

Love Akron

A ministry for the Greater Akron Area



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Pastor Mark Ford

Executive Director's Corner

I bring you warm summer greetings to all who may be rested, busted, disgusted, or all three!

Last month I chronicled the 13 year history of Love Akron and how we arrived to where we are today. In this edition I will share how God worked in my heart leading up to the launching of this prayer fellowship.

In 1995 I was serving as lead pastor at Falls First Assembly of God in Cuyahoga Falls, and had served there 11 years when a special stirring started in my heart. Like many pastors I know the stirring came as a result of holy frustration with the way things were going, or should I say not going in the church. When I would get to a desperation point, it was my practice to take an extended time to pray and fast for the purpose of consecration and direction. It was during one of those "times" that I was confronted by the Holy Spirit regarding my lack of relationship with my pastoral colleagues in the city. Let me state quickly, that I had and have always been involved with the local ministerial alliance, so it was not as if I was uninvolved. Notice I said my "lack of relationship" not professional involvement. In fact, I had served as the President of the ministers association, so I was involved but was spiritually detached trying to build my barn bigger than theirs. One night when sleep failed me, the Holy Spirit made me to know that I was to personally contact every pastor in the Falls and ask them how I could pray for them. The Lord made me to know that my concern was for "my church," but He was more concerned about "His kingdom." ↩



Michael Starks
S.L.A.P.P.

Start Living and Acting Positive

Para Church Ministry

Michael Stark's testimony is nothing short of a miracle. After the death of his mom at the age of 16, Michael's life took a downhill tumble. For the next thirty-four years, the bitterness and anger he felt would force him to live his life as an "outlaw" with an "I don't care attitude," in a world of drug addiction and hustling to survive. "God showed up and showed out in my life" Michael says, "and I wouldn't trade the way I'm living now for anything in the world." God brought Michael out of the prison system to minister to the world. While serving as community organizer for the Summit Lake Neighborhood Association, and impacting the lives of many in and around the community, Michael heard the call to develop a ministry that would provide: mentoring, substance abuse intervention, relationship building, employment, food, housing and prison ministry to the broken hearted. The mission of S.L.A.A.P. is to empower an individual to change the direction of his or her life by coming into the Saving Knowledge of the Power of Jesus Christ. God directs that mission by opening up the doors of opportunity (through developing and nurturing relationships).

Michael now goes into the prisons here in Ohio, sharing his testimony and the power of Christ, as part of the Harvest House Christian Center Jail Ministry Team. Michael says, "I have also been blessed to minister individually as an ambassador for Christ whenever family or friends of jailed individuals call and request my intervention. I look forward to expanding the prison ministry so that one day I can go into the prisons each week to share the Good News of the Gospel. I am continually amazed and in awe of the number of doors the Lord our God has opened in my life, and as he opens them I go through because this is part of the covenant I made with him."

"Love Akron, through the person of pastor Mark Ford, has epitomized what Hebrews 13:2 speaks of, "Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it" (NLT), and for that I am so very grateful. It's difficult at best to begin a new ministry, especially considering the way of the world today; but it's even more difficult when it comes to urban ministry. The other ministries around you seem hesitant to offer any assistance whatsoever, and appear to regard you as little more than "incoming competition." Not so with Pastor Mark Ford. From the moment we met there just seemed to be an instant rapport, and from that day to this he has been a source of inspiration. Not only has he been there as a brother in Christ, he's also been a close friend, a mentor and a continual source of support. He's always looking for different venues to expose me to, and a wide-range of relationships to introduce to the vehicle of S.L.A.A.P. Suffice it to say, Proverbs 18:24 speaks clearly to his character."



Executive Director's Corner Cont.

I began a two year journey moving from one pastor's office to another, building relationships that I cherish deeply. I was humbled as these powerful servants of God, from every denominational affiliation in the Christian church, allowed me to share in their private pain and joys. I began to see them as fellow team members, an extended pastoral team, reaching the city together. It was at that time that a man named Dr. Jack Dennison stepped into my life, and I was never the same. He was brought to the Akron area by a group of lay business men who had and still have a heart to see the church of Jesus Christ come together as one, the way Jesus prayed for in John 17. Dr. Dennison shared a paradigm of reaching a city together like I had never heard or considered before. As the Holy Spirit would have it, I was also being challenged by Dr. Jack Hayford during this same time frame to call the Christian pastors and Para church leaders to pray together at least on a quarterly basis. Well, the rest is history. My last month's article picks up where this one stops. For a copy of last month's newsletter, you may obtain it by accessing Love Akron's website at www.loveakron.org.

So there you have it dear friend. This is why I am so passionate about connecting all of the Christian pastors and leaders who are serving together in Summit County. Be assured, it is not organization that drives me, rather it is the organic synergy that is created when we all work side by side, rebuilding the broken walls of our culture and tearing down the walls that separate Christ's church. Jesus designed that His church could not be built apart from Himself, and each of us working together. Thanks for listening and let's get better connected. Be sure to pen down: Wednesdays, September 10th and November 12th. These are the dates for the upcoming prayer events later this year. Stay tuned. I love you and pray for your success. May the words from John the Beloved be spoken with your name attached (3 John 1:2). Dear friends, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.



Who's On Board:

Pastor Dennis K. Butts, Sr.
Vice Chairperson, Board of Directors

Pastor Butts serves as the Senior Staff Pastor at The House of the Lord in Akron, OH. He has been married 34 years to his childhood sweetheart, Jewrusha Butts.

They have two sons, Paul Butts (Kena), Dennis Kelsey Butts, Jr (Millicent), and two grandchildren Makaya and Dennis III. Pastor Butts enjoys gospel music, singing, traveling, skiing, racquetball and conducting seminars in the areas of marriage, family, men's retreats, and personal leadership development. Most of all, Pastor Butts loves the Lord, his family, the people of God, preaching and teaching the Word of God, experiencing genuine worship and ministering to hurting people at their level of need.

When asked why he joined the Love Akron fellowship? Pastor Butts replied, "I can't quite recall when or where I attended my first Love Akron fellowship, but I do recall being pleasantly impacted by the warm and friendly welcome I received from many of the men and women who were enjoying refreshments as they mingled among one another. I could sense a sweet and yet genuine spirit of love and unity among people who were of different colors, ethnicities and religious denominations, as we sang songs of worship, prayed for our city, our schools and our churches. I was challenged by the possibility of what could happen to the greater Akron region if only the leaders of our churches and servant ministries would step outside of our racial and denominational walls and come together in prayer. I got involved in Love Akron because I wanted to be apart of the move of God to bring healing, reconciliation and unity to our city. I personally believe that before any city can accomplish this, the churches that comprise the city must come together and do the same. Being involved in Love Akron has heightened my sensitivity to the fact that all of God's children are truly brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. So I praise God for Love Akron, and I encourage all pastors of our city to come aboard and be apart of what God is doing for our city. ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO IMPACT OUR WORLD IS TO ALLOW IT TO SEE THE POWER OF GOD IN HOW WE ACTIVELY LOVE AND CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER IN THE SPIRIT OF GENUINE LOVE AND PEACE!"

Team Work:

Love Akron is all about team work and investing in the Church of Jesus Christ for the greater good. You may be interested to know that Love Akron gave over \$5,000 in the past year to assist ministries in the city that needed special help, as well as helping make Imagine Unity a reality. The cost for the Imagine Unity day with Dr. John Perkins was \$6,698.12. Though the generous gifts and offerings, \$3,636.56 was given to help defray the costs of this historic day. With God's help, Love Akron was able to pay the balance. When you invest in Love Akron, this helps us to continue to give financially when need or opportunities arise. Perhaps you may want to consider writing Love Akron into your personal or church budget. When you do this, it is home missions at work. Thank you for your prayers and support!

Love Akron is a not for profit ministry.
Donations may be sent to: Love Akron



Upcoming Prayer Events:

Join us for Prayer Food & Fellowship

9:30 AM

11:15 AM Lunch

September 10, 2008

St. Luke's Anglican Church

565 S. Cleveland Massillon Rd.

Akron, OH

Host Pastor: Bishop Roger Aims

&

November 12, 2008

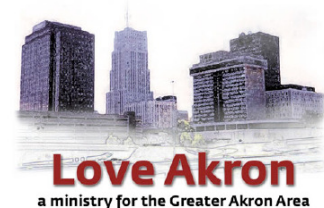
Open M

941 Princeton St.

Akron, OH

Host: Dottie Achmoody, CEO

Bring a friend and have lunch on us!



PO Box 19056
Akron, OH 44319
(330) 990.4180

Email: Pastormarkford@gmail.com