Dear Wendy,

It has been a hard week for me here in New York City, so if its okay with you, I'm going to ramble for a while.

I like normal people, don't you?

You know, the kind of people who spit on the sidewalk, drink beer at a high-end bar, sneak a drink out of paper bag, smoke, eat meat, love baseball, stop at fast food places when they are hungry, order burgers with extra fries, laugh, cry, get jealous, play loud music, talk about other people behind their backs, people who enjoy a large bag of potato chips, pick flowers from other people's gardens, try to get away with not paying taxes, don't attend a friend's funeral because they are busy with work, people who walk into churches every week, men who sleep at night on church steps, vegetarians who think they are better than other people, people who cheat on their spouse, people who never call their mother, mothers who haven't spoken to their children in years,
fathers who walked away from their responsibilities, people who think they are the only person who knows God personally and corrects everyone around them. mothers who love their family, fathers who get out of bed even when they are too ill to go to work to put food on the table, that "friend" who hurt you deeply, that "friend" who would take the shirt of their back to help you.

Now that is a run-on sentence.
No time for a proof reader today, but I hope you get the point.

You know -- "normal" people.

In New York City there are millions of normal people who Christ loves. Our "normal" is not his normal. Praise God for that truth. Believe it or not, Christ even likes me, when I've been "normal" to the church crowd, or not so "normal" to them. Christ loves me all the time. He loves you also.

Let me share a quick Bible verse with you and a quote I just read in a friends blog, so we can all go back to being "normal" and loved by Jesus, no matter what kind of "normal" we are.

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into his grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, (or "normal") Christ died for us." - Romans 5:1-8 (NIV)

I added the word "normal" to that verse, in case you were wondering.

Christ was always where the "normal" people were. Here is the quote, that I read just yesterday. I read it in a statement shared by my good friend Loren Seibold. The statement comes from the Rev. Dr. George MacLeod, an urban pastor (from Glasgow) who died a few years ago:

"I simply argue that the cross be raised again at the center of the marketplace, as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap; at a crossroad so cosmopolitan that they had to write His title in Hebrew, in Latin and in Greek...At the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse and soldiers gamble. Because that's where He died. And that is what He died about. And that is where churchmen ought to be and what churchmen should be about."

You can hear more of this Conversation With The Word, tomorrow morning, Saturday, August 25, live and in person, as I share some simple concepts at historic Manhattan Church, 232 West 11th Street, NYC, in the heart of Greenwich Village. The conversation begins at 11:20 a.m.

Oh, if you normally wear jeans, please feel free to come and be your normal self.

God bless you and give you peace.
Know that you are normal and God loves you anyway.

Best regards -

Tony Romeo, Pastor / NYC
9.11.12

A NIGHT OF REMEMBRANCE

You are invited to join the Greenwich Village Community for

A NIGHT OF REMEMBRANCE
Tuesday | Sept. 11, 2012 | 7:00 P.M.
Music | The Spoken Word | Peace

Come together at historic
Manhattan Seventh-day Adventist Church
232 West 11th Street, NYC
1.5 blocks West of Seventh Ave. South / Greenwich Village

A FREE COMMUNITY PRESENTATION OF REACH-NYC | reachnyccontact@gmail.com
Saturday Morning, August 25, 2012, at 9:30 a.m.
FREE Breakfast with the Word Study begins at 9:50 a.m.

Something New: 9:15 a.m.
Morning Prayer Service in the Sanctuary.
A bit of quiet time with friends in prayerful contemplation with God.

Join us for a nice, simple breakfast of a healthy whole-grain NYC bagel, fresh fruit, and a hot drink, and wake up your mind with the study of God's Word.

This is a relaxed setting where all are invited to join in, no matter what your faith tradition.
We meet on Saturday mornings at historic Manhattan Church in the West Village, in an intimate setting we call Cafe Reach: 232 West 11th Street, NYC just a block-and-a-half west of Seventh Avenue. Breakfast is served at 9:30 a.m. Study begins at 9:50 a.m.

See you for "Bible with a Bagel."

Invite your friends.

This free breakfast is sponsored by supporters of REACH-NYC and we thank them.

Click here for map of location of Manhattan Church

Donations to REACH-NYC help us in our efforts to reach out to the people of New York City. REACH-NYC is recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt corporation, and all contributions are fully tax-deductible.*

Contributions can also be made by check payable to: "REACH-NYC" and mailed to: REACH-NYC, P.O. Box 651, North Salem, NY 10560

Thank you for helping the REACH-NYC ministry!

*A receipt will be sent recognizing all contributions at the end of the year for tax purposes.