In this issue of REACH-NYC...
A special gathering in Danbury, CT on Saturday, May 17 / 4:00 p.m.

It has been some time since I sent you our REACH-NYC newsletter. I hope that you
are well and relaxed in God's agape love. Sadly, I meet people at various events who are
deePLY burdened by the religion they have been taught, since childhood, and some who
have learned a false impression of God, that leaves them completely unsure of how much
God loves them.

Wendy
The ministry of REACH-NYC is dedicated to clearly help individuals find the profound simplicity of a God who is absolutely in love with each of us. Every single one of us. In fact, it is my studied belief, that God even loves those who do not love themselves. Sounds crazy, perhaps, but I meet people all the time who simply believe they live lives or have done something in their past, that keeps them always on edge as to their salvation or have been made to feel inferior in one way or the other, by church dogma that has very little to do with the teachings of Jesus.

A few weeks ago, I woke up in the middle of the morning, around 2:00 a.m. feeling something was just not right with my body. In less than an hour, I found myself in the emergency room of a local hospital where I had driven myself to see what was going on. I will keep you from all the gory details, but I spent the next 4 days in the ICU of that hospital being treated by some of the most gifted nurses and physicians I have had the pleasure of meeting. Oh, by the way, they were all women. Gifted women. I know of some church groups that spend a fortune and decades studying whether or not women should be "ordained" or not, that is how silly religion can get.

Just in case you are wondering about my stand on such trivial conversations and issues, I say women are a gift from God, and used by God in ministry. I will leave it to others who have nothing better to do with their time to discuss this for another decade or two.

While in the ICU, I had time to think and contemplate my life. Sitting there with needles and IV's in both arms, and wearing a gown, tubes protruding from all vectors of my body, I felt privileged to understand some of the anguish that goes through the minds of people who spend months and years in this condition, fighting cancer and other serious deceases that contribute to the perplexities of life. I also was clearer than ever on issues that people spend so much time on, that are clearly meaningless.

The sermon that I had prepared for that Saturday morning that I never gave, was based on Psalm 23. I had gone over it with a small group of young people I study with on Friday evenings, just a few hours before my life was to take a turn, where the Psalm became more than just a religious pleasantry, wrongly reserved for funerals and now became a divine reality. As I drove to the hospital, against my physicians orders, I remembered the words of the Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd."

Not to sound to spooky, but I truly felt that God was with me all through that twenty minute drive to the hospital, and the next 4 days. I know that many of you might be dealing with medical, and emotional issues at this very moment, and perhaps are praying for a loved one that is going through a tremendous medical battle. My family has a person we deeply love, admire and pray for each day, who trusts in God each and every day, as she battles her fight with cancer. Her spirit and devotion to life is beyond outstanding, and each time I think of her, I am sure that she is as tough as any United States Marine, in her battle with this brutal decease. The Lord is her shepherd also, and that of her loving husband and family.

A few days ago, my wife and I had the privilege of visiting a little young child around eleven years of age, who was about to go through surgery the next day or so. She had already been through a lot in her young life. As she was resting in her hospital bed, she was stoic, surrounded by her mom, dad, and grandmother. Her name is Destiny. A beautiful young girl. It is simply amazing how much we humans can go through as long as we have hope and faith, and are lifted up in prayer by our friends and family. It is also a marvel to me, how little children have the power to go on and do it with a smile.

What is becoming my favorite statement made by Jesus Christ to those who were enslaved by their understanding of "religious law" can be found in Matthew 22:35-40. "One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

As I reflect on how abusive many people are to each other, how we treat one another with petty differences of belief, it is becoming clear to me that one can take thousands of Bible studies and never fully understand the profound nature of the clear statement that Christ was making in the microscopic, and misguided religion of dogma, while missing the entire point of what it truly means to be a follower of God. Love God and your neighbor. How wonderfully simple.
Some of you who know me, understand and appreciate my sense of humor in my preaching and life experiences that I share from time to time. Well, even in a hospital ICU one can find humor. It was early morning, about 2:30 a.m., on my third day in that hospital room. I was blessed at last to be in a very deep sleep. Suddenly, I was awakened by all the lights in the room bursting with a brilliant white flash, being turned on full blast. I was startled and not really sure where I was. A giant of a man made his way to my bed side. He was large, dark skinned and back lit, wearing a white lab coat. I really could not make out his features, but he seemed to be at least 6’ 7” tall.

As my eye fell upon this looming giant of a man, he shouted in a deep wonderful cavernous African-American voice, that boomed "I am Moses!" For a minute there I was not sure if I was in heaven being greeted by "Moses" or still in the ICU room. Once I fully came to my normal self, I began to laugh uncontrollably, so much so, that "Moses" called for the nurse on duty to come into my room. I told them both, that it might be a good idea not to wake up patients in the middle of the night, especially if they have a Biblical name like "Moses." I then suggested that Biblical names like Paul, Joseph, Daniel or Jesus, also be banned from use at 2 a.m.

May God continue to bless each of you with laughter, love and the joy of knowing that you are loved by a loving God who has always loved you and me deeply, profoundly, and has the best of all intentions for each of our lives. Let no one fool you into believing that following God is a burden, or you are unfit to belong to the family that God has called each of us to belong. One in the Spirit. What a blessing.

Best regards -- Tony Romeo, Pastor / REACH-NYC

P.S. - People have been asking for a REACH-NYC gathering for supporters of this ministry in the Southern Connecticut, Westchester, NY area, and it will take place on Saturday, May 17, 2014. Please scroll down for more information. Click here for directions to the event venue. Tell your friends about this exciting event, and share this newsletter and invitation with them. If you scroll down to the very end of this newsletter you will find "Forward email." Just follow the directions. Looking forward to meeting you at this event. Please let us know you are coming, by writing me at romeo.anthonyj@gmail.com
REACH-NYC INVITES YOU TO
JOIN US IN DANBURY, CT
SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2014
4:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.
“Loving God Supreme &
Your Neighbor as Yourself.”

REACH-NYC is reaching out to those living North of NYC,
to join us in a special event, on Saturday, May 17 at 4:00 p.m.
We have made arrangements to meet at the Hilton Garden Inn,
119 Mill Plain Road, in Danbury, CT, just off I-84.

Please join your hosts, Pastor Anthony Mazzella, and
Pastor Tony Romeo, as we come together to study and share the
simple, yet profound Word of God, in a safe environment.
If you’ve stopped attending church or just want to refresh your
spiritual life, this event is just what you have been praying for.

All faith traditions will feel welcome. Directions? Go to:
http://hiltongardeninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels/connecticut/hilton-
garden-inn-danbury-DNBDHGI/maps-directions/index.html
Cafe Reach / 2014 Season continues:
Friday, April 25, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
Join us for some simple refreshments, hot drinks and some great conversations.

A thoughtful discussion for young professionals and thinkers of all ages, who want to think out of the box and out of the pew. The Conversation begins at 7:00 p.m.
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 for tax purposes.