



Detroit, Two Months Gone By

Compelled To Go **Compelled To Go**

Issue #124
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Dear Friends, Family, and In-Pact Partners:

Six weeks have gone by since our last letter, and we're just over a month away from returning to our home in Collins, MO. While the Hoppers have kept our home safe and sound there, we have been free to try fulfilling the Lord's calling on us here in Detroit. We're so grateful for their profound contribution to our ministry in this way. We know we have no worries when they're at the helm. Thank you, Danny and Melody . . . and Riley!

Since our last letter, much has transpired. The first month we focused on cultural acclimation, getting into a discipling and training regimen with the team, team building, prayer walking, and visiting a number of area churches each week. The second month things moved into a higher gear making contacts with pastors and churches, doing some neighborhood improvement projects, becoming more intentional in looking for a building, and concentrating more on team training.



On our cultural excursions we visited places like The Renaissance Center from which we could see Windsor, Ont, across the river connecting Lake St. Clair to Lake Huron, the Detroit city museum where we learned that in the early 20th Century Detroit had over 125 automobile manufacturers, The Heidelberg Project where one man has taken the lead to help restore a neighborhood by creating "art" from junk and trash (seen above).

We also have visited the amazing Henry Ford Museum, the Polish community of Hamtramck (where we ate Croatian Chivappi and Bangladeshi chicken and visited a quaint coffee shop), and other interesting places as we try to get a better understanding of this amazing and diverse city. Also, the rest of the team has visited Belle Isle, a state park, and other places. In general, our various activities have been intentional ---- getting to know local community leaders, helping neighbors, introducing Eleos and our own ministry to pastors and area denominational leaders, and spending valuable time together as a team in prayer, fellowship, and Bible study.



While our immediate neighborhood is neat, clean, and pretty quiet except for the two or three ice cream trucks that pass every afternoon (above left), it's a different story a few streets away (above center and right). The Russell Woods Neighborhood in which we live (eight blocks by four blocks in size) is far nicer than most around us, mainly because of a very active neighborhood association that works for beautification and security.

However, especially to our south and east, it is a different story with many houses vacant, vandalized, and often burned. Where other houses once stood, there are vacant lots filled with trash, brush, and weeds. With all our hearts we wish you could see the devastating blight that still dots this vast city. However, the best we can do is post an album entitled "2015 – This Is Our Neighborhood" on Bob's Facebook album page and urge you to look at it. It is important that you see it in order to get the full impact of why we are spending these months in Detroit. Try the following link, but if you're not on Bob's Facebook friends list, you may have to sign. https://www.facebook.com/bob.tolliver.52/media_set?set=a.10153434894564047.1073741854.677804046&type=3

Most of the people living in our neighborhood are older longtime residents who cannot afford to move, younger renting families who cannot afford anything better, and a few houses with cohabiting singles or young men who have too much time on their hands. Up until a few weeks ago, it was common to hear late-night gunshots, followed by police sirens, helicopters, and flashing lights. However, most of that has died down since the latest episode. Dexter Avenue, just two blocks east of us, is known for its heavy concentration of rival gang activity and the presence of numerous members of The Nation of Islam headed by Louis Farhakkahn. We suspect the last encounter may have resulted in some deaths or arrests, leading to the reduction of activity. We have pinpointed the intersection of Dexter and Buena Vista as an area over which we pray several times a week.

Our team continues meeting weekly for staff meetings (below left) and worship time (below center), as well as personal mentoring and discipling. All of this continues strengthening and unifying the team. We also continue visiting different churches weekly (Philippine International Church below right) and meeting with pastors to tell about Eleos and our own ministry and to learn about what they are doing and how we might serve them.



We were also recently blessed to have Eleos Founder and Director, Dan Smith and Eleos Board member, Dan Bosse, visit from Kansas City to do some repair work on the house and look at a possible building for the Eleos coffee shop. It was an especially enjoyable time, and we're glad they came.

The same day the two Dan's flew home, the two of us took a couple days off to go north to Mackinaw City and Mackinac Island before the Memorial Day holidays hit us. It was a beautiful trip, even though we did nothing other than visit the Island via ferry for about five hours. We quickly learned that this isn't the place for old folks like us unless you have lots of money or have the endurance to bike or walk long distances. So, we kept close to the docks and downtown area, and settled for some light walking and lots of picture taking. Bob took lots of pictures and posted a few on Facebook, but here are three. You can check out the Mackinaw album for more.



We relaxed walking along the main road enjoying the huge mansions and boat slips (above left), seeing the ancient Fort Mackinac (above center), and the famous Grand Hotel (above right). Perhaps one day we will return with enough funds to take one of the horse-drawn carriages around the island. There are no automobiles allowed (since 1895) at all on the island, and everything is by bicycle, walking, or horse-drawn carriages.

The Future: We've had no reports from any of our extended and "partner" ministries for some time, but ask you to continue praying for them all ---- Timur and Natasha in Russia, Saied and his family in Russia and Syria, "M" and his family and team in Ukraine, Sergei and his family in Russia, Joel and Ira in Ukraine, "H" in Sweden, and Tania and Arto in Finland. Hopefully we'll have some updates by our next letter. We do know they are all keeping very busy in their various ministries.

Today we find ourselves planning to return to Detroit at least one more time this year, and possibly twice. We will leave Detroit June 28th and return home in a circuitous route via Mackinaw City and Escanaba, MI, St. Paul in MN, and Des Moines, IA, landing in Collins July 5th. After about 18 or 19 days at home, we will return to Detroit around July 24th for four more weeks of ministry before then going back to Collins around August 22nd for all of September and most of October. It is possible we will then return to Detroit for a few more weeks leading up to Thanksgiving. We have several conferences and other obligations in September and October.

And, all of this leads up to Lots of Prayer Requests:

VERY IMPORTANT PRAYER REQUESTS

- + Bob injured his right wrist four weeks ago and is having difficulty with it healing.
- + For the Intersection of Dexter and Buena Vista where there is much drug and gang activity at times.
- + For an ideal building for the Coffee House– space, fenced parking, ideal location, great price, great price.
- + For funds to purchase the Coffee House, for more supporters for Eleos Coffee House ministries (go to www.eleoscoffee.com to see what the ministry is all about).
- + For the needed \$1,000 to finance our return to Detroit on July 24th. We can't go without the funding.
- + For team member James Dickens as he leaves June 18th to return to ministry with Fusion Missions in KC.
- + For continued team melding as Jacob and Nicole Cumberland, Shantalea and Alan Johns, and we carry on God's call on our lives as a team.
- + For our Detroit neighbors, that we can build growing relationships as we prayer walk & interact with them.
- + For continued favor with neighborhood and city officials as we try to live out the example of Christ to them.
- + For churches to come along side Eleos with prayer warriors, volunteer helpers, and bulk coffee purchases.

As you can see, what lots on our plate, and we cannot do what we do without your encouragement, prayers, and support. We need you more now than any time in the past couple of years.

In His Bond, By His Grace, and For His Kingdom,
The Tollivers, Bob and Jo Ann