

# God's miraculous *transformation* of Light of Life

“As often as possible, we share stories about lives transformed by the power of God. ***This time I want to share how God is transforming this organization!***”

**When I arrived in October 2002, Light of Life was in bad shape.**

- In just one year we lost \$1 million in revenue due to significant bad press.
- Expenses had not been cut to reflect the reduced revenues...Therefore,
- Red ink exceeded \$1.1 million, and long-term debt approached \$2.5 million.
- And we had no reserves!

It didn't take much analysis to see we needed a miracle. Light of Life could not survive unless creditors were willing to give us time to design and implement a plan—a plan we came to call the rescue plan for the Rescue Mission. Fortunately, I know who is in the miracle business. So we began with prayer... intense prayer.

**And God was faithful.** We had to do a lot of hard work, but He worked his first miracle. We leaned on His strength to see us through many day-to-day challenges and to help us make many very difficult decisions. We cut expenses by almost a third. We reduced staff, sold off properties, and closed the thrift store. In short, we refocused the Mission on its primary services to the Kingdom and the community. He showed us how to do more with less.

By the grace of God, we were able to reduce expenses ***without cutting any basic services*** to Pittsburgh's homeless and needy. Every night the 34 beds in our emergency shelter were available for men fearing the cold and danger of the streets. Every day we were able to help 50 men find hope and counseling in our long-term and transitional recovery programs. The number of women with children finding a way out of addiction and despair actually grew from 15 to 20! And every night, 365 days a year, our hungry and hurting neighbors were able to find a good meal and a warm welcome at Light of Life.

The second miracle unfolded over a few years. As expenses fell and fundraising began to recover, we were able to use the resulting surpluses to retire long-term debt. As it became apparent that God planned to continue to use Light of Life to reach the least and the lost, He called several former business executives to come to Light of Life despite the significant financial sacrifice their choices represented. He formed a team of new and existing leaders to shore up the foundation of this ministry and begin to rebuild it.

During the first three years of the turnaround, benefits were cut and no one on staff received a raise. It was a difficult time. We were now able to address the needs of our staff whose sacrifice was an integral part of the turnaround. We commissioned Dewey and Kaye, highly regarded consultants to the nonprofit community, to help us establish competitive pay ranges for every position. We found that many on staff earned salaries below the minimum recommended by the consultants. God supplied the resources to establish fair compensation and to provide training to improve staff skills.

Along the way, He made it possible to pay off all long-term debt by the fall of 2006. Current reserves exceeding \$2 million have allowed us to begin an orderly expansion of ministry.

We also agreed to reserve funds to insure against potential revenue shortfalls. Additionally, due to severe space limitations, we chose to build cash reserves to prepare for the expansion it now seems God has in store for us.

***I don't know if we should call it another miracle or not, but about one year ago, God began to reveal His vision for the future of Light of Life.*** Over the last several months, He has brought the leadership team together around several key objectives and initiatives.

We have completed a strategic plan demonstrating how Light of Life can dramatically increase the impact we have in the lives of the men, women and children seeking our care. All is aimed at providing greater hope and more complete transformation:

We've begun an **Education and Employment program** to ensure that clients receive quality instruction in basic academic skills and access to

by David  
Bugher,  
Executive  
Director



good jobs with living wages as well as top-notch job training programs.

We will research the need for **additional emergency shelter space for women** and/or the need for a residential women's program.

We will offer some men's shelter guests **longer stays in exchange for their commitment** to participate in case management services.

We will **intensify our search for more adequate facilities** to provide clients an environment more suitable to the growth and independence they seek.

If you would like a copy of the entire plan, please call. We would be pleased to share it with you. We are thrilled with how God is leading Light of Life and are profoundly thankful for the journey on which He has led us these last four-and-a-half years.

I am excited to share this history of God's amazing work at Light of Life because we encourage our partners to become fully informed about the work we do, the outcomes we produce, and how we manage the ministry.

God has called the current board and staff to steward the resources that you generously provide with extraordinary care. As we move forward with the plan God has laid out for us, **we will become even more effective in bringing real and lasting hope to our neighbors in need.**

May God bless you richly. I hope you know how much we appreciate your faithful partnership.

In His grip,