

Christians In New York City?

by Wayne Goff

Christians who aspire to move to New York City have special dangers to face. What are they?

Life In The Big City?

Don Bunting preaches for the Upper West Manhattan Church of Christ in New York City, and his June report contained an article warning Christians about coming to the Big Apple and how it can affect their faith. I will summarize the points found in his report because they can be enlightening to us and helpful as well.

The Dangers Faced

Some Christians move to New York City and lose their faith because it wasn't very strong in the first place. There are numerous strong Christians in the city, and more faithful churches now than there used to be. But it will always be a **challenging** environment because it is **so** progressively sinful.

Christians are isolated and outnumbered. You might live 30 minutes from the next faithful Christian. You may have to travel an hour to worship. Public transportation is slower and less reliable on Sundays. Travel is difficult. You cannot just get in your car, turn on the radio and enjoy the drive! Instead, you will have to get out in the weather, in possibly crowded cars, walking several blocks, waiting for train transfers, etc. Consequently, there are a lot of Christians who only attend one service on Sunday.

Furthermore, in New York City you are one of thousands and thousands of people. Most are not church-going, moral people! You are more likely to live in an apartment complex with all these non-Christians and it can be very discouraging.

Christians face impure thoughts and words. Billboards, bus ads, women's clothing scream impurity in NYC. Loud, bad language is part of the daily experience. It takes work to keep your thoughts and language pure.

Desensitizing. You see so much immorality in the Big City that it becomes part of everyday life. It can desensitize you to its harm and danger! Of course, the same thing can happen in any place in America. From where do you think most of our TV programs, movies, and commercials come? But to live right in the middle of it all is an extra challenge.

Kindness and temper. It is very hard to remain kind, even-tempered and patient while constantly being pushed, shoved, cut off, yelled at, etc. Christians are not to return evil for evil.

Overt challenges to Christianity and conservatism. A good indication about how New Yorkers feel about morality is their attitude toward conservative politicians. They hate them! They had a Bush punching bag for children at a campaign office street party. They constantly pass around petitions favoring abortion, gay rights, save the planet, etc. as you walk about the neighborhood. Christianity is mocked in college classes and work places.

Coming to New York City for the wrong reasons: arts, entertainment, fashion or finance. This puts you in the wrong crowd automatically. How long do you think a Christian can maintain his faith while he pursues a job "in the fast lane" of 90-100 hour work weeks?

Coming to New York City without making spiritual plans for yourself. Most college students who have depended on their parents to get them to worship and to be part of spiritual activities face this. It is difficult for young people who are on their own for the first time no matter where they go to college. But New York City magnifies the problem.

Strong Christians who do live in New York City put the problem this way: ***Life in NYC will make or break you as a Christian.*** Much of what has been summarized in this article is likewise true of life in any larger city in America. Hopefully our readers will consider these truths taught from a Christian who lives in New York City, consider their lives and the influence of the world upon them, and bolster their efforts to be a faithful child of God in the midst of a hostile world. You cannot be a **faithful** Christian in the world *by accident!*

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