

New York



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Dear brethren in Christ,

Greetings from central New York! School is out and summer is officially here. In New York, the school year ends close to the end of June and resumes after Labor Day. Summer is typically the busiest for me as so much is happening. For instance, the warm weather gives us more opportunities to casually visit people since our neighbors spend lots of time outside with their children, especially in the early evening hours.

Since my last letter, we had a weekend gospel meeting here with Lee Tosti from Waterown. It was well attended by brethren from other congregations in NY who drove over an hour and a half to be with us. Lee did an excellent job in presenting lessons of value to both believers and unbelievers. We had over 35 in attendance for most of the lessons.

We continue to run ads in the local papers. One of the county papers that was running our ads and articles has gone out of business, so we are looking for other options to get the word out. I continue to receive requests for Bible correspondence courses and pray that these people will also accept our invitation to worship and have a home Bible study. We've continued our studies with Dave and Raegan Roy in Waterloo. Our neighbor Colleen Foss continues to attend Bible study at our house every week. We are studying through Acts, with emphasis on the plan of salvation and the nature of the church. Our other neighbors who have asked Bible questions and said positive things about studying with us still have not committed to a regular study. We will continue to have patience and pray that they will overcome whatever obstacles are preventing them from learning more about God's word. My wife Sonia often takes my Bible class material to them so at least they might study themselves. If it works to get them to open their Bibles, then maybe they will learn some things on their own and have more questions for us.

One of our members, Kevin Floyd, has moved back to Florida where he is originally from to start a new job. June 20 was his last Sunday with us. He worshiped with us for 4 years in Canastota. Kevin grew a lot spiritually in that time and even preached for us on a couple of occasions. We miss him and wish him well as he continues to grow and meet with the brethren in central Florida.

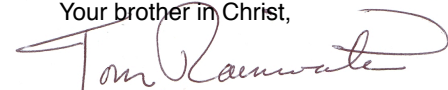
Last Friday evening we had an uplifting evening singing with the brethren that meet near Watertown. It's always enjoyable to be with the brethren up there that we worked with in the past and love very much. The singing was at the Bosworth's house in their large garage area. They had around 200 people there, some of which were from other congregations, but over half were people that lived in the county. The Bosworths invited everyone they knew and many of the people present were from Amish-type families. The brethren were surrounded by contacts and took full advantage of it after the singing was over. The church there near Watertown is doing well, and will be meeting soon at a different location in Philadelphia, NY. Three families that left a few years ago to start a new congregation further north are now back meeting with those brethren. It is a time of rejoicing as many felt that the gospel had a stronger influence in that area when all those families were together.

I request your prayers for my wife Sonia. She has been having some health problems and is having a colonoscopy later this week to find out for certain the source of her problems. I hope and pray the problem is minor without requiring any kind of surgery.

My evangelism tip for this letter is simple: If you show people you genuinely care about them and come to their assistance whenever they are having problems or concerns, they will respond so much better to what you have to say about the gospel. Whether people admit it or not, they want to see Christ in you. They want to see that you really mean what you say about love and faith and obedience. So many have been burned by hypocrisy in religion. If you rise above that and are consistent in your goodness, it will open so many more doors for teaching. Even those hostile to the faith can be influenced for good, who, "may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:12).

Thanks again for your prayers and thoughts towards us in New York. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. Pray the gospel can continue to grow and flourish in this spiritual wilderness. May God be with you in your loyal service to Him.

Your brother in Christ,


Tom Rainwater