

REFLECTIONS

June 11, 2006

The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish.

Jonah 1:1-3

Running Away From Nineveh

Oh! The Places You'll Go is a Dr. Seuss book that hits the best seller list every year about this time. Written to depict the adventures of life, it is a very popular graduation gift. And isn't it true! At your graduation could you have imagined the places you have been to this point in your life? Haven't some of those been places that you never wanted to go?

For years and years I took pride that I had never been to New York City. I escaped the assignment on several occasions and I finally decided that one of my life long goals was to never go there. God seems to have seen it differently because one evening I found myself lying in a New York hotel room saying to myself, "This is everything I never wanted to do."

Many years have passed since that time, but I can see now that God sent me there against *my* will to prepare me for a mission that He had in mind. The whole idea removed me from my comfort zone. I ran from Him, but his plan was different. And the adventure prepared me to serve God in ways I could never have dreamed.

The story of Jonah is very similar. His story has always been a captivating one because of the fascination of surviving inside the belly of a large fish. But that's not the real story. The real story is Jonah's unwillingness to get out of his comfort zone. Jonah was running away from Nineveh, and by doing so he was also running away from God.

For years I ran away from New York. I thought it was filled with wickedness like Nineveh, and I wanted nothing to do with it. Whether my assessment was correct or not, God had another idea, so one day I found myself in the midst of it. The experiences from what became many business trips to New York City equipped me for a phase of life that I never envisioned. I was content to live my life in the safety of the little world that I knew and understood. But God had a bigger idea and running away from Nineveh was not part of it. God had a plan for me that He would not allow me to change.

God has a plan you. And *Oh! The Places You'll Go*.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +

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