



If you enjoy watching crime shows, you've probably heard the term 'safehouse' referring to a secret place of sanctuary used to hide people from a threat. The typical storyline for these dramas follows a witness, preparing to testify against an organized crime boss or some other powerful criminal, who is kept in a safehouse until they can provide their testimony and the offender is sent to prison.

The term safehouse, however, has a much more significant historical meaning. Safehouses were used as temporary stops on the Underground Railroad, a large and diverse network of people who helped fugitive slaves escape. They provided people fleeing slavery with a safe place to eat and rest until nightfall when they could continue their flight to the next station.

The Underground Railroad was not run by any single organization or individual. It consisted of numerous people willing to risk everything to protect others facing incredible injustice. The Underground Railroad moved hundreds of slaves north each year, with one estimate indicating that the South lost around 100,000 slaves between the years 1810 and 1850.

Safehouses also played a critical role in rescuing Jews being exterminated by the German Army during World War II. *The Hiding Place* tells the riveting story of Corrie Ten Boom and her family, who sheltered hundreds of Jews, protecting them from arrest by Nazi authorities. Betrayed by a fellow Dutch citizen, the entire family was imprisoned. Corrie survived and, following the war, she set up a ministry that saw thousands come to Christ and receive healing from the anguish of their past trauma and pain. The New Testament reveals that even Jesus had a safehouse. He would often visit the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. John 11:5 says, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." This family created a safe place for Jesus, and it was here that Jesus spent some of his last days on earth.

In Psalm 9:9–10, we read, "God is a safe-house for the battered, a sanctuary during bad times. The moment you arrive, you relax; you're never sorry you knocked" (The Message). I want to suggest to you that the term safehouse refers to so much more than a place in a crime show and it is not solely for historical reflection. God has made Himself our safehouse. He

is a God of radical hospitality, and He is calling us to imitate Him. He is asking us, the followers of Jesus, to create a safe space, a sanctuary, a place of refreshment for the neglected, the battered, and those who are feeling afraid.

The neighbourhood Agnes and I moved into a year ago is in a location where many families are fractured. Children are often left trying to find something to do. Because our grandchildren visit our house frequently, our home has become a kid-magnet, with many children playing in our yard. We provide drinks, and snacks but more than that, we have become a safe place where these children know they are loved. As we listen to the stories of brokenness and pain, our hearts are stirred to want to bring healing and hope. On July 1, I lit a big bonfire in our backyard and set off some fireworks. We had several neighbourhood kids gather around for the 'big show'. I could not help but feel a deep sense of God's delight as this situation echoed His heart of radical hospitality. I will never forget my daughter, Jessica, as she shared with me how one of the girls looked at her and asked, "Can you give me a hug?" She felt safe and my heart burst with gratitude that God has granted Agnes and I the privilege of becoming a safehouse for these children.

Is your home a safehouse? Is it a place where the afraid, the sad, and the lonely can come, and from the moment they arrive, they relax and are never sorry they knocked? God is a God of radical hospitality, and He is calling us to imitate Him.

I encourage you to take a moment and be still. Ask God who in your life needs you to be a safehouse for them and then reach out and watch as God turns your home into a sanctuary. COVID-19 brought on a season of ever-changing restrictions, isolation, incredible hardships, and challenges for so many. The Spirit of God is longing to expand our hearts and make us people of radical hospitality—intentionally seeking out those around us who have been deeply impacted by COVID-19. This is our opportunity to rise up and show the world that our God is a safehouse for those who put their trust in Him.

Let's get out there and do it!

Is your home a safehouse? Is it a place where the afraid, the sad, and the lonely can come and from the moment they arrive, they relax and are never sorry they knocked?

Global Advance Fund Update

The Global Advance Fund (GAF) covers the costs of sending and supporting international workers. Through the GAF, our workers take the Gospel to places where few or none have heard the name of Jesus.

Year to date (as of July 29, 2021)

Total 2021 Faith Goal	\$14,322,910
YTD Income	\$8,138,946*
Excess/Shortfall	(6,183,964)

*56.82% of total 2021 Faith Goal



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