



## Encouragement: The Key to Caring By Pastor Ken Ediger

At our last Servant Community meeting I asked each table of participants to write five questions that have the same answer, namely "it's encouraging!" Here are some of the questions:

- What is it when your boss says "job well done"?
- Why do people like compliments?
- Why do we fellowship with others?
- Why do we send sympathy cards?
- Why is it good to have small groups?
- Why should I even go to church?
- Why should you answer "yes" when I ask you to help?
- What feeling do you get out of getting together?
- Why is it important for the Care/Compassion Team to send cards?

We then discussed other things that we found encouraging.

Encouragement is important business. It deserves careful attention, not only because the Bible tells us directly to think about it, but also because it represents the unique value of Christian fellowship. Any group of compatible people can enjoy themselves, but Christians can enrich their relationships, knowing they can make an eternal impact on another person.

Expressing encouragement and appreciation is notoriously difficult and therefore must be intentional. Research generally suggests that people require six positive interactions to offset one negative interaction.

I doubt that any of us wants to be a source of discouragement. Yet, if we do not pay careful attention, we can become more pessimistic than optimistic, more discouraging than encouraging. Encouragement is vital for life and for relationships. Encouragement is like a cool breeze on a sweltering summer day. It revives and refreshes. It's like a chilled drink on a parched throat. It renews and gives strength. Encouragement helps you overcome when you feel overwhelmed. It helps you soar rather than sink. It helps you to be a victor rather than a victim. We all hunger and thirst for encouragement. We soak it up when it comes our way. We're always ready for more because that's what gets us through the day.

If encouragement is that important, what can you and I do to make sure we're more encouraging than discouraging, more positive than negative? If encouragement brings hope and strength and growth to people's lives, what can we do to make sure we're more encouraging than discouraging?

(Article continues on page 4)



## SHEEP SHAPE

By Pastor John Wiker



### “Living Life from the Inside Out” ...

William Alexander in his book – *the \$64 Tomato* – asks, “If you were doomed to live the same life over and over again for eternity, would you choose the life you are living now? The question is interesting enough, but I've always thought the point of asking it is really the unspoken, potentially devastating follow-up question. That is, if the answer is no, then why *are* you living the life you are living now? Stop making excuses, and do something about it.” (*William Alexander, The \$64 Tomato (Algonquin Books, 2007), p. 245*)

Recently we looked at what the phrase “*living life from the inside out*” might mean. The desire was to begin a conversation among us about what that means and what it might look like in our individual and collective lives.

Our **worldview** - (*what we believe to be real*)...will form our **beliefs** - (*what is true*)...which then form our **values** - (*what is good or best*)...which then are lived out in our **behavior**.

- The question we need to ask is...what is real?
  - Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going?
- Is there an eternity and if so, what will last for eternity?

I believe this brings us to a “bottom-line” conclusion...either that **God Is** - (He exists – and created everything we see or **God Isn't** - (and thus everything we see is here by random chance). I don't see a “door number three”...and both of these choices are believed by faith.

Good questions to ask then are...what is faith and which view of what is “*real*” is more reasonable to believe?

The Bible says it takes faith to believe that He exists and that we are to approach Him by faith... Hebrews 11:1-3, 6, (NIV), “*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*”

- Dr. Warren Wiersbe does a great job of explaining/defining faith when he says, “*True Bible faith is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.*”

The Bible says God's Creation speaks – clearly and powerfully...

Psalm 19:1-4 (NLT), “*The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or word their voice is never heard. Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world.*”

(Article continues on page 5)



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## Dominican Republic Mission Trip Update

Dear Church Family,

We wanted to give you an update on the preparations for the NOCC Dominican Republic Mission trip that we are preparing for July 8-15. God has called 23 people to join our team. These individuals have been preparing for the trip by building relationships with each other, planning various aspects of the trip, and reading *Foreign to Familiar* by Sara Lanier. A huge blessing to our team is those who are actively helping in preparation but who aren't going on the trip. Ross Wilson, Kim Lanning, and Marty Kraemer are taking care of the finances, Bridget Ballinger is taking care of our flights, and Dot LeClerc is organizing the dress and shorts making project.

Individuals on the team have been working hard to build a support team around them, including prayer partners and financial partners. In future updates we will be sharing some exciting stories about how God has used a variety of ways to help us go on this mission trip. Over half of our team has raised their funds or are getting very close to raising their funds for this trip. Any amount raised above what the team needs will go to bless the people and missionaries in the DR. Currently the team has raised a total of \$30,184 of the \$34,500 needed. If you would like to give to this team, please make checks out to NOCC and put "DR Trip" in the memo line.

We are excited about the opportunity to give clean drinking water to many Dominican families through the water filters that were so generously donated during our Advent Conspiracy offering in December. We are also looking forward to giving the dresses and shorts that are being made by the ladies of our church. As the details of the trip come together, we will be letting you know of any other opportunities for you to donate to help the people in the DR.

Please continue to pray:

- For the team as we prepare
- For the details of the trip to come together
- For the remaining support to be raised and that transportation details will be worked out
- For the families who will be receiving the water filters
- For job concerns and timing for those who are going on the trip

That we may keep God as our focus and keep his glory as our main purpose

Below is a list of those individuals going on the trip. Please lift them up in prayer as well:

David Breeden, Debbie Breeden, Jackie Balzer, Jordan Flaherty, Emma Henry, Kelly Henry, Eriana Holle, Ken Holle, Carolyn Insley, Maddie Keller, Shelly Keller, Travis Keller, Anita Koster, Dan Koster, Paula Martin, Zoe Martin, Jeff Neher, Jessica Neher, Kaleb Neher, Abbey Rupke, Dustin Rupke, Karen Wasinger, Lanee Young

If you have any questions about how you might be able to help with the trip or how to give please contact Lanee Young, Bridget Ballinger, or Jeff Neher.

Thank you for all your support!

Encouragement: The Key to Caring  
(Continued from page 1)

Pastor Rod Cooper describes five qualities of an encourager in a sermon entitled *The Kiss of Encouragement*:

- Encouragers give freely of their resources. If you want to encourage someone, do something tangible for them.
- Encouragers accept you where you are. Encouragers have a wonderful ability to let the past be the past and to start fresh right where you are.
- Encouragers get excited about the progress of others.
- Encouragers meet the current need. The major goal is to meet the need even when you're not the best one to do it. An encourager is never out to make a name for himself, only to glorify the Name.
- Encouragers give others a second chance.

*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.  
(Hebrews 10:25, NIV84)*



**Men's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Retreat---September 9-11, 2011**



We are encouraging all men and their sons to make plans to attend this year's Men's Retreat, September 9-11. The new location this year is Camp Wood YMCA in Elmdale, Kansas which offers a unique view of the Flint Hills. Many activities will be available: low ropes, canoeing, water slide, and much more! (Check out all the many activities at [www.campwood.org](http://www.campwood.org)) Spending time with God, with our sons, and with our brothers in Christ is always rewarding and something to look forward to.

Jack Hager will be our guest speaker. His dynamic personality and authenticity will challenge and inspire us all! You will want to extend an invitation to all men who you know: friends, family, co-workers.

We have received many positive comments about past retreats.

Here is one man's testimony:

*"This is a good opportunity for all fathers and sons to renew their knowledge of the Scriptures in order to have a closer walk with Jesus."*

Please set the date and beginning making plans to attend this memorable and life-changing event.

Submitted by NOCC Men's Ministry Team

*“Living Life from the Inside Out” ... (Continued from page 2)*

The Bible says people cannot say they don't know God, because Creation declares His power and nature...

Romans 1:18-20 (NLT), *“But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.”*

The Bible says God clearly spoke to us through His Son – the Lord Jesus Christ...

Hebrews 11:1-4 (NLT), *“Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.”*

The Bible says Jesus was born, lived, died and rose again...

1 Corinthians 15:3-7 (NLT), *“I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.”*

The Bible says the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis for our “sure hope”...

1 Corinthians 15:12-20 (NLT), *“But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.”*

***If God truly is Real...then what He tells us is ahead and coming...will become a reality.***

- If that is true...would it not be wise to listen and obey – and make our choices in line with our “sure hope”?

In a Dennis the Menace cartoon years ago – Dennis was sitting in his chair facing the corner of a room. He was there because he failed to believe his parents' instructions and was being disciplined. The caption read...*“I may be sitting down on the outside – but I'm standing up on the inside.”* It was humorous, but too often may describe our attitude toward God.

- I encourage us to *live from the inside out*...choosing wisely today by keeping what is coming in view. This is what I believe. What about you? May the conversation continue...

### Youth God Sightings

On April 15-19 a group of 32 students and adults traveled to the Mennonite Brethren National Youth Conference in San Antonio Texas. The group had a wonderful time together learning about and participating in what God is doing in the world and in San Antonio. We were inspired by great worship, challenged by the speakers, and had our eyes opened to the needs of people in the city as well as challenged to look around us to see who we can serve, encourage, and love. Here are a few of the things that students wrote about their time in San Antonio. If you would like to read the rest of what the students and leaders wrote go to [www.northoak.net](http://www.northoak.net) and look for it under the youth ministries tab.

“I am truly blessed to even of had the opportunity to go to a conference like this. But when it impacts your life so dramatically, that makes the trip really worthwhile. Now I hope that what I say and do is more of a reflection of God and not what modern society has told us is right. The quote that impacted me the most was ‘Be the hands and feet of Jesus. Be agents of grace.’ This conference and that quote have given me a completely new outlook on life.” ~**Alex Tuttle**

“The San Antonio conference really taught me about how not to be a ‘normal’ Christian. To me being a Christian is living out your faith through Jesus Christ and really trusting in him. Many of the Christians I know don’t always do that. I see people and how they act at youth group and then I see them act differently at school. I think this is because it’s easy to show your faith and live out Jesus when you’re around other people who do; when it’s comfortable. I also know people who think that the only way to be a Christian is to go to church every Sunday and read your Bible every night. It’s important that we do these things to a certain extent but they are not necessary to be a Christian. I used to always worry that I didn’t read my Bible enough or didn’t go to church enough; but I have come to realize that it isn’t about the stuff we do; it’s about who we are. We always think that we have to ‘do things’ like read the Bible, go to youth group, go on more mission trips, etc. We are so caught up in this ‘do’ theology, if we do more, it’s better. We weren't created to be a human doing; we were created to be a human being. We need to be the Lord's image bearer and live out the word. And I really think God has been trying to show me this all along. Going to this youth conference and listening to the speakers talk about letting Jesus flow through us really showed me that in order to be more of a Christian I need to trust Jesus more and really live out the word. ~**Eryn Johannes**

### **Believe Conference**

In May we took a group of 22 students and leaders to the Believe Conference in Tulsa where we were challenged from the book of Esther to take a stand in our culture and to do what is right in any and every circumstance. It is not always easy to do the right thing when the pressure is on but if we prepare in advance and ask God for strength to stand, we can stand for what is right.

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**NORTH OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

**JUNE 5, 2011 AT 6:00 PM**

**CHILDCARE PROVIDED FOR CHILDREN AGES 10 AND UNDER**

**EVERYONE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ...LIGHT MEAL WILL BE PROVIDED**

## ~ FAMILY ALBUM ~

### BIRTHS:

- Alexa Faith Cooley born to Brandon & Sarah Cooley at HaysMed on February 13 at 8:52pm weighing 6 lbs., 7 oz. and 18 in. long. Grandparents are Keith & Bev Brungardt.
- Reagan Beatrice Staab born to Jason & Laura Staab and big sister, Rachel on March 4 weighing 7 lbs., 4 oz. and 20 in. long.
- Ben & Jayna Hill's baby, Micah Jacob, was born eight weeks early on February 27 weighing 3 lbs, 11oz, 17 in. long. He went home on March 22 with no complications. Welcomed by brothers Josiah and Silas.
- Jakson Ray Sprenkle born to Jake & Melissa Sprenkle at HaysMed on March 27 at 7:15 a.m. weighing 7 lb., 15 oz. and 20 in. long. Grandparents are Ross & Cindi Wilson
- We rejoice with Kris & Anna Beth Marintzer and grandparents Jeff & Jan Vap in the birth of Miles Benjamin. He was born on March 31 weighing 7 lb., 5 oz.
- Congratulations to grandparents John & Evie Wiker and Aunt Sharon in the birth of Lily Sharon Perkins. She was born to Levi & Jenifer Perkins on April 11 in Wichita weighing 6 lbs., 2 oz. and 18 inches long. She is welcomed by big brother, Matthew.
- We rejoice with grandparents Alan & Carolyn States in the birth of Donovan Reid States. He was born to Ryan & Jessica States on May 18 weighing 7 lb., 12 oz. and 20 in. long.

### SYMPATHY:

- We extend sympathy to Chad Maier and family. Chad's father, Tom, passed away February 5.
- Clayton Herbel left this world for a far, far better place on March 6.
- Our condolences to Daryl Beam and family. Daryl's mother died April 2.
- Vicki Shaver and Mary Matzke's mother #2, Gwen, passed away April 15; their father, Rex, passed away the next day.
- Dot LeClerc's dad, Joe Walton passed away May 2.
- Sherrill Weeks' mom, passed away May 24.

### WEDDINGS:

- *We rejoice with Kay Monroe and her family in her marriage to Robert Frank on April 23, 2011. Her address is: 733 N. 6th St.; Sterling, KS 67579*

### CHILD DEDICATIONS:

2/20/11: Pete & Andrea Herrera~~Eleanor Elizabeth Herrera John & Sharon Ross~~Janae Rose Ross

**NEW MEMBERS:** Steven & Dot LeClerc affirmed 4-17-11

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING GRADUATES:

#### 2011 High School Graduates:

Kristin Coen	Diego Gallaway	Micayla Greathouse
Taylor Krom	Danny Mulkey	Ky Scheibler
Andy Schmidtberger	Tony Schmidtberger	Stephanie Shoemaker
Kathryn Sleigh	Brandell Sterling	

#### 2011 COLLEGE GRADUATES:

- Ben Galloway FHSU—B.M. Music Education/B.M. Music Performance
- Mitch Kraemer KU—B.A Environmental Studies & English
- Jenna Rolland FHSU—B.S. Communications & Public Relations
- Kelsey Vine Central Christian—B.A. Theology
- Alyssa Zerfas Johnson Co CC -Assoc. Paralegal
- Jeff Zerfas SE Missouri St U—M.S. Sports Administration
- Kaitlyn Coen KU—Master of Accounting-Tax
- Kimberly Conner FHSU —B.A Modern Languages (Spanish), B.A. History, B.S. Education (Secondary) Minor in Business Admin.
- Elise Crull Notre Dame—PhD Quantum Physics
- David States KSU—B.S. Social Science
- and any others we may have missed!



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**Discover the Rock of Ages  
Gold Rush Vacation Bible School  
North Oak Community Church  
June 13 – 17, 2011  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

In this day and age, it's vital that we teach our children that the Bible is more than just a dusty book of stories. We need to show them God's Word connects to every area of our lives and is as relevant today as it was thousands of years ago, so they will know its amazing message of salvation is true!

With *Gold Rush* VBS, children who have completed kindergarten through 8th grade will learn about our amazing Creator and Savior, Jesus the Messiah! They'll discover His amazing claims about Himself, His astounding power over His creation, His fulfillment of prophecies, and His life-changing love! Register online at <http://answersvbs.com/vbs/nocc/> or on Monday, June 13, at 9:00 a.m. when *Gold Rush* begins at North Oak! If you have any questions, please call North Oak at 785-628-8887 or email [nocc@northoak.net](mailto:nocc@northoak.net).