



The Echoes

December
2009

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS

From the Editor

I realize this issue is dated December 2009 and that most of you have received it after the New Year so an explanation is obviously in order.

There has actually been very little in the way of new information and frankly not enough to justify the expense involved in putting another issue out. Hold on! Yes I've received many e-mails, most of them forwards and many of them interesting, funny and insightful and I've gone back and forth in my mind, as to what should and what should not be the subject of our newsletters.

Frankly some of the information I've received simply is not appropriate for these pages and while I may or may not agree with the content I'm struck with the responsibility of selecting the news of our Fellowship without inserting personal or political views which might be considered offensive by some of our members.

That does not mean we should compromise our message or our goals as a Fellowship; but we are a diverse Fellowship of Independent Ministries and as such must be careful to 'build our relationships' not tare them down through inappropriate words or deeds.

I do appreciate the many calls and e-mails I've received regarding the last issue of The Echoes and the many suggestions for the future. Please understand I will make every effort to be insightful and careful so as not to be offensive in the selection of the materials we print; at considerable cost, I might add! But also realize, I really desire this newsletter to be a reflection of what's happening within the ministries and membership of the Fellowship.

That said I hope you'll enjoy the selections I've decided on for this issue. The next will be a combined issue for January and February and we'll be off and running on schedule for 2010.

NOTE

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CHANGES OF ADDRESS ARE POSTED PROMPTLY SO YOU WON'T MISS A SINGLE ISSUE!

For God So Loved The World That He Gave...

John 3:16, perhaps the most memorized and quoted scripture of all, but I wonder if we've become so educated in the things of the church and steeped in the traditions of men, and simply doing it our way, that we no longer realize this is the sum-total of God's purpose for all mankind. The purpose behind everything He does for us and the plan for His entire creation as revealed within the pages of His Holy Word.

Everything He is, everything He does is all wrapped up in the most precious gift ever given; the gift of eternal life through the miraculous process He chose to bring His very nature into this world, who would then become "sin for us, that we might be made the righteous of God through Him." The very Word of God, made flesh and dwelling among us! God incarnate in the flesh; God in human form.

A miraculous child was born, not of man but of the seed of God: fully human, fully God. He came as a king, but not of earthly estate. He came in obedience to the Heavenly Father in order to fulfill His perfect will. As the Son grew and matured He declared that if we would just look upon Him we would see our Heavenly Father.

No man could have conceived such a plan, no human could have performed it. The darkness of a sin-sick world cannot fully comprehend it, but still the light of the world shines forth cutting through the darkness, burning through the sin-sickness, exposing all that is contrary to the light and the very source of the light; pure holiness, total perfection, sinless beauty, perfect peace, agape love and true life in abundance!

God is not a man that He can lie, therefore all that He is, all that He does, all that He has planned for the object of His affection is good, perfect and true. He has declared that 'we shall know the truth and the truth shall make us free.' Too often we misquote the scripture. In a sense He may in fact 'set us free' which implies a one time act, but the truth is that He 'makes us free' which implies a process of becoming free, yes free indeed!

God is consistent in His nature! He uses processes to set His plans in motion. He spent nearly thirty-four years preparing His Son to die so that His most prized creation could spend eternity in the place He is preparing just for them. He uses the process of growth and maturity through sacrifice, obedience, tribulation (which works patience) and constant instruction as He makes us free. To make, is a creative process! He is the creator, His creations are of perfection. He is incapable of error, He can never make a mistake, therefore we should glory in the process, for perfection is at the end of it!

As we begin yet another year in our Godly personal process, let us be reminded anew that our existence is not about us. It's about Him! Our purpose is not for personal gain, but the advancement of His cause of world-wide evangelism. It's about the proclamation of His Word to a lost and dying world, the winning of souls for the Kingdom of God and the building up of His body not ours. He so loved that He gave! Now we must allow Him to so love through us that His precious gift can be presented to all the world while there is still time. Let this year be the most productive ever for the cause of Christ!

I Give You Me

There was a nine year old boy who lived in a rural town in Tennessee and his house was in a poor area of the community. Within his community there was a church that had a bus ministry that came knocking on his door one afternoon. The Kid came to answer the door and greeted the bus pastor.

The bus pastor asked if his parents were home and the small boy told him that his parents take off every weekend and leave him at home to take care of his little brother. The bus pastor couldn't believe what the boy said and asked him to repeat it. The youngster gave the same answer and the bus pastor asked to come in and talk with him.

“They went into the living room and sat down on an old couch with the foam and springs exposed. Where do you go to church?” he asked. The young boy surprised the visitor by replying, “I’ve never been to church in my whole life.” “Are you sure?” asked the bus pastor. “our church is less than three miles from your house.” “I sure haven’t,” came his answer.

Then the bus pastor said, “well son, more important than going to church, have you ever heard the greatest love story ever told?” Then he proceeded to share the Gospel with this little nine year old boy. The young lad’s heart began to be tenderized and at the end of the story he was asked if he wanted to receive this free gift from God.

The boy exclaimed, “you bet!” They got on their knees and the lad invited Jesus into his little heart and received the free gift of salvation. As they stood up the bus pastor asked if he could pick the boy up for church the next morning. “Sure,” the nine year old replied.

The bus arrived early the next morning but the lights were off. After waking the little boy and his brother they got on the bus and shared a donut for breakfast on their way to church.

The church was a big one, and the little boy had never been to church before so he was clueless as to what was going on. After a few minutes some tall unhappy guys walked down to the front and picked up some wooden plates. One of the men prayed and the boy with utter fascination watched them walk up and down the aisles.

All of a sudden like a bolt of lightning it hit the boy what was taking place, these people must be giving money to Jesus. Immediately he searched his pockets, front and back, but couldn’t find a thing to give Jesus.

By this time the offering plate was being passed down his aisle and with a broken heart he just grabbed the plate and held on. His eyes remained glued on the plate as it was passed back and forth, all the way to the rear of the sanctuary. Then he had an idea.

In front of God and everybody he got up out of his seat and walked back to the usher, grabbing him by the coat and asking to hold the plate one more time. Then he did the most astounding thing He took the plate, sat it on the carpeted floor and stepped into the center of it. As he stood there, he lifted his head up and said, “Jesus, I don’t have anything to give you today, but just me. I give you me!”

Walking in the Light

I was in the Korean war, 1952–1953. I was put on the front line at the midnight hour. It was dark and I could hardly see my hand in front of my face. My heart was heavy.

All at once something hit me on my face; it was snow coming down on that dark night.

The darkness became light! I could see the barbed wire fence that was out in front of my bunker now. If the enemy shows up, I can see him.

I was blessed to make it back to America, the land of the free and the home of the brave. May God always bless the U.S.A.

I was blessed to be able to go to church and confess my sins. God forgave me of all my sins and he wrote my name down in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

In John 8:12 Jesus speaks saying “I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the Light of Life.”

Walking in that light keeps the enemy in my eyesight at all times. I shall always keep him walking away from me because Jesus is the light of my life and always shows me the way.

Rev. Vester Keesee

Awaiting Our Day

The story is told of an old missionary couple returning to the States after many years of thankless service in Africa.

They happened to be on the same ship to New York as President Theodore Roosevelt, who was returning from a big game hunt in Africa.

As the ship pulled past the Statue of Liberty and into the dock, huge crowds were gathered to welcome him home. The press was out in full force, and thousands of people had come to get a glimpse of the president.

In the middle of the chaos, the aged missionary couple fought their way through the crowds with their large suitcases in tow. Silently they hailed a cab and made their way to a cheap hotel.

“It doesn’t seem right. We gave our lives to Christ to win souls for the Kingdom in Africa, and when we arrive home there is no one here to meet us. The president shoots a few animals and receives a royal welcome.”

His wife sat beside him on the bed and said softly, “That’s because we’re not home yet, dear.”

Rumors

Abraham Lincoln’s coffin was pried open twice. The first occasion was in 1887, twenty-two long years after his assassination. Why? Because a rumor was sweeping the country that his coffin was empty.

A second time, fourteen years later, the martyred man’s withered body was viewed again. Why? Rumors of the same nature had again implanted doubts in the public’s mind.

Finally officials felt the rumors should be laid to rest along with the Civil War president. Finally it was permanently embedded in a crypt at Springfield.

“Cruel!” Rumors are like that. Lacking authoritative facts and direct sources, information is loosely disseminated, creating unrest and harm. It is pandered by busybodies who cater to the sick appetite in petty people.

They find satisfaction in trafficking in poorly-lit alleys, dropping subtle bombs that explode in others’ minds by lighting the fuse of suggestion. They find comfort in being only an innocent channel of the unsure information...never the source.

Shakespeare did a super job of portraying the truth about rumors in King Henry IV. “Rumor is a pipe blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures, and of so easy and so plain a stop, that the blunt monster with uncounted heads, the still-discordant wavering multitude can play upon it.”

And oh how certain Christians can play the pipe! The sour melodies penetrate many a phone conversation, or mealtime discussion, or after-church ‘fellowship times’, or a leisurely evening with friends.

The tongue is capable of prying open more caskets, exposing more skeletons in the closet, and stirring up more choking, scandalous dust than any other tool on earth. (Charles R. Swindoll)

Surely we don’t have time for such nonsense? Surely we can make better use of the precious time the Lord has given us to live our lives in His service!

Editor

The Echoes

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A.R.M.Y. GEAR

We now have new T-shirts for the National youth Department or rather FGCI ARMY. They are called our new ARMY GEAR. The shirts are \$15.00 each and you can contact Sis. Liz Major to order them. One style of the T-shirt is camo and comes in three colors green camo, black camo, and pink camo for the ladies. These shirts have our new logo on it.



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New Members, Churches & Advancements

Arkansas:

Rev. Kendall Blaine Rensink, Ord.
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Grace Covenant Church

Super Trivia

In the 1400's a law was set forth in England that a man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Hence we have 'the rule of thumb.'

Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled Gentlemen only...Ladies Forbidden...and thus, the word GOLF entered into the English language.

Men can read smaller print than women can; women can hear better.

It is impossible to lick your elbow!

The percentage of Africa that is wilderness: 28% - The percentage of North America that is wilderness: 38%

The cost of raising a medium size dog to the age of eleven: \$16,400

Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.

The first novel ever written on a typewriter, Tom Sawyer.

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died because of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

Only two people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, John Hancock and Charles Thomson. Most of the rest signed on August 2nd, but the last signature wasn't added until five years later.

At least 75% of people who read this will try to lick their elbow

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE!

I just spent the last three and one half hours going through a ridiculous number of returned Echoes, a number of which have no forwarding address.

Now I realize we are all busy, consumed with the affairs of life and that's as it should be. However, if the interest is there to be a member of our Fellowship, and there's a desire to be informed then you'd think folks would at least keep the head office apprised of address changes.

Those changes that come through me have to be forwarded to Donna in the head office. The changes that come through her have to be sent to my office.

Her list is by State in alphabetical order. My list is by zip code. One change effects all twenty-two pages of my list which then has to be set up again for printing labels.

Unless you've been involved you have no idea what Donna and I go through to keep things in order, (Donna much more than I).

That said, I'm enjoying the challenge and hopefully you'll be appreciative of the changes we've made and the efforts advanced to keep you informed.

While I'm on the subject and still have room to rant; let me share my feelings with you regarding e-mail forwards. Many are really good, many are not! I'm thankful to all of you who have taken the time to forward materials you thought important. Please don't be offended but I'd rather hear about what is going on in your life and ministry! Once again let me share with you my vision for The Echoes.

Information about members; thoughts about individual ministries; things you're doing in your local church or your State Fellowship that are working or perhaps not working!

Together we can make this the best most informative and instructional newsletter we've ever had. It's our Fellowship! Together we stand, together we advance against the enemy of our soul! Together we are a growing army, a powerful force for the Truth of His Word!

A Christmas Poem

We have a list of folks we know all written in a book,
And every year at Christmas time we go to take a look'
And that is when we realize that these names are all a part;
Not of the book they're written in but of our very heart.

For each name stands for someone who has crossed our path sometime;
And in that meeting they've become the rhythm in each rhyme.
And while it sounds fantastic for us to make this claim,
We really feel that we're composed of each remembered name.

And while you may not be aware of any special link,
Just meeting you has changed our lives a lot more than you think.

So never think our Christmas cards are just a mere routine,
Of names upon a Christmas list forgotten-in-between.
For when we send a Christmas card that is addressed to you,
It's because your on the list of folks that we're indebted to.

For your one part, of a total of many folks we've met,
And you happen to be one of whom we prefer not to forget.
And whether we have know you for many years or a few,
In some ways you've been a part of shaping things we do.

And every year when Christmas cards come we realize anew,
The best gift that life can offer in meeting folks like you!
So may that wondrous Christmas spirit that is timeless and endures,
Leave it's very richest blessing in the hearts of you and yours.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

**Are you planning on moving? Please notify us of your new address:
E-mail us at: theechoes@mjwc777.com**

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