western michigan teen challenge

440 Pontaluna Road, Muskegon, MI 49444 231-798-7927

September 2008

dear saints,

We Christians are waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe, according to Bible prophecy that He is coming very soon. Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3). **Jesus wants us to be with Him where He is, and He will soon come for us**. We are pilgrims and strangers on earth, our true citizenship is in heaven. Earthly things and heaven are quite different. Material things are earthly, transitional and temporal. Heaven is the world of realities, things eternal that cannot fade away, be corrupted or defiled. (1 Pet. 1:4)

1 John 2:17 says, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." One day this earth will go into giant convulsions, the heavens will pass away with a great noise, the elements will melt with fervent heat, "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). But our eternal home will never be removed or shaken (Heb. 12:27).

As pilgrims, we Christians are daily traveling toward our heavenly home, the heavenly Jerusalem, the "city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). **While earth's trials, burdens and difficulties try to distract and hinder us, we continue to look toward heaven. We stay focused on the eternal**. Paul said in Rom. 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Saints, we're not quite home yet. But when we get there and see Jesus, we will say, "Surely, it has been worth it all!" Let me remind you, "…our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20, NKJV). And all of us say along with John the Revelator, "Even so, come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). Amen.

graduates

ROBERT BELL

DERRICK LYONS

GERALD COMER

JEFFERY JOHNSON

JERAD TABER

PATRICK ALBER

ANNUAL BIKE-A-THON

I want to thank all riders for their participation and thank those who supported the Bike-a-thon financially. It was a great day of exercise, fellowship, fun, and prizes.

First Place Winner:
Dawn Detra
Second Place Winner:
Rob TerVeer
Third Place Winner:
Rachel Losch

UPCOMING BANQUETS

Grand Rapids
September 18 at 7:00 pm
Grand Rapids First Assembly of God
2100 44th Street SW

Muskegon
September 25 at 7:00 pm
Maranatha Bible Conference Grounds
4759 Lake Harbor Road

Holland Christmas Banquet
(Unique/Different)
December 4 at 7:00 pm
Beechwood Reformed Church
895 Ottawa Beach Road

We invite you to attend one of these banquets and perhaps host a table of eight or more. It will be an evening of good food, fellowship, wonderful student testimonies, and inspiring music. Contact Sheryl at 231.798.7927 to reserve your place.

student testimony

My name is Theresa, I'm 42 years old from Knoxville, Tennessee. I've been at Teen Challenge almost ten months. My parents were divorced when I was five years old. My mom began to drink as a result, beginning a succession of men in the home. I was physically and sexually abused during this time. My dad obtained custody when I was nine years old. Even though my environment changed, I still had the emotional baggage - feelings of shame, guilt, rejection, being damaged. I grew up thinking that if I obtained the things of the world; house, car, jewelry, etc., it would make the pain go away. I graduated three trade schools and studied psychology for two years in college. The more things I acquired, the more I needed. It began to lose its appeal. In 1993, my sister died and I chose crack cocaine as a way of numbing the pain. Little did I know, it was the beginning of a 14 year battle of addiction. In and out of rehabs, I lost everything and destroyed all my family relationships, the worst being my dad's. I turned his little girl into a prostitute, liar, thief, manipulator and schemer. My dad couldn't even look at me. To see the disappointment and disgust in his eyes was unbearable. October 9, 2007, I decided to kill myself. This was to be the fourth and final attempt on my life. As I was waiting for the right moment, I was flicking the remote and came across a Christian station. The man asked for people to bow their heads and repeat after him. I did. It was the sinner's prayer. I was being saved and didn't even know it. Afterwards, I just cried to God out of sheer desperation. At that time, nothing happened and I figured even God didn't want me. Two hours later, there was a knock at the door. A friend I used to party with had graduated from Teen Challenge and said the Lord put me on their heart. God heard me. He answered my prayers! My friend shared scripture with me, and I knew I was saved beyond a doubt. My life has truly changed since coming to Teen Challenge. I have a relationship with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He has taught me to forgive, even the men who hurt me. I pray for their salvation and hope to see them in heaven. I used to dislike being touched. Now I hug everyone. God has restored my relationship with my dad. I don't feel damaged anymore. I am God's child and I know I am forgiven. I am weak in the knees, googly-eyed, head over heels in love with Jesus. Phil. 3:13, "…forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth towards those things which are ahead."

The Teen Challenge center is full of testimonies just like this. There are ongoing life changes daily. Our Lord is truly a miracle worker. Here at Teen Challenge we see II Cor. 5:17 continually come to pass, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Thank God there is hope beyond this life. Paul said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19). Thank God there is a resurrection of the dead, and a home for us eternal in the heavens. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:17-18). We saints see the invisible, and with faith, patience and joy, pursue it. We are soon to complete our journey. Hallelujah!

Now, thanks be unto God for all He is doing in the lives of these beautiful people in the program. I know their lives were shattered, broken and messed up. But today, they are beautiful. Your prayers and financial support are making a difference. Thank you for your help. Michelle and I love you dearly.

Serving Christ gladly,
Phil & Michelle McClain

Phil & Michelle McClain