Outreach Center Network News Letter

April 2016

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### A post Easter Devotion

The disciples were together in the evening, that first Easter, behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. They were talking over the events of the last week and in particular that day. There was the trial, beating, cross, and death of Jesus. Then the morning’s events of the women's story of the empty tomb and sighting of Jesus.

Without warning or the opening of the doors, Jesus comes and stands in the midst of them. The disciples thought he was a ghost. Finally they believe that he is truly the risen Jesus.

One of the 12 disciples was not there that night, Thomas. The disciples Told Thomas their experience. Thomas doesn’t believe them. He doesn't want words. He wants physical evidence. He wants to put his finger in the nail marks of Jesus’ hands.

One week later Jesus comes and invites Thomas to touch him and have his evidence. Jesus loved Thomas and wanted him to trust in him.

That is our God. He does what is necessary to help us, forgive us, save us. Jesus comes to us, even when we doubt or have fear. Jesus comes through closed locked doors of our heart. He gives us tangible evidence of his presence, love and forgiveness. The real question is “will we believe the evidence?”

We sometimes call Thomas “doubting Thomas” because of this. It is true that he doubted, but which one of us hasn't doubted God and his promises and his Word in our life? It occurred to me that we may call Thomas a doubter, but we can’t call him a coward. After all, he did not stay behind locked doors like most of the disciples.

Thomas did not believe the other disciples. "If Jesus was alive, why are you all hiding behind locked doors?" He might have thought.

The problem was not Thomas, he was out and about. Yes he doubted but the disciples were the cowards. Thomas just needed the experience of the risen Lord.

Jesus says, "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed."

For many Christianity, and the idea of a risen Jesus, is not believable. This is because of our witness, our life and the way we live.Stop and think about it for a minute. Do we live our lives behind locked doors? Are we living like we believe Jesus is risen? Yes, sometimes we do. And when we do not, Jesus again comes to us through his Word to forgive and assure us.

This month, consider ways that you might live that will give a strong witness to a risen Jesus. After all, the people around us need the experience of the risen Lord.

Pastor Dave

### This Month’s Focus the past few months we have considered how a center was established with five core values. A core value is something absolutely necessary to survive. For human life some core values are to eat food, drink water and breathe.

We have looked at the first four core values:

1. Show human care and compassion;

2. Keep every promise you make;

3. Develop leaders who develop leaders.

4. Give birth to a daughter ministry.

This month we look at the fifth and last core value:

“Don’t forget the National Office”.

This core value was given for two reasons. First the national office of LBM helped open other outreach centers. To open a center there was and is financial costs. There was and is some ongoing costs even in today’s networking of centers. When an outreach center can financially help another center get started they are sharing kindness and compassion with other people who are blind.

This work of opening, networking, training and supporting outreach centers is now done by NAIMB.

This leads to the second reason for this core value. Giving to the Lord, giving to His work is something everyone can and should be doing. Why? Two reasons. First it is our way of acknowledging and thanking God.

Second it is expected by God. Jesus has been generous with us and wants us also to give.

 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV) Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

In Mark Chapter 12 Jesus acknowledged the very small gift of a widow. It was a large gift because it was given in faith. Mark 12:42-44.

Consider what your outreach center might give and to whom. Pray and know God will bless it.

Pastor Dave

### Notes from Centers

This past month I visited the Toledo Blind Outreach Center. It started in May of 2002. It meets at Saint Philip Lutheran Church. In some ways the church was not a good location. It is in a part of town that is older and a bit rough. The building has many steps and narrow halls.

It is a perfect place to meet however, because of the commitment and care of the church members and community for people who are blind. These dedicated volunteers were even able to raise funds to build a ramp, making it easier to come into and out of the building.

On average they have 45 people who are blind. This does not count the sighted drivers or servers. On average they connect with and have in attendance 1 to 2 new people a month.

The first week of this month I traveled there to provide advanced training for the blind and sighted leaders. We looked at what was being done well; not well; what was stopping plans from being carried out; what are some new goals for the next few years to come.

We also talked about reaching and recruiting new volunteers.

If your center could benefit from some advance training like this, please contact me.

Pastor Dave

### Audio Bible Study Options

At your next outreach center meeting you might want to ask who has a computer, Victor stream or smart phone. With any of these electronic forms an audio weekly Bible study and devotion can be received from this ministry; Not Alone Internet Ministry for the Blind.

The devotion is called “Week in Reflection”. It connects an event, or life circumstance of a blind person to the Word of God: 6 to 8 minutes long.

The audio Bible study is also done by myself but includes Cecilia Lee, a former outreach center blind leader. Again, we relate the Word of God to the life of a blind person. The Bible study is called Room 4216: 25 to 30 minutes long.

In the upcoming lessons we are considering the Ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Dave

### Final Thoughts

In upcoming issues we can and will look at many of the same topics as well as others. If you have questions, thoughts or suggestions, please post them on the blind ministry email list.

Pastor Dave