

# THE COMPASS

## Death Hike with Jesus

Pastor Joe Johnson

Have you ever been on a death hike? That's what my brother calls hiking with me. It's when you are going without a trail and usually up a mountain. On these hikes you'll find yourself using your hands as much as your feet. What with the rock slides, the brush, the massive inclines and no idea when, or if, you'll make it to the top...now that's hiking! But you know what's even worse than a death hike? It's a death hike with 90 pounds of gear on your back!!!

Any walk becomes a hike when you have to carry a heavy backpack. Ask an Army Ranger, a SWAT team member or just a person having to carry a ton of gear into the back country. All the sudden, turning that ankle is the norm not an occasional accident. In fact carrying such weight slows you down, makes you expend a lot more energy and can cause you to fall. So how much are you carrying in life?

Sometimes my life feels like a death hike! I mean I'm trying to get to the top, but it seems like I have to claw for every inch of progress. There's no trail. I'm not sure when I'm getting to or if I will get to the top. And if that's not bad enough, I've got tons of things I'm trying to carry with me. I've got guilt from past failures. In one big pocket I've got my fears and they're heavy. Doubt is clamped on, my reason is telling me to stop and of course I've got a rucksack of worry on behind. And there's more! There are of course my pet sins that are stowed away and no matter how many times I re-organize, they always seem to end up back in the pack! And then there are the things I don't even know I'm carrying, the sins I don't see, the hidden burdens of the heart. So what's the answer? How do I climb this mountain? How do I move forward?

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### ISSUE 1, VOLUME 9

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## Learning To Accept God's Plan by Hilarie Johnson

When I graduated from the University of Minnesota in May, I thought that meant my years of learning were finally complete, right? God has used the months following graduation to show me I have many more lessons to learn- only most of these lessons have taken place outside of the classroom.

There is a saying that goes, "if you want to make God

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laugh, tell him your plans." Over the past few months, God must have been laughing quite a bit; many of the plans I had made for my life have not come to fruition. But driving across the country in July with all of my possessions in my 1990 Toyota Camry, to a city where I could count the people I knew on a single hand, has taught me the value of trusting in the Lord. Jeremiah 29:11 reminds me, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" True to his word, soon after my move to San Diego, CA, God provided me with a full-time job as a pharmacy technician. While I am still uncertain what career path God has in mind, I am growing increasingly more comfortable putting my future in the hands of one who know the way.

As God continues to allow struggles in my life, He also gives me the tools to persevere. While challenges at work dishearten me, I remain positive knowing Christ has chosen me to be one of his own. God has led me to Ascension Lutheran Church in Escondido, CA, where I look forward to being refreshed in church on Sunday and Bible class during the week, where its welcoming members encourage me to fight the good fight of faith. In a new city, physically hundreds of miles from family and friends, God has provided me with a support system of true friends and thoughtful family to give me wise, Christian advice when I need it most. God has also used many of the curve balls adulthood can throw, i.e. health and car insurance, car repairs, banking, etc, to exhibit the power of prayer.

For most students, school is back in session, and while I don't have any midterms looming, I have realized that learning is a life-long experience. As I move forward, one day at a time, I continue to learn more about myself, my future, and my relationship with my Savior as the Lord slowly but surely unveils it to me. Though my Five-year plan has undergone some changes since graduation, I take heart in knowing God is in control of my life no matter where my car may take me. While there are more variables than certainties in my life's equation presently, I can remain joyful because "God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28.

## Every Week @ True North

### Evening Praise

#### Sundays - 7pm Evening Praise

At Coffman Memorial Union;  
The President's Room 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

### Weekly Bible Studies

To Be Announced

There will be 2-3 studies weekly.  
Watch for the evenings, times, &  
locations on-line.



*Fun & Fellowship Events &  
Details Online!*

**WWW.TRUENORTHWELS.ORG**



### Office Hours

In the Dinkydome and at Coffman  
Mondays-Fridays 9am-4pm

*Call to find out where Pastor Johnson will be.  
Cell # 612-597-7998*

### For a WELS Campus Ministry near you:

Contact Karen Marshall at 414-256-3279

or e-mail her at

*Karen.Marshall@sab.wels.net*

Or Access the church locator at

WWW.WELS.NET

## New Location, New Challenges, New Opportunities

There are a lot of changes this year at True North. Sunday worship is now held at 7PM, instead of 11 AM. We have also moved worship services about a half mile from Dinkytown to the President's Room in Coffman Memorial Student Union. The implications of this change are many; with no permanent meeting place, we have to bring in everything we use each week. That means no hymnal racks, no drum set, no permanent place for rehearsals and meetings, and all food has to be pre-approved by the staff at Coffman. While these are significant challenges, we see them as an opportunity to be more creative and to change up our worship format for the better.

Not all the changes are hurdles to overcome. The location at Coffman is more central to campus. Both this and the new time will likely be more accessible to a wider array of students. Further, Coffman Union is more of a public location, so there are great opportunities to bring in many new faces through outreach.

The musical situation allows our members to use their gifts more in worship, whether it be through playing piano with the hymns, strumming along on an acoustic guitar, leading singing in a small choir, or leading singing with a

wind instrument. The lack of hymnals turns into a blessing; by printing out all of the songs in the bulletins, it is easier for non-WELS people to join in the service without having to navigate tricky page turns. By leaving the doors to the President's room open during worship, we are inviting anyone to join us, another great outreach tool.

While the transition this year comes with its challenges, these are actually strengths that will help us to spread God's Word to more people and live our faith in a more public setting. May God bless us as we strive to use this new opportunity to reach more people on the University of Minnesota campus.

*Joe Jakubowski is our student Worship Coordinator. A music major who's been doing a great job organizing the numerous musicians True North has been blessed with this year.*



### Death Hike - Continued from page 1

I have to thank my two year old for the answer. We were on a hike just this summer that I'm sure felt to him like a "death hike." So what did he do? He put his little feet down firmly and positioned himself right in front of me—his arms on my legs. Then he looked up at me, arms raised high, and said one word, "UP!" It worked. I picked him up and carried him the rest of the way, he even took a nap on the hike and seemed to enjoy himself immensely.

The key to life is not how strong you are, or how much you are even carrying...it's who you're with. Jesus can make the worst death hike into a joyful experience. He did it in Jerusalem. There he was on a death hike for us, right up to the cross. He carried our sins and all the evil and garbage of humanity that we simply couldn't carry. He died with them on his back. But what did he do? He turned that horrible day, that death, into beauty. When he rose from the dead he proclaimed victory and life

and changed the sorrow and the blood to light and life. And he can do the same in our lives. So quit trying to do everything yourself and on your own! Stop. Look at the Lord Jesus, put your arms up and say "Up!"

Look at how God was with the people of Israel on their own death hike.

*"They committed outrageous sins. But because of your endless compassion, you didn't abandon them in the desert. The column of smoke didn't leave them during the day, but it lead them on their way. The column of fire didn't leave them during the night, but it gave them light to see the way they should go. You gave your good Spirit to teach them. You didn't keep your manna to yourself. You gave them water to quench their thirst. You provided for them in the desert for 40 years, and they had everything they needed." Nehemiah 9:18-21*

# MY LIFE HAS VALUE.

Is the value of human life dependent on what you can do? Wouldn't that be scary! What if the value of life was set at what you could do for the government or economy? How much would you be worth? And who would decide? Does human life have any intrinsic value apart from human judgment?

Whether you are in a wheel chair or deaf, rich or poor, young or old, of any race your life is of inestimable value. This value is there whether the government or society values you or not. It's there whether your parents, family or friends value you or not. This value quite simply cannot be taken away and the more this value is recognized by society, governments and people the better it will be. But where does this value come from?

Jesus said, "God so loved the world." The Bible gives several reasons why human life has value but Jesus puts his finger on the heart of the matter. God values every life and that value is linked to God's love. In fact this love is the basis for why Jesus told people to even love their enemies. Try today to look at people and see them the way God does. Then make some time to look into Jesus and see how this love of God is expressed and put into action.

"Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

--Jesus

## LIFE MATTERS.

*True North gives permission to re-use our articles in additional church publications.*

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*Partially funded by  
Lutheran Institutional Ministry Association*

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