

# Teen Challenge Update

Colfax Training Center

September, 2010

## Destruction to Redemption

I was born in Congo Zaire, and by the grace of God, I was able to come here to Teen Challenge of the Midlands. My family and I came to the USA on July 27, 1999. Before I go any further, I'll give you a little background history.

I am the eighth child out of eleven. My parents were, and are, very good parents. They provided for us, and gave us everything we needed. However, they were very busy, so we had freedom to do whatever we wanted. My mother is a pastor, so I always knew about God, but I didn't know Him personally.



Nate with his Father and Mother

The reason we left the Congo was because my father was a businessman who received death threats because he was forced to close down a company with seven hundred employees. Out of fear and safety for his family, he decided to leave the Congo. With nowhere else to go, we went to Benin, which is in West Africa. Life was very hard there. The lowest point for my family was having to stay in a refugee camp for three years. Life was really, really hard there, but my mother always had faith that we would get out. One day the opportunity came to apply for visas for the USA. People didn't think that my family was going to get approved because there were so many of us. However, God is great! Out of eight hundred people in the camp at that time, only twenty were allowed to leave, and my family was among the twenty! Praise

God! It was good news, but also sad because not everyone was able to come. My three sisters are still there today. They couldn't come because they were married, but we keep praying and believing that God will open the door for them.

When my family arrived in the states, I was fourteen years old, and the oldest child at home. We started school, learned English, and life was okay again. Times were hard though, and my parents both had to work to make ends meet. Since I was the oldest at home, I did what I wanted. We lived in Portland, Maine at the time. I played soccer in high school, and that

is when all my trouble began. I started hanging out with the wrong crowd, and going to parties after home games. I speak French, so girls liked my accent. I didn't know that all the fun I thought I was having, would lead to destruction.

During summer break, I started using drugs, and I thought I was on top of the world. I hated my parents for telling me the truth, and I started listening to my friends more and more, and began drinking heavily. After soccer ended, I started doing x heavy, and tried to make money on other drugs. Life was boring to me, and I sunk into depression because my family was no longer supporting me. I went to jail for 9 months for a crime that I committed while under the influence of drugs. Although my family no longer support-

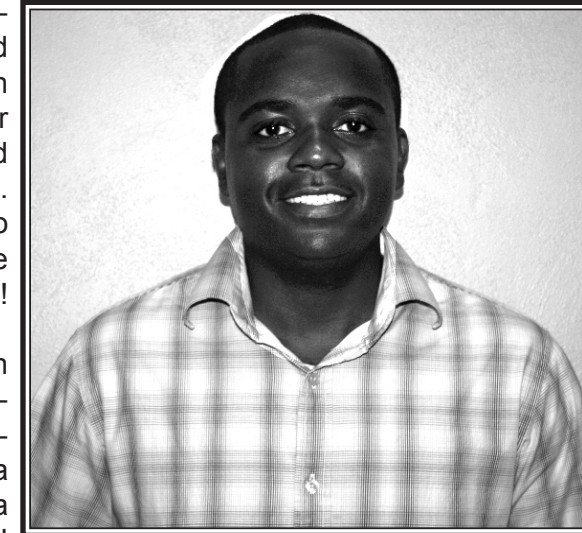
## Set Free: A Testimony of God's Saving Grace

ed me, my mother came to visit me in jail. She told me that she was praying for me, that I needed to stop using drugs, and to get my life together. I promised her that I would when I got out. After being released from jail, I tried to fix my life on my own; without God. That didn't last long. I was getting worse and worse. My inner pain was crippling, and I started experimenting with cocaine. My mother never gave up hope for me, and she continued to pray for me. There is power in prayer. No matter how long you have been praying, God hears us!

I continued living my life in my own strength. In December, 2007, I was on probation when my mom heard a call from the Lord to start a church in Coralville, Iowa. I stayed in Maine with my father until a year later when he decided to come to Iowa also. On February 6, 2008, I moved to Iowa with my father. I had every intention of doing well once I got to Iowa. I had a good job, was saving money, attending church, and got my license back. Everything was going along smoothly. However, I still did not have a personal relationship with God. I knew all about the Bible, but deep inside I was hurting because I was doing it all on my own. In Matthew 11:28, it says, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." I didn't turn to God though. Instead, I started making more money and feeling more freedom. I thought God would keep me safe because I was giving ten percent to Him every week.

My addiction continued. I lost my license again, was hanging with the wrong crowd, and my criminal life started back up. Because I was a pastor's kid, people started judging my parents because of me. It was hard on them, so I decided to move out. I even managed to go to Kirkwood Community College for Culinary Arts, but continued to use my money for drugs, and my addiction with women. I was sitting in my room when my older brother

called me. I hadn't talked to him in five years, and I hated him for no reason. He called to tell me about Teen Challenge. As he was talking, I knew at that moment that it was something I had to do. Why else would he call me out of the blue after five years? I knew God was calling me, so I made the decision to come.



Nathaniel, Colfax, Iowa Student

The first thing about Teen Challenge that really got my attention was the love that was shown me. People went out of their way to tell me the truth, and they wanted the best for me. These people didn't even know me, but they cared for me.

One verse that amazes me is Matthew 13:14, "You will be ever hearing, but never understanding; you will be ever seeing, but never per-

ceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes." I didn't see the destruction that I was causing by selling drugs. Before, I knew about Him, but now I am living for Him, and the Holy Spirit teaches me something new every day. Now that I am here at Teen Challenge, my life has changed. I hear God's voice, and He is calling me into ministry. I have to help others see the truth. My future is looking great because He is leading me. I've picked up my cross and I'm following Him until the day that I die. Now, like Philippians 3:13-14 says, "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call in Christ Jesus." I totally understand that it will not always be easy. The devil will try me in every way that He can, but I must always hang on, and that's why I must always have that connection of communication with the Lord; every day, every second. I'm so excited for what the Lord has for me. God bless you.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

You can reach our Admissions Director by email at: [i.hunsberger@tcmid.org](mailto:i.hunsberger@tcmid.org)  
Visit our website at: [www.tcmid.org](http://www.tcmid.org)

You can reach our other Midlands centers at:

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Pella, IA  
50219-1828  
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