

A Free Will Baptist Magazine for Women

CoLaborer

**Remove Your Mask
Time to Be a Friend
The Miracle Came**

Jan • Feb
2002

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS



Sarah Fletcher

Volume 42

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JAN • FEB 2002

The Right Questions

In the hours of aftermath coverage, a newsperson grilled the architect with senseless, incriminating questions about the World Trade Center. Had he foreseen such a demise? Could better workmanship on his part have prevented this disaster? The architect, solemn yet calm, replied, "No one has asked the right question. The question should not be why the building fell, but rather, how did it stand?"

The architect went on to explain that unlike most skyscrapers, which would have crumbled within minutes, the unique design and craftsmanship of these towers permitted them to stand for a while, creating a window of time for escape. Though countless lives were lost, thankfully, other lives were spared.

In the midst of trials, pain, grief, uncertainty, and national tragedy, are we asking the right questions?

- How did this happen?
- Why does evil affect the innocent?
- How could a loving God allow this?

These are probing questions, but are they the right ones? Rather than questioning the authority of God, let us instead examine our willingness to submit to God's authority. Will we allow God to humble us as individuals, as churches, as a nation, in order that His purposes may be fulfilled?

Daniel 4 records the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar. God allowed this prideful, ruthless ruler to claw and graze the fields until he came to reason. With fresh humility he declared his nothingness compared to God's greatness. Nebuchadnezzar realized that God's will would be accomplished without his input. It is not man's place to question God's plan. Grappling in the grass, Nebuchadnezzar had understood. This prompted him to acknowledge, honor, and praise the God who is in control.

Ask the right questions. Not, "What have you done, God?" but rather, "God, what are You doing?" "What are You calling me to do?"

In such a time as this, is God urging you to be a friend to those who are asking questions? Is he calling you to examine your own motives—to shed the mask of hypocrisy? We who claim the firm foundation must not crumble with the fallen. We must ever praise and proclaim the name of our marvelous God who causes us to stand.

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motivation for
service?*

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*Get on your nerves?
Get on your knees.*

Change Points

COVER ART: Janis Williams

PHOTOS: p. 4—Melody Hood,
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*Except where otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version.



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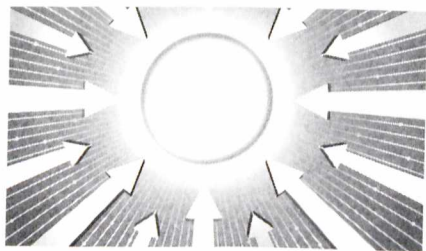
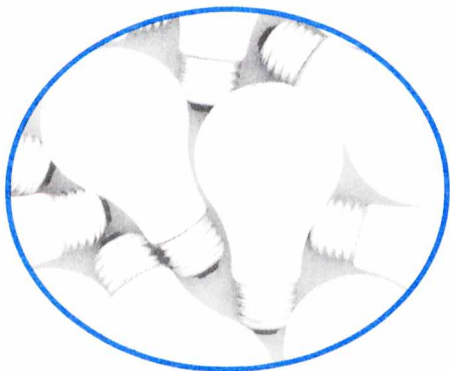
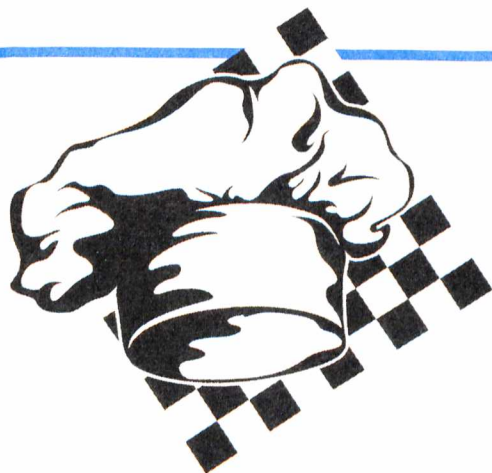
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STAFF

Executive Editor: Marjorie Workman

Editor: Sarah Fletcher

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God Began to Cry

He watched them as they arose that morning, and knelt to the wall to pray.
The words that they were speaking were not directed to Him that day.
They asked for strength and courage to undertake the task at hand.
They planned to bring about death and carnage to many innocent men.

*God shook his head and mourned the fact that these were His creation.
He had made them in His image, but not for such degradation.
He watched but would not stop them, for free will was theirs to choose.
He knew that all that lay ahead was pain, so much to lose.*

Across the city, to the west, another rose that morning.
As she dressed and planned her day, she prayed for grace not knowing,
That before the day was over, in His presence she would stand.
Sent to God before her time by misdirected hands.

*He left early in the morning; his son needed him at school.
A play, a meeting with the teacher, all a part of the rules.
His mind went to the others already at their desks,
Because of his delay today, his desk would be a mess.*

They stood around the coffeepot, discussing the day ahead.
One of them had pictures from the day that she was wed.
The "ooing" and the "ahhing" soon gave way to much ado.
They slowly walked away, resigned with sighs of work to do.

*Another rose and kissed his wife as out the door he ran.
He was running late to catch a plane, so many miles to span.
He hurried as he thought ahead to the trip that he was taking
He waited at the airport and scanned the points he would be making.*

She dropped the kids at the daycare door, with lots of hugs and kisses.
Her job demanded her best effort against all her other wishes.
She took the elevator up and up to the very top of the building.
She stood and watched the sun come up, thanked God for what He'd given.

*In another state a callous man stepped into an airport building.
He'd come to bring destruction today; to give his life was willing.
He looked around at all the people, scarcely knowing and unfeeling.
Before the day was over this nation would be reeling.*

He walked the hallway to the plane, and boarded without stopping,
The man who sat beside him was up and felt like talking.
He turned away and looked out of the window on the tarmac.
He felt the weapon in his pocket and willed the plane to start up.

*The airplane now was in the air, destination by most unknown.
The flight crew laughed and joked around, a wonderful future shown.
If the doomed had known what lay ahead, some would have asked them, "Why?"
Far in the heavens up above, God began to cry.*

—Beverly Brantley

Did God cry?

We cannot

know. Jesus

wept over

Jerusalem.

Hebrews tells

us He is

touched with

the feeling of

our infirmities.

Beverly Brantley, Plant City, Florida, is a recent winner in the articles category of the Creative Writing Contest. This poem was written September 14, 2001. She states, "I would love to put my arms around the hurting and try to comfort them, but I cannot. They are not alone in their sorrow. God also feels the pain."

Remove Your Mask

BE REAL

BY DIANNE SARGENT

The party gyrates in full swing as the noise and excitement spiral higher and higher. The hands of the clock creep toward midnight. This will be the cue, the time when everyone will finally know the true identity of the other costumed and masked guests. The clock strikes midnight and masks drop amid squeals of delight and sighs of recognition. What fun to discover a friend hiding behind some purchased costume glittering with sequins and rhinestones!

But sometimes, an individual lowers the mask to find only an acquaintance, a casual friend, or maybe even a total stranger. As the last strike of the clock dies away into the night, the air of excitement wanes and the party guests quietly make their way home.

When a person takes that fateful step from behind the mask, somewhere a clock strikes midnight and reality moves onto the horizon. A party dress does little to hide the hurt and misery that looks out from where the mask used to be. Exposed for all to see, she wonders what ever made her decide to take such a chance. Was it a longing to experience life once again? Was it the

anticipation of the startled looks on the faces of her family and friends that so intrigued her? Or was it simply a desire to be genuine? As long as she wore her mask, her family and friends saw only that part of her that she wanted them to see. But, now, the world can intrude. She has opened the door to her hiding place. She has removed her mask.

We Christians often look at our lives and commitment to Jesus Christ, and smugly assume that we have it all together. No fancy party dresses or costumes in our closets, we wouldn't be caught dead wearing one of those silly masks! Or would we? Perhaps we should take a closer look.

Time is running out as the clock winds down to chime its final toll. The world wants to look within us and see what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. People want to know what it takes to love our fellowman more than we love ourselves. Do the things we teach really work? Can people change just by practicing the teachings of a poor, itinerant preacher? Is there really a God—a God who cares about us? If we are to convince our family and friends that Jesus Christ is the way to eternal life, then it's time we shed our costumes and step out from behind our masks. It's time to get real.





GET REAL WITH OURSELVES

At no other time in our lives are we more innocent or dependent on someone else's care than at birth. As we grow into childhood and then into adolescence, some of that innocence disappears and tarnishes as we experience new freedoms and a growing independence. We no longer need anyone to watch over us, particularly to tell us everything to do. But, this independence soon leads to new and different territories and the tarnish of adolescence changes into the blight of adulthood.

How are we going to handle the fall out from the mistakes and wrong decisions we have made? Just where are we going to put all the pain and hurt that boils almost uncontrollably inside of us? Deep down inside the recesses of our heart and mind we long for a place to tuck this pain and hurt away. If we could just remove it from sight, then we could handle what we have done, what other people have done to us, and who we have become. Maybe, we could even pretend these hurts are not there at all. So, on go the masks.

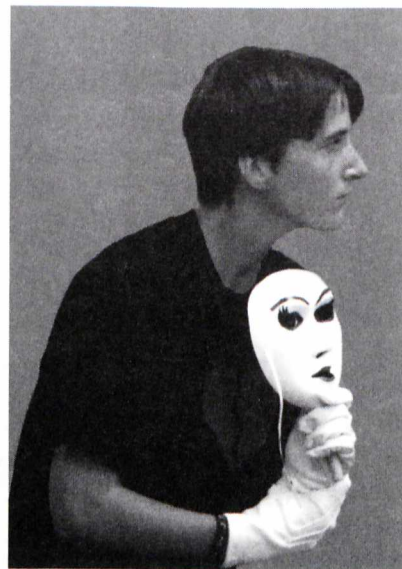
But masks of hidden hurts are not what Jesus has in mind for us. He says in John 10:10, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (NKJV). God wants us to live our life to the fullest. In order to do that we must face up to the wrongs we have done and even move past those things others have done to us. What does this mean? Forgiveness—the ability to forgive ourselves and others. Easier said than done, forgiveness is quite impossible apart from the Holy Spirit that lives within.

Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us that in Christ the old person we were becomes new and passes away. Are we hanging on to a corpse? Don't we want to get rid of that old smelly thing and get on with a new, abundant life? Decide today to remove the mask, step out of the darkness into the glorious light of Jesus Christ, and let the healing begin.

GET REAL WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

"Ignore it and it'll go away." "If I keep it to myself, no one will ever know." "What I did wasn't so bad." "No one else got hurt." Lies, lies, and more lies. Satan delights in convincing a child of God that his or her life has no affect on anyone else's. Each of us has a direct bearing on the quality of life of those around us.

Are we so foolish to think that our closest family members and friends cannot see behind the mask? Do we think our masquerade is so complete that no one knows of the misery that hovers like a cloud over our head? Family and friends look on helplessly as we slip away behind a mask of pretense. Oh, to be children again and be altogether whom we were created!



Freedom is possible. Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32, NKJV). While it is evident that this Scripture refers to the truth of God's Word, knowing the truth of any issue or circumstance brings a certain amount of freedom.

Truth may require an apology. We may need to grant forgiveness to someone who unwittingly has injured our feelings. True, some people may not respond to our overtures in like manner, but this is the starting place. Jesus initiated the concept of forgiving those who have done us wrong. He taught in Matthew 18 that if we don't forgive others, He can't forgive us.

Love family and friends and accept their love in return. When the repressive weight of the costume and mask fall away, like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon, we will step forth into new life. With pretense out of the way, healing can begin and relationships will be restored.

GET REAL WITH GOD

God knows all about us. Whom do we think we're kidding? The truth is—no one. Why should a person get real with God if He knows everything already? Ever heard the saying that confession is good for the soul? You see, God can only forgive and restore when we confess and repent. Romans 10:10 states, "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (NKJV). And that is the ultimate reality—freedom from sin.

All reality is interrelated. How we see ourselves affects how we interact with those around us. Our relationship with others has a direct bearing on our walk with Christ. And if we are not walking in faith with the Lord Jesus Christ, then we cannot be at peace with our family and friends. Our whole concept of reality is skewed.

Let's take off the costumes and get rid of the masks! It's time to step away from these walls of pretense and let the light of God's love seek out every facet and corner of our hearts. There's a whole new world waiting for us, if we have the desire and courage to get real. "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36, NKJV).



Dianne Sargent attends Woodbine FWB Church, Nashville, Tennessee. Mother of two, grandmother of one, Dianne works as an editor for Randall House Publications.



January Rain

**Spring rain comes gently,
Softly caressing dry seeds
That lie sleeping in the warm earth
'Til they burst with new life.**

**January rain comes howling
On a north wind.
Clinging to branches and high lines,
Grasping and pulling
'Til the weight of the burden breaks
them down
And power fails.**

**It takes time to recover from
January rain,
For repairs to be made, power
restored,
Wounds to heal . . .
Time before it melts and blesses the
earth.**

**Is this January rain, Lord—
This chilling, pounding, breaking
crisis in our lives?
Give us strength, Lord.
Help us not to break.
Keep the Power coming.
Send the spring.**

Ruth Bivens

A frequent contributor to CoLaborer, Ruth Bivens and her husband are missionaries in Puerto Rico.

The Chef

a parable for church workers

By Alice Grant



For as long as she could remember, Angela had wanted to be a chef just like her mother. Angela could remember how dynamic her mother had been. How Angela had loved watching her cook! Now that she was grown up, Angela was certain that she, too, should be a chef.

Angela went to the local restaurant and told the manager she wanted to be a chef. He was so delighted—they could always use more chefs—and he put her to work right away. She spent many hours pouring over all the cookbooks she could find so that she could be the best chef this restaurant had ever known. She had so much zeal and energy; everyone was amazed at how good she was. Her food was the best anyone had ever tasted and Angela felt great success because she could make the people happy.

Soon everyone was coming to the local restaurant to eat the food Angela prepared. She became so busy. She tried very hard to keep the best recipes handy so she could use them as much as possible. She went to all the cooking conventions and workshops she could find and asked the advice of the older, most respected chefs in the area. She was even writing some of her own recipes. She was well on

her way to the top. She just couldn't stop cooking!

But something happened one day. Angela had to put her cookbook aside for a few minutes and do something else. It was only for a short while but when she arrived at the restaurant, she couldn't quite recall how much of a certain ingredient she need-



ed for the recipe she wanted to make. She thought and thought but just couldn't remember. So she just substituted what she thought was the right ingredient. The recipe was not quite as tasty, but no one seemed to notice. She just kept on cooking.

Angela was preparing a special recipe for some very wonderful people one day when she began to feel strangely weak. Dizzy and lightheaded, she realized that in the midst of cooking for all the other people she had forgotten to feed herself. She grabbed a quick

bite and went right on cooking for everyone else. Everyone raved about her dedication.

One day Angela cooked all day long. She fell asleep, not taking any food to nourish her own body. The next day the same thing happened. She had so many people to feed, she worked very hard at making enough food for the crowd. But Angela never ate. Before long she found that she was spending so much time feeding everyone else, there was no time to feed herself. Angela kept promising that she would take time for herself soon—just not right now. She kept on cooking for everyone else.

The restaurant was very pleased that Angela was so dedicated to cooking for its patrons. Angela tried that much harder to feed the hungry people that came each day. Sometimes the manager would suggest that she stop for a while and rest and get something to eat. Angela always said no, she couldn't take the time. She must feed the others.

One day Angela noticed her favorite cookbook shoved into the corner and covered with dust. How long, she wondered, had it been since she had picked it up? How long since she had checked the ingredients for her

favorite recipes? No time now, Angela recoiled. She must feed the others; she would feed herself later. Besides, wasn't she the best chef in the restaurant? She could do this on her own. She didn't need any help.

Late one evening, as Angela was putting things away at the restaurant, she noticed an empty plate at the table. No one had eaten there.



That had never happened before. All the places at the tables had always been full. Oh well, she thought, she was too tired to worry about that now. The customers would all be back tomorrow. She was not feeling very well and she had to get some rest.

The next morning Angela overslept. She jumped up and rushed as fast as she could to the restaurant. Some of the crowd had already arrived but she managed to throw together some food. They seemed to be content with it. She did notice at the end of the day that several of the plates had not been used. Maybe she had been too rushed lately. Maybe she could spend a little more time preparing what she would cook. But right now she was just too tired and too weak to worry about it. Maybe tomorrow would be better.

Angela didn't get up on time the next day. The crowd arrived before she had a chance to cook. She went into the restaurant,

opened a few cans here and there, and hoped it would please the crowd until she felt better and could cook the way she used to. The manager was not happy and suggested Angela rest and take some time off for herself. "Oh no," Angela shouted. She was just fine and could still cook better than any chef in the restaurant. There were many empty plates in the restaurant that day.

Soon Angela noticed more empty plates than used plates in the restaurant. She was exhausted but kept cooking as best she could. Each day fewer and fewer people ate the food Angela prepared. Angela was too tired to care.

How long had it been since Angela had eaten? Was it yesterday, last week, maybe even last month? She couldn't remember. Too tired to think, too weak to cook, maybe she would just rest for a few minutes. No one was in the restaurant anyway. She would find a chair and sit for a little while. But Angela didn't make it to the chair. She slipped to the floor too wasted to even call for help. She lay there, unnourished and unfed, until the life slipped out of her. Tragically, there was no one around to notice.



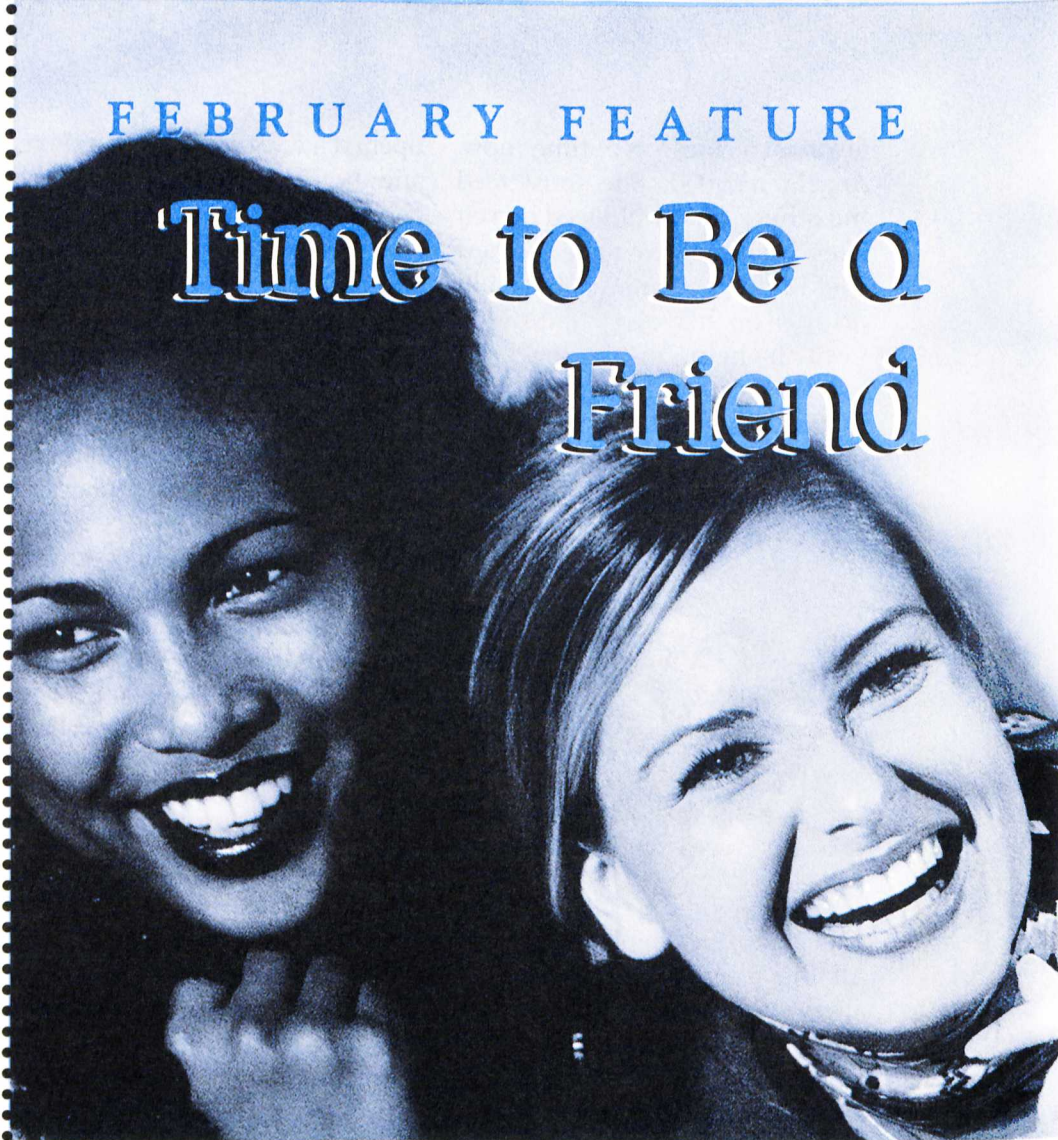
Alice Grant, a pastor's wife from Ohio (New Lexington FWB Church), manages an outpatient mental health counseling center. This article won first place in the 2000 Creative Arts Contest.

1. PRAY EVERYDAY FOR OUR COUNTRY, ASKING GOD TO CHANGE HEARTS AND HEAL OUR LAND.
2. BAKE AND TAKE A CASSEROLE TO A SINGLE MOTHER OR AN ELDERLY PERSON.
3. SEND A NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO YOUR PASTOR.
4. CALL TO ENCOURAGE SOMEONE WHO USED TO ATTEND YOUR CHURCH OR SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN ABSENT FOR AWHILE.
5. WRITE A MISSIONARY YOU'VE NEVER WRITTEN, AND TELL THEM YOU WILL PRAY FOR THEM. (CONTACT THE FOREIGN OR HOME MISSIONS DEPARTMENTS FOR ADDRESSES.)
6. ANONYMOUSLY SEND FIVE DOLLARS IN AN ENCOURAGEMENT CARD TO A DISCOURAGED TEENAGER IN YOUR CHURCH.
7. PRAY DAILY FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF YOUR CHURCH, CALLING THEM BY NAME.
8. BUY OR PICK SOME FLOWERS AND DELIVER THEM TO A PERSON WHO IS SICK.
9. SHARE AN APPROPRIATE VERSE OF SCRIPTURE WITH SOMEONE.
10. SHARE AN ARTICLE FROM COLABORER MAGAZINE WITH SOMEONE WHO MIGHT ENJOY OR BE BLESSED BY IT.
11. SEND A CARD TO YOUR PASTOR'S WIFE, STATING YOUR APPRECIATION FOR HER DEDICATION AND HARD WORK.
12. SPEND TIME WITH SOMEONE WHO IS LONELY.
13. WRITE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE WITH WHOM YOU'VE LOST CONTACT.
14. ASK SOMEONE'S FORGIVENESS.
15. PRAY EVERY DAY FOR A LOST FRIEND OR RELATIVE.
16. MAKE TIME TO VISIT AN ELDERLY PERSON OR SHUT-IN.
17. GIVE ONE OF YOUR POSSESSIONS AS A GIFT TO SOMEONE LESS FORTUNATE.
18. FAST FOR 12 HOURS IN AN ATTITUDE OF PRAYER FOR A DEEPER WALK WITH CHRIST.
19. INVITE A COWORKER TO LUNCH AND SHARE HOW GOOD GOD HAS BEEN TO YOU.
20. MAKE TIME TO MEET A NEIGHBOR YOU DO NOT KNOW.
21. WRITE YOUR CONGRESSMAN ABOUT AN ISSUE OF CONCERN. LET HIM KNOW YOU ARE PRAYING FOR HIM AND THAT YOU WILL BE WATCHING TO SEE HOW HE VOTES ON THESE ISSUES.

22. SIT WITH SOMEONE WHO NORMALLY SITS ALONE IN CHURCH.
23. BAKE OR BUY A PIE FOR A YOUNG COUPLE IN YOUR CHURCH.
24. VOLUNTEER AN HOUR OR TWO OF HELP AT YOUR CHURCH.
25. PRAY DAILY FOR THE LEADERS OF YOUR CHURCH.
26. DO SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR.
27. EACH DAY WRITE AN ENCOURAGING NOTE TO INDIVIDUALS WHO NEED A LIFT.
28. ASK A FRIEND TO BE YOUR PRAYER PARTNER. EXCHANGE REQUESTS; SET ASIDE TIME TO PRAY TOGETHER.
29. BUY A CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE OR DEVOTIONAL BOOK FOR A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR OR GIVE AWAY BACK ISSUES.
30. INVITE A COLLEGE STUDENT FOR A HOME-COOKED MEAL.
31. CALL SOMEONE WHO IS HAVING MEDICAL TESTS, TREATMENTS, OR SURGERY. TELL THEM YOU WILL BE PRAYING.
32. RUN AN ERRAND FOR A HOME-BOUND PERSON.
33. WRITE A LETTER FOR SOMEONE WHO IS NOT ABLE.
34. OFFER BABYSITTING (FREE TIME) FOR A BUSY MOTHER.
35. SHARE A FEW OF YOUR CD'S OR CASSETTES WITH SOMEONE.
36. READ TO SOMEONE WHO CAN NO LONGER READ.
37. SEND A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION OF A CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE TO SOMEONE WHO CAN'T AFFORD IT.
38. VOLUNTEER A MONTH OF HELP IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS.
39. LOAN A BOOK YOU'VE ALREADY READ TO SOMEONE WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM IT.
40. SEW OR REPAIR SOMETHING FOR A PERSON WHO CAN'T.
41. PREPARE A TRAY OF FRUIT (OR OTHER GOODIES) FOR SOMEONE CELEBRATING A BIRTHDAY, GRADUATION, ANNIVERSARY, ETC.
42. TRY TO OBTAIN THE BIRTHDATES OF EVERYONE IN YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS AND SEND THEM A CARD THIS YEAR.
43. SHARE A BOOK, TAPE, MAGAZINE ARTICLE, OR VERSE OF SCRIPTURE ABOUT PARENTING WITH A YOUNG MOTHER.
44. INVITE A NEWCOMER TO CHURCH; INTRODUCE HER TO FRIENDS.
45. OFFER AN ELDERLY PERSON A RIDE TO CHURCH.
46. TRY NOT TO SAY OR LISTEN TO ANYTHING NEGATIVE ABOUT ANYONE DURING THE WEEK.
47. MEMORIZE THREE SCRIPTURE VERSES ABOUT COMPASSION.
48. PRAY SPECIFICALLY THAT YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY WOULD GROW IN CHRIST AND MAKE WISE DECISIONS.
49. ASK SOMEONE YOU HAVE WRONGED FOR FORGIVENESS.
50. TELL TWO PEOPLE HOW MUCH AND WHY YOU APPRECIATE THEM.
51. SKIP COFFEE AND COLA AND DONATE THE MONEY TO WNAC EFFORTS.
52. SPEND 10 MINUTES IN CONCENTRATED PRAYER FOR A PERSON WHO IS STRUGGLING.

FEBRUARY FEATURE

Time to Be a Friend



Younger/Older

Last fall Ella Bee and Carol attended a women's retreat with a group of ladies from their church. An unlikely pair, Bee, in her sixties, and Carol in her thirties, the two discovered they had similar interests and hobbies.

One afternoon during free time, Bee and Carol decided to visit quaint craft shops. In the first shop Carol found something that struck her heart with joy. A cloth doll wearing a beautiful antique lace dress, simple straw hat and carrying a basket of flowers, just happened to match Carol's

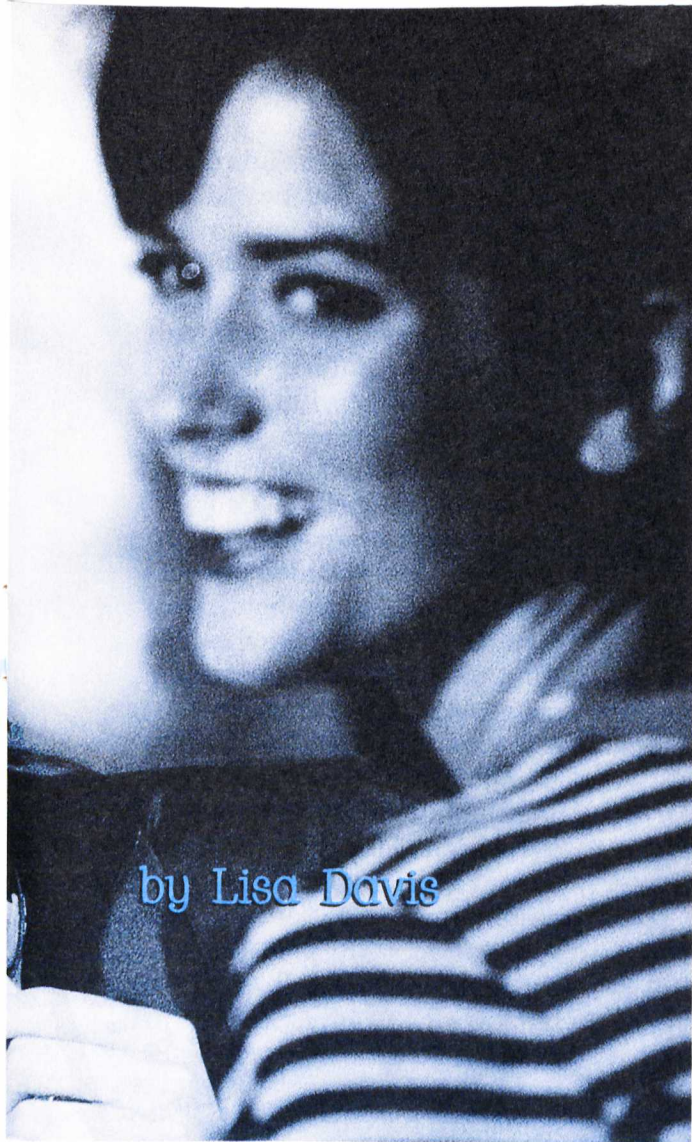
home décor. The basket bore the inscription: "Few things are as precious as gold. A daughter's smile is truly one of them."

Carol was deeply moved and reminded of her three precious daughters. She almost bought the doll, but decided to wait.

Little did Carol know that Bee later secretly purchased the doll, intending to surprise Carol on her birthday. The two returned home with fresh, renewed spirits. They continued to talk each week at church and sometimes chatted over the phone.

Several months later, Carol faced difficulty as she and her daughter

"A friend knows what truly makes your heart smile."
—Lisa Davis



by Lisa Davis

Beth, now sixteen, struggled to get along. This particular week, Beth had continually tested Carol's limits. Wednesday, as Carol prepared breakfast, Beth appeared wearing something she knew would not meet Mom's approval. Discussion escalated into argument. Beth screamed, cried, changed outfits, and stomped out the door to school. Carol cried most of the day, praying that God would give her renewed understanding.

On the other side of town, Bee wasn't sure why Carol had come to mind, but all day as she worked in her garden, she prayed. As she rushed to make supper and get ready for church, she remembered the doll. Carol's birthday was still a few months away, but Bee would give the doll to Carol tonight.

Carol was so surprised. She smiled at Bee in disbelief—how she had secretly bought the doll, how she had sensed Carol needed a gift and lift that day. The basket's inscription once again touched her heart. She knew this was God's answer to prayer. He had impressed Bee to pray and share this special gift. She had needed a reminder—She loved Beth so much and she must share that love with her. Bee's card confirmed God's watch care over Carol's family. Carol cried and hugged Bee. Together they determined to meet weekly and share one another's burdens. Carol thanked God for this special friendship.

What if age differences had kept Bee and Carol from becoming friends?

In what ways would the outcome be different if Bee had not responded to the tug of her heart?

"Plant a seed of friendship; reap a bouquet of happiness."
—Lois L. Kaufman

Careful listening and discernment can be a strong building block to a special friendship. As we begin to know each other, we begin to learn what makes each other smile as well as cry. Galatians 6:2 states, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." In order to encourage others with their struggles in life, we must get close enough to learn of their burdens. Is it time for you to listen to those around you?

Strangers

Laurie was enjoying a day of running errands, which of course included a trip to Wal-Mart. There, she noticed a woman, wandering around aimlessly, continually wiping tears from her eyes. Laurie felt compelled to ask if she could help. As Laurie approached her, the lady acted somewhat embarrassed. Laurie apologized for being abrupt, but shared her name and phone number and extended an invitation for lunch the next day.

Laurie waited patiently in a corner booth of the restaurant to see if her new acquaintance would show. To her surprise, the woman approached her table at exactly the appointed time and introduced herself as Betsy Miller. Over lunch, Betsy began to pour out her heart. Within the past six months, Betsy had lost her mom to breast cancer and her husband and son to a tragic automobile accident. Laurie listened as Betsy recounted her pain. Though Betsy was relatively a stranger, Laurie's heart stirred. She began silently praying that God would give her the right words to share a glimmer of hope with Betsy. As the

"A friend is someone who can sing you the song of your heart even when you've forgotten it."
—author unknown

women departed, Betsy felt better having shared her heavy burden. Laurie was joyful having met a new friend. She was excited at the possibility of sharing her best friend, Jesus Christ, with Betsy.

Betsy and Laurie's friendship continued to blossom through phone calls, shopping trips, and lunches. Still Betsy's bad days outnumbered the good. As she approached what would have been her 15th wedding anniversary, Betsy contemplated ending her life. The day before her anniversary date, a beautiful bouquet of lilies arrived at her door. Laurie had sent them with a note, "Hope you are doing well, thinking and praying for you. Your Friend, Laurie." Betsy wondered how Laurie could have known. Lilies were her mother's favorite flowers. She'd often remarked that a lily in the spring was a sign of hope and newness of life. As Betsy thought of her mother and gazed at the lilies, she began to feel the presence of hope flow through her. She immediately called Laurie and thanked her.

Over lunch the next day Betsy shared with Laurie the significance of the lilies. Laurie had chosen them simply because they were one of her favorites. That day Laurie told Betsy of her relationship to Jesus Christ. She shared that He gives a sense of hope and newness to life each day. Betsy wanted to know more. She agreed to attend church with Laurie and within a few weeks, Betsy gave her heart to the Lord. Laurie and Betsy's friendship was truly unique. Now it was even

stronger because they shared a bond in the Spirit of Christ.

What if Laurie had hesitated or had never spoken to Betsy in Walmart that day?

"Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (Matthew 5:15).

In order to share the loving light of Christ with others, we must be willing to come out of our comfort zones and help people when they need us most. Becoming a friend to strangers is a great opportunity to open their hearts to the Lord.

"When it is a question of God's Almighty Spirit, never say, 'I can't.'"
—Oswald Chambers

Acquaintances

Candice loved her church and attended most anytime the door was opened. Like most other churchgoers, Candice and her family sat in the same place for every service. Nearby sat a young family whose children created quite a ruckus, often distracting others and interrupting the services. Candice and her husband would smile when the mother looked around embarrassed.

One Sunday morning Candice noticed the young mother crying. Midway through the singing, the woman got up and left. Candice thought maybe she should follow her and see if she could help. But the longer she stayed in the pew, the less she thought about helping. Soon the service was over.

Later, Candice felt guilty for not listening to her heart. She thought about the woman often and prayed for her daily. Candice noticed that the lady and her family had not returned to church. Candice thought about calling her, but she just wasn't sure what to say. Weeks turned into months and still the family did not return. Candice finally asked her pastor about the family. He explained that the woman and her husband had experienced some marital problems. She had been too embarrassed by the situation to come to church. Sadly, the couple split up and the mother and children moved out of town. The pastor voiced concern, but knew of no way to contact her.

Candice deeply regretted not reaching out to her. Now all she could do was pray for her protection and encouragement. Though she never saw her again, Candice thinks of her often. Candice now prays, "Lord, help me reach out to those in need."

What might have changed if Candice had reached out when she first noticed the lady crying in church?

What might have been different had Candice called the mother when she and her family began missing services?

The lives of those around us can truly suffer when we fail to listen and obey the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives. "Quench

"Give what you have to somebody; it may be better than you think."
—Henry W. Longfellow

"You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late."
—Ralph W. Emerson

not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

How well do you know the persons sitting near you in church? Are you sensitive to their needs?

Thomas and Liz were trying out yet another new church. They had visited several in the community and just couldn't find one in which they felt comfortable. They had attended the last church for over a year and still felt like strangers.

Liz was rather nervous on their first Sunday in this new place when she noticed a couple about their age sitting nearby. They appeared friendly, but nervous too. Liz perceived that they might also be newcomers. Thomas made the same observations. They both decided to greet this couple and invite them over for a meal.

By the end of the service Liz had begun to analyze the situation and second-guess their decision. What if they weren't newcomers at all? What if the

couple were uppity and high class?

Would they think her

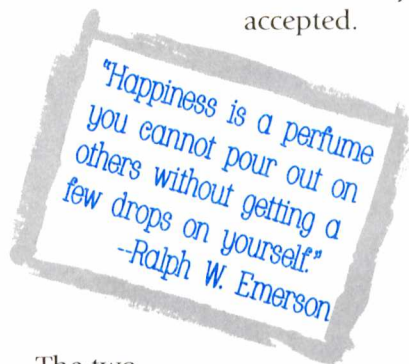
house small,

ragged, or dirty? What

if this couple just didn't like them? What if they didn't like the couple?

A few weeks passed, and Thomas and Liz had yet to make their first move. Finally, Liz threw caution to the wind and suggested they sit behind them and see if a conversation ensued. Liz

very shyly tapped the lady on the shoulder and introduced themselves as new comers. The couple, William and Sue McRay, seemed delighted to meet Thomas and Liz. At the end of the service, Liz asked the McRays to join them for lunch. William and Sue immediately accepted.



The two couples hit it off and talked as if they had known each other for years. Soon they were spending a lot of time together. Sue and Liz became very close friends. Although Thomas' job has now moved them to another town and another church, Liz and Sue still stay in touch. They know they can always depend on one another.

What if Thomas and Liz had waited for the other couple to make the first move?

What if Liz had given in to her doubts and fears?

What if William and Sue had not responded in a friendly manner?

"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Proverbs 18:24).

How many friendships are never begun because we sit and judge the situation instead of just being friendly to those around us? Sadly, it often takes a tragedy for people to begin reaching out to others? Friendship definitely requires a small

amount of boldness. Is it time for you to speak to someone new? Maybe invite a newcomer to join you for a meal? Is it time for you to share yourself with others around you?

Friends can truly change our life experiences. Friendship is a vital part of life whether with families, people at church, strangers in a shopping center, or even with our Heavenly Father. Yes, even God wants us to be His friend. James 2:23 states, "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

Too often we excuse ourselves and say that we just do not have the time to make new friends or keep up with old ones. Yet deep down we know we have the time to do what we truly want to do. It's so easy to wait for others to make the first step, write the long awaited letter, and make the well overdue phone call. If we really want to be a friend, we must listen to the tug of our hearts and respond with action. It might be the perfect chance or the last chance to reach out to someone in need. As God's children we are blessed to be a blessing (Gen. 12:2). Is it time for you to be a friend?

Lisa Davis attends the Oak Grove FWB Church in Greeneville, Tennessee. A homemaker, she is the mother of two small daughters.

Need help?

Look on page 16 for some valuable resources on friendship.

Telephone, Tell-a-friend, Tell it to God Together



Betty Jane Jones

The ringing telephone broke my concentration and I turned off my sewing machine. My friendly hello was soon subdued upon hearing that a member of our church and WAC had just been taken by ambulance to the hospital with a severe heart attack. Not knowing all the details (but knowing that God did) my caller and I had special prayer for her on the telephone.

James 5:13-16 tells us to pray for one another in sickness. It does not tell us where or with whom we must be. Giving God our concern for our mutual friend was all we could do for her at that time.

A few nights later, a new father called to tell me about his little son's birth. There had been com-



plications. Together we prayed for God's loving care for the baby and mother, and gave thanks for this new life He had given. And as John 14:16 tells us, the heavenly Father comforted this new father by His Spirit.

God hears our prayers not because we are good, but because He is so good. He cares not how we approach him, only that we do. I have found the telephone to be a good medium of prayer. It's one thing to hear someone say, "I'll pray for you," but quite another to hear that person pray, even over the telephone.

I live in an area where winter-time travel is difficult and many of our Christian friends live several miles apart. But neither distance nor slick, snowy streets hinder intercession. My prayer partners are as close as my telephone. Together we pray with and for shut-ins and elderly from the church.

Christians should always be ready to pray with one another. And we often need someone to help us pray about specific needs or problems. In this fast paced age, when we don't always have time for the drive across town, we can "tell-a-friend." Victory, strength, and power are just a phone call away. Phone a friend, just to pray. God hears!

Betty Jane Jones attends the 1st FWB Church in Kirksville, Missouri. She holds leadership positions in WAC at both the local and district level.

Ms. Jones says, "Being a past prayer chairman for WAC has helped enrich my prayer life as I studied and tried to promote prayer in the lives of fellow church members."

I am 63 years old. I am set in my ways. I like my house clean and orderly. I plan meals ahead and shop in quantity. I have no desire for bigger, better, or newer. The only thing I collect is people.

Friendship Evangelism

by Lorene
Francen

I love people in all shapes and sizes. I don't have a favorite age or nationality. My husband and I have lots of company. When our son Mike was small he learned all the cues and signals. He would say, "Mom, who is coming?" I would usually counter, "I like our house to be clean and nice. We don't have to have company for me to do . . . (whatever I was doing)." "I know, I know," he would say, "but who IS coming?" Our favorite cartoon—we kept it for years—pictures a man brushing his teeth at the birdbath of a fenced backyard. The neighbor, looking over the fence asks, "Company again?"

Often, if not usually, someone is living with us. It fits us. We have time and opportunity to demonstrate how to live, or quite honestly, how NOT to live the Christian life.

I grew up in a Christian home. At age nine, I accepted

Christ as my Savior after my neighbor presented the gospel at a Bible club. I was a teenager before I knew anyone else who actively tried to win people to the Lord.

As a teen, I admired Billy Graham and Cliff Barrows. They held one of their first city-wide meetings in Modesto, California—only four miles from my little town of Ceres. Judy Barrows, Cliff's youngest sister, was my friend at school. I could not see me doing what they did.

I watched FWB men like Don Robirds and Archie Mayhew become soul winners. They took sandwiches and milk to winos living under the bridge near us. I could not see myself succeeding at what they did either.

I was defeated over my life's lack of witness. It took me a long time to learn that God uses us in ways that fit our spir-

itual gifts, our gender, and our personalities. I like people. I like to share. Friendship evangelism fits me.

A friend is someone

- you are comfortable with.
- who cares about you.
- who is faithful, even when friendship is costly.

Friendships are grown, not found.

(adapted from Elmer L. Towns, *Winning the Winnable*, pp. 11, 12.)

Friendship evangelism is befriending people with their salvation and growth toward spiritual maturity as the clear goal. It is a natural and effective way to reach out, win and disciple others. Witnessing is giving testimony to something about which you have first-hand knowledge. Both spoken with the mouth and communicated by the way we live, witnessing begins with a relationship. For me, relationships have been the first step toward conversions.

Relationship-based witnessing, winning, and then discipling, is very often a team effort. The hand-off from one believer to another in a group may consciously occur in order to take advantage of spiritual gifts. It may be completely unintentional.

Evangelism is making contact with a person and motivating him or her to give the Gospel a thoughtful hearing. It is the act of leading a person to the threshold of personal com-

GINGER'S STORY

Ginger and husband Chris attend New Hope FWB Church. She tells this story.

Chris and I met Troy, Betsy and their son, T.J. at baseball practice. T.J. and our Christopher became best friends as soon as they met! They were on the same team and played one season together.

We invited T.J. to attend church with us. He went the next Sunday morning. He liked it. He said on the way home, "I'm going to get my Mom and Dad to come here, too." With T.J.'s help they agreed to come. The LORD did the rest. It was a great day for us when Troy and Betsy were saved.

Betsy and I do a lot together. We shop (of course), and we talk about the LORD. I have tried to teach her as much as I can. They come over a lot. We eat together, play games, and talk. We will always be close to Troy, Betsy and T.J. We share a special bond in the Lord.

mitment to or rejection of the plan of salvation.

I use the Roman's Road to Salvation. I keep a copy in my Bible. The points are simple and easy.

1. Every person needs God. (Romans 3:23)
2. The penalty for sin is death. (6:23)
3. Christ died for us. (5:8)
4. You must choose or reject salvation. (10:9)

For small children I use the Wordless Book. I keep one in my purse, with the accompanying tract. It is my habit to give the tract I use to the person I have dealt with after we have prayed together. I jot down that day's date, my phone number, the pastor's number, etc. in the blank space on the back.

Jesus Christ is the model for friendship evangelism. Remember how he chose those twelve men? "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach," Mark 3:13,14 (NIV).

The men were invited to spend time with the LORD. He showed them how he lived.

They listened, observed and questioned. The twelve caught His vision. Then He sent them out to do as He had been doing.

Acts 4:5-13 records Peter and John's testimony before the Sanhedrin after the healing of a blind man. Peter, who was "filled with the Holy Spirit," said, "It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead that this man stands before you healed." He continued, "...there is no other name under heaven given to men by which they must be saved." The members of the Sanhedrin, "saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men. They were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus" (NIV).

In John 15:15, Jesus said, "I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I made known to you" (NIV). As you befriend, win, and disciple, remember that you have all the resources of the LORD of Heaven. He is able to do whatever needs to be done through you. Unbelievable? Ask Him!

Attributes of a "Befriender"

- She has a meaningful relationship with Christ.
- She genuinely likes people.
- She is willing to be open with others.
- She is able to tell what Christ has done for her.
- She has an active prayer life.
- She is a student of God's Word.

RESOURCES

REACHING YOUR WORLD; DISCIPLEMAKING FOR WOMEN by Beth Mainhood. Colorado Springs: NavPress.

THE FRIENDSHIP FACTOR by Alan Loy McGinnis. Minneapolis: Augsburg.

OUT OF THE SALT-SHAKER AND INTO THE WORLD: EVANGELISM AS A WAY OF LIFE by Rebecca Manley Pippert. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

WINNING THE WINNABLE: FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM by Elmer L. Towns. Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute.

ANDREA

For several years I taught an evening class at a local college one or two quarters each year. It was my habit to invite my entire class to our home on a Sunday early in the quarter. We ate, talked, usually took a hike, and got acquainted. This was friend-building time. At least one friend came from every group. Someone was saved from almost every class.

One quarter an extremely shy and introverted young woman enrolled in my class. I had already met her at the library where I worked during the daytime. After that first Sunday at our house Andrea came often. She attended church with us. We included her for holidays and came to love her little dog Penny. Within the next few months she changed from skeptical observer to sincere seeker. One Sunday she gave her heart to the Lord at church. My how she grew!

Andrea asked me to make her a skirt. She had neither a dress nor a skirt in her wardrobe and she had noticed that most of the women she saw at church wore one or the other. She called it her "Sunday uniform."

She was about to be transferred in her work. We talked, prayed, and studied as she prepared to live for the Lord in a place where she knew nobody (and where we had no friends to continue to help her grow.) We moved before she did. Friends who had been missionaries in Ethiopia continued to disciple Andrea after we left. Awhile later Andrea called to ask if she and three friends could spend the night with us. She had brought her first converts to meet their "grandparents."

DIANNE

Dianne was in the Navy, stationed at Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Puerto Rico. I was Navy Librarian there. We met through a mutual friend. She was unsaved and her background was a world away from mine, but we became friends anyway. She had a lot of emotional baggage from her past. She did not understand "God-talk" at all. We learned to share spiritual things in new ways (new to us!). Her salvation brought lots of changes. She bloomed into a sunny, smiling, still shy, lover of animals and children.

Dianne lived with us in our home during her final three months in Puerto Rico. She was waiting to get orders for another military assignment. Her lease was up and the landlord would not let her stay by the month. It was a good time to share and pray. She was afraid of being assigned to sea duty—not a good place for a Christian woman. Our church prayed with her. Praise God, when the orders came, they were for San Diego Naval Station.

A friend of ours pastored the FWB church in San Diego. His wife Alma was a sweet Christian learning to live with blindness caused by complications from diabetes. I wrote to them. They responded by return mail with a note to Dianne asking her to spend her first night in California with them.

A student of the word and a lover of books, Alma asked Dianne to read to her. She chose books with both of them in mind. Dianne grew as a Christian. She began to teach a children's class in Sunday School. As Alma's health failed, Dianne stayed in this home and helped care for her teacher/mentor/friend during the final days of her life.

CHERRY

I met Cherry at Sunday School. She received the Lord at a Child Evangelism meeting held for the children during a revival at our church.

Cherry lived about two blocks from us. She came to our door often, usually hand in hand with her little sister Kim. They were often hungry. Cherry seemed just as hungry for the things of the LORD. Like a little sponge, she soaked up verses of Scripture, Bible stories and choruses.

The girls' father had an alcohol problem. The mother was mentally disturbed. Her medication kept her in a "fuzzy" world. Eventually, the father decided to move back to his hometown, far away in another part of the States, hoping relatives would help care for Cherry and Kim. In the weeks following his decision, the girls and I continued to study, memorize Scripture verses, and sing. We also began to pray for specific things. We asked God to send an adult who would love the girls and the Lord, too. We prayed they would find a gospel preaching church where they could continue to grow. We prayed about friends for them and for the new teachers they would have at the new school. Then they were gone. (I am crying as I write this.) I loved them. It was hard to let them go. Someone went before and with them who loved them more AND had the power to really help.

Lorene Francen and her husband Charles have befriended countless persons throughout the US and Puerto Rico. As caretakers for Tennessee's Cumberland Youth Camp, they still pour their lives into people.

How Do I Begin?

- **Pray for God to open new doors of friendship.**
- **Build bridges to people. Smile, listen attentively when others are speaking; learn names of new acquaintances (and use them); find common ground for friendships.**
- **Pray for open doors for befriending.**
- **Be yourself.**
- **Take advantage of every opportunity.**
- **Live "Christian-ly."**
- **Don't be afraid. God IS able. He is in control.**
- **Use time wisely.**
- **Be diligent in your devotional life, Bible study, and church attendance.**
- **Consider enlisting four to eight like-minded women from your congregation to form a support group to provide accountability, prayer support, guidance and help.**
- **Discover your spiritual gifts. Using your gifts will increase effectiveness. Working in concert within a support group, each woman can exercise her area of giftedness.**

SPRINGBOARD

memos for WAC officers

Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators:
Use the special enlistment program included in the 2002 Yearbook. (There's still time to order.) Plan now for the rest of the year. The Plan Sheets in the Yearbook are ideal guides. Set goals for your group. The February feature includes questions for discussion. Ask individuals to be discussion starters.

Please do not send postage stamps to WNAC. We no longer have a buyer.

**We're on the Web!!
Check us out @
www.nafwb.org/wnac**

**Provision
Closet Needs:**
Twin sheet sets
Pressure cookers

Treasurers:
Consider a "Dinner for Two in 2002" commitment. Each time a woman eats out, she contributes the same amount to WAC. Remember to include the WNAC general fund in your monthly budget.

Prayer Chairman:
Challenge women to pray "in the news." As they read or listen to news items from around the world, pray specifically for evangelism concerns in these countries.

Study Chairman:
Pose the question, "What does it mean to really love Christ?" Encourage women to read a book related to this theme. The review on page 23 gives a recommendation.

If your group is looking for a Bible study, consider *Esther: A Woman of Strength and Dignity*. Order from WNAC (1-877-767-7662). End the study with a banquet or a Purim feast.

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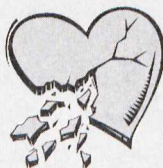
**MISSIONS
HOTLINE**

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Missions Chairman:
Are women in your group actively involved in evangelism? Include this dimension as you schedule any outing or social event. Plan a time to share your faith at a rest area, in a shopping mall, or other location.

**PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE NATIONAL
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INSIGHT

Heartsick

By Teresa Johnson

What does it mean to be heartsick? This question may have many answers. Heartsick can refer to physical, emotional, or spiritual needs. I become heartsick when someone I love says or does something hurtful. Words and actions come straight from our heart. I experience physical heartsickness when I have a bad day caused from my illness. I begin to have soreness and pain in my body and the lupus sometimes affects my heart.

In my spiritual life, I can also become heartsick. If I neglect time spent with God in prayer and His Word, I know it will eventually cause damage to my heart. I will not feel the same toward God and His ways. This heartsickness numbs me and does not allow me to experience joy—the joy that only comes from God.

Psalm 16:8,9 offers a way to overcome heart sickness. Part of the verse says, "The Lord is always before me, because he is at my right hand. I shall not be moved" We must trust Him in all things; this is our hope. Be strong in knowing He will not forsake us.

Nahum 1:7 says. "The Lord is good. a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knows those who trust in him." To overcome heartsickness, we must believe God will be there for us. This means that in every circumstance, we must know Him as our healing Physician.

Are you experiencing heart symptoms? No matter the reason, there is hope. Don't fight this disease alone. Jesus is the heart healer.

Teresa Johnson attends North Warren FWB Church, Michigan. Limited by lupus, she still teaches Sunday school and writes for her church's newsletter.



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LABORS OF LOVE

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father:" 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3

✿ Fifty-seven women from the Oklahoma First Mission District met August 3,4, at the Holiday Inn in Stillwater. Guest speaker and singles ministry radio co-host Toni Richmond explored the theme, "Totally His." The meeting included time for worship, singing, laughter, and skits.



Alta Stockton and Robin Haskins enjoy the fellowship at the First Mission Retreat.

✿ Missions Partners WAC group led the Donelson FWB Church in giving to the Hope Center (women and children's divisions) of the Nashville Union Rescue Mission. The group collected over \$2000 worth of toiletries, bath, and personal items.



✿ Michigan State WAC members sent their yearly Provision Closet offering in late August. The gifts arrived via rental truck and totaled several thousands of dollars. Both WNAC and Missions Department personnel were on hand to help unload the truck and stock the closet.



Yvonne Hampton, Steve Lytle, Rob Conley, and Walter Hatfield unload a portion of the Michigan gifts.

✿ A record number attended the Tennessee WAC Retreat in Pigeon Forge, TN, October 4-6. Various speakers explored the theme of "Sharing Hope and Healing." A craft fair and silent auction yielded approximately \$2300, designated for the 2002 WNAC Convention in Memphis.

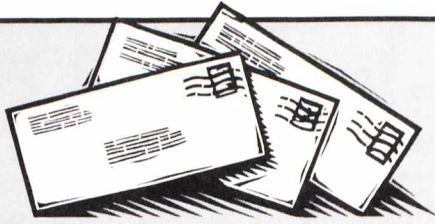


Tennessee president Debbie Mitchell (foreground) listens and prepares to worship with singing.



Donna Kinsey, Lisa Tucker, and Nadine Hood pledge their allegiance.

✿ Blue Bell FWB WAC, Sapulpa, Oklahoma, decked out in red, white, and blue for their August meeting. The program included a discussion of ways women can be committed to country, church, family, and the Lord. Women gave testimonies concerning loved ones in military service. Special patriotic music and door prizes (red, white, and blue candles) added interest.



Letters to WNAC

Dear WNAC,

Thank you so much for the phone card. It made my day. I was so thrilled to receive it. Thank you so much for your ministry to all of us. Have a great day!

In Christ,
Brooke Cousineau

Dear WNAC,

We received the boxes from the Provision Closet yesterday. Thank you so much for sending not only the supplies I asked for but also extra ones. That was very thoughtful, and they are greatly appreciated. I hope that you have a wonderful day. Take care and God bless.

Love,
Sarah Nichols

Dear members of WNAC

Thank you so much for the box you sent! The comforter and sheets will keep me warm on those cold Chicago nights. The pocket organizer will be helpful, and the phone card will allow me to keep in touch with my parents in Japan. Thank you so much!

In Christ,
Ben Bailey

Dear WNAC,

Thank you for the support you sent to our account this month; we appreciate it so very much. We are so thankful for WNAC and all that you do for all the missionaries.

The banquet at the National was such a blessing. The food, fellowship, and program were all so very good. Susan Turnbough did such a wonderful job in challenging our hearts for the Lord's work.

Your servants,
The Mark Shores Family

Lucy and Marge

a skit for WAC promotion

(Lucy walks in on Marge who is crying.)

Lucy: Marge, why are you crying. What's wrong?

Marge: Nothing, it's nothing, I'm just fine.

Lucy: If you're fine, why are you crying?

Marge: I'm not crying...it's just an allergy.

Lucy: Now Marge, I'm your friend. You can tell me what's bothering you.

Marge: As a Christian, I should be able to handle this myself.

Lucy: I think this is exactly what our program is about at our next WAC meeting. We're meeting _____ (*time and place*)

Marge: What do you mean? Is it a program about my problem?

Lucy: We don't even know what your problem is, Marge.

Marge: Isn't it about the masks we wear and about taking them off and being just who we are?

Lucy: You're right, it's called "Remove Your Mask." It's a great program.

Marge: What makes you think I'm wearing a mask, Lucy?

Lucy: How can I be your friend if you're not willing to be real? No matter what your problem is, Marge, as your sister in Christ and your friend, you should be able to trust me.

Marge: Okay Lucy, you are my friend. Come on, I'll tell you all about it.

Lucy: Well, I don't know that I want to hear ALL about it Marge. Just tell me the juicy parts.

Lucy and Marge is written each month by Dr. Mary Wisehart and Yvonne Hampton.

Conversation Partners

Two Buddhists, one "religious" person, one atheist, and me, a Christian, eager to talk about my God...

I found myself excited as I walked into the room where Conversation Partners was about to start. I had no idea what to expect, but just prayed that God would guide my conversation in some way toward Him and give me the words to show His love.

Are you one of those people who say: "I have no contact with internationals... how can I get involved with them?" One of the easiest, most excellent ways to get involved is through a ministry called Conversation Partners. My particular group met every Monday night at a local church. Dinner began at 6:30; the time from 7:00 to 8:00 was reserved for conversation—just simply talking and listening.

The ministry is attractive to international students interested in practicing their English. This gives a window of opportunity for Christians to share the truth about Jesus with those who, quite possibly, have never heard it.

I was involved with Conversation Partners for five months. It was an experience that I needed,

for God used it to teach me many lessons... patience, humbleness, love, and the death of pride. Most importantly, He taught me that living down the street from me were people who needed Him, while I stayed wrapped up in my comfortable Christian environment.

Held within our hearts as Christians is the greatest love that any man could ever know.

Maybe we should ask ourselves these questions. Are we showing the Buddhist, devoutly worshipping a piece of metal in the shape of a dead man, that ours is a *living* God? Do we tell the religious person bound in ritual and church affiliation that peace comes not through a priest or a memorized prayer, but only through a personal relationship with Jesus

Christ? Do we share with the atheist the truth that there really is a God who created them and loves them?

God entrusted His love to us, not to keep for ourselves, but to share with those who've not found it. I was able to do this through the ministry of Conversation Partners. How will you share?

Name: Lori Gaw
Age: 20
Home Church: Cookeville FWB, TN
Education: sophomore at FWBBC
Interests: missions; spent summer 2001 working in FWB Children's Home in Araras, Brazil

Check with your local school ESL department or a nearby college or university about opportunities available for you as a conversation partner.

HELP! I'M A MOM

bright ideas for mothers from mothers

Q My children often have to sit through adult worship services. I want them to listen and learn. How can I keep them quiet?

After my children reached school age, we never allowed toys at church. We gave them a notebook and encouraged them to write or draw anything they wished as long as it went along with the sermon. This kept their hands busy and their minds in gear. After church, they would proudly show us their illustrations (usually cartoons). We've kept a few of those notebooks as childhood mementos.

Here are some more ideas:

Consider quiet books and toys. If possible, have a special church bag that contains Christian resources. Even preschoolers can understand that everything at church should be about God.

Play quiet games. With primary-aged children play five in a row. Make a grid of five squares across and down on paper before church. Let children write Christian terms in each square (God, church, Holy Spirit, etc.). Each time they hear that word, they get to X the square. When children obtain five in a row, they receive five (dimes, quarters, dollars) to give as a special offering of their choosing.

Play "sacred word" instead of secret word. Choose one Christian term to be the sacred word of the day. Have children keep track of how

many times the word is used during the sermon. Parents listen and compare at the end of the service.

Pack a mystery bag. For preschoolers, this might include a healthy snack (in a quiet package) as well as Christian toys or books. Change the contents each week. For older children, place one or two objects per week along with a tablet and pen. Let children guess the connection between the object(s) and the sermon or songs, encouraging children to write down every possibility. After service, let them share their findings.

Look it up. Encourage children to look up Scripture passages and underline those that are meaningful.

Talk with your pastor. Discuss the possibility of including a Children's Sermon or special feature within the service.

*In the next issue:
How do you handle profanity, especially when children do not understand the terms?*

Send us your input on this subject. We welcome your questions too.
WNAC: Moms
P. O. Box 5002
Antioch TN 37011-5002 or
sarah@nafwb.org

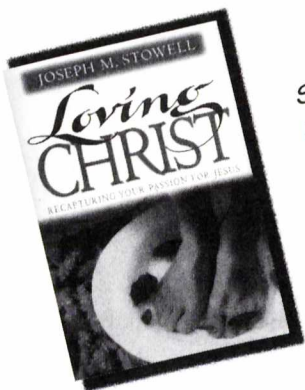
Read any good love stories lately?

One of the most unique and compelling love stories of all time is captured in Joseph Stowell's new book, *Loving Christ*. It's a story about a sinful woman and a self-righteous man. It's a story about us.

Centering on the gospel of Luke, Dr. Stowell explores the love lives of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet and the Pharisee who condemned her. He examines the motives of Judas Iscariot. Throughout the book the author cites modern-day examples of people who experienced the overwhelming and accepting love of Christ.

The book doesn't just stop with the stories. It's motivational, designed for "recapturing your passion for Jesus." Throughout its pages rings the haunting question, "What does it mean to really love Christ?"

Dr. Stowell, president of Moody Bible Institute, is a noted conference and radio speaker. His practical style and excellent communication skills make *Loving Christ* an easy read. If you're looking for something that will immerse you in the Word, convict and challenge you, this book is ideal. *Loving Christ* is available in hardback and in audio for those who prefer to listen.



LOVING CHRIST ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING \$19.99 (AVAILABLE FROM RANDALL BOOKSTORE 1-800-877-7030)

Be a Friend Through

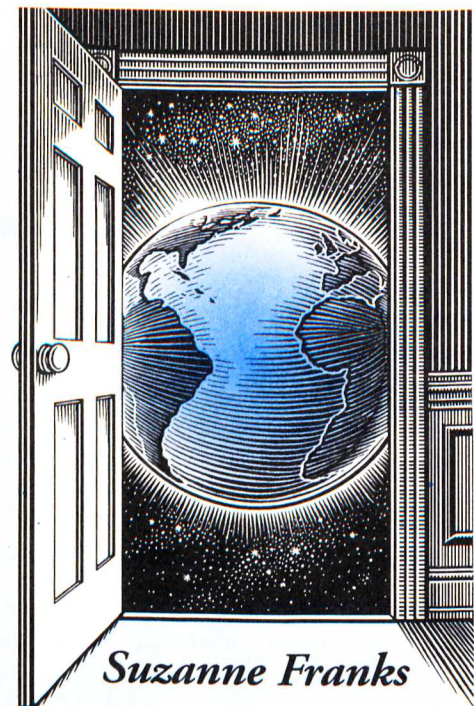
Homestay

"Lord, help me meet unsaved people so I can be a witness for You." This was my prayer. Guess what happened? My housemate moved to Illinois. So, what's the connection?

When I lost my housemate, I began thinking about hosting an international student in my home. Nashville is full of internationals, but I had been out of school for over 10 years and didn't know how to go about meeting students? I knew of families who had hosted foreign students, but as a single person, hosting an exchange student seemed out of my reach. Who would want to live with a thirty-something single woman? What if I got a male student? Besides, I couldn't afford to host a student.

The idea of hosting an international student wouldn't go away. So I decided to inquire at Nashville's two intensive English schools. I thought, "This is a long shot, but it won't hurt to ask." One of the schools sent me to a homestay coordinator. Her job was to place students in American homes. I was surprised to learn that most hosts are single people. There's a great need for people willing to open their homes and share their lives with foreign students. The coordinator explained that I could request female students and assured me that she always did her best to find a good match when placing students in the homes. Plus, students pay for room and board. For the first time, I thought, "This might actually work."

A few months later, Lizie arrived and we became instant friends. Lizie turned out to be a delightful person and a committed believer. She attended church with me, helped around the house, and was great company.



Suzanne Franks

I wondered why the Lord had sent me a believer, since I had hoped to have evangelism opportunities through the homestay program. Unbelievably, I met more unsaved people through Lizie than I had met in the past year. One Sunday Lizie and I took a Brazilian and a Japanese student to church with us. This was probably their first visit in a Protestant church.

As in any ministry, not all is fun and games. The homestay program involved considerable emotional and time commitment. Although most students are college age, they often get homesick and experience culture shock while here.

One of the difficulties foreign students face in a city like Nashville is the lack of public transportation. I made a commitment to take Lizie to school every morning and pick her up in the afternoon. This was no small task since the school was across town; it meant fighting rush hour traffic. I viewed my drive time with Lizie as a part-time job. More importantly, it was an investment in God's kingdom.

Helpful Websites

<http://www.iface.org/> (*InterFACE Ministries networks internationals with Americans interested in cross-culture*)

www.gospelcom.net/iv/ism/resource/host_prog.html
(*tips on hosting an international student*)

www.internationalstudents.org/index.html (*shares other opportunities to serve in international student ministries*)

www.gateman.com/acmi/index2.html (*Scripture booklets and pamphlets in over 400 languages and other useful information*)

I learned two life lessons. Never assume something can't be done until you try it and seize every opportunity for ministry. International students often stay for only two to six months and then return to their home countries. Sometimes the window of opportunity is short.

After two and one half months, Lizie finished her course and returned to Brazil. Was it worth the trouble? Certainly! When I have the opportunity, I would like to host another student.

How to Get Involved

- Call any local colleges or intensive English schools in your area. Ask if they have a homestay program.
- Check out the websites listed on page 24:
- Check to see if you have any local college student ministries.
- Ask the homestay coordinator about any pets. If you have allergies, you may want to ask for a non-smoker. Look into public transportation and be willing to take the student(s) to school.
- Ask about what is expected of the host family. For example, I could provide breakfast and supper. The student was responsible for her own lunch. Maybe you don't cook much. No problem: The homestay I worked with allowed the host to decide whether or not he or she would cook. If the host family doesn't provide meals, the homestay student gets a discount.
- If you have an extra room in your house, clean it out so it can be a guest bedroom.

Suzanne Franks is an MK who now resides in Nashville, Tennessee. She is an active single at Donelson FWB Church.

“Be Hushed”

“Be still and know that I am God...” Psalm 46:10

He was standing in the doorway of his older sister's room. Seemingly, they had been playing very well together. The truth be known, she had unceasingly been telling him what to do and when to do it. He had had enough. With hands on his hips, this very docile, two-year-old commanded, “Be hushed, Amy, just be hushed.”

The older sister is now married with a home of her own. The gentle, little brother? He is a junior at a Bible college. But recently, God brought that incident to mind as a little reminder of times when I am talking and not listening.

So many times I am with God like our daughter was with her little brother. I want to tell Him what to do and when to do it. Is He even aware of the situation? Why is He taking so long? I need an answer and I need it now. There is a real tendency in my life to insist that God “do it my way and in my time.”

Thinking I know what is best, I have even been guilty of praying that God would answer in only one certain way. Caught up in making sure everything turns out just the way I want it, I do not hear God.

The children of Israel had my problem. God wanted to help them, but they wouldn't get quiet and listen. “For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not,” (Isaiah 30:15).

Elijah had my problem. He was lamenting to the Lord how much he had done for the “cause.” God had to get his attention. God wasn't in the wind; God wasn't in the earthquake; God wasn't even in the fire. It was after the “still small voice” that Elijah knew he had communed with God. Do I miss out on God's blessings or God's provisions because I am busy bossing or whining instead of listening?

The wisest man who ever lived said in Ecclesiastes 4:6, “Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.” Oh, the trouble I could have saved myself over the years had I just “be hushed.”

We all would do well to accept Paul's instruction to the Thessalonians. “And that ye study to be quiet...” (1 Thessalonians 4:11). Listening to God is an acquired art. I am trying my best to improve my listening skills.

I wonder if there are days when God wants to take my face in His hands and say, “Be still! Be quiet! Just be hushed!”

“Be still and know that I am God!”

Debe Taylor, a pastor's wife from Hot Springs, Arkansas, serves as President of Women Nationally Active for Christ.

by
Debe
Taylor

Mission Alert

Evangelism News from Around the World

FWB AROUND THE WORLD

Missionary Molly Barker rejoices over a safe arrival in Uruguay. When she was rerouted after missing a flight, her luggage did not go with her. The incident worked in her favor as neither her bags nor her delayed luggage were searched.

Pray for Annette Aycock (Brazil) and family as they grieve the recent death of Annette's father, Hal Carter.

The Second FWB Church in Uberlandia took advantage of Brazil's Independence Day, scheduling a two day retreat. Seventy attendees heard messages from new missionary Andy Moore.

Ten students are enrolled in the Bible Institute in Bouna, Côte d'Ivoire. Three are serving as lay pastors. One has already planted a church, reports Dr. Kenneth Eagleton.

The FWB Garden Church for All Nations, Korea, has relocated, according to Pastor John Chang. Dr. Chang preached to nearly 12,000 youth in camps this past summer; around 8,000 accepted Christ as Savior.

FWB IN NORTH AMERICA

Missionary Alexander Drozdov and members of Good News Free Will Baptist Church recently participated in a special event for Chicago's Russian community. A rainstorm drew many to the church's tent for shelter. The group gave away over 1000 hot dogs and gospel booklets.

In one month, ladies from Faith FWB Church, Wisconsin witnessed 28 professions of faith through their ministry at a homeless shelter for women. Missionary Terry Hardison's people are also involved in rescue mission, abortion clinic, prison, and tract ministries.

Missionary Andrei Chirine has begun Sunday services within the Russian community in Philadelphia, PA. Two men were baptized the first week.

Around 30 children prayed the sinner's prayer during a service at a housing development in San Juan, Puerto Rico, according to missionary David Roy.

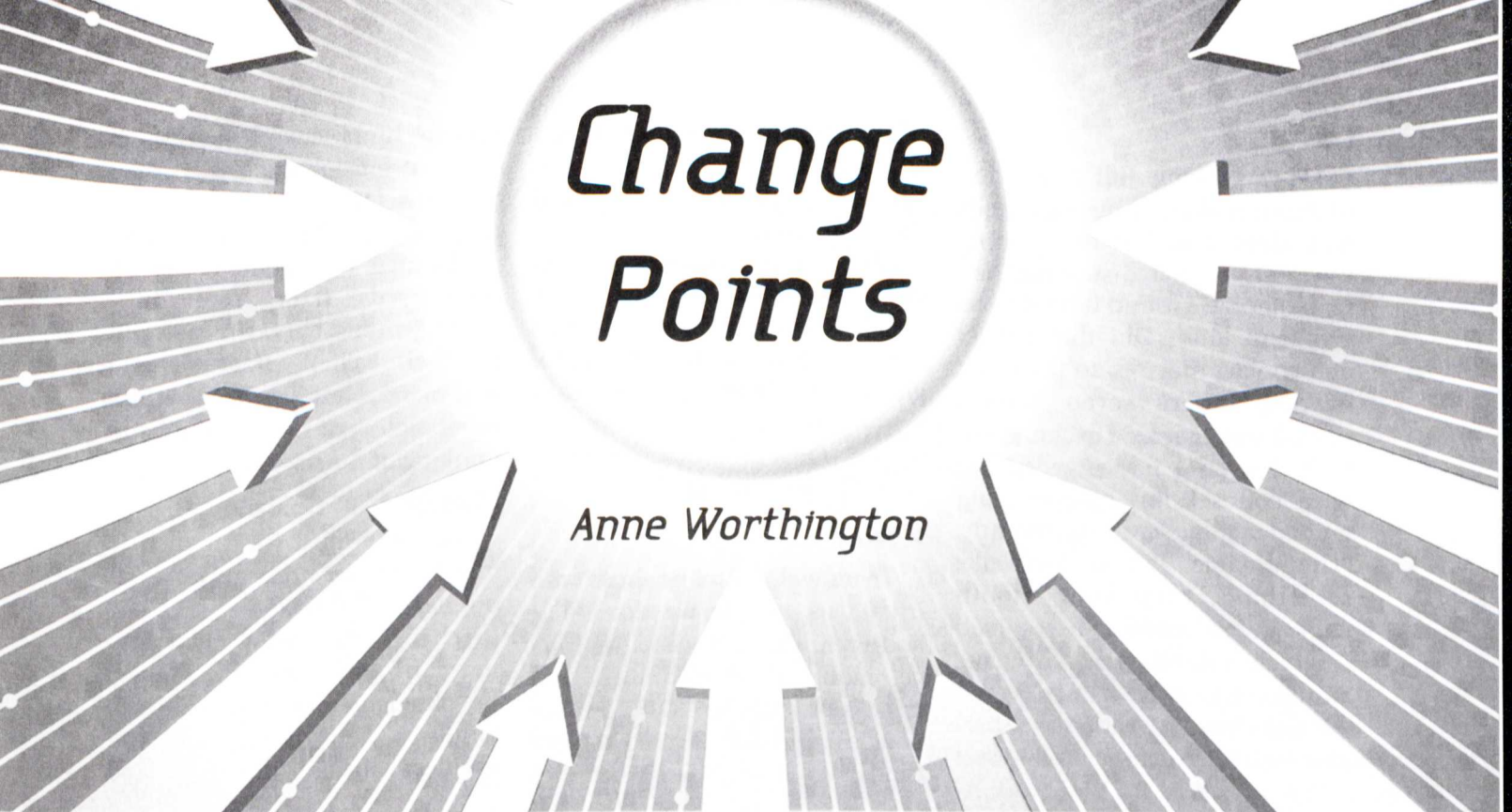
WORLDWIDE CONCERNS

Pray for the safety of all missionaries worldwide.

Three missionaries to the Kuna Indians in Panama have now been declared dead. The three men, captured by terrorists in 1993, were held hostage for many years. The news brings closure to these families.

Though several Arab nations have aligned themselves with our country in the war against terrorism, the persecution of Christians by these governments continues.

Outbreaks of violence in Nigeria have forced several missionaries to suspend ministries. The fighting, labeled "Muslim/ Christian," challenges true believers to show Christ's love in the midst of conflict.



Change Points

Anne Worthington

Daughter

Can you imagine not liking your own daughter? Not to worry, she knows it. I told her when she reached adulthood. She responded in her typical way, with laughter.

Perhaps from day one that's what I didn't like—her wonderful confidence, her self-assuredness, her independence.

It all began with those awful afterbirth pains. I remember clinching my fists and curling my toes as I nursed her. I was truly glad when she preferred the bottle. For some reason, I despised nursing her. It was not the pleasant experience I'd known with her brother twenty months earlier. I loved her and was never unkind or mean, but she did not receive the empathy I gave her brother. He and I were alike. I always knew, and still know, what he feels and how and what he thinks. Not so with my daughter. She was that wonderfully,

delightful person whom everyone liked and wanted to be with—always happy, always content, always positive and optimistic. When other teens hated themselves, she loved herself and thought herself great. Never brooding or depressed, she was wonderful, and life was wonderful.

How could I like such an extrovert? We were such opposites. She with self-confidence, I with feelings of inferiority. She who liked herself so completely, I who didn't like anything about myself. She who so freely gave of herself, I who was afraid to be myself. She who had friends and fun, I who seldom had fun and knew few friends.

Did this undeserved dislike of my daughter bother me? I'll say! I probably said more prayers over my feelings than I would care to count. Do I still harbor those feelings? No, not in the least. A mother now, has her personality changed? No, she is

still her delightful self and I love her dearly. Could it be that I changed?

Mother

I held my dear mother's lifeless face in my hands, kissed it, and told her I loved her. But it was too late. Too late to tell her what a godly example she had been. Too late to praise her for her goodness and kindness. Too late to acknowledge the sacrifices she had made on my behalf. Too late to ask forgiveness for being an unloving, cold, and indifferent daughter. Did I weep that day when I looked into her face? Yes. I still do.

What irritated me most about her? Maybe we were too much alike. I wanted to be with her during her dying hours. Though many years and miles had separated us, I wanted to show her that I could be warm and loving. I desperately wanted to be at her side when she drew her last breath. When I arrived to check on her that morning, her heart was faintly beating and she had stopped breathing. It was too late to change.

Colleague

He was young, full of life, full of himself, full of new methods and ideas, and full of irritating ways. Was I irritated? You had better believe it. I found it hard to be civil and kind. Did that bother and convict me? Yes, to the point of despair. For seven years I prayed and agonized over my attitude. I should have heeded the wise counsel my nine-year-old granddaughter gave me recently, "Grandmama, if you don't like something, keep your mouth shut." Our conflicts resolved when he moved away to pursue another job.

Over twenty years have past and I can't remember now what

what I had done set in. I had wounded and crushed my friend. Far more serious, I had grieved the Holy Spirit.

Almost immediately her many good qualities flashed in my mind. I wrote them down lest I forget. The next morning I apologized and rehearsed those qualities—qualities sorely lacking in myself. One of those is forgiveness. She remains my friend.

Change

There will always be those who irritate us, people we don't like, and with whom it seems we can't get along. If allowed, they will burst our bubbles, rain on our parades, and lick the red off our candy. What they are, what they

ness [or humbleness] of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (NKJV). How can we practice humility? Give others preferential treatment. Focus on their needs, rather than ours. Show genuine concern; look out for their welfare, interests, and well being. Humility is not about thinking less of ourselves, it's not thinking of ourselves at all.

Change Our Hearts

Not only must we change our minds, but we must also change our hearts. Ephesians 4:31,32 says to change the sinful heart attitudes of bitterness, rage, anger brawling, slander, and malice to kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Inward bitterness and

There will always be those who irritate us . . .

irritated me. Yes, he had irritating qualities, but his many good qualities far outweighed his bad. Today I consider him one of my dearest friends. When our paths cross we hug. I can honestly say we genuinely love each other. We have changed.

Friend

Marie (not her real name) irritated me to the exploding point and explode I did. I'd had all I could take of her constant complaining. With harsh, cruel and angry words I told her she was the most complaining person I had ever met. I was tired of it. No one wanted to hear over and over about her ailments. She was hurt and wounded by my unfeeling words. I could see it in her eyes. Her friend had lashed out at her.

At first I felt good about getting those pinned up feelings off my chest. But that night the reality of

say, or what they do just annoys us. At home, on the highways, in the work place, even at church—no matter where we turn, we encounter irritating people. And rest assured, we are also irritating. What should we do? We can't isolate ourselves if we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. How do we as Christians handle irritating people?

Change Our Minds

Warren Wiersbe in his book, *Be Joyful*, says that people can steal our joy. He suggests that in order to defeat joy-stealers we must cultivate the right mindset. Since outlook determines outcome, what we think will determine our attitudes, actions and reactions toward others. Joy is birthed in humility.

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit," Philippians 2:3 says, "but in lowli-

ill-will often lead to rage and anger which spiral downward to physical and verbal abuse.

Change Our Garments

The Apostle Paul instructed the Colossian Christians in Colossians 3:8-14 to exchange the old for the new. Take off the old filthy, smelly, tattered rags of the sinful human nature—anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language and lying. Clothe ourselves instead with new garments of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, and most of all, love.

Change Our Actions

Act rather than react. Galatians 5:19-20 says that hatred, discord, jealousy, outbursts of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, murder, etc. are the natural reactions of those controlled by the sinful flesh. But those who are filled and controlled by the

indwelling Holy Spirit will act (rather than react) with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Change Our Affections

"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Love is the changing factor. It binds the fruit of the Spirit together. Love is not hasty, but patient and slow to anger. It is not inconsiderate, but kind, good-natured, gentle, tender, and polite. It doesn't envy, but is content. Love is not arrogant, but humble. It is not rude, but courteous. Self-forgetting rather than self-seeking, love is not irritable. It is not vindictive or malicious, and does not retaliate when wronged. Love protects others, trusts others, hopes the best for others, and preserves others.

Change Me

When I honestly examine myself, I find that the source of irritation is not in other people. It is I with the cancer. I am the one who needs change. How about you?

Dare we follow the example of Evelyn Christenson, author of the book, *Lord Change Me?* For 14 months she prayed, "Lord, don't change my husband. Don't change my children, don't change my pastor, change me." Am I—are you—willing to take the risk to pray, "Lord, change my mind, my heart, my garments, my actions, my affections—change me!"

Anne Worthington is no stranger to change. She recently relocated in Ayden, North Carolina, where she now cares for her father-in-law.

National Marriage Enrichment Conference

APRIL 5-7, 2002

PIGEON FORGE, TENNESSEE

Don't Miss:

- *The beautiful setting of the Smokey Mountains.
- *The wonderful accommodations of the Smokey Shadows Conference Center.
- *An opportunity to fortify your marriage, family, and church.

Hosted by the Master's Men Department in partnership with WNAC, this National FWB Marriage Enrichment Conference will feature Drs. Richard and Rebekah Land. Dr. Richard Land has championed the interests of American families for more than a decade as the President of the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. His daily radio program, "For Faith and Family," reaches more than 1.5 million listeners nationwide. Dr. Rebekah Land is a psychotherapist in private practice in Nashville, Tennessee.

Conference Agenda

Friday

- 4:00 Check In
- 7:00 1st Session—Dr. Richard Land

Saturday

- 8:00 Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 2nd Sessions
 - Men Only—Dr. Richard Land
 - Women Only—Dr. Rebekah Land
- 10:45 3rd Session—Dr. Richard Land
- 7:00 4th Session/ Banquet for Couples
 - Dr. Richard Land

Sunday

- 8:00 Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 5th Session/ Worship Service
 - Dr. Richard Land

Registration includes:

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THE MIRACLE CAME

† GENEVA POOLE †

Christian heritage? Yes. I will never forget the heritage afforded me by Christian parents, Sunday school teachers and church family.

Church filled the spiritual and social aspects of my life. My home church would be packed each spring and fall during revival. I recall sitting on the floor next to the pulpit just to make room for more adults. The revivalists would preach down fire and brimstone. Even as a child, I experienced joy as people trusted Christ as Savior.

But I had a problem. Night after night I desired to make a public profession of faith, but I was unable. Somehow I had been led to believe I was too young; I would have to wait until I was older and understood. Revival after revival and I still had not responded.

In my third year of public school, my legs began to ache and I experienced fever. Since I often had unexplainable fever, my parents were not very concerned. However, this time the fever persisted. Soon I was no longer able to walk or even straighten my legs. Hospital tests revealed the dreaded disease—polio.

Mother was constantly by my side throughout my hospital stay. A God-fearing woman who knew Him in intimate ways, she knelt beside my bed and poured out her heart. She committed me into His care and begged for my healing.

The miracle came! The fever left; the pain was gone. The day of my hospital dismissal, I wanted to walk down the stairs. I did not understand what had taken place, but I was indeed happy to be my normal self again. My mother knew a sweet secret, one she no doubt shared with my dad and our Christian doctor.

A couple years later, she told me how God had answered her prayers for my healing. I could not shake this from my mind. God began to deal with me in a different way. I needed to be saved.

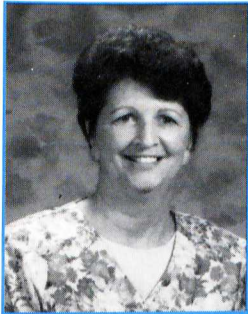
In those days, people thought individuals could only be saved after a sermon or in a revival. Under great conviction, I waited.

My first opportunity came on Mother's Day evening. I went forward. What a relief to know I had finally become a Christian!

God did not stop there! And how grateful I am. Each night after my personal devotions, I would lie in bed thinking, giving the Holy Spirit opportunity to speak. He did speak and revealed that he wanted me as a missionary. At age 13, in a missions service, I gave myself to God to be used wherever He desired. Since that night, the vision of the mission field has never dimmed.

God saved. God led. After 41 years of serving Him in Brazil, I am still glad I yielded to His will.

Geneva Poole serves as a missionary in Riberão Preto, Brazil. She and her husband Bobby are currently on stateside assignment.



Words FOR WOMEN

*Marjorie H.
Workman*

9 1 1

June 21 began as a normal, routine day. My husband and I went to our separate offices. Having just returned from an out-of-town business trip and visit with our youngest daughter in Florida, we had catch-up work to do. Tired and exhausted by the end of the workday, we rushed home to begin our evening routine that included a two-mile walk.

We had barely begun walking when nausea forced us back to the house. A good thing, too, because within minutes my husband was having chest pains. Pains he lightly brushed aside as "indigestion." I watched him turn clammy and pale and urged him to go to the emergency room. Reluctantly agreeing, he insisted I pack an overnight bag. With bag and car keys in hand and a tinge of anxiety in my voice, I announced, "Let's go." To which he responded, "I think you had better call 911." Stunned by his admission of trouble, I managed to walk across the room to the phone. With heart pounding in my throat, I dialed that infamous number. I mustered enough calmness in my voice to describe the symptoms and give directions to our house to the 911 dispatcher. That call probably saved my husband's life because his "indigestion" was really a heart attack.

September 11 began another typical day in the lives of millions of Americans. It was "business as usual." However, by mid-morning we were reeling from the shock of the catastrophic attacks on New York City and Washington D. C. Weeks later we are still shocked, saddened, and grieved for the families affected by the attacks.

Was it a coincidence that the attacks occurred on the ninth month and the eleventh day—9/11? Could this be God's emergency call to wake up America? The America that has shunned His commandments, killed the unborn, and drifted into apathy and hedonism.

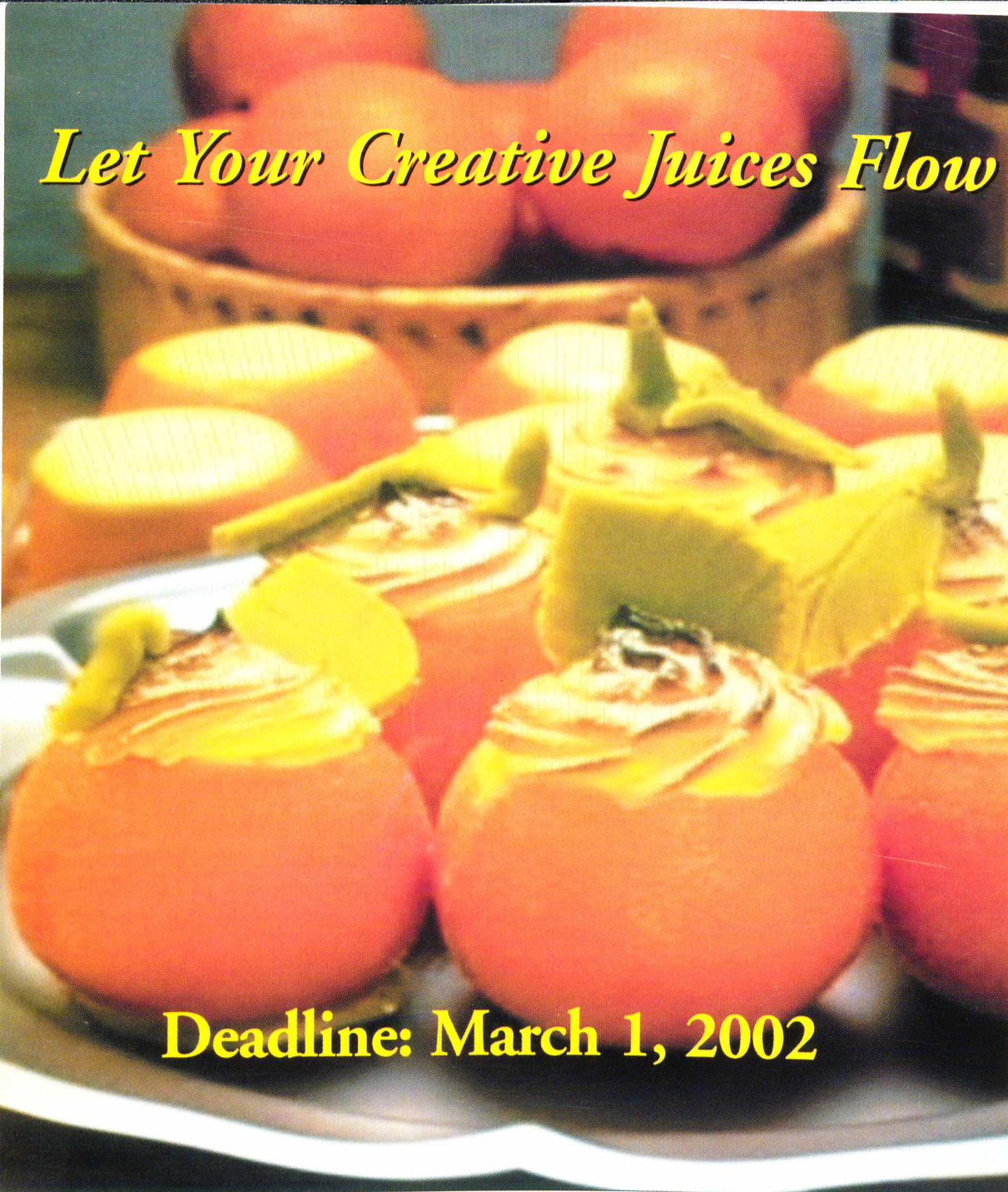
Although we may not understand how God governs the events in the universe or why He allows man's free will to wreak

such calamity, we do know that He is sovereign. He was there. He knew every detail before it happened. Could He have thwarted the terrorists' plans? Certainly! (Read Psalm 33:8-22.) John Piper said it best in *World* magazine, "From the smallest thing to the greatest, good and evil, happy and sad, pagan and Christian, pain and pleasure—God governs all for His wise, just, and good purposes." It is in knowing that God is sovereign that we have hope and peace in times like these.

I'm glad there is a 911 emergency line to call when we are in trouble. I'm even more grateful that God has a 911 available for His children. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1). I first encountered this thought of God's 911 from Victor Parachin in the Sept/Oct 2000 issue of *Christian Reader*. He shares the story of Charles Haddon Spurgeon who ministered during a terrible cholera epidemic in London in 1854. Conducting funeral after funeral, Spurgeon became discouraged over the massive spread of the disease. The long hours caring for the sick and dying left him tired and weak. He knew it would only be a matter of time before he contracted the deadly disease.

Walking home from one of the many funerals, he passed a shoemaker's shop. A flyer in the shop window quoted from Psalm 91. "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; . . . nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; . . . A thousand shall fall at thy side, . . . but it shall not come nigh thee." Immediately Spurgeon's spirits were lifted. He said, "I felt secure, refreshed, girt with immortality." He was able to continue his ministry with the dying without fear and without harm. He recognized the "hand of God" in placing those words of comfort at the right place at the right time.

The next time you face a crisis situation, call on God's 911 to give you peace, comfort, security, consolation or confidence.



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