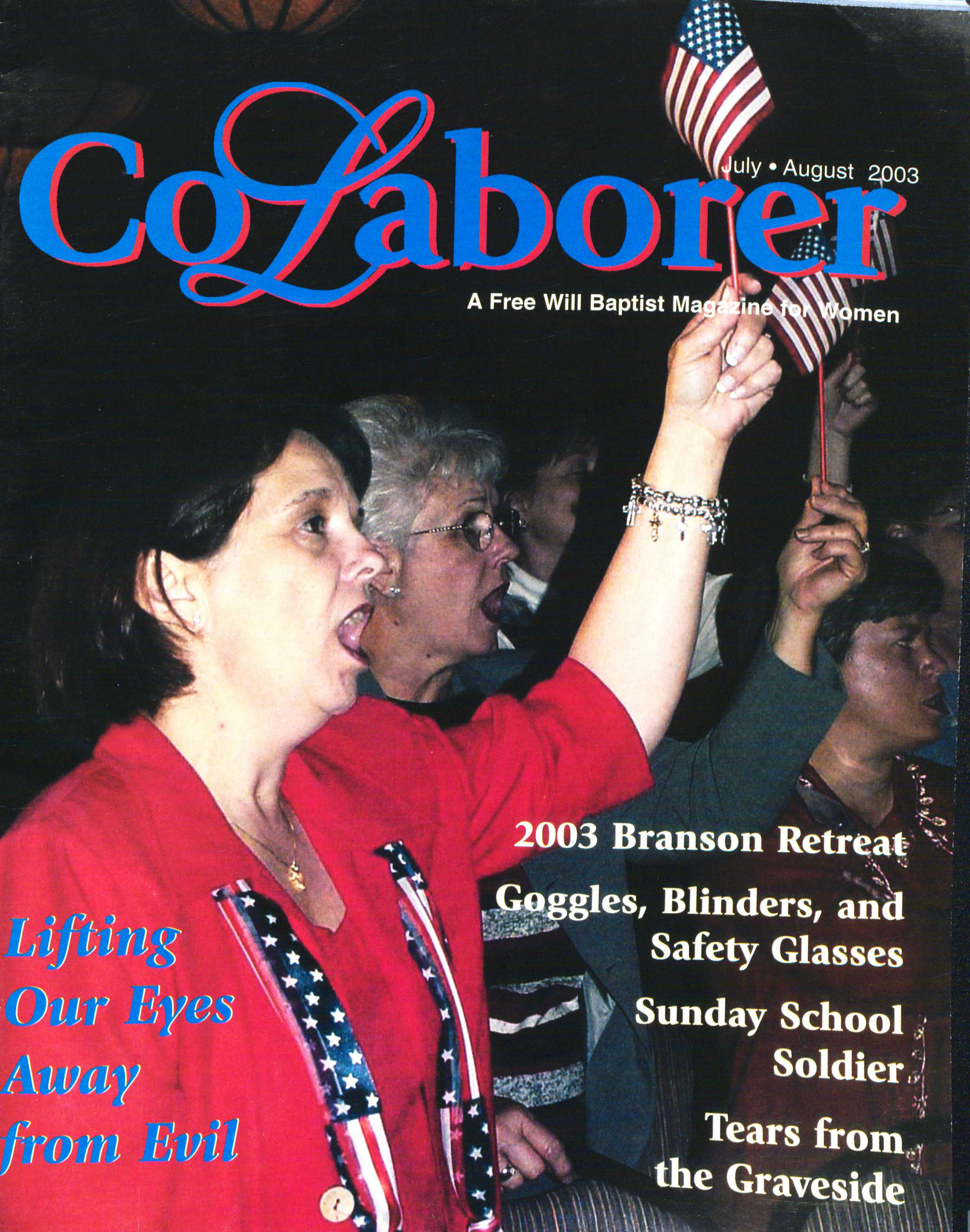


CoLaborer

July • August 2003

A Free Will Baptist Magazine for Women

Lifting Our Eyes Away from Evil

2003 Branson Retreat

Goggles, Blinders, and Safety Glasses

Sunday School Soldier

Tears from the Graveside

CoLaborer

July-August 2003
Volume 43, Number 4

STAFF

Executive Editor
Marjorie Workman

Editor
Sarah Fletcher

Circulation
Yvonne Hampton

Executive Board
Debe Taylor
Hot Springs, Arkansas
Joanne King
Cramerton, North Carolina
Debbie Burden
Antioch, Tennessee
Dawn Sweeney
Church Hill, Tennessee
Yvonne Brown
Fresno, California
Carolyn Hendrix
Madison, Alabama

Cover Photo: WNAC National Retreat, Branson, Missouri

Credits: pp. 18, 24—FWB Foreign Missions; p. 26—Clipart.com

*Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE
www.nafwb.org/wnac
or call 1-877-767-7662



Labor of my heart

Sarah Fletcher

God Bless America

I'll never forget that day in eighth grade history class. We watched a classic, made-for-elementary-school film about the War of 1812. Yet midst the click of the reels and the yawns of young Americans, something happened. Patriotism soared. The sight of the American flag flying in the breeze sent shivers down my spine. Though I had daily pledged allegiance to that flag, on that day I became a loyal citizen. I remain loyal today. I am proud to be an American.

I've been to the top of Pike's Peak where Katherine Bates wrote her majestic tune. And looking out at the vast expanse from the mountains to the prairie, I whispered her prayer again, "God Bless America."

That three-word prayer has been breathed by multitudes on myriad occasions. And God has answered. We are so blessed. No other nation in modern history has experienced such wealth and abundance from the hand of God.

Yet is this enough? As Christians, should we not also pray, God bless Iraq, God bless North Korea, God bless Canada, God bless France? The Unites States of America does not hold exclusive rights to the blessings of God. He has promised to bless all nations.

Genesis 12 records the promise and the purpose of God's blessings. God would bless Abraham, and bless Abraham's great nation, so they in turn could be a blessing. In Abraham, all the families of the earth would be blessed. How would this happen? Through the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ.

"Christ hath redeemed us... that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3;13, 14). We were purchased by his blood to perpetuate his blessings. As believers and blessed people of God, we are commanded to go and make disciples of all nations. God's abundant blessings give us the means to accomplish this.

We should daily pray, God bless Iraq (and other nations) with the knowledge of Your salvation. May Satan's plans for evil be thwarted. Bless your redeemed ones there; strengthen them in the power of Your might. Grant believers holy boldness to speak your name. Save them from the hand of their enemies. May your name be honored and glorified.

God bless America? Certainly. This should be our prayer. Bless America with a giving spirit. May her wealth and abundance be spent to feed the hungry and provide for the poor—true religion and undefiled (James 1:27). Bless America's people with knowledge of Your Truth. May she share that Truth to set men free. Bless her leaders with wisdom from on high. Bless her churches with unity and holy fervor. Purge her sins. Cleanse and cover her in righteousness for *"blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord;"* (Psalm 33:12).

Lifting Our Eyes Away from Evil

At a Glance

FEATURES AND ARTICLES

4 **Lift Up Your Eyes—A Glimpse of Branson**

6 **Sunday School Soldier**—Susan Henderson

8 **JULY FEATURE**
Goggles, Blinders, and Safety Glasses—Carol Reid

12 **Dressed for Victorious Living**—Isabell Wheeler-Oakes

13 **AUGUST FEATURE**
Tears From the Graveside—Diane Thomas Bridgman

16 **God is Good!**—Diana Harris

17 **The Path**—Kathy Ruffing

26 **Looks Can Be Deceiving**—Betty M. Reeves

28 **www. Worrisome World of the Web**—anonymous

Features may be used for WAC programs.

COLUMNS AND DEPARTMENTS

7 **Marriage Enrichment Conference Registration**

18 **2003 Convention Delegate Registration**

19 **Springboard: memos for WAC officers**

20 **Labors of Love**

21 **Letters to WNAC**

21 **Help I'm a Mom!**

22 **I Feel I'm Gettin' Stronger**—Debe Taylor

23 **Life!/Action**

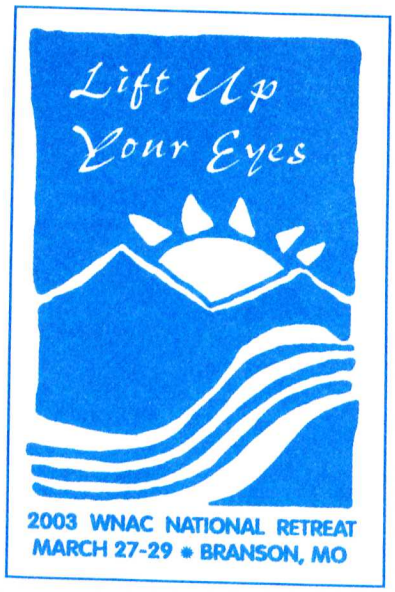
24 **Focus: M Team**

31 **Words for Women**—Marjorie Workman

CoLaborer (ISSN 0896-0038) is published bimonthly by Women Nationally Active for Christ of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 5233 Mt.View Road, Antioch, TN 37013-2306, (615)•731•6812. Address all correspondence to P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Annual subscription rates: $11.50 per year, single; $10.50 per year, 5 or more to one address.

Periodical postage paid at Antioch, TN and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *CoLaborer*, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

Copyright privileges, reserved © 2003 Member of the Evangelical Press Association. USPS 0896-0038



I will lift up my eyes unto the hills...

BRANSON'S Ozark hills provided a picturesque backdrop as over 800 women from 18 states and three foreign countries joined in the Psalmist's declaration at the WNAC National Retreat.

from whence cometh my help.

WHEN the retreat was planned, America was not at war. Yet how timely that the speaker, Ronda Sturgill, is the wife of a FWB Air Force Chaplain. Throughout the sessions, God's presence and His ever-present help were evidenced. Two women received Christ as Savior.



The call beckoned from bags, T-shirts, video screens, and printed programs, "Lift up your eyes." And women responded. Glancing out over the rows and rows of participants crowded in the huge hotel ballroom, one could see expressive faces and uplifted eyes...



Eyes teeming with praise

A variety of worship and praise songs, led by musicians Debbie Burden and Marian Kern, appealed to both young and old. From "Where Could I Go" to "Shout to the Lord" women voiced their sentiments in song. Guest soloist, Ronda Freeman, ascended to the heights (literally) and stirred hearts with her selections.



**"I will lift up my voice in an anthem of praise,
I will lift my life to you and adore you all my days."**



Eyes sparkling with laughter

Minnie Pearl (alias Kathy Thebeau) and the Coon Creek Band from De Soto, MO, sent women knee-slapping, toe-tapping, and hee-hawing during an early morning Hillbilly Hoe Down. Women also heard from Betty Dail, a bonafide yodeler. A barnyard tale involving the audience, put the WNAC staff and executive board on parade—in costume!

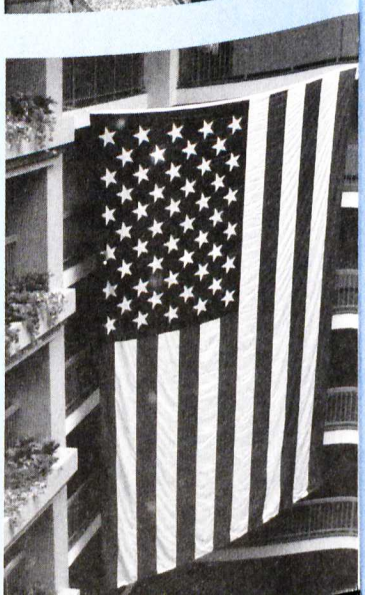
"If we raided your rooms, we'd probably find enough food to feed the five thousand."



Eyes beaming with patriotism

Patriotic songs interspersed with narration brought hearty applause and the crowd to its feet during a special patriotic feature Friday morning. Flags waved, voices sounded, women prayed for our nation, for our President, for our troops, for our enemies.

"We also pray today for the Iraqi people. They are mothers of sons at war as well, people who need to know Christ as Savior."





Eyes hungering for the Word

"A solid Bible teacher." That's how many described speaker Ronda Sturgill. She opened the Word and led the group in a study of God's grace. Her enthusiasm for the topic brought smiles as she proclaimed after each aspect, "That's my favorite kind of grace." Ronda also related her testimony and encouraged women to invite God's strength to work through our weakness.

"We are lifted up by his wings—the wing of grace and the wing of discipline."





Eyes sorrowing for the world

Verla Fletcher from Locust Grove, Oklahoma, coordinated, "Courage to Go; Courage to Stand," a Friday evening music and drama presentation that heralded the lives of three missionary women. Women responded by graciously giving over $8000 in a special missions offering, benefiting ten current FWB missionaries who participated in the retreat.

"They just need Jesus."—Ede Zuniga



Eyes longing for the future

For many, this was their first WNAC National Retreat experience—first, but probably not their last. An overwhelming number of attendees indicated they'd be back for another Branson retreat. Will you lift up your eyes and join them? Plan now to attend one or more of these upcoming WNAC events.



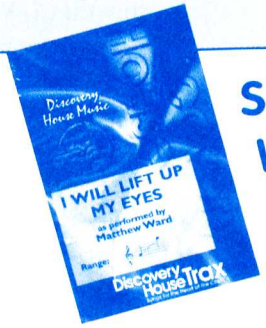
WNAC National Convention
July 21-22, 2003, Tampa, FL

WNAC/Master's Men National Marriage Enrichment Conference
September 19-21, 2003, Pigeon Forge, TN

WNAC National Retreat
October 28-30, 2004, Ridgecrest, NC



PICTURES: ***p.4 Left, top to bottom:*** **1. Marjorie Workman displays Retreat T-shirt. 2. The Coon Creek Band strikes up a tune. 3. Some women come prepared!** ***Right, top to bottom:*** **1. Ronda Freeman sings. 2. "Howdy! I'm just so proud to be here." 3. The Grand Old Flag adorns the Chateau lobby.** ***p. 5 Left top to bottom:*** **1. Ronda Sturgill shares the Word. 2. Home missionary Kim Fairchild tells of her vibrant children. 3. French M Team members pray.** ***Right, top to bottom:*** **1. What a crowd! 2. Missouri president Shirley Jackson welcomes everyone. 3. Becky Gwartney and Tamatha Olgilvie *(background)* reenact missionary moments.**



Share the 2003 WNAC Theme Song

as sung at the Retreat
Track tape includes sheet with words and music.

Only $7 plus S & H

Call 1-877-767-7662 to order.

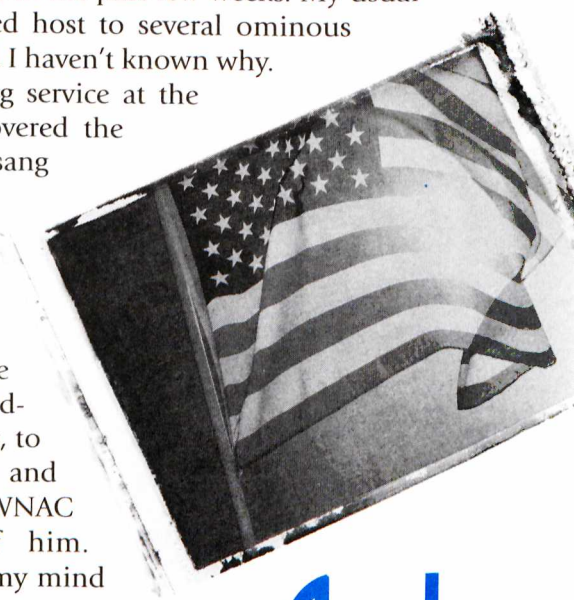


Sunday School Soldier

by Susan Henderson

I'M SURE YOU'RE ACQUAINTED with the feeling; a heaviness of heart, an emptiness of soul; an ominous weight of mind. Grief. Most of the time we can pinpoint its exact cause–a death, a loss, an illness, a broken friendship. However, sometimes grief haunts us inexplicably. Such has been the case for me in the past few weeks. My usually sunny outlook on life has played host to several ominous storm clouds. I've been grieving, and I haven't known why.

Until Friday. During the morning service at the WNAC Retreat in Branson, I discovered the cause of my grief. War. As the ladies sang patriotic songs, waved tiny American flags, and prayed for our fighting men and women, I wept uncontrollably. I mourned.

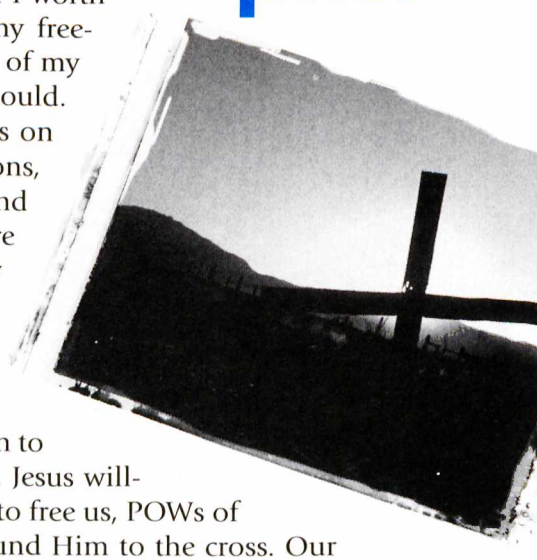


I owe my patriotic spirit to my dad, a Marine and veteran of the Korean War. Throughout my childhood he taught me to honor the flag, to pray for my country, and to respect and appreciate my freedom. During the WNAC service, I naturally thought of him. However, the prominent picture in my mind that day was Jacob.

Jacob was a student in one of the first Sunday school classes I ever taught, sometime back in the early 1990's. About a week before the bombing began in Iraq, Jacob received his deployment orders. That's tough for a Sunday school teacher's heart to take.

Am I worth the price...?

As I waved my flag and sang "God Bless America," I thought of my Sunday school soldier Jacob, and I asked myself a disturbing question. Am I worth the price Jacob is willing to pay for my freedom? Not particularly. I take advantage of my freedom. I don't appreciate it as I should. Jacob is too precious. When those of us on the home front stop and think of the sons, daughters, husbands, wives, fathers and mothers laying down their lives to secure our freedom, we should be unbelievably humbled. Worth it? No, but they battle for our freedom anyway.



Ironic though it seems, war provides us a perfect picture of grace. Think about it. God sent His beloved Son to fight for and win our spiritual freedom. Jesus willingly became a prisoner of war in order to free us, POWs of our own making. Our chains of sin bound Him to the cross. Our imperfections held Him captive. Are we worth it? Not particularly. We take advantage of our spiritual freedom. We don't appreciate it as we

Check the price tags attached to freedom:

should. Songwriter Bill Gaither once penned these beautiful words:

"But in my heart a battle is raging.
Not all prisoners of war have come home.
These were battlefields of my own making.
I didn't know that the war had been won.
But then I heard that the King of the Ages
Had fought all my battles for me,
And victory was mine for the claiming.
And now, praise His name, I am free."

(From, "It is Finished," copyright 1976, Gaither Music)

Worth it? Hardly, but Jesus came, He fought, He died, He won freedom for us all. That's grace.

Although none of us would claim worthiness to national and spiritual freedom, the price has been paid nonetheless. What should be our response? National and spiritual patriotism. We must practice these; we must teach these to our children.

What should we do with our national freedom? What should we do with our spiritual freedom? We must teach our children *who* has fought and died for each. We should also express appreciation for freedom by *living* in freedom. We must not allow the Sunday School soldiers or the Savior of the World to have sacrificed in vain. We must live free!

We must also teach our children to share freedom. Jacob fights not only to preserve *my* freedom, but also to gain the freedom of others. If we teach our children well, they will be willing to fight and die for the national and spiritual freedom of others. Jesus said, *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:13).

Finally, we must teach our children the cost of freedom. Freedom isn't free, you know . . . . or is it? Freedom and fairness, it seems, share little common ground. Freedom is always purchased with blood. However, few of those who enjoy national freedom have spilled a drop. And *none* of those who enjoy spiritual freedom have paid for it with their own lives. In a way, freedom *is* free. It's a gift. A very expensive gift, for which someone else paid dearly. A small percentage of Americans have purchased freedom for "We, the People." The Prince of Peace alone bought the freedom of our souls. May we never forget the cost of freedom, a cost that others have gracefully paid.

Casualties*

—in the Civil War: 558,052
—in World War I: 11,708
—in World War II: 407,316
—in the Korean War: 54,246
—in the Vietnam War: 58,168
—in the Gulf War: 293
—in the war for our souls: 1

*Figures listed include only U.S. casualties. Statistics gleaned from Lee, R. "The History Guy: Casualties From America's Wars." For additional information, please visit www.historyguy.com.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

Susan Henderson is involved in shaping the lives of many "soldiers" as Sunday school teacher, FWB curriculum writer, and secretary in the Purdy, MO, Public School System. Susan attends Macedonia FWB Church.

Is your MARRIAGE worth it?

WNAC/ Master's Men

National Marriage Enrichment Conference

September 19-21

Smoky Shadows Conference Center

Pigeon Forge, TN

with special guests:

REGISTRATION

Husband's Name _____

Wife's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone ( ) _____ Email _____

SPECIAL NEEDS: Non-smoking (if available)_____ Handicapped _____

MAIL FULL PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION TO:

Master's Men P.O. Box 5002 Antioch, TN 37011-5002

❑ $225 per couple
(includes two nights lodging with continental breakfasts, banquet, and all conference sessions)

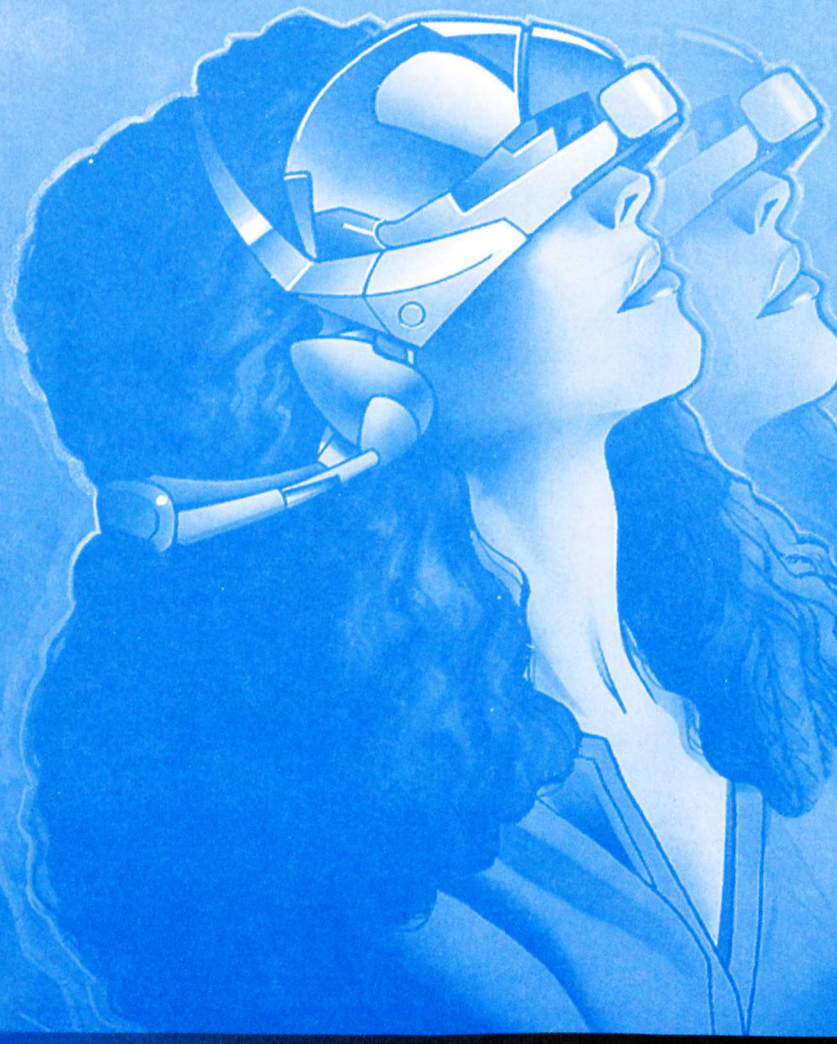
❑ $125 per couple OFF SITE
(includes banquet and all conference sessions)

Questions? 1-877-767-8039

Spacious King Rooms with Jacuzzi Tubs

JULY FEATURE

GOGGLES, BLINDERS, AND SAFETY GLASSES



guarding our eyes from evil

by Carol Reid

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes."
Psalm 101:3a

Children often sing:

"Oh, be careful little eyes what you see;
Oh, be careful little eyes what you see!"

Adults chime in:

"Open my eyes that I may see,
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me."

So which is it—open or closed?

Are we the "see-no-evil" monkeys with our hands over our eyes? Or are we looking to "the hills from whence cometh our help"? We might end up like Winken, Blinken and Nod!

For presentation helps and suggestions, see the 2003 Program and Plan Book, pp. 38-39

The answer is simple—not easy, but simple. Both. Our eyes must be open to God's Word; open to God's will; open to God's perfect holiness. We should be open to the moving of the Spirit, open to the needs of others; open to help from above.

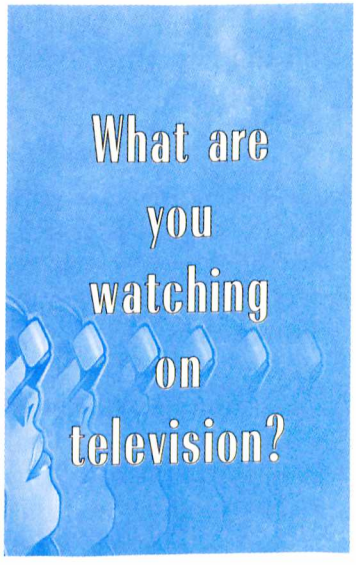
But at the same time, we must guard our eyes from temptation, from evil, from straying away from the face of Jesus. Maybe "Oh be careful little eyes" and "Open my eyes" would make a nice medley.

SAFETY GLASSES

Remember high school chemistry class? One of the safety requirements was a pair of safety glasses—clear plastic oversized glasses to protect your eyes from any chemical reactions that splashed or erupted. Maybe you had them in shop class to protect from wood chips or particles that would fly up and cause danger to your eyes. You may still have a pair if you work in a lab or a doctor's office or on a factory line as protection from germs and disease or injury. Eyes are much too precious to risk. These glasses are not a fashion statement—they are a protective measure for the dearest of the five senses.

What about your spiritual safety glasses in the lab of life? Have you put yours away and forgotten where they are? Maybe you need to rummage through some drawers and find them again.

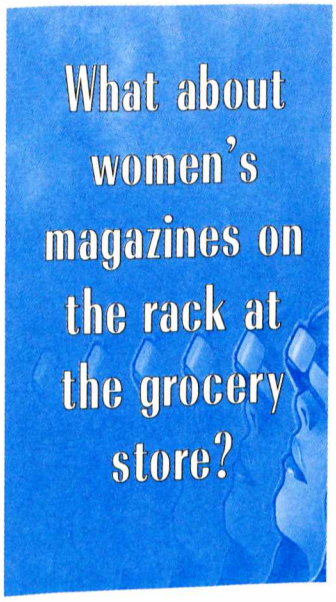
They'll protect your eyes from taking in temptation and lust that might lead to spiritual damage.



John lists "the lust of the eyes" as worldly and temporal and in opposition to God (1 John 2:16). What we see may open us to sin and disobedience.

For instance, what are you watching on television? Have you become so desensitized to the suggestive language of your sitcom that you are no longer offended by it? Does the sinful, even perverted, behavior of the characters in your favorite TV drama float right past you now? Does your soap opera need bleach to clean it up?

In Christian homes today, during family time, we regularly watch things that would have embarrassed us beyond words twenty years ago. We've lost a sense of shame and accepted the world's subtle persuasion. We accept nudity, vulgarity, profanity, and perversion from our little television sets without a blush. Even more, we allow these influences to shape our thinking about what is permissible, what is acceptable, what is good. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, we allow the physical characteristics of the television characters to reflect in the way we dress, the way we act, and the way we accept others.



For some reason, we've been convinced that beauty and wit and muscles are more important than sincerity and modesty and character. We want possessions more than we want godliness; we want bodies that look good more than we want minds that think right; we want acceptance and popularity more than we want a relationship with God. Tolerance has become more important than morality.

Oh, but we can't stop with television! What about women's magazines on the rack at the grocery store check-out counter? Almost every one has an article about sex—advertised on the front cover! There'll be an article about food, one about diets or exercise, and one about sex in almost every issue! God made sex and wants us to enjoy it in the boundaries of marriage, but these articles are not written from a Christian perspective. They often pervert God's perfect design and encourage adultery and lust. They also give women unrealistic expectations in their marriages as well. Beware of filling your mind with garbage like that!

Romance novels, the internet, movies and other allurements would tempt us and drag us to a danger zone. Find your safety glasses! Ask the Lord to alert you to the negative impact that such things are making on your thinking and your decisions. Ask Him to protect you from sin as you hide His Word in your heart. Be careful, little eyes, what you see!

GOGGLES

Then there are goggles—attached to helmets to protect from the wind or worn in the water to protect eyes from chemicals or salt—to keep our eyes open, even when surrounded by foreign impact. In the pool, on a motorcycle, or in a race car, in splashing mud or sand, goggles offer protection for our eyes.

Are you wearing your spiritual goggles? They will give you a clear vision in spite of foreign objects. They will keep you from the warped mirrors of this world's system, from burning eyes when damaging things are hurled at you, from misconceptions of what is truly valuable and important.

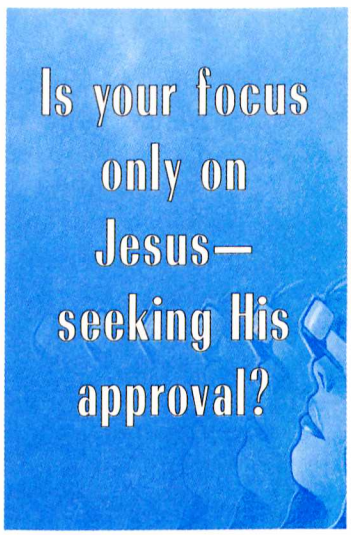


Living in this world, we often face storms. We must see clearly the values that God holds as important. This world thinks that power and wealth are the most important attainments. Attention is given to physical beauty, youth, and strength. Our eyes might be turned aside, even injured by this viewpoint if we don't keep our goggles on for protection. We might think that godly grandmother is of little value next to a movie star if we aren't seeing clearly in spite of the trash the world system swirls around us. We might think that an unborn baby is not precious and valuable if we only listen to the news media; spiritual goggles help us keep our eyes wide open to Satan's devices.

The devil would like to trick us—kick sand in our face and defeat us. We must be alert and on guard against his attacks. Foreign matter is all around us. But we can still keep a clear perspective on God's purpose for us as His children if we "look unto Jesus" and commit to wholly following Him.

BLINDERS

Blinders serve to protect the eyes too—but generally to protect from light or distraction rather than danger. A horse wears blinders when he is running in a race—to keep him from getting off course. Sun visors and shades protect eyes from the glare of the sun and make vision clearer. Blinders block out what is harmful or distracting and keep our focus clear.



Once at a youth symphony concert, a young teen played a beautiful Chopin piano concerto. Her performance with the symphony was flawless in technique and interpretation, and thunderous applause broke out at the end. When the young woman stood to take her bow, however, she was obviously searching the audience. At last she caught the eye of an older woman, seated off to herself in the balcony. The performer looked to the audience member with her eyebrows raised in an unspoken question. The older lady stood, smiled and nodded a slow nod of approval. Only then did a bright smile break out on the performer's face. She had the approval of her teacher. The applause of the others dimmed in comparison to the approval of her teacher.

Are you wearing your spiritual blinders? Is your focus only on Jesus—seeking His approval, searching for His "well-done"? Stay on course! Focus on the prize of the high calling of Christ. Too often we are distracted by those running next to us; their opinions, their speed in the race, even their cute little running suits divert our attention from the goal.

Sometimes the scenery beside the road pulls our attention away from the goal. We are attracted by the green pastures, neat red barns, and cute fillies along the way. We'd like to stop and munch some

hay or eat an apple instead of running the race set before us. We need our spiritual blinders to keep our focus on the finish line and endure to the end.

PROTECT YOUR EYES

Wash them with the Word; keep them focused on Jesus. Get your glasses cleaned and adjusted often; have regular check-ups to be sure there is no disease or nearsightedness. Protect them with tears and rest and good habits. But guard them! Keeping your eyes on Jesus will also protect your heart. And remember, while you are watching Him, He is watching you too. So sing it again!

Oh, be careful little eyes what you see.
Oh, be careful little eyes what you see.
For the Father up above, is looking down in love.
Oh, be careful little eyes what you see.

Carol Reid is a Sunday school teacher and organist at Cross Timbers FWB Church in Bellevue, TN. She also serves as secretary for Cumberland District WAC. Carol is employed as librarian at FWBBC, where her husband Garnett chairs the Bible department. The Reids have two sons and one granddaughter.

Are you avoiding The Evil Eye?

What do you see as your greatest eye temptation?

What steps can you take to avoid this eye evil?

What storms are you presently facing that require goggles or special night-time vision glasses?

Name some blinders that could help you keep a proper focus.



Reproduce and display near bookshelves, televisions, computers, etc. as a reminder of your commitment.

Dressed for Victorious Living

by Isabell Wheeler-Oakes

From the time our children are born, we pursue every avenue possible to make them strong and healthy. We get the proper immunization shots; we provide for their academic need, making sure they have every advantage for a happy life, protected from harm and evil.

Our heavenly Father wants His children to be strong and healthy as well. In Jeremiah 29:11 we read, *"For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."* (NASB) The Bible has many provisions for Christians. If we obey, we will find help in every situation.

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:10-11). This is a command for every Christian; we are no match for the devil in our own strength; it is imperative that we put on the armor of God. This armor can fit over any outfit you are wearing because it is put on by faith.

IN THE MORNING before you get out of bed, visualize yourself putting on each piece of the armor.

Today in Jesus' name, by faith, I put on the Helmet of Salvation. This helmet comes down over the ears and forehead. Lord, I pray that you will protect my mind today; that I may dwell on things that are uplifting and glorifying to you. Renew my mind; let me speak those things that are kind, loving and helpful. Let me process the things that go into my mind in the light of your Word.

By faith, I put on the Breastplate of Righteousness. This covers my heart and the seat of my emotions. Today, dear Lord, keep my emotions on an even keel. Let me show the sensitivity of Christ today. Please keep my temper and actions in keeping with a child of God.

By faith, I put on the Belt of Truth. Lord, give me a firm stance in your truth. I thank you that I know who I am in Christ. I'm a child of God and the Spirit of God dwells within me. I begin my day by affirming the truth of who God is and who I am, and who controls my life.

By faith, I put on the Sandals of Peace. Dear Lord, today let your peace permeate my whole being, and let me be a peacemaker today. If I have opportunity, let me show others, through your spirit, the peace that comes from knowing you.

By faith, I take the Sword of the Spirit. Please bring verses to my remembrance today when I am faced with situations in which I need your guidance. Let your Word be *"a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105).

By faith, I take the Shield of Faith. The shield, as large as a door and covered with leather, was kept wet with water, so as to extinguish the fiery darts that were thrown at the soldier. When Satan fires one of his temptations, it is like a flaming missile; he intends it for irreparable damage to my life. Today may the shield of faith protect me from Satan's fiery darts. There is no armor for the back, implying we must never turn our back on the foe. Our safety is in resisting ceaselessly. *"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* (James 4:7b)

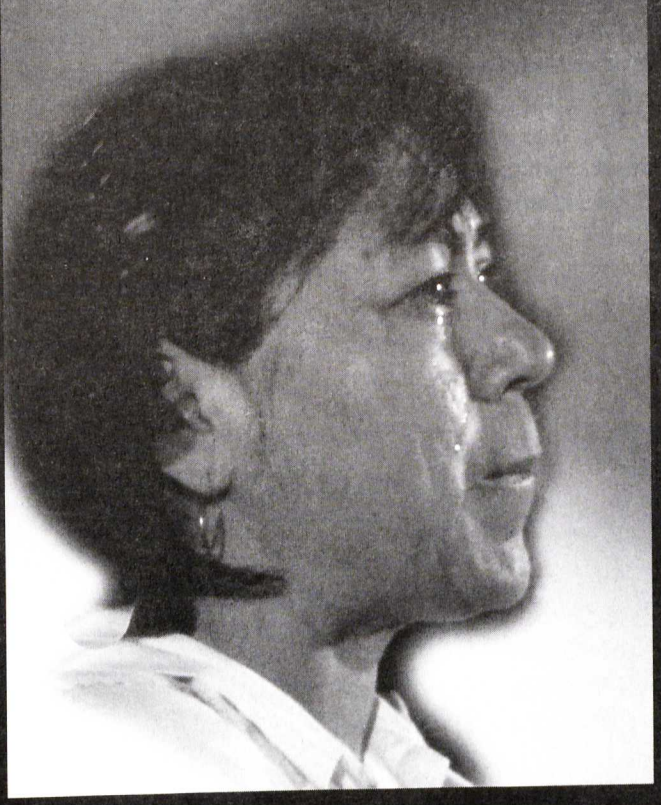
Praise our wonderful Lord! He has made these provisions for our protection and strength. "Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might." David recognized the source of this strength. In Psalm 18:1-3, 30 he wrote, *"I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies... As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him."*

Isabell Wheeler-Oakes is a member of the Free Will Baptist Church, Holmesville, New Brunswick, Canada. This article first appeared in **Tidings,** *a Baptist women's magazine for the Atlantic Provinces.*

AUGUST FEATURE

TEARS

FROM THE GRAVESIDE



THE STORY OF JOHN 11

by

Diane Thomas Bridgman

For presentation helps and suggestions, see the 2003 Program and Plan Book, pp. 40-41.

FROM a Christian perspective our world is in chaos. Statistics report that one out of every two marriages will end in divorce. Even more horrific is the report that the failure rate of marriages is higher in the church. Left in the wake of this breakdown are disintegrated homes and children who are hurt, angry and confused. A debris field of scarred lives remains. This is not the plan that God designed.

Disease of every kind is rampant. No doubt, we all know someone who is suffering from cancer. The mystery of Alzheimer's defies logic. Deadly infections, with origins unknown and treatment unavailable, pose a great threat these days. War has ravaged peace from the world. Churches are being plundered from the inside out; evil abounds. Death still causes grief and pain still hurts.

Where is our help and our hope in the midst of all this turmoil?

Let us go to the graveside of Lazarus for some answers. Christ loved this friend of His and raised him from literal death and burial. Many consider this wonder to be the greatest of all the miracles. Though this story contains many lessons to help us face the anguish many of us endure today, let's **focus on the tears and learn from them.**

In the ancient East, mourners would reportedly catch their tears of grief and put them into bottles or water skins, then place them at the tombs of their loved ones. This flood of tears would prove their grief. David makes mention of this in Psalms 56: 8 when he asks that his be stored in God's very own bottle. *"Put thou my tears in thy bottle:"* he pled. We also can ask God to keep our tears in His bottle so that He can see them closely and consider us and our situations.

TEARS OF SORROW

Lazarus was sick and dying. This caused such sorrow for those who loved him. The Scriptures do not tell us what his affliction was, but this was a close-knit family, and without doubt, his

illness caused hurt for his sisters Mary and Martha and also for his friends. They could do nothing but stand helplessly by as he grew worse.

Many situations around us today cause great sorrow and render us just as helpless. It might be the collapse of a home close to us, maybe our own. Perhaps a loved one has chosen the life of homosexuality. We all suffer with the knowledge that people we love are lost and on a journey that leads toward hell. What are we to do with such sin and sorrow?

The sisters of Lazarus sent for the Lord. (John 11: 3) They had a close, loving, relationship with Jesus. They knew he could help and they believed He would. The sisters sent for Him to come to their place of sorrow and see their tears.

Jesus did not come when they thought He should or do what they believed He would. God's Word reminds us that His thoughts and ways are not like ours (Isaiah 55: 8). Psalms 30: 5 is a balm to those in sorrow. **If we believe, God will turn our tears to joy in His acceptable time.** He does not disregard our tears. Mary and Martha were about to witness incredible gladness where sorrow had been. This would not have happened if they had not called for Him.

TEARS OF REPENTANCE

Lazarus died from his sickness. Mary and Martha were so disappointed; they felt bitterness toward the Lord. When He finally came, Martha went out to meet Him and immediately told Him of her hurt. Mary knew He was there but remained in the house and would not even go to Him.

Because Satan has wreaked such havoc in this world, our hurts can be overwhelming. Christians often become discouraged and defeated. Some may choose to turn away from the Lord. **We're in a dangerous place when we ignore or do not invite the presence of Jesus.** Satan is looking for such an opportunity. What must be done?

Mary did not hesitate to go to Jesus when He called (John 11: 28, 29). She took her hurt, her bitterness, her tears, and fell at the feet of the Lord. There, she left all remorse. She repented and found the love and compassion that would heal her. Mary was about to experience an unimaginable exchange—something she would have missed had she remained seated in the house.

TEARS OF SUFFERING

Suffering shadowed the town of Bethany as Lazarus endured the valley of death. The sisters could neither understand this nor the fact that Jesus had not come when they sent word. Their bewilderment stung and hurt. Friends of the family could only watch. Sadness pressed heavy upon them all.

Suffering comes to each of us at some point. It has many faces. Suffering might be the result of sin, sickness, or oppression that comes in myriad ways. It almost always afflicts more than one victim. When someone we love suffers, the pain affects us as well. Are we helpless when it comes?

Martha, Mary and their friends sought consolation in Jesus. They called Him, went to Him, and

"TEARS never tasted so good until I entered the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Until then, I never wept bitterly over lost souls and a hurting world. The ache in my heart never felt so fiery and passionate. Sorrow and joy never seemed so sweetly mingled. Hope never seemed so solid. Being alone never seemed so satisfying."

"DESPAIR that rises in a direct and vertical line to God opens us up to change, real hope, and the possibility of seeing God as he really is, not as we want him to be."

"GOD USES SUFFERING to purge sin from our lives, strengthen our commitment to him, force us to depend on grace, bind us together with other believers, produce discernment, foster sensitivity, discipline our minds, spend our time wisely, stretch our hope, cause us to know Christ better, make us long for truth, lead us to repentance of sin, teach us to give thanks in times of sorrow, increase faith, and strengthen character. It is a beautiful *image!"*

—from ***When God Weeps*** by Joni Eareckson Tada

laid their suffering down before Him. They could because they were assured of His love for them. He understands our sorrow. His Word tells us in Isaiah 53: 4, that He will carry our sorrows. We have to release them to Him.

This family of Bethany was confused. They could have rejected Jesus and suffered alone, but they yielded their sorrow to Him. All traces of it would soon vanish.

TEARS OF GRIEF

One has to experience the pall of death to understand what Mary and Martha endured. Breath is replaced by sighs; each heartbeat becomes a throb. The mind must struggle for clarity. Surely Martha had lost her focus, while Mary sat wounded in her chair. No one can prepare for the hurt of death.

Grief is not limited to death. Pain comes with any loss. Divorce can cause a heart to feel gashed open. Loss of a home to fire or natural disaster can bring great heartache. Someone has said that the shortest route to the other side of grief is to go through it. How can we walk in the midst of such pain?

The presence of Jesus comforted this family and their friends. Jesus also used others to help minister in this situation, asking some to remove the stone from the grave, and others to loose the grave clothes from Lazarus. The family was fortunate to have willing hearts and hands ready to help. What a lesson in servitude, helping others get through their grief.

Mary and Martha were afflicted with grief that day. Yet because they turned to Jesus, theirs was not a wasted experience. As promised in Isaiah 48: 10, their affliction became a cause for their refining. The entire experience would soon be a time to see God's glory.

TEARS OF SALVATION

Many do believe this was the greatest miracle ever performed. What made it great? Was it the act of Lazarus being brought back to life, or was it the gift of eternal life given to the many who believed?

The trail of Mary's tears led them to Jesus (John 11: 45).

The suffering Lazarus endured may have cost him tears, but others accepted Christ because of it. (John 12: 11)

Our tears are valuable to God. Psalms 126: 6 says, *"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."* What an incredible experience in the life of the three friends of Jesus! Their tears were exchanged for souls, and death was truly turned to life. Many were loosed that day.

TEARS OF GLORY

This fascinating story begins with the line *"Now a certain man was sick"* and includes the dramatic event of verse 44 *"...Loose him and let him go."* The actions of Mary and Martha between those two written statements made the difference between death and life. They could have let their misery consume them, but they chose to give their tears to Jesus.

What was the purpose of it all? The Word of God says, *"To appoint unto those who mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified "*(Isaiah 61: 3).

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "God gets His best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction."

Will we allow Him to use our tears for His GLORY?

Diane Thomas Bridgman is no stranger to tears. Widowed and remarried, she recently experienced again "tears of sorrow into joy" as God healed her husband who was severely injured in a work related fall. Longtime writer, speaker, and WAC enthusiast, this woman of irresistible joy lives in Grifton, NC, and attends the Grifton FWB Church.

When God Weeps by Joni Eareckson Tada explores the whys and wonders of our sufferings. Excellent reading for anyone, the book is available from RANDALL BOOKSTORE 1-800-877-7030 or your local Christian bookstore.



God is Good!

Lessons I learned through cancer

by Diana Harris

In April of 2002, I was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of breast cancer. Cancer is categorized into stages. Mine was stage IV—the worst.

I realized God was at work in my life from the very first. I saw His hand every step of the way. Even before I knew to ask God for strength, He was providing it. I remember when I received the phone call with the biopsy results. I thought, *"This must not be registering in my brain."* I was unusually calm. Things were happening so fast. We were given so much information to process that we did not fully comprehend some of it until later.

My husband and I spent several weeks going from one doctor and test to another as the oncologist and surgeon planned the course of treatment. All the preliminary tests came back negative with one exception. The final test revealed that the cancer had metastasized into the left lung. We were not expecting to hear this bad news. Still, we experienced a calmness that only God could have given. The diagnosis was not good. Doctors felt there was a chance of taking care of the cancer within the breast, but they could do nothing about the cells that had moved beyond.

As the oncologist explained the type of cancer and the treatment it would require, we knew God's strength. We calmly focused on beginning the treatment as quickly as possible. I would undergo 18 weeks of chemotherapy, then surgery, additional chemotherapy and 28 radiation treatments. I would also be on medication for the rest of my life to help keep the cancer under control.

One year later, after months of treatment and surgery, what have I learned?

Trust

I've learned not to put my trust in myself. I would have been a wreck emotionally. I needed a source of strength. I found that source in God. The calm, peace, and strength that I experienced were not mine. This was the miracle. It was not me; it was God.

Big Bucks and Beauty

When cancer entered my life, I watched my health slip away. Devastating changes occurred in my body, affecting my appearance. I did not know if I could continue to work. Bills mounted; I realized cancer's effect on my family. Still, I found the essence of myself is not bound in these things.

We spend a majority of our time making, saving, and spending money. We want a secure future for ourselves. We spend our money reinforcing the pride in our appearance. But if we only possess looks, we don't have much. Looks do not define who we really are. Our source of strength and hope is in God.

Books or The Book

Countless books have been written about breast cancer, all its treatment involves, stories of survivors. I received many and read several. But I don't want to share what I went through. I want to tell everyone *how* I got through. I want women to know that they can get through cancer or any trial with glorious victory.

Isaiah 41:10 says, *"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: Be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."*

Grief

I can't say I didn't cry. I cried when I lost my hair and I cried when I lost my breast. I allowed myself to grieve for a short while. Then I turned to the Lord and asked Him to strengthen me. I could not allow myself to dwell on what I had lost. I had to focus on what I had gained through Christ. When we only see ourselves, we cannot see His hand.

The Value of People

Husband. One of the main reasons I did not grieve more over my physical losses is my husband, Roy. The Lord blessed me with a compassionate husband who took every opportunity to let me know that he loved me just as much as he ever did.

The surgery would not make a difference. Isn't God good to give me such a partner? Roy went to every doctor appointment, every treatment. He held me often. He hurt for me; I could see it in his eyes. I hated for him to go through this; Often I asked God to be with him and strengthen him.

Coworkers. For almost nine years, I have worked for the FWB Board of Retirement and Insurance. Bill Evans, the director, waged his own battle with cancer several years ago. He and all the staff proved a real blessing during my illness. They worked with me, allowing me to continue as long as I could, letting me rest when I needed. They prayed for me and encouraged me.

Church. Roy pastors Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church. There isn't a greater group of people than those who attend our church. They brought meals for several months. Their concern was evident. The congregation supported me with prayer and took every opportunity to show love and care. One lady unselfishly cleaned my house every week. Words cannot express what all of this meant to both Roy and me. I am confident God will bless this church because of their deep compassion.

Family. Who but God could have arranged a ray of sunshine in the midst of the darkness! Her name is Claire, our third grandchild. Isn't God wonderful? He knew I would be in the middle of my treatment when she would arrive. He had planned it ahead of time. How precious God is.

Who God Is

The most important lesson I've learned is that God is constant and sufficient. He has been all He said He would be and more. I've found Him *El Shaddai* (the Almighty God); *Jehovah Rapha* (the God who heals); *Jehovah Shalom* (the God of my peace); *Jehovah Jirah* (the God who provides); and *Jehovah Shamah* (the God who is there).

Like Corrie Ten Boom, I've discovered, "No pit is so deep that God's love is not deeper still"—no circumstance so grave that God is not in control, no illness that He cannot heal.

If the cancer returns, God is still good. He will provide what I need when I need it.

Whatever God has for me in this life, I want to be found faithful.

Diana Harris is the pastor's wife at Woodbine FWB Church, Nashville, TN



The Path

I began a journey on a warm spring day,
It started on a path on a narrow way.
At the end of the path, so short and sweet,
Stood a Man I knew I just had to meet.

I had been looking for many a day,
For something to show me a better way.
I wanted to find some peace in my life,
I wanted an end to depression and strife.

This Man at the end of the path so dear,
Was calling to me in a voice so clear.
"My yoke is easy, and My burden is light,
I will open your eyes to a future that's bright."

My destination was so very near,
But along the way, I began to veer.
Fear and doubt and some other voice
Said to me, "There's another choice".

"The gift He's giving, it's too good to be true.
Friends and family will call you a fool.
Can you believe in what you can't see?
There's nothing in the world that's ever free!"

Those words rang true, and yes, seemed right,
But something on the path came into my sight.
There on the path lay an open Book,
And as I read, I trembled and shook.

For what this Book was saying to me,
Was "Go to the Man, He's waiting for thee!"
I ran, not walked, as fast as I could go,
I knew when I reached Him, it would please Him so.

I kept my eyes on the Man straight ahead,
My mind still swirling with the words I'd read.
Words of forgiveness and love and grace,
I knew I had to see that Heavenly Face.

I finally reached the Man, and fell down to my knee
And said, "Dear Savior, is there mercy here for me?"
He reached down and helped me back up to my feet,
And the words He spoke then were oh, so sweet.

"My Child you finally made it; with Me you can now rest.
The path has led you to Me, and you will be so blessed.
Your sins have been forgiven, you have nothing more to fear.
Your home is now in Heaven, I will always hold you near."

He wiped away my tears and opened up the gate.
And through it I did enter; I did not hesitate.
My life was changed that very day–I never will turn 'round.
My way is sure, my path is straight, in Him my peace is found.

—Kathy Kaffing

Looking for a new life in Christ?
Call 1-877-767-7662

Set your sights on Tampa



Deleen Cousineau
Worship Speaker



Rosalie Ranquist
Luncheon Guest



Karen Owen
Seminar Leader



French M Team
Seminar Leaders

- *Worship and Praise*
- *Missions Service*
- *Monday Seminars:*
  - —"Developing a Financial Green Thumb"
  - —"Mystery, Mothers, and Mercy"
- *State President & Field Worker's Reception*
- *Committee Reports & Resolutions*
- *Tuesday Fellowship Luncheon*
- *Inner City Ministry Opportunities*

2003 Local WNAC Delegate Card

This certifies that_____
(Name)
is a duly authorized delegate to the Women Nationally Active for Christ Convention.
Church Name_____

Church City State_____

_____
Local Coordinator's or Local Secretary's signature

Important: This card properly signed and accompanied by a **$5 registration fee** entitles a local delegate to register for voting privileges. **Only one delegate** per church.

WNAC
National Convention
July 21-22, 2003
Tampa, Florida

SPRINGBOARD
memos for WAC officers

Prayer Chairman:

Pray for families in your church or community that have recently been affected by death. Pray also for women who may be battling eye temptations. See other ideas in the *Program and Plan Book*, pp. 39, 41.

Pray specifically for the WNAC Convention, July 21-22, in Tampa, FL. Pray for Deleen Cousineau, Rosalie Ranquist, and President Debe Taylor.

Study Chairman:

Are your women participating in weekly Bible studies? Ask someone to give a testimony or good report.

Two books, *When God Weeps*, and *Through Deep Waters* are featured in this issue. Since both deal with painful issues, lead a discussion of ways you could minister to hurting women. Share resources and ideas mentioned in the *Program and Plan Book*, pp. 39, 41.

Celebrate Christmas in July!

WNAC (in conjunction with FWB Student and Children's Ministries) is collecting Christmas gifts for handicapped adult workers at the Ronald McDonald Center in Tampa. Bring your gift to the Convention. Not going? Send your gift with someone who will attend.

WNAC/Master's Men's

National Marriage Enrichment Conference

Smoky Shadows Conference Center
Pigeon Forge, TN

September 19-21, 2003

(registration form is on page 7)

Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators:

Summer months are typically busy ones and times when some groups choose not to meet. Try to meet but consider an alternate place, or alternate time that would be convenient for more women. Promote your July meeting with the humorous *Lucy and Marge* skit in the *Program and Plan Book*, pp. 53.

Be sure your group is represented at Tampa. Delegate card is on p. 17.

August is WNAC Emphasis. Program and ideas are included in the *Program and Plan Book*, pp.20-25. Helps and photos are also available on the WNAC website.

Provision Closet Needs:

Corelle ware (service for 8)
Sheet sets (king/queen)

Missions/Service Chairman:

Note the "Christmas in July" service project *(below, left)*. Send a gift from your group if possible. Challenge women attending the Convention to participate in WNAC's inner city ministry opportunities.

Read the FOCUS article on pp. 24-25. Encourage women to partner with or pray daily for these young wives and mothers.

Consider the missions and community outreach projects mentioned in the *Program and Plan Book*, pp. 38, 40.

Bring out the pictures, collect memorabilia.

August is Emphasis Month

"Take a Good Look"

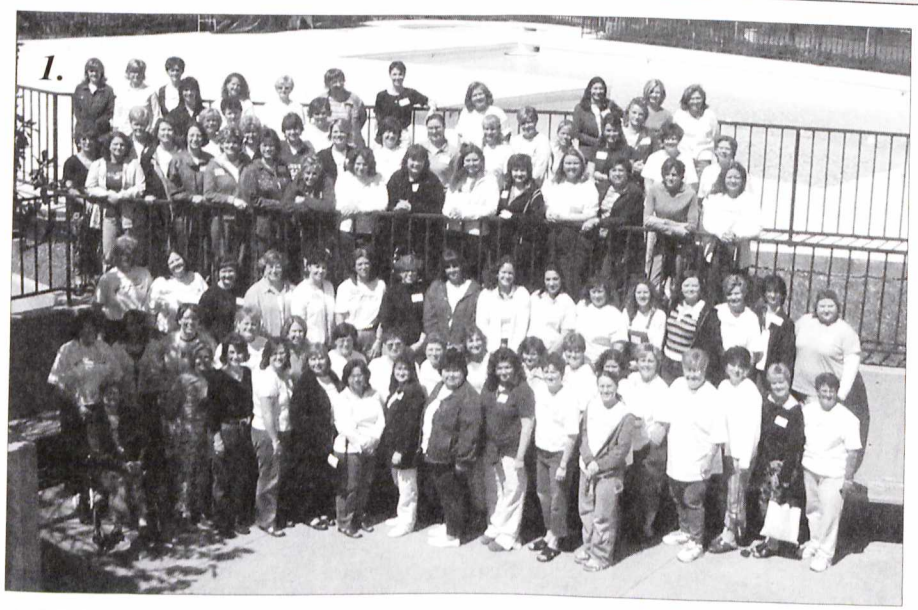
at the WNAC Family Album

Will you give a hearty family offering to support your sisters in ministry at the WNAC office?

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

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:" *I Thessalonians 1:2,3*



PICTURED: *1. Donelson, TN, women at retreat. 2. Nadine Hood, Linda Bigger, and Donna Kinsey, Blue Bell WAC, OK 3. Cathy Corley and Janie Aldridge, Progressive District WAC, AL 4. Sue Morgan, First Mission District WAC, OK.*

❁ Over eighty women from the Donelson FWB Church, TN, attended the church's Women's Retreat at Natchez Trace State Park, April 4-5. Speakers Beverly Welch and Mary Holland explored the theme, *Unchallenged Unchanged.* Times of personal and concerted prayer highlighted the event. Prior to the retreat, almost half the group participated in a 40-day (partial) fast in spiritual preparation for the weekend.



❁ Blue Bell WAC, Sapulpa, OK, focused on compassion at their special January meeting. Guest Linda Bigger from Ponca City, compared the brothers in the story of the Prodigal to lives and attitudes of people today. Lisa Tucker provided special music.

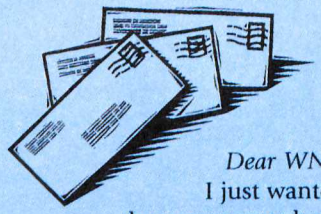


Is your group involved in a
Labor of Love?
Send us your news
and photos today.



❁ Cathy Corley, missionary to Russia spoke to women of the Progressive District WAC, AL, on March 1. Former missionary Janie Aldridge serves as president of this group.

❁ Sue Morgan presented the skit, "Greater Egypt Lost and Found" during a "Let Us Laugh" segment of the First Mission District WAC, OK, April 5. Thirty-six women heard speaker Linda Bigger share ways of "Looking Inward to Growth" (Isaiah 54:1-3). Door prizes, fellowship, snacks, and a missions update rounded out the meeting.



Letters to WNAC

Dear WNAC,

I just wanted to say thank you so much for the money you have given to help support my ministry in Japan. I am so thankful for WNAC and their faithfulness and commitment toward missions. Thank you for helping to make this ministry possible..

Joni Thomas
Japan

Dear WNAC,

Thank you once again for the wonderful items I got from the Provision Closet. During these months of transition since our evacuation it's been nice to get things from the Provision Closet to replace things left behind in Bouake. I especially appreciate your warm, caring staff and the attitudes you all portray to us.

Deleen Cousineau
Cote d' Ivoire

Dear WNAC,

I want to take this opportunity to tell you how much I loved the National Retreat. It was evident how much thought and work (and, of course, prayer) you put into the program. I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect.

Lee Ann Wilfong
Park Hills, MO

Dear WNAC,

I really appreciate all the work you did for the National Retreat. My only negative comment is that it was just too short. However, I don't think emotionally or physically we could have lasted longer!

Thanks for remembering the African believers as the Lord brings us to your hearts during prayers. Unless events turn otherwise, we're preparing for a June 23 departure, taking many wonderful memories and items from the Provision Closet with us. Thank you so much

Carol Pinkerton
Cote d'Ivoire

Dear WNAC,

Just a note to acknowledge the gift to my account in January. I truly appreciate gifts from WAC ladies. I just wish the gift had been for the French Bookstore Project instead of my personal account. That's where the money is really needed and it can't be accessed for that unless it is specifically designated French Bookstore Project. I'd appreciate your prayers for the bookstore project monies. The need is urgent and funds are coming in slowly…

Patsy Vanhook
France

HELP! I'M A MOM

bright ideas for mothers from mothers

Q A

Tragedy. How do you break the news to your child? How do you answer children's questions? Should you share or discuss tragic world events?

Attempting to always shield our children from tragedy and world events would in itself be a tragedy. Death and suffering are facts of life and cannot be avoided. Exposing our children to this truth in early childhood will help them to more easily accept and adjust to tragedies the rest of their life. There is not a patent formula as to how you should tell them. But tell them the truth. If someone has died, don't pretend the person has just gone away. This leaves the child with false hope of a return.

Answer their questions. However, be sure you understand what they are really asking before answering. Often you'll find they want a simple yes or no and are not interested in details. Know your child. Handle the tragedy according to your child's temperament. A tenderhearted child may need more reassurance and fewer details than the inquisitive, independent child.

Yes, school age children should be made aware of world events but not reminded of them daily through constant news coverage. Last week's tornado will seem like today's in the mind of younger children.

Ultimately, how you as a parent handle tragedy and world events will most likely fashion how your children will handle them.

NEXT ISSUE: Travel tips. Ideas for peace and pleasure without "Are we there yet?"

Send us your input and questions. sarah@nafwb.org or P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.



DEBE'S DELIGHTS

"thy commandments are my delights."
Psalm 119:143b

by
Debe Taylor

WNAC President

I feel I'm gettin' stronger!

Almost from the day she was born, she didn't have much of an appetite. Her parents were concerned, but doctors assured them that when she was hungry, she would eat. Early on doctors detected a heart problem; they decided to try medication before opting for surgery. After a few years of the medication regiment, open-heart surgery became inevitable. So when Bailey was two-and-a-half years old, she faced the traumatic operation. What a change! We saw color in her little face that had not been there before; her personality blossomed right before our eyes; but, alas, the appetite did not improve. Just a few months ago (before her fourth birthday) the pediatrician told Bailey's mother that she really needed to try to get Bailey to eat more of a variety of foods. Thus the experiment began. Fish sticks... peanut butter & jelly sandwiches... taco meat. Bailey's mom repeatedly told her that each new item she tried would make her stronger. One evening, with each bite of taco meat, Bailey would raise her arms in the air and exclaim, "I feel I'm gettin' stronger."

When Bailey's mom shared the story with me, I began to think about the spiritual food God offers to me. I am so guilty of only "eating" the same item over and over again. Oh how I love Psalm 23, Galatians 2:20 and Matthew 5:3-12. But I have a hard time swallowing some items that are set before me. Shouldn't I have the same feeling for God's Word which Jeremiah had? *"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts"* (Jeremiah 15:16).

If someone tells me something is really good, I will try it for myself. The Psalmist David has assured me that God's Word is *"...sweeter than honey to my mouth"* (Psalm 119:103). Still I often *pick* at whatever tasty morsel I want to eat next.

I've recently arrived at the understanding that *"all scripture...is profitable"* (2 Timothy 3:16a). Peter encouraged and instructed the early Christians *"as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"* (1Peter 2:2). He went one step further in 2 Peter 3:18a, *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."*

Although we are admonished to drink the "milk" of God's Word, we are encouraged to graduate to a more mature level of dining. Hebrews 5:14 says, *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* We can not stay spiritual babes; we must heighten our spiritual taste buds.

When I was a little girl, we sang, "Read your Bible, pray every day and you'll grow, grow, grow." With every minute of Bible study, I should raise my arms in the air and exclaim, "I feel I'm gettin' stronger."

Happy Birthday, T&P!

Life! Action

a column for teens

This summer marks the 20th year for Truth & Peace, the three-week program for high school students designed to develop Christian leadership and service skills.

The program began in 1984 as two separate conferences: Truth for girls, Peace for guys, 25 students in each. It soon became just "Truth & Peace," an ultimate experience for FWB teens.

Interest in the conference has steadily grown. Though many apply—approximately 250 applicants per year—only 72 (36 guys, 36 girls) are chosen on the basis of spiritual maturity, leadership ability and referral. The students meet for two weeks of training, then put their training into action, working in various areas of the National Youth Conference.

In these years, over a thousand "Truth & Peacers" have come through the program. But where are they today? Did Truth & Peace have a long-term impact on their lives? Here's the word from just a few of them.

When I was a little girl, I remember going to the National in Little Rock, Arkansas. One of the most exciting parts for me was seeing all the "Truth & Peacers" in their rainbow suspenders and matching hats. They seemed to have such a great time even though they were working. Two of the people in those (shall I say "80's"?) rainbow accessories were Sam and June McVay, leaders of the conference.

Almost ten years later, I met up with them again when I was in Truth & Peace. No, we didn't wear rainbow suspenders that year, but I did develop a friendship with Sam and June that you could call colorful. Those three memorable weeks in July went by too fast and before I knew it, I was a student at Bible College.

I attended Cofer's Chapel in Nashville where I got to know Sam and June better. June introduced me to her homemade bread, and Sam supplied many hugs and encouragement. My husband Tim and I even stayed at their house for a week while they took a trip to Spain to "check out" their future home. Little did we know that Spain would also become our home just a few short years late, when we became part of the missionary team with Sam and June.

God knew long before that National in Little Rock, Arkansas, that being a part of Truth & Peace would impact my life far beyond what I could have imagined. He knew that meeting Sam and June in the summer of 1991 was going to lead to a lifelong friendship. They are true examples of *truth* and *peace*.

Kristi (Hanna) Johnson
Missionary to Spain

Truth & Peace helped shape me into the person I am today. At Truth & Peace, I learned many things about myself, the Lord, and life in general. I was in Truth & Peace for three years. During those three years, I learned what it meant to become a confident young lady in the Lord and how important it is to have a personal relationship with Him. I feel that Truth & Peace played a major role in my friendship/relationship with the Lord that I have now in college. I learned that this relationship is the most important thing in life. I learned to seek the Lord first; everything else will fall into place.

I also made lifelong friends there, many who will soon graduate with me from college. I still talk, almost daily, with another Truth & Peace friend who lives ten hours away. Three of us "Truth & Peacers" gave our senior testimonies on the same day. These friends are special because they are encouraging and loving, unconditionally, and they hold me accountable to decisions and disciplines concerning life and my walk with the Lord. Truth & Peace was a critical part of my life and I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to be a part of it.

Lori Gaw
2003 FWBBC graduate

The Peace Leadership Conference was a pivotal experience in my life. My parents and church had laid the foundation for me based on Jesus and my need to serve Him. During the Peace Conference I learned more of what it meant to serve Jesus and be a leader, that is, to lead by serving, just like Jesus did. My experience during the three weeks of this conference showed me that being a leader did not mean just "being in charge," but rather doing what I could do to make sure the needs of others were being met.

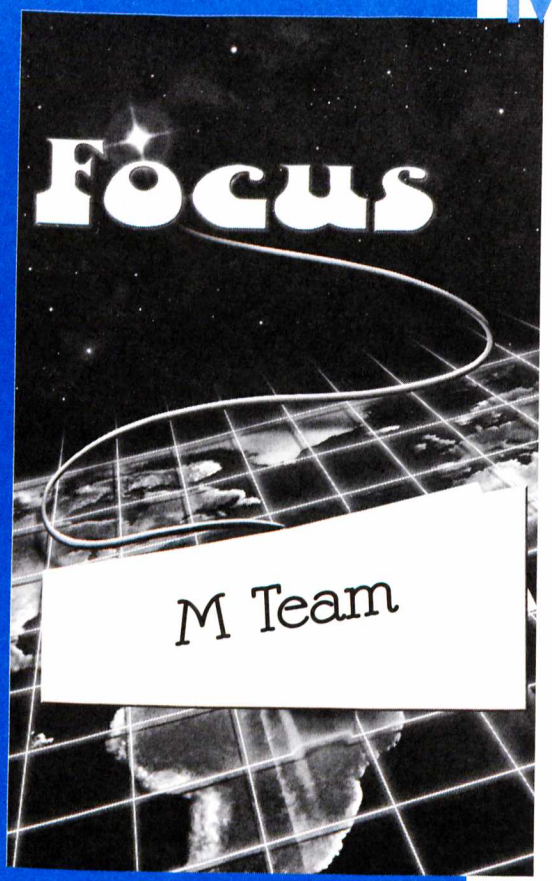
The lessons that I learned during the Peace Conference have affected many, if not all areas of my life. I feel certain that it has enabled me to be a better teacher, mother, wife, and church worker. I would highly recommend this Leadership Conference to all high school girls. It will be three weeks that won't be easily forgotten.

Krista (McClintock) Lane
Deacon's wife in Russellville, AR

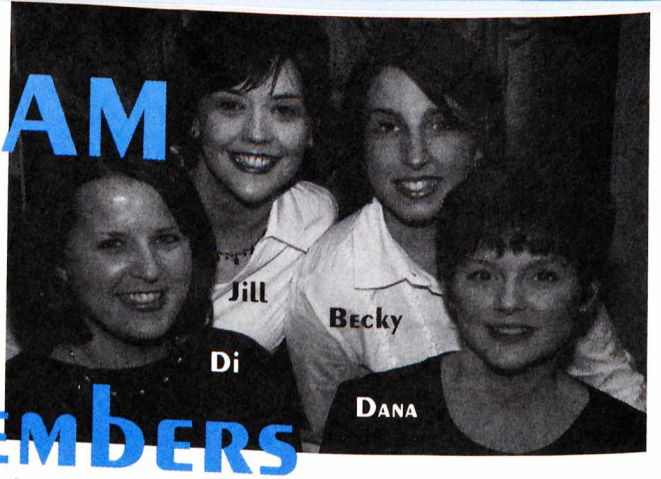
I was involved in the second year of Truth & Peace. That was 1985, the summer after my senior year. It truly was a "Leadership Conference," taking a select group of high school students to a higher level of competence in Christian leadership. I also met some great friends that summer. It wa a summer I'll never forget. Most importantly, I think Truth & Peace instilled in me the importance of serving Christ with all I am and all I have, with the gifts with which He has uniquely equipped me. I want to thank Jim Lauthern and all those early staff members for spending time with us and investing in our lives.

Matt Pinson
President of FWBBC

Will you belong to the next generation of Truth & Peace?



M-TEAM



Members

Jill Warren, Becky Derby, Di Keener, and Dana Portell are the female members of the French M team. Each adds her strengths to the mix. Jill lends leadership, organization, and faith—not often considered a strength but a necessary ministry element. Jill enjoys shopping, reading, and collecting things with a history—anything with sentimental value. She loves amusement parks.

Becky offers fervor and a passion for people. She looks forward to working with immigrants, going to market with women, and opening her home to others. Becky is an encourager.

Di sees her strengths as hospitality and music. Di loves to sing, cook and read. She's happy sitting in a coffee shop with a friend or relaxing with her family.

Dana says God has given her gifts of administration and mobility. She feels ten years in the corporate world and a series of family moves have been God's unique preparation for this time. Dana likes to scrapbook, read, and picnic at the park with her family.

Marriages

All four are wives. Dana and Darren celebrated their tenth anniversary this past December. They met at Camp Hope (Illinois FWB youth camp) when they were 12. Darren went home and announced to his parents that he had met the girl he would marry. They continued their "youth camp" romance, meeting one week a year, calling long distance, writing, dating whenever possible throughout high school. They chose to attend FWBBC together where their relationship blossomed.

June 24, 2003 marked eight years of marriage for Jill and Sean. They met at FWBBC. Soon after they were married, Sean entered graduate school at Columbia International University. Jill worked to help put him through school.

Di and Tim both hail from Ohio, but they met at FWBBC. Di says their broken hearts actually brought them together. Hurt in separate relationships, they both "refused to ever date again." The Lord had other plans. Not long after they became best friends, they fell in love. They were married in May of 1999.



Becky is the newlywed of the bunch. Approved as a single missionary, Becky had begun deputation when God brought another blessing into her life—a husband! In college, Becky struggled with the idea of singleness, not fully understanding what role she would play in evangelism, fearful of being a single woman in a Muslim context. One night

Pray:

—for safe arrival and smooth transition into the French culture, especially for the four children of the Team.

—for family stability, effectiveness and endurance through the language study process.

—for needed financial support.

—for spiritual strength and harmony as the team commences their combined ministries.

she poured out her heart to God, confessing her fears. The Lord replaced them with peace and two special verses, Matthew 28:20 and Isaiah 26:3. She sensed that team ministry was God's provision. But God provided a friendship with Micah Derby, another team member, that "grew into a wonderful love." Micah proposed last fall outside Paris, during a church missions trip. They were married this past January.

Mothers







Three of the team wives are mothers. Both Dana and Jill feel their greatest challenge lies in leaving family stateside. Dana has concerns for McKenna, 5, who will begin school this fall in French public schools. She is hopeful that McGwire, 2, who pretends he's a different superhero every day, will have an easy transition.

Jill describes "learning how to be a mother" as her greatest challenge to date. Used to working in the corporate world, Jill says, "I was in control of my own schedule and my successes were easily measured so I was in for a big surprise." Sophia Rose is an active toddler at 18 months.

Di is concerned about transitioning her family into a new culture. Eli, almost 2, has been with Mom since birth. Language school will necessitate full-time childcare.

Missionaries

Becky grew up in a pastor's home. The Lord began dealing with her about being a foreign missionary at a WAC meeting when she was eleven years old. An E-TEAM participant as a teen, Becky has already taken three short-term mission trips to France. God has given Becky a special burden for Muslim women. This is her heart—her passion.

Dana never dreamed she'd be a missionary. She planned a career, thick in the world of "things." God planned differently. In the spring of 2001,God began dealing with both Dana and her husband Darren, a teacher and coach, about full-time service. He led the Portells back again to FWBBC and to a Sunday school class taught by Sean Warren. Darren, with his coaching background, will coordinate sports ministries while Dana, with a degree in English, will minister through ESL classes.

Jill got an early taste of FWB missionary life. Her parents served one year as associate missionaries in Japan. As a college student, she also spent a summer in Japan as a missionary intern. The Warrens led E-TEAM France this past summer.

For Di and Tim, it was not a question of *whether* they were going as missionaries, but *where.* A friendship with the Warrens opened their eyes and burdened their hearts for the Muslim world.

Jill, Becky, Dana, Di. Team members, married women, young mothers, first-term missionaries. Ready to minister. Relying upon your prayers.

Learn more about this ministry at WNAC's Monday Seminar in Tampa.

Other Prayer Concerns

—Pray for the Christian bookstore now open in Nantes, France. Patsy Vanhook heads up this ministry.

—Pray for continued community outreach opportunities for the Edgmons and the Johnsons in Spain. God is opening doors through a community choir and a library story hour.

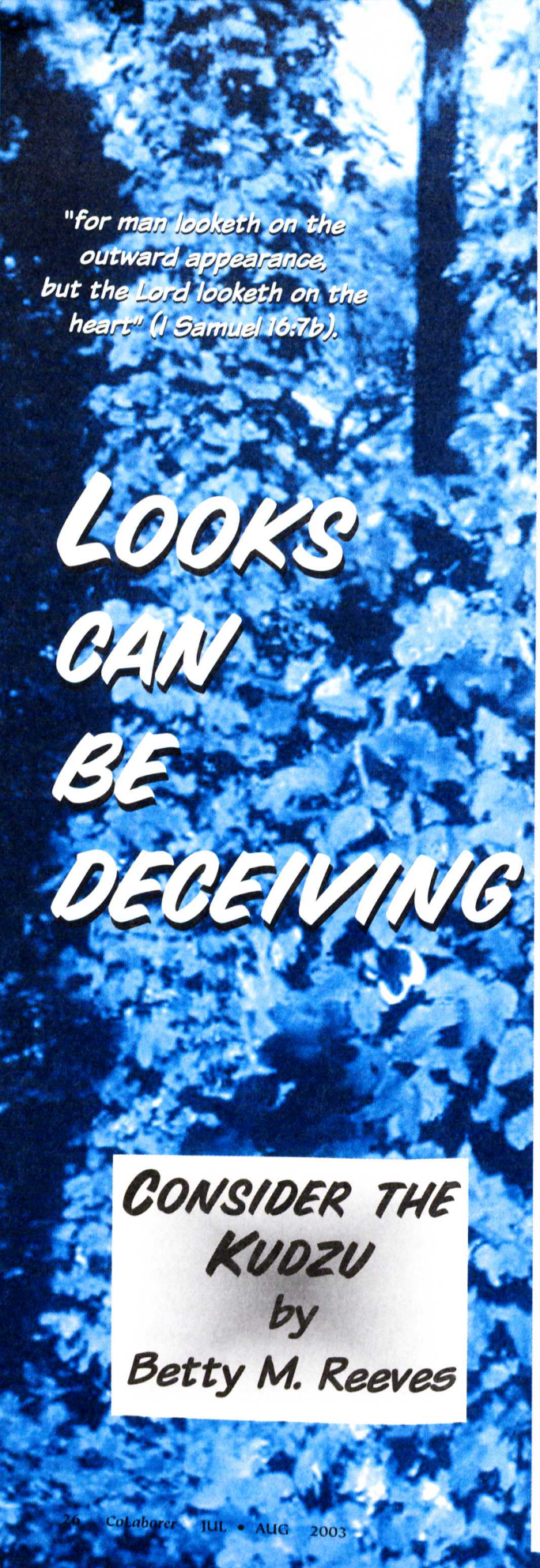
—Pray for the Nehemiah Project (Villalba, Spain). Although the Turnboughs now have city approval for building, a tax matter still needs to be settled.

—Pray for God's protection upon Jerry and Carol Pinkerton and Robert and Pam West as they return to war-torn Cote d' Ivoire.

—Pray for FWB chaplains as they continue to minister to troops and their families.

—Pray for the family of former Home Missions Director Roy Thomas. Brother Thomas entered Heaven on March 23, 2003.

—Pray for eager acceptance of Christian aid organizations in Iraq. Pray also for Iraqi Christians who have suffered much loss.



"for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7b).

LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING

CONSIDER THE KUDZU

by

Betty M. Reeves

A few years ago, when family members migrated to warmer climates, my husband and I began traveling through Southeastern United States. As we sped along the interstates, rolling hills gradually leveled into flat lands; landscapes changed from huge oaks and elms to pine forests. Along the roadside, I noticed a vine that covered the shoulders of the roadway. My initial reaction was, "How pretty."

But as we traveled farther south, I observed that the vines did not stay on the ground, but gradually began to cover small plants and bushes. Eventually, they crept up the pine trees. Some of these trees were thirty or forty feet high, but this relentless vine climbed to the very tip-top. "Now, wait a minute," I thought, "enough is enough. Covering the bare clay shoulders is fine, but covering the trees is too much." Every part of the landscape looked the same, enveloped by the viny, green leaves. What had seemed attractive in small quantities was not so alluring when multiplied.

I questioned those we met about this strange green vine that threatened to cover the whole South. I learned only that it was called kudzu, an imported plant used to stop soil erosion on roadsides and fields.

Later, while traveling to visit our daughter and her family, we stopped by a south Georgia tourist center. Looking at the brochures and magazines on display, my eyes caught the title of one small newspaper, *THE KUDZU GAZETTE*. Naturally, when we left, a copy of that paper went with us.

I learned that kudzu is a legume (bean) plant, imported from China and Japan. Introduced in the U.S. at the 1876 Philadelphia Exposition, folks used it as a shade on porches and arbors. Later, during the Great Depression (early 1930's) the U.S. Government paid farmers $8.00 an acre to plant kudzu on fallow fields and roadsides to control soil erosion.

Cattle like to eat its tender leaves, but tough stems make it difficult to harvest. The plant has runners that take root at various intervals; thus it spreads quickly. An old story says that Southern mothers kept a close eye on their children in summer months to prevent them from being choked to death by a wayward kudzu vine that might crawl through a bedroom window. The writer likened the vine to a Kentucky Wonder Pole Bean on steroids, producing a stalk nearly as big as the one Jack climbed, with growth estimated as much as a foot per day. "Were the vines not killed by frost, the entire South would soon become one huge kudzu plant." An estimated two million acres are affected by its resilient roots which sprout new growth each spring.

The plant contains daidzom, a chemical compound proven effective in suppressing the craving for alcohol. Harvard researchers are studying its ingested effect on hamsters. The paper concluded, "Today the primary value of kudzu is a source of amusement and ridicule and, of course, the plant is

a valuable source of medication for alcoholic hamsters." The publication answered my kudzu questions with one exception: How do you get rid of or at least control the kudzu?

As a longtime children's church and Sunday School teacher, I know the value of object lessons. Just as Jesus, the Master teacher used parables, we can employ everyday objects—even kudzu—to teach spiritual truth. The truth of kudzu is this: Looks can be deceiving.

Sometimes we're confronted with a situation or an invitation to participate in a certain event or activity. At first glance, it may seem all right, with seemingly good or valid reasons. We might get acquainted with some new people and possibly share our faith and values. Perhaps the experience will be educational and expand our knowledge or ability to serve the Lord more efficiently and effectively.

However, we need to step back. Before we proceed, we should visualize the big picture. Will this one little vine become a smothering thicket? Each of us needs to ask these questions. How will this particular event, activity, or choice affect me personally? Will it alter my values, my reputation, my ability to share my faith? Can I do this and keep my testimony pure among my peers, my family, my church family, and most importantly with my Lord? While the thing may not be harmful, will it be helpful? Will it consume me?

Choices, like kudzu, may be beneficial if they are kept under control. Out of control, these choices can ruin our lives, destroy our reputation, and cause heartache and pain for those we love. Consider the long-term effects of whatever we do. Take it slow and easy; pray and pray again.

Remember, man looks on the outward appearance. Yes, God looks on the heart. He knows every thought and motivation; He also knows what is best. Unfortunately, fellow human beings are not privileged to this information. People *do* judge us by our actions (or by their perception of our actions). Is the choice that seems so attractive worth the risk?

Ask God to either open a door, allowing us peace concerning the activity and any consequences that follow, or simply shut that doorway. He has promised to answer when we ask. Trust Him to do just that.

Material quoted from Colonel Jebodiah P. Matterhorn's *KUDZU GAZETTE*, July August, 2001 Volume 4 NO 1.

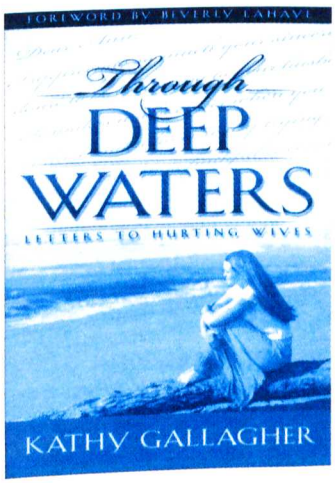
Betty Reeves is a mother, grandmother, and longtime WAC contributor from Farmington, MO. She attends Fellowship FWB Church in Park Hills, MO.

Is someone you know a victim of "the other woman"?

—the woman who's flaunted in videos and magazines

—the woman who dominates hotel room/late night cable television

—the woman who pops up on countless internet sites?



Kathy Gallagher, co-founder of Pure Life Ministries shares her story and offers hope to hurting women whose husbands are involved with pornography or other sexual addictions. Written as letters to wives, the book addresses many issues that often are disregarded or remain unspoken in the church. *Through Deep Waters* is a valuable resource to read and to share.

This book and other helps are available from

Pure Life Ministries
P. O. Box 410
Dry Ridge, KY 41035
1-888-293-8714
or order online
www.purelifeministries.org



The Internet

Place of information

–Consider the following online statistics.

Place of faith

–More than 3 million people a day get spiritual or religious material from the Internet.[3]
–One of every three Protestant churches in America currently has a website.[3]
—48% of adult Christians have home Internet access.[3]

Place of message and meeting

–75% of Internet users below age 25 use instant messaging.[4]
—18% of Canadian online daters marry or get involved in a common-law relationship.[2]

Place of temptation

—In August 1999, 11% of all calls to Focus on the Family's Pastoral Care Line concerned pastors and online porn. In August 2000, 20% concerned online porn.[1]
–Almost 10% of Care Line calls about sexual addiction are from women.[1]
—As many as 20 million adults visit cybersex sites each month.[1]

STATISTICS GLEANED FROM THESE SOURCES: 1. "Tangled in the Worst of the Web" March 5, 2001, www.christianitytoday.com. 2. Statistics Canada, a study by Brym and Leach. 3. "How People of Faith are using the Internet." pastors.com.Article. 4. Cultural Trends Affecting Leaders: George Barna.barna.org

In the Book of Romans, Paul gives guidelines for faith in Christ. He reminds the believers in Rome of the thought patterns that were prevalent in those days, and what their attitudes and behaviors should be in light of that setting. This foundation for faith is still relevant. Ungodly thought patterns are just as prevalent today, if not more so, than in Paul's day. Our world has become so small by means of television, next-day air, and the Internet that we are being bombarded from all sides by the wonderful, amazing, interesting, wild, and wicked things of this world, while barely noticing its effects on our lives. Therein lies the danger.

Romans 1:21-32

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

WHO IS SATAN'S TARGET?
Your boss?
Your friend?
Your child?
Your spouse?
Maybe it is you.

Satan is the father of lies and masquerades as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians. 11:14) In 1 Peter 5:8, Peter gives hope to believers facing temptations and trials because your enemy *"the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour."* NASB Satan is already doomed. His fate is sealed, so what does he lose in taking as many of us with him as possible? He knows he will not have dominion in eternity, so he is going to build up his kingdom and exert his power while here roaming the earth. Who is his target? Your boss? Your friend? Your child? Your spouse? Maybe it is you.

Satan is so subtle, and yet Christ offers us an escape (1 Corinthians. 10:13). In James 4:4, we are encouraged to *"Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* Satan wants us to put our trust in ourselves and rely on our own intellect and reasoning power in order to take our eyes off of Christ and His ways. You see, Satan does not need us to totally reject God and become a "Satan worshiper" in order to accomplish his goal in this world. His tac-

tics are much more refined than that. He simply needs to get a foothold in our lives to plant little seeds of selfishness, desire, self satisfaction, or dissatisfaction with what we have in order to draw us away from our loving Savior. Satan does not need our undying adoration, he just wants our adoration to be focused on anything other than God. This is why we must be aware of how he works, to be able to *"resist the devil"*, so that he *"will flee from you."*

At the click of a button...

One area in which Satan has begun to get a foothold in our communities, churches, homes, and lives is through the Internet. At the click of a button, we can find wonderful information to enhance our learning, reach out to others we love through e-mail, and virtually bring the world into our dens and bedrooms. With the very button, we can open up and bring a world of sorrow, pain, and addiction into our homes. Please don't get me wrong, I am not advocating that we all throw our computers and modems in the river, though some may need to do just that. But, I would like to encourage us to evaluate and be mindful of the dangers and the misuses of the Internet so as to create a safe and wholesome environment in which to use this wonderful device.

The dearest person in my life became addicted to the use of the Internet to the point that our lives began to revolve around the computer. Initially, the Internet was going to be used for further training and for gathering good illustrations for ministry. We had filters and other devices to keep our young ones from wondering onto the wrong websites. Over a relatively short period of time, I saw a God-fearing, loving spouse change from one who stood by Christian principles and standards to one who began to compromise many convictions and rationalize them away. No amount of questioning, prodding, and praying would keep my spouse from delving deeper and longer into relationships built on the web. As my spouse became increasingly engrossed and self-absorbed on the web, I could tell I was gradually losing the one I loved to something or someone I could not control. My spouse did not seem to see the obsession nor the danger. Married, happy, and satisfied in our relationship...and this e-mail friend was also happily married. What I was suspecting was much too obvious and addictive to ignore. This would be something my spouse would have to acknowledge before God and personally confront. Though I prayed and asked God to protect the one I loved from this all-consuming attraction, my spouse had a choice to either continue on this track, or to ask the Lord for help with this area in which self-control was needed.

Though I prayed and asked God to protect the one I loved from this all-consuming attraction, my spouse had a choice...

My spouse chose not to seek the Lord's help, but began a relationship over the internet that ended up growing into more than just a friendship. Admittedly, my spouse did not begin this relationship in order to tear apart our marriage, ruin a ministry, nor break the hearts of family and church members, but gradual, subtle, decisions inevitably led to such results. You see, Satan had "blinded the eyes." In Romans 1:21-32, Paul shares what happens when men follow their own devices. The passage paints a picture of self-deception and Satan-deception, though those who are being written about know and understand God's perfect plan.

Extramarital or inappropriate Internet relationships, cybersex, pornographic addictions on the net or off, are all devices of Satan to capture the hearts and minds of any who will give it a try. Most individuals do not go into the situation hoping to get addicted or attracted to someone. It is a very gradual process.

To steer clear of extramarital or inappropriate relationships online (*or face to face*), avoid getting too hooked on email and chat room communication. If you are engrossed with the idea of "needing" to check your email to see if you have a message, checking in with a correspondent before doing daily tasks, or spending much of your spare time corresponding on the internet, you may be building a relationship that has the potential to become addictive.

When on the Internet, we must use caution. A number one requirement, after my seemingly innocent experience, is to share a mutual email account and avoid individual accounts. Singles who have a problem in this area should seek a partner to log on

with who will hold them accountable. Avoid discussing personal problems, marital problems, or areas of vulnerability with a person of the opposite sex on the internet. This can rouse a sympathetic ear and create a type of relationship that causes dissatisfaction with current relationships. It can lead a person into deeper reliance on the "other" person.

Billboards, song lyrics, magazines, TV shows, and even the illusive commercials, constantly reek of pornography and promiscuity. Addictions to these things are on the increase due to the ease of their accessibility, even in our own homes. At one time, the most common place believers might have encountered this attraction was in hotel rooms where we possibly had to click past such degrading material. Now, the click of a button can bring every kind of imaginable image (and some unimaginable) into our offices, libraries, and the very haven of our homes. What might begin as a passing glance or a fleeting interest, commonly turns into a monster that cannot easily be quenched. The "secret sins" we harbor have a way of growing into something we can no longer satisfy. The law of diminishing returns takes hold. What once was enough, now pales, and we need just a little more to reach the same level of satisfaction. Someone once said, "How much money does it take to make a person happy?" The response, "Just a little more." The same holds true with sex, drugs, or any other form of addiction, or should I say, sin. Satan's ploy is to pull us in gradually as if unaware.

What might begin as a passing glance or a fleeting interest, commonly turns into a monster that cannot easily be quenched.

If you, or someone you know, has become involved with such a stronghold, the Lord has made a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). We are created with a free will, and though the devil's schemes are very present and addictive, with God's help, we can break free. We have to place our addiction in the Lord's care. We cannot "take care of it" ourselves. If we could, most of us would have already broken free from the sin. This is spiritual warfare; we must trust in the Lord's strength and take well-thought-out steps to break the cycle. We can leave our laptops at home on out-of-town business trips, have the hotel staff remove the TV from our hotel rooms, and keep only Internet accounts that are also available to our spouse or an accountability partner. We can make sure someone else is present any time we are on the Internet. We can seek help from someone who will encourage us to replace this "need" with healthy, holy endeavors. Local church leaders, counseling groups for addictions, and national organizations* can provide godly counsel and accountability connections.

I cannot speak as an expert, nor as one who has all the answers. It may seem that I am trying to simplify a very painful and often long-lived solution. I do share as a person, just like you, who thought it would "never happen to me and my family." My burden is that we will awaken ourselves from our comfortable complacency to see that none of us are above being drawn into areas of sin. For any of us who have been drawn into sin, we must seek someone who will help and not condemn us. For those of us who may be sought out for help, we must pray for guidance. What a daunting task! No condemnation is needed. If people are seeking help, the Lord has already convicted them. Now is the time to assist with restoration. This may be an extremely long road, but with God, all *and He means ALL* things are possible.

—Anonymous ☺

Helpful organizations include Pure Intimacy-1-800-AFAMILY:pureintimacy.org; Desert Stream Ministries 714-701-1880 info@desertstream.org; PureLife Ministries (see p.27).
Some facets of these ministries may not necessarily reflect the views of WNAC.

10 Tips for Internet Use

1. Place your online computer in an open area where others have access.

2. Avoid individual online accounts; be accountable to someone who has access to your internet log.

3. don't surf without a cause; have a goal in mind when you're online.

4. Stay away from unspecific chat rooms and message boards. Even "Christian" rooms are sometimes dangerous. All chatrooms are time consumers.

5. Take your mood temperature. If you're feeling blue, lonely, or aggravated, stay off line.

6. Install a reliable filter and use parental control devices to block offensive or pornographic sites. But don't trust them. No filter is 100% efficient.

7. Keep it personal. Don't fill out online personal profiles. The more you tell, the more junk (SPAM) you'll receive.

8. "Never 'talk' to strangers." If you are seeking help, organizations are better than individuals. Check out any source before you share.

9. Limit your time online. Give the Lord and your family your best moments.

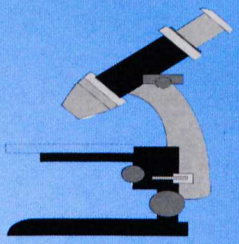
10. Cancel access if the Internet becomes an ongoing temptation or struggle.

Words for Women



Executive Secretary-Treasurer
Marjorie H. Workman

Under the MICROSCOPE



Unbelievable. I could still see streaks all through my freshly washed glass storm door. I grabbed the Windex® and paper towels, tackling the door again—inside and out. But it was hopeless. The streaks remained. All my spraying and scrubbing were no match for the brilliance of the sun's rays flooding through. It was as if all the imperfections of the glass had been put under a microscope.

In a different way, I noticed the same result one morning in my kitchen. Again, the sun became the revealer as it streamed through my large window casting its beam of light to the floor. In that beam I could see all shapes and sizes of little squiggles frantically moving. With a little fanning, the squiggles went frenzied. Looking away from the beam...nothing. Squinting I looked for the tiniest particle. Zero. Through the brightness of the sun's rays, I could see what was impossible to see with the naked eye. I grimaced. I was breathing all those unseen particles.

I'm reminded of another sun—God's Son—more powerful and significant than the created sun. A light capable of "microscoping" my innermost thoughts (Jeremiah 17:9-10, Job 28:11b, Daniel 2:22).

As I lift my eyes and heart toward the Son, He reveals my weaknesses (Psalm 90:8) and causes me to cry out like Isaiah, *"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man [woman] of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts"* (Isaiah 6:5). The more I am under His light, the greater I sense the need for cleansing.

I cry like David, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,"* (Psalm 139:23-24). On a practical level, this means I must constantly ask the tough questions. What do I allow through my eye gate? Do I ward off the barrage of TV messages that are contrary to Biblical principles? Am I reading material bent toward evil rather than purity? And what about the computer? I'm aware that sites are available to tempt even those who are in ministry, but I must not go there.

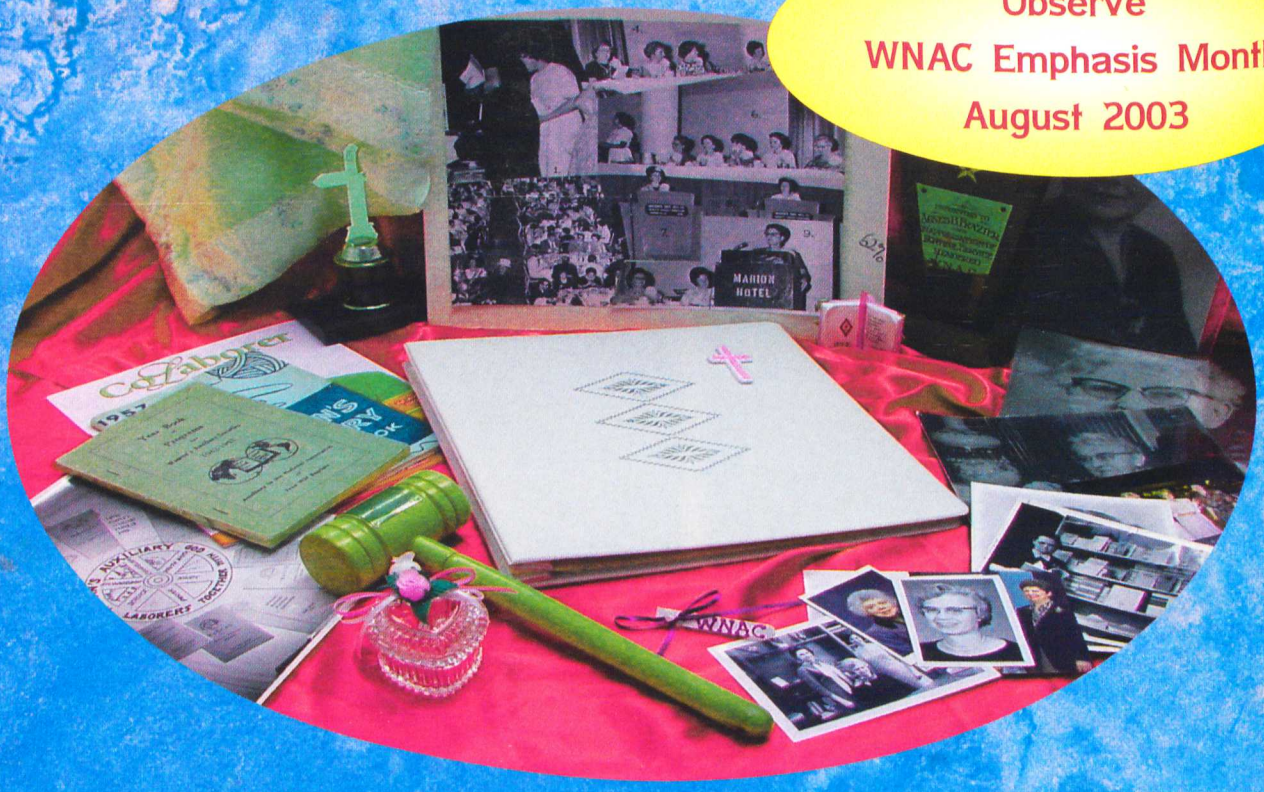
Consciously, I must keep my life under the Son's microscope lest the road ahead lead me away from the Light of the Son into darkness, *"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved"* (John 3:20).

As cleansing takes place, I am drawn closer to the Son, the true Light. *"God is light, and in him is no darkness"* John said. The Word is *"a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105). The Psalmist said *"...in thy light shall we see light."* Jesus, the Incarnate One said, *"...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father... I am the light of the world..."*(John 14:9; 8:12). That divine light which shines in the Scripture becomes the microscope through which I see God.

Only turning my eyes from evil is not sufficient. As I am drawn closer to the Light, I am responsible to share the Light with a dark world. Jesus said, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16). Henry Blackaby said, "Let the world see God at work and He will attract people to Himself. Let Christ be lifted up—not in words, but in life." I am a microscope revealing God's character to others. I pray they will see the Son's beam in my life.

Family ties.

Observe
WNAC Emphasis Month
August 2003



Family responsibilities.

WNAC. WE'RE FAMILY. 6,500 strong with a 68–year heritage. A generous group, giving over $500,000 to missions–related causes last year. Like any family, we face financial obligations––rent, utilities, insurance, unexpected expenses. Your Emphasis Month Offering will help shoulder these costs and ensure that WNAC will minister to future generations.

CoLaborer Magazine
P.O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002
www.nafwb.org/wnac
Periodical postage paid at Antioch, Tennessee,
and at additional mailing offices
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to above address.

**********3-DIGIT 372
FWBBC LIBRARY
3606 WEST END AVENUE
NASHVILLE TN 37205_

125
13