

COLLABORER

May • June 2005

**Pursue or
Be Pursued**

JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

Silent No More

His Heart in Branson

Women Nationally Active for Christ

Labor of my heart

BROKEN



Sarah Fletcher

An elegant bone china teacup graced our wooden shelf for most of my growing up years. Delicate, exquisitely designed, we could drink only from its beauty, for it was broken.

Years before, a trip to a gift store with toddlers turned disastrous when my active brother failed to heed my mother's "don't touch" warnings. The posted sign declared, "You break it, you've bought it." She bought it, an extravagant far-beyond-means purchase for broken pieces of glass.

My mother was and still is a master with glue. Carefully, painstakingly, she fit the pieces together.

From a distance, the cup appeared whole, its hidden seams invisible to most. Only we knew it was broken.

WNAC's 2005 theme verse, declares, *"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord..."*, implying a previous happening. Hosea 6:1-2 sets the stage for this pursuit. *"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."*

Torn apart. Broken in pieces. For the purpose of healing and reviving, for the promise of living in His presence. Brokenness is often a necessary prerequisite for pursuit.

Brokenness is painful. Shattered glass, fractured limbs—these phrases create images of hurt. However, broken lives produce even greater pain. Severed relationships, broken marriages, abusive experiences—these measure high on the hurt-meter. Yet, oftentimes God leads His daughters through the deep waters of pain. Where is God leading you? Is He tearing you apart in order to heal you?

Brokenness is purposeful. A personal reaction to events or circumstances, brokenness sometimes results from sinful choices. Other times it involves things beyond our control. But God is in control. He may not have ordained the evil or the pain but He can work through it to accomplish His purpose. One purpose is a pure and right spirit, the focus of our June feature.

Brokenness is redeemable. As my mother bought the broken cup pieces, Christ seeks to redeem our brokenness. The ultimate redemption of our souls came as Christ's body was broken for us. His purpose is healing and restoration. However, healing is a process. Like the teacup, piece by piece, our Redeemer carefully puts us back together. Most times, healing is not instantaneous. *"After two days...in the third day..."*, Hosea affirms the process.

Brokenness is beautiful. Look around. Who possesses a beautiful spirit? Often it's someone who's been broken, who's endured hardship and suffering. Through His power, we can rise above our circumstances and our defeats. God offers beauty for ashes. He seeks to raise us up to live in His presence. He urges us to follow on to know Him as Lord. The Psalmist declared, *"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord..."* (27:4). What could be more beautiful?

Are you broken, torn in pieces? Whether it's a past hurt, a present oppression, or a future fear. Bow before Him. Lay the pieces at His feet. He wants to restore you and make you whole—for use in His kingdom, for the display of His splendor.

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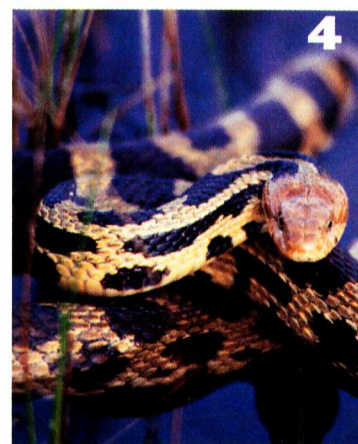
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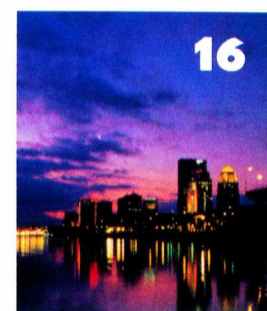
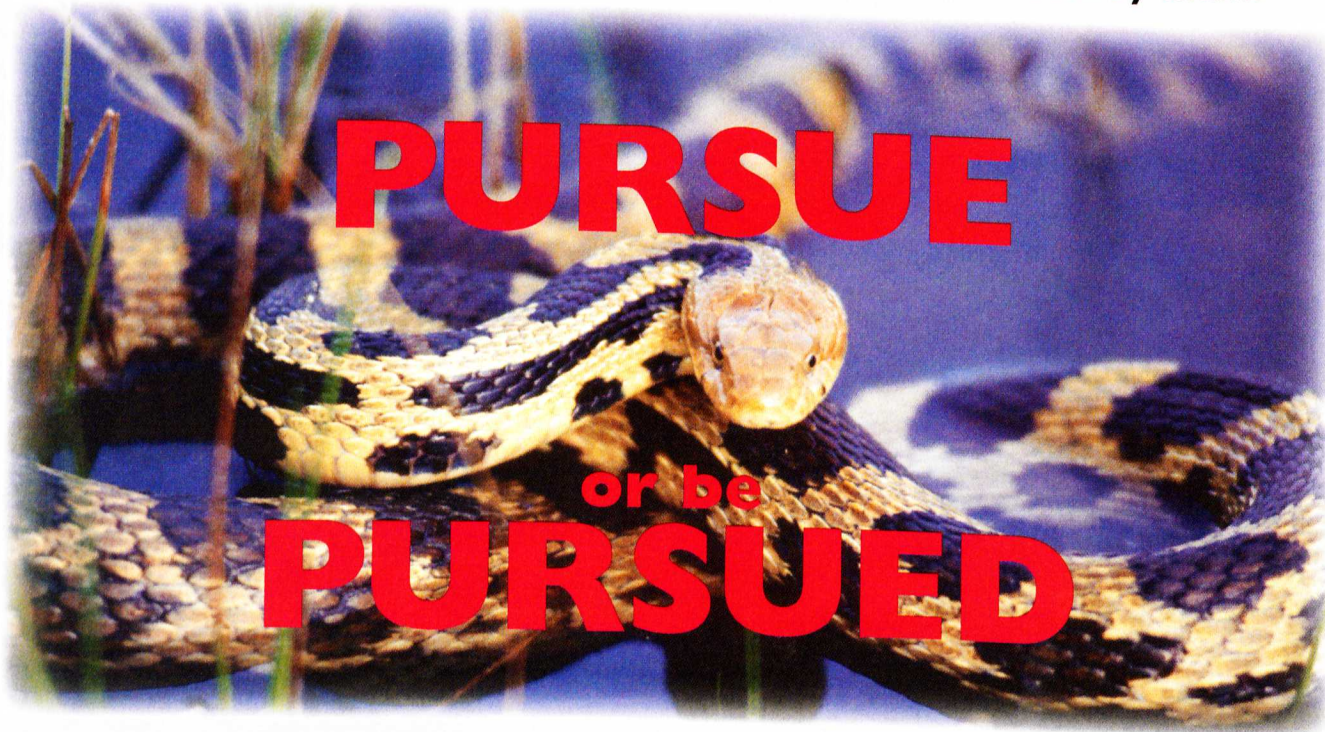


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HOROSCOPES? FORTUNE TELLERS? TAROT CARDS? HORROR STORIES? WITCHCRAFT? A JOKE? JUST A LITTLE FUN? Our old enemy wants to enter through our minds. We must be careful how we open our minds out of curiosity or how we let down and compromise on our lifelong beliefs. The Bible says, "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake... my lust shall be satisfied upon them... my hand shall destroy them."



by Shirley Roberts Combs

First Encounter

All the years of training For living our faith in another culture had not prepared us for our first shocking contact with a person possessed by the powers of darkness. This encounter taught us some needy, faith-building lessons.

- 1) We need to be careful of the way we handle curiosity and doubts.
- 2) We must actively pursue peace, righteousness, and purity.
- 3) If we keep our minds idle or empty of God's truth or if we open our minds to new and strange ideas, we will be pursued by the old enemy of our souls. He wants us.

The first time I saw a woman in a trance in Brazil, a voice came from her mouth that certainly didn't sound like her own. Since then, we have heard those strange, tormenting, blasphemous voices coming from the mouths of men, women, children, poor, rich, religious and heathen.

It doesn't happen in every church service or every time we go into a home for prayer. But most Brazilian homes are full of idols and images, and the Bible says that when you offer to an idol you are offering to a demon. We have seen these battles with the powers of darkness many times since we first entered the sleeping giant of Brazil in 1964.

Pursued

Our most recent battle happened a few months ago. I only recount it to show that the power of Jesus is real. The power of Jesus is available. I never cease to be amazed with the reaction of a possessed person at the very mention of the powerful name of Jesus and the mention of His blood.

One Sunday afternoon, our foster son, Marcos and I met at the home of a new church family who were having problems with oppression. I parked the car in front of their house, across the corner from the church. We prayed before entering what we knew would be another spiritual battle zone. With not enough advance notice to observe fasting and I wanted the protection of the whole armor of God before entering their home.

The couple and their two sons met us at the door. After the ceremonial greetings and small talk, Marcos asked Sr. (Mr.) A__ to stand up for prayer. His wife and two sons sat to one side on the sofas and I stood behind Marcos to give prayer support. After years of experience and seeing possessed people attack, I practice what the Bible says. "Watch and pray" I keep my eyes open!

“Stand up straight. In the name of Jesus, you are not going to throw that man on the floor.”

As Marcos began praying, the man's body started curving forward and his head fell on his chest as he closed his eyes. Suddenly Marcos said in Portuguese, "Stand up straight. In the name of Jesus, you are not going to throw that man on the floor." The battle began to increase. Sr. A__ trembled and started curving down again. Marcos repeated, "Straighten up in the name of Jesus!" The man's body stood up, but his hands were in a fist and his rigid body started to rock back and forth in a trance. I kept watching and praying, since on other occasions, Marcos had been attacked at this point.

A voice from the mouth of the man growled in Portuguese. "I wish they had never met you folks."

Marcos came back with the remark, "It is not because they met us. It's because they have met Jesus, the Holy Son of God and are going to follow His Holy Word."

"No, no" he growled. "I'm going to destroy this man."

"Not while God is on his side. He was made to worship Christ Jesus and be inhabited by the Holy Spirit—not by you."

The man's body started jerking. "No. I am going

to destroy him financially before I quit."

"Silence, in Jesus' name and through His all powerful blood. We are here to pray deliverance for this man and his family."

I was glad that part was over. The unclean spirit was really jerking the man around. I personally don't like to waste time asking questions of the demons, as some do. Marcos had not done that. He had only confronted the demon when he made his declarations. (I must admit, it is still emotional to hear words from the underworld.)

We both started praying. At a time like this, we really pray—for our safety and for the safety of the other family members. For power to free the dear man from his torment and to lift up the name of Jesus. That power is readily available, but we have to believe and ask for it. We must declare—greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world.

Finally, the man's body went limp. Marcos helped him up. He prayed with the man and explained the importance of filling his life with the Holy Spirit of God. Marcos led his weak body to a chair where he prayed the prayer of victory. We were elated and exhausted at the same time.

We then turned to our next challenge—an adult son in his twenties. This battle began as accusations came through a strange voice from his mouth. Again, we declared the name and blood of Jesus, supreme and all powerful. Again, deliverance came.

We prayed for the wife, S__ and their nine year old son but saw no manifestation of evil spirits.

Idols and Images

As the exhausted family members were seated, I wonder what they were thinking and feeling. The man's mother is a spiritist medium, so cultic sacrifices and calling for spirit possession were not unfamiliar to them. However, never in her seances had the family experienced the defeat of demons and deliverance in the all-powerful name of Jesus.

Marcos calmly questioned, "The other day you handed over your idols, images and fetishes. Is there anything left here that you did not give me?" The mother and older son immediately left the room. Each came back with small objects—a rosary with a small crucifix attached, and a tiny plastic and metal crucifix. Both could be held in the palm of a hand.

As Marcos received the objects, he said, "These objects represent something very special to you—the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. But let's just think

**We must declare—
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world.**

They were doing the pursuing now—pursuing a new life.

about something. If Satan were going to choose an object to represent all the sins, filth, pagan darkness, transgressions of all the past, present and future, what could he choose? What would he create or invent? Wouldn't he choose something that represents everything offensive to a Holy and Pure God?"

Everyone in the room looked at the objects in his hand. Wow! I had never thought about this before. The very moment when God turned his back on his Son is represented in these manmade replicas of the dead Christ. That moment of rejection, I believe, hurt Christ Jesus more than all the beatings He received from Roman soldiers. That's the moment Satan would want the world to remember. His supposed victory, God's supposed defeat.

Marcos held up the objects. "Would you allow us to take and destroy these? We don't want to leave anything here that could hinder your Christian growth." The family agreed.

Burn and Burial

It was almost time for the evening service. Marcos handed me the objects before crossing the street to the church. Finishing later than we'd calculated, I hurried home to change clothes, get material for children's church, destroy the objects, and return for the church service.

I didn't have much time. Yet, I knew I must get rid of the objects before I returned to church. There's a place under the trees in our front yard where I burn and bury idols turned over to us. I dug a little hole, placed torn pieces of paper inside, laid the crucifixes and rosary on top and dropped a match. At first, it only smoldered. Then I saw a little flame as I stirred it with a stick. Other objects made of chalk, wood, plastic, silver and gold had been

burned in that hole. I was very aware that God was witnessing the scene. Was God smelling the smoke?

I take such moments seriously. Each time I burn something, I sing (quietly so the neighbors won't hear) songs about the blood and name of Jesus. I thank God for the deliverance of the person who gave up the idols. I praise Him for His protection, for His desire to give deliverance and salvation to all.

A New Pursuit

It was growing late, so I kicked loose dirt to cover the smoldering objects and hurried into the house.

By the time I made it back to the church parking lot, the service had already started. As I walked in the door, I could hear the music of the first song. The

congregation was singing,

"Ha Poder no Sangue de Jesus"

("There is Power in the Blood of Jesus.")

Where was the enemy who declared, "I will pursue...I will overtake...my hand will destroy them"?

I looked around for a seat and saw Sr. A__'s family sitting on a pew near the front. Their faces were glowing as they smiled at me.

They were doing the pursuing now—pursuing a new life

Shirley Combs and her husband Jim served as Brazil missionaries with FWBIM from 1964-2004. Now retired, the Combs continue to live in Brazil, working with ex-street children at Lar Nova Vida, the children's home they established. Shirley is mother of three, mother-in-law of two, grandmother of five (soon six) and guardian mother of 245+ Brazilians.



It's time to go



Christmas shopping!

Louisville Salvation Army Angel Tree

Buy children's gifts from the list on page 17. Send or bring the gifts to the 2005 WNAC Convention this July. Help stuff the items in provided Angel Tree Christmas stockings as part of Women Active in Louisville. Benefit a ministry; impact a city for Christ.



poison ivy and venomous snakes

By Anne Worthington

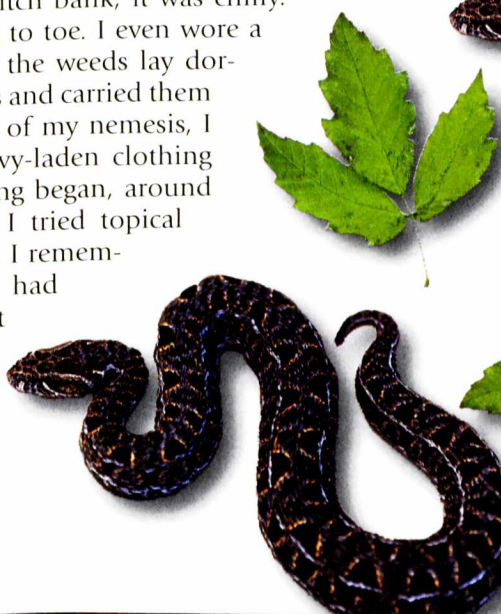
I ran into an old acquaintance the other day, *Rhus toxicodendron*, better known as poison ivy. I first met him last spring in the flowerbed where I recognized his familiar leafy pattern.

Though wary of him, I was not overly cautious. I carefully pulled some vines and skirted the rest, careful that he not touch me. With gloves and long pants, I thought I was well protected. My first mistake? Short sleeves. My next mistake? I did not immediately change clothes and shower. *Rhus* made his appearance later in the form of itchy blisters on the underside of my arm, in the spot that had rested on my contaminated pants.

Before I knew it, lesions began spreading on that arm, to the other, and then to my body and legs. Everywhere the weepy lesions touched, new lesions appeared. I tried all sorts of lotions, but nothing worked. It itched terribly. I tried not scratching, but at times I just couldn't resist. Knowing my touch was spreading the poison, I came to the panic point, afraid that eventually my entire body would be infected. I could fight it no longer; I had to see the doctor. His was a simple cure, healing from within, a shot of cortisone. I learned my lesson; avoid poison ivy.

The next spring I was extra cautious, donning long sleeves, long pants, gloves, changing clothes and showering. I prided myself for cleaning out the ivy-laden blueberry patch without incident. However, my enemy was more subtle this time. He hadn't made his leafy appearance; I didn't know where he was. Knowing that dormant vines are also potent, I was extra careful. But he was hovering in another unaware place and I walked into his trap. There on my hip I spotted a tiny, red, itchy blister. How could poison ivy find my hip of all places? Oh, how subtle he is.

The day I pulled weeds along the ditch bank, it was chilly. I was covered with clothing from head to toe. I even wore a coat. Little did I know that lurking in the weeds lay dormant poison vines. I gathered the weeds and carried them in my arms to the trash pile. Unaware of my nemesis, I did not change clothes and shower. Ivy-laden clothing proved the infector again. The spreading began, around my waist, down my leg. Once more I tried topical cures. Someone even suggested Clorox. I remembered that when my brother-in-law had encountered this enemy, the druggist prescribed a miracle drug. He sold me that same expensive bottle that read, "ten drops in a glass of water twice daily," an inward cure.





Surely now I was poison ivy smart. No more trickery. Yet, trekking across the field to seek out the grave of the original owner of my property, I met him again. "Nimrod Nelson," the tombstone read, "born 1787, died 1870." As I straightened up from reading the inscription,

there he lurked, thick as my index finger, wound high around the trunk of a large tree. I jumped back, startled. Had he touched me, my hair, my clothing? Beware, poison ivy lurks everywhere.

I can never let down my guard. He is my constant enemy. I know what he looks like, but oh, how he loves to deceive me, catch me unaware, trap me and infect me. Eradication is the solution to my problem, but how? Some suggest Roundup® and other chemicals. Still, if the source of life, the root, isn't destroyed, my enemy will only raise its ugly head again. I've discovered that even dead vines and smoke-inhaled burning vines are lethal. My enemy doesn't give up easily. At present, the only solution to my problem is my neighbor, Effie, who can pull it up with her bare hands and not get infected. How I envy her.

I spied the enemy just the other day in my favorite part of the blueberry patch where the largest, juiciest berries grow. It was as though he was saying, "I'll even keep you

from enjoying the best of the berries." In that same ivy-toxined blueberry patch, a little venomous snake deceitfully disguised himself in order to lure and ensnare unsuspecting birds. He resembled a branch. I picked all around him and never saw him. Now, I am doubly vigilant and cautious outdoors; both ivy and snakes wait to ensnare me.

As I thought on this, I recalled another enemy far more subtle and harmful. Satan lurks in unexpected places, often appearing dormant or dead, but definitely alive and lethal. He's the master of deceit. Satan seeks to deceive me, trip me up, infect me and yes, even poison me. I am aware of his daily presence as he lures me into His trap of selfishness, covetousness, materialism and greed. When I least expect it, He jumps out at me in the form of pride, envy, jealousy, bitterness and anger. How delighted he is when he infects me with a critical judgmental spirit, and a backbiting, gossiping tongue.

I'm not immune to His attacks. He is too strong, subtle, cunning and crafty for me. I know I can't pick berries where He is and not expect to be bitten or infected. As with poison ivy and snakes, I must know who He is, where He is, and what He can do. And I must stay my distance. The Bible calls Him a liar and compares Him to a devouring roaring lion, a fiery dragon, a deceiving angel of light, and yes, a subtle serpent. I am careful to warn my fellow berry pickers of the lurking perils. Am I as careful to warn of their real enemy, Satan?

Satan offers many false cures, but none can stop the spread of His poison. The cure must take place from within, medicine pre-

scribed by the Great Physician. I need the power of God to withstand Him. God has provided His armor to protect me from Satan's fiery darts. Ephesians 6:14-18 speaks of the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the preparation of the Gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, and prayer. "Put them on," God says, "and stand and fight, for we wrestle against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The enemy and his warfare are real.

When my husband experienced a major poison ivy encounter, the dermatologist prescribed Clobetasol Propionate Cream. Now, whenever the first itchy blister appears, we make application and immediately stop the itching and spreading. I liken the cream to the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Just as Jesus defeated Satan by applying Scripture, we can also use the same effective treatment.

I am afraid of poison ivy and venomous snakes that harm only the body. Am I equally afraid of Satan who destroys both body and soul in hell?



Anne Worthington lives in Ayden, NC, where she teaches the women's adult Sunday school class at Liberty FWB Church. A pastor's wife, Anne enjoys reading, sewing, cooking, gardening, and walking with her husband Melvin, former FWB Executive Secretary. Mother of two and grandmother of two, Anne stays busy cleaning, raising Black Angus cattle and avoiding snakes and poison ivy.

A funny thing...

CoLaborer is looking for personal accounts of funny things that have happened at church.



Send us your story (200 word max) before September 1, 2005. Best stories will be

printed in our Jan/Feb 06 issue. Writer of the funniest story will receive one free year of CoLaborer.

by Rebecca Pugh

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Hebrews 10:10 says believers are sanctified through Jesus' offering Himself. Christ's death cleanses the believing human heart from defilement, sin, and wickedness. "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." The blood of Christ purges us (Hebrews 9:14). Our sins are "put away" (Hebrews 9:26b). We are declared "without sin" (Hebrews 9:28). God remembers our sin no more (Hebrews 10:17). We have remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22, 10:18). We are forgiven.

Sinners become saints. We are made holy. We are pure. We are sanctified. The Hebrews writer continues in verse 14, saying the sanctified ones have been "perfected forever." The work of Christ on our behalf is complete. All the purity, righteousness, holiness we will ever require in the forensic courtroom of God as well as, in the arena of life, is complete. "Jesus paid it all. Sin had left a crimson stain; He washed it white as snow."

THROUGH THE MAZE

In this new relationship with the Lord Jesus, we follow Him. He said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27). He told His disciples and He tells us, "If ye continue in my word...[the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life]...then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth," (John 6:63,8:31-32a). "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me and I in you...without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:3,4a,5b) He has delivered us that we might serve Him, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives (Luke 1:74,75).

In pursuing purity, we recognize that He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15b). We follow Him to make a "way of escape" for any temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13). We obey Him because we love Him for loving us (1 John 4:19, 5:3).

The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us. The indwelling Spirit is the presence of God in a person's heart. He indelibly marks in the spirit of man a new understanding of God's will. John 15:26 says that the Spirit, who is truth, testifies of Jesus Christ. The Spirit guides us into all truth (John 16:13). The truth, the Word, sanctifies (John 17:17). God's law is in our hearts and written on our minds (Hebrews 10:16b).

Along the way, we as women often wonder which choice is best for us? This is when "thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:21). God does lead us in paths of righteousness. This is confirmation to those pursuing purity. We do not have to live in ignorance as to who we are, where we stand, or where we are going.

Hebrews 10:19 continues, "Having therefore boldness..." We have confidence. We have God's acceptance and approval. We have all the resources necessary to live in purity. There is no deficiency in our standing with God. Verse 22b also makes reference to "full assurance of faith." I John puts it this way: "there is no fear." The sanctified woman has true security. She has immeasurable inner peace and power to victoriously combat the old fleshly desires that would daily drag her back into sin.

SIGNS TO GUIDE US

Unlike the corn maze, on the path to purity, we are not left on our own. The Word of God is our personal map, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Like road signs or trail markers, Hebrews 10 lists several exhortations for the sanctified ones to follow.

DRAW NEAR

Let us draw near... with a true heart. (v.22).

A true heart is a sincere, single heart produced by the cleansing sacrifice of Jesus' blood. This sincere heart allows us to approach God. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." What greater reason to draw near to God, than to discover available, beautiful grace, readily dispensed as we ask? James 4:8 promises, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." James further expands on purity, adding that we should cleanse our hands as sinners, purify our hearts as double minded, and ultimately humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. For the Christian woman, there is no substitute for time spent alone with God. If we are pursuing purity, we must actively maintain the cleanness that Christ's blood has accomplished. We can understand specific daily wisdom only from the Holy One's presence. As Mary, the sister of Lazarus, sat at the feet of Jesus, we also should choose the better part and draw near to the Lord.

"Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience..." (v. 22). The process of drawing near to God and spending time with Him requires continual cleansing. (The participle *having* connotes, "While the other is going on, this will also be taking place.") Our minds which were deceived by sin (Hebrews 3:13) are transformed and renewed (Romans 12:2). According to Paul, believers can live with a pure conscience (1 Timothy 3:9, 2 Timothy 1:3).

"And our bodies washed with pure water..." (v. 22). Christ gave Himself for the Church "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word...that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians

**DRAW
NEAR**

5:26,27). Drawing near to God allows His light and holiness to wash and transform us into the glorious women we are meant to be.

HOLD FAST

**HOLD
FAST**

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (10:23).

We must hold unswervingly to the hope we profess. In his book, *Grace Faith, Free Will*, Dr. Robert Picirilli notes "hold fast" as "the dominant motif...urging readers to hold to the faith...cling to' our profession...hold on for dear life." In our pursuit of purity, there can be no turning back, no giving up, no quitting. The *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* says, "Purity is achieved by effort and attention and maintained by effort and attention....Life is ever-gravitating, slipping toward impurity. Like dust and dirty dishes, uncleanness requires regular action and maintenance." Paul exhorted Timothy, "Keep thyself pure...Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith...Flee youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace...continue in the things you have learned..." (1 Timothy 5:22, 6:11-12a, 2 Timothy 2:22, 3:14). Peter wrote, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:10). "...Be diligent that ye may be found of Him...without spot, and blameless,...seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Peter 3:14, 17). Hebrews 10:35, 36 continues, "Cast not away, therefore your confidence...For ye have need of patience..." In other words, don't throw away your faith; endure; persevere.

ENCOURAGE

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." (v. 24-25a)

1 Timothy 3:15 says the "house of God, which is the church of the living God, [is] the pillar and ground of the truth." Theologian and author Leroy Forlines believes the "work of ministers is designed to...help Christians move toward maturity (Ephesians 4:13,14)...the preaching ministry is designed to contribute to our moral sanctification. Paul said to Timothy, 'Preach the word;...reprove, rebuke, exhort with...doctrine.' In the New Testament, the sanctification of the members was...the responsibility...of the whole body" (emphases mine).

Author Rick Warren (*Purpose Driven Life*) writes, "A church family helps you develop spiritual muscle.... Only participation in the full life of a local church builds spiritual muscle....A church family will help keep you from backsliding....He has assigned us as

individuals the responsibility of keeping each other on track...."

By God's design, corporate worship helps us stay accountable to God and other Christians. Vital relationships within our local church, Sunday school class and WAC group serve as *support-therapy* to keep us encouraged.

OBEY

OBEY

"If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth..." (v. 26)

What a sober warning against rejecting God's Word. Obedience is essential in the pursuit of purity. Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 6:24 that the person who hears His words and does them is like a wise man. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Samuel 15:23). Sinning willfully is a serious act, equal to rebellion and stubbornness. Women who pursue purity cannot deliberately compromise specific truths outlined in God's Word. We cannot rewrite truth with our own definitions. God's Word is not a menu to pick and choose according to our personal whims. His commands are not optional.

THE PROMISE AND THE PRIZE

Just as I made it out of the corn maze, God gives great promise for "the just [who] live by faith"—for those who pursue purity. Hebrews 10:34b-37 says, "knowing...ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance...cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward...after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come...." Faith will lead us to a home we have never seen. We will be like Moses who "endured, as seeing the invisible" (11:27). The path of purity exits in Heaven.

May we pray with the Psalmist: "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" (139:23-24). "Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me" (25:4-5a).

To draw near to God and walk with Him every day; to hold fast our profession and not quit; to consistently, regularly encourage others through our local churches; to live in obedience to God's Word and will for our lives—these are choices which reap eternal rewards for all who pursue purity.



Rebecca Pugh attends the Liberty FWB Church, Millington, TN, where her husband, Gwyn, pastors. This homeschooling mother of six (Carmen McKenzie, Khristi, Karyn, Daniel, Michael and John), is an accomplished musician, music teacher, and dedicated student of the Word. Rebecca serves as Tennessee State WAC President.

Who's in your driver's seat?

by Kathy Thebeau

New drivers? We've had four of them.

As parents, we try to teach our kids the rules of the road, rules that will help keep them safe and out of trouble. Problem is, most sixteen-year-olds think they already know everything. If we correct them, we are overreacting. As soon as they receive that little piece of paper declaring them a legal driver, they think we should allow them to take the car and go out on their own. If we say no, then we don't trust them. One of the hardest things for me as a mother has been to watch my kids drive off alone for the first time and wait (for an eternity it seems) for them to park safely in the driveway again.

Before teens take the driver's seat, they must learn auto basics. The car body provides protection; they must treat it with care. Windshields keep foreign objects out of faces and eyes. A proper key in the ignition starts the engine. Fuel in the tank keeps the car going. Working signal lights let others know the direction a driver is taking. Working brake lights alert others of slows and stops. Seat belts restrain passengers in case of collision. Air bags cushion blows. Gears serve different purposes. Low gear gets the car going. Once the car is moving, shifting up helps maintain a steady speed. Neutral is for idling. Backing up or turning around requires reverse.

New drivers must also correctly identify road signs. A stop sign or light means just that—STOP. Failure to do so could result in hitting another car or being broadsided. Caution lights mean 'slow down' or 'be careful'. It's not nec-

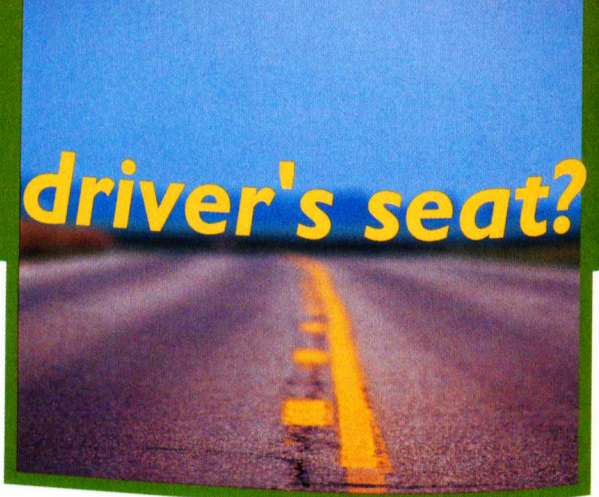
essarily their driving that places these new drivers in danger. They must look out for other drivers. Warning signs alert drivers of dangerous curves, narrow bridges, and other hazards. Drivers who ignore these warnings will likely end up off the road. Of course, a green light means go—now. (Just try sitting at a green light for even a few seconds and observe the reaction of the driver behind you.) Yield signs require giving others the right of way. Those all important 'Speed Limit' signs give drivers safe established boundaries. Exceeding the limit can cost a driver dearly.

A teen in the driver's seat certainly causes parents to spend more time in prayer.

Sixteen-year-olds feel invincible. As sure as they are, that nothing will happen to them, we are doubly sure of this possible reality. When new driver blunders do occur, parents can tactfully use these as teachable moments.

The whole teen driver process has taught me much about myself and my relationship with God. Spiritual journeys bear striking similarities.

Only Jesus can ignite our hearts and get us on the road. The *body of Christ* offers strength and protection. We must treat that body with care. Fellow Christians and even those in the world need to see the direction our life is going. A *windshield of faith* allows us to see the world and not be harmed by its debris. Fueling up with personal



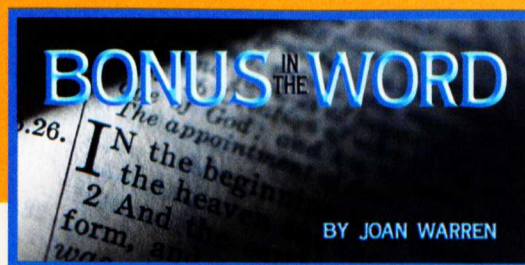
Bible study and prayer keeps us going. Without these we won't get far. The Holy Spirit restrains us from worldly things and cushions the blows of disappointments and hurts along the way.

Daily spiritual journeys demand different gears. First thing in the morning, spending time with God gets us going. Shifting our cares upon Him throughout the day helps us maintain a steady pace. Sometimes God places us in neutral so we can be still before Him and let Him speak. When we have hurt someone or done a wrong, spiritual reverse allows us to back up and make amends.

We also must identify and obey God's instructions. We should not hesitate when God says, "Go." Whether with words or actions, not stopping when we should can be detrimental to us and cause us to become a stumbling block to others. A conscience guided by the Holy Spirit cautions us to be careful how we live before others. We do not exclusively own the road to Heaven. In love, we should yield to the opinions and ideas of others. We must pay attention to warnings. Satan seeks to sabotage our journey. Rushing new Christians along too fast, expecting too much too soon, or exceeding their limits could cost us dearly if we cause these believers to give up.

God wants us to have a safe journey; He's given us guidelines for our good.

LIFE'S JOURNEY



We might wish we could just coast along and not be bothered with any problems. Remember, God is training us. We will learn if we apply His rules of the road.

Our protective Father God doesn't want us to go out on our own. Though He is always with us, He allows us to make our own choices. Although these choices may not be the best thing for us at the time, God can use our blunders to teach and strengthen us.

Because we love God, we may believe we would never do anything wrong. Most of us wouldn't intentionally disobey—we just tend to forget that we can make mistakes. God knows we will fail sometimes. May we be willing to let Him teach us through our failures.

Sometimes, (okay, a lot of times) I've behaved as a teen in the driver's seat. Newly saved, I felt invincible. I thought I could do anything. Along the journey, I have not always appreciated God's rod of correction.

So, who's in your driver's seat?

New drivers are not always bad drivers. Often, the longer we drive the more careless we become. As Christians, we need to stay spiritually alert and fueled up, no matter where we are in the journey or how long we've been at the wheel.



Kathy Thebeau has survived new drivers Faron, Ben, Brett, and Amy. President of St. Francois District WAC, Kathy attends

First FWB Church, DeSoto, MO, where her husband Bob pastors. Kathy enjoys horseback riding, sports, and crafts.

I. NECESSARY ITEMS FOR THE JOURNEY

A. The best apparel

1 Peter 5:5

Revelation 3:18

Philippians 3:9

1 Timothy 2:9,10

1 Peter 3:3,4

Proverbs 17:22

B. Special weapons and equipment

Hebrews 4:12

Revelation 12:11

1 Samuel 17:45

2 Corinthians 10:4

Ephesians 6:13

2. BEST ROUTES FOR THE JOURNEY

Matthew 7:13,14

Isaiah 2:3

Psalms 119:30

Psalms 23:5

Isaiah 35:8

Proverbs 16:17

3. OTHER ESSENTIALS FOR THE JOURNEY

1 Peter 4:8

Ephesians 6:16

Luke 9:23

3. REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE JOURNEY

Record any insights, meditations, or prayers below.



His Heart in Branson

They came from 22 states and five countries to Pursue His Heart. Six hundred twenty women met March 3-5 at the Chateau on the Lake Resort Hotel for the 2005 WNAC National Retreat. Billed as an all missions retreat, FWB home and international missionary women spoke, prayed, led worship, read Scripture, and provided special music.

Messages

Debbie Griffin missionary to Japan, spoke twice on Pursuing His Heart in Intimacy. Very candid and transparent, Debbie shared how both unbelief and self-love hinder intimacy with God. We must choose to believe God and we must choose to believe that He loves and desires intimacy with us. Though a personal pursuit, intimacy with God cannot be "just for us." "There is a world who needs God and a God who loves the world. And we stand in the middle, reflecting His glory."

Friday morning's session highlighted the dreams and adventures of three missionary women. New missionary Angela Emerick shared both her fears and excitement for ministry among North African Muslims living in France. She noted, "I strongly believe the way we will reach Muslims for Christ will be through women and children." Vicki Sturgill, veteran missionary to Brazil, likened our pursuit to riding a stationary bicycle—often spinning our wheels,

but getting nowhere. She told the story of one couple whose neighborhood witness to three children continues to impact the Kingdom. She asked women to pray that God would provide a Brazilian pastor and one or more couples to team with them in Belo Horizonte. Fern Phillips, former missionary teacher in Brazil challenged women to take a journey that will be unforgettable. Recounting experiences, she lamented, "I only wish I had gone sooner."

Lynette Morgan (Cote d'Ivoire and Central Asia) emphasized the place of prayer in pursuing God's heart. She noted, "You can't pursue to know God without knowing what touches His heart. God's heart is for the world. Our prayers are the key to the evangelization of the world." She challenged women to pray at least five minutes each day specifically for world missions.

Music

Combining hymns, old-time songs and new praise choruses, missionaries to Spain, June McVay and Kristi Johnson led the group in worship. Ruth McDonald (Japan), Kristen Wilson (Brazil), a missionary trio (Spain), and a vocal ensemble of state, national and international missionaries ministered through song. Praise came in a variety of languages.

A concert by International Missions Stateside Development Director Doug Little ushered women near the heart of God.

Many were stirred to tears as he ministered through songs composed in his quiet times with God.

Merriment

The Coon Creek Band made its second appearance at a WNAC Retreat, this time as potential Weight Watchers. These wacky women from the DeSoto, MO, area picked and crooned hillbilly favorites 'til the chickens came home to roost.

When women retreat, they often shop. Randall Bookstore and WNAC provided women opportunities to shop without ever leaving the hotel. Those who did venture into Branson discovered a city filled with outlet malls and craft venues.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MOM

They hadn't celebrated a birthday together in ten years. When Pastor's wife Amy Johnson noted that her mother, Cassie Butcher's birthday coincided with the retreat, she decided to celebrate. Saturday morning's session included a surprise presentation of flowers and balloon and a 600-voice rendition of "Happy Birthday." Living 750 miles apart—Amy in Newport, AR, her mother in Garden City, MI—visits together are rare.



At least 600 miles have separated the pair since Amy's college days. She recalls, "When I went to Bible College, she put me in God's hands. She's always had a peace about it." Amy muses, "My mother used to go to retreats to get away from children (me). Now we go to retreats together so I can get away from mine."



Money

WNAC women are generous. Two offerings netted almost \$10,000 for world evangelism causes. The second offering, designated for the Sister's Prayer Fellowship enabled over 50 Central Asian women to attend the April 2005 conference in Kazakhstan.

Moving

Scripture reading and prayer by missionaries Ruth Bivens, Kim Fairchild, Lea Edgmon, and Kristen Wilson invited God's moving in each session. Yet prayer was not just a worship ritual. In the Friday evening session, mothers stood, giving their children to the Lord for His service. Special prayers were offered for soldiers in Iraq, and for the family of Nettie Lou Jernigan, (President Debe Taylor's mother) whose homegoing coincided with the weekend. Brother Larry Powell, Director of FWB Home Missions led a dedicatory prayer for women attending the Sister's Prayer Fellowship, asking God to break down the strongholds of Satan in Central Asia. Later that morning,

women lined the aisles and the altar, tearfully and prayerfully committing themselves to pray each day for world missions.

Memorable

Beautiful weather, an elegant setting, and warm fellowship helped make Branson 2005 memorable. Yet it's the memorable morsels of truth from God's Word that will remain, forever shaping lives and challenging women to pursue His heart.

PICTURED: (top, l-r) Fern Phillips, Lynette Morgan, Debbie Griffin, June McVay, Vicki Sturgill, Angela Emerick, Doug Little, Ruth McDonald, Kristen Wilson, Kim Fairchild. (below, l-r) Women line aisles and altar; Prayer for Sisters' Fellowship; MO President Shirley Jackson; "And the winner is..."; "We're going to France"; Cleaned-up Coons.

They said it in Branson...

"But you didn't sweep the porch."—Debbie Griffin (concerning expectations)

"Even at 60, you can dream."—Vicki Sturgill

"I'm convinced God loves me. He probably even likes me without the scarf." —Debbie Griffin (on self-worth)

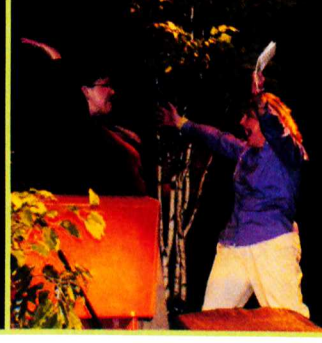
"We're stressed out with things."—Lynette Morgan

"This is *not* rigged." —Marjorie Workman (door prize drawings)

"Let your children go." —Angela Emerick

"Some of my children are so new, I can't remember their names." —Doug Little (about his songs))

"We've been entertained by the King of Kings." —Shirley Jackson



Pursue

HOSEA 6:3

70th Annual WNAC Convention

July 18-19, 2005 + Louisville, KY

Join hundreds of women nationwide who seek to "follow on to know the Lord." The two-day 2005 WNAC Convention, July 18-19, includes instruction, worship, fellowship and service opportunities.

Pursue Instruction

Ever wonder at God's timing? Ever question your place in the process? Monday seminar speaker Sandy Atwood has. Women's ministry leader and former pastor's wife, Sandy will challenge your heart and make you smile as she answers the mother question of all pursuits, "Are We There Yet?"

Does your women's group need a face-lift? How about an extreme makeover? Highlighting WAC groups who've changed their looks but kept their purpose, this seminar will give you an eye-full of 21st century WNAC.

Pursue Worship

Anthony and Lea Edgmon have known tragedy and blessing. After losing triplets at birth, then suffering another miscarriage, God gave them a daughter and son. Through heartache and happiness, they've continued to pursue God's mission in the country of Spain. Hear their story, catch their vision during Tuesday morning worship.

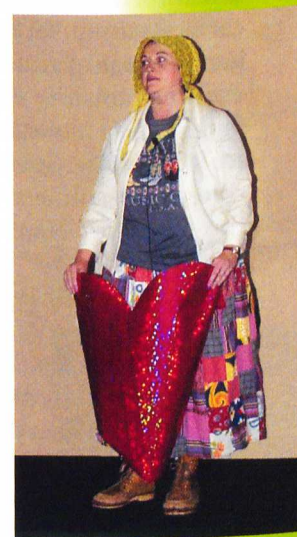
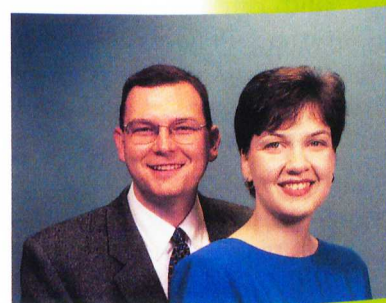
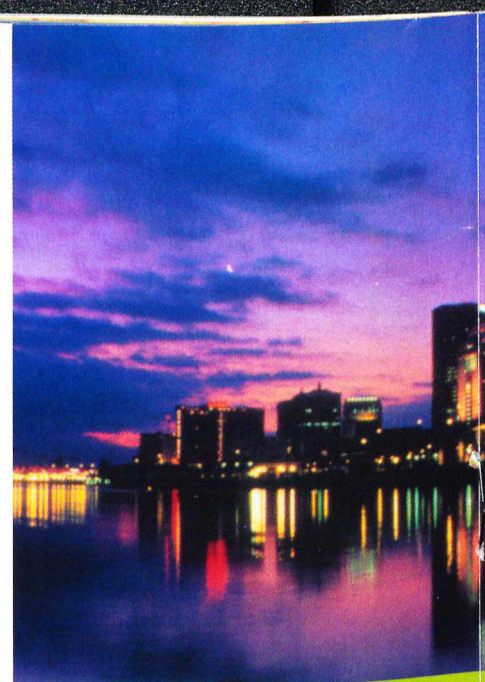
The sign language choir of Heart to Heart youth ministry, Owensboro, KY, will offer praise with their hands during WNAC's main session. The morning will also include testimonies from the recent Central Asian Sister's Prayer Fellowship.

Pursue Fellowship

Viney Mae returns. You laughed with her in Memphis, you'll love her in Louisville. Dramatist Teri Peacock will present "Viney Mae, Part Two" during Tuesday's WNAC Fellowship Luncheon, sharing hilarious yarns and heartwrenching stories as the gal from Fruithill, Kentucky. Tickets are \$25 per person.

Pursue Service

Give. Serve. Go. Women Active in Louisville is an opportunity you'll want to pursue. Individuals or WAC groups are encouraged to send or bring various children's items to the Convention, where attendees will stuff the items into Christmas stockings for Louisville's Salvation Army Angel Tree. Participate in a Wednesday blood drive or pursue various inner-city ministry ops throughout the Convention.



For Convention Registration and/or Luncheon tickets:
go online: www.nafwb.org (link to National Convention)
or call 1-877-767-7659 to obtain a convention brochure.



Is your WAC group innovative? Are you doing things differently to meet the needs of women in your church? Has your WAC or women's ministry program undergone a recent overhaul or facelift? Share your EXTREME ways with others.

WNAC is seeking EXTREME groups to feature at its Monday seminar. Please contact Marjorie Workman before June 1. Be a part of EXTREME WNAC.



Currently, 19,000 children in the Louisville area receive Christmas gifts in the annual Salvation Army Angel Tree program. In addition to the gifts, each child receives a Christmas stocking. WNAC is partnering with Reach That Guy to fill 1,500 stockings for this program.

Louisville's Salvation Army will provide the stockings and a special card to top it off. We just need items to fill them.

We're asking individuals and WAC groups to donate or purchase items for filling. Naturally we'd love to include items of a Christian nature in each stocking. Perhaps a child will come to know Christ as a result of something we place within the stockings. Be creative. Use the suggested list at right as a starting point.

Bring or send the items to the WNAC Convention. There, we'll stockpile the goods at a central location. Throughout the Convention, we'll be stuffing the stockings. Pick a time, enlist a friend and spend an hour or two, impacting a city without ever leaving the Convention site.

2005 Local WNAC Delegate Card

This certifies that _____
(delegate name)

is a duly authorized delegate to the
Women Nationally Active for Christ Convention.

Church Name _____

Church/City/State _____

(local coordinator or local secretary's signature)

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



SUGGESTED STOCKING ITEMS

2-3 YEAR OLDS

Tub toys
Hair bows
Crayons
Books
Balls
Dolls and Accessories
Stuffed Animals
4-5 YEAR OLDS
Sidewalk chalk
Crayons
Playdough
Matchbox cars
Tonka toys
Games
Learning toys
Little books
Dolls

6-9 YEAR OLDS

Action figures
Barbies
Dolls & Accessories
Costume Jewelry

Water Paints

Legos
Trading cards
Key chains
Yo-Yos

10-12 YEAR OLDS

CDs (christian)
Hair Accessories
Notebooks
Key Chains
Louisville or Kentucky items (Kentucky Wildcats/ or Louisville Cardinal merchandise)
Pens or Pencils
Card games
Trading cards

EXCLUSIONS

(all ages)
No food or candy
No bubbles
No glass items

SPRINGBOARD

LEADERSHIP

PROMOTE. Let Lucy and Marge create interest for your June meeting. Skits are found in the 2005 Program and Plan Book.

SING. The song, "Into the Harvest" by Doug Little was inadvertently left out of the PreEaster Packets. Download a printed copy from the WNAC website.

REGISTER. It's time to register for the 2005 WNAC National Convention in Louisville. See pages 16, 17 for details.

EVALUATE. Review the mission statement for WNAC. How well is your group helping women find their place in the Great Commission through opportunities in the home, the church, the community and around the world? What areas need work? Set reachable goals for improvement.

PARTICIPATE. Become Women Active in Louisville. Purchase Christmas gifts for Angel Tree Christmas stockings, benefitting children in Louisville, WNAC's 2005 Convention site. Bring the items to the Convention. If no one in your group can attend, send items with someone in your area who is going.

NOW AVAILABLE

\$8.00

PLUS SHIPPING AND HANDLING

Order yours today!

LET US PURSUE

**2005 WNAC
PROGRAM &
PLAN BOOK**

SERVICE

VOUNTEER or lend support to a local battered women's shelter.

GIVE small Mother's Day gifts to women in these shelters or to new mothers in your local hospital.

SEND a card or note to female high school graduates in your community, offering your guidance and prayers for their future. Include a gospel tract and information about your church and WAC.

STUDY

UTILIZE the mini Bible study on p. 13.

CONDUCT a study on purity with young girls in your church. Helpful resources are listed in the Program and Plan Book.

EMPHASIZE knowing and applying God's Word defensively in times of temptation and spiritual warfare.

MISSIONS

HIGHLIGHT the continuing ministry of Lar Nova Vida children's home in Brazil.

READ the FOCUS article (p. 24). Challenge women to remember these leaders as well as E-TEAM members in prayer during the months of May and June.

NEED a missions project? Email or call contacts Richard Atwood richard@nafwb.org (HM), Steve Lytle steve@fwbgo (IM), (615)-731-6812

NEEDS

PROVISION CLOSET. Full and queen sheet sets; gift cards. Please no phone cards at this time.

WNAC OFFICE. Funds to underwrite recent purchase of a G-5 Macintosh Computer; scanner and InDesign Creative Suite software.

STATE SECRETARIES

Annual forms must be submitted to the WNAC office by June 1.

OUR WEBSITE

www.nafwb.org/wnac

Contact us:
wnac@nafwb.org

CHATTANOOGA CONFERENCE

WNAC and Master's Men announce their Third National Marriage Enrichment Conference, October 28-30, 2005, at the Convention Center Marriott in downtown Chattanooga, TN. Benefit from the conference; enjoy the city. Relax in scenic natural beauty, visit historic sights and Civil War battlefields, tour its Aquarium and museums, or shop till you drop. Find pricing and registration information at www.nafwb.org/mm or call 1-877-767-8039.

PRAYER

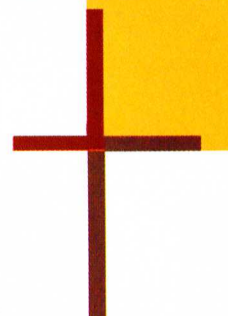
INTERCEDE for home and international missionaries' daily victory over Satanic forces.

DISTRIBUTE rose petals to each woman as prayer reminders of women who have suffered abuse. Statistically, some in your group will need those prayers. Be sensitive in this area.

FORM small groups and pray for these specific concerns: personal purity; purity of teens and younger girls in your church; marriages affected by moral impurity; purity of your pastor and/or church staff.

PRAY for Cote d'Ivoire children, orphaned by military conflicts and the AIDS pandemic.

FEEDBACK...FEEDBACK...



Dear WNAC,

We were welcomed to the states for our short furlough by a letter from you...complete with some WalMart gift cards. We love them and have already had the cultural experience of visiting WalMart and seeing all kinds of things we love. Muchas gracias.

Alejandro and Ana Johnson
Spain

Dear WNAC,

I want to thank you for your hard work you do each day. Your office has such a huge impact on so many women's lives, especially missionary women. You are so good to make sure we have everything we need, and sometimes even some *wants*. I know the Lord is honored by your efforts.

I just finished the Jan/Feb issue of *CoLaborer*. It's so good. It seems like each time I read it, it gets better and better. It's so exciting to see how the Lord is working in so many peoples' lives—from the states to overseas. I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoy your magazine. The Lord uses it each time to encourage me, inspire me, and even challenge me.

Di Keener
France

Dear WNAC,

Thanks for a wonderful March/April *CoLaborer*. You did well in spotlighting International Missions during their emphasis month. Good stuff! And thanks for a number of places I saw Home Missionary names. Thanks so much for the great coverage you give both departments and our work.

Larry Powell
Director, FWB Home Missions

Dear WNAC,

Thank you again for ministering to our family through household needs. We were required once again to evacuate out of the Ivory Coast in December. Thank you for your continued ministry to missionaries. Please pray for peace in the Ivory Coast.

Deleen Cousineau
Cote d'Ivoire

Dear WNAC,

This afternoon I made a phone call to Spain to talk with our fellow teammates about upcoming events in Spain. Last week I called Tim while he was away...just to check in. Both of these calls were made with the phone cards I received from you while visiting the Provision Closet. I just loved the idea of phone cards. I like to keep in touch (talk). You've helped me out. Thanks so much.

Kristi Johnson
Spain

Dear WNAC,

The Lord has opened so many doors here for me to share Christ and I'm very thankful. He is also making it possible for me to come to [the Branson] retreat. It seems so long since I had this blessing of WNAC retreat fellowship.

The *CoLaborer* gets better each time. I like Debbie Burden's articles very much. I read every program, article, etc. in it.

Delois Loveless
Farmington, MO

CORRECTION:

Matt and Cristina Price were twice listed as missionaries to Spain. The Prices are new missionaries to France.

HELP! I'M A MOM

bright ideas for mothers from mothers

Preteens and modesty. What principles should you teach? What guidelines should you follow?

Modesty is such a multi-faceted idea which can be interpreted in numerous ways. One of the keys to dealing with modesty in our home has been to discuss it and deal with it from an early age. It's harder to change modesty guidelines amid the emotions of the pre-teen years than to introduce them early-on and establish a pattern to follow. We must guide our children to follow Daniel's example,

purposing in their hearts what is acceptable and not acceptable before the situation arises.

I often point to options in magazines or store displays and ask my eleven-year-old her opinion of an outfit. How well do you think this protects modesty? Do you think it could be altered to increase modesty and still be in style?

It's important to teach that modesty isn't syn-

onymous with lack of style. It is possible to wear stylish, up-to-date clothes and still be modest.

Ask your preteen this question, "Would you be comfortable wearing that if Jesus came and sat down next to you?" Sometimes that simple question may provide the direction you need.

Katie Greenwood
Antioch, TN

NEXT ISSUE: Torn between two parents. How can we help children of divorce?

LABORS OF LOVE

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

1 Thessalonians

1:2,3



✿ Every fourth Sunday, Women Active for Christ at O'Fallon FWB Church, MO, don lavender outfits accented with specially-made lavender ribbons. It's Missions Sunday and these women want others to know. Often showing a video or performing a missions emphasis skit, they seek to garner prayer and financial support for global evangelism. And it's working. Their congregation of about 150 recently sent 14 participants to the Sister's Prayer Fellowship in Central Asia. Terri Crewse leads this devoted group.

✿ Sisters in Service of Cofer's Chapel FWB Church, Nashville, TN, gave \$600 toward the purchase of a new computer for WNAC. Most of the funds came from a churchwide yard sale. First FWB WAC, Bristol, VA, and Union Hill FWB WAC, Slocomb, AL, have also contributed toward this project.

✿ Recently, the Home Missions Department surprised WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer with a new all in one printer/scanner/copier. The much needed item replaced a ten-year old model. A Home Missions staff member then volunteered to install the printer and update WNAC's software. WNAC extends its thanks and thanksgiving for this gracious provision.

✿ Missions Partners of Donelson FWB, Nashville, TN, recently sent "Blessing Bags" with missionary Clint Morgan to all children of FWB pastors in Cote d'Ivoire. Each gallon zip-lock bag contained a tee-shirt, flip-flops, candy, and age-appropriate gift items. Response was so great, the bags required an extra piece of luggage. However, when Clint told the airline official the suitcase contained gifts for children in a war-torn African country, the extra charges were waived. Estimated value of the items topped \$700.

PICTURED: 1. WAC members from O'Fallon FWB (MO), sport lavender ribbons at the National Retreat. 2. WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Marjorie Workman and Home Missions Director Larry Powell with new printer. 3. Sisters in Service leaders of Cofer's Chapel FWB Church, Nashville, TN.

☼ WNAC offers condolences to Debe Taylor, WNAC President, on the loss of her mother, Mrs. Nettie Lou Jernigan. Mrs. Jernigan went to be with the Lord on March 2, 2005. A FWB minister's wife, Mrs. Jernigan served faithfully for many years.

Is your group involved in a special project or noteworthy endeavor? Share your ideas and

LABORS OF LOVE

SEND NEWS AND PHOTOS:
EMAIL: sarah@nafwb.org
MAIL: P. O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002



fall in love again...
Third
WNAC/Master's Men
**Marriage
Enrichment
Conference**
October 28-30, 2005
Convention Center Marriott
Chattanooga, TN
REGISTER ONLINE AT
www.nafwb.org/mm
OR CALL
1-877-767-8039



JUST LIKE DADDY

They burrow in the morning
Down beneath the still warm sheet,
And shriek and laugh as Daddy tickles
Little ribs and feet.

It's off to school and off to work
But in the afternoon,
The gleeful shouts of "Daddy's home"
Sweetly fill the room.

They watch you as you mow the grass
Or as you wash the cars.
They watch you as you bow your head
To say the bedtime prayers.

Daddy please be careful
In everything you do.
For the little feet you tickle,
Will always follow you.

The little mouths that sweetly shout
Will mimic what you say,
And little eyes that look like yours
Will watch you every day.

Live your life in such a way
That when the day is thru.
You're worthy when your children say,
"I want to be like you!"

—Amy Gibbon

Amy Gibbon is active in WAC at the First FWB Church in Bristol, VA. Her husband, emergency physician Dr. Bruce Gibbon, is "Daddy" to daughters Kara, Kayde, Karlee and son Kristian.



DEBE'S DELIGHTS

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

Debe Taylor
WNAC President

CONFESSIONS OF A FRAIDY CAT

My name is Debe and I am a *fraidy cat*. I pretty much have been this way all my life. Amazingly, God is still trying to help me work through my fears.

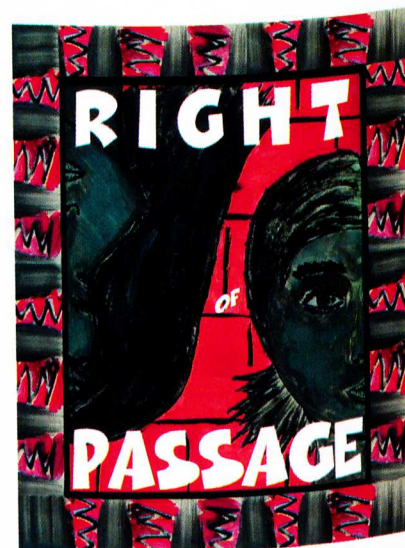
I'm afraid of the dark. Several times my husband has informed me that there is nothing in the dark that is not there in the light. Easy for him to say – he's not afraid of the dark. Every once in awhile I hear a gentle whisper from the Lord, *"I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"* (John 8:12). My years in science class were not wasted. I did learn that light dispels darkness. So, if the Light of the world walks with me, the darkness disappears. Together, we're conquering fear number one.

I'm afraid to stay alone at night. By nature I am a people person. So, every time David would be gone at night, I would host a slumber party. What better excuse? After moving to our present pastorate, I decided it was time to get past this. God's Word assures me, *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5c). I am *not* alone! I even find myself singing, "Anywhere with Jesus I can fall asleep, even though the shadows all around me creep." We're on our way to wiping out fear number two.

I can't swim. You might think this would make me afraid of water. Guess what? I am. More than three inches of bath water is too much. Standing ankle deep in a river is too far from the bank. I couldn't be a NFL coach. When the Gatorade came over my head, I would die of a heart attack rather than drown. Yet, the words of the prophet Isaiah have begun to bring me comfort, *"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee..."* (Isaiah 43:2). I still catch my breath when water splashes in my face, but it's not *total* panic.

Though you may not believe this of a woman my age, I am deathly afraid of dogs. Big dogs, little dogs, sleeping dogs, barking dogs, yapping dogs, tail-wagging dogs—even dogs named Goofy and Lassie. Growing up, if a dog loomed anywhere near, my sister Rhonda would carry me home from school. It didn't matter that my feet dangled low enough for the dog to bite me. I felt safer when she carried me. I am not really sure how God will help me overcome this fear, but I am leaving this up to Him. He is an expert in matters of impossibility.

One thing I do know—*"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (II Timothy 1:7). My name is Debe and I am a fraidy cat, but God is still working on me.



If truth be told, most Japanese have no religion. They follow traditional customs—going to Shinto shrines on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, attending Buddhist funerals—without even thinking about them. Most young people believe in neither God nor Buddha. Their image of religion is one of fear and suspicion. Many follow fortune telling, horoscopes, astrology, and the occult. Though they might say Christians are good people, most would also say that religious things do not concern them.

I grew up in that kind of environment. Unlike most Japanese, I attended church and heard stories about God from the time I was three. Having more knowledge of Christianity, I was less resistant to the church than others around me; I continued to believe there was a God. However, after I entered junior high, with extra curricular activities on Sundays, I hardly ever attended church.

As a child, I faced problems and illnesses related to nervous disorders. At the time I didn't really question why. Looking back, I think these stemmed from sensitivity toward things happening at home. My friends turned against me and bullied

GROWING UP CHRISTIAN IN JAPAN

by Kanna Nageo

me. We had family problems. I began to think that, in the end, I couldn't depend on anyone but myself. I didn't even trust my parents, especially my father. With my own eyes I witnessed my father going to different places and being unfaithful to my mother. When my mother was very ill, he placed himself and his wants ahead of her needs. Even as a child, I saw how hard things were for my mother.

One time I thought, "I will just get a knife and kill my father. We have plenty of insurance and we would be better off without him." That's how much I hated him. I began to reason, "My father is a man, therefore, I can't trust any man."

Throughout junior high, I did what was expected. Everyone, including my teachers, thought I was a good girl. Little by little, things started changing when I entered high school. As captain of my basketball team, I still showed my good side to many. On the other hand, as we say in Japan, I was acting like a scoundrel. I got involved with the wrong crowd and started shoplifting, driving motorcycles without a license and playing chase with the police. Once I got caught and had to go to court. I still remember my teachers' surprise when I was suspended from school. Wanting to graduate and go on to college, I decided I had better straighten up. Again, I put on my *good girl* face. However, I didn't return to church. I didn't want Sunday School teachers and "aunts" in the church asking questions or trying to help.

When I entered junior college, I lost all inhibitions and started living a selfish life. I wanted my own place; I wanted my own money. I started working part-time at a store which greatly overpriced

merchandise. I couldn't show revenge to my father, so I took it out on any man who came along. Totally absorbed in extorting money from men, I rose to the top of my company. I also worked part-time in the night-life district in Sapporo. Though I was making thousands of dollars, the money went through my hands like water as I played and skipped classes. My life was a mess. I didn't remember God. I tried to fill the emptiness in my heart with more money, more friends, more love and more things.

During my second year of college, I was hospitalized with chest pains and diagnosed with a heart problem. I wondered why this was happening to me. I remembered questions I had asked as a child: Why do I exist? What is my purpose for living? What is love? Along with these, I asked another: What happens if I die? This caused me to think about God again. "Maybe God is punishing me," I reasoned. But instead of turning back to God, I tried to run away from Him. I felt that if I became a Christian I couldn't do as I pleased. I would have to change. I didn't want to feel bound. I contended that if God is on the side of the weak, why had my mother endured such suffering?

About a year later, I moved back home and started attending church. At first I went because my mother told me to go. However, I continued going every week. Even though I had rejected the church in the past, slept through most of the messages and didn't think I knew very much about God, I started to realize and understand what I was hearing—not only in my head but in my heart.

I highly respect Pastor Ishii. Through his teaching and leadership the Bible became more than just knowledge. God's Word reached my

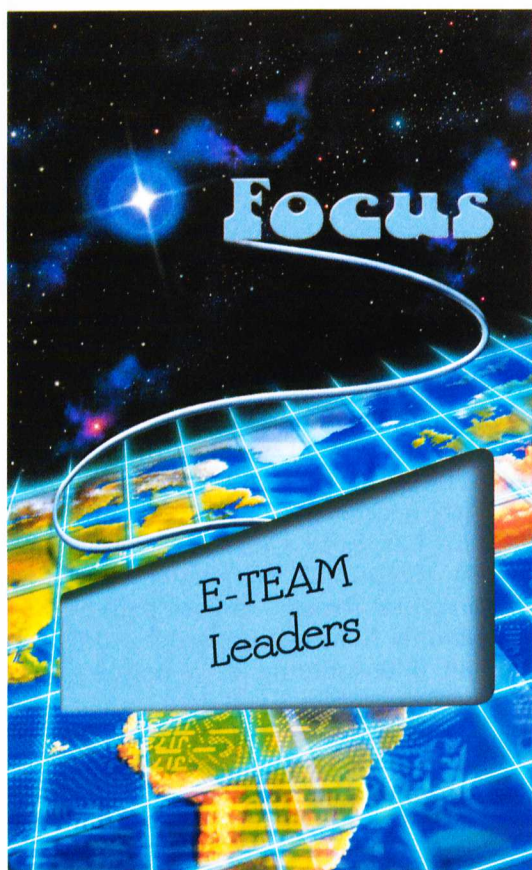
heart. Isaiah 63:9 especially spoke to me, *"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."*

When I read these words and looked back at my life, I saw a set of footprints and thought that somehow I had made it. I had been protected. I was still alive. Then, I realized it hadn't been me; Jesus had carried me. Those were His footprints. No matter how good our friends or even family are, only Jesus can understand the pain and suffering of a person's heart. He suffered and died on the cross for a sinner like me. I finally understood.

When I started seeking for help, God showed me that He is still alive. He will be with me, whether I can see Him or not. I am overflowing with thanksgiving. God's love now fills my life. I never thought I could be changed like this. But I didn't change myself; I was changed by God's love.

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."* When I put my name in this verse it gives me strength. Jesus is the one who changed me and saved me out of darkness. No one besides the God of the Bible can see and touch the deepest parts of a person's soul. No one else can save. I believe. Thank you, Lord. Hallelujah!

Kanna Nageo, age 24, is a leader in Japan's FWB young peoples' group. She attends Ai No Sato FWB Church, Sapporo, Japan. According to missionary and translator Sandra Bishop, Kanna's story is typical of many Japanese youth who come in contact with the church, yet fall away during junior high and high school years.



Pray:

- for spiritual boldness and power as teams minister in their respective fields.
- for safety of both leaders and students as they travel.
- for trip details: necessary visas, coordinating flights, etc.
- for new FWBIM employee Alicia Bunch as she coordinates the E-TEAM program.
- for bonding and uncommon unity among leaders, students, and host missionaries.
- for leaders' children and other family members while they are apart from one another.
- for a harvest of souls.



LOOK AT THE PICTURE ABOVE. Notice the sea of smiling, energetic faces? They're E-TEAM members, high school students involved in summer missions trips—teens committed to world evangelism.

LOOK AGAIN. See the adults? Every team needs a leader. Because they are not visiting churches, writing letters, or garnering support, E-TEAM leaders are often overlooked. These unsung individuals who serve such vital roles within the program need your prayers.

Who Are These People?

E-TEAM leaders are volunteers. This summer's E-Team leaders include Tommy and Barbara Boyd (Uruguay), Curt and Mary Holland (Brazil), David and Bethany Lytle (Japan), David and Pat Shores (France), Mick and Rachel Donahue (Panama), Steve and Judy Lytle (Cuba), and Rodney and Mary Yerby (Russia.)

Some are missionaries or missions-related personnel. Former missionary Judy Lytle and her husband Steve were asked to lead E-TEAM Cuba because of its unique situation. With no English-speaking missionaries in Cuba, it was necessary to find leaders who both spoke Spanish and had been to the island before.

Some are couples considering career missionary service. Most are lay persons from FWB churches whose interests include young people and progression. They became interested through Outreach work at their local church, Union Chapel FWB, Chocowinity, NC. The Boyds first took teens to Tennessee to help with church building repair. They were "blessed beyond description." They've also been involved in disaster relief efforts in North Carolina and Florida. Encouraged by their pastor, the couple applied.

It's trip number two for Mary and Rodney Yerby of Alabama, who accompanied a group to Japan in 2003. In what Mary describes as a "God thing," they came in as last-minute sponsors, not knowing much about the program. That wonderful experience in Tokyo prompted the Yerbys to seek future appointments. This time, one of their four children, 14-year-old Thomas is going with them.

E-TEAM leaders are usually husband and wife. Spiritually mature, they are active in ministry within their local FWB church. Previous cross-cultural experience is helpful, but is not required. Obviously, leaders must adjust to new and different situations round out the criteria for leaders.

How Did They Get There?

Interested couples complete and return an application to FWBIM. Applications are reviewed, placed in a volunteer pool, and prayerfully



Other Prayer Concerns



—Pray for safety of missionaries and all believers in the midst of continued unrest in Cote d'Ivoire.

—Pray for continued progress on the Nehemiah Project (church building effort) in Villalba, Spain.

—Pray for job situations of FWB national workers in both France and Spain. Believers there are often forced out of jobs because of their faith.

—Pray for the family of pioneer missionary doctor Laverne Miley, who went home to be with the Lord on March 15.

—Pray for three Missouri youth groups as they visit and help missionary Scott Cheatham in Colorado.

—Pray for missionary Bill Reynolds (Rhode Island) and his congregation as they close on their property on June 1.

—Pray for missionary Dexter Guin's grand opening service, May 22, in Colorado Springs, CO, after remodeling of the present church facility.

—Pray for the persecuted church around the world.

selected. Leaders attend Culture Link, a training seminar for leading short-term missions trips. Then, they clear their calendar for the month of June, since E-TEAM includes one week of training before the two-week assignment.

Leading an E-TEAM requires preparation. On occasions, last-minute replacement leaders have been chosen. However, most leaders begin early, gathering information about their field, corresponding with host missionaries and team members, collecting items and supplies for their particular ministry focus. For the Yerbys, that focus is puppetry. They will be involved teaching puppetry to two youth groups who will minister in orphanages. Thankfully, two of their team members are seasoned puppeteers, having competed in NYC's Music and Arts Festival.

How Do They Feel?

Newcomers to the program possess both apprehension and anticipation. Barbara Boyd's feelings contain a mix of excitement and the gravity of being the leaders God would have them be. Mary Yerby is excited about working with Mike and Cathy Corley (missionaries from her home church) and finally seeing the field she's heard about for years. Political climate, safety concerns, customs, food—all these unknowns can be unsettling. Even seasoned veterans face unknowns. Leaders often serve in multiple countries. Each year's group forms its own dynamic.

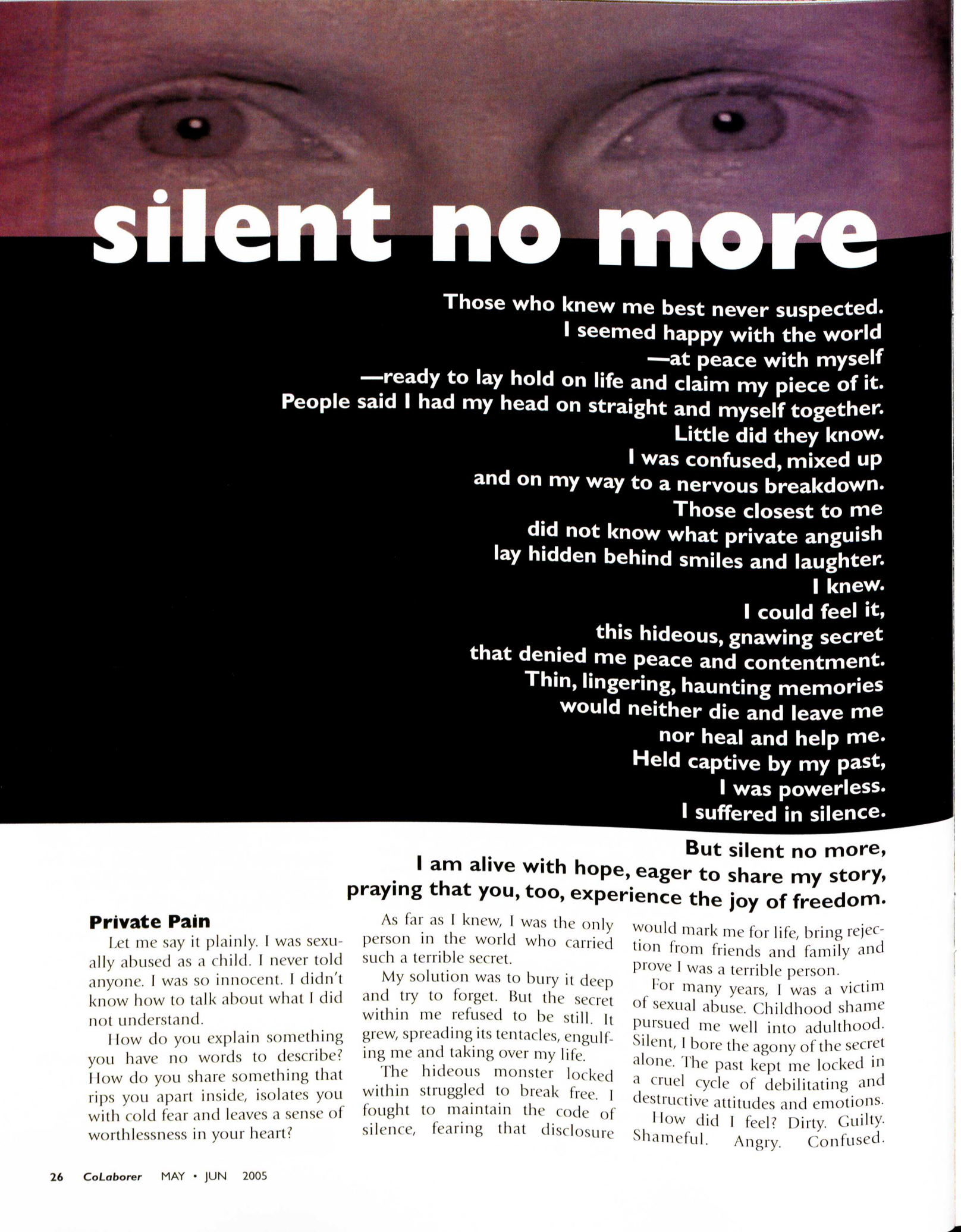
What Do They Need?

E-TEAM leaders request prayer for their student members. Judy Lytle is specifically praying that God would not only work mightily through the team but also do a great work in each team member's heart. She shares, "When you go to Cuba, you never return the same." E-TEAM leaders themselves need prayer—for Holy Spirit leadership, for health and safety, for the family they may leave behind.

What About You?

Mary Yerby affirms, "Chaperoning an E-TEAM is a wonderful ministry opportunity and a way for lay people to have first-hand missionary experiences. My experience challenged my faith and trust and brought me to a new level of faith in Him." Yet, she cautions, "[Leading] an E-TEAM is not for the weak or faint of heart. It can be an enormous time and energy commitment." Leaders agree, however, that the blessings far outweigh the burdens.

Is God calling you to pursue this opportunity? For more information or to obtain an E-TEAM leader application, contact Alicia Bunch at alicia@fwbgo.com.



silent no more

Those who knew me best never suspected.
I seemed happy with the world
—at peace with myself
—ready to lay hold on life and claim my piece of it.
People said I had my head on straight and myself together.
Little did they know.
I was confused, mixed up
and on my way to a nervous breakdown.
Those closest to me
did not know what private anguish
lay hidden behind smiles and laughter.
I knew.
I could feel it,
this hideous, gnawing secret
that denied me peace and contentment.
Thin, lingering, haunting memories
would neither die and leave me
nor heal and help me.
Held captive by my past,
I was powerless.
I suffered in silence.

But silent no more,
I am alive with hope, eager to share my story,
praying that you, too, experience the joy of freedom.

Private Pain

Let me say it plainly. I was sexually abused as a child. I never told anyone. I was so innocent. I didn't know how to talk about what I did not understand.

How do you explain something you have no words to describe? How do you share something that rips you apart inside, isolates you with cold fear and leaves a sense of worthlessness in your heart?

As far as I knew, I was the only person in the world who carried such a terrible secret.

My solution was to bury it deep and try to forget. But the secret within me refused to be still. It grew, spreading its tentacles, engulfing me and taking over my life.

The hideous monster locked within struggled to break free. I fought to maintain the code of silence, fearing that disclosure

would mark me for life, bring rejection from friends and family and prove I was a terrible person.

For many years, I was a victim of sexual abuse. Childhood shame pursued me well into adulthood. Silent, I bore the agony of the secret alone. The past kept me locked in a cruel cycle of debilitating and destructive attitudes and emotions.

How did I feel? Dirty. Guilty. Shameful. Angry. Confused.

Fearful. Helpless. Out of control. Consumed by self-hatred, blame and rage. Hopeless. Worthless. Violated. Alone.

I wanted to turn myself wrong-side-out and wash away the memories and shame. I longed to feel clean and whole, to be rid of the horror within. I desperately wanted someone to see what I could not voice and show me a way to find relief.

But no one could see what lay just below the surface, because I was afraid to let anyone get close enough to really know me. I was afraid my secret would get out.

Secrets are like that—they sit right on the tip of your tongue waiting for a slip.

Secret Slipped

My secret first slipped out while I was talking with my Best Friend and Confidant. He didn't reject me. He already knew and promised to always love me. Jesus took it well. So I thought, "With His help I can tell someone else."

I picked my moment and shared just a bit with my husband. He didn't reject me either. In fact, he hugged me, kissed me and encouraged me to stop keeping secrets. So I bought books, read articles, made notes and talked to victims of sexual abuse. From the information I gathered, a plan was born. I began working my way down the path toward healing.

I wanted to know if it were possible to move beyond being a victim of sexual abuse to being a victor. *Guess what? It is possible!*

My Path

I'm not a counselor. I'm a victim who, like you, deserves the best God has to offer. Remaining a victim of sexual abuse is not His best for us, nor is it His will. Jesus said He came to *"...heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, ...to set at liberty them that are bruised..."* (Luke 4:18).

This is my story; this is my path; these are my steps. First, I told.

Second, I sought help. Third, I began to move forward.

The first issue I dealt with was forgiveness. I had to forgive those who misused me. I also had to forgive myself for any real or imagined wrong I had done. Most abuse victims feel a sense of guilt (either from something they should not have done or something they should have done differently).

Then came acceptance of what happened to me—acceptance of all of it, the abuse, the baggage, the emotions, everything. By giving everything to the Lord as I dealt with memories, attitudes, anger, the past—*constantly* giving them to Him and *leaving* them at His feet—I was able to maintain growth and healing.

I discovered the importance of understanding the effects of the abuse and its impact upon me as a child and, now, as an adult. I had to learn how it affected me, how it changed me, what it did to me physically and emotionally.

Next came a good strong, honest look at who I am, why I am this way and what life path I chose because of abuse. I had to identify habits I developed and patterns that were forged as a result of abuse, before I could work toward correcting what was wrong. I had to learn new ways of coping and dealing with issues. This *was* and *is* an ongoing project.

The day came when I knew I must learn to see myself as God sees me—not how I see or how I think others might perceive me. Learning to look at life through His eyes changed my perspective and my perception—about myself, about the abuse.

Confronting my abusers was not an option for me. Time took care of that. They died before I found the resolve to confront them. But that may not be true in your situation. A trained counselor can be of great benefit in this area.

Beyond Victim

How long has it taken me to reach this point? Over 20 years.

It has been a slow process. Slow because I was headstrong and proud. I chose to work through things on my own without the help of a professional counselor.

I had help, of course. My family supported me. A special

friend offered excellent advice and was a constant source of encouragement. A missionary friend spent several weekends with me, making sure I was on the right track and dealing with matters adequately. Friends prayed. The Holy Spirit also constantly tutored, nudged and opened doors that were long ago locked tight. However, I didn't have that special touch which a professional counselor brings to the process.

My advice? Swallow your pride and seek the help of an experienced Christian counselor. Christian counselors provide guidance and advice for dealing with issues and concerns that sexual abuse victims experience. They offer support, broad knowledge, experience in counseling victims and a proven recovery/healing method. Their goal is to see the victim become victorious.

Your Journey

Healing begins with a decision to break the silence. Tell someone. It's as simple as saying, "I was sexually abused."

Seek professional Christian counseling. Healing is a gradual experience. Sexual abuse victims often possess deep festering wounds that need expert care. Self-medication is not the best solution.

Gather a support group of people you trust, who are strong in

**First,
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faith, who love you and want God's best for you. Accept what each has to offer: wisdom, comfort, answers, a listening ear and more. Let them encourage you, uphold and pray for you.

Victory can be yours. "...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

New Beginning

Remember, you are not alone. Statistics indicate that one in four women and one in five men were sexually abused as children.

You won't be alone on your journey of healing. Jesus promised to be with you. He promised to give you strength and a sound mind (2 Tim 1:7). He promised to give you a new beginning—"beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness..." (Isaiah 61:3).

Many people have been where you are. If you will let them, they can direct you to find help, offer support and provide encouragement.

We, the victims of sexual abuse, are a silent minority. Silent. That's the problem. You don't know how to find us. We don't wave a banner labeled "Victor" or write articles like this very often. But we are here.

The shame of sexual abuse is silence. If you don't tell, you can't get help. If you don't get help, you won't experience healing.

Healing is available. Reach out and take that first step. Tell someone. Then take the next step and find an experienced Christian counselor. Start your journey today—Begin now.



helpful resources

AACC (American Association of Christian Counselors)
PO Box 739
Forest, VA 24551.
1-800-526-8673 or 434-526-8673
<http://www.aacc.net/>

Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse. Diane Mandt Langberg, Ph.D., AACC Counseling Library, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Wheaton, IL, 1997, ISBN 0-8423-0487-8
(Contains a vast listing of resources)

Healing for Damaged Emotions. David Seamands, Chariot Victor Publishing, Wheaton, IL, 1991, ISBN: 0-89693-938-3

Healing of Memories. David A. Seamands. Chariot Victor Publishing, 1985, ISBN: 0-89693-169-2

Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse. Lynn Heitritter and Jeanette Vought, Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN, 1989, ISBN: 0-87123-930-2

See Yourself as God Sees You. Josh McDowell, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, IL, 1999, ISBN: 0-8423-1832-1

The Freedom of Forgiveness. David Augsburger, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, 1988, ISBN: 0-8024-2884-3

Additional resources are listed in the **CoLaborer** section on the WNAC website: www.nafwb.org/wnac.

About the article:

Articles concerning sexual abuse are often written anonymously. However, author Suzan Hutchinson chose to identify herself in the hope that she and her story can minister to others. Suzan describes herself as "one who has found victory in Jesus and the power to overcome." She says, "I desperately want others to find that victory, that power, that wonderful healing found only in Him. It's not about me—it's all about Jesus."

She may be contacted at:

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more_than_conquerors@hotmail.com



WHEN TEARDROPS FALL

by Waynelle Scott

Today, I saw grief in the tear-streaked face of a young brother. Today, I felt grief in the trembling handclasp of a sorrowful grandmother. Today, I heard grief in the heart-rending sobs of a broken mother and father. Their precious child was gone.

The pastor ministered to this family, offering words of comfort and hope. Many friends and loved ones gathered to offer sympathy and support. People who know the worth of prayer upheld them in their time of need.

When I was very young and inexperienced with life (let alone death), I went through the pain of losing a child. Without God's direction and the support of my church and my family, I'm sure I would have floundered—helplessly—in getting on with living.

The following I offer because I've been there, and with God's help, I made it through. If you are suffering due to the loss of a loved one, these words are for you:

1) Don't be ashamed of your grief. Make no apology for the shedding of tears or other manifestations of grief. Remember, Jesus also wept (John 11:35).

2) Don't put a guilt trip on yourself. Eliminate the words, "If only I had..." from your vocabulary. Determine to learn from any past mistakes. Savor every moment spent with your loved ones. Begin today.

3) Don't shut out those who love you. They are grieving, too. Your

companion, your children, your close friends and other family—you can all help each other.

4) Don't let time hang heavy on your hands. Involve yourself in new projects that you will enjoy. (I went back to college following the death of my child.) Unoccupied time gives space for depression. Don't give in to it.

5) Don't be too proud to ask for help in dealing with your grief. Choose a pastor, a friend, or somebody else who cares to help you bear your burden.

6) Don't bottle your grief inside you. Give yourself an outlet. Walk, talk, hit a tennis ball, go bowling, laugh, cry, do whatever it takes, but don't keep your feelings locked up.

7) Don't grow bitter; allow your tragedy to help you grow better. Let it develop within you a nature that wants to help others in need. Let it draw you closer to God, and He will draw closer to you (James 4:8).

Perhaps you are not battling personal grief this moment. First, thank God for your blessings. Then, look around and see if someone close to you is needing someone who cares. Remember that she needs you to be there not only today, but also tomorrow and in the days that lie ahead.

We will all experience grief in this life, but we do not have to despair. When we are at our weakest low, God's grace is sufficient. This is when His strength is made perfect (2 Corinthians 12: 9). We can trust Him to help us win the battle over grief.

Waynelle Scott is a pastor's wife (Olivet FWB Church, Marshall, MO) whose interests include family and collecting frogs. This devotional placed first in the 2004 Creative Arts Contest.



The book, *Losing You Too Soon*, by Bernadette Keaggy offers hope and healing for those who have suffered a miscarriage or loss of a child. Order from WNAC: 1-877-767-7662.

BEHIND THE SCENES

A LOOK INTO THE LIFE OF A FWB DIRECTOR'S WIFE



VIVACIOUS, CARING, AND HELPFUL. Those words describe Sandra

Akers, wife of Master's Men director, Kenneth Akers.

Born in Nashville, TN, Sandra grew up in a Christian home. Her mother and grandmother both greatly influenced her spiritual path. When the family moved to Monterey, TN, they became involved with Free Will Baptists. Sandra's grandfather was a charter member of the Monterey Church. Though she attended church regularly, it took a gospel crusade in a nearby town to bring Sandra to Christ. The well-known evangelist clearly explained salvation. As a teen, she made her decision to follow Christ.

Sandra was later influential in bringing Kenneth to Christ. The story of how they met is unique. Ken worked as an optician at Horner-Rausch where Sandra went to get a pair of glasses. So impressed with her, Ken pulled her file, copied her phone number, and called to ask her out. Not knowing anything about this guy, she declined. Several phone calls later, she finally agreed to date him. Kenneth began attending church with her. One day, when the pastor came to visit, he accepted Christ.

Today, Ken and Sandra have been married twenty-five years. Son Brandon, a regional recruiter for Fed Ex, and his wife June, a schoolteacher, live in the Atlanta area. They are expecting their first child (Kenneth and Sandra's first grandbaby) in

June. Ryan, a four-year participant in Truth and Peace, is now a Free Will Baptist Bible College freshman, majoring in youth ministry.

"It was God." That's how Sandra describes her husband's appointment as Director of Master's Men. The Akers were an active laycouple in the Cookeville FWB Church, volunteering and working with youth. They owned their own optical business in Crossville, TN. However, when previous Master's Men director Tom Dooley approached Kenneth about becoming his assistant, the couple prayed and put the business on the market. Three weeks later, it was sold, a marvelous testimony of God's working in their lives.

Sandra jokes that when Ken sold the business, he also sold her job. (She was his office manager and bookkeeper.) However, she's happy now as a homemaker, keeping an eye on her parents. Her father is in a local nursing home. Her mother lives next door to her. "We look out for each other," Sandra says.



Ryan, Sandra, June, Brandon, and Kenneth Akers.



Unlike most director's families, the Akers do not live in the Nashville area. Church responsibilities and family influenced Ken's choice to remain in Monterey and make the daily one and a half hour commute to the FWB National Offices. Ken says he doesn't mind the drive. One day they might consider "moving in" but for now, Sandra stays busy where she is.

Sandra serves as church bookkeeper. She's active in Women of Worth, her church's women's ministry which includes WAC, Bible studies, and fellowship events. She's completing her second semester of FAITH Sunday school evangelism strategy.

When she's not working at church, Sandra is into scrapbooking. She enjoys painting and decorating. Quite a handywoman, she recently constructed a backyard stone walkway and laid her own tile floor. Her husband declares, "She can do anything she puts her mind to."

Sandra enjoys traveling and often accompanies Ken on ministry trips. She desires to help her husband in his ministry any way she can.

Words FOR WOMEN

DEAR MOM



Executive Secretary-Treasurer

*Marjorie H.
Workman*

Dear Mom,

A dear friend of mine just lost her mother to a massive heart attack. I ache with her, wishing I could comfort her.

Suppressed feelings over losing you are surfacing. How long does it take to get over losing a loved one? It's been almost seven years, yet, it seems like yesterday. I'm comforted, knowing that you are in a better place, free of pain and heartache, and that there is hope beyond the grave (1 Corinthians 15). Now Heaven is more real because you are there.

Do you know when I miss you the most? When I see something that I know you enjoyed, like beautiful flowers or sunrises. One particular sunrise I'll never forget. You and I were standing in your yard, saying goodbye. We both were fighting back tears; family departure time had come. Living five hundred miles away kept us from being together often, making every goodbye difficult. You pointed to the sky, absolutely breathtaking with the sun's brilliant shades of red streaking across the horizon. "One day, we'll be up there, where there will be no good-byes," you said. From then until now, a beautiful sunrise brings thoughts of you.

Your heart was huge, always giving and never wanting anything in return. I wonder how many meals you cooked for preachers, evangelists, and missionaries? It never seemed to bother you that we didn't have much in material goods. It was more important that our home was always open. You never knew how many people would be eating Sunday dinner, but you always had plenty of food. You loved getting out the linen tablecloth and napkins to dress up the table for our special guests. You would set the table with a special set of dishes and silverware. You never bought flowers, but when anything was blooming, you always graced our table with a fresh bouquet from the yard.

Thank you for the etiquette lessons, taught before company came. "Pass the

food to the right," you would say, and the company often passed to the left. "Chew with your mouth closed." "Children are to be seen and not heard." "Be careful not to spill your tea."

You had the patience of Job. Remember the time my younger brother misbehaved and you said you were going to whip him? He ran out the door and across the yard. You didn't chase after him. You were sewing that day, so you kept on sewing. Soon he was coming back, but you kept on sewing. He came into the room where you were, but you kept on sewing. Finally, he begged you to whip him. After what seemed an eternity, you obliged him. He never ran from you again, nor did any of us.

You were a godly woman. How do I know? Everybody said so. You were honest, loving, compassionate and genuine. You taught Sunday school for years. I've heard many in your class say what a good teacher you were. More importantly, you lived what you taught. Often, I heard you witnessing to a neighbor or relative about how they should live. You answered questions that others asked about the Bible. You loved the church. You loved your family. You loved your neighbors.

I'm glad that President Woodrow Wilson, in 1914, made an official announcement proclaiming the second Sunday in May as a national holiday. As far as I'm concerned, every day is Mother's Day. How blessed I am, having been born to such a wonderful Mother. Everything I am, I owe to you. Your strength and wisdom guides me. Your kindness and grace warms me. You have been my teacher and my friend. I love you, Mom. I miss you very much.

Your loving daughter,

Marjorie

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3

*As sure as the sunrise,
as constant as the rain,
God is faithful.*

*For seventy years,
God has enabled WNAC
to meet the needs of missionaries,
assist churches and communities,
and minister to women everywhere—
helping them find their place
in the Great Commission.*

*And He's done it
through the prayers
and support
of people like you.*

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