



Connections

◆ A Journal by & for Women in Ministry ◆

Vol. 18, No. 1

Spring 2011

What Happens in Heaven

By Sue Berger

My friends have a sign at their lake cabin, “What happens at the cabin, stays at the cabin.” A spin off, I’m sure, of the slogan, “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.” The implication being the location is a safe place to let your hair down and be yourself, a place of confidentiality and perhaps a place to do things you wouldn’t normally do in public. One’s imagination can run amuck with that thought!

So when I saw an article titled, “What Happens in Heaven,” my mind filled in, “stays in heaven,” and I immediately experienced mental whiplash as I almost said *No!* out loud. The article was about heaven, which was all well and good, but I was totally derailed by the emotional leap I’d already taken.

I suppose much of what happens in heaven does stay in heaven. We really don’t have a clue what it’s like there. On one hand, the apostle John records fantastic visions of God’s throne room and heavenly hosts. On the other, author Paul Young portrays Father, Son and Spirit sharing the day’s events around the kitchen table eating chicken, rice and greens. I’m wow’d by the first, but I’m warmed by the second.

I believe much of what has happened in heaven has had everything to do with us here on earth. For starters, the Father’s overflowing love prompted our very creation. A heavenly war between good and evil perpetuated an ongoing battle of the same in humanity. The biblical narrative relates numerous earthly encounters with angelic beings on various assignments, one of which announced God himself coming to dwell with mankind.

Now *that* was just plain crazy talk! Why on earth (or should I say, why in heaven) would God want to come here? Comparatively, the physical limitations, squalor, frustration and pain are mind-boggling. It would be like going out to live in my flower-

◆ Contents ◆

- *Tam 2U*
Responding to God page 3
- *Pondering Life*
By Hannah Knaack page 4
- *Briefly Speaking...*
A Gift to God
By Sheila Graham page 5
- *God Made You Special*
By Anne Gillam page 6
- *Girl Power*
By Joyce Catherwood . . . page 7
- *Blog Roll page 8*
- *Zorro and Me*
My Recent “Hyster-ia”
By Barbara Dahlgren . . . page 9
- *Opportunities*
By Becky Deuel page 11
- *My Adventurous Nature*
By Phyllis G. Rose page 13
- *The Sack of Potatoes*
Contributed by Betty Johannsen
. page 14
- *Lighter Side page 15*
- *Connecting & Bonding*
Be Refreshed
By Jannice May page 16
- *C&B Registration Form*
. Page 17

Continued on page 2

Heaven

Continued from page 1

bed with my pansies, experiencing life sustained by soil and rainfall, while hoping not to get trampled by the neighborhood kids or marked by my own dog. I'm just not that motivated to relate with my flowers! But God was motivated to relate to us.

Heaven didn't stay in heaven. Emmanuel. God with us. A heavenly King surrounded by worshipping choirs, came to sit and eat at earthly dinner tables. Yes, ladies, he belched and scratched, but he also laughed and hugged and cried. Heaven was human, motivated by a depth of love unimaginable to us. Creator, wanting to be personally known by his creation. Who can grasp that? A desire to reveal the Father's love for us, so deep that Jesus would come here to walk with us, laugh with us, suffer and die for us. And he didn't stop there. Earth then went back to heaven and sent the Spirit to work here in us, forever linking us to God.

No, what happens in heaven, doesn't stay in heaven. Heaven has walked earth and now dwells within us. We are known, we are accepted and we are loved. And that my friends, is *very Good News!*



Sue's winter pansies survived not only kids and dogs, but three unusual Texas snowfalls. Warmer weather is teasing and she's itching to get outside to plant her summer pots and flower beds. You may email her at sueberger2000@gmail.com.

CONNECTIONS

Pastor General: *Joseph Tkach*
 Advisory Panel: *Senior Pulley, Marilys Green, Pat Shaw, Susan Dick, Norva Kelly, Trish Clauson.*

Editor/Managing Editor: *Tammy Tkach*
 Senior Editor: *Sheila Graham*
 Contributors: *Our readers*

Connections, a journal by and for women in ministry, is published by Grace Communion International to promote the constructive exchange of ideas and experiences. Opinions of the writers do not necessarily reflect official church policy.

Submit your ideas and articles to *Connections*, GCI, P.O. Box 5005, Glendora, CA 91740-5005, or email: tammy.tkach@gci.org

Copyright 2011 Grace Communion International, Glendora, California. All rights reserved. A.R.B.N. 010 019 986

Connections

Mission Statement

Primary: The Connections for Clergy Support Department provides intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual support and encouragement in the personal lives of GCI ministry families.

Three primary means of serving are the *Connections* journal, the Connections for a Successful Ministry and Life web pages, and the Nurturennet forum. We highlight women in ministry but are inclusive of the needs of the entire family.

Secondary: To promote respect, understanding and support for women, their personal ministries and ministries that serve them.

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2010, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

• CALIFORNIA •
TAM 2 U

Responding to God

When I began taking medication for a minor skin condition I was told 3 out of 10 people don't see results. It hadn't occurred to me a medication might not work, and I left hoping I'd be one of the lucky seven. I kind of wished the doctor hadn't told me because it bothered me I might be wasting my time and money, besides risking unpleasant side effects.

At the end of my second month of treatment the doctor said with a smile, "You're a responder!" It was working and I was relieved and happy. I kept thinking about how she called me a responder. In this case, my body responded to the medication, but my thoughts soon turned to how I am doing as another kind of responder.

To respond is to do one or more things as a result of an event or action of another. We first notice or hear, then we act. In the case of God's interaction with humanity, he revealed himself in the Old Testament in various ways and the people responded, sometimes with fear and sometimes with obedience—or lack of it. In the New Testament, God revealed himself in the person of Jesus and the people's response was to kill him, because of his

presumed boasting and seemingly lawless living.

It's easy to see how people respond to God today. We see belief, scoffing, anger, indifference, even murder. Some respond by giving lip service and going their merry way. Some actively try to pull believers away by telling them the Bible is a fairy tale. Some put their energy into obeying every jot and tittle of the law, while others live in fear they can never do enough.

Some authors and speakers tell you to let God control your mind and heart. I have a problem with this as it leaves no room to respond to God in the way he wants.

How does he want us to respond? We know we don't have to do anything to earn our salvation. Jesus finished his work on the cross, giving us the gift of grace. A gift can't be earned or bought. If that were true, it wouldn't be a gift. He gave us freedom of choice and calls us his friends, so I don't believe he wants us to relinquish control of our hearts and minds. Besides, it's impossible anyway.

God is the one who formed his plan of salvation before the foundation of the world. He loved us while we were enemies. He's the one who reaches out to us even when we don't want to be reached. He never gives up—his love is never ending. He wants us to try and grasp the enormity of his love and grace and respond in kind, to love him and to love others.

We have a choice as to how we'll respond—or not—to the Holy Spirit each day. My prayer is that we'll become more and more responsive to his indescribable love.

A fault which humbles a man
is of more use to him than a good action
which puffs him up.



—Thomas Wilson

Tammy



Pondering Life

By Hannah Knaack

Whoever said wisdom comes with age was mostly correct. Have you ever wondered how different our lives would be if we'd had the wisdom at age 21 we do now? Perhaps we'd have fewer regrets. Why isn't life less complicated? And why am I pondering random thoughts more and more? These ramblings and many more swirl together in the deep, gray confetti that used to be my normal mind.



Had I known when our last child was born the tiny pearl-like toes and feet I kissed and cooed over would one day be the size of gunboats and require copious amounts of air freshener, I'd have kissed more toes. A loss of sweet innocence, for sure. If I'd known I'd be tripping over one or more of his Jethro-size shoes left in the doorway *every day*, I would have told him barefoot is better.

Having prepared full meals since the age of 15, I was no newlywed novice in the kitchen. Cooking every day for the rest of my life—no problem, I said. Oh, the foolishness of youth. Spending hours in the kitchen only to see food disappear as if sucked into a vacuum can get surprisingly old. Had I known then how wonderful it is to have someone else take that responsibility on a regular basis, I would have held family cooking classes. I'd have offered rewards for a job well done. Dessert is a great reward in our family.

No one told me that at 50-something I'd be doing the very things we trained our children not to. We had two major rules with our young ones—no lying and no whining. I've told myself I'm going to fit into the size 6

jeans again. I call myself middle-age when I am slightly (very slightly) beyond. Yesterday I inferred I was out of chocolate when my husband's sweet tooth kicked in. Somehow that last square of Lindt's didn't have its usual smooth flavor.

No one enjoys hearing a grown woman whine. It's pathetic, childish and just plain nasty. However, I've discovered that a well-placed whine regarding the run-down condition of certain household items can result in wonderful Christmas gifts. For whatever reason, cold weather brings out the whine in me and before you know it, hubby has offered to bring the groceries home. Never mind half the items aren't those I normally purchase, or that we're still out of milk, which topped the list.

Somewhere in western New York are a couple of used vehicles with fingernail grip marks on the door handle and size 7 shoe indentations in the floor of the front passenger side. They weren't intentionally left behind, but no amount of prior experience can help you avoid the teeth-clenching fear that grips you when teaching teenage sons to drive. Fortunately there's a solution for mothers of teens. I suggest a move near the city, followed by detailed instructions of the public transport system.

Had I known when I married that my husband would become a full-scale Messie (the politically correct term for a clutter bug who may or may not be bothered by it), I'd have done away with horizontal surfaces in our home. I was aware he'd inherited pack-rat genes from both parents, so moving nine times in 29 years has allowed for a natural cleansing process. What he didn't see go into the garbage didn't hurt him. I believe that's biblical (see Ecclesiastes 3:6—with emphasis on "throw away").

Continued on page 5

A Gift to God

Nothing shocks a young mother more than the first time she hears her mother's words and tone coming from her own mouth. I guarantee it will stop you in your tracks. Looking into a mirror proves worthless. You may look like you, but on the inside you have become your mother. It's a scary thing. Prayer may not help. Keeping a list of your mother's best qualities is of some comfort.

Any mother who can look in a full-size mirror after she's birthed the last child and not wince is a good mother. A great mother, really, for a mother's love covers all (bodily) flaws. So what if the bikini days are over. Who cares if when overnight at a hotel you choose to swim in the dark while everyone else is sleeping. Love covers all things. I cover more these days as well.

In spite of my ramblings, regrets and ponderings—many about my less than stellar mothering abilities—I will come clean and admit to one secret vice. On occasion, when by myself and no one's looking, I sneak into the infant section of the store, flip open a lid and take a deep breath of Johnson's baby lotion. I've found this neatly removes certain memories and enhances my anticipation for the grandchildren I'll one day hold in my arms.



Hannah is dreaming of spring and ordering flowers for planting. You may email Hannah at justmomhik@gmail.com.



Be kinder than necessary,
because everyone you meet
is fighting some kind of battle.

Sometimes I decide to give a day to God. No, not always Sunday, it can be some other day—a day when I put aside my desires, concerns and personal pleasures and focus on God. I might not eat on that day. I might not watch television or play video games or check Facebook over and over to see what my friends are up to. I don't do laundry or clean house or cook. It's a day to worship, praise, meditate on him—a gift to God.

Now, I have to admit most of the time I have ulterior motives. I'm needing inspiration for an article or a presentation or I need a solution to one of those concerns I'm supposed to have put aside. I'm a natural born worrier.

God is not fooled, of course. He knows my human nature, and in spite of me, appreciates my attempts to give him a gift. Kind of like children when they bring a somewhat straggly, slightly wilted wildflower to you as a gift. You treat that flower like a treasure, put it in a vase and give your child a big hug. You might give your child a cookie too.

I think that human love response to a child comes from God. Every time I try to give God a day, it turns out he gives me a day instead. On that day with God, my concerns are turned to joys and my stresses are relieved. I'm rested, calmed, and the worrier is now rejoicing because God lets her know she is not totally responsible for solving either her problems or the cares of the world. He reminds her he knows what's going on and he is still in control. Thank you, Lord.

—Sheila Graham

You may email Sheila at sheila.graham@gci.org.



God Made You Special

By Anne Gillam

I listened to my grandson from the next room as he was reading his tee shirt. He slowly sounded out the words: “God made you special and he loves you very much.” As those words sank into his mind he asked: “What? Why would he do that?” And then he went off to play. Who knows what really went on in his little head at that moment. My grandson has autism and communication with him is difficult, but he does know he is different and that life is a struggle for him.

I began to think about those words. The truth is I could not get them out of my head. Haven’t we all wondered why God made us the way we are? We are similar in the way we are put together. Take one look at us and you would recognize we are of the human race and not a creature of the sea or a monkey in a tree.

Yet, we are different in many ways: in character, in what we love to do and in what gives us joy. It is obvious we are never satisfied with ourselves, because we constantly try to change the way we look. I would imagine a high percentage of us are on some sort of diet right now. We change our hair style, hair color and even, with the help of contacts, our eye color. Clothing styles in our closets are constantly changing. If we were completely satisfied with our appearance we would have no need for that new pair of shoes.

When we look at the world God has made, it’s obvious he loves variety, from the many colors and shapes in the flowers and trees and even in the landforms and the climates. We, each of us reading this article, live in a variety of climates and environ-

ments. Some live in the country and some in the greater cities. We work at different jobs and have different hobbies. Yet I feel safe saying most of us share a common love for our Maker though we may express even this in different ways. Every congregation of the GCI worships God, yet the way we do so may vary greatly. Where does this variety come from? We have different cultures and traditions, yet we all worship and adore one God. It is a wonderful tapestry woven in love by our God.

God made us all special, but at times we have trouble accepting that. We forget the rest of the saying—“and he loves you very much.” I believe if we could accept the last part we would stop trying so hard to be accepted and loved for the way we look. God loves us the way we are—every wrinkle and every pound—and when we act in immature ways. He sees the potential we have and waits patiently for the maturing of our character.

We need to realize and accept that God loves us as we are and God loves others as they are too. He loves us so much he sacrificed his one and only Son so we could be his loved and accepted children. God went to great extremes to draw us into his loving relationship. Just like a diamond in the rough, we may not be much to look at right now, but God sees the potential to shine with beauty under the direction of his hand. God made you special and he loves you very much!

Merciful Father, we thank you for making each one of us in your image. Help us to be patient and to allow your work within us so we can shine with the full glory you intend us to have, a glory that will reflect who you truly are. Amen.



You may email Anne at webebass@aol.com.

Girl Power

By Joyce Catherwood

Is there such a thing as “girl power”? In the 21st century it has become a cultural phenomenon and a term of empowerment, a way for women to connect and support each other. But it is not a term one would apply to women of the first century AD, who had few privileges and rights, with little empowerment. How is it then, that the women included in Jesus’ close circle of friends collectively showed unusual and extraordinary strength and courage during Jesus’ darkest hours? They demonstrated some real girl power.

When Jesus willingly subjected himself to rejection, cruelty, humiliation and mind-numbing pain from beatings and the cross, the tragic desertion by most of his disciples only added more misery. One cannot blame the disciples for fleeing because the scene was an extremely dangerous one. Family and friends caught mourning a crucified person, particularly one perceived as a political problem for the Romans, were subject to



potential crucifixion themselves as sympathizers.

Knowing this, the women who were part of Jesus’ ministry entourage stood firmly beside him as he suffered. Maybe they were braver because they could hide their identities behind veils. Regardless, their safety was seriously jeopardized by remaining steadfast as events surrounding his trial and execution unraveled. Not only were the Romans and Jewish religious leaders to be feared, but also the out-of-control angry mobs exhibited terrifying raw emotion and hatred.

Understanding how these women became followers of Jesus may shed some light on their fierce loyalty. While the men were handpicked and personally invited by Jesus to be his disciples, many of the women had been dramatically and miraculously healed by him. They were delivered from crippling diseases and debilitating mental illness. And all were shown unheard-of validation, confirmation of worth and respect from Jesus in a patriarchal society unyielding when it came to a woman’s place. His attentiveness and

Continued on page 8

Nurturenet

Nurturenet is a computer forum for women in ministry. Its purpose is to help you stay connected through digest-mode communication (each day’s messages compiled into one email). You may use it for requests for information, prayer requests, to share ideas and resources, to receive updates on *Connections* news or just to stay connected!



Do we
have
your
email
address?

To join or update your email address, please send Tammy a message at tammy.tkach@gci.org. Please do not reply to a post unless you want to address the entire list.

Girl Power

(Continued from page 7)

support turned their lives upside down and forever changed them. What they had in common was a powerful emotional attachment to the One who was the binder of wounds and healer of hearts. They shared a deep abiding gratitude that gave them uncommon courage and brave hearts—dare I say girl power?

The women stood together that horrible day, watching helplessly as Jesus grew weaker and died slowly and painfully before their eyes. Never mind that they risked their lives to be there. They were returning the empathy and depth of emotion and love shown to them by their master. He had not turned his back on them in their need, how could they turn their backs on him in his time of sorrow? They displayed a uniquely feminine response not only to the unconditional love of Jesus, but also to his suffering.

In spite of the vast social and cultural differences between the 1st and 21st centuries, I believe today, as women, we continue to share that uniquely feminine response to the Divinity. It is not a superior response, simply different because of the way we were formed as women by the Creator himself. We have sensitive caregiving and nurturing maternal instincts. We tend to be more intuitive and can be more emotional in our response to life. This shapes our response to God and our response to each other.

We are in need of the same validation, confirmation of worth, respect and support Jesus offered his original female followers. He is our healer of hearts and binder of wounds too. As Jesus heals and binds, we respond, developing a strong emotional attachment to him that easily spills over to each other and allows us to connect and bond as women. And have you noticed how this

tends to give us courage and brave hearts as well? Let's call it girl power. He remains the source.

How amazing—Jesus, who leads us to the Father and is Creator, Sustainer and Savior of all, is the designer of our female point of view and reaction, including girl power. And he delights in meeting our uniquely feminine needs as women.



Joyce says: "We are deeply grateful and relieved to have grandson Sergeant Jeff Molnar safely home. His honorable discharge from the military ends his five-year service to our country. Our lives have been forever touched and his forever changed by the harsh and tragic reality of fierce combat. We continue to remember our troops." You may email Joyce at joyce.catherwood@gci.org.

Blog Roll

Sue Berger:

www.onepilgrimsusings.com

Joyce Catherwood:

<http://i-love-to-tell-the-story.blogspot.com>

Barbara Dahlgren:

www.barbdahlgren.com

Tammy Tkach:

www.ttkach.wordpress.com

If you have a blog, please send the URL to Tammy.

Zorro and Me

My Recent “Hyster-ia”

By Barbara Dahlgren

For about eight months I suffered with debilitating pain in my right leg. Walking was most difficult. An MRI showed that a 10-pound fibroid tumor in my uterus pressing on nerves was causing the pain. (Women who’ve delivered large babies can probably identify with this.) Because of the size of the growth an immediate hysterectomy was suggested.

My doctor, a lovely woman with terrific bedside manner, thought it was best to remove what I like to call “my whole shebang”—uterus, cervix and ovaries. That was OK with me. After all, menopause was over, I certainly wasn’t hoping for more children and I had long abandoned the idea of wearing a bikini. I took great comfort by knowing almost every other woman I’ve met had a similar operation and survived. These “hyster-sisters” had been most encouraging.

However, no surgery should be entered into lightly. Doctors are required to tell you the possible complications from even a routine surgery. For example, “2% experience this” and “5% experience that.” You sort of feel as if you’re in one of those television commercials where they spend one minute declaring the benefits of taking a drug and three on what could happen to you if you do—including death. I guess cancer is always the biggest concern. It’s such an insidious disease.

I remembered how my 48-year-old mother went to the doctor thinking she had a

urinary tract infection and was dead from uterine cancer two weeks later. Also, my dear friend Lori had gone in for a simple hysterectomy and a small amount of cancer was found that was supposed to be easily taken care of through chemo. She, too, died. You try not to think about these things, but you do.

I spent surgery preparation time drawing close to God and my family. I read my favorite Bible story about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. I love Daniel 3:17, 18 where they say, “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up” (NIV©1984).

I seem to be drawn to these scriptures when I go through a trial. I never doubt God is able to deliver me. There is peace and calm from knowing God is in

control. Of course, God’s idea of deliverance and mine can be vastly different. I guess the phrase that affects me the most is when they say, “But if not...,” because sometimes God protects us in the fiery furnace and sometimes he doesn’t. My hope and prayer was if God chose not to have the results I hoped for, I would still love him, believe him, trust him and praise him.

On the morning of December 21 my family and I headed for the hospital. Zorro packed a small duffle bag in case he needed to spend the night. At the last minute he remembered he forgot to pack socks so he grabbed a pair of white athletic and tucked them in his coat pocket. He also picked up a



Continued on page 10

My Recent “Hyster-ia”

(Continued from page 9)

container of wrapped chocolates someone had given us as an early Christmas gift, in case anyone needed a chocolate fix during the ordeal.

When the doctor entered the waiting room after the surgery my family gathered around her. She told them everything went well. The 10-pound growth was decaying so they got it out just in time. There was no cancer and I was doing fine.

All at once my whole family started crying—tears of relief, tears of joy, tears of love. Zorro had no tissues so he wiped his tears with the cotton socks he had in his coat pocket. Then they passed out chocolates to everyone in the waiting room, strangers who were also overjoyed to hear the good news and who joined them in their jubilation.

When the doctor visited me later she said, “Your family is so precious!”

I said, “Doc, you have no idea. I am so blessed.” Then we gave her a *Zorro and Me* book.

I was home by Christmas.

Recuperation has been slow, but that’s OK. I’m not so much into speed anymore. The doctor says it could take months before I feel

tip-top and not to push it. Until then I’ll continue to be swollen and a bit lethargic. I haven’t felt like doing much. I didn’t even want to talk to anyone on the phone or even look at my email. So I didn’t respond to calls, cards, notes or email during this time, but each one was appreciated and valued more than anyone could realize.

I’ve been reading a lot, watching movies, sleeping, becoming the world’s fastest remote control user and eating. My energy may be low but my appetite is great. I may be the only woman to have a 10-pound growth removed and manage to gain weight.

Sometimes I feel a little guilty everything went so well when so many are dealing with life-threatening illnesses. My heart and prayers go out to them. Yet I’m thankful. I’m thankful these decisions are in the hands of a loving God who knows what’s best for me in any given situation. When my time comes to walk through an even hotter fiery furnace, I know God will be with me just as he was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. For when the king looked in to see, there were four of them, not three. And the fourth was the Son of God (Daniel 3:25).



Barbara is continuing to recuperate from surgery. A couple of her favorite get-well cards read, “Sorry you had to have surgery, but you’ll be happy to know that your doctor is up to date on all the latest technology...he has a 50-inch HD widescreen plasma TV in his new home entertainment center,” and “I heard your whatchamacalit got all out of whack and discomboobulated so it’s a good thing they have those thingamabobs to fix your doohickey.” She wants you to know her doohickey is doing much better. She thanks you for your love and prayers. You can contact her at bydahlgren@pacbell.net.

If you’re a woman and have been ordained for ministry, we’d like to hear from you. Please consider writing a 500 to 750 word article for submission to *Connections*. We’d like to know your experience as a pioneer in this exciting new world of women elders. Please send your article, photo and bio to Tammy Tkach at tammy.tkach@gci.org.

Opportunities

By Becky Deuel

As a follow-up to the article in the last *Connections*, I wanted to share some of my experiences as a female pastor during the past nine years, along with some of the opportunities.

While attending a dinner for area pastors and spouses to hear Max Lucado, someone at the table looked at my husband and asked, “Pastor Steve, how long have you been a pastor?” Over the years, there have been many such occasions, where the assumption is that my husband is the pastor and I am the pastor’s wife.



We are not invited to pastor events in our area because the sponsoring organization does not support women being pastors. I’m OK with that because there are plenty of events to which we are invited. Other opportunities come along because I am a female pastor. Sometimes, the person extending the invitation states I am being included because they want a woman on the team.

Within our denomination, I am given tremendous support. As a member of a congregational pastoral team, the various pastoral duties are divided among us by areas of giftedness. I give sermons about every other week, develop the worship schedule on a quarterly basis and submit the monthly reports.

It has been so much fun officiating at weddings, the most recent at my oldest son’s wedding in October. Several years ago, my husband and I took the classes to become certified Prepare/Enrich counselors so we could do premarital counseling. I also took the necessary coursework through Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to become a certified biblical counselor.

The first couple of years after I was asked to be a pastor, I accepted several invitations to give sermons at other GCI congregations. The pastors wanted their flocks to recognize the many opportunities opening up for women. And as I am on a pastoral team and do not preach every Sunday, I have been asked to speak at other churches when the pastor needed to be somewhere else. I have also had the exciting opportunity to speak at women’s retreats.

My husband and I have been involved in youth activities over the years in various capacities. The last three years, I have been blessed to be on the chaplain team at two SEP camps, and have taught Christian Living classes and Worship classes.

More recently, I have been involved with the Church Multiplication Ministries. Because I had taken the Church Planting coaching training about three years ago, I was asked to be a coach for female church planters and the wives of church planters. In September, I was given the amazing opportunity to be one of the presenters at a Church Next Training workshop.

I am also in the process of working on my master’s degree through Grace Communion Seminary. It has been quite exhilarating learning more about the Bible and GCI doctrine as well as new ways to present material. I enrolled in the program because I want to be prepared for what-

Continued on page 12

Opportunities

(Continued from page 11)

ever opportunities come along next.

Opportunities are also available outside our denomination. I was just reelected as one of the officers of our local pastor's fellowship. And this year, I was given the privilege of being one of the co-coordinators of Convoy of Hope, an interdenominational outreach to our community in which we served around 5,000 people in need.

The function of each pastor, male or female, is different. The Holy Spirit gives a variety of abilities and natural aptitudes, provides different training opportunities and bestows unique passions. Some pastors are called to serve close to home and others are given the desire to serve across the country or internationally. It's exciting to see how the Triune God works to ensure that each congregation has leaders with the skill sets needed to minister to his people.



Becky and Steve live in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where the winter snow gives everything a beautiful, sparkly white covering. She appreciates responses from all readers. You may email her at becky.deuel@gci.org.

Pray like the old peasant who had a bad foot. Since he did not know which was best for him, to be cured, to be lame, to be in pain or out of pain, he just went to church and said, "Lord—foot."

—Unknown



Resources for Tough Times

From Joan Backhus:

Angel Food Ministries

Our daughter told us about a program that was helpful to her brother-in-law and family during his time of being unemployed. Although this is designed to help those going through difficult times, the program is open to anyone who needs help.

www.angelfoodministries.com

From Debbie Paz:

Cleaning for a Reason

If you know anyone undergoing chemotherapy, please pass the word to her about a cleaning service that provides FREE housecleaning—once per month for four months while she is in treatment. All she has to do is sign up and have her doctor fax a note confirming the treatment. Cleaning for a Reason will have a participating maid service in her zip code area arrange for the service. This organization serves the entire USA and currently has 547 partners.

www.cleaningforareason.org



If you know of any helpful resources, please email the information to Tammy at tammy.tkach@gci.org.

My Adventurous Nature

By Phyllis G. Rose

Have you wondered if you'd have the courage to do something daring? Having a curious and adventurous nature, I've been able to do many scary things, though I was a little nervous about undertaking some of them. I grew up with brothers, so if I wanted to be part of the team I had to do as they did, such as jump out the window at the top of the barn into a pile of hay beneath. I did and loved it.

Now as I am older, I wish I had tried more things. I wanted to learn to fly a plane, but the big drawback was lack of money. I have a suspicion at this point in my life I have lost some of that zeal and courage.

I remember roller coaster rides in California that looked so daring and, well, sort of fun. But as I was grown up I would not attempt them. I often wonder why. Was it deep down raw fear? Bungee jumping? Well, guess not today.

I enjoyed reading a book by John Ortberg titled *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*. Now that makes a lot of sense—until you start to get out of the boat. Then it brings an altogether different sensation. I don't imagine Peter ever considered doing this until he took the first step. What? Really? Walk on water?

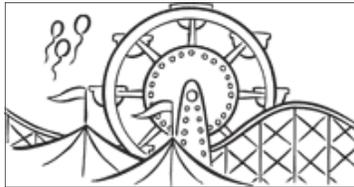
I grew up by a river and my brothers and I often walked on the ice in the winter to go to my grandmother's house. We knew at the end of the walk wonderful pies awaited. I have commented on how fun it was to walk on water—hard water, that is.

Impulsive as he was, Peter did not just jump out of the boat. First, he asked if it

13

really was Jesus. Then he asked Jesus to tell him to come to him. Jesus did and all was fine until Peter took his eyes off Jesus and placed them squarely on the water and the high waves. I suspect Jesus knew how the whole situation would work out. And, of course, he reached down and held Peter up. But Peter did walk on the water for a time, while the others hovered in the boat. It had to be an indescribable experience and feeling.

About a year after my car accident in 1973, I was living in New Hampshire when I was asked to do something I had not heard of or seen before. That summer all the young men in the church's speaking club were



given several weeks to find a unique experience to discuss at a future meeting. One of them decided to take a ride in a glider, but he waited a little too long to find a partner. Though I was the

young people's chaperone, I was the only female available. I agreed to be his partner and wondered all the way to the airport what it was about.

The plane was just large enough to hold the pilot and right behind him, in tandem, two seats to hold us. From my view in the back seat I noticed the wings were much longer than ordinary planes. I was told another plane would tow us up in the air and let us go. Wow! Move over Peter! What? We don't have an engine in this thing? Gulp!

My mind went back to my car accident and how I woke up in the hospital and learned God had saved my life. I knew he was with me then and would be with me again, which helped me calm down. I managed to enjoy the wonderful scenery. We were in a valley, where the air currents and updrafts were the best for gliding. I was able to relax and enjoy my first flight. It was peaceful, quiet and thrilling at the same time.

Continued on page 14

While my gliding experience wasn't quite the same as walking on water, for me it was just as big a leap of faith. Over the years I've taken many such leaps, some small, some big, but always Jesus was there to take my hand and keep me from sinking. The Christian life does call on us to get out of the boat at times, and while it seems frightening, it is possible, as long as we keep our eyes on Jesus.



Phyllis lives in Maine and says a snow bank is in front of her window and she can't see her car. She wonders if the snow will ever melt and spring will remember what it is supposed to do. You may email her at rose7883@roadrunner.com.

Connections and the Public

As you may know, your articles in *Connections* are not as confidential as they once were—if they ever were, that is. As it is even more available now through email, like it or not, *Connections* is being shared outside its intended circulation list.

Your articles tend to be on subjects helpful to anyone, not just those in ministry, so what do you think about sharing *Connections* with all who are interested? Contributions would still be limited to those in ministry.

I would love to get your feedback so please let me know what you think. If there are no objections, I'll begin posting *Connections* on the WM website. Email me at tammy.tkach@gci.org.

My teacher had each of us students get a clear plastic bag and a sack of potatoes. Then for every person we refused to forgive in our life, we had to take a potato, write the name of the person and the date on it and put the spud in the plastic bag. Some of the bags, as you can imagine, were heavy.

Then she told us to carry this bag full of potatoes everywhere for one whole week. We had to keep it at our bedside every night, on the car seat when in the car, next to our desk at work.

The hassle of lugging that bag around made it clear what a weight we were carrying spiritually, and how we had to pay attention to it all the time not to forget and keep leaving it in embarrassing places.

Naturally, the condition of the potatoes deteriorated into a nasty slime. That helped us appreciate the price we pay for keeping our pain and heavy negativity!

Too often we think of forgiveness as a gift to the other person. While this is true, it clearly is also a gift for ourselves!

So the next time we decide we can't (won't) forgive someone, we can ask ourselves, "Isn't *MY* bag heavy enough?"

We can empty that sack out before it gets too heavy and slimy. Or better yet, we don't even have to put those potatoes into it. We can be willing to forgive in the same way the Lord has forgiven us.

—Author unknown

Contributed by Betty Johannsen

*Be kind and compassionate
to one another;
forgiving each other,
just as in Christ
God forgave you.
Ephesians 4:32*

Being a Light...*has a lighter side!*

When my wife and I went up to New England a couple of years ago we decided to stay in one of those quaint little inns. The clerk at the inn asked me if we wanted a room with a shower or a tub.

“What’s the difference?” I asked.

“Well, sir, in a tub, you can sit down.”

A Sunday school teacher was teaching her class about the difference between right and wrong. “All right children, let’s take another example,” she said. “If I were to get into a man’s pocket and take his billfold with all his money, what would I be?”

Little Johnny raises his hand, and with a confident smile he blurts out, “You’d be his wife!”

God said to Adam, “I am going to make you a helper, a companion. What would you like your companion to be like?” Adam replied, “Well I want someone humorous, witty, intelligent, compassionate, caring, loving, trusting, polite, generous and beautiful.”

God paused a moment after hearing Adam’s wish list and told Adam a companion like that would cost him an arm and a leg. Adam seemed a little dejected and then brightly replied: “What can I get for a rib?”

Confidential Peer Listener Line

Shall we talk? We’re here for you!

Darlene Schmedes
626-792-2329, Pacific
glysch@gmail.com

Ginny Rice
225-205-2901, Central
ginny.rice@gci.org



Helen Jackson
626-284-8256, Pacific
HHelenjac@aol.com

Connecting & Bonding Conference

Be Refreshed

By Jannice May

A friend shared with me that she often promises to take more time for herself so she can be refreshed. She plans a day to take a long bubble bath or read a good book or get a manicure or pedicure or just have lunch with friends. Then she surprised me by saying, “We women can’t keep promises we make to ourselves.”

How many of us have made similar promises to ourselves—promises we don’t keep? I know I have. I remember the many times I planned to have a time-out, to put everything on hold and do something just for me. Yet something always seemed to come up to take precedence, or I would feel guilty and then I was back to the same old grind. We need to let go of the guilt and keep the promises we make to ourselves.

That’s what this year’s theme for *Connecting & Bonding* is all about: “Come Drink of the Living Waters and Be Refreshed.” When we take a little time for ourselves, not only do we reap the benefits, but so do our families, friends and those we serve.

The Samaritan woman desperately needed to be refreshed when she met Jesus (John 4). She was alone, ostracized and so wiped out she gave up trying to live a decent life in fellowship with others. Jesus met her at her greatest need and told her about living waters that could satisfy all her needs. She received his call on her life and not only became refreshed, but also brought many others to the

place of refreshment. Only Jesus and the living waters he provides can give us ultimate refreshing, but we can at least meet him half way. Even Jesus felt the need to get away from the crowds occasionally.

I know many of us are working hard at home to keep our families functioning, at jobs to provide extra income, at church to serve others and in our communities to be a light to the world. Then there’s the added blessing of being a minister’s wife or perhaps a minister, and this, too, places extra demands on our time and energy. At the end of the day we may find we are too tired to think about ourselves or even Jesus. If we don’t take time to be refreshed, we will eventually have little left to give to others.

This year *Connecting & Bonding* will emphasize the importance of being refreshed and drinking of those living waters. Coming to a conference can be something you do just for you. Even if you are unable to attend I hope you realize God never intended you to be Super Woman. Taking some time for yourself is not a bad thing. Keep some of those promises you make to get away from it all once in a while and be refreshed!

See the last page of *Connections* for an application form, which you may print and mail if you choose to register by mail. You may also register on our website at www.connectingandbonding.org and pay with credit card or mail the form:

Connecting & Bonding
300 South Highland Springs Avenue
Suite 6-C #156
Banning, CA 92220

—Jannice May
conbond@acninc.net



C&B Ministers' Wives Conferences 2011

Registration Information

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Please mark which type of room you need.

Ontario, California

Hilton Ontario Airport
September 2-5, 2011
Double (\$417/person) or 3 payments* of \$139
Single (\$555/person) or 3 payments* of \$185
If you should cancel, the registration fee
of \$150 is not refundable.

*If you are making 3 payments the due dates are:
1st payment—March 26, 2011
2nd payment—May 28, 2011
3rd payment—August 13, 2011
If final payment is not received by August 13,
there will be an additional charge of \$50.

The prices are for accommodations, meals and registration fees.

Please indicate if you have any physical limitations that would require wheelchair accessibility or limit your stair use:

No Yes If yes, please explain:

Please indicate if you have any dietary needs:

No Yes If yes, please explain:

I plan to share accommodations with the following person/people:

(No need to send forms together.)

- 1.
- 2.

If you have questions, contact Jannice May at 626-379-0505 or conbond@acninc.net.

Please send completed form to:

Connecting & Bonding, 300 S. Highland Springs Ave, Suite 6-C #156, Banning CA 92220, or register online at www.connectingandbonding.org.