



Connections

◆ A Journal by & for Women in Ministry ◆

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Spring 2010

“Save Yourself and Us!”

By Joyce Catherwood

More often than I care to admit, I am astonished at how quickly I flare up or lash out at someone over the smallest things. Or as I did only recently, honk back at a driver who just honked at me because I did something stupid at an intersection. Seeing how easily I react to minor occurrences gives me ample reason to marvel at how Jesus was able to hold his tongue, restraining himself in response to the mockery he endured as his physical life drew to a close.

Sometimes we hastily read over the description of this degrading and blasphemous verbal abuse, not fully grasping that not only did Jesus suffer physical pain, he also bore emotional anguish in order to pay for our sins. Let’s inject ourselves into the story once again and let the words sink in.

“Save yourself!” These harsh, biting pronouncements burned Jesus’ ears as he hung on the cross. The mob congregating at his feet grew louder and braver, snarling at him and wagging their heads. He could hear the acid sarcasm of the chief priests and the scribes and elders. “He saved others, but he can’t save himself,” they sneered. The Roman soldiers, having just pounded nails into his hands and feet, joined the cruel mimicry, taunting him. “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” As the hateful slander swirled furiously around Jesus, one of the common criminals fastened on a cross next to him bitterly shouted, “If you are the Christ, save yourself and us!”

Jesus, the Savior, the sole author of salvation, redemption and deliverance, did not save himself. He was in the brutal process of saving us, including the outrageous crowd prancing around his feet, insulting and casting doubts on his capacity as

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“Save Yourself and Us!”

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Savior. How ironic! Jesus’ ability to save was the target of the vile mockery at the foot of the cross. These hateful words had to sting, like multiple slaps on the face. The haughty accusations that Jesus could not save must have broken his heart.

Why were they there, this angry crowd that turned Jesus into a spectacle? Some came to watch out of morbid curiosity. Others wanted to make sure Jesus got what they felt he deserved. But they were all caught up in the worst possible display of malicious hostility as the anti-savior ridicule intensified by the minute, escalating to a feverish pitch of near madness.

Then suddenly, the sun stopped shining. An inky blackness descended on these mean-spirited hecklers, throwing them completely off guard as they stumbled around awkwardly, frantically groping for each other, their hearts racing with fear. Did the sudden blackness shut them up? Very likely.

Jesus had been the object of utter contempt on every imaginable level from the moment of his arrest. Did the Father use the murky darkness to shield his only son and finally silence the constant, raucous chorus of insults? Did it ease things just a little? Even though the Father never

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CONNECTIONS

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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.

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“Save Yourself and Us!”

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left him, he must have struggled with the feeling of complete isolation and utter abandonment as he died.

In the end, many of these individuals who scorned him went home beating their chests in anguish and mourning. But it was too late to be of any comfort for Jesus. He died unjustly with their irreverent mockery still ringing in his ears.

It is not easy for us to read these words. It is disturbing. We would prefer an antiseptic rendition of these awful events. But there is a valid reason for us to periodically penetrate those traumatic last moments of Jesus’ life here on earth. Taking a journey to the cross and entering his suffering demands a personal response from each of us—a response that can be transformational, particularly when we feel a need for spiritual regrouping.

I’ve often wondered, what hurt the most? The physical torture or the mental cruelty? It isn’t surprising Jesus dreaded it, literally crying out with a loud voice and tears to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane, pleading for another way to save the human race. I find it difficult not to respond on a profound emotional level, and with deepest gratitude, to the sacrificial, passionate love that drove Jesus to Calvary on my behalf.

If Jesus, our beloved Savior, our dearest friend, had saved himself, he would not have saved us.



Joyce says: “A second granddaughter is graduating and off to college. What’s left of her childhood are now only sweet memories stored up in my heart.” You may e-mail her at joyce.catherwood@gci.org. © 2009

• CALIFORNIA • TAM 2 U

New Every Morning

Spring is such a wonderful time of year. It starts early in California. I’m already enjoying wildflowers and spring bulbs, preparing the garden for planting and mowing the lawn too. Apologies to my friends on the East Coast. I’m not trying to rub it in. I hope spring comes soon for you as well.

I think one of the reasons we feel better once the temperatures rise and the flowers begin to bloom is the sense of freshness and newness all around. Spring brings feelings of anticipation, hope and wonder, especially for those who’ve been enduring lots of snow and darkness. Perhaps even more than the first of January when people make resolutions and try to start over, spring is a real beginning. As a gardener, I live this new beginning as I plant and watch things grow.

God seems to like new things. In the Psalms we are encouraged to sing a new song of praise to him. In Jeremiah 31, God told his people he would make a new covenant. In Ezekiel, he talked about giving them a new spirit and a new heart. In Revelation we read of the new heaven and a new earth and that we will all be given new names.

My favorite reference to new things is in Lamentations 3. If you read the context, you’ll notice what a bad time the author was having over the destruction of Jerusalem. But starting in verse 19 of chapter 3, he changes his focus to the hope he has in God. And the new part? God’s mercies. In the midst of devastating

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New Every Morning

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circumstances, he had hope in the love, compassion and faithfulness of God, which are fresh every morning.

The resurrection of Jesus was a new thing and it took place in the spring. It was both an ending and a beginning for him and for us.



Not only was it the end of his life, but also the end of the old covenant and an old way of life for many. It was the beginning of his life as the resur-

rected Son of God—who took his place at the right hand of the Father in heaven. It was the beginning of a life of grace for those who accepted the forgiveness of Jesus and the new life they could have in him.

As we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus this spring, let’s remember all the newness we’ve been given as believers in Jesus. In Christ, we are new creatures. We sing a new song of praise every time we remember him and what he’s done for us. Our faint hearts receive fresh strength to endure to the end. Our weak minds are renewed and transformed through the Holy Spirit, who daily leads us as we walk with Jesus.

As buds form on the trees and flowers burst into bloom, remember the new life we’ve been given in Christ, and the new life we look forward to in eternity. And remember the fresh new mercies of our loving God, who is good to those who depend on him and who search for him (Lamentations 3:23-25, *NLT*).

Tammy



Camping, Anyone?

By Hannah Knaack

Speaking from first-hand experience, few things test the mettle of a minister’s family more than a church camp-out. And speaking from hindsight, I’d say it’s best to have at least one woman among the planning group to assure the availability of running water and flushable toilets.

Our three kids eagerly anticipated our late afternoon arrival at the rural camp grounds. Within minutes our van was unloaded, and my husband was deep into grasping the true meaning of patience as he struggled to set up the new two-room tent with the help of six miniature hands. Not to mention the growing audience of well-intended early arrivals, eager to share tent-raising advice. Meanwhile, I was eyeballing the van’s interior, wondering if my sleeping bag might fit inside—just in case.

Our eldest headed off to the bathroom in short order, eager to clean up. I didn’t have it in me to break the news to our obsessively neat and clean child. Sure enough, he hot-footed it back in record time, “M-o-m!” It’s amazing how much can be conveyed by tone of voice and facial expression. I held up my hand, Indian fashion. “Speak to your dad,” I said, “I had nothing to do with it.”

For the next half hour, dear Dad endured his son’s verbose, graphic ranting about the lack of proper toilet facilities. It was a well-earned tirade, I might add. Dad had waited to tell me about the bare necessities toilet until we were on the road or I would have stayed home for sure. He may not have chosen this camp ground, but surely pastoral influence

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Camping, Anyone?

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never had a more opportune moment.

Soon dinner preparations were underway, revealing some interesting truths about this variety of people we served. Who knew Mrs. Prim-and-Proper could commandeer an outdoor food shelter like a four-star general? Or that our timid, reserved church librarian could peel potatoes like nobody's business. And was that Mr. Always-Grumpy-at-Church over there flipping those heavenly smelling oversized burgers, grinning from ear to ear?



The fun and games went well into the night, but when the stress of trying to roast the perfect marshmallow finally got to me, I decided it was time to haul my small army off to bed, uncomfortable as that may be. We spent the next half hour explaining to our preteen, within earshot of a sizable audience, why he wasn't going to be staying up until all hours of the morning. That boy could argue the hide right off a mama elephant and have her come away thinking she was sporting the latest style.

If you've ever enjoyed camping with a group well into evening, however, you'll recall there is no early to bed. People you've known for years to be self-controlled and respectable individuals freakishly turn into party animals, hooting and howling until all hours. Who knew? Fighting to get three young kids into sleeping bags in a tent with fabric walls was akin to swimming downstream during the salmon run.

The weatherman's predicted cool night temperature turned downright frigid and at some point a tiny hand tapped my arm. "Mommy, I'm freezing." Eyes crossed, and barely coherent at this hour of the night—morning?—I struggled out of my rock-hard sleeping bag and did the only thing that

would come to my sleep-deprived mind. Digging into their bags, I slipped a clean pair of undies over the head of each child, hoping to conserve heat loss. They all looked so warm and adorable I just had to try it myself. I'm so glad that never made it into photo material for the church bulletin board.

Morning brought, among other things, a little private satisfaction for yours truly.

When several of the women and teenage girls who'd been up hooting most of the night dragged themselves into the shelter, it was obvious they'd tried to cover their lack of sleep with make-up. It was equally obvious that in their haste to pack, they'd forgotten a mirror. And I really didn't feel it was my place to remedy that oversight.

We ended up leaving this delightful hum of activity a little earlier than planned. It turned out dear Dad wasn't as keen on outdoor facilities as he'd first made us believe.

Reflecting back during the trip home, I realized a camping event was a great equalizer of all. I'd always known Mr. Local Elder to be the epitome of decorum at church services. I felt a giggle coming on—who knew he snored like a fully loaded freight train at full speed?



Hannah says: "The women of our congregation now have a bimonthly journal, Grace Notes, which I enjoy helping with. It's a blessing for our shut-ins and has brought joy to those who didn't realize they had talent for the written word." You may e-mail Hannah at justmomhllk@gmail.com.

The Joy of the Lord Is Our Strength

By Amy Warren

Today I attended a women's conference. The speaker got my attention when she said, "I'm fun to live with."

I work full-time. My life is busy. I'm dependable and look after my family. I care about my church family. But fun? Hmmm. That gave me pause.

This same speaker reminded us Jesus is not still suffering on the cross. He doesn't have a bloody, unrecognizable face. He is laughing. He smiles at us. He loves to see us laugh and smile too.

It's not like the speaker's life has been a bed of roses. Let me tell you a little about her. Her name is Eloise Bergen. She and her husband made national news in Canada. They were missionaries in Kenya. In July 2008 their two security guards and several others attacked her and her husband. She was raped and beaten. Her husband was beaten and left for dead. They have physically recovered and have chosen to forgive. (For more information, Google John and Eloise Bergen.)

She took us to Habakkuk 3:17-18. She told us the key word is *yet* in verse 18. Even though bad things happen, "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior." And we can do this because, as we're told in verse 19, "The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights" (*NIV*). He goes through the hard times together with us.

She also said, "I am not a victim! Jesus died to give us back everything the devil tried to take from us." She encouraged us to check our thoughts and not allow ourselves to listen to the lies of the enemy. You are pure, beloved, forgiven, accepted, cherished—because of the blood of Christ.

Some of you are already lots of fun. I'm challenging myself, and anyone else who would like the challenge, to be fun to live with!



Amy has been involved in ministry with her husband Eric, in Canada for 27 years. They have 3 grown children. Amy enjoys working as a sign language interpreter in an elementary school. She also enjoys gardening, reading, playing games like Pictionary and going for long walks. You may e-mail Amy at amywarren56@hotmail.com.

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 e-mail). 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! To join or change your e-mail address, please send Tammy a message at tammy.tkach@gci.org.



Family Matters

By Cathy Emerson

“What are we going to do about Mom?” my sister asked a few years ago. “How shall we handle Jane on this particular matter?” my husband queried. “Any opinions?” “Grr—doesn’t Helen know she is alienating a lot of people with her caustic comments?” I fume. “After all, any normal person would realize *you can’t act that way.*” Oh well, Helen is Helen, so we’ll roll with it.

My mom struggled with my father for years about keeping the Sabbath and holy days. (This was pre-new covenant understanding.) My grandmother did the same with my grandpa. Grandma ended up hiding oatmeal in her freezer and standing on the kitchen table so she could be closer to Jesus when he came for her. My mom and my grandmother were active Christians before the fog of dementia started robbing their minds.

Jane lives in a senior complex since her husband’s death. She plays bingo and other games. She does attend church, but at the facility. And Helen, dear Helen is a member of a congregation. She is a woman who others have said would “give the shirt off her back if someone was in need.” Helen has

traveled the country with enthusiasm. Now she doesn’t go far from home unless someone else drives. She lives alone and I see her slipping into a funk and withdrawing. Her daughters worry about her. Yet, she too is a Christian.

So my mom has Alzheimer’s, her mother had dementia and maybe Alzheimer’s (it wasn’t in style back then). My mom, though, knows all her children, grandchildren and some of the great-grands. My sister keeps pictures on mom’s wall to remind her of all who love her. Jane can’t remember her past though she too knows her son and daughter and all of her grandchildren. Helen knows her children and woe betide anyone who forgets her great-grand’s birthdays.

These women raised and nurtured families and in the process ran their own households with expertise. All are now widowed—a trial in itself. What were their dreams for their old age?

Someday we will all stand before our God to answer for our deeds on this earth. “For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies” (2 Corinthians 5:10, *NLT* throughout).

He knows us. He knows them. For my mom and grandma and even Jane, Christ may have come long ago. Helen is gradually slipping away from reality. I do not believe she knows it. Will he condemn them for losing their sensibilities of our world? The merciful One I worship will not. Philippians 1:6: “And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus comes back again.”

I have considered these matters as personalities have changed and my dear friends grow older. At what point does one become

I walked a mile with Sorrow
And ne’er a word said she;
But, oh, the things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me.

Robert Browning Hamilton:
Along the Road



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Family Matters

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responsible for one's parents and one's friends? Where does God expect our responsibility to be?

The whole concept of personal freedom and integrity is at stake here. At what point does self-determination cease? When do the desires of society take precedence over the lone person? The bottom line: What gives anyone the right to say that my mom, Jane or Helen has to do thus and such? The answer is only God knows. Only God has the authority to make that call.

It is a delicate balance we walk, and the love of God has to be our guide. We continue to nurture our messy family, whether in our fellowship or not.

I will go up to Canada to visit my mom as often as possible as she is no longer able to visit our family. Friends will continue to go to the nursing home to visit Jane. They will help her with her finances and socialize with her. Helen continues to fellowship with her congregation. The congregation is gentle with her as she unknowingly offends people. We continue to pray for them all. I think that is what Christ would do.



Cathy says: "As I drove up the driveway this past week, two bald eagles were circling in mating flight over our neighbor's house. Late that afternoon, two deer wandered across my yard. We had a brief snow flurry this morning, but it was gone by this afternoon as I went out to plant a hydrangea and red phlox. I noticed the rabbits had been nibbling my tulips so I see the circle of life is starting anew. What a hopeful time spring is." You may e-mail Cathy at ceewee@juno.com.



Willingness to Serve?

By Kaye Kissee

Thank you for your service to the community as a juror. I know jury service takes time away from your friends, family or employment." The letter I received from the circuit judge goes on to say: "The right to a jury trial is a valuable constitutional right. However, without your willingness to serve as a juror this right would not be possible."

Those words, *willingness to serve*, stood out to me. How many times have you been asked to serve in some capacity, whether at church, in the home or in your community, and you had all kinds of excuses why you couldn't serve.

I have to admit when I was asked to serve on jury duty, all kinds of questions came to mind. Should a Christian serve as a juror? I'm actually not here to answer that question. That is something you will have to answer if you are asked to serve.

When I first received my summons for jury duty, co-workers told me, "Not to worry; you probably won't be selected." When I arrived at the courthouse, I found more than 100 people had been summoned. Out of those 100, the jury would be selected. I had not been in a courtroom, and immediately found myself getting a little nervous.

And then I thought of Jesus. A comforting thought came to mind. Jesus went through a trial of sorts, but he was the one being accused. Wow, how much harder what he went through than what I was being asked to do.

The courthouse is right across the street from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

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Willingness to Serve?

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hall where we meet every Sunday for church. As the courthouse doesn't have an extra room large enough for 100 prospective jurors, they use the VFW hall when selecting a jury. I walked into the VFW hall that Monday morning through a metal detector and sat down in a very familiar seat, just a few rows back from where I had sat for church the morning before.

After getting all of our names in the computer and giving us each a number, we were taken to the courthouse for the selection.

The prosecuting attorney and the defending attorney began the long process of the jury selection. I noticed the attorneys and the defendant were all facing us. As the questions started coming, I began looking for an excuse not to serve.

They told us about the case. "Have any of you heard anything about this case that would affect your decision making?" I hadn't. Has anyone close to you had a crime committed against them? I couldn't immediately think of anyone. Have you ever had a crime committed against you?

Now I did have to think about that one. Our little dog Jazz was kept overnight, tied to a boat on a cold wintry night and died the next day. Somehow in the scheme of things, I didn't think I should bring up that scenario. I also had \$50 taken from my wallet at work, but never could prove who might have done it. Somehow I didn't think that was a very good excuse not to serve.

Then another question came, are there any religious or philosophical reasons why you shouldn't serve? I grew up believing Christians shouldn't vote or serve on juries, so I do have to admit, this question gave me pause. After several people gave reasons why

they shouldn't serve, the attorneys asked if there were any other reasons why someone felt they shouldn't serve.

I'm too busy, I thought. I manage five shops and it is just a couple of weeks before our winter break and I have a lot to do. But then I remembered my employers are supportive of jury duty. They pay for it in full and no time is lost in terms of employment. Somehow, the I'm-too-busy excuse just flew out the window.

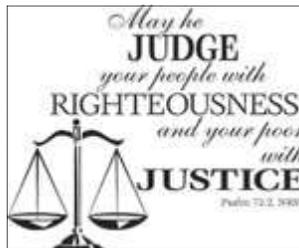
To make a long story shorter, when they called the names of the jurors, I was the third name called. I had been selected for jury duty.

For the next four days, I served as a juror in a difficult trial. I don't plan to share the case with you, but instead, ask you a question. When you are asked to serve, what kinds of excuses do you make? Do you know God can work in mysterious ways? As I sat in that VFW hall waiting, I began to hear a call to serve. When I heard my name called to the jury box, I definitely heard a call to serve.

The next time you are asked to serve in some capacity, as you begin to bat around those excuses of why you can't serve, you might ask yourself a question: is it a man asking me to serve or is it God? In some mysterious way, I felt God called me to serve on jury duty that day. Maybe someday I will feel free to share "the rest of the story."



Kaye says: "I am a grandmother who absolutely loves the new "Grammy" role. We delight in keeping grandbaby Zander and sending him home as other grandparents have always told us. We discovered it's the energy of the little people that needs younger hands!" You may e-mail Kaye at kkissee@cebridge.net.



Zorro and Me

10

He Saw/She Saw

By Barbara Dahlgren

More than 25 years ago when we first moved to Tacoma, Washington, we were in a rush to get to our first church service. We hurriedly scooted our three young children into the car and flew down the highway. Zorro glanced at his rear view mirror and noticed a flurry of papers flying around behind us. Then he remembered leaving his briefcase on top of the car. Could this paper storm be everything from his briefcase, including our important documents we didn't want lost in our move? Ah, yes. Indeed it was.

Frantically we pulled to the side of the highway and Zorro started picking up some still intact files, his Bible and what random documents he could find. Miraculously he wasn't killed by the on-coming traffic. We were surprised when a leather-jacketed Good Samaritan on a motorcycle stopped to help. Believe it or not most of the important stuff was recovered and Zorro lived to tell the story. God is good!

The Good Samaritan waved farewell, and Zorro and I have recounted the incident many times. However, each of our versions seems to be slightly different. He remembers the Good Samaritan taking off his helmet and revealing long, shoulder length, tousled hair. I remember his head as totally shaven. Each thinks he/she is right and the other is wrong.

This isn't the first time this phenomenon has occurred. It comes up quite often. In a previous article I wrote about the time Zorro accidentally left me at a gas station in Jackson, Tennessee, for six hours. He returned to find me killing time at a K-Mart. He swears he found me looking at shoes and I know I was looking at puzzles. We both agree I

asked, "Should I buy this one or that one?" And he said, "Buy them all!" But we still disagree about what it was I was buying.

How can that be? How can two people see the same thing and see something totally different? I have a scientific name for it. It's called marriage. Marriage with all its benefits and ecstasy has one flaw. It consists of people. People see things differently. Police are familiar with this. If seven people see a grocery store clerk being robbed, there will be seven accounts of what happened and seven various descriptions of the assailant—and they could all be totally different.

Marriage is not without its problems so Zorro and I have mastered a few survival techniques in our 40 years together. We know children, finances and health issues are far more crucial than winning an argument over what color shirt the man wore who worked on our car when we got stranded in the middle of nowhere ten years ago. On obscure matters in this area of he saw/she saw, Zorro and I have learned to agree to disagree and move on. This sound advice has helped us focus on the more important concerns of married life.

(But just between you and me—the guy was bald and I was looking at puzzles!)



Barbara is going through a technological learning curve. For Christmas she got a digital camera with instructions the size of an encyclopedia, a new iPhone with so many bells and whistles she may never learn how to make a phone call, and a new blog called Barbara's Banter at www.barbdahlgren.com. She says, "It's definitely in the embryonic stage and a work in progress, but I'm learning lots. Come visit me!" You may contact her at bydahlgren@pacbell.net. ©August 2009.

How God Gave Me a New Kidney and New Life

By Shelba Stanley

From my bios on my articles for *Connections*, many of you know I had kidney failure. I have been given a new life by God, starting May 26, 2009. I'm absolutely certain about how much Jesus is involved in our everyday lives. I could not see that while I was going through my health trial, but now I can look back and see no other explanation for my new life. This could not have just happened. Jesus must have planned what happened, probably as far back as 2000, if not before.

I was working when I started having pain in my knee. I began a search for a doctor but each one, for different reasons, wasn't right. I was still looking when my knee pain sent me to Dr. Kenneth Bramlett in Birmingham, Alabama. His examination—and the X-rays—revealed the pain was not caused by my knee. A disintegrating hip joint was causing misalignment and creating the knee ache. I was given exercises to strengthen my leg muscles, which I still do.

The presurgery exams also revealed a condition that causes my body to make misshaped, and too many, platelets. I went to a cancer clinic for treatment, but the first medicine made me so sick I refused to take it. They convinced me to resume taking the medication, assuring me the sickness should be temporary. The sickness continued so I was started on another medication that cost us \$1,200 a month. We couldn't afford that for long, but we were blessed to learn the pharmaceutical company had a program

through which we could receive the medication free. This medication worked well and I felt fine again.

I went back to work, although still hurting, and rescheduled the hip replacement surgery. I was taking high doses of aspirin and Aleve for pain when I started feeling as if I had the flu or something. One day at Walmart I nearly passed out and called my husband to come get me. I did not want to go to the ER so I went to the cancer clinic where I could get right in. They say if I'd waited 30 minutes more I'd have died. I was in the hospital for eleven days and received four units of blood to replace what I lost to bleeding stomach ulcers. The hip replacement was put off again.

I still needed to find an MD because I was swelling. Some of the doctors thought it was my heart. One even said I had an enlarged heart. With all the tests I had while in the hospital I didn't believe him. I tried yet another doctor. He and his staff were good and caring. Dr. Randy Pounders said I could use his name. I know he is a big part of the plan Jesus was working out. He saw I had a real problem and sent me to the only nephrology clinic in the area.

After testing I was told, "We're not ready to start you on dialysis just yet." I nearly passed out again! I was not ready to hear that at all. I just needed to have my hip replaced to stop the pain that had not been so severe while taking the high doses of Aleve and ibuprofen that I could not still do my jobs. My surgery was set again for 2004. This time I got the surgery, and the exercises I did for three years paid off big time. I had no problems with, or after, surgery and did not have to take any pain medicine the whole time. I quit my job when I realized how much my

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New Kidney

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life was changed now. I could do volunteer jobs at the sheriff's office working with Homeland Security and I loved it.

My kidneys continued to get worse but I kept refusing to go on dialysis. I had been around the kidney clinic enough to see that patients on hemo-dialysis usually get sicker so I decided if I did anything it would be home dialysis. I was told about transplants and went for an evaluation at University of Alabama Hospital in Birmingham, and was placed on the waiting list in 2005.

On August 15, 2005, I gave in to having the dialysis catheter installed. That ended my favorite activity—swimming. I still fought dialysis. We went to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee, for another evaluation and I was put on their transplant list for 2007. We were told I could add my time built at UAB to Vanderbilt, which I did later.

I started on manual Peritoneal Dialysis (PD) January 2, 2008, with four exchanges a day. I hated it! On March 24, 2008, I trained on the night cyler where I hooked up to a machine for ten hours each night. I liked this better but didn't sleep much.

We got a call to UAB for a second kidney during the night March 26, 2008. The experience was a nightmare and I still didn't get the kidney. By the time we knew I would not receive that kidney I had been praying I

would not get it. Afterward, I wrote a four-page letter of all the wrong things that made the experience so unpleasant. Here again Jesus knew had I received the kidney I'd be unable to handle my mother's death just two weeks later in Texas. My only sister and I needed each other at this time. With a transplant I would have been unable to attend our mother's funeral.

I continued to get worse; not sleeping was a big part of it. I started having all kinds of symptoms, not related to kidneys, from back aches to gallbladder pain, upset stomach and lung congestion. I coughed so hard I thought I'd cracked some ribs. Then I started having pain resembling shingles, though it didn't break out. That was such horrible pain I couldn't wear clothes and I got weaker, but Dr. Pounders was patient with me.

We received another call to go for a kidney at UAB, but I declined because of my health problems. I asked my kidney doctor for something for my nerves and his answer was to try yoga meditation. My mind was so messed up I could not read and comprehend. Years ago I used self-hypnosis so I dug out a tape on concentration and tried it one night. I had a total melt down, every nerve and muscle in my body was jumping. I called Dr. Pounders the next morning and he sent me anti-anxiety medicine that helped some.

Roland (my husband) found some information listing some unusual physical symptoms of depression and I had every one. I carried it to Dr. Pounder's office. I was told he doesn't usually read Internet stuff people bring to him, but he read this. Jesus at work again! He called me in and gave me a starter kit for Effexor, an antidepressant. I took it and the second week I slept around the clock for three days and nights.

Two men please God—who serves Him with all his heart because he knows Him; who seeks Him with all his heart because he knows Him not.



—Nikita Ivanovich Panin

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New Kidney

(Continued from page 12)

I was on the mend and in less than two weeks I received the call from Vanderbilt that they had a kidney for me. How soon could we get there? We are three hours from Nashville, but they were waiting for me and immediately started the necessary testing. The transplant could have been performed that night, but the surgery before mine took longer than expected so they waited until the next day.

Normally a person under these circumstances would be very nervous but I slept well that night. Both Roland and I were at peace as never before. Jesus at work again! I got my kidney and it is a perfect match, which is rare even among family donors. The donor was kept on life support so the kidney was as good as from a live donor.

The kidney is healthy and works so well one doctor said, "It pees like a pony." God was so involved in every part of this whole event. I healed quickly, never needed any pain medicine and I was discharged from the hospital in three days—walking and soaking wet by the time we got home. You can guess what I mean by soaking wet.

All kinds of people and churches around the world were praying for me, even one

Hindu friend. Most told me they prayed for a matching healthy kidney. This, to me, is proof God loves all his children and hears them all. I did not realize how involved he is in our everyday lives and how he plans and works out everything for our good. Now I *know* how loved I am and everyone else too.

We are his children in every way. Even in death he is doing what is best for us, because we have to die to start eternity with him.

My new life and story of how I know God planned and worked out the whole thing, probably starting years before, has given me a chance to introduce others to the God I know. So far, when I tell others I got a new perfectly matched kidney, even total strangers give God the credit. But when I expand on how much Jesus is working in lives, most do not see it. I usually challenge them to look for what is happening in and around them that could only be of God. I love my new life!



You may e-mail Shelba at sestan303@gmail.com.

Confidential Peer Listener Line

Shall we talk? We're here for you!

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Connecting & Bonding

By Jannice May

Dear Sisters in Ministry,

As we begin our 13th year of *Connecting & Bonding*, we are excited about those who will come for the first time and about seeing our sisters who return each year. Many friendships have formed over the years and it is a joy to see the growth in each of us from year to year.

I would like to share comments from three women who tell us why they keep coming back each year.

“For a good many years I have embraced 1 Corinthians 15:58 as my life verse. In this scripture it states that your labor for God is never in vain. Sometimes I lose sight of this, and every year that I have been at *Connecting & Bonding* it reminds me of my determined life goal, to work with Jesus for the Kingdom’s sake, and no matter how hard some of my circumstances have been, no matter how hard the fight against the enemy to stay focused, it is worth it. *Connecting & Bonding* is a place where I am refueled and refreshed to continue living by my life’s verse.” ~ Thelma

“I would like to share with you and everyone on the *Connecting & Bonding* team that I had a great experience. This was my first

time attending and the timing was perfect. My husband and I had just lost his mom and my dad this past spring and early summer of 2009. *Devastated* is the only word I can use to describe how we were feeling. I was encouraged by my husband and a friend to go to the *Connecting & Bonding* conference, and I’m glad I did. Everyone was so encouraging, loving and understanding. This was exactly what I needed for my broken spirit. All of you lifted me up, at the most difficult time of my life. Thank you, everyone. Mrs. May, a special thanks to you for starting this conference. It is truly needed. I pray it continues to grow for many years to come. God bless.” ~ Sian

“I became a pastor’s wife in 2001 and have been attending *Connecting & Bonding* since 2002. Why do I keep coming back each year? Well, first of all, it is an intentional time to stop and be still and listen to the Lord. He spoke to me so clearly at the first conference that I made a commitment to attend every year whether I thought I needed it or not. Somehow, God has always made a way for me to attend each year and he graciously allows me to both gain and give something new. In addition to this annual spiritual health check-up, I meet some of the most delightful women and we get to support and encourage one another on this journey. The speakers are excellent, the praise and worship is authentic, the accommodations are top-notch and the time for relationship with God and other women is worth every penny!” ~ Anne

I hope someday you will get to meet these wonderful women at one of our conferences. Here are the dates:

The Lexington, Kentucky, conference took place March 12 to 14. Our guest speaker

Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance; it is laying hold of His highest willingness.

—Richard Chevenix Trench

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Connecting & Bonding

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was Judy Hampton. Judy is a popular speaker best known for her entertaining speaking style. She is transparent, authentic, extremely humorous and biblically sound. Her testimony has aired several times on the *Focus on the Family* radio broadcast. Judy is also a free-lance writer with publications in several magazines. She is a contributing author in more than 25 books, including *Chicken Soup for Christian Woman's Soul* as well as *Kisses of Sunshine for Grandmas and Women*.

The Los Angeles conference is scheduled September 3 to 6. One of our guest speakers is Joan Jackson. Joan is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, and resides in San Diego, California. A former NFL player's wife, she is a parent to two teenage sons. Joan has a wealth of experience. In addition to serving as the president of the Jackson Foundation, she has participated in women's Bible seminars, the NFL Wives Association and shelters for battered women. She is also an active member of her church in San Diego. As elders' wives we are women who live public lives in varying degrees. I look forward to having Joan share some of the good, bad, ugly and indif-

ferent aspects of living a high profile lifestyle, as well as the hurts and pain and ways to heal and move on. You will be inspired by her unshakable faith in God, her authenticity as she shares her story and her dedication to helping women around the world.

This year we will be moving the Los Angeles conference to the Hilton Hotel in Ontario, which will be a money saver. The hotel is nice and close to the airport. I know you will enjoy staying there. More information to come.

The theme for this year is "Divine Surprises—When Life Puts Us in the Valley" (Philippians 4:19). Please mark your calendar with the dates of the conference for 2010. You may register on our website at www.connectingandbonding.org and pay with a credit card, or save the registration form to your computer, complete, print and mail to the address noted on the form with your payment. Be sure to take notice of our three payment plans.

If, for economic reasons, you are not able to attend the entire conference, consider attending one day or an evening. This applies to both the Lexington and Los Angeles conferences. Please feel free to e-mail or call me at (626) 379-0505 and we will be happy to help in any way.

Thank you for your prayers for the ministry and for your support to help make a difference in the lives of many.

Blessings,
Jannice May
President,
Connecting & Bonding



Connecting & Bonding 2010

Los Angeles, California: September 3-6

Plan now to attend this inspiring conference.

Website: connectingandbonding.org.

E-mail: Jannice at conbond@acninc.net.

My Experience as a Pastor

By Sonia Orozco de Vengoechea

I am a pastor in a congregation in Barranquilla, Colombia, with an attendance of about 50 to 70 persons, not counting the children. In the beginning we didn't have a pastor. Two deacons led the group. I began to take care of the group's needs and to organize the activities in 1999 because some of the older members had stopped attending. They live far from the congregation and because of their age were unable to travel.

From the original group of members we have a few women left. Most of the men are gone. I have found favor with the group. We began to grow close and work together, joining Jesus in strengthening the church. Due to the previous belief about the ordination of only men, I have felt some hostility. But it has not been an obstacle for the congregation as a whole to accept a woman's authority and continue to support my leadership. The church meets on our family property.

After attending my first Pastor's Conference in Indian Wells, California, in 2007, I was ordained a pastor at our Annual Conference in Barranquilla by Mr. and Mrs. Hector Barrero from Bogota, Colombia. The congregation has been blessed by the Lord. He has been working with us. Men, married couples, and more women have made the commitment to participate in the great commission of making disciples and of equipping them so they grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank God for the acceptance I have received from the group and for their collaboration. The training of leaders has rendered satisfactory results. We have good mini-

sterial teams: the children's ministry, the worship ministry, the youth ministry, the prayer ministry, the ministry of helps and service and the dance ministry.

My husband is a great support in my role as pastor. We live next door to the school where I am a principal and where the church meets. He is retired and helps me with the school and the church. He travels with me to the church conferences as well.

I have to tell you a story: once at a pas-



tor's conference when we were called to the front to pray, a pastor said to me, "The Bible doesn't mention any women pastors." I was so surprised I didn't say anything to him. There were many women pastors there.

This continues to be a controversial subject, but God says: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, male or female...we are all one in Christ Jesus." We respect the role of the man, but God is doing a work without gender discrimination and women are responding just as the men are responding to the Lord's work. If he uses us then we want to join him in his work. There are certainly more women than men in the church.

Thank God for the pastors and leaders in the Lord's work and thank God for their wives—helpers in the various ministries. God bless the pastorate in general. The glory

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My Experience

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belongs to Jesus; he is the great pastor of pastors who gives his life for the sheep. God bless our pastors in the Lord's name. Bless your women and give your support to the women pastors. Women pastors, may you continue going forward in the great commission participating with the Father in leading souls to Jesus. You are included!

It has been and continues to be a wonderful experience. It took time for me to accept my calling because I didn't believe the Lord was using me to pastor. I didn't do anything to deserve it; he has done it all. May God continue to direct and support his work in his way, not ours.



You may contact Sonia through Carmen Fleming at carmen.fleming@wcg.org or through Facebook. (Translation by Carmen Fleming.)

So live that after the minister has ended his remarks, those present will not think they have attended the wrong funeral.

—The Mortarboard



American Hero, Part Two

By Joyce Catherwood

On July 13, 2009, at 8:22 p.m., Sergeant Jeff Molnar wrote on his Facebook wall: "Rest in peace, my brothers. I simply do not have the words to express how I feel. A year later, I am still haunted. You will be remembered forever." Sergeant Molnar is our grandson. His post referred to nine army buddies killed in the course of several hours of fierce battle in Afghanistan in July 2008—a battle during which he narrowly escaped with his own life several times, once when a bullet lodged in his helmet.

I wrote about our grandson and the perils of being on the frontlines during his 15-month deployment in Afghanistan in the Fall 2008 issue of *Connections*. We, as his family, had our hearts in our throats during his entire deployment and a whole lot of praying was going on. To show how good our God is, we received answers to prayers we had not even thought of praying. Check this out.

Jeffrey finally returned to his home base in Vicenza, Italy, for a year between deployments. And what a year it has been for him! The stand-out event was his marriage to a precious young woman, Camille, from his hometown area in Texas. She was brave enough to take her place as an army wife.

Jeffrey and Camille were wed in a simple civil ceremony in December 2008. They will wait until he concludes his final deployment and is discharged in February 2011 before they have the huge, family wedding celebration she has always dreamed of. They have

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American Hero

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two babies—Giorgio, a sweet puppy, and Tortellini, the Russian tortoise.

So, instead of living in the barracks, had he been single, Jeffrey and Camille lived in an apartment with balconies and views of the mountains on a picturesque street full of shops in charming Vicenza. They could easily travel to Venice or the Adriatic coast on weekends because those locations are close by. They were not far from Paris and Rome. Several months ago, they took a romantic trip to Capri. When Jeffrey came home in the evening from his base duties, he could crash on the sofa, with Giorgio on his chest, and both snooze away. And on it goes.

Now, why didn't I think of all that? A lovely wife, a year in a comfy apartment, a little dog and a tortoise. Not to worry, our Lord knows what we need. Instead of putting his life on hold until he finishes up his five years plus in the military, Jeffrey has actually started his life. He has someone to come home to. The softness and love of his little family serve to dull the hard edges of a combat soldier who has experienced the horrendous nightmare of war.

Though Jeffrey left for a second 12-month Afghanistan deployment in November 2009, he and Camille stay connected through e-mail. During his absence, Camille, Giorgio and Tortellini have returned to her parent's home in north Texas. Camille is finishing up her college degree, planning a belated gala wedding celebration and counting the days until Jeffrey's safe return.

Our family has once again joined the hundreds of other military families who put their lives on hold while their loved ones are deployed to dangerous parts of the world. May God bless and sustain those courageous men and women in uniform and their brave, beloved families. Remember our troops!



You may e-mail Joyce at joyce.catherwood@gci.org.

Two Book Reviews—
**Sacred Pathways
What's Your God
Language?**

Reviewed by Barbara Dahlgren

I've been reading *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* by Gary Thomas (Zondervan, c. 2000) and *What's Your God Language? Connecting with God Through Your Unique Spiritual Temperament* by Myra Perrine (Tyndale, c. 2007). It

may seem unusual to review two books at the same time, but Thomas' *Sacred Pathways* actually laid the foundation for Dr. Perrine's doctoral thesis, which resulted in her book, *What's Your God Language*, so I decided to read both back to back.

As we are all different, the way each of us relates to God can vary. That's the premise of *Sacred Pathway* by Thomas. Worshiping God is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. What feeds one spiritually may not nourish another. Thomas explores nine pathways that bring certain spiritual temperaments closer to God:

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Two Book Reviews

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naturalist, sensate, traditionalist, ascetic, activist, caregiver, enthusiast, contemplative and intellectual. For example, naturalists feel closest to God through his creation, whereas traditionalists might be inspired by ritual and symbolism. Ascetics draw strength from solitude and simplicity, whereas caregivers worship God by attending to the physical needs of others. Enthusiasts show their love for God with a festive celebration, whereas contemplatives prefer calm adoration.

There are many ways of experiencing God's presence in our lives. Thomas writes that if we feel we have practiced tried and true methods to draw closer to God but not progressed, we might be on someone else's path and not our own. Or if we find ourselves in a spiritual rut, we might benefit from incorporating a new path for a while. Thomas explains the strengths and pitfalls of each pathway. Questions at the end of each chapter may help determine which pathways we lean toward.

Dr. Perrine's doctoral research was partially built on Gary Thomas' work. Her book *What's Your God Language?* takes readers through a condensed version of Thomas' nine pathways, which she calls "spiritual temperaments." Thomas endorses the book and writes the forward. Some quotations describing the spiritual temperaments are taken from his *Sacred Pathways* book, as well as many other sources. Those who like a more disciplined approach to the temperaments might enjoy the personal inventories Perrine presents to help determine spiritual temperament and practices. She also includes many exercises and assignments to develop or enhance the specific temperaments.

Both books are well-written, easy to read and enlightening. I agreed with all of the pathway or spiritual temperament categories

except one. The enthusiast pathway is divided into celebration and mystery. One gets the impression Thomas didn't know what to do with those who speak in tongues or interpret dreams so he lumped them in with those who are more demonstrative in worship. Perhaps this is because in the past only charismatics clapped and raised their hands in praise, but now this enthusiastic form of worship can be found in many denominations.

However, I totally agree with the overall concept that what draws one person closer to God may not draw another. People connect with Jesus in different ways because God designed us that way.

While Thomas gives a more in-depth look at each of the nine pathways, Perrine's book builds on that foundation by providing inventories, exercises and assignments some might find helpful—lots of journal writing and self-exploration. I found them distracting and a little formulaic, so I viewed them as suggestions that might help my spiritual temperament journey rather than a mandatory to-do list. Some of her chapters are insightful such as "Denominations and Differences in the Church Today," whereas her final chapter seemed more like an altar call rather than tying everything together.

Both Thomas and Perrine caution against thinking our particular dominant spiritual temperaments are superior to others and they remind us to guard against being judgmental. There is value in every pathway or spiritual temperament and each makes a significant contribution to the Kingdom of God. As Christ's body, we should appreciate our differences and realize we truly do need one another.



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

The Rev. Billy Graham tells of a time early in his career when he arrived in a small town to preach a sermon. Wanting to mail a letter, he asked a young boy where the post office was. When the boy told him, Rev. Graham thanked him and said, "If you'll come to the Baptist church this evening, you can hear me telling everyone how to get to Heaven." "I don't think I'll be there," the boy said. "You don't even know your way to the post office."

A boy was watching his father, a pastor, write a sermon. "How do you know what to say?" he asked. "Why, God tells me," the father answered. The boy replied, "Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"

For all of us who are seniors—for all of you who know seniors—and for all of you who will be seniors. It pays to be able to laugh about it when you are a senior! "Where Is My Paper?" The irate customer calling the newspaper offices, loudly demanded to know where her Sunday edition was. "Ma'am," said the employee, "today is Saturday. The Sunday paper is not delivered 'til Sunday." There was quite a pause on the other end of the phone, followed by a ray of recognition. "So that's why no one was in church today."

—The above from www.cleanjoke.com

I never get tired of housework—I don't do any. When guests come to visit I just put down drop cloths and say, "We're painting."

—Joan Rivers

My husband, Mike, and I had several stressful months of financial difficulties. So one evening I was touched to see him gazing at the diamond wedding ring that symbolized our marriage. "With this ring..." I began romantically.

"We could pay off Visa," he responded.

In the office where I work, there is a constant battle between our technical support director and customer service personnel over the room temperature, which is usually too low. The frustrated director, trying to get us to understand his position, announced one afternoon, "We need to keep the temperature below seventy-five degrees or the computers will overheat." Thinking this was just another excuse, one of my shivering colleagues retorted, "Yeah right. So how did they keep the computers from overheating before there was air conditioning?"

—The above from www.cleanlaffs.com