

Hearth to Hearth

Woman to Woman



Vol. 5, No. 3

“And ye are complete in him.” Colossians 2:10

May/June 2002

God the Matchmaker

Karina Vargas de Ashton



“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou cameth forth out of the womb I sanctified thee.” (Jeremiah 1:5)

When I was very young my parents divorced. Ignorance of truth, and God’s love, caused my father to

walk away from his family. As a child I used to dream of finding a good man and having a home that would never break apart. Sometimes when I would swing in my garden I would feel that I was soaring up into a wonderful, beautiful place. I continued my dreams as a teenager, playing and dancing like a butterfly, flitting in and out among the fruit trees, where I waited for my blue prince who would fill with love the empty space in my heart. Closing my eyes I would see him come and take me away to the beautiful place I saw from my garden swing.

Unexpectedly, I had to leave my beautiful home to live with my Grandfather. The environment in this new home was very hostile towards me, there were many arguments, many problems. I began finding refuge in alcohol, and ran away from home several times. My blue prince no longer dropped by to see me. They tried to shut me in so that I could not run away, but I left by the roof, taking with me anything valuable enough to sell. I would be gone for days, or even weeks. I did not care that I would be punished, spanked, or beat up, I was numb to the pain, and continued down my destructive path. My friends had the same problems I did; we all came from broken homes, and we drowned our sorrows in alcohol, and parties, hanging around drug pushers.

I knew that God was there, and that He knew what I was doing, but I did not know how to come to Him. No one had told me how to repent and come to Him for forgiveness, and adoption into His family. I didn’t know

how to ask Him to heal my blistering wounds, and I ultimately blamed Him for my problems. My life seemed to drag on and on. I finished high school and, not knowing what to do with my life, went to live with my aunt.

I knew that God was there, that He was everywhere, and often wondered, “Why doesn’t God pay any attention to me? Why is my life like this?” So many times I wished for death. I did cut my veins many times, but never good enough for my wish to come true.

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MAIL CALL:

Thanks for your information in the newsletter. I appreciate your efforts in managing the African project.

Arizona

I just wanted to tell you that *Hearth to Hearth* was real good this time. [Your article] about water was very helpful. Even the drinking times gave me ideas how to get more water.

I had already gotten the Daffodil story online and that is maybe how you got it. "Martha's Garden" was good too and your story about Eve.

For a while I wasn't ever impressed but this one was good.

Arkansas

I'm starting to collect some items to send to the girls [orphans she has sponsored in Kenya]. I find that I can't go to the store without thinking about them. It's making me more conscientious in how I'm choosing to spend my money. I.e. Do I really need this? Or do I really need to purchase such an expensive item when something cheaper would work? And then, of course, I'm thinking about what I can buy for the girls.

Michigan

We pray for Mercy [their sponsored Kenyan child] every day. Cody, our four-year-old son talks about Mercy and if we say a prayer and forget to mention Mercy he quickly reminds us "We need to pray for Mercy." We continue to wait for a letter from her realizing the postal service is slow. We do write to her and send stickers.

Minnesota

Thank you very much for the magazine, *Hearth to Hearth*, you sent me a couple of weeks ago. It's a blessing for me and I am touched much by the pain of these kids suffering of AIDS and lack of love. As you say, we cannot do everything but we can do a little something...

We keep you in prayer and go by faith. God is blessing the faithful and the humble ones which bring God's goals and wishes and desires and His will before our needs. He promises to be faithful in keeping His promises, and also He gives more than He promises...

I do pray God opens doors and hearts of other women, tender women, to pray and do something for the needy ones and also for themselves.

Once again, thank you for the articles which help us come closer to Jesus and also to understand others by little acts of love. It makes me sad to realize how sick is this world, but maybe God wants us to be a tool of joy for others; like you, and those great people from Romania and Africa, which have faith, trust, love and courage to love God (caring for orphans and the widow, needy ones) more than themselves...

God bless you, and those close which help you, and keep you.

Finland

Editorial

THE BRIDEGROOM AWAITS HIS BRIDE

May and June; the the months of graduations, weddings and special honor to parents. As you read this issue of *Hearth to Hearth* you will, no doubt, thrill with Karina Ashton as she shares God's incredible answer to her prayer for a mate (and more!) in "God the Matchmaker," page 1. As we rejoice with her over the goodness of God, let's contemplate the most important match our Heavenly Father wishes to make; the match between Christ, His only begotten Son and us. We, the church of God, are to be His bride!

As we honor our parents on the world's designated days, let's remember to give honor to our heavenly Parent as well. This is best done by giving our whole hearts to His Son in a betrothal pledge. He has given us the garment of His righteousness to wear as a wedding garment. Let's not be distracted or taken in by the glittering garments that "World" is offering and the promises he makes. (See *The Church Walking With the World*, pages 10 & 11.) He is a liar and the riches he offers are a mirage. If we, God's people, His church, not a denomination or group of denominations, are walking with World, we walk in danger for the closer and longer we walk together, the more sure it is that one day we will become married to each other. Our heavenly Suitor has made it clear that He will not be involved in any polygamous relationship. He has admonished us to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." (1 John 2:15) We cannot have Him *and* World. We must choose between them. And we must be aware that World will use every means possible in an effort to stealthily and cunningly steal our affections. We will need to guard closely the avenues to our soul. (See "The Fall and Restoration of Eve" page 4.)

Like the Ten Virgins, spoken of in Matthew chapter 25, we must keep a constant vigil so we are ready when our Bridegroom returns to receive us as His bride. Though He is away, preparing a place for us (John 14:2), He has sent us many love letters printed in a volume referred to as "His Word," or "the Bible." As Grace Cox brings out in "Touch and be Healed" (page 19), too many of us are content to allow others to read and interpret these letters for us rather than devouring, savoring and digesting them for ourselves. How can we possibly expect to really get to know our Suitor unless we do so? Can we truly trust that others may not add to or subtract from His messages to us, causing us to lose something important through their interpretation?

Among the pages of His Word, He has included a road map, which, if followed closely, will guide us to the Promised Land where the wedding is to take place. However, as Sally Specht so aptly points out (page 8), we must be wary of the busses. Sometimes they display the wrong placards. And, besides, much of the way is so narrow it can only be traveled on foot.

As portrayed by Edna Shaffer in "Love Endures – One Step at a Time," (pages 6) our Betrothed has pledged Himself to love and care for us for "better or worse, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." The only thing He asks from us in return is our loyalty—our whole heart's affections. What a deal! Can we swallow our pride and our inclinations to trek to World's formalwear shop and provide our own garment? Nothing we could possibly provide would suit the occasion. Why not put on the garment that has been so wondrously and lovingly woven in the looms of Heaven for us and get onto that narrow path. Our Bridegroom is eagerly waiting.

✧

Esther McDaniel & Alice Fredrick

To all who are preparing this wonderful little newsletter. Such great articles... We are going back to Oregon so please mail further booklets to... We enjoy reading all articles sent.

Arizona

[Thank you so much for sending us your change of address. It helps us out a lot. Editor]

Thank you for the recent newsletter you sent. After reviewing some of the articles, it led me to believe that I am not qualified to write for your newsletter. All the articles are so professionally written that it would put me to shame. I am not that educated, and my writings would sound stupid. I always wanted to write but it

doesn't come out the way I desire it to. Your newsletter looks great and I love the articles you publish. God bless you, and keep up the excellent work on *Hearth to Hearth*. *Illinois*

[It is true that we strive for quality in the articles we publish. However, I'm sure any true "professional" would recognize us as a counterfeit. We would say to anyone, "Please do not hesitate to submit your prayerfully-written article. We may need to edit it, and we may not be able to print it due to space limitations, but we are always happy to receive articles, poems, artwork or testimonials from our readers. Editor]

I really enjoyed this Mar./Apr. '02 issue as much as I could without pages 4, 5 and 13, 14. Really need to have the full Scripture study, "Everlasting Gospel," article. The last part of it is wonderful—pages 15/16. Sure like all the other articles too.

Hearth to Hearth keeps improving! Wish we had these ideas of "Happy Homemaking and Family Harmony" years ago when we had our young family. *Arkansas*

[Thank you for letting us know that pages were missing from your issue. Unfortunately, things never seem to end up as perfectly as we would like. We are always happy to send a replacement issue for any reason. Editor]

I am praying for your ministries that God will continue to work things out for all the orphans and they will be taken care of in every way... Keep up the good work. I hope one day I will be able to visit you all in [West] Virginia. God bless and keep you. *Jamaica*

PRAYER CALL:

1) Shalom, this is a quick one. We got a flood here in town. The river went off. I do not know if you ever heard about "huayco." It is a Quechua word for when the flood brings mud and rocks. Our house got invaded by the water, and the congregation too. Thanks to our Almighty Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, that the damage is not that bad.

We need to replace the roof in our house, but the congregation is fine—just repaint and replace the drainage pipes. The furniture is ok—just one bed got bad. We are blessed and nothing happened to us. Pray for us. Here in Peru things are getting worse. It rained for two days. We must prepare for if it rains again. We just got back to the house today [February 7], and I have to do a lot of clean up.

Karina Ashton/Peru

[I am sorry this was missed for the last issue. Though the Ashtons have no doubt finished their clean-up by now, they can still use our prayers as they continue to work for the Lord under difficult conditions. Editor]

2) One of our contributing editors, Onycha Holt, is scheduled for surgery on May 28, to remove a small, non-malignant tumor from her brain stem. Onycha's courage is good as her trust is in God. Please keep her in your prayers at this time.

3) Please left up Sister Arlene Noyes and her family in prayer at this time. She has been diagnosed with terminal cancer and the doctors have given her one month to live. While we do not know if this is the Father's will, we know that He is merciful, gracious and easily entreated. Arlene lives in the state of Washington.

4) Let's continue to remember Michael Sibanda on death row in Zimbabwe for a murder he did not commit. His courage is good in the Lord.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

» **Moving?** If you have changed your address, please kindly notify us to avoid missing any issues, as well as to help us save on expenses. Postage for returned newsletters is very expensive at \$1.41 each. Thank you for your help.

» **Reminder:** The return address shown on the back page is strictly for postal purposes and should not be used for correspondence. The correct address for correspondence is *Hearth to Hearth*, P.O. Box 247, Pineville, WV 24874. (Please see box at right.)

» **Mail Call:** We had planned to begin printing your names with your letters in this issue of *Hearth to Hearth*. However, we have decided to give it a little more thought. We would like some input from you. Do you think it would be beneficial to do so or not? Perhaps we could just use initials or possibly a nickname as they do in Internet chat rooms and message boards.

Perhaps we could leave it up to each individual as to how they would like their name designated on their letter. Please write and give us your comments and suggestions regarding this subject. We will be very appreciative.

Wee Wit & Wisdom

George got stung by a bee and said, "I wouldn't have got stung if I'd stayed in bed."

Fred got stung and we heard him roar, "What am I being punished for?"

Lew got stung and we heard him say, "I learned somethin' 'bout bees today."

Selected

Our Method:

Hearth to Hearth is published bi-monthly and sent free upon request. Voluntary donations are appreciated.

Our Mission:

Believing that we can find completeness in all areas of our lives only "in him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:10), it is the mission of *Hearth to Hearth* to provide a forum for Christian women to reach out to each other in friendship, joy and hope; and to encourage each other to find our completeness in Christ as we sojourn here on our way to the kingdom. By this completeness in Christ we become better wives, mothers, daughters, homemakers, neighbors and friends. As an outgrowth of this completeness, we will desire to share the love of God through our efforts to meet the needs of others and to relieve the suffering of those for whom Christ died.

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The Fall and Restoration of Eve

Part III

Esther McDaniel

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” (Genesis 3:6)

Apparently, Eve saw the serpent eating the fruit and he did not appear harmed. The tree and its fruit were, no doubt, beautiful; they did not *look* hurtful. Eve listened to the serpent as he *told* her the fruit was good. This news was *pleasing to her ear*. She *took* the fruit and probably smelled it. Its aroma was undoubtedly pleasant. It felt good in her hands—there was no *sensation* of anything unpleasant about it. In fact, it *seemed* very desirable; it gave promise of a god-like wisdom! Then she tasted the fruit and excitedly shared it with Adam.

Eve’s senses caused her to believe Satan’s lie and to distrust God’s intentions in withholding from her the fruit of that one tree.

God had said the fruit was bad for her; eating of it would do her harm. The serpent said the fruit was good for her, that God was bad; that God had, in fact, lied to her.

Satan had coveted the throne of God. (See Isaiah 14:13, 14.) Now he tempts Eve to covet it for herself as well. “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,” he said. (Genesis 3:5)

When Eve decided that Satan was telling the truth and God was a liar, she ate of the forbidden fruit. God’s Word says, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19)

Eve did not recognize her foe disguised as a serpent. How can we detect him today in all his disguises? We are told that he is going around as a “roaring lion... seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:8) We are also told that he can be “transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14), doing miracles (Revelation 16:14) in an attempt to deceive even “the very elect.” (Matthew 24:24) That’s you and me and our families! How can we *avoid* being deceived?

Here are seven steps we must take to avoid deception.

- 1) Be wary and watchful. (1 Peter 5:8)
- 2) Ask God for His spirit of discernment. (1 Kings 3:9)
- 3) Guard our senses, as they are the avenues to our souls. (Matthew 18:8,9; Proverbs 17:4)
- 4) Prayerfully study an accurate translation of our Guidebook, the Bible. (2 Timothy 2:15)
- 5) Listen to the voice of God as He speaks to us through the words that we are studying. (Isaiah 29:18)
- 6) Heed the warnings and instructions we are given. (Ezekiel 20:19)
- 7) Test every spirit against what the Word says. (1 John 4:1)

All but two of these steps are self-explanatory. I will attempt to explain those two. Regarding #4, much has been written about Bible translations. I would be happy to share with you a study on the subject written by Lynnford Beachy. If you are interested, just request a free copy of the study, “Which Bible?” This would at least give you a starting point from which to launch your own study.

Regarding #7, the Bible gives us clear instructions regarding how to test the spirits. This includes checking everything that comes to us with God’s Word, whether it comes in spoken or written form. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because *there is no light in them.*” (Isaiah 8:20) Most of us understand the law to be the Ten Commandments, but what is “the testimony”? Revelation 12:17 says, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” To simplify this text, I will simply say that in Bible prophecy a woman represents a church (God’s church or Satan’s church—there are only two).

The seed of this woman was Christ and the remnant of her seed (the last part) are those who keep the commandments and have “the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The dragon represents Satan.

Revelation 19:10 tells us that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Therefore, if anyone comes to us with a message that is contrary to God’s law, or to the testimony of the prophets of God, we can know that there is “no light in them.” And if the

words of each prophet who ever comes are tested by the words of all the prior prophets of God, there should be no disharmony. It is really a very simple test—but only if we *know*, through personal study, the testimony of all the former prophets, beginning with the books of Moses, Genesis through Deuteronomy, the first Bible ever written.

God is faithful. We can trust His Word to be true! “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:8-11)

LESSON #3: In order to be restored to the image of God as Eve was before she sinned, *do not allow the evidences of your senses to lead you to distrust the Word of God!*



Scripture Study

“A TREE TO BE DESIRED”

Part I

A Temcat Study

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” (Genesis 3:6)

Two trees in the center of the Garden: the “Tree of Life” and the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” People who read this account and just see two trees are missing one of the grandest lessons on salvation in the whole Bible!

Some Bible scholars claim that, in Bible prophecy, the first time a subject appears in the Bible is most important, and the most important aspects of it are present in the first account. So here in the center of the Garden we see the issues of what was to become the “Great Controversy” spelled out for us with great clarity.

To begin our exploration of the subject, we first need to understand some basic facts about God. We all know the basic that “God is love.” “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:16)

But “love” is a very abused word in our language and we don’t always have a clear concept of what the “love of God” really is. “Love” in our culture all too often degenerates into a sentimental feeling of warm teddy-bearishness that tells us nothing accurate about the character of the great God of the universe.

Let’s see what the Bible says: “And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,

and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” (Exodus 34:5-7)

“To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.” (Psalm 92:15)

Here we see a character described that is one hundred percent good. Also, the Ten Commandment Law of God is, in truth, a representation of God’s character put into human concepts. God’s character is love and the Ten Commandments outline how *true* love behaves towards others.

There is another aspect of God’s character that is very important for us to understand: “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faith-

God is one hundred percent faithful; He does not change or go back on His word.

ful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.” (Deuteronomy 7:9)

God is one hundred percent faithful; He does not change or go back on His word.

Now we see something else in verse 14: “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

Because God is one hundred percent good and righteous altogether, he has absolutely no toleration of wrong. He describes this intolerance of evil as His being “jealous.” Now jealousy is something the Bible has some warnings about:

“Jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which

hath a most vehement flame.” (Song of Solomon 8:6)

We see the Hebrew word translated “jealousy” is קנאה. Sometimes it is translated as “envy” and also as “zeal.” In the text, “The zeal of thy house has eaten me up,” it can also be read as “jealousy for Thy house.”

It seems strange to us to have something we tend to think of as an undesirable trait to be part of God’s makeup, however, a little study shows us that God has much more to say about being a jealous God, in the Bible, than He does about being love. But it has to be put into perspective. Man is naturally evil since the fall and, therefore, the jealousy of man, like the wrath of man, “worketh not the righteousness of God.” (James 1:20)

God is one hundred percent righteous, or good; He is also one hundred percent faithful and unchangeable. So now we begin to understand. It all goes back to God’s intolerance of evil.

“Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness.” (Psalm 45:7)

Why does God HATE? To understand that, just look at what He hates—He HATES wickedness! Why? Because He IS a God of righteousness and good, AND He IS a God of LOVE! Love cannot tolerate harm to come to what it loves. Wickedness is harmful. Anything that deviates from the character of a perfect God is harmful.

You see, if I think I am perfect, and everybody ought to do exactly what I want him to do, well, I have a problem. Why? Because I am NOT perfect—I am a fallen being. The Bible is clear about that: “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Proverbs 16:25)

So I could really believe I am guiding you aright, but I could advise you right into death. (This is why we must

(Continued on page 9)

Happy Homemaking and Family Harmony

Love Endures - One Step at a Time

Vicki Kritzell

Pocahontas, Arkansas, January 7, 1943.

Edna Meade Thomas, 16, and Howard Edward Shaffer, 21, are united in holy matrimony over the staunch objections of their parents. Edna, who was born in Indiana, lived most of her girlhood in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Howard, from Fremont, Ohio, was stationed in Pocahontas as a member of the United States Army.

Edna was working in a BBQ stand frequented by many of the servicemen. One of her friends was going on a date with Howard, and since it was not proper to go unchaperoned, she asked Edna to blind date with one of Howard's buddies. The moment Howard laid eyes on Edna, he fell in love with her. They dated for three weeks with the knowledge that Howard could be shipped overseas at any moment. Howard wanted to know Edna would spend her life with him, no matter how long it might be. He wired home for money for the marriage, and by the time his mother's telegram reached him, beseeching them to wait until after the war, they were married. [See picture at right, taken on their wedding day.]



Traverse City, Michigan, January 7, 2002.

Edna Meade Shaffer slowly hangs her coat in the closet of Howard's room, trying not to disturb his rest. The 30-mile drive to the nursing home, across roads made treacherous by Lake Michigan snows, has unnerved her, as she does not see as well as she once did. She has made this trek every day for exactly two years to the day. She sits quietly beside his bed, reaching out to smooth his hair. Will he recognize her today, on their 59th anniversary? As he opens his eyes and gazes at her, a wide smile splits his face. It will be a good day. Oh, what roads were traveled to get to this place in time!

The Secret of an Enduring Marriage

What is the secret of an enduring marriage? How did a 16-year-old girl build a relationship that would last a lifetime when many twice her age have failed? Was it the example of her parent's interaction that served as a life lesson? Edna's childhood was filled with poverty and struggle. Her father was often absent and her mother struggled to keep her brood fed. Sometimes she did not succeed, and the children went to bed hungry. At the age

of 10, Edna moved in with a family to clean and care for their children; a child taking on the job of raising children. She did this so she might stay in school. Edna always knew she was different. She knew she would have a future very different from her past. She excelled in school. She loved poetry, and can still recite poems memorized as a young child. Robert Lewis Stevenson is her favorite poet because he never "forgot the child inside," to quote her. Her love for God gave her strength beyond her years, and her triumph in marriage is a tribute to His grace and her hard work.

When Howard was discharged, he and Edna began a life of nomadic existence. As he moved from one career to another, Edna supported him in his search for his true calling. He worked as a musician, salesman, and project coordinator. During these years the family moved from Michigan to Ohio to be close to Howard's parents. He had a large, boisterous family. Many of them needed a hand up over the years, and Edna was the first to give them the love and support they

needed. At least half a dozen of Howard's relatives lived in Edna's house at various times of need. When Grandma Della (Howard's mother) died, Edna took Grandpa (also named Howard) into her home, where he stayed until he died, because his own daughters were too busy. During the "Ohio" years, three daughters were born. Edna felt her life complete. Her love spilled over into everyone she met.

Howard, however, was still searching. Inside was a burning desire to serve the Lord. He and Edna became active in all areas of church life and finally, after the marriage of their oldest daughter, Howard accepted his calling to become a pastor. Once again, Edna pulled up stakes and moved into uncharted waters. For the next five years, Howard and Edna served a church in Alpena, Michigan. Howard continued his education and, at the age of 46, was finally ordained as a minister in the Methodist Church. As his partner, Edna was invaluable to the church family. Howard was strong willed, opinionated, quick tempered; Edna was gentle, insightful, and slow to judge. They balanced each other fairly well, but not without a lot of work. Therein lies the secret.

Marriage is Not a Joy Ride

Marriage is a job, not a joy ride. A spouse does not always arouse feelings of affection. At times, quite the opposite is true. But when the commitment is made, it must be honored. If a young woman looks to her husband to provide all her happiness, she needs to rethink making that leap. A person fills emotionally from the inside out, not from the outside in. Edna learned at a very young age that hard work, loving deeds, pursuit of knowledge, change and growth, and an abiding faith in God's goodness, made her a complete person. Her belief in herself as a woman was steadfast. She was her husband's right arm throughout their years together. She did not measure the "fairness" of the distribution of responsibility; she just did what was necessary to keep the marriage strong.

It was not an easy road. At the age of 41, she had a fourth daughter. They joked about having children in school for 47 years. They carried the joys and sorrows of thousands of parishioners who looked to them for support. Her strength helped her husband to deal with the transgressions, illnesses and deaths of the people they so dearly loved. She gave him willingly over to his flock, often dealing with the pressing problems of family without his presence. He was a stern taskmaster, and she was his mediator.

The Last Few Years

The last few years have been hard. He tenderly nursed her back to health after a serious bout with cancer. She cared for him through open-heart surgery and a series of strokes that left him disabled. When he began to develop dementia, she often went for days without sleeping as she watched over him. Finally, he suffered a stroke so debilitating the decision to care for him was taken from her hands and he was sent to a nursing home. There, she tends him as if she were his new bride, fluttering about to assure every comfort. She feeds him and decorates his room with pictures colored for him by his many grandchildren. She bathes him in love and worries daily if this might be the last day she will have with him. He is her last link to her girlhood. They shared their whole lives together. Though she knows the release of pain awaiting him, her heart longs to keep him near. Watching them together brings a tightness to the chest; all the years slip away as you watch them gaze at each other. Life seems very fragile. [See photo above.]



In an age where brides become weary of their husbands so quickly, there is much to be learned from Edna. The age-old saying that adversity builds character is true. Nothing worthwhile ever comes easily, and putting another's needs above your own is a daily struggle. It is natural for love in a relationship to fade as the plants do in winter, but if you can weather the seasons, it will bloom again with a little nurturing. Remember what you loved in your husband the day you pledged your lives together, and keep it holy. Do not look to him to provide your contentment; fill yourself. When your paths begin to separate, as they always will, work hard to bring them back together. This is especially important when you have the blessing of children. Your life is no longer yours; no stone can remain unturned in keeping your marriage whole.

My sister once told me that when she was going through a particularly difficult time in her marriage, she went for a drive and stopped to think near a beautiful lake. As she pondered her life, she noticed a small fishing boat floating in the sunset. On board, in perfect unison, were three men casting their lines. First was a young boy, next, his father, and third, the grandfather. As they quietly fished, they had no knowledge of how they impacted their silent audience. She realized the most important thing in her life was reaching that moment, and she wanted her husband to be that grandfather.

Thank you, Edna Meade Thomas and Howard Edward Shaffer, for staying the course. Your perseverance, love and faith have been an inspiration to me, to say nothing of the many other people you have touched in your lives. As I celebrate my 38th wedding anniversary, I know my husband and I will be someday facing our last days together. I hope we have the grace and devotion you have so aptly taught. You are the best parents a woman could have been blessed with.

[Vicki would like to clarify two issues about this article: My mother, Edna Shaffer, would be the last person to ever recommend that people marry at such a young age, especially against the objections of their parents. During the time of WWII, however, the situation in the country was much different. Their generation had a maturity honed by the hard times of the depression. The emotional conflict of being young adults at wartime was very influential in their decisions due to the uncertainty of the future. Edna and Howard both give praise to God for sustaining them during times of difficulty over the years of their marriage.]

THE BUS (A Modern-day Parable)

Sally Specht

The bus was small, but there was lots of room on it and the driver seemed so nice. The sign on the front said, “The Promised Land.” Several of us got on. We found the other passengers to be very congenial. The road was a little rough, but the scenery was beautiful. We were happy and began singing together; we even prayed together. As time went on, we stopped for others along the way. Soon we became a bit crowded. We needed a bigger bus. Maybe we needed two busses. We voted to get a bigger bus.

**The sign on the front said,
“The Promised Land.”**

The road seems to be smoothing out a bit. We continue to pick up people on the way. We try to sing together, but some do not like the songs; they brought their own songs. So we sing with them—the words are nice... This bus is now becoming a bit crowded, too. What we need is a big touring bus. It would also be more comfortable. The seats are softer and you can recline in them, you know; you can rest a little. We vote to get a bigger bus.

Wow! This is really a neat bus. It even has carpet! The acoustics are good, too, for our music. Oh yes, we have very nice music now; a lot of people have brought their musical instruments. It really sounds nice, even though sometimes it’s hard to hear the words. We also have TVs and VCRs. We can now watch movies. But it’s okay, because they are Disney movies. We were getting a little tired of having only the old destination map to read. This is entertaining!

Is this bus getting crowded again? No, not really, but it seems the

people are jostling one another more. Something has happened to the unity. There seems to be dissent among us. We all thought we were going one way, but some seem to think we are going wrong. I’m sure our driver knows where we are going. We should just trust him. This road is really quite smooth, and it’s getting wider. It looks like there are four lanes. I’ve been noticing there are other busses going on this road, too. Once in awhile one passes us. It looks like there are some nice big busses like ours.

I can’t believe it, but the people on our bus are divided. In fact, they are sitting in several groups in the different sections of the bus. Sometimes they look back at us and frown. Then we begin to look at others and frown. But we really are happy, because there is much laughter and joking on our bus. There are still a few who say we are on the wrong road. They must learn to trust the driver.

The road is really heavy with bus traffic lately. I never saw so many beautiful busses. The people on the busses are having such a good time, too. Lots of laughing and joking. We wave at them and they wave back. We are smiling at each other. But we no longer smile at everyone on our bus. We have discovered some fanatics on our bus.

It’s so nice now to have this new road, and it’s smoother than ever. It is very wide; it must have ten or twelve lanes. It has relieved some of the bus traffic, but there just seem to be more and more busses all the time. The drivers are talking to each other on CBs now. They are all talking about unity. I think they all want us to meet together sometime. Much of the music coming from the other busses is really loud and it’s giving some of us

a headache. Some of the people on the other busses are dressing very strange, too, and wearing their hair weird. But we shouldn’t judge them.

There is to be a meeting today. The expense of running this bus has become very great and some are not doing their fair share. There are a few people who think they are paying all the expenses, and others are not helping at all. Others are continuing to say we are going the wrong way. The road they read about was not this wide or smooth. Some aren’t sure of the destination anymore; they just like to go along for the ride. The road map is not the same; the other one was old and ragged, some say, so they got a new, revised one. The problem is that some of the turns seem to be different, or changed. Some feel it is leading us in the wrong direction.

I’m really getting nervous. Some of these other bus drivers are a bit too friendly. They want to drag with our bus driver. He seems to think this is a good idea. But these busses were not made for dragging. It costs so much for gas these days, wouldn’t it be a waste

The road map is not the same; the other one was old and ragged, some say, so they got a new, revised one.

of money? No one seems to care about wasting money, even though there seems to be less coming in.

Our driver has stopped reading the map. I think that since it has replaced the old one, he is getting confused. He says he will just follow along with the other busses. “We are all going to the same place anyway,”

he says. Some of us don't think he should do that. We had a special destination, and it seems we are not get-

Our driver has stopped reading the map.

ting there. Actually, it seems we should have been there before this! Some of the people on the bus are really getting irritated with us. They seem to think we are annoying because we keep harping on the old map and the destination.

It's getting uncomfortable on this bus now, even with all the amenities. Our people are beginning to look just like the people on the other busses. They are also borrowing their CDs and the music is so loud. They are laughing and joking a lot more. Are they no longer serious about where we are going? I feel sometimes like I want to get off this bus.

Someone has a pair of binoculars. He can see way up ahead. I wish I could borrow them. He has a worried look on his face. I heard some-



one tell him not to worry; it's just a mirage. He said something like, "I saw a sign that said Egypt." Could we be that far off? I thought we were headed for the Promised Land.

I finally asked him if I could see through his binoculars. He let me and, wow, I can see way up there. I do see a sign that says "Egypt." But that's not all. I see a road that leads to nowhere. This very wide road full of busses is going nowhere. In fact, the road ends at a precipice. We are all going to go over!!

These busses are going so fast. Don't they know there is a precipice up there? Some try to tell the drivers but they say they know what they are doing. They have the CBs on most of the time now. I can't believe it; I just saw someone jumping off that bus! They are going to be killed with all this heavy bus traffic! Others must have jumped off too. As I look back, I can see them walking back the other way. But the road they are walking on is not this big highway; it is a very

He said something like, "I saw a sign that said Egypt." Could we be that far off?

narrow road. It looks rocky and steep, too. I wonder if they know what they are doing. Where are they going?

I haven't seen the face of our bus driver for a long time. He just keeps talking to us over the PA system. There seems to be unrest among us and he is trying to quiet our fears. He assures us he knows where we are going and he will get us there. I am looking into the rear-view mirror to see if I can see his face. Oh, there it is. Oh, no! He has the face

of a demon. How did I get on this bus? I must get off..... I must get off..... **I must get off!!!**



[Sally lives with her husband, Wally, in Angwin, California. They are retired and have three grown children and six grandchildren. Sally's concern, when she wrote this parable, was that we as Christians are too prone to follow the crowd rather than study the road map for ourselves to make sure we are heading in the right direction. She prays every day that she and her family and friends will be together in the Promised Land.]

(Continued from page 5)

not guide others or ourselves by our personal ideas, but rather only take or give counsel from the Word!) But when we look to God we see something different indeed; He IS perfect. He DOES know what is right all the time and He *does* what is right all the time. You know, it is easier for us to comprehend His almighty power than it is for us fallen beings to comprehend His almighty right-ness.

So God tells us: "That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days:" (Deuteronomy 30:20)

"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul." (Deuteronomy 10:12)

"In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it." (Deuteronomy 30:16)

Do you see the pattern?

Obey God = LIFE! Turn away from obeying God = DEATH.

Now do you understand why God is jealous and at the same time a God of love?

Next time: Back to the two trees.



[This article was written by the editor of the Beside Still Waters website: <http://www.temcat.com>. She states: "No one will be helped by knowing who I am but they can be blessed by browsing the website. The old Irish missionaries used to tell people who asked them who they were that, 'It matters not who we are but it matters who we serve.'"]

The Church Walkin

The Church and the World walked far apart
On the changing shore of time—
The World was singing a giddy song,
And the Church a hymn sublime.
“Come, give me your hand,” said the merry World,
And walk with me, this way!”
But the good Church hid her snowy hands
And solemnly answered, “Nay.
I will not give you my hand,” she said,
And I will not walk with you;
Your way is the way of eternal death;
And your words are all untrue.”

“Nay, walk with me but a little space,”
Said the World with a kindly air;
“The road I walk is a pleasant road,
And the sun shines always there;
Your path is narrow and thorny and rough,
While mine is flowery and smooth;
Your lot is sad with, reproach and toil,
While in rounds of joy I move.
The sky to me is always blue,
No want, no toil I know;
The sky above you is always dark,
Your lot is a lot of woe.
My way, you can see, is a broad fair one,
And my gate is high and wide;
There is room enough for you and for me,
And we’ll travel side by side.”

Half shyly the Church approached the World
And gave him her hand of snow;
And the old World grasped it and walked along,
And whispered in accents low,
“Your dress is too simple to please my taste;
I have gold and pearls to wear,
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form,
And diamonds to deck your hair.”
The Church looked down at her plain white robes,
And then at the dazzling World,
And blushed as she saw his handsome lip
With a smile contemptuous curled.
“I will change my dress for a costlier one,”
Said the Church with a smile of grace;
Then her pure white garments drifted away,
And the World gave in their place,

Beautiful satins, and fashionable silks,
And roses and gems and pearls;
While over her forehead her bright hair fell
Crisped in a thousand curls.

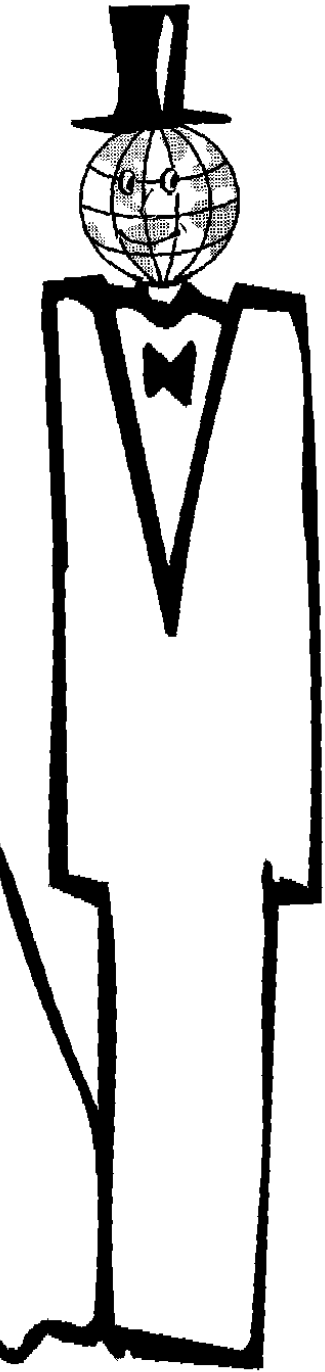
“Your house is too plain,”
Said the proud old World,
“I will build you one like mine;
With walls of marble and towers of gold,
And furniture ever so fine.”
He built her a costly and beautiful house;
Most splendid it was to behold;
Her sons and her beautiful daughters dwelt there
Gleaming in purple and gold;
Rich fairs and shows in the halls were held,
And the World and his children were there,
Laughter and music and feasting were heard
In the place that was meant for prayer.
There were cushioned seats for the rich and gay,
To sit in their pomp and pride;
But the poor who were clad in shabby array,
Sat meekly down outside.

“Your preachers are all too old and plain,”
Said the gay World with a sneer.
“They frighten my children with dreadful tales,
Which I like not for them to hear.
They warn of judgments, and fire and pain,
Of doom of the darkest night,
And speak of a place that should not be
Mentioned to ears polite.
I will send you some of a better stamp;
More brilliant and gay and fast,
Who will show how men may live as they list,
And then get to heaven at last.
The Father is merciful, great, and good,
Tender, loving and kind,
Do you think He would take one child to heaven
And leave another behind?”
So she sent for pleasing and gay divines,
Deemed gifted and great and learned,
And the plain old men who had preached the cross
Were out of her pulpits turned.



*A 'siren' is a mythological creature used to bewitch sailors and cause them to crash.

ing With the World



biological woman that
sings with her voice and
sings on the rocks.

Then Mammon came in supporting the Church,
And rented a prominent pew;
And preaching and singing and floral display
Proclaimed a gospel new.
Then fair and festival, frolics untold
Were held in the place of prayer,
And maidens, bewitching as sirens* of old,
With worldly graces rare,
Thought up the very cunningest tricks,
Untrammelled by gospel or laws,
To beguile, and amuse, and win from the World
Some help for the righteous cause.

The angel of mercy flew over the Church,
And whispered, "I know thy sin!"
Then the Church looked sad and earnestly longed
To gather her children in.
But some were out at the midnight ball,
And some were at the play
And some were drinking in gay saloons,
So she quietly turned away.
Then said the World in soothing tones,
"Your children mean no harm,
Merely indulging in innocent sports."
So she leaned on his proffered arm,
And smiled, and chatted, and gathered flowers,
And walked along with the World.
While countless millions of precious souls
O'er the fearful brink were hurled.

"You give too much to the poor," said the World,
"Far more than you ought to do.
Though the poor need shelter, food, and clothes,
Why should that trouble you?
And afar to the heathen in foreign lands
Your thoughts need never roam—
The Father of mercies will care for them.
Let charity stay at home.
Go, take your money and buy rich robes,
And horses and carriages fine;
Roses, and jewels, and dainty food,
And rarest and costliest wine;
My children just dote on all these things,
And if you their love would win,
You must do as they do, and walk in the way
That they are walking in."

So the Church drew tightly the strings of her purse,
And gracefully lowered her head,
And simpered, "I've given too much away,
"I will do, Sir, as you have said."
So the poor were turned from her door in scorn;
She heard not the orphan's cry;
She drew her beautiful robes aside
As the widows went weeping by.
Her missions treasuries beggarly pled,
And Jesus' commands were vain,
As half the millions for whom He died
Had never heard of His name.

Then they of the Church and they of the World
Walked onward hand and heart,
And only the Master, who knoweth all,
Could tell the two apart.
Then the Church sat down at her ease, and said,
"I am rich and in goods increased;
I have need of nothing and naught to do
But to laugh and dance and feast."
The sly World heard it and laughed in his sleeve,
And mockingly said, aside—
"The Church has fallen, the beautiful Church;
And her shame is her boast and her pride."

The angel drew near to the mercy seat,
And whispered in sighs her name;
Then the loud anthems of rapture were hushed,
And heads were covered with shame;
And a voice was heard at last by the Church,
From Him who sat on the throne,
"I know thy works, and how thou hast said
'I am rich' but thou hast not known
That thou art poor and naked and blind,
With pride and with ruin enthralled.
The intended bride of a heavenly groom
Is companion of the World.
Go, humble thy heart and confess thy sin,
Let shame now cover thy face,
Or else—alas—I must cast thee out,
And blot thy name from its place."

✧

Matilda C. Edwards

[This poem was written many years ago but the truth of its message seems even more applicable today.
Editor]

Discovering God

Part II

Pat Kroeger

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20) This text seems to have become my second motto (the first being John 3:16); the more I learn about creation the more is revealed to me the truth of it.

Since nearly being ambushed by an atheist, I have been on a spiritual quest to discover as much of the creative evidence for God’s existence as I can. I have also become more keenly aware of how extensive the anti-Creator/creation campaign is that the devil is waging over the masses via the scientific community. For my part, I don’t ever want to be guilty again of wasting opportunities to learn more about my Maker. God has woven within the very fabric of creation ample evidence of His existence, and has given each of us eyes with which to see. Still, probably the best evidence to date nearly slipped right through my hands.

My mother had two *Reader’s Digests* that were sent to her as a promotional incentive. Since my husband is an avid reader, she let me have one. The cover of the December 2001 issue caught my attention: “The Science of God, A Stunning New View.” My first

God has woven within the very fabric of creation ample evidence of His existence...

impression was that this was the usual anti-God, anti-Christ dogma. However, a fleeting thought came to mind that that was not necessarily so. But before I could decide one way or the other my husband took it off somewhere and

lost track of it. I never got a chance to check it out and it was soon forgotten.

About this same time I received in the mail an offer to subscribe to the *Reader’s Digest*. The price was exceptional so I signed up, assuming the subscription would start at the beginning of the new year. However, when the first copy arrived in January, it was the November 2001 issue. My husband was rather disappointed since he had just read it. So was I. It was like buying last month’s newspaper—a little out of date.

About a week later another issue arrived. It was the December 2001 issue. At first I brushed it aside, remembering that my husband wouldn’t be interested in re-reading it so soon. I had forgotten about the article, but God had not. Somehow it kept showing up in my way, on this counter, on that table... Eventually, I noticed the cover and remembered that I had wanted to read it. I set it where I could be reminded when I had more time, but still didn’t read it for several more days. Finally, I found a few minutes of time and grabbed the book. I quickly started scanning the contents to determine if it was something worth spending my precious moments with. I soon ran back to get a marker to highlight important points.

It turned out to be a fascinating article documenting research done by Andrew Newberg, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, in a developing area of science called neurotheology. Neurotheology studies the theory that there is a connection between the physical brain and the spirituality of man. As it turns out, there seems to be a biological basis for religion: man’s thirst for the Divine is neurologically “hard-wired” into the brain.

What a pleasant surprise! It seems this wasn’t going to be the usual God-bashing rhetoric after all. As I continued reading, a text kept playing

in my mind. “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt [divided] to every man the measure of faith.” (Romans 12:3) The Greek word for faith includes “the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ.”¹ Everybody has at least some faith. Mmmm. Could it be...? I had to learn more.

Sometime during the 1970s the late Eugene d’Aquili first began research on how brain functions generate a wide

Mmmm. Could it be...? I had to learn more.

variety of spiritual experiences for believers. During the 1990s Newberg joined forces with d’Aquili, working with a type of imaging called a SPECT. The SPECT uses technology to photograph the neural activity in the brain. Their study led them to the left parietal lobe, an area “responsible for drawing the line between the physical self and the rest of existence, a task that requires a constant stream of neural information flowing in from the senses.”² The scan was taken on believers while in deep spiritual meditation and prayer. The results show that “...at peak moments of prayer and meditation, the flow was dramatically reduced. As the orientation area was deprived of information needed to draw the line between the self and the world—the scientists believed—the subject would experience a sense of a limitless awareness melting into infinite space.”³

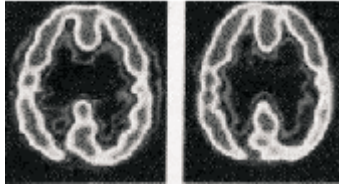
In essence, as I see it, that “sense of a limitless awareness melting into infinite space” could be translated into “becoming one with the infinite God.”

Newburg believes these experiences can range in degrees, from the milder state produced by a sense of unity felt during a religious service, to an almost “total blackout”—what I personally think of as a “mountain-top” experience with God. And now it’s in living color. (Imagine what that scan might have looked like at a time when man had perfect communion with his God.)

“That’s why religion thrives in an age of reason... You can’t simply *think* God out of existence... because religious feelings rise more from *experience* than from thought. They are born in a moment of spiritual connection, as real to the brain as any perception of ‘ordinary’ physical reality.”⁴ (Emphasis original)

So, what’s the bottom line to this? I think the author summed it up nicely by asking the obvious. “Does this mean that God is just a perception generated by the brain, or has the brain been wired to experience the reality of God?” “The best and most rational answer [Newberg] can give to both ques-

Enlightened Images



The picture of the brain at left was taken while the subject was in a normal waking state. It shows a relatively equal amount of activity in all parts of the brain in the scan, indicated by the “red” [darker] areas.

The image at right was taken while the subject was engaged in deep meditation. The scan shows a decrease in activity in one parietal lobe (indicated by markedly more “yellow” [lighter] in the lower right), suggesting a blurring of the line that defines the self, and a moment of intense spirituality.

tions... is yes.” In my own words, not only do we experience God in the intangible spirit of our minds, but physically in the brain, wired by the Creator to facilitate the reality of His presence. Hence, a measure of faith “dealt to every man.” It’s becoming increasingly apparent how everyone will be left “without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)

How absolutely incredible, that our Maker has endowed everyone with the basic measures of faith, then allows each individual the freedom to decide whether he will act on that faith or deny it.

As the import of this information started sinking in, it did not escape me how close I was to losing yet another opportunity, an extraordinary opportunity to delve deeper into the wonders of creation and the Creator. It filled me with a great sense of gratitude to God for being so patient and so persistent with me when I am so consistently clueless. I can only imagine what He has in store for me next.



[Pat writes from her home in Louisville, Kentucky, where she is continuing her quest to discover God.]

¹ All definitions taken from the *Online Bible*, Millennium Edition.

² *Reader’s Digest*, Dec. 2001, The Science of God, p. 142.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 142-143

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143



OUR MOTHER

Our mother is so precious, so patient, kind and true;
We know that when you meet her, you’ll love her dearly too.
Her hair is soft and silvery, eyes a heavenly hue,
Her smile is like the rosebud, when bright with morning dew.

We thank our heavenly Father for her whom He did give
For hands of love that labored and taught us how to live.
Yes, many years she labored to make our childhood bright
And, now, though we are older, she’s still our guiding light.

She loves our blessed Saviour, and follows Him each day
And prays that we her children will walk the narrow way.
When Jesus comes in glory, to take His saints above
May we all, our dear ones, be there with her we love.

Vera L. Hocking

Compassion and love, that is our mother,
A heart tender and true, there is no other
Hands wrinkled with age have cared for us
Through the countless days.
Tears long dried and pain we have caused
Show not in her gentle ways.
When life deals blows as it always does,
She goes on as if nothing has caused a buzz.

Health claims its pay for life,
Lived through long years and filled with strife.
Memories are like pages of a book;
Each chapter holds a brand new look
Of children, hearts healed, hurts fixed.
Our emotions, as we read, are mixed.
Our mother, what a witness of love,
She was never too busy to take time
To mend the wing of a dove.
The scars, the wounds, the tears all dried;
She did it all, and we can’t just say, she tried.

Alice Fredrick

Spotlight on Orphans

One Child at a Time

Vicki Kritzell

With the coming of May, we have been involved in the OBREC Orphanage project for six months. What a difference the generosity of you, our donors and sponsors, has made in life for these children. When we began this journey to help these children so far away in Kenya, we had no idea of how many hearts would be opened to their plight. Initially, we sought to provide assistance to relieve the immediate needs of starving children. Now, due to the loving response you have all made, we are beginning to make plans for the future. We know that with your support, we are able to make a long-term commitment to Brother Lawrence in helping achieve his vision. In April, we were able to send \$1130. Much of this is sponsorship dollars. The rest are love gifts.

This is a very generous amount of money and Lawrence and his progeny, with much gratitude, accept it. The unfortunate truth is, however, we are falling far short of the budget Lawrence shared with us before he left here. We would like for you to see with what little in US dollars he is able to maintain, educate and house these children. We think it will interest and astound you to see how far your money is being stretched. Remember, this is an orphanage with 126 family members, plus staff.

As you can clearly see from the tables at right and on the following page, we still have a long ways to go in meeting even the most meager monthly amount. Of course, the most urgent needs are met for the children before anyone gets paid their stipend, so many of these staff members are working as a labor of love. It is amazing to contrast the difference in wages between the United States and Kenya. The total wages for a staff of 22 dedicated members is less than one person can make at a \$6.00 per hour rate in our country. We are blessed to live in this land of opportunity, and blessed that God opened the door for us to share with these who are struggling to survive.

In the next issue, we will present the projected costs for a new dormitory and other needed improvements. We are also keeping in mind the need for a shipping container filled with essentials, plus supplies and equipment to open a printshop at the school, but we can only move as God opens the way.

We would like to introduce you to two more of our children who are praying to be sponsored. The first is Jane Atieno, a 16-year-old girl whose parents met tragic deaths. She stayed for a time with an uncle, but he was unable to provide for her. After two months in the streets, Jane found her way to OBREC. She is a bright girl who

DESIGNATION (ORPHANAGE)	HONORARY PER MONTH	HONORARY PER YEAR
Manager	7,000.00	84,000.00
Matron	5,000.00	60,000.00
Secretary	4,000.00	48,000.00
Head Cook	2,000.00	24,000.00
Cook 1	1,500.00	18,000.00
Cook 2	1,500.00	18,000.00
Head of Security	2,000.00	24,000.00
Security Guard 1	1,500.00	18,000.00
Security Guard 2	1,500.00	18,000.00
Laundry	1,500.00	18,000.00
TOTAL HONORARY	27,500.00 KSHS 362.00 US \$	333,300.00 KSHS 434.00 US \$
(ACADEMY)		
Headmaster	5,500.00	66,000.00
Deputy Matron	4,500.00	54,000.00
Senior Teacher	4,500.00	48,000.00
Trained Primary level Teachers (three)	3,500.00 (each)	42,000.00 (each)
Untrained Teachers (three)	3,000.00 (each)	36,000.00 (each)
TOTAL HONORARY	33,500.00 KSHS 441.00 US \$	402,000.00 KSHS 5,292.00 US \$
(NURSERY)		
Head teacher	2,600.00	31,200.00
Trained teacher	2,000.00	24,000.00
Untrained teacher	1,600.00	15,200.00
TOTAL HONORARY	6,200.00 KSHS 82.00 US \$	74,400.00 KSHS 984.00 US \$
ANNUAL STAFF WAGES (TOTAL)	67,200.00 KSHS 885.00 US \$	806,000.00 KSHS 10,620.00 US \$
	MONTHLY	YEARLY
TOTAL BUDGET (See list next pg.)	123,650.00 KSHS 1,605.50 US \$	1,483,800.00 KSHS 8,656.62 US \$

would like to continue her education past primary school. She is currently working in the headmaster's office and is very enthusiastic about her future. The love and support of a family in America could help make her future secure.

The second is a boy, Noah Omondi. Noah's life in the streets of Homa Bay was terrible. After his parents died, he was forced to steal to eat, and slept in the streets. The police chief brought him to OBREC after he had been badly beaten. There, he has a new lease on life. He is surrounded by other children who have experienced great loss, and is loved by Lawrence's family and staff. Noah is attending classes and his future could be bright. There is now hope where once was only despair.



The cost of sponsorship is \$30.00 per month, but \$20.00 will help with the basic necessities. We still have dozens of children to sponsor in all age groups. We are trying to relieve the burdens of some of the older children first, as they need to proceed with their educations as soon as possible. The money is sent in one sum on the fifth of each month. If you cannot afford to make a long-term commitment of sponsorship, a one-time donation would be so appreciated.

God bless you in your continued prayers and support for these children. We will continue to work for their futures together. Lawrence has assured us he will pray over the use of each dollar so that it might be multiplied as the fishes and loaves were in the hands of the Master.

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[Vicki writes from Clyde, Ohio, a small agricultural town near Lake Erie. She relates that at this beautiful time of year

ITEMS	QUANTITY	COST PER UNIT	TOTAL COST
Bags of Maize	15	900.00	13,500.00
Bags of Beans	4	1,500.00	4,500.00
Bags of Rice	4	1,500.00	4,500.00
Bags of Sugar	1	3,500.00	3,500.00
Bags of Potatoes	5	1,200.00	6,000.00
Cooking Oil	2	1,500.00	3,000.00
Vegetables	20	300.00	6,000.00
Salt	3	350.00	1,050.00
Fish	4	1,000.00	4,000.00
Tomatoes	4	200.00	800.00
Onions	4	200.00	800.00
Firewood	100	50.00	5,000.00
Boxes of bathing soap	5	300.00	1,500.00
Boxes of washing soap	5	300.00	1,500.00
Vaseline body lotion	5	200.00	800.00
		TOTAL KSHS	56,450.00
TOTAL MONTHLY		TOTAL US \$	720.50

the rolling farmlands and blossoming fruit trees surrounding Clyde are splashed in such lush colors, it's as if God has created a magnificent painting for all to savor. She is happy to be working on the Orphanage project as a way to give back some of the blessings bestowed on her family.]

Beauty Has No Color

My Mama's name is Daisy
The same as mine.
People stare at us sometime
When they see us together.

Even words smile when Mama speaks them
The words that come from her lips make me feel good.
She uplifts me when I'm in a down mood.
I love to be with her.

When I call her Mama
People stare.



Why should they care
That Mama's black and I am white?

Mama Daisy didn't give me birth.
But if she had
I would be glad
Because she is so special.

She will always be my Mama
So look at us and know
Before you turn and go
That beauty has no color.

Daisy Albertson

[© 1987 by Daisy Albertson. Used with permission of the author.]

(Continued from page 1)

Feeling that not even God wanted me, and that I would continue living this sour life forever, I again ran away. I ended up in a park in a town called Chaclacayo, in Lima, Peru. In front of this park was a beautiful, beautiful house that arrested my attention, it seemed to call me, almost like it wanted to speak with me. I stared at it for a long time, and then left. Often I would return, always sitting right in the street, watching for hours the architectural beauty of that house, and loving it in my mind. I asked God—that God whom I did not know, but whom I knew was there—I asked Him if I could have a house like that. Many times I assured myself, “Some-day this will be my house.” I knew God would give me that house, or at least one like it.

About two years later, I saw an enormous pickup truck parked in front of that house. The truck was green, a bright, dark green with a white camper and big tires that reminded me of airplane tires. The green was like a mirror reflecting the light, and I could see the images from things or cars that went by next to it. The reflections drew me towards the truck and I crossed the street

I asked God—that God whom I did not know, but whom I knew was there—I asked Him if I could have a house like that.

and walked around the truck, touching and fondling it. I wondered who the owner of the truck was, and if he also owned the house. I waited around

hoping he might come out, and even began asking God to make this guy come out so I could meet him personally. I almost went and knocked on the door, but I heard a voice impressing me that the time was not yet.

After that I didn't see the house as often. Once in a great while, I would pass by it, and could not help but glance up to see if the truck might be there, but it never was. Six years went by and the house was painted many different colors. In spite of all the changes through the years, I continued to feel inside myself that the house was mine.

When I was twenty-one a lady showed me that a way existed to get close to God. That way was through God's Son, Jesus Christ. She told me that He was God's begotten Son, and that God gave His Son as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. She told me how much love the Father had to have for us in order to be willing

to give up His Son, and that because of this I could become a new creature in Him.

What did I have to lose? I had already lost everything because of my disobedience and ignorance. I had always known God was there, but now it was different; now I knew how to talk to Him. I lifted up my voice in prayer and said, “Lord, if you want me to be lonely, and without a husband, make me strong and give me the strength to accept it. You know the desires of my heart. I don't want to sin anymore. I want a home, a family, a man to love and respect me. Someone who will appreciate me for who I am. Amen.”

When I was twenty-one a lady showed me that a way existed to get close to God.

One year later, after much seeking, I accepted Christ as my Saviour and Lord. From that day forward my life changed. It was now a peaceful life, full of miracles. I saw the powerful hand of God in my life, and I saw the miracle of love in His only begotten Son. At the beginning of my new life in Christ, I requested of God that the first man who gave me a Bible for a gift would be the man I should marry.

I visited many congregations, and went to many places seeking the Word of God. After two years of seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness, I was invited to hear a preacher who was visiting from the United States. I had worshipped several times with this small congregation—the meeting place was only three blocks away from the house of my dreams at Central Park. The meeting was on Friday night, but I decided to go visit them on Wednesday to find out everything I could about the meetings.

As I was visiting with the brethren, this new brother from the United States arrived on a bicycle, bringing a bag of bread. I glanced at him, but did not pay much attention to him at the time. Then he pulled from his sack a little doll, which turned around, spinning like a butterfly, her arms outstretched. It reminded me of the way I used to dance through the trees as a teenager. I was impressed when he gave the doll to a little girl as a gift. I asked myself, “Who is this man, so sweet and kind, with the appearance of a husky timberman?” I was very much captivated by his kindness and the way he talked about God. It was like he knew Him very much and that he had a true intimacy with God and Jesus Christ. He

spoke to me with so much assurance and love about the way of salvation.

I went back to the house every day for the rest of the week. When he preached on Friday night he presented so many truths that I had never heard before. One day I stopped by the house and found him on his knees singing a song in Hebrew. His voice was so captivating, and I knew it was something I would remember even after he had gone back to the United States.

Suddenly, I had this feeling, this desire to hug this brother. I asked God, "What, what's happening to me?" I felt like hugging him with a kind of love that I knew came from above, and I asked God for help.

I had a dream about this brother; we were in a house full of flowers. It was the house of my dreams. I knew in my heart that now was not the right time to talk about, or do anything about my feelings. I began to meditate as the Word of God says to do. I prayed for confirmation that this was right. Then the most exciting thing happened; a miracle of God. This brother approached me and gave me a Bible, with a dedication in it for me. Inside my heart I cried out my thanks to God for this sign, but I did not show my emotions.

Almost a week had gone by when I heard we were both going to a wedding celebration in the congregation. He looked so handsome, so good-looking, in his black suit. After the ceremony I was in charge of the wedding banquet. When he walked into the kitchen I could not hold it in anymore. I walked toward him and put my arms around him. I was able to embrace him and

I had a dream about this brother; we were in a house full of flowers. It was the house of my dreams.

let the love that came from heaven be released from inside my heart. He hugged me back and kissed my forehead, and the praise and

thanks from my heart ascended into the presence of my Heavenly Father and to my King and Saviour.

I was amazed when he later approached me with a written declaration of love, containing the most poetical verses from the Bible, and asked me to be his girlfriend. He invited me out for a walk, and we began walking toward the park, the very park where I used to sit and stare at the house. As we were sitting on a park bench facing the house, I opened my mouth, about to tell him the story, when he, staring at the same house told me, "You see that house?" I answered back, astonished. "What

about it?" I almost fainted when he said, "That house is my dad's house. It has been rented for the last several years. I want you to go and pray for that house. Put your hands on it and claim that house, because I want to marry you and live in that house." Woouuuuhhh!!!!

We were married a week later. Brother Aland R. Ashton, who is my husband, left three days later for the United States,

During those three months I went and prayed in front of that house. I put my hands on it and I claimed it.

and did not return for three months. During those three months I went and prayed in front of that house. I put my hands on it and I claimed it. God was there for me all the time. I live in that house now, for the glory of God. When I told my husband the story, he was amazed by the power of God. The green pickup truck was his. He had been going through a lot of burdens at that time. He had been living in Peru then, and was also seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Aland tells me he never came out of the house that day because it is written, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Aland accepted the Lord as his Saviour and came to Him, as it says in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Then again it says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7:7)

Aland's father has willed the house to Aland and me, with the promise that after he sleeps in the Lord Jesus Christ that house will be ours. Please pray for Brother Aland's dad. He is also seeking for the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

And for you, my sisters who may be going through difficult times, remember the words of Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in my God, I will surely defend my ways to his face, indeed this will turn out for my salvation, for no Godless man would dare come before him." (Job 13: 15, 16)



[Karina Vargas de Ashton writes from her home in Lima, Peru. She and her husband, Aland, work diligently to spread the message of God's love to people near and far. Recently, they have been busy replacing the roof on Karina's dream house and repairing other damage caused by a flood that hit their area in February. (See Prayer Call, page 3)]

Water vs Coke

WATER

We all know that water is important, but I've never seen it written down like this before.

1. 75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated.



2. In 37% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is so weak that it is often mistaken for hunger.

3. Even MILD dehydration will slow down one's metabolism as much as 3 %.

4. One glass of water shut down midnight

hunger pangs for almost 100% of the dieters studied in a University of Washington study.

5. Lack of water is the number one trigger of daytime fatigue.

6. Preliminary research indicates that 8-10 glasses of water a day could significantly ease back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers.

7. A mere 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on the computer screen or on a printed page.

8. Drinking just 5 glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, plus it can slash the risk of breast cancer by 79 %, and one is 50% less likely to develop bladder cancer. Are you drinking the amount of water you should every day?

COKE

1. In many states (in the USA) the highway patrol carries two gallons of Coke in the truck to remove blood from the highway after a car accident.

2. You can put a T-bone steak in a bowl of Coke and it will be gone in two days.

3. To clean a toilet: Pour a can of Coca-Cola into the toilet bowl and let the "real thing" sit for

one hour, then flush clean. The citric acid in Coke removes stains from vitreous china.

4. To remove rust spots from chrome car bumpers: Rub the bumper with a crumpled piece of aluminum foil dipped in Coca-Cola.

5. To clean corrosion from car battery terminals: Pour a can of Coca-Cola over the terminals.

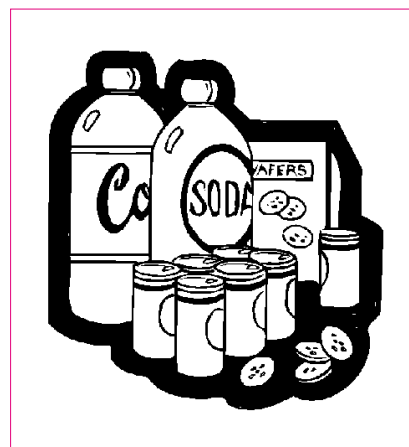
6. To loosen a rusted bolt: Applying a cloth soaked in Coca-Cola to the rusted bolt for several minutes.

7. To remove grease from clothes: Empty a can of coke into a load of greasy clothes, add detergent, and run through a regular cycle. The Coca-Cola will help loosen grease stains.

8. Coke will also clean road haze from your windshield.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

1. The active ingredient in Coke is phosphoric acid. Its pH is 2.8. It will dissolve a nail in about 4 days. Phosphoric acid also leaches calcium from bones and is a major contributor to the rising increase in osteoporosis.



2. To carry Coca-Cola syrup (the concentrate), the commercial truck must use the hazardous materials placards reserved for highly corrosive materials.

3. The distributors of Coke have been using it to clean the engines of their trucks for about 20 years! Now the question is, would you like a glass of water or a Coke?



[Editor's note: We have not verified the truth of all of these claims, though we can personally vouch for most of what is said here.]

Touch and be Healed

Grace Cox

The story of the woman with the issue of blood who managed to press through the crowd and touch the hem of Jesus' garment is well known and much loved. (Mark 5:25-34) We don't even know her name, yet we marvel at her persistence, at her faith, and at Jesus' instantaneous perception that someone in that eager crowd had touched Him in a different and special way. Perhaps we marvel also that His disciples, who knew Jesus better than did anyone else in the crowd, failed to understand at first. They thought it ludicrous that, in the midst of such a crowd, He would ask, "Who touched me?" Lots of people had touched Him! But not in that different and special way that caused divine healing power to flow out of Him to them.

"As many as touched were made perfectly whole."

The woman with the issue of blood was not the only one healed just by touching the hem of Jesus'

garment. In Matthew 14:35, 36, we read of others: "And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased: And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole."

Imagine that! Not just "whole," but *perfectly* whole! Everyone from miles around who was sick came. But notice, please: it does not say that everyone was healed; but "as many as touched..." Did some come into His presence, yet fail to reach out in faith and touch? The wording implies that, yes, sadly, some did, in fact, fail to touch and be healed.

Every week, multitudes stream into churches all around the world. Why do we come? What are we seeking? Is it out of habit, a sense of duty, of obligation that we come? Is it a sense of acceptance, of belonging, of fellowship that we are seeking? Yes, all that. And more? Yes, much more.

We are seeking for healing, are we not, healing of our sin-sickness. We are told that Jesus is there, so we come. We have heard that if we but touch the hem of His garment, we can be healed. And so we come, but do we touch? Might we be just part of the jostling, curious crowd, eager to be where He is, brushing against Him in our eagerness, touching but not *touching*? Or do we reach out, with persistent, clinging faith, and touch the hem of His garment? Do we really touch His pure, white garment of righteousness, causing Him to perceive that healing virtue has gone out of Him in response to our great need? Do we touch, and in that touching receive His divine healing for our sin-sick souls? "As many as touched were made perfectly whole."

If the sickness of sin could be healed just by touching the "hem of His garment," why would anyone *not* touch and be healed? Good question, is it not? Perhaps there are many reasons—as many reasons as there are sin-sick people in the world.

Perhaps we find ourselves caught up in the throng, and it is overwhelmingly difficult to make our way to where Jesus is, and get close enough to *see* Him, to say nothing of *touch* Him. We have our families, our friends, neighbors, co-workers, even strangers in the marketplace, with whom we must interact and share ourselves on a regular, even daily basis. How do we find Jesus in all the crowd?

But it's not only the crowd of people hedging up our way and making it difficult for us to get close enough to Him to touch the hem of His garment. Perhaps even more difficult is threading our way through the myriad demands on our time and energy that crowd our busy lives. Ask someone, almost anyone, "How are you? What have you been doing lately?" and the answer is: "Oh, just busy, busy!" If we are not careful, we will start to think that all the "busy, busy" is something we are supposed to wear like a badge of honor, evidence that our lives have purpose, meaning; that we are not lazy, that we make our time count, that we are energetic, hard working, even important people.

Remember the persistence of the un-named woman who desired healing. Who knows how busy her life might have been, how many things she might have planned to do that day. But her first priority was to see Jesus, to somehow manage to touch Him. How she must have kept her eyes on Jesus

The Hem of His Garment

**O Lord of Calvary and Bethlehem,
Thou who did'st suffer rather than condemn,
Grant me to touch Thy garment's healing hem!**

**Thou trailest Thy fair robes of seamless light
Through this dark world of misery and night;
Its blackness cannot mar Thy spotless white.**

**Thou dost not, Master, as we pass Thee by,
Draw in Thy robes lest we should come too nigh;
We see no scorn in Thine all-sinless eye.**

**There is no shrinking even from our touch;
Thy tenderness to us is ever such,
It can endure and suffer much.**

Anna Elizabeth Hamilton

as she made her way toward Him! While being jostled this way and that, taller people getting in front of her, stronger people pushing her aside, smaller people blocking her way, she must have fixed her gaze on where He was, ahead of her

“Please, God, don’t let me lose sight of Jesus in this crowd.”

in the crowd, and refused to be turned aside from her goal. She must have been sending up a prayer with every breath, “Please, God, don’t let me lose sight of Jesus in this crowd.” Earnestly, her faith not wavering, she made her way until, finally, she could just touch the hem of His garment. And “straightway... she felt in her body that she was healed...” Imagine the joy that flooded her soul!

In all our busy-ness, do we keep our eyes on Jesus? While managing our jobs, our homes, our endless errands, our appointment schedules, do we remember Him? Do we stay focused on Him in the clutter of junk mail that floods our mailboxes (yes, even our e-mail inboxes), in the ceaseless ringing of the phone, the constant barrage of noise from TV, radio, and CD players?

Even things that are good in themselves—such as the ever-increasing accumulation of religious papers and maga-

zines that arrive almost daily—can keep us preoccupied in a spiritually harmful way. Are we so busy reading what has been filtered through the minds of others that we have no time left for the reading of the Bible itself? We need the pure, unfiltered Word, fed directly to our minds by the Source of all light and truth.

Are we really touching the One who *is* the way, the truth and the life, the One who wants to heal our disease of sin, and make us perfectly whole, ready for translation into His eternal kingdom? Beyond the tumult of the crowd, beyond the busy-ness of our everyday lives, Jesus is waiting, saying, “Come unto me, touch Me, *really* touch Me, and be healed, be made perfectly whole, complete in Me.”

“Come unto me... and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

We need the pure, unfiltered Word, fed directly to our minds by the Source of all light and truth.



[Grace Cox writes from Trenton, Tennessee. She is happy to relate that she enjoys being a full-time homemaker, country living and Bible study.]

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