



Connections

◆ A Journal by & for Women in Ministry ◆

Vol. 21, No. 1

March 2014

Awakened to God's Beauty

By Carmen Fleming

Before taking painting lessons I didn't realize how little attention I paid the beauty and mystery in my surroundings. As I learned techniques in how to use various brushes to get a desired effect on the canvas, how to mix colors and position elements on the canvas to draw the eye, a whole new world opened to me.

I have always had a fascination with colors, but now I have a new interest in the sky, trees and plants, and the ocean and lake waters, as I wonder how to paint them.

I notice the effect light and shadows create on a landscape. I notice how sunlight shines on leaves, bringing out the glossiness in some and the gleam from others. I see how shadow is necessary to show contrast and depth. I realize how negative space enhances the beauty of a composition by highlighting what is most important.



Painting lessons have awakened me to a new way of seeing my familiar surroundings and I began to notice and wonder about the genius of God, the master artist.

In a similar way, spiritual disciplines can awaken us to God and the mystery of his beauty and goodness, but unless we are trained in new ways of sensing and seeing, we miss so much. It's easy to go through a day and not even notice God is speaking through the seemingly monotonous and ordinary.

Jean Pierre de Caussade, an 18th-century spiritual director, said God is active in every moment of our lives. "Everything proclaims him to you, everything reveals him to you, everything brings him to you," yet unless we are intentionally seeking to see and learn, we will hardly notice.

Unless we regularly position ourselves through spiritual disciplines such as Bible study, fasting, prayer, solitude and silence to experience God's transforming love, our experience with him will be more like: He is proclaiming, but I don't hear. He is coming to me, but I don't see

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Awakened

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him. He is by my side, but I am unaware. He is over me, but I feel vulnerable and exposed. He is around me, but I feel alone. He is in me, but I feel empty. God's desire is to be with us anywhere, everywhere and in anything.

A prayer called *Here* is a helpful way to experience an awakening to God's presence. You can say it in any moment of your day to become more aware of him. I adapted it from Brian D. McLaren's book *Naked Spirituality: A Life With God in 12 Simple Words*. It goes like this:

Here I am Lord. Here you are Lord. Here we are together. (It is helpful to say the *here* statements in rhythm with your breathing. Take a deep breath, say the first part, exhale. Breathe in again and say the next part, exhale again. Do the same with the next *here* statement.) Pause.

Who am I, Lord? Who are you, Lord? Who are we together? (After each question, wait and notice any word, thought or image that may come to mind). Pause.

Say open. Imagine yourself opening the deepest part of you to God. Then imagine him opening his arms to you in a warm embrace. Stay awhile in his arms and enjoy his presence.



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

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

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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 Nurturernet 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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• CALIFORNIA •
TAM 2 U

Another Year, Another Word

Last year I shared my one word with you, a word that helped me get through a difficult year. God helped me “breathe” through a couple of family trials, including the death of my younger, only sister.

God is my anchor in life, but my word, *breathe*, felt like the chain that held me to him. I grabbed my word, climbed it to my anchor and held on for dear life.

Each year brings new challenges and blessings and each word brings new insights, blessings and grace. My one word for this year came about from another reading of A.W. Tozer’s book, *The Pursuit of God*. He said we should practice the habit of inwardly gazing upon God.

I have always loved this quotation from Tozer’s book, which to me exemplifies God’s grace in the face of our fickleness and unfaithfulness:

“I would emphasize this one committal, this one great volitional act which establishes the heart’s intention to gaze forever upon Jesus. God takes this intention for our choice

and makes what allowances he must for the thousand distractions which beset us in this evil world. He knows that we have set the direction of our hearts toward Jesus, and we can know it too, and comfort ourselves with the knowledge that a habit of soul is forming which will become after a while a sort of spiritual reflex requiring no more conscious effort on our part.”

It seems everywhere I turned, I came across this concept, from Hebrews 12:2 (We do this [run the race with endurance] by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith [NLT]) to the song *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus* by Helen H. Lemmel. Then I found out NEWIM, an organization I volunteer for, is having a retreat with the theme, “Fix Your Eyes on Jesus.” Of course I plan to attend.

It seemed my word was chosen for me: *gaze*. And then one more “coincidence” cemented it for me. At the first regional conference in Southern California, Gary Deddo provided attendees with a list of scriptures that can help us get to know Jesus on a more intimate level. I was given a concrete starting place for my Savior-gazing. With his permission, I am providing the list on the last two pages of *Connections*.

So as I gaze upon Jesus this year, I hope to learn how to keep my focus on him in the midst of distractions. I hope to get to know him better by looking into the stories of his life and further develop the “habit of soul” of gazing upon him forever.



Tammy

A big thank you to all who sent articles
for this issue.

Please keep them coming!



Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full in his wonderful face!

Thank God It Doesn't Depend on Us!

By Karon Smith

This past December, my son turned 34. How did that happen? Where did the years go? He is now a “grownup,” as he puts it. He seems to be as surprised by this as I am. And last September, he got married. Yeah! Finally!

My son had not dated much and when he casually dropped the bombshell two years ago that he was “headed to his girlfriend’s house for dinner,” I was shocked. “Girlfriend! I didn’t know you had a girlfriend!” Well, he did have a girlfriend and she cooks! We are delighted with this young woman who is now his wife. She adores my son and tells me often what a wonderful partner he is and how lucky she feels to have found him. He is equally effusive about his delight in her.

I have agonized for years over the negative effects my failed marriage and the breakup of our family would have on my children. My heart has broken over and over again as I relived the devastation my son exhibited when he realized his father and I were getting a divorce. I remember telling him, “I’m sorry, son. I can’t fix this.”

Eight years after my divorce, God redeemed my failed marriage by providing me with an amazing partner, a man whom I have been happily married to for more than 20 years. He is a joy to me, and my children have come to love and enjoy him as well. We have a life filled with love, laughter, God and goodness, a real partnership with each other and with God. We’ve had some dark days. Life is not without its challenges. But God has faithfully seen us through them all.

Even so, I was often wracked by guilt and regret about the pain I had inflicted on my children and all the ways I had failed them. How could I ever make it up to them? How could God possibly make things right with them? Would they ever be able to have successful relationships and happy marriages? So I beat myself up, cried a lot and pleaded with God for forgiveness and help.

Why do we torture ourselves? Why do we doubt God when he has proven over and over again his goodness and love? I couldn’t fix things for my son so I thought he was doomed. What crooked thinking Satan can use to ensnare us and rob us of joy!

This scripture has been a lifeline over the years to rescue me from my negative thinking: Philippians 4:6-8: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (NIV).

Now my son is happily married. He and his wife are partnering together and planning for their future. Again God has proven he is the Great Redeemer. I couldn’t fix things for my son, but that certainly didn’t mean God

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Having the answers is not essential to living. What is essential is the sense of God’s presence during dark seasons of questioning.

—Ravi Zacharias



It Doesn't Depend on Us!

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wasn't on the job.

I can't begin to tell you how reassuring and comforting this turn of events in my son's life has been for me. I feel my heavenly father has pulled me into his lap, hugged me close and whispered in my ear, "See, I had this one in hand the whole time. There was no need for your anxiety. Why do you doubt? Relax! You can trust me."

All that angst, anxiety, guilt and despair about our mistakes and failures is not required by God; it is suffering we choose to bring on ourselves. God is our all-powerful Father who can use any circumstance for good if we let go and let him. We can't fix things but God can. Thank God it doesn't depend on us!



Karon and Steve maintain a community garden, which helps feed many in their neighborhood. You may email her at karon-smith@yahoo.com.

The great thing, if one can, is to stop regarding all the unpleasant things as interruptions of one's 'own', or 'real' life. The truth is of course that what one calls the interruptions are precisely one's real life—the life God is sending one day by day: what one calls one's 'real life' is a phantom of one's own imagination.

—From *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume II*



Briefly Speaking...

Ready, But Not Willing?

I can't seem to pass a church sign without reading it. Some are quite clever and amusing. Others are just plain awful! You've seen those, I'm sure. The "So You Think It's Hot Here" signs.

One I passed the other day asked, Are you ready to meet your Maker? It was designed, I guess, to cause people to question their sinful lifestyles and to encourage repentance. I wonder, do the ones who write these actually expect people to respond positively? Oh sure, I really want to go to a church that makes me feel guilty.

Well, this one did lead me to reflect, but not for long, just long enough to answer, yes, I am ready. The sign didn't cause me to go over all the mistakes I had made during my life or even sins I committed that very day, of omission or commission. I knew I was ready because my life is hidden in Christ, our perfect, sinless Savior.

As I drove on I thought, even if I'm in a horrible head-on collision right now before I reach home, and I die, I'm ready. I could say that with confidence. Thank you, Lord, for that wonderful understanding. But, then, I quickly added, Yes, Lord, I'm ready, but I'm not willing and eager to go just quite yet! OK?



Sheila says she still has copies of From Fear to Faith if you would like a signed edition. You can also download the book from Amazon.com for just \$.99. But if you like to turn real pages, contact her at grahams@ntin.net.

For Whom the Bell Tolls

By Joyce Catherwood

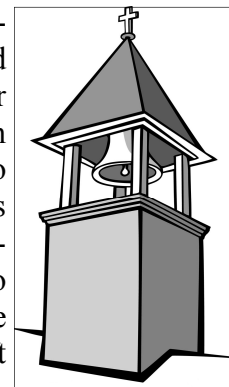
When I found out my next-door neighbor, Carolyn, had asked to leave the hospital, my heart sank. I knew she was coming home to go to her heavenly home. After an intensive year waging war against a virulent and extremely aggressive form of lymphoma, she had had enough.

In our bedroom, just across the driveway and only a few feet away from their home, I slept fitfully and sometimes not at all. I was fully aware her beloved husband Doug and cherished family members were keeping close vigil over Carolyn as she neared the end of her time on earth. Doug, who had not left her side during the past year, held onto her hand for her last three days and nights. And then she was gone. The final outcome was certainly not what anyone wanted.

We had often chatted or waved to each other coming and going as next-door neighbors do. Carolyn was a beloved professor, educator and counselor at a nearby uni-

versity. You know how some people are by nature dynamic and charismatic? Well, that was Carolyn. She had a big personality, a big smile and a big heart. She left a monumental legacy, having poignantly and joyfully touched the lives of scores of people.

Her memorial service, a celebration of her remarkable life, reflected her spirit and persona perfectly. Doug, Carolyn's dear sisters, brother-in-law, colleagues and close friends told warm, humorous and affectionate stories about her. They described her creating a lot of excitement in heaven with her bigger-than-life personality as she reunited with loved ones. They fondly pictured her exploring the streets of gold in awe and wonder and asking too many questions as she was prone to do. And yes, the significance of the loss of one so cherished was apparent in the words spoken by those she left behind.



But more often than not, we found ourselves smiling, sometimes laughing, through our tears. The church sanctuary was filled with vibrant music that was touching, stirring and just plain heavenly as the worship band played and the choir sang with their whole hearts. Carolyn was one of their number for years. We left having sensed her energy and zest for life and feeling as though we had just had a glimpse of eternity.

During a time of reflection not long after Carolyn's death, the book I was reading referenced John Donne, 17th century poet and church leader. It was he who wrote: "Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." Throughout John Donne's term as dean in London's largest church, three waves of the bubonic plague swept through the city.

He remembers our frame and knows that we are dust. He may sometimes chasten us, it is true, but even this He does with a smile, the proud, tender smile of a Father who is bursting with pleasure over an imperfect but promising son who is coming every day to look more and more like the One whose child he is.



—A.W. Tozer
1897-1963

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The Bell Tolls

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During the last epidemic, Donne came down with what he thought was plague (which turned out to be typhus). As he lay severely ill for six weeks, he could hear the bell toll for each plague fatality. Realizing the person for whom the bell tolled obviously could not hear it, John concluded the bell tolled for him.

It made him reflect and meditate on the real meaning of life and about God and his divine plan. Each time the bell rang out for someone, he felt connected to that individual because it deepened his contemplation, which he likened to gold, a treasure bequeathed to him.

And so it is that what happens to others not only affects us profoundly, but connects us and in that way the entire human family is inextricably linked. Though we may each be on our separate journey, the truth is, as Donne so poetically explains, "No man is an island.... All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language.... God's hand is in every translation."

During times of devastating loss or calamity, whether globally or within our own circle of family and acquaintances, the clang of the bell comes as a shock. But it gives us pause, causing us to think about what truly matters. If we linger, we will receive some of the golden treasure of which Donne spoke.

Carolyn's passing from this life not only prompted me to once again earnestly ponder life's meaning, but also her purposeful memorial service lifted me up with precious hope. Whenever and wherever the bell tolls, we will always be changed for the better in some way, whether a little or a lot.

"Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."



Joyce says: "Spring is such an uplifting and heartening time of the year for so many reasons, but most of all because it is the season in which we are reminded of the magnitude of our Savior's sacrifice and his astounding grace and unending love for us." You may email her at joyce.catherwood@gci.org.

Nurturenet

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



**Do we
have
your
email
address?**

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

Zorro and Me

By Barbara Dahlgren

When All Else Fails

Although Zorro does a great job fixing things around the house and enjoys it, his weakness would be assembling or installing anything using directions. I'm not sure if it's a male proclivity or just a Zorro thing, but Zorro hates following directions. He views it as a time waster. He would rather plunge into a project.

This was reiterated while visiting our daughter in the L.A. area. She wanted him to put together a bookcase she bought at Target. It seemed like an easy task, but it wasn't. A long scone didn't seem to attach to anything and the whole thing just didn't fit together.

I finally asked, "Well, did you read the directions?" This was not helpful. Zorro hates it when I ask that. I think it stems back to when we first got married and he was trying to install a tape deck in our old Rambler. After an hour or so of frustration I comforted him with, "Well, did you read the directions?" Of course not!

He challenged me, who knew nothing about cars, mechanics or tape decks, to install it. So I took the directions from the box and slowly proceeded to install it. For the past 45 years he's been a little touchy about that.

Now about this bookcase. Since we were meeting business associates of our daughter's for dinner, we needed to finish the job and get on our way. So I got the directions out of the box. Of course, after trying to read them, I fully understood why people don't bother.

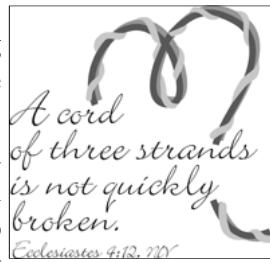
One needed a degree in gobbledygook to

decipher the directions and ancient hieroglyphics to understand the diagrams. It was like: Insert dowel *A* into slot *F* while holding shelf *C* and balancing side *H*. Then you do the hokey pokey and you turn yourself around, that's what it's all about! It actually took both of us to put it together. I think it was easier installing that tape deck.

I have a theory. I think the world can be divided into two groups: those who read the directions and those who don't. However, just because someone reads the directions doesn't mean he or she is superior. I'm great at reading instructions but struggle with basic concepts like right or left or north or south. Therefore I can be very slow in putting a project together. We each have different strengths. Sometimes the most efficient approach is working together with one reading the directions and another doing the assembling.

We've all heard the adage, "When all else fails, read the instructions." Well, there may be times we could say, "When all else fails, let's work together."

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 speaks of two being better than one because they have a good return for their work. Solomon is speaking of friendship, but it applies just as well, if not more so, to marriage, especially when he gets to the part about two who lie down together can stay warm. Anyway, I have another theory: I think working together is a key part of marriage, but no one said it would be easy!



Zorro and Barbara reside in San Jose, California, where Zorro is pastor of South Bay Christian Church. You can check out Barbara's blog at www.barbdahlgren.com or Google Barbara's Banter. You may email her at bydahlgren@pacbell.net. She loves hearing from you!

Snowmageddon in Birmingham

By Ruth Miller

When I was a student at Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas, one of the professors who had a tremendous influence on my life was Dean Blackwell. I have often reflected on his belief that we should look at the Scriptures and say, “Have I lived this scripture?”

Tuesday, January 28, began as a normal winter day in Birmingham, Alabama, but it turned into a chance to live out a verse in Matthew 25:34-40. The weather forecast predicted a dusting of snow. Shortly after arriving at my job at Saint Mark United Methodist Church I saw a single snowflake.

It was a busy day at the church and my devoted group of office Pea Shellers (volunteers) were busily folding and labeling the weekly newsletter. In another part of the building women were preparing gift baskets for shut-ins. The preschool was in session.

In a short time, the single snowflake turned into many snowflakes. We got a couple of phone calls from folks who cautioned us we should head for home. A decision was made to close the office at 11 a.m. I sent out an email, but by the time 11 o’clock rolled around we had to make a drastic change in plans.

The small amount of snow began to turn to ice. Birmingham was instantly crippled. Thousands of children were stranded at school. The word went out to parents to get their children, but they got stuck in giant traffic jams. Birmingham experienced what some called “snowmageddon.” Cars piled up as people lost control of their vehicles on the ice. School buses attempting to take students

home had to turn around and go back to the school.

The weather deteriorated drastically and stranded people began to show up. The church became an overnight shelter against the storm. We had made no preparation for this, but God had truly “gone before us.” Two of our best cooks were preparing food for two large meals, one to feed about 100 or more homeless the following day and another to feed our usual Wednesday night dinner crowd, another 100 or so.

We were contacted by the news media to confirm we were an overnight shelter. The county disaster relief office called to confirm our shelter status. When asked if we had cots, I said, “We have pews.” And we did have heat, electricity and food! A steady stream of tired, cold and hungry strangers kept coming through the doors.

The pastor was also stranded at church, so he was able to visit with the strangers, show hospitality and offer comfort. I had the joy of taking phone calls from many who needed directions to the church. One man told me his wife had been stranded on the freeway for 10 hours and had not eaten. I helped people get in touch with their families, get their phones charged and I answered questions.

Some of us were there for the long haul—from Tuesday morning until Thursday afternoon. By then the sun had come out enough to melt the ice and folks were returning home.

One of the “strandeers” sent a thank-you note:

I want to thank you so much for the food, shelter, and love you and your congregation provided me and my fellow strandeers. You have exemplified Jesus’ admonition to take in strangers (Matthew 25:31). Your people have showed cheerfulness, kindness and pa-

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Snowmaggdon

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tience with us. I was on my way from Montgomery to Huntsville and I shudder to think what would have happened had I stayed on 65 last night. I thank Jesus for His good counsel to stop here in Hoover/Vestavia and finding you all here, ready, willing and able to be His smile, His hug, and His chef. Please accept this check in gratitude and apply it to help the next needy person. Thanks again for all you've done. God bless you. 1 Thess. 3:9.

Sometimes we would like to do something really big for God. But I learned it really is the small stuff that counts. He asks us to love and serve one another. We had no strategic plan for what happened at Saint Mark and we were not prepared! But God had prepared us in ways we could only marvel at, in particular arming us with the grace of God so we could extend it at a moment's notice.

On that day God surprised us with a brand-new ministry opportunity we could not have imagined. But as he did with the loaves and fishes, he provided what was truly needed and we were privileged to be his hands and feet to serve those cold and hungry strandeers.



Ruth broke her arm in November. She's in therapy and still recovering. You may email her at ruth.miller@gci.org.



Something of God flows into us from the blue of the sky, the taste of honey, the delicious embrace of water whether cold or hot, and even from sleep itself.



—C.S. Lewis
"Scraps," *St. James' Magazine*

Reconciling God's Love With Our Pain

By Trish Clauson

When my husband and I found out he had cancer, I immediately prayed God would orchestrate every detail of what we were about to face. My expectation was that God's deep, abiding love for us would be a shield against too much pain and suffering. I was soon to be reminded his ways are not always in line with our expectations.

I read a story expressing the enigma of God's love in relationship to our pain that validated what we were experiencing through our struggle.

"Karl, a Norwegian fisherman, had taken his two teenage sons out for a day of fishing. The morning had been beautiful when they started out, but the afternoon turned nasty—in a hurry—catching them too far at sea to beat the incoming storm to shore. The wind-whipped ocean began to work into a frenzy, until he and his sons were battling for their lives. As darkness fell on their frantic efforts, even the steady beacon of the seaside lighthouse was suddenly extinguished by a terrific bolt of lightning. Hope seemed lost.

"But things were actually worse than Karl knew. Lightning had also struck his home and the structure quickly erupted into a fireball. So when Karl and his sons finally staggered ashore, exhausted, he was met by his wife with the bad news.

"Strangely, Karl seemed unfazed, much to his wife's frustration. As he stroked her tear-lined face with his tough, leathery hands, he

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Reconciling

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said, 'Don't you understand, sweetheart? When the lighthouse went out, the glow on the horizon became my compass. The fire that destroyed our house guided us home.'"

When Arnold went into complete renal failure, it was hard to imagine God orchestrated that detail. However, as I began to view it through God's higher ways of expressing love, I could see it was possible.

Arnold goes in for dialysis three times a week. His vitals are monitored each time and blood is taken once a week. His iron and hemoglobin stay very low, as the cancer is in the bone, so both are able to be treated as needed. As we chose not to go the conventional route for treating the cancer, none of this would have been covered by insurance, but as it's part of his dialysis treatment, it's covered.

We also have a nephrologist who has followed us from the beginning of Arnold's hospital stay and continues to see him at the center. He takes a personal interest in Arnold and is willing to help us even with his cancer treatment. When we asked him if Arnold's uric acid levels could be tested to gauge how well his body is fighting the cancer, he was more than willing to do so. When we needed a PET scan, he set that up too.

Also, the tumor lysis (death of the cancer cells) is being handled by the dialysis and not affecting his kidneys, which is what caused them to shut down in the first place. But most of all, people at the center have become involved in our well being. It seems God made sure we would not go through this alone.

I still hate to watch Arnold go through dialysis. And even though I know I can't speak for God or what he has in mind about

any of this, given my original prayer, I also can't imagine he's not involved. Instead, I might suggest it is, as the author of the article went on to say, "a good consequence from an eternal perspective."

As I watch my husband lie in bed day after day, week after week, I choose to believe, in spite of the intense pain I feel, that our Heavenly Father loves him very much. It's hard to reconcile God's love with our pain, but this is the challenge that comes with almost every trial. If a human father, with a limited capacity for love, would not allow his son to suffer indiscriminately, neither would the Father of the universe, who is all that *LOVE* encompasses.

Striving to comprehend and to embrace that kind of love is ultimately where my strength comes from. But I also believe that reconciling God's love with our pain, especially if it seems God is not going to deliver us from it, becomes our greatest challenge, no matter what causes it.



Trish requests that you help throw Arnold a birthday card shower. His birthday is April 23. Please send cards to 109 Melrose Circle, Denison, Texas, 75020. You may email her at trishannson@yahoo.com.

When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer.



—Corrie Ten Boom
1892–1983

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Many of you know our dear sister Marj Friddle passed away in 2013. Marj loved being a pastor's wife. She served in ministry for more than 50 years and had a deep affection for *Connecting & Bonding*. Each year she made special cards for the women who attended our conferences. Following is a letter Marj wrote before she died. She hoped it would inspire you to attend one of our conferences. I found her heartfelt words encouraging and I hope you will too. Marj will be greatly missed, but never forgotten.

We are now making plans for our 2014 *Connecting & Bonding* Conference in Ontario, California. Last year our theme was "Resting in Jesus' Presence." Everyone enjoyed hearing from pastor's wife and author Lucinda Secrest McDowell.

Our theme this year is "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so." Kathleen Hart will be with us again and she is already working on making handouts to go along with the theme. Our other guest speaker will be announced later.

Please mark the date on your calendars: August 29 to September 1, 2014. Remember, you can register on our website at www.connectingandbonding.org and pay with a credit card or mail the application form (last page of *Connections*) to:

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

Thank you for your prayers as we prepare for another great year. Hope to see you in Ontario! Remember: "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so."

You are in my prayers!
Jannice May

Dear "Darlings,"

If you have never attended a *Connecting & Bonding* conference, I invite you to come and experience what it is like to be one of Kathleen Hart's "Darlings." Now retired, Kathleen was chaplain to student wives at Fuller Seminary, who were known as her "Chicks." Kathleen has been a keynote speaker at the conferences in Southern California from the start and became a mentor to all who have attended. She began calling us her darlings at the first conference. With her slight South African accent we are "The Dahlings" and everyone loves being one.

I remember the day Jannice told me she wanted to have a conference designed specifically for ministers' wives. She and Curtis had attended our first international women's conference [*Women Who Live for the Lord*] in Dallas where the wife of one of our pastors came to her for help. Jannice has a caring and tender heart and when she arrived home Jannice knew she wanted to do something to help other women.

One day as I walked by her office, she asked me to come in. She told me of her desire and she asked me to pray about it. She hadn't told anyone else about this. She asked me not to say anything and I didn't. She asked me to pray about this and I did. A few days later as I once again walked by, she stopped me and said, "I have just received my first donation for the conference I want to have. It is \$7.00."

That fall she indeed did have a conference. This was in 1998. She originally

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planned to have just the one conference but there was such an excellent response she has continued with it. She now has one each year in the Southern California area and one in Lexington, Kentucky. That little donation of \$7.00 was the beginning of a conference that has helped many women.

Through the years the Darlings have been given valuable information to help them in their life journey. They have been shown the meaning of love and one way is through Friendship Teams. Each year leaders are chosen and given the names of women who will be in their groups. I have been one of those leaders several times. The leader's job is to regularly stay in touch with her group throughout the year. As a result, friends have connected and bonded together in a way that would not have happened otherwise.

I feel close to these women whom I have gotten to know so much better. I love them and they in turn love me. We have developed lasting friendships that will last for eternity. We share, we care, we pray for each other and we are truly connected. This *is Connecting & Bonding!*

At these conferences I have learned it is OK to be transparent and let others know of struggles and challenges one may have in life. When we share our lives together, without being critical or judgmental, friendships deepen. We truly love each other. I have seen lives change as a result of feeling loved and shown our value. Too many times in the past our value has been overlooked. Jannice's goal is for each person to realize her true value in Christ.

Jannice puts her heart into making us feel loved and each morning as the women arrive in the meeting room they find a small gift on their chair. These are small, inexpensive gifts

but this kind gesture can make such a difference. The gift says, "I love you" and everyone loves to hear those words. Jannice and her team certainly fulfill the meaning of the word *darling* for the attendees.

I have not been able to attend the last few years and now my life is threatened once again with cancer. The prognosis this time is not good. I am not doing well but if there is anything I could leave you as an encouragement, it would be to attend one of the conferences. Become one of the Darlings. You will be so glad you did.

With love to all, your sister in Christ and one of the Dahlings,
Marj Friddle



Blog Roll

Sue Berger:
www.onepilgrimsusings.com

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

Barbara Dahlgren:
www.barbdahlgren.com

Sheila Dela Peña:
<http://velvetconfections.multiply.com>

Leslie Howard:
Sister Circle Prayer Network on Facebook

Tammy Tkach:
www.gemsofgodsgrace.wordpress.com

Send us your blog address and we'll publish it here.

Ministers' Wives Conferences 2014

Registration Information

Full Name	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone	
Email	

*Please mark the type of room you need.
The following prices are for accommodations, meals and registration fees.*

ONTARIO, CA
 Ontario Airport Hotel
 August 29 to September 1, 2014

- Double (\$417 per person)
or 3 payments* of \$139
- Single (\$555 per person)
or 3 payments* of \$185

If you should cancel, the registration fee of \$150 is not refundable.

*If you are making 3 payments the due dates are:
 1st payment—April 12, 2014
 2nd payment—June 14, 2014
 3rd payment—August 2, 2014

If final payment is not received by August 2, there will be an additional charge of \$50.

I plan to share accommodations with the following person or people: (No need to send forms together.)

- 1.
- 2.

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

Yes No (If yes, please explain in comments below)

Please indicate if you have any dietary needs:

Yes No (If yes, please explain in comments below)

Comments:

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

Please send completed form to:

Connecting & Bonding, 300 S. Highland Springs Ave., Suite 6-C #156, Banning, CA 92220

Passages for Discovering Who Jesus Is

Jesus' character shown in healing:

Matt. 5:5-13 Healing of centurion's servant

Mark 2:1-12 Healing of paralytic (and forgiveness of sins)

Mark 5:21-43 Healing Jairus' daughter and the woman with the flow of blood

Luke 13:10-17 Healing a crippled woman on the Sabbath

Luke 18:35 – 19:10 Healing the blind man and conversion of Zacchaeus the tax collector

John 5:1-15 Healing the man at the pool

John 9 Healing of the blind man

John 11:1-44 The raising of Lazarus

Jesus' character shown in other miracles:

Mark 6:30-44 Feeding of the 5000

John 2:1-12 Wedding at Cana

Jesus' character shown in his teaching and interactions:

Matt. 5:1-16 Beatitudes and salt and light

Matt. 6:25-34 Teaching on worry

Mark 10:35-45 Request of James and John

Matt. 12:1-14 Lord of the Sabbath

Luke 7:36-50 Jesus anointed by the sinful woman

Luke 9:43b-50 Jesus predicts death a second time and disciples argue who is the greatest

Luke 15:1-2, 11-32 Parable of the Prodigal Son

Luke 20:1-8 Jesus' authority questioned

Luke 20:20-26 On paying taxes to Caesar

John 4:1-42 Samaritan woman

John 13:1-17 Jesus washes the disciples' feet

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Discovering*Continued from page 15***Jesus' character shown in the calling of his disciples:**

Mark 1:14-28 Announcement of Kingdom of God, calling the first disciples, exorcising a demon and healing sick

Mark 8:27-38 "Who do you say that I am?"

Luke 5:1-11 Calling of first disciples

Jesus' character shown in his relationship with his Father:

Matt. 11:25-30 Exclusive knowing of Father and Son; invitation to the burdened to come to Jesus

John 13:1-17 Washing the disciples' feet—first part is about Father-Son relationship

Luke 15:1-2, 11-32 Parable of the Prodigal Son (Jesus tells the story in response to Pharisees' accusations that he associates with sinners and tax collectors, so how does this story about the Father's heart answer them?)

John 4 Samaritan woman—speaks of Father-Son Relationship

John 5:16-23 Jesus speaks of his relationship to his Father in response to Jewish leaders' persecution of him

—Courtesy of Gary Deddo

The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity.



—Charles Haddon Spurgeon,
England's best-known preacher
for most of the second half
of the 19th century