

Strengthening Families Across The World

ABOVE RUBIES

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Issue: Eighty-Four

In This Issue:

Who Determines Life?

My Heritage of Sons

Miscarriage

A Tale of Two Cultures

The Best Career

Shepherding your Flock

Reaping what you Sow

No More "Give or Take"

VBAC Stories



From Our Home to Yours



Nancy with her little poodle that was found in the country, abused and terrified. He is now a healed and happy dog.

Colin and I have recently returned from ministering at retreats and seminars in England, Northern Ireland, Wales, Belgium, Germany, and Czech Republic. What a joy to meet precious families along the way.

Now it is back to getting the garden ready for planting—a wonderful time of the year as we sow and look forward to harvest. And my favorite time of the year, when the dogwoods are in flower. I love it and have dogwoods flowering all over our land.

Our next big family event is the wedding of our oldest grand-daughter, Chanel. We are all looking forward to this wonderful celebration on the 20 April. Everyone

loves weddings, don't they? Did you know that God loves them too? When God's blessing is on the nation, He describes it this way, "Again there shall be heard in this place... The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts" (Jeremiah 33:10-11).

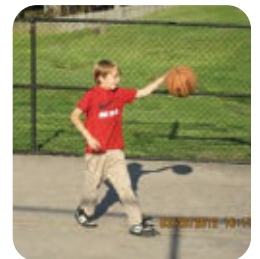
The big news in this magazine is that Serene and Pearl's book, *Trim, Healthy Mama* will soon be in your hands! It has taken years of research and a lifetime of experience. In their daily life of mothering and homeschooling their children, they have discovered that stringent diets do not work for busy mothers. Their

approach to nutrition is to celebrate all the foods God has given us along with using science to achieve perfect weight and vibrant health.

This book is more than a nutrition book, although you'll be armed with knowledge that will revolutionize your life. It is more than a recipe book, although you will find hundreds of quick, tasty and easy recipes to satisfy your family and trim your own waste line at the same time. Serene and Pearl coach you all the way through to freedom from food restriction and excess pounds. They go far beyond food and give the reasons why you should not overdo exercise, how to balance your hormones, and how to keep the fire alive in your marriage relationship.

It's a one stop book—well over 500 pages! Thankfully, they have made it fun and the important concepts easy to understand. You won't feel condemned for your

Oliver Campbell (9) practicing basketball. It sure is fun to watch Oliver play competition basketball. He is still deciding if we will train for the MBA or the NFL!



A force to be reckoned with! Some of the cousins on the land—Arden Alison (14), Crusoe Johnson (14), Bowen Barrett (13), Jireh Johnson (12), Rocklyn Barrett (11), Arrow Johnson (11), Noble Barrett (10) and Cedar Allison (9). Photography by Rashida Johnson (16).





Joshua Campbell (11) with his trophy. He is now the elementary Tennessee Chess State Champion. He and his little brother, Harry (7) have a whole room full of trophies. Joshua, Harry, and Cousin Bowen Barrett are now preparing for the national chess competitions in May.



Arden Allison riding his horse, Freedom with Jireh behind.

eating habits, but only inspired to embark on an exciting lifestyle of satisfying eating and yet trimming to your waistline.

It turned out far bigger than they originally anticipated, as they did not want to leave you guessing on one point. They trust you'll find all your answers in the book! It will be worth every penny you save to purchase it.

Once again, I hope you enjoy pictures of some of our grandchildren—36 now, and two more on the way.

We face strategic months ahead,

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Above Rubies is a magazine to encourage women in their high calling as wives, mothers and homemakers. Its purpose is to uphold and strengthen family life and to raise the standard of God's truth in the nation. The name has been chosen from Proverbs 31:10 AMP, "A capable, intelligent and virtuous woman, who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far ABOVE RUBIES or pearls."

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FRONT COVER: Campbell grandchildren: Sitting left to right—Rocklyn Barrett, Bowen Barrett, Causoe Johnson, Arden Allison, Arrow Johnson, Noble Barrett, Cedar Allison and Jireh Johnson kneeling. Photography by Rashida Johnson (16).

especially with coming elections. How important it is for families to pray together. We can't expect churches to be committed to prayer if families are not committed to prayer. It starts in the home first. Seek to make it a priority in your home to gather your family to pray together each day. There is nothing more important that you can do as a family. Our lives are so busy and we get taken up with so many activities, all good and healthy, but none of them are as important as prayer. The blessing of our children, and our nation depends upon it.

I love the words of Leviticus 26:8 where God says, "Five of you shall chase an hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword." The greatest way to pursue your enemies is by prayer and intercession.

How many children in your family? Do you have three! You, your husband, and your children (five of you) can put 100 enemies to flight! Isn't that amazing! What if you have more children? You can send more enemies to bite the dust. The more children you have around your table, the more prayer goes up to the throne of grace, and the more impact you make upon the world.

No wonder Satan seeks to get us interested in doing everything else but



Jack Campbell (6) playing soccer. Jack is the youngest sibling of Chanel who is getting married in April.

praying together as a family. This powerful ministry doesn't just happen. You have to make it happen. You have to make it a commitment. But you can do it. I have proved it over years and years and we are still doing it today.

It is praying families that will change the nation.

NANCY CAMPBELL

Founder and Editress

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Who determines the value of life?



Jimmy and Tesha with their blessings—Jimmy (14), Jesse (10), Jadon (6), Shayla (2), Joseph (1) and Jonathan in heaven. Jimmy pastors a church in Venice, California.

handicaps and go ahead and abort him anyway.

We told them we would never consider abortion. We would love our child no matter what. We cried out to God for a miracle, and on February 24, 2005 Jadon Richard was born. He was perfect. Absolutely no handicaps.

We named him "Jadon," which means, "The lord has heard our cry." We chose this name even before he was healed because we knew that no matter what, Jesus had heard our prayers. He is now a perfectly healthy, energetic six-year-old, who is a joy and a delight. I learned from that pregnancy that the medical profession deems quality of life over life itself.

In October 2011, I found we were expecting our sixth child. The scan showed a perfect 12-week-old baby. At 18 weeks, we discovered he was a boy. He was only 15 months younger than our toddler and we were excited. We named him "Jonathan Anthony," which means, "gift from God."

A week later, we were shocked. The doctor couldn't find his heart beat. We rushed to ER. To our dismay, the baby had died. We found comfort in thinking of him in heaven with my beloved father-in-law who had recently succumbed to cancer.

They offered us an abortion procedure of dilation and evacuation but I could not bear the thought of them tearing apart my precious baby's body. We chose to deliver him the next day. My mother and sister-in-law gathered with my husband and myself to say hello and good-by at the same time.

Jonathan Anthony came into the world on January 24 at 7:40 p.m.; just minutes after his daddy laid hands on my tummy and prayed for God to deliver him. He arrived in the warmth of his placenta and the doctor gave him to me to hold.

I was terrified by what I would see. I took him into my arms and felt instant maternal love and protection flood my heart. He was a little longer than my hand. His skin was thin and bruised but his hands and feet were perfect with tiny fingernails. Daddy said he looked like him. To me, he was beautiful—my angel baby boy.

We held him, loved him, prayed over him, and spoke our unending love for him. At a little past midnight, we let him go. The pain of knowing I would never again



At what week is life valuable? In California where we live, the value of life is set at 20 weeks gestation. That is the age a birth and death certificate is given.

When I was pregnant with my third

child, I remember the doctor's pitying look as he told us the baby would be severely handicapped and that we had just passed the legal age for abortion. But, he said, they could make an exception for severe

see him on earth threatened to shatter me. Yet, I also felt the presence of God whispering, "He is safe."

The doctor and the mortuary told us we would not receive a birth or death certificate. Jonathan was a few days away from the legal age counted worthy of acknowledgment of life and death. We do not need a certificate to tell us he lived, that he was a valuable, precious, loved person. I will always say I have six children, five here on earth and one sweet son in heaven.

Every day, little babies his age and size are legally scraped from their mother's womb and thrown away. They are gath-

ered into the Father's arms, just as Jonathan was, but Jonathan will be remembered, talked of, and loved the rest of our lives.

All life is a valuable, precious, and wonderful gift. We must fight against the cultural lies of our age that put value at a certain gestational time. Don't let our culture taint your view on the value of life. We are bombarded continually by a subtle propaganda.

In what week of gestation does life begin? We must seek the truth from God's Word. Jeremiah 1:5 NIV says, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart."

We must not judge the young mother who has succumbed to the lies of our age. Instead, we must offer her hope of heaven, healing, salvation, and restoration. As Christians, we must be a voice of one crying out in the desert (Isaiah 40:3), but speak the truth in love.

Life is precious no matter how long it lives. Nineteen weeks and three days was enough to stay in my heart forever, and Jonathan's soul is in heaven for all eternity.

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My Heritage of Sons!

Bob and I married February 3, 1980. I became pregnant on our honeymoon and our first child arrived November 14, 1980. A boy! "What do I do with a boy?" I thought. I had previously only babysat girls. It didn't take me long to figure it out! You do the same things you do with girls: feed them, change them, and love them!

Time passed by and we were blessed with three more sons. By then, people knew we were nuts and thought we were probably trying for a girl. Not true. We

boys?" He spoke to my heart that He wanted me to raise up an army for Him, to train them to love their wives and be sensitive to them, and to be leaders in their homes.

More years went by. We were blessed with two more sons and two daughters! About six years ago, I was thinking about friends who had lost their spouses and how difficult it must be to maintain the simple things in everyday life. For instance what if I got a flat tire? Or need-

son, Nathaniel, builds houses and is productive. He is very discerning with people and situations. My third son, Christopher, is a landscaper, accountant, and a very good listener. My fourth son, Uriah, is strong, aggressive, and focused. My fifth son, Seth, is great mechanically and good at fixing things. My sixth son, Obadiah, is great at helping to pick up and tidy the house; he has finesse and engineering capabilities.

My first daughter, Aimee, is great at keeping our house running (if you want a job done, she'll do it) and knowing where everyone is. My seventh son, Ezra, has determination and drive, but is a loving boy at the same time. My second daughter, Jacqueline, likes to cook and is very creative and always happy. They are all very loving and caring.

I am truly blessed to have them in my life. What more do I need? I often say, "I am who I am because of them!" God has truly used them to build character in me. I am grateful for the peace and comfort of my heavenly Father's provision through my children.

At the time of discovering another pregnancy, the Lord directed me to Luke 23: 28-29 ESV where Jesus says, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'" I wept. Jesus was dying on the cross and yet He had me in His mind's eye, knowing I would need to hear from Him at that exact time!

Did you catch what Jesus was saying? Jesus prophesied of a time coming when the world will say that it is blessed to be barren! We are living in this time. Wow! What if I hadn't made the decision to give my womb to Him? How much I would have missed.

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Bob and Michelle with their wonderful family—Zack (31) married to Kara, Nathaniel (28) married to Lindsey, Christopher (25) married to Laura with 2 boys, Uriah (23), Seth (20), Obadiah (18), Aimee (15), Ezra (13) and Jacqueline (10).

wanted God's perfect will for our life. He had control over my womb. I believed he could close it (Genesis 20:18) or open it (Genesis 29:31). He alone knows our perfect needs and is faithful to equip us for the task that lies before us!

One day I discovered I was pregnant again. I was not looking forward to the criticism of family and Christian friends. I asked the Lord, "Why did you give me all

ed a plumber? Or help with buying a home or car? One day, as I was thanking God for my children, I realized that if I were to lose my husband, there would be such a void; but I actually wouldn't have to worry about things. God would provide the care and help I would need through my sons.

My oldest son, Zack, is wonderful with finances and legal issues. My second

Family Bible reading is better than divorce. *Norman V. Williams*

“Should we tell them?” Mom’s eyes twinkled up at Dad.

He shrugged his shoulders. “It’s up to you.” His smile seemed to hold a special secret.

I was 13 years old and will never forget that cold March day in 2008, when the sunshine streamed through the living room window where our family sat just after family worship. I was feeling relieved that Mom was up out of bed. She had seemed so sick lately, and I was worried about her. For the past month she had been experiencing symptoms of the stomach flu, coupled with extreme sleepiness and fatigue! What strange sort of sickness lasts for more than a month! Perhaps she had some dreadful disease! Maybe....

But my oldest brother chased all these anxious thoughts away by suddenly blurting out, “Mom’s going to have a baby!” he guessed.

Mom nodded her head, smiling happily. Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted a baby sister more than anything else. As the youngest child and the only girl in our family, I had often prayed for years that God would send me a baby sister. At almost 13 years old, I still prayed that prayer, although by then a baby sister seemed impossible.

I stared first at Mom, then my brother, and back at Mom again. Were they both teasing each other? Mom couldn’t possibly be going to have a baby! Could she?

“You’re both teasing, right?” I asked incredulously.

“No, we’re not!” Mom assured me. “I’m three months pregnant!”

I couldn’t believe it! Mom was going to have a baby! It was true! Whirling around and racing to my bedroom, I slammed the door shut and fell to my knees laughing and crying at the same time. All I could say was, “Thank you, thank you, thank you....” That was the happiest day of my life.

From then on, we treated Mom with the gentlest care. We helped her up the steps; we supported her when we went for walks; we made sure she didn’t have any work to do when she felt her morning sickness.

I, for one, still wondered how my older brother—who certainly couldn’t know as much about babies and morning

For All Eternity!



Sarah with her parents, Ken and Ann Brown, and her siblings Hosea (23) and Theodore (21).

sickness as I, being a girl, did—had figured out about Mom’s pregnancy while I worried myself sick that she had some deadly disease!

I couldn’t believe I would be a big sister in about six months! I could almost imagine holding the sweet little bundle, helping to feed and dress her, having her crib in my bedroom where I, her beloved big sister, could “protect” her during the night. It was almost too good to be true! The Lord had given me the biggest and best answer to prayer I had ever received, and I couldn’t thank Him enough!

Over the next couple of weeks our family discussed baby names over and over again. Finally we decided upon Aleicia Ann for a girl, and Timothy Ken for a boy. In my opinion, they were the most beautiful names I had ever heard. I quietly told myself that we would surely use the name Alicia Ann, because we already had two boys in the family, and I had always wanted a little sister. Of course I would also be very happy with a little brother. Brother or sister—it really didn’t matter, because either way I would be “Big Sister!” I could hardly wait!

One day, however, Mom made the startling announcement, “I’ve been cramping and spotting!” Now, for those of you reading this that don’t know what this means, let me just tell you, it’s something you do not want to happen when

you’re pregnant! It spells miscarriage.

“Will it go away?” I asked anxiously.

“It could—if I’m very careful,” Mom tried to reassure me.

I nodded my head, satisfied. God had answered my prayer for a baby in our family, and I felt certain we weren’t going to lose it even before its birth! Mom went on complete bed-rest, getting up only to use the bathroom.

But Mom’s cramps only got stronger and closer together. Even though we had prayed in faith, it appeared that we were going to lose our little baby... and soon. I refused to believe it! We couldn’t—we wouldn’t. God would work a miracle to save it! He would have to. *He has promised!* I thought desperately.

But on the night of the miscarriage I couldn’t keep blinding myself to the truth anymore. I was losing my baby sister—forever! I sobbed as if my heart would break; and my dear, brave mother who wanted this child as much as I did cried with me.

The next morning it was all over. The tiny undeveloped form lay lifeless in the palm of Mom’s hand. We counted its little fingers and toes—all perfect! At only twelve weeks gestation, it was too small to tell if it was a boy or a girl; but it was definitely a child, a little person—and we loved this precious one sent from God. We buried it outside under the little

oak tree behind the house, and Mom and Dad lingered there together for a while, saying goodbye to our little one.

I raced as fast as I could away from there, running to my secret place along one of our walking trails behind our property. I threw myself down among the tall waving grasses, my body racked with sobs and a terrible ache inside. When I had cried all my tears, I rolled over and gazed up at the puffy clouds floating listlessly through the deep blue sky, and I prayed.

Why God? Why? My eyes somehow found more tears, and they squeezed out and trickled down my cheeks. *I was sure, Lord, that you had answered my prayer! I was sure that we would soon have a baby sister to love and hold! Other girls, who don't even care about getting a new brother or sister, have gotten one; but I, who have wanted one for years and years, get mine taken away from me through a miscarriage! Why?*

Suddenly it hit me, as if a voice spoke from heaven: *I have answered your prayer! You haven't lost your little sister forever! You will see her again! In that land where there are no tears, your little sister will join your family, happy and healthy! I have only asked you to wait!*

Yes, yes! *Of course!* My mind whirled. *In heaven I will have my little sister again! She will be ours for all eternity! She won't ever have to go through the pain and suffering of this earth! She will never be sick or sad. She will never be tempted, but will only know the joys and happiness of heaven. Jesus did answer my prayer! He has given me the promise of a beautiful baby sister for heaven, whom we will know throughout all eternity!*

I jumped up, an incredible joy filling my heart, and ran to find my mother. She and I went on a long walk with our arms around each other and we both shared the peace of God's wonderful promise to us.

From that day forward, Mom and I grew closer together than we had ever been before. We needed each other's friendship and companionship. I went to her if I had a problem, and she helped me through it with her motherly wisdom; I told her of my mistakes and shortcomings, and she in turn helped me overcome them; I told her of my hopes and dreams, and she encouraged me to never lose sight of them.

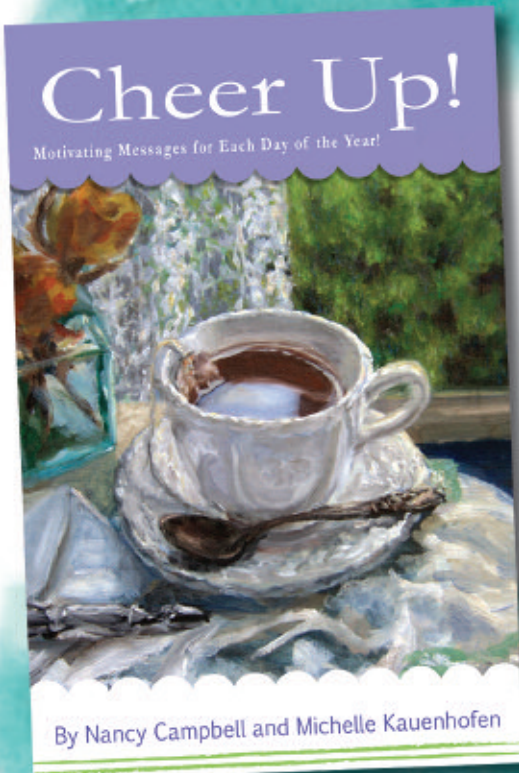
I still cannot think back to those

days of the miscarriage without feeling an ache inside, but the friendship I developed with my mother during that time proved essential for my spiritual growth in the years ahead. The Lord knew! And He has promised!! I will see my baby sister again... very soon!

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Sarah has published a book for children,
LEARNING LESSONS FROM FURRY FRIENDS.

This book encourages children to give their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ, and also to be very educational about animals and their care. It teaches how to prepare for a litter of kittens, how to deal with the loss of a pet, how to train an unruly puppy, and much more. The Scripture-based lessons are from everyday-life situations. Contact Sarah for further details.



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By Nancy Campbell and Michelle Kauenhofen

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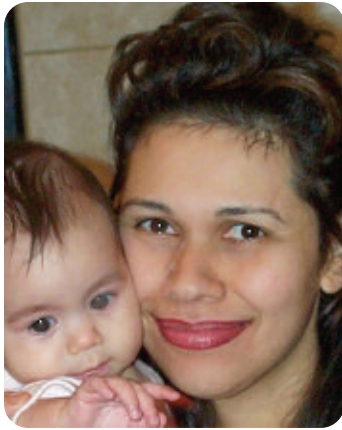
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Jasmine with baby Victoria



I have always loved being pregnant, enjoying smooth and uncomplicated births. While pregnant with our fifth child, my husband and I waited three months before going to the doctor for routine blood work. The doctor reprimanded us for waiting so long to visit him and began sharing all the dangers and risks associated with a woman having her fifth child in her thirties.

After leaving his office, I felt so discouraged that my husband and I decided to take a completely different route with this pregnancy and birth. We called up a midwife in a nearby town and started visiting her on a monthly basis. I was so thrilled to be seeing a woman who reminded me more of a mother than a doctor that I began to embrace something profound and natural taking place in our lives.

Around my third trimester, I started feeling extremely uncomfortable. I had a few episodes where I was rushed to the hospital only to find out it was nothing. I don't know what was going on with my body, but I'm pretty sure this baby wanted to see me before its appointed time. However, the Lord was gracious and allowed the baby to stay in position until our 36th week.

As a result of crying wolf numerous times, my midwife and husband didn't pay much attention when I told them I was having mild contractions on a warm spring afternoon. I wasn't due for another

He Arrived in Time

three weeks, so no one was concerned.

My husband decided to run some errands with the children, and I was alone. I ran a warm bath and had a cup of tea in hopes of settling the contractions, but they intensified while in the bath. I stepped into my robe and tried to walk back to my room. I paused several times because the mild contractions had now become unbearable.

I looked at the clock and realized only a few hours had passed since I told my husband about the contractions. Due to the excruciating pain, I couldn't even dial the phone to call my midwife.

It began raining softly, which soothed me. The droplets of water and the cooler weather of early evening brought comfort to an otherwise tired and shaky mother. I knew I was in hard labor.

God spoke to me in the soft recesses of my heart, and my mind and body became clear as I reached for a place to deliver my baby. We had wanted a water birth, but that wasn't going to happen so I made my way to our bed. I didn't dare lay on my back for fear of paralyzing pain and stumbled onto my side.

The tears streamed down my face as I thought I couldn't possibly continue in this manner, so I pushed without feeling the need to. As I pushed, my water broke

and I heard my husband unlock the front door.

I yelled for him. As he reached our bed, I pushed a second time and our baby fell into his arms. Two pushes and the baby was free from my body and the pain immediately stopped. Amazing!

My husband wrapped our baby in a towel and placed the baby on my breast and allowed me the honor of bonding, touching, and nourishing our precious newborn. About 15 minutes later, he helped deliver the placenta.

My midwife was stunned as we called with the news, and she hurried over to assist with the finishing details. She apologized profusely and couldn't do enough to comfort me during recovery. It was a victorious evening that required a lot of faith, so we named her Victoria Faith.

I was never alone. God was with me the entire time. I heard and felt Him every step of the way. Looking into the face of my Victoria Faith, I would do it all over again in a heartbeat.

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Anthony and Jasmine's children are Brandon (14), Alina (11), Natalie (9), David (8), Victoria (6) and Ella Grace (4).

Take Care of the Lambs!

A farmer was walking over his farm with a friend, exhibiting his crops, herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep. His friend was greatly impressed and highly pleased, especially with the splendid sheep. He had seen the same breed frequently before, but never such fine specimens. With great earnestness he asked how he had succeeded in rearing such flocks. His simple answer was, "I take care of my lambs."

A Tale of Two Cultures

We live in a realm of predominantly two cultures—the “normal humanistic culture,” which seems very normal to most people, and the “normal biblical culture,” the way of life which is not so popular. Many of us often go between the two.

The folk who live in the “normal humanistic culture” are mostly delightful people—intelligent, kind, caring, involved in the community, and good citizens. Many of them are born again believers. Their hearts have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus and they love God. There’s only one problem. Their minds have not yet caught up with their renewed hearts. They are influenced by this society with its socialist and progressive agenda and think like a humanist. It is so normal to their thinking pattern, that they think any other way is “strange,” even if it’s biblical.

Truth is Twisted

It’s not new to God. He spoke to His people, Israel, saying, “*Though I wrote for him ten thousand precepts of my law, they are regarded as a strange thing*” (Hosea 8:12 NASB). Again, He said to them, “*You turn things upside down*” (Isaiah 29:16). God’s ways seem strange because they are not familiar with them. Therefore, they would rather trust in their own reasoning than God’s counsel (Psalm 81:11-14).

In the “normal humanistic culture” couples usually wait a few years until they consider having children. They plan to some day, but they want time to further their studies, their careers, solicit material possessions, and, of course, to “get to know one another more.” When they eventually decide to have children (if they have not waited too long to conceive) they limit the number to two. Sometimes they may go for a third. After that, it’s “the snip!” Isn’t that what the majority are doing? And we have to keep up with the Joneses!

Sometimes the mother may stay home with her newborn for awhile, but soon she sends her child to daycare

while she continues her career or job. Once children reach school age it is “normal” to send their children to public education (and they wouldn’t want to be considered different.) Everything looks great on the surface, but many parents are not aware of the hidden agenda of the socialists and progressives to take over our country by infiltrating the minds of our children.

Light is Dimming

Let’s take a look. From 1962 God has been continually excommunicated from our state schools, due to court rulings from our U.S. Supreme Court.

On June 25, 1962, students were forbidden to do what they had been doing since the founding of our nation, publicly pray at the beginning of each school day, “Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence on Thee and beg Thy blessing over us, our parents, our teachers, and our nation.” Can the demise of our nation be traced to the cessation of daily prayer in schools?

In 1963 the U.S. Supreme court banned the school-directed recital of the Lord’s Prayer and reading of Bible passages as part of “devotional exercises” in public schools.

In 1980 the Ten Commandments were prohibited from being posted on public school classroom walls.

In 1985 observance of “daily moments of silence” were banned from public schools when students were encouraged to pray during the silent periods.

In 1992 they banned prayers led by members of the clergy at public school graduation ceremonies.

And on June 19, 2000 the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed student-led pre-kickoff prayers at high school football games.

Now, instead of the religion of Christianity on which this nation was founded, children are taught the religion of secular humanism. They are taught

evolution as a fact, sex-education, and the “goodness” of other anti-Bible religions, including Islam. Homosexual activists are lobbying for their lifestyle to be taught as part of the school curriculum. Already the California Teachers Association supports abolishing gender stereotypes in schools and doing away with all distinctions between male and female. The light of God’s truth is dimming as each generation is hooked more and more into the “normal humanistic culture,” masterminded by the devil.

Watch the Language

There is also a whole new language that goes along with this culture.

Homosexuality is called “gay” even though God calls it an abomination, because it is contrary to the way He created us and His plan for mankind. We are dumbed down with the term, “same-sex” marriage, although a person doesn’t have to be very intelligent to know that God created Adam and Eve, not two Adams or two Eves. They want us to believe that abortion, the murdering of a tiny baby in the womb is “choice.”

We are brainwashed with “multiculturalism” where we must tolerate anyone or anything, no matter how evil. Satanists are given the same respect as Christians and Jews. We are expected to accept countries that amputate feet or hands for a small offence and where women, who have no freedom, are equal to America. How can this be in the light of a nation founded on the Bible and a godly constitution—a nation that has produced the most prosperous and freest country on earth? It is to this country that people have clamored to come and live and experience the American dream.

The “separation of church and state” are familiar words in the humanistic society. They say they come from the 1st Amendment which says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion and the force exercise there-

“Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from

seriously OWT to elst A

of.” I do not see the words, “separation,” “church,” or “state” anywhere in this sentence, do you? Our Framers intended that not one particular denomination would become the national religion, but each person should be free to worship God according to their own convictions. We are also plagued with “no fault divorce,” a part of this culture that has brought devastation to millions of lives, especially the children.

The humanistic lifestyle is quite predictable because these folk demand control of their own lives—their bodies, their finances, and their future. Many in this culture depend upon government programs and government finances. They think it is their “right” to receive “hand outs.”

Ordinary to Extraordinary

On the other hand, it is quite scary to live in the “normal biblical culture.” First of all, you will be a misfit. You are a stranger and pilgrim. You believe what God says rather than what man says. You have to move out of the ordinary into the extraordinary. You have to move out of the predictable into a life of faith! You have to move out of being in control of your own life and future and trust in God’s sovereignty. You have to move into a sphere where the “normal culture” will think you are strange because you live a completely different lifestyle.

Because you no longer trust in your own wisdom and resources, you are cast upon God to sovereignly direct your life. This means you believe the Bible rather than the popular voice of society. This means you believe God when He says that children are a blessing. This means you don’t say “No” to God when He wants to give you the blessing of a child. This takes faith. You move into miraculous living. Every time you conceive, you are visited by God. Read Genesis 21:1-2 and I Samuel 2:21. “Doesn’t a “visitation of God” call for rejoicing?

And when you birth your baby, you experience another miracle. Talking about birth, God said in Genesis 18:12, “*Is anything too hard for the Lord.*” The phrase “too hard” is the Hebrew word *para* and means “extraordinary, wonderful, miraculous, astonishing, marvelous, and beyond the bounds of human powers or expectations.”

This is just the beginning of your life of faith and watching God do miracles. Your baby is God’s gift to you. Are you going to give your precious gift away to someone else to look after while you do something secondary? No, you and your husband trust God to provide, even beyond your husband’s hard-working income. You trust His Word that when He blesses the womb, He promises to bless you with all you need to provide for His child (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). You may not have everything you want, but God will make sure you have everything you need.

Continual Celebrations

Remember, you have moved from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Perhaps we should more correctly call this lifestyle the “extraordinary biblical culture.” It’s certainly not a kill-joy lifestyle. We enjoy continual celebrations of weddings, babies, and all the exciting adventures of life which each new baby leads us into. We live in a culture of life, not death. We live in a culture of covenant-keeping and marriage commitment.

The Bible tells us that out of the dwelling places of Zion “*shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry; and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small*” (Jeremiah 30:18-19).

Again, God describes the blessing of living in His culture, “*the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride*” (Jeremiah 33:10-11). This is not a languishing life.

It’s a walk of faith. It’s full of challenges and hard work, but the fruit is joy, fulfillment, and knowing you are walking in the perfect will of God. Your career is eternity impacting!

Because you are concerned that your children and grandchildren may be pulled in to the “normal humanistic culture” that permeates the whole of society, you think very carefully about how you will educate them. You do not want them to sit in the company of the scornful each day (Psalm 1:1). Instead, you teach your children the ways of truth, integrity, righteousness, wisdom, and justice. You daily fill them with the Word of God, so God’s ways, thoughts and plans will be “normal” to them and not “a strange thing.”

God-mandated Career

You know you are called by God. This is your affirmation which you confess every morning.

I am not languishing. I am not deceived. I have a vision. I know who I am and who God created me to be. I know my purpose. I am walking in the perfect will of God. I know it’s not easy, but I’ve counted the cost. My goal is set.

How could my career be easy when I am influencing a nation for God, generations to come—and eternity? How could it be easy when I am destroying the plans of the devil? Such is the power of my God-mandated career, the highest calling ever given to women—motherhood.

I have embraced my calling. I am not intimidated by my antagonists. I will not be moved. My heart is fixed. I may be hidden in my home, but look out world! I am sharpening my arrows. I am getting them ready to shoot forth and destroy the adversary. In the power and anointing of God, I am advancing God’s Kingdom.

NANCY CAMPBELL

within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good” (Romans 12:2 J.B. Phillips).



Sweet Yogurt

During my last pregnancy I experienced gestational diabetes. There is a strict diet linked to “Gestational diabetes mellitus” or “GDM” as doctors call it, although it is only as strict as the person takes it. I took it very seriously.

After the first weeks, when I thought I would probably die from hunger, my body quickly got used to it. During the rest of the pregnancy, I felt very healthy. I was surprised at my energy level.



However, the most surprising thing was that I began to taste the sweetness of food that contained no sugar. I used to think plain Hollandia yogurt was the sourest yogurt that had ever been produced, as it contains no sugar. It soon became a “goodie” to me, and I regularly ate it as a treat after meals for more than a quarter of a year. I gained a unique sensitivity for what is truly naturally sweet.

After the delivery of my baby, the diabetes disappeared and the doctor condescendingly released me from the diet with the words, “Don’t go overboard on the sugar now.” I could now eat bread, baked goods, apples, oranges, and bananas to my heart’s content. I could eat between meals! I could even get back to my normal sugar intake.

After a few days I remembered my yogurt and decided to prepare some with strawberries. However, what was sweet as honey to me before, now tasted nastily sour. It was not a treat at all. My sensitivity was gone. As I sat disappointedly over my red and white bowl, God gave me understanding.

This is what the world offers—a quick fix of energy, full of sugar, which instantly satisfies. However, when folks who feed this way come to do God’s will, which is what we are actually here on earth to do, His will seems somehow sour. Rather than read God’s Word or do what God wants them to do, they would rather reach for the TV remote, newspaper, magazine,

or go shopping. However, the one who has trained her spiritual “diet” and gets used to receiving her energy from what pleases God, finds that His will is sweet, good, and lasting.

In that moment, I realized that what I long for is to fulfill God’s will for my life. When I desire something really sweet, God will satisfy my craving. When we try to sweeten our life with the pleasures of this world, we often end up stuffing ourselves until we lose our sensitivity. Only God is able to satisfy the soul.

I have a feeling that my gestational diabetes was more of spiritual diabetes. I think there are many spiritual diabetics walking around this earth, and they don’t even realize it. I thank God that He opened my eyes and now I can live “healthy,” spiritually and physically.

By the way, we are back to the natural. Our children don’t need the sweet foods we give them. When we drastically cut down the sugar in their diet, we find they are calmer and decidedly healthier! Only, it has to start with us parents first, right?

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Martin and Kristyna with their children, Kristyna (12), Johana Rut (9), David Joshua (6) and Elisabeth (2).

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THE Best Trade

It was my husband's ten year high school reunion. We were small town high school sweethearts and wanted to go, but it didn't work out. It was the perfect opportunity for the enemy to whisper in my ear. I wish I hadn't listened, though I am grateful for what the Lord showed me instead.

I remember who I was in high school. I was fun, vibrant, and outgoing. I was in charge, knew what I wanted, and how to get it. I was willing to work for it and determined to never be a doormat. I had big dreams. I was very involved in school, yearbook, sports, and even ASB at one point. I wanted to be a lawyer, go to a good college, live in New York City, and travel around the world. If I married and had children, which was a HUGE IF since I didn't want them, it would be MUCH later in my life.

I imagined my life would be like a movie. I mean, what non-believing teenager doesn't?

Now, my idea of sparkling conversation involves diapers and what's growing in my garden. I have three children and am a stay at home mother--training, teaching, cooking, and cleaning my days away. What's that compared to being a lawyer, helping others, living a big life, and traveling? How can I deal with the common issues of bickering, floors that never stay clean, laundry that never stays tidy and folded, and food that always needs cooking when I was supposed to be much more than this? What would my high school contemporaries think of me? Was this really what I wanted to show them?

My husband could see I was work-

ing up to a huge outburst so he took the children to the park. I decided to make dinner and clean the house before starting homeschool. Now that's another thing that separates me from whom I used to be: homeschooling. I loved school, was always the teacher's pet, and got great grades without even trying.

Feeling down and defeated, I put on my favorite worship CD and started to chop veggies for supper. Ironically, I was making stew because I sure was stewing about the life I had intended to have, the life I had given up for this one.

Suddenly, the peace of the Lord fell upon me in a powerful way and He brought to my mind the words of John 14:27 NKJV, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

I was right! I had given up the life I had intended for the one I have now. And yes, I have messes, bickering, and irritations. But, it is filled with joy, laughter, hugs, kisses, and peace. I don't want to be a lawyer or a law enforcer. I want to be a grace enforcer, and I get to be that to my children every day. I don't want to miss a moment of my children's learning, and I don't have to.

While diapers aren't always a good topic of conversation, there is nothing wrong with finding joy in the fruit of the land that the Lord has brought us into--and that the land is in a small town where we grew up is all that much better. We can go to the exact location my husband and I met and show our chil-



Colin and Brandi with their children--Dylan Caden (5), Joshua Azzariah (3) and Peter Joseph (1).

dren. We can continue our legacy right where it started.

Why would I want to live in the city surrounded by man's creation when I can live in this small town surrounded by God's creation? Am I a freak for being sweet and submissive to my husband? Or, am I an obedient child of God, doing my best to bring joy and peace into my home by following God's call on my life?

Best of all, I get to give up my dreams in favor of the Lord's dream for me. What a trade! I give up on something that would have undoubtedly brought me sorrow for something that invariably brings me joy. I get to help three little men and my grown man to grow into the Lord's dreams for them, which is the most rewarding and demanding job I could have ever dreamed about.

Truly, God's Word is true in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the thoughts that I have toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

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My Influence

"A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove. But, the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child."

We Stopped Crying

We were going to stop at number three. Well, my husband wanted to. I wasn't so sure. However, we decided that if the baby was a boy, we'd stop. It was a girl!

I found out I was pregnant with number four when my oldest daughter was sick in the hospital. We were spending nights on the floor on a big blow-up air mattress, and my breastfed toddler was in a small playpen sleeping next to her sister's hospital bed. Those were some

another baby." I laughed, but the voice would not be stilled. It became a longing, then an almost desperate urge. I had to have this baby! I told my husband, who was very upset and adamant. "No," he said. "We are not having any more children."

We went to a flea market one weekend and I saw a car seat in perfect condition for only \$6.00. I wasn't even pregnant but I asked my husband if we could

marriage) went through a horrible, heart-breaking divorce. My life was turned upside down. I learned awful truths that had been kept from me all my life. My children saw and heard many bad things I wish I could have protected them from.

As a family, we had all been so close. My mother and father had lived one mile away. We went to their house pretty much every day and spent every holiday together. This was absolutely devastating! We all cried every day for months on end.

I had experienced six months of hyperemesis, and towards the end of my pregnancy I suffered terribly from Pubic Symphysis Diastases. I literally had to roll off the bed and have someone help me to



rough times! I felt elation at learning I was pregnant but was scared to tell my husband.

Imagine my surprise when he smiled and said, "This is the best thing that has happened to us all year!"

During that homebirth, my husband caught my third daughter, which was the first time he'd caught one of our children. It was very healing for him. Two years later, I was pregnant again, and we were blessed with another son. I cried with joy when I saw him. I had waited a long time for another boy. Finally, we decided our family was complete.

Fast forward three years. I was sitting on my bed knitting a baby blanket for my soon-to-be born nephew. Clearly, as if someone was standing over me, I heard a voice in my heart saying, "You will have

get it. He refused. I cried. I was so emotional at this point. I was desperate for my baby that I knew I was going to have, if only my husband would let me.

I told God that if he truly wanted me to have another baby, He would have to convince my husband and work on his heart because I could never change his mind. Within two months I was pregnant. Ask me why I believe in miracles!

When I was a few months pregnant, I was folding laundry one day. Again, that familiar and powerful voice spoke as plain as day, "You will have a baby girl." I smiled and kept folding.

I couldn't understand for a long time why God wanted us to have this baby and why it had to happen that year. I would soon find out. My mom and dad, after 34 years of marriage (and a seemingly loving

the bathroom. I could not stand or walk. Because my parents were in the midst of their battle, I had nobody to help me, bring me dinner, watch the children, or clean for me.

My children ran the entire household and did the best they could. They were amazing, but it was hard on them, and they fought often. Through it all, we became closer to each other; but they were the hardest days of our lives. I cried out to God, and wondered why I had to go through so much heartache.

Sometimes we do not understand, but I can now look back and see God's plan. He gave us that little baby to save our whole family! When I finally gave birth at home to our sixth child, a sweet ten pound baby girl, never have I seen such HUGE smiles on everyone's faces!

Our family stopped crying. We smiled and laughed and smiled some more. This little angel was a miracle. She took away our pain and healed our hearts! I think we have smiled or laughed every single day since her birth! I thank God continually for giving her to us.

After her birth, we decided, once again, that we were done. Our family was complete. I found a small tumor in my neck when my baby was a year old. By the time she was two years, the tumor had grown considerably. I tried natural alternatives, diet, and exercise to get rid of it. I tried a raw and liquid diet which shrank the tumor to almost nothing, but it also weakened me. I had to have surgery to have the tumor removed in December of 2010. It was a very difficult and painful experience.

Within two months of that surgery, I was once again pregnant. I was a bit scared of the birth since I am RH-negative and had not had the rhogam shot for

the past three pregnancies. I sought medical care to have blood work done and find out if I had been sensitized during that time to RH+ blood. I was on pins and needles for weeks. I prayed my heart out to God. I believed that God would not have had me get pregnant again, only to take my baby from me. If I had been sensitized enough, it could have required extensive medical intervention, many tests, much monitoring, and probable blood transfusions after birth with possible death to the baby.

When I went in for my test results, they were negative! I was NOT sensitized! I guess all of my natural homebirths, without intervention, no pulling on the cord, and letting it stop pulsing before cutting, etc. had really helped to keep me from becoming sensitized! I was so elated; I began sobbing in the hallway. I was SO happy! I could have my baby at home after all! I have never in my life felt such relief and joy in my heart. I thanked

God over and over again.

After a much easier pregnancy, I had a very difficult birth--my hardest labor and delivery to date. Three days of hard on and off labor with no progress and 13 hours of back labor. I was exhausted and weak. My seventh baby, another girl, was born in the bathtub. All of my trials and suffering had brought me to this moment. Though it was hard, I knew the Lord was with me and I was never afraid. Everything we must endure makes us stronger.

We have now decided to not make the decision whether to have another baby. We will let God plan our future.

JENNIFER BROTHERTON

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Buck and Jennifer's children are Samuel David (16), Madelynn Kaye (14), Hannah Elizabeth (12), Gabrielle Josephine (10), Benjamin Stirling (8), Meghan Grace (4) and baby Gwendolyn Rose (2 months)

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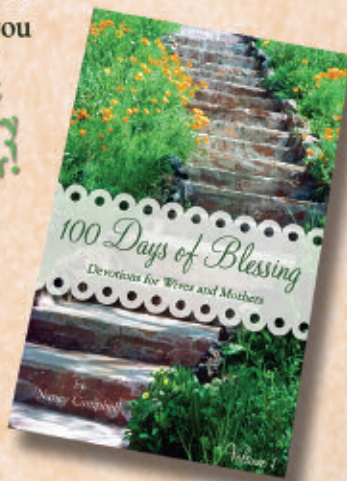
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Start from Birth

"From birth to about six, the child is tender, pliable, open and very, impressionable. He will never again be so pliable and open as he is in these early years. After six, his character and personality will have a "set" to them. God has made the child pliable and tender and open so that He might be molded toward God and His Word in the very foundations of his being by his parents. Whoever, whether God or the devil, wins these first six years in the life of a child will lay the foundations of that child's life—the one for good and blessing, and the other for ill and damnation! All you need to do for the devil to claim those first six tender, critical and life-forming years of your child is nothing. To give God and his Word a free and life-molding power in your child's life during these strategic years, you must do something and do it daily and earnestly.

~ Norman V. Williams



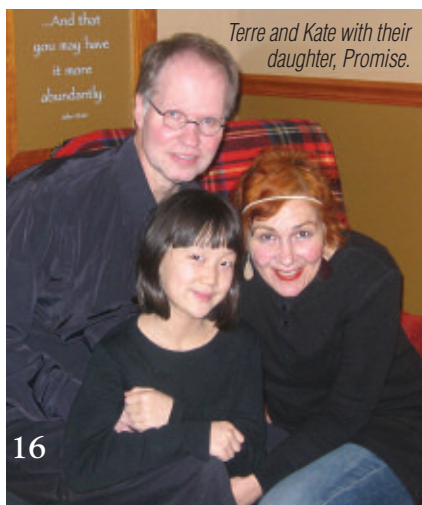
MY SHEEP, MUSHIES



Kate, the sheep lover in New Zealand.



Kate tending to her sheep in British Columbia, Canada.



Terre and Kate with their daughter, Promise.

As I leaned over the fence into her pen, I realized how much I would miss my sweet ewe friend. She had passed away in the night. If you were to observe her closely, you would notice her fleece was a little more fawn than the other orphans, sporting a mottled brown face, hence the name Mushroom (Mushies for short). I had raised her from day one. She was my friend, the ewe I will always remember.

I was living in northern British Columbia, 20 miles from the nearest town, and shepherding my own flock of sheep. I was well aware of the predators in this rugged land! It was a “hands on” adventure.

I was not unfamiliar with the sheep world. I was raised in New Zealand where sheep outnumber the human population—about 50 million sheep to four million people with no threatening predators. My father, Ivan Bowen, and his brother, Godfrey, were involved in the wool industry. “Bowen” was a household name in the sheep shearing industry, and for a season, my father bore the title of world champion shearer. I never lost the thrill of watching that fleece come off in 60 seconds! And, to this day, mint sauce with succulent lamb is still a delicacy, which we regularly enjoyed in our downunder homeland.

As I worked closely with the flock, I learned the heart of the shepherd towards the sheep. They knew me and I them (John 10:14). More than that, they pulled at my heartstrings, doing nothing other than being sheep, no matter how stubborn. They were my flock and I loved them.

We also, as the sheep of His flock, pull at the heartstrings of the Good Shepherd and, we don’t have to try! We have His heart! I discovered the fierce protective love the shepherd has over his flock. Our Shepherd is not the paid hireling and will never abandon His

flock. And this is just how you feel as a mother shepherd over the little flock God has given you. He has given you His shepherd heart.

Sheep cannot survive without the shepherd. They are totally reliant on the shepherd for their protection, sustenance, and healing of their wounds. They go astray, get sick, dirty, and are totally vulnerable, just like us—and our children (Isaiah 53:6).

One day I was sitting in the barn, quietly watching the flock contentedly chew their cuds. Suddenly, one of the older ewes stood up, looked at me, trotted right over to where I was sitting, and put her head on my lap. Can you imagine how that delighted my heart? I scratched her head and whispered endearments to her! Isaiah 62:4 tells us, “*The Lord delights in you.*” Sheep also delight the shepherd. How easily we move the heart of the Good Shepherd.

In contrast, the shepherd never rests if one sheep is missing. As the old hymn, says, “There were ninety and nine that safely lay in the shelter of the fold, But one was out on the hills away, far off from the gates of gold.” I could never sleep if one of the flock was unaccounted for after evening check up. We would search with our flashlights for that lost ewe, rejoicing when found, but saddened if lost.

I raised many orphans and watched them grow. They had a special place in my heart. I believe orphans have a special place in the heart of our Good Shepherd. I named every orphan, but I had a particularly soft spot for Mushies.

I would often take them to the lower field and watch them frolic. Mushies would come and lean hard into me. If I moved, she would fall! The shepherd loves it when we lean into Him!

They all knew my voice, but Mushies consistently responded. In the

summer the flock had their routine, leaving the barn early in the morning to graze in the lower pasture. At high noon, in the heat of the day, they trudged up the hill back to the barn for rest and water. I decided to test Mushies. I called her name and wondered if she would respond as it was exceptionally hot and she was literally panting for water.

"Mushies," I called, "Mushies." Back came her weak, tired bleat! Baaah! Wow! How thrilled our shepherd is when he hears the response of our voice to His call! Not only did the sheep know my voice, but I knew theirs (John 10:3-5). I could identify quite a few of the flock by the tone of their bleat. I certainly knew Mushies' cry. God knows your cry too, just as you know the cries of each one of your children.

Whenever I think back on this season of shepherding, a "Mushies" story is forever etched in my memory. It was a sunny day. I had gone into town to do the weekly errands, leaving the sheep contentedly grazing. As I hopped out of the car on my return, the sound of continual bleating filled the air. Something was up. It was Mushies. Her bleats were desperate.

I walked into the field. She immediately ran over, stood right in front of me, looked up at my face, and stamped her hoof, her bleats becoming more desperate by the minute. My heart sank. I knew instinctively what had happened--a coyote had taken her lamb. She was trying to say to me, "Where have you taken my baby? What have you done with her?"

To fully understand her anguish, Mushies was the only orphan that had not conceived for many lambing seasons. Usually, any infertile ewe is culled from the flock as production is important in a flock, but her special relationship with the shepherd saved her!

Three to four days earlier she had disappeared overnight, which was rather worrying, but she appeared in the morning with a brand new lamb. We were thrilled. It truly was the prettiest lamb in the flock, her markings of brown and white like none

other. Mushies was a proud mother. She literally strutted beside her little one, protecting her every move.

As I looked down at my bleating Mushies, my heart went out to her. I tried to console her. Of course, I could not convey to her that it wasn't me that had taken her lamb. It was the enemy! It was living in a rugged land! She cried for days and wouldn't have anything to do with me for weeks.

I never loved her more. As her shepherd, my heart ached; and I wept over her loss. She never conceived again. Even as I type, I feel again the pain she went through!

Our Shepherd, Jesus, aches over our pain and weeps over the seasons of our loss, never loving us more. That can often sound trite in a season of pain, but, truly, there is no one who cares for us like Him. Who knows us like our Shepherd? Who else has numbered the hairs on our head? Who knows when we rise up and sit down? Who knows our words even before they are in our tongue? (Psalm 139).

Truth rings from the old hymn, "No one ever cared for me like Jesus, There's no other friend so kind as He, No one else could take the sin and darkness from me, O how much He cares for me."

Our Good Shepherd will never leave us, forsake us, or turn His back on us. He is the Great Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. Lean into Him today.

Embrace your shepherd anointing that God has given to you as a mother. Be the shepherd He wants you to be to your little flock.

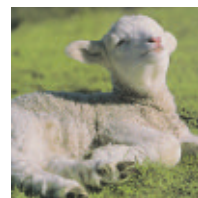
KATE MARCHINIAK

(Nancy Campbell's sister)

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Kate named her daughter, Promise because she held on to God's promise for a little Chinese daughter for about 18 years before she miraculously came to her. Promise is the greatest blessing and joy of their lives.



What you Sow is what you Reap!

We are all sowing and reaping every day, but do you ever stop to think about whether you are sowing the right crops? Recently, I did an inventory on my sowing and harvest. Some was positive and some negative. The positives are:

Sowing homeschooling and limiting peer interaction = reaping children that are more family centered and have time to pursue their individual giftings. Apart from their number one passion which is loving Jesus, Amy (22) raises alpacas and farm sits for alpaca farmers in our area. She also homeschools Zack (7) who has Down syndrome.

Ashley (17) sews time period costumes and hopes to start a Princess Party business for little girls, providing the costumes and entertainment. She is also our family cook and loves acting, singing, and dancing.

Sasha (13) as well as homeschooling, works with photography and horses. She has learned through professionals how to train the two horses she cares for and can now ride them. Each of the girls are financially productive by using their gifts, and yet staying at home under their father's covering.

Andre (10) loves to work with anything having to do with science and is an avid reader. Zack (7) was born when I was 48, and he is such a joy and delight to all of our family. He has a great sense of humor and loves to entertain our foster children.

Sowing foster care of toddlers and infants = reaping children who are learning to serve and go the extra mile; daughters who serve at home and who are making a difference in the lives of little ones. We have been blessed to have 95 foster children up to age three in the past three and a half years. We are listed to receive them after normal office hours, some in the middle of the night. Amy and Ashley do middle of the night feedings for preemie and baby foster placements and care for those who cry during the night and need reassurance.

Sowing daily Bible reading and prayer together as a family = reaping

peace and stability. Family devotions are an important part of our day. Every morning and evening each member of the family gets their Bible and turns to the passage we are reading. We each take turns to read, and then we discuss the verses. It is amazing what insights the children share.

We then go around the circle and each person prays whatever is on their heart to pray. After prayer, we always make time to talk about whatever the children want to discuss. This routine has helped our family immensely, especially when Zack was diagnosed with cancer at two years and was in the Children's Hospital for six months. The unity we enjoyed together at Family Devotions really bore fruit in that time.



Ron and Ruth

Sowing at being a homemaker = reaping peace in our home, being able to homeschool, and teach my children God's ways.

Sowing intimacy with husband = reaping unity and a happy relationship together.

Sowing limited electronics time = reaping time to read, do personal Bible studies, exercise, play games, play outside, and pursue personal interests such as sewing, working with animals, science experiments, and researching subjects in which they are interested.

Sowing kindness and encouragement = reaping friendship, love, joy, and peace in family relationships.

Sowing a serving attitude toward

one another in Jesus' name = reaping Christ-likeness.

Sowing humility = reaping the last shall be first! We all work on being quick to apologize when we realize we have mishandled a situation or have a wrong attitude.

Sowing for God's kingdom = reaping heavenly treasures and true joy.

The following are where I need to plow, fertilize, and sow good seeds.

Sowing anger and frustration = reaping division and hurt.

Sowing negative thoughts and talk = reaping bitterness, resentment, and a critical spirit.

Sowing too much computer time and Facebook = reaping less time to train our children.

Sowing earthly gain = reaping earthly treasure and temporary pleasure.

Sowing busyness = reaping tension in my life and in the home.

Sowing unhealthy eating = reaping overweight, less energy, and poor health.

We need to prepare the ground for a bountiful harvest. We plow with the truth of God's Word which takes time and work. We have to keep tending the garden. Small plants are tender, susceptible to bugs, hail, being stepped on, weeds drowning them out, rocky soil, and dry ground. Weeds grow up on their own without even planting. To get a good crop worth harvesting takes relationship with God, an ear to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying, time, prayer, thought, and wise counsel.

I have endured criticism for my choices to trust God with the size of our family, homeschool, and have our older daughters stay at home rather than go to college or get a career. As time has gone by, and people have seen the fruits in my grown daughters, the very ones that criticized now speak positively about their abilities, their servant's hearts, and the joy they exude.

God has a lot to say in the Scriptures on sowing and reaping. The following are from the New International Version.

Job 4:8b, "Those who plow evil and

those who sow trouble reap it.”

Psalm 126:5, “Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.”

Hosea 10:12-13, “Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you. But you have planted wickedness, you have reaped evil, you have eaten the fruit of deception... you have depended on your own strength.”

James 3:18, “Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.”

Galatians 6:6, “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A

man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

RUTH POMERANTZ

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Ron and Ruth's children are Jon 32 (getting married in May), David 30 (married to Cayla—Dryden (2) and expecting another in September), Amy (22), Ashley (17), Sasha (13), Andre (10), and Zack (7)



Amy with alpaca, Chinook.

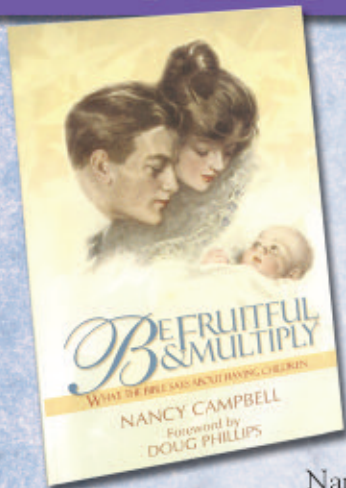
Ashley writes:

I was given the fabric for the vest/corset and decided to make a 16th century style outfit. After some study, I sewed small channels in the two layers of fabric and pulled cotton cord through it with a special tool. The blouse underneath was made from a sheet—it is super comfortable and I wore it to my nephew's birthday party, dressed as pirate.



Ashley with the corded jacket she made.

AUDIO BOOK



You don't have time to read? Or you prefer to listen while walking or driving?

This popular book is now available in Audio Version

Narrated by Jake Shanks, third generation radio broadcaster who has won numerous awards for media production in the audio world. Though this project was years in the making, he stayed true to his convictions and his desire to encourage others to bring forth godly seed, both physically and spiritually.

A great boon for husbands who don't have time to read but like to listen while driving to and from work.

Download from www.aboverubies.org

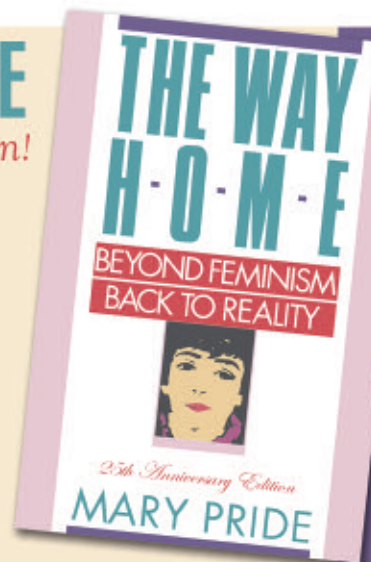
THE WAY HOME

25th Anniversary Edition!

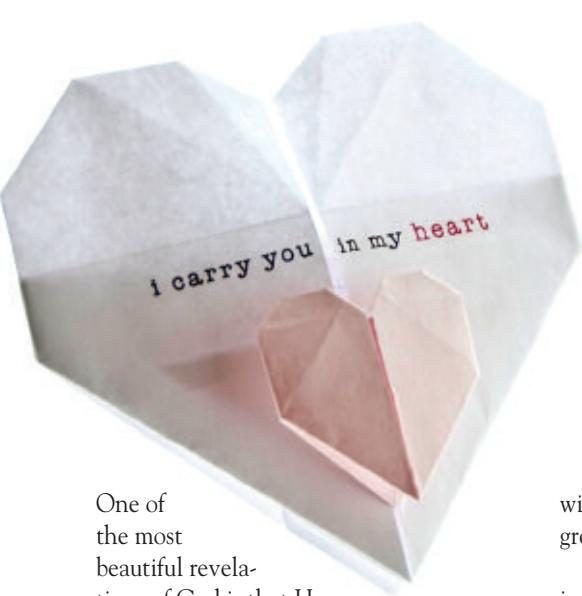
By Mary Pride

This nation changing book is in print again! Did you ever read it? If not, you won't want to miss out. It is a classic for every family.

It shows how the life plan set out in Titus 2:3-5 brings love and creativity to home, church, and society, and the deadly consequences to all three when women reject it. This new 25th Anniversary Edition includes everything in the original edition, plus a new Preface and Afterthoughts dealing with such topics as Home Business (what kind NOT to start), TV and the Internet (the latest research and some suggestions), Fruitfulness (why "trusting God for your family size" is not a "baby derby") and other topics. The Way Home brings the Bible's message on family and social roles to a new generation of Christian women.



Available from www.aboverubies.org



Folding your Flock

One of the most beautiful revelations of God is that He is our Shepherd. He is our personal Shepherd and He is the Great Shepherd of His flock--His people Israel and the church. Not only is He our Shepherd, but of all the animals God created, He chose to call us His sheep—and a sheep cannot survive without a shepherd.

The Chief Shepherd wants to shepherd His precious flock through His under shepherds. He raises up shepherds to watch over His flock, the church. 1 Peter 5:1-2 exhorts the elders to *"Feed the flock of God which is among you... being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."* And also Acts 20:28 which says, *"Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* The word "feed" means a lot more than giving food to eat. The word is *polmaino*, which involves the full responsibility of the shepherd—leading them to nourishment, but also guiding, guarding, tending, and folding the flock.

When Jesus spoke to Peter after His resurrection, He exhorted him three times, *"Feed my lambs... Feed my sheep... Feed my sheep"* (John 21:15-17). The first and last exhortation to "feed" literally means to nourish with food. However, the second time Jesus said these words he used *polmaino*, the word that means the fullness of shepherding.

I love the term, "folding the flock," don't you? In biblical times, the shepherd folded his flock each night. He counted each one and made sure they were all in the fold, safe and secure from any wild predators. He often slept at the door of the fold to protect his sheep. During the day, he watched over them constantly

with his rod and staff, and led them to green pastures.

God also wants you, as a shepherd-ing mother, to fold your flock. One of the biggest things you do as a shepherdess is feed your children. That's what sheep do all day long--eat! They rarely lift their

**You reveal
God's character
when you
tenderly nurture
your flock**

heads from eating grass! Now do you wonder why God calls us sheep? Don't think you are wasting your time when you seem to be preparing meals all day! This is a huge part of your shepherding.

But you do more than prepare meals. You reveal the shepherding heart of God as you tenderly nurture your flock. You walk in God's likeness as you nurse your baby, gently lead, and lovingly teach and train your little ones (Isaiah 40:11).

However, you are not only a sweet caring mother. You are also courageous! You have the enormous task of protecting the minds, souls, and spirits of your children (1 Thessalonians 5:23). You are guarding them from evil—from all decep-

**Shepherding
is both tender
and powerful**

tions, delusions, and detours from God's paths that are everywhere in this society.

When the enemy comes stalking your children, you are like a wild watch-woman as you grab your child from the

jaws of the destroyer. That's what David, the shepherd of Israel did. Such was his courage that He would grab a ferocious lion by the beard and rescue his lamb from its mouth (1 Samuel 17:34-36).

This protecting anointing is very much part of your mothering, because shepherding is both tender and powerful. The prophetic words concerning Christ, the Messiah say, *"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel"* (Matthew 2:6). The Messiah who will rule the nations with a rod of iron is also the tender shepherd (Revelation 2:27).

Although you tenderly shepherd your flock, you are also the governor of your home—leading, guiding, and guarding. You don't allow your lambs and growing sheep to become unruly and get out of order. Your responsibility is to govern them and keep them folded. This takes hard work and daily sacrifice (sometimes night and day), but shepherding involves laying down your life for your lambs and sheep (John 10:11).

Shepherding is so much part of who God is that He continues to shepherd us even in the eternal realm. Revelation 7:15-17 says, *"He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed (polmaino) them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

God will never stop folding His flock. He is the Chief Shepherd and will continue folding us throughout all eternity, leading us continually to greener and greener pastures and fountains of living waters. We will be totally satisfied and

contented sheep, yet always being led to more and more delightful pastures.

Do you notice that He is not only the Shepherd, but also the Lamb—the Lamb that was slain and who bears the marks of our salvation in His body. And, although He sits on the throne, He also dwells with us and enjoys the eternal days with us. He is now, and always will be, the “dwelling” Shepherd who loves to dwell with us and be part of our lives.

You also, as a shepherdess will always

want to be with your sheep, to dwell with them, and to be part of their lives. Even an earthly shepherd would not take a

A shepherd always wants to be with his sheep

lamb away from its mother or take the lamb out of the family flock. In the same

way, a shepherd mother cannot part with her little lamb, even for a few hours. As they continue to grow, she still wants them around her, to enjoy them and teach them in God's ways.

Don't only observe your flock. Fold them into your heart. Fold them into your secure and godly home. Fold them into your dreams. Fold them in to your daily prayers.

NANCY CAMPBELL

Brandon and Kristen with 8-month old Brooklyn.



Anyone who has ever been a stay-at-home-mom dealing with only one vehicle for any period of time, knows that it isn't easy to be the one “stuck” at home all day. This is especially true if you live in a small house or apartment, or are caring for more than one little one. You begin to feel quite lonely and depressed without even realizing it. You stare at the same walls, do the same household chores, and look at the same refrigerator leftovers. Soon, the complaining and discontentment sets in.

One day recently, I let myself become so upset by my circumstances that I made a whole list of things I was “tired of.” Not being able to do this or that, not having enough money for this or that, not having a husband who remembers to do this or that, and so on. However, as I wrote my list, the Lord helped me to see that for each thing I wrote, there was encouragement from His Word to combat the complaint!

I looked up each verse that came to my mind, and wrote it underneath the “tired of” to which it applied. This exercise was such a blessing to me!

Exodus 17:7 tells us, “And he called

Look for the Special Moments

the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?”

We can feel exactly the same way in our daily lives, but the answer is, YES, the Lord IS with us! He has not left us nor forsaken us! Furthermore, we have no earthly reason to complain!

Philippians 2:14-16 commands us to, “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life . . .” If we murmur, complain, and argue, we are not a good Christian testimony to the world around us. We are to be LIGHTS, not complaining little dark spots!

In Numbers chapter 14, we read that the majority of the Israelites did not even get to go into the Promised Land because of their murmurings! They gave up the “land flowing with milk and honey” for the sake of complaining. God does not desire His children to complain and grumble through difficulties! He brings us through difficult times so that we might learn to TRUST HIM MORE!

Again and again, God provided for the Israelites as they traveled those 40 years in the wilderness. He gave them food and water, and even kept the soles of their shoes from wearing thin, but yet, they still complained against Him. Psalm 106:21, 24-25 says, “They forgot God their

saviour, which had done great things in Egypt . . . Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word: But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.” Aren't we often guilty of doing the very same?

A thankfulness tool that helps me in my mothering journey is a “Weekly To-Do Chart.” On the left is my list of household duties that I need to accomplish within the course of a week, and on the right is a large bubble entitled “Special Moments.” The “Special Moments” bubble is to record the blessings and the happy little moments that occur during each week. It helps me to see, over and over again, that a seven-day week is NOT only dishes, laundry, and sweeping, etc. God sprinkles “Special Moments” into every week, if I'll only look for them! My husband comes home from work early, baby discovers her toes for the first time, or friends invite us out to eat with them. I see each week that GOD IS SO GOOD TO ME!

I Thessalonians 5:16-19 tells God's people to, “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit.” We mark each day in our home by either being thankful or complaining.

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No More “Give and Take”



*David and Anita's children are Israel (5),
Samantha (3), Caleb (2) and
Amelia (2 months).*

I have come to realise that there is a common misconception today that to have a good marriage you have to “give and take.” While it has its merits, to me this theory is flawed because in “giving and taking” there is always a loser. Even when you do it 50/50 down the middle, there will still be a loser because someone is always “taking” what they want from the other.

“Taking” implies that what is being “taken” is not always freely “given” by the other person. They may have caved into the pressure being applied to them to “give,” or they simply had no choice at all about what they “gave.” It was just “taken.”

Also, “give and take” keeps a score: “I gave this so you must give me that!” is the attitude many couples take. This score keeping brings all kinds of trouble along



with it, especially if one person feels they give more than the other. It can lead to bitterness, resentment, and inferiority. It can also lead people to feel that they “owe” or are “owed” something, when in reality, a gift is given freely; otherwise, it would not be a gift!

This is why I believe truly successful marriages are “give/give” relationships

where each person gives freely without keeping score and without even a record of who has given what. Both people give out of their love and care for the other and nothing more! There are no “brownie points” to earn in a “give/give” relationship! Each person has already earned a lifetime of “brownie points” just because they are husband and wife!

It should also be stated that it is not a competition to see who can be the most self-deprecating either! It is solely about each spouse building up the other in the small and the large things, hand in hand together each day of their life. Each one knows they are loved, cherished, adored, and valued higher than anyone else, so that there can be no doubt as to where each one stands with the other!

For a “give/give” relationship to truly prosper, each person must also know how to receive. Without this knowledge you could have the greatest giver as your husband/wife and never know it, because you are too busy thinking you are not worth the gifts they are giving you!

For me, giving has always been much easier than receiving. I struggle to accept the credit, love, affection, friendship etc. that I am shown, not just by my wife, but from anyone who chooses to bless me! I have to remind myself constantly to receive the gifts, both physical and emotional, that people give me and to value them as the giver values them. If you can do that, the world opens up to become a completely new place, filled with love and opportunities you never thought could be there!

Begin a “give/give” relationship with your husband/wife!

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*David and Anita's children are Israel (5),
Samantha (3), Caleb (2) and Amelia (2 months).*

Praying Saints

Prying saints are the only saints who have influence with God. Praying saints are the only saints in which the Holy Spirit dwells, for the Holy Spirit and prayer go hand-in-hand. The Holy Spirit never descends upon prayerless saints. He never fills them. He never empowers them. There is nothing whatever in common between the Spirit of God and saints who do not pray.”

~ E. M. Bounds

Testimonies of Vaginal Birth after C-Section

I'm not Crazy!

My husband and I carefully thought out how we wanted the birth of our first child to take place. We took natural birth classes and researched midwives and birthing centers. Being first-time parents, we were not quite ready for a homebirth (so we thought), and we were on a long waiting list at a birthing center. Thus, we decided to deliver at a local hospital that had a birthing center within the labor and delivery unit.

Unfortunately, that experience did not go as we had planned. After more than 24 hours of laboring with Pitocin, we were told our baby's heart rate had dropped drastically. Immediately, they prepped me for an emergency c-section. In discussing the experience with my husband, I shared my desire for a homebirth. So began my prayer and petition to the Lord.

Fast Forward to February 2010 when we found we were expecting baby number two. I immediately began looking for birthing centers and/or midwives that would accommodate us. I did not believe that I was supposed to continue having c-sections. Most birthing centers will not accept clients who have not already had a successful VBAC (Vaginal Birth after Cesarean), so that choice was not an option. But look at God! I found a midwife less than 30 minutes away who has a successful record in performing VBACs. So began our homebirth journey.

Deciding to have a VBAC was not generally well received. Some thought I was going a bit too far with deciding to have a home birth. In my culture, it is considered "unusual" giving birth naturally, not to mention at home. And did I say with no medication? WHAT? Are you crazy? Additionally, the women in my family were very concerned. I assured them that home births are legal, safe, and have been regularly practiced in the United States for decades.

Truthfully, I am not crazy. I am exactly what the Word of the Lord describes in 1 Peter 2:9, "*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people* (meaning a people for

God's own possession), *that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" I am an African-American woman who advocates home birthing, breastfeeding, home schooling, etc. And just for the record, there are many more like me who prefer alternative methods of health and wellness.

I started laboring Friday, November 27, 2010. My labor progressed over a four day period, with no breaks. This gave me greater appreciation for the freedom to labor in the comfort of my home. If I had

pain I had ever experienced in life. I could not stay in one position for a long period of time because the pain was so overwhelming. I went from bed, to birthing ball, to the floor on all fours, to the tub, to sitting on the toilet, to sitting in a chair. I performed this routine several times before delivering my baby.

To soothe myself during these intense contractions, I listened to praise and worship music, and repeatedly said to myself, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*" (Philippians 4:13). My husband's continuous, positive rein-



Kenneth Sr. and Alnisha with Eulalia (3) and Kenneth Jr. (1).

been at a hospital, they would most likely have induced my labor, administered Pitocin, and given me an epidural. And, if I had not have made "progress" after 24 hours, I would have been pressured to have a c-section.

Laboring at home was indeed no cake walk; my body went through many changes over the course of four days. I could not hold down any food or liquids. The only sleep I received was between each contraction.

During the active contractions (the contractions that were strongest just before the baby came), I was in the worst

forcement, and the sincere emotional support from my birth assistant was very helpful.

Finally, on Tuesday, November 30th at 4:42 a.m., after 93 hours of labor, I gave birth to a beautiful, healthy 9 lb. 1 oz. baby boy in my bathtub. After experiencing such an organic, hands-on birth, the prior events were well worth it! The events that took place were a reminder of how awesome God is, how He hears our prayers (Psalm 34:17), and that He truly does do exceedingly above all that we could ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).

As I reflect on the entire experience,

Testimonies of Vaginal Birth after C-Section

here are some of the blessings for which I am grateful:

- God answered our prayers and allowed us to have a successful home birth.
- Through the process, I learned that I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength (Philippians 4:13).
- At moments when I thought this birth was impossible, God showed me that all things are possible with Him (Jeremiah 32:27).
- I was able to give birth vaginally to a big healthy baby without receiving stitches.
- I was blessed with a loving, supportive, and patient husband.
- I was blessed with a patient and experienced midwife.
- I was blessed with attentive and personalized care from my birth assistant.
- Lastly, having a VBAC showed me another level of surrender to God as well as the tremendous strength that He provides in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)!

ALNISHA MUSCHETTE

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We were Wowed!

Our first baby was a c-section baby born at 35 weeks premature. It was devastating for me to have him born that way and I struggled to trust God afterwards. Our daughter, Eliyahna was a homebirth. My husband, Brandon, was deployed overseas at the time. He was miraculously able to come home and be at the birth. However, he returned overseas only 36 hours after she was born, leaving me home alone with our newborn, our 17 month old son, and no family or friends around to help.

I'd like to share with you about the birth of Halleli, our "Praise." On the day of her birth, I woke up about midnight and felt the same strong contractions I had been feeling every few days for the last couple weeks. They never lasted more than two hours. I returned to bed 30 minutes later and expected the contractions would soon stop. I didn't go back to sleep, and the contractions felt stronger by 1 a.m. I knew at this point I was in labor. I was excited!

Just before 2 a.m. I phoned my midwife. About 10-15 minutes after talking to the midwife, I gave Brandon the phone

and told him to call her back.

"What am I supposed to say to her?" he asked.

"I'm having strong contractions, close together!" I replied, while riding out a contraction.

"Where is her number?" Brandon asked.

"Under 'Midwife' in your phone!" I replied quickly before the next contraction hit. "Breathe sloooooowly," I told myself.

As he phoned, I knew there was no turning back and we were "here." I was excited.

The midwife confirmed she was on her way. Relief for me! Immediately, Brandon got dressed and started getting things ready. While he was getting things into place and filling the birthing tub, I paced the living room and dining room, praying our other children would keep sleeping.

I got into the tub about 4:15 a.m. Immediately my contractions got stronger. Brandon sat outside the tub next to me and held my hand. Between contractions I sat back and smiled. After a bit of time, I told the midwife I could feel her head! My excitement was building! This was just how I had prayed and hoped it would go.

It wasn't long before I felt the need to push. The midwife soon joined Brandon and me at the birth tub. My contractions were coming very close together! The baby was coming very fast. I had one quick break between two contractions before she was born. I looked down to see my baby in the water. Instinctively, I grabbed her up out of the water and held her close to my chest as I sat back to look at her.

"WOW! This is what a newborn looks like," was all I could think initially. This was the first time I had seen any of my children immediately after birth. It was surreal. The total time in the birth tub was 14 minutes and total pushing time was four minutes. Halleli was born at 4:39 a.m. on Saturday, May 14th, 2011 and weighed in at 8 pounds even.

Everything went so wonderfully, just the way I had prayed. The best part was



Brandon and Cassidy with their blessings--Gamiel (4), Eliyahna (2), and Halleli (11 months).

Testimonies of Vaginal Birth after C-Section

that this was the first night that neither of our little ones woke up!! God is good!

Brandon and I were both "wowed" with how well everything went. Brandon cut the cord about 6 a.m. The children woke up just as the midwife finished up the newborn exam and they knew right away that the baby had "popped out" of my belly. They were so excited! The joy and the excitement in our apartment that morning could have been felt upstairs, downstairs, and all around us.

God showed me His faithfulness through Halleli's birth. I realized that birth can be as beautiful as the children who come as a result of it. After two stressful births Brandon and I still marvel how good the Lord was to answer our simple prayers for a healthy and enjoyable delivery.

CASSY BRACKETT

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Nothing like it in the World!

When I had my first child, a beautiful baby girl, I took hospital classes on delivery and breastfeeding, met with my OBGYN, and decided I would use any modern medical treatments offered to me.

As I began labor, the contractions were painful and I tensed up each time. I lost my appetite and stopped eating, drinking, and sleeping. After 31 hours I was exhausted, mainly because of the lack of food, drink, and sleep.

My husband and I decided to go to the hospital. They checked my dilation and I was a half centimeter dilated. I couldn't believe it! ONLY A HALF? I thought I would lose my mind during. A few more hours went by and nothing progressed so I eventually agreed to have pitocin and narcotics.

After a few more hours, nothing much happened so I asked for an epidural. The anesthesiologist told me that sometimes in back labor an epidural doesn't work. I told her I wanted one anyway.

The epidural made little difference in my pain and I was completely exhausted.

Finally, I started dilating quickly and after 44 hours, Kaitlyn arrived! The doctor put her on my chest but I was so weak, I couldn't hold her. I vomited and started to black out. The staff had to re-catheter me because I couldn't stand on my own to walk to the toilet. I had torn my body to

When I started to go into labor I focused on relaxing through the contractions instead of tensing with them. I closed my eyes and tried to make low moaning sounds to offset the pain. I kept record of my contractions on my iPhone app and sent them to my doula. I talked with my husband about where I was with my labor. I went on about my day and kept eating



the 4th degree (the deepest one can go) and needed a small surgery to be sewn back up.

After coming home from the hospital I spent about three weeks in bed recovering. I took large amount of vicadin and had to deal with side effects from that drug as well during my recovery. I kept wondering how I would ever go through giving birth again, and yet I knew that I wanted more children.

When I discovered that I was pregnant with my second child, I knew that I had to do things differently. My husband and I took a 12 week Bradley Method Class. We hired a doula. We still met with an OBGYN, but we did not take the hospital classes.

This time everything was different.

(I had dinner six hours before delivery) and kept fluids in my body. I went to sleep any chance I had.

My doula eventually came over and timed my contractions. My husband had wanted to go the hospital but I didn't want to go! I was scared that I would get there and they would tell me that that I wasn't dilated and I couldn't emotionally handle that if it was the case. My doula calmed me down by telling me that if I wasn't dilated we would come back to the house and work on relaxing during my contractions and so I agreed to go.

When we arrived at the hospital I was eight centimeters dilated! I couldn't believe it! I thought that if I only had two more to go, I could do it! It was difficult and I did have a lot of self doubt, but I lis-

tened to my body and continued to work on relaxation. My water broke on its own, shot across the room and splattered on my husband's leg. It was hilarious!

At 12:15 a.m. (two and a half hours after arriving at the hospital) I gave birth to a handsome baby boy, Nathan. No medical interventions! I felt amazing! This time I held my baby close to me after the birth and nursed him. Instead of blacking out, I felt so great I walked to my postpartum recovery room. I came home feeling fully recovered.

I don't think that there is any "right way" to birth a baby. Every birth makes someone a parent and to me that means

that any way someone decides to have a baby can be a blessed experience, no matter how they do it. Also, I am not against medical interventions in child birth in certain cases, if needed. However, I want to encourage mothers who have had bad experiences that they don't have to be scared! Giving birth can be an amazing experience and there is nothing else like it in the world.

STACEY GRAVES

Vancouver, Washington, USA
staciavontastic@gmail.com
<http://thegravesfamilyonline.com/>

MARRIAGE



Quotes

"Connubial happiness is a thing of too fine a texture to be handled roughly. It is a sensitive plant, which will not bear even the touch of unkindness; a delicate flower, which indifference will chill and suspicion blast." ~ *Thomas Sprat*

"A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers." ~ *Ruth Bell Graham*

"A marriage where not only esteem, but passion is kept awake, is, I am convinced, the most perfect state of subliminary happiness: but it requires great care to keep this tender heart alive." ~ *Frances Brooke*

"When we first met we were two people who loved each other. Now we are one person—two lives inextricably entwined and held by love." ~ *Peter Gray*

"It is as absurd to say that a man can't love one woman all the time as it is to say that a violinist needs several violins to play the same piece of music." ~ *Honore De Balzac*

You can never be happily married to another until you get a divorce from yourself. Successful marriage demands a certain death to self. ~ *Jerry McCant*

"The great secret to a successful marriage is to treat all disasters as incidents and none of the incidents as disasters." ~ *Harold Nicholson*

"A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person." ~ *Mignon McLaughlin*

"Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove;
O no! It is an ever fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken."
~ *William Shakespeare*

THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF YOUR LIFE

**"Choose you this day whom you will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
(Joshua 24:15).**

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1. **ACKNOWLEDGE** that you are a sinner. It is your sin that separates you from fellowship with God. (Luke 18:13; Romans 3:21)
2. **REPENT** of your sin and turn away from it. (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38,39; 3:19)
3. **CONFESS** your sin to God and He will cleanse you and forgive you. His forgiveness is complete. When He forgives, He forgets! (Psalm 32:1,2; 1 John 1:7,9; Romans 10:9,10)
4. **FORSAKE** your own way and determine to follow God's ways. (Isaiah 48:18; 55:7; Mark 8:24-38)
5. **BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the Son of God. He is the One who has borne the punishment of your sin. (John 3:16; Mark 16:16)
6. **RECEIVE** His great salvation that He has purchased on your behalf. (John 1:12)
7. **BE BAPTIZED.** (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:38)
8. **THANK** Him for His great salvation and His blood that He shed for you. Receive Him gladly and ask Him to take control of your life.
9. **DETERMINE** that you and your household will all serve the Lord.

ABOVE RUBIES RETREATS FOR 2012

Check www.aboverubies.org for additional retreats or changes.

4 – 6 MAY, NORTH CAROLINA

LADIES RETREAT at Three Trees Retreat Center, North Cove area of Marion (about 5 miles from Blue Ridge Parkway).
Contact: Donna Peck, Ph: 828 756 4859 • peckd2007@yahoo.com
Or Charissa Gibson, Ph: 828 756 7098 • abide@inthevine.net

1 – 3 JUNE, LOUISIANA

FAMILY RETREAT at Rocky Creek Conference Center, Pineville
Contact: Angela Decoteau • Ph: 225 715 1587 • calmdec@cox.net

8 – 10 JUNE, ONTARIO, CANADA

FAMILY CAMP at Torrance (near Gravenhurst)
Contact: Alison Morrison • labadddc@hotmail.com • 705 458 9631

10 – 12 AUGUST, WASHINGTON

FAMILY RETREAT at Camp Brotherhood, Mount Vernon
24880 Brotherhood Rd, Mount Vernon, WA 98274
www.campbrotherhood.org • Ph: Pat Slater: 360 420 1468
Contact: Meighan Graham • Email: skagitvalleyrubies@gmail.com
Ph: 206 351 2942 or 206 909 3534

17 – 19 AUGUST, COLORADO

LADIES RETREAT at Jellystone Park, Larkspur, CO
Families are welcome! Fathers can enjoy time with their children at this amazing park.
Contact: Felicia Johnson: felipsha@gmail.com • Ph: 719 478 2113
Or Sarah Rigby: lovethatmkface@yahoo.com • Ph: 719 683 4067
Facebook: Colorado Rubies

24 - 26 AUGUST, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

FAMILY and LADIES RETREAT at Pine Valley Bible Conference Center (45 min. east of San Deigo)
Contact: Gary and Trish Evans, Ph: 951 681 4858 or Cell: 951 315 9078
Email: gtdkz@empirenet.com

7 – 9 SEPTEMBER, MANITOBA, CANADA

5th ANNUAL LADIES RETREAT at Wilderness Edge Retreat Centre, Pinawa. Michelle Kauenhofen • Ph: 204 388 6015 or 204 355 7682
Email: ceducate@xplornet.ca

28 – 30 SEPTEMBER, ALBERTA, CANADA

1ST ANNUAL LADIES RETREAT at Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton. Only 70 beds available! Register early to reserve your place!
Contact: Michelle Kauenhofen • Ph: 204 388 6015 or 204 355 7682

5 – 7 OCTOBER, NORTH DAKOTA/ SOUTH DAKOTA/MONTANA/WYOMING

LADIES RETREAT at The Upper Missouri Ministry, Williston, ND
Contact: Pam Rinas • kprinas@gmail.com • Ph: 425 737 2068
Or Melissa Brown • melissalahtibrown@gmail.com • Ph: 731 330 6858

12 – 14 OCTOBER, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

1ST ANNUAL LADIES RETREAT, Cedar Lodge, Dundurn, SK
Contact: Michelle Kauenhofen • Ph: 204 388 6015, 204 355 7682
Email: ceducate@xplornet.ca

2 – 4 NOVEMBER, OREGON

LADIES RETREAT at Aldersgate, Turner (South of Salem)
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Go to website: www.oregonrubies.com



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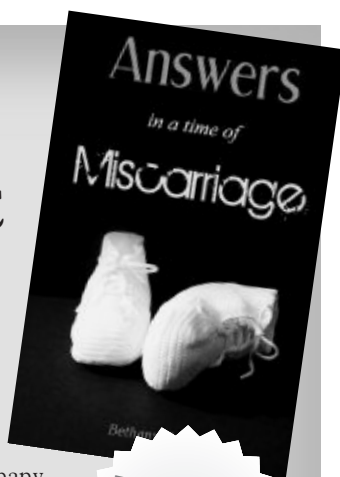
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84

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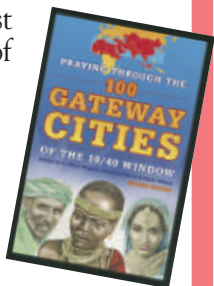
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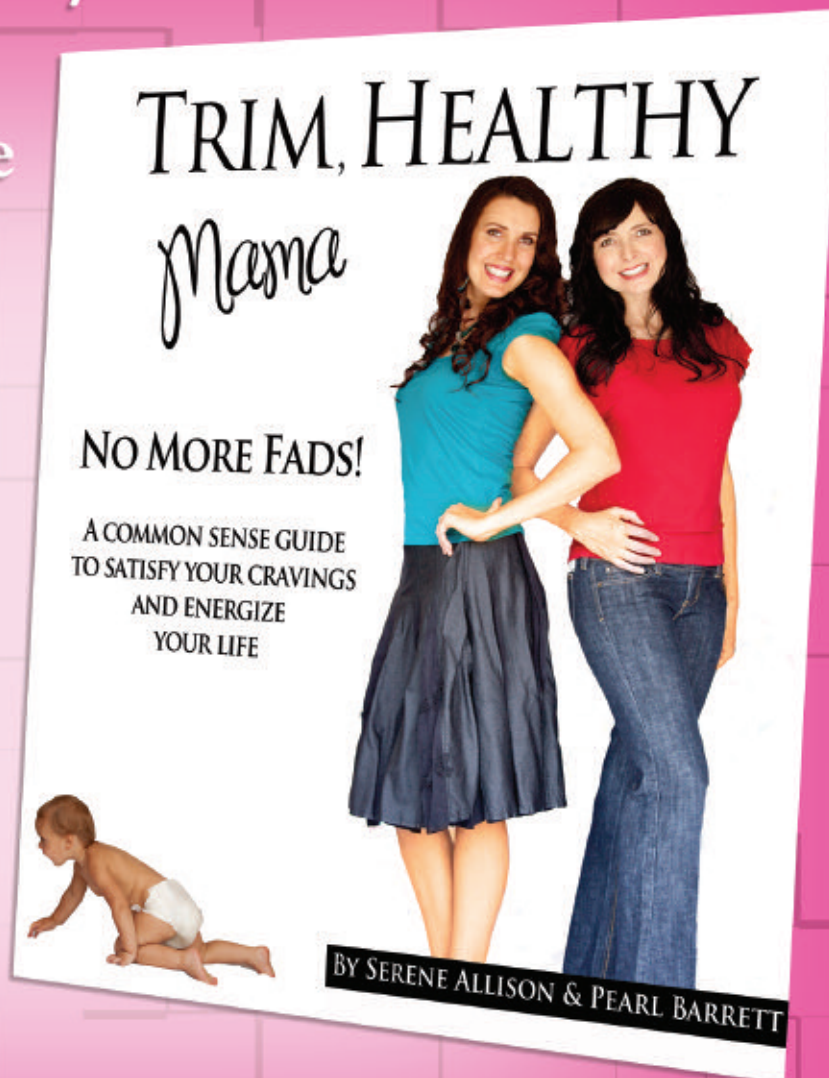
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