

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a yellow, backless dress, is seen from behind, looking out a window. The window has a decorative, ornate iron railing. The background outside the window is a dramatic, cloudy sky with warm, golden light. The scene is framed by dark red curtains. The entire image is enclosed in a decorative border with a repeating geometric pattern.

# The Color of Light

Spring 2006

Spiritual Encouragement For The Exotic Dancer

## *The Color of Light*

*Created for the heart  
of the exotic dancer!*

LIGHTDANCERS

P.O. Box 253

Anthony, Kansas 67003

Or

Come visit us at

[www.lightdancers.org](http://www.lightdancers.org)

[lightdancers @ lightdancers.org](mailto:lightdancers@lightdancers.org)

## "WHO ARE THEY?!"

*The Faces Behind the Pages...*

**Lisanne McMurray  
Tammy Dahl  
And the grace of God!**

Contributing Writers:

**Jackie Dawson  
Terrise Lyle-Brown**

Special Thanks:

**Kimmery Beels**

This season we'd like to thank

**Stefan Blondal**

For allowing us to use his  
beautiful artwork entitled,  
*"The Gate"*

For more information on  
this fine artist  
and to view more of his  
incredible work,  
please visit his website at  
[www.stefanblondal.com](http://www.stefanblondal.com)

### Publication With Purpose

Welcome to *The Color of Light*, the quarterly publication for LIGHTDANCERS, a spiritual support ministry for exotic dancers. It is our desire to bring the love of Jesus Christ into the world of the dancer by simply supporting the heart of the woman.

Our purpose through this publication is to serve the exotic dancer emotionally, physically and spiritually through articles of encouragement, people of integrity, and a variety of services and resources.

We encourage each of you to write, or e-mail us with any thoughts, ideas, or concerns that you may have. Hearing from each of you helps us to be able to better serve you on a more personal level.

*The Color of Light* emanates from the heart of each one of us in a unique way...the way that God intended. He is the One who illuminated the darkness of our lives, and it is our desire that through this publication, His light will be reflected unto you.

# SEASONS OF LIGHT

## Passion

Ah, passion.....I shared with Tammy that I felt this was suppose to be the *Season of Passion* and followed it with, "but I'm not feelin' it yet." So, I decided to pray about it a bit longer. But God is God and when He makes a declaration it is what it is whether or not I "feel it."

To be passionate about something does not simply refer to an emotional reaction within the structure of a relationship. This is a season of defining what it is to really be sold out for something. For me personally that something is my relationship with Jesus. How far am I willing to go? How much am I willing to relinquish? How far am I willing to walk to reach a destination that I cannot see? How much am I willing to sacrifice? To be able to answer those questions I had to allow God to unveil my motivations. To turn me inside out and reveal the "why" of what makes me tick. Yes, I could say I love God with all my heart and soul, I can tell you my passion burns for Him like no other, but were my motivations pure enough to allow Him to take me to the next level of what awaits? This mode of discovery I suddenly found myself thrust into had actually been unfolding for quite sometime and so here I was, brought to the point where my desires had to be defined, dissected and laid aside in exchange for the fullness of God's plan, for only then could I ever know what true passion really is. I allowed myself to be broken in so many ways as God began the process of rebuilding. And before I knew it, the passion that I was unable to feel before began to ignite within me.

So, how does all of this effect **LIGHTDANCERS** you may ask? Simple! **LIGHTDANCERS** cannot proceed into tomorrow without vision. And vision doesn't come by way of being passive and complacent. Vision is only had by way of igniting the fire and stoking the passion that fuels the vision. In order to do this, certain things need to be brought into play, into place. God has to lay the groundwork to build upon. Sometimes that requires tearing "the house" down to it's foundation, reinforcing and under girding the foundation to prepare it for the new structure that is soon to replace the old, and that is exactly what He is doing with **LIGHTDANCERS** this season.

It seems as though **LIGHTDANCERS** has not known such an outwardly quiet season of ministry for a number of years. I felt most distinctly that I was to keep our schedule of outreach events to a minimum during this year as a whole and so, have only chosen to step up to a very few select events. For much is going on right now in the spirit that cannot be seen, probably more than any other time since the inception of the ministry. God has been busy stoking the fire, tearing down the walls, reinforcing His foundation and calling those in from afar who will tend to the needs of what He has planned for **LIGHTDANCERS** in the future. Things are shifting and He is taking this *Season of Passion* to root us firmly in Him as we are readied and prepared for this next exciting step of the journey.

Passion....do I feel it now? You bet I do! And I'm not alone! But I had to believe in what I knew He was setting in my spirit before I ever saw or felt evidence of it. I had to step out on that limb and trust Him blindly, knowing in my heart that He would meet me there and trusting that if what I felt was me and not Him, that He would shut it down before I ever moved on it in the flesh. Trust like that only comes when you know that you know that you know that you are willing to go the distance for the One you are willing to pursue. My motivations have been revealed. My passion has been ignited. Willing to go the distance? I'm in this 'til the death. Some things just can't be denied and His calling is one of them. Where ever that takes us, whatever the cost. So welcome to our *Season of Passion* as God prepares us all to step over the threshold into the great unknown!

*In His Grace,*

*Lisanne*

# LESSONS LEARNED

## Friends

*People come into your life for a Reason, a Season, or a Lifetime.  
When you know which one it is for a person, you will know what to do for that person.*



*When someone is in your life for a REASON, it is usually to meet a need you have expressed. They have come to assist you through a difficulty, to provide you with guidance and support, to aid you physically, emotionally, or spiritually. They may seem like a Godsend, and they are! They are there for the reason you need them to be. Then, without any wrong doing on your part, or at an inconvenient time, this person will say or do something to bring the relationship to an end. Sometimes they die. Sometimes they walk away. Sometimes they act up and force you to take a stand. What we must realize is that our need has been met, our desire fulfilled, their work is done. The prayer you sent up has been answered, and now it is time to move on.*

*Some people come into your life for a SEASON, because your turn has come to share, grow, or learn. They bring you an experience of peace, or make you laugh. They may teach you something you have never done. They usually give you an unbelievable amount of joy. Believe it! It is real! But, only for a season.*

*LIFE TIME relationships teach you lifetime lessons: things you must build upon in order to have a solid emotional foundation. Your job is to accept the lesson, love the person, and put what you have learned to use in all other relationships and areas of your life.*

# SCRIPTURES TO STAND ON

## God Has A Positive Answer

### YOU SAY

### GOD SAYS

### BIBLE VERSES

**You say:**  
"It's impossible"

**God says:**  
All things are possible

(Luke 18:27)

**You say:**  
"I'm too tired"

**God says:**  
I will give you rest

(Matthew 11:28-30)

**You say:**  
"Nobody really loves me"

**God says:**  
I love you

(John 3:16 & John 3:34)

**You say:**  
"I can't go on"

**God says:**  
My grace is sufficient

(II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)

**You say:**  
"I can't figure things out"

**God says:**  
I will direct your steps

(Proverbs 3:5-6)

**You say:**  
"I can't do it"

**God says:**  
You can do all things

(Philippians 4:13)

**You say:**  
"I'm not able"

**God says:**  
I am able

(II Corinthians 9:8)

**You say:**  
"It's not worth it"

**God says:**  
It will be worth it

(Roman 8:28)

**You say:**  
"I can't forgive myself"

**God says:**  
I Forgive you

(I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)

**You say:**  
"I can't manage"

**God says:**  
I will supply all your needs

(Philippians 4:19)

**You say:**  
"I'm afraid"

**God says:**  
I have not given you a spirit of fear

(II Timothy 1:7)

**You say:**  
"I'm always worried and frustrated"

**God says:**  
Cast all your cares on ME

(I Peter 5:7)

**You say:**  
"I'm not smart enough"

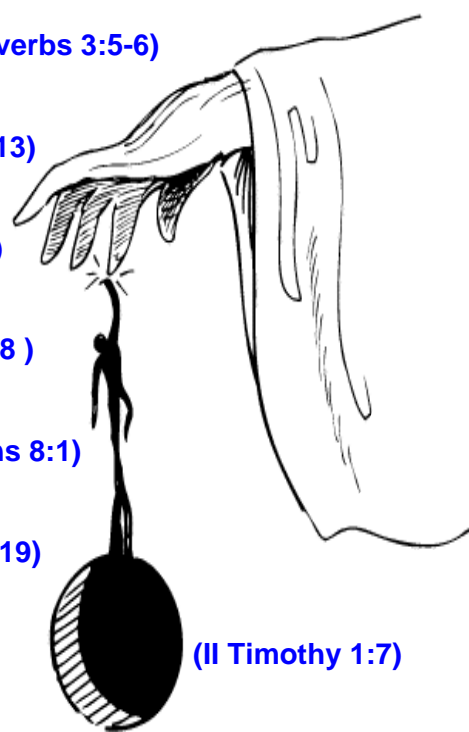
**God says:**  
I give you wisdom

(I Corinthians 1:30)

**You say:**  
"I feel all alone"

**God says:**  
I will never leave you or forsake you

(Hebrews 13:5)



# GRACE HAPPENS

By Jackie

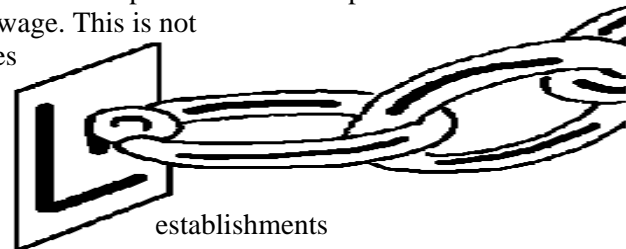
Dear Friends in Christ,

I am a former stripper who also was rescued from the life by Our Lord and I was grateful to find your ministry. I too feel the charge to witness to others in this world and you are a real inspiration to me. Below is my story. Feel free to use it on your site if you wish. As a stripper, I sometimes felt judged by people who weren't strippers themselves. Your website conveys the kind of acceptance and compassion women in our profession (and their clients) greatly need. Praise God that you have answered his call and may we bring many souls to Christ!

In Christ,  
Jackie

*You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell" (Matthew 5:27-29).*

I was a dancer for three years in a strip club in Hollywood, California. One of the oldest of its kind in Los Angeles, this club is a popular hangout for entertainment industry people of all stripes, from the aspiring, yet-to-win-an-Oscar screenwriter to big-name celebrities and rock stars. Really more of a "go-go bar" or a "bikini bar" than a strip club, the dancers were required to stay pretty covered up and we weren't pressured to sell lap dances to the patrons. Rather, we made our money on tips and were paid an hourly wage. This is not the case in most strip clubs, where dancers rely almost 100% on lap dances for their money. But I learned first hand, even at this "Disney version" of strip clubs, that being employed in the sex industry is anything but "sexy." **It is a lifestyle that is unhealthy, unsafe, and only results in misery for everyone involved.** And it is just as destructive and addictive for the people who work in it as it is for the people who patronize these



At first it seemed like a fun way for me to make a living as I tried to break into the industry as an animator. But in a very short time, I discovered a much darker side to the job, and its unhappy, and in some cases deadly, cost. Having participated in this world, I can say unequivocally that **the strip club business is nothing less than an invention of Satan to destroy human souls** by robbing them of their God-given dignity.

Many of the women in this profession end up in prostitution (becoming "take out" with the patrons), doing porn films, and modeling for adult magazines. I'll never forget one beautiful and highly intelligent young woman who decided to go down that road and started "acting" in porn films. She tended to laugh and joke a lot, but her eyes gave away her deep sadness. Strippers who end up staying in the business too long (and most do) often end up alcoholic, drug-addicted, lesbian, or simply end up going crazy. Some end up dead from the unhealthy lifestyle. One dancer I knew got her wake-up call when she was nearly strangled to death by her boyfriend, *who was a bouncer at my bar*. Another who worked at my club died of AIDS. One, a "feature dancer," was relentlessly stalked by a customer with whom she took things a little too far - a common occurrence in the strip club world.

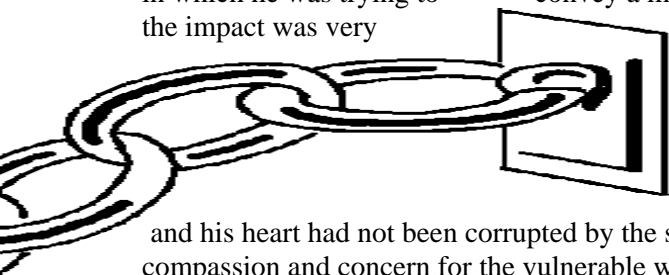
I was finally chased out of the job by a crazed, ruthless stalker, and eventually I moved out of town with my husband out of fear for my life. I used to subscribe to the belief that "exotic dancing" was an art form and a healthy expression of sexual freedom for women in our post-feminist age. This is merely a lie propagated by Satan. Several times I quit, only to end up missing the thrill, the easy money, the false camaraderie, and I went back to it. **Like a spider's web, it ensnares you economically, emotionally, and physically** and it tricks you into

wondering why you ever did anything else for a living when *this* is so fun, easy, and lucrative.

It is time to refer to stripping as what it truly is: witchcraft. It is witchcraft in the form of seduction and manipulation. The dancers "bewitch" and "enchant" the men with their serpentine, lurid dance moves, seductive looks, and charming, girlish prattle, all the while plying money from their wallets and cooing at them to drink "spirits" as the juke box blares out its raunchy rock/rap/metal lyrics. In fact, quite a few of my coworkers were practicing witches - no coincidence. Some of the dancers as well as the clients seemed downright possessed, or as if under a spell.

Many, if not most, of our customers were married men with children. How sad that they were wasting their time and money with us when they should have been at home with their families. Others were lonely single men who were using us as a substitute for serious, committed relationships. These men should have been putting their energy into looking for a real partner instead of fostering hopeless crushes on us strippers. Again, time and money wasted. **Just what the evil one loves.** I now pray the rosary every day as part of my daily spiritual cleansing from this dark and poisonous world that I participated in. And I pray for the souls of my former coworkers and clients, and that all strip clubs close down once and for all.

I converted to Catholicism last year, thanks be to God, and thanks in part to a bouncer at a neighboring strip club whose life was suddenly and tragically cut short. I never met him, but he was my husband's best and very dear friend. His life and death was a real wake up call to those who really knew and loved him. I was actually visited by him in a dream only days after he died, a dream that did not seem like a dream at all, but a very real encounter in which he was trying to convey a message to me. It was a short dream, lasting only a minute or so, but the impact was very



powerful. In it he gave me a great big hug. I can only describe the feeling it left me with as one of total love. Within months after this dream, I left the business, and Hollywood, for good.

This young man was raised Catholic, and although he had not attended church for some time, he still believed very much in God and his heart had not been corrupted by the seedy world around him. This was demonstrated in his almost saintly compassion and concern for the vulnerable women he was in charge of watching over every night, making sure they got into their cars safely. No one bothered the dancers during *his* shift. I wish I could say that all bouncers showed this much concern for the girls. I'd say that among the five bouncers working at my bar, *one* was actually there for the right reasons. This person eventually quit his job too, thanks be to God. The rest were there to either have access to the dancers after whom they lusted, sell drugs, or to sit on their butts and get paid. So deeply was my husband's friend's loss felt that I am told the dancers at his club wept while performing on stage after he died. Sadly, he was planning to quit being a bouncer, leave Hollywood, and pursue his true calling that year - working in criminal justice.

His story only proves how lethal this world is. Even at my own establishment, there were several violent deaths in just the three years I worked there. I can't even recount the number of fights that broke out, or the number of times dancers (including myself) were physically and sexually assaulted by patrons. All the deaths involved either drugs, alcohol, or gang activity. A spirit of anger and violence seemed to hover over the club, especially at night. The dancers generally made more money at night, but I stayed away from the night shift, when it seemed to morph into an entirely different place, a place much more sinister, perverse, and dangerous, attracting all manner of disturbed characters. Like abortion clinics, strip clubs are a breeding ground for evil of all kinds. The owner of my club was a woman, but was hardly the concerned mother hen she postured to be. She did nothing about the man who stalked me or any of the other predators who terrorized the other dancers. Like all strip club owners, her concern was with one thing and one thing only: money.

People need to understand that **the sex industry kills** - both the body and the soul. It seduces many women who look at it as a fun and harmless way to make good money while they put themselves through school or pursue a career in "showbiz" - but that's a selfish and foolish attitude. I get annoyed with these movies and TV programs that attempt to glamorize this depressing, soul-murdering world. More satanic propaganda. Strippers and porn

“empowered feminists.” So rife with physical and mental problems are the lives of porn actors and actresses that former adult film stars have created nonprofit organizations offering support services to keep them from committing suicide or overdosing on drugs.

A "G-string diva" is a no one to be envied or admired. This is not an “art form.” It’s a tragic, lonely, and dangerous lifestyle. Behind the sexy stripper facade is a deeply wounded and confused soul who needs help, who needs compassion, in short who needs the Lord. She usually ends up hating men for being stupid enough to give her money for gyrating in front of him. She knows deep down that he is exploiting her, and that she is using him. And she knows that the whole thing is a con game, no matter what she tells herself. One of the popular songs the women liked to perform to was titled “Living Dead Girl,” and for me, that epitomizes the state of an dancer’s soul. Some of my coworkers acted downright proud of their profession, strutting around as if they were “all that.” To some degree, I was proud of what I was doing too - after all, did it not take some guts to be a stripper? Were we not admired and lusted after by our male and female fans? What a vain delusion we were living in!

I have seen firsthand how this profession destroys relationships and marriages. I never knew one stripper or client who had a happy relationship, myself included. As one dancer told me, "If you want a happy relationship, then get out of this business." This certainly proved to be true in *my* life. My relationship with my husband vastly improved after I quit for the last time (and we got married and stopped living in sin). But why, then, didn't *she* leave? Why did she put up with the losers she kept dating and their abusive behavior if she knew it was connected to her job?

We need to send our prayers to the San Fernando Valley, home of the American porn film industry. We must pray that the hearts of the men and women enslaved by this cruel business be conformed to the love and mercy of Christ Jesus. As with all people trapped in a sinful behavior pattern, Jesus is their only hope. What I find particularly disturbing is that more and more women from mainstream society (such as myself) are getting into stripping and acting in pornographic films. The owner of World Modeling Agency, the porn industry’s leading talent agency in California, claims that in only a few decades, he has seen a huge increase in the number of visits to his office from young women eager to break into the adult film business. Just look at the "stripper fabulous" fashion trends popular among girls and young women today. Let's pray that these misguided and wounded souls begin to see themselves as our loving Father sees them, and that He wants better lives for them than this, and that they don't have to debase themselves to be loved or to earn a living.

*A significant postscript to my story: Very shortly after I quit my job and started preparing to move out of Hollywood, my apartment was burglarized. Among the things that were stolen were all my stripper outfits and jewelry, even my makeup. I'm one of those people who doesn't believe in coincidences; good or bad, I believe that God is in charge of everything that happens to us. I got the message here, loud and clear: I had done the right thing.*

# GOD GOODIES

## The Five Finger Prayer

1. Your thumb is nearest you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C. S. Lewis once said, a "sweet duty."
2. The next finger is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.
3. The next finger is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.
4. The fourth finger is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger; as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.
5. And lastly comes our little finger; the smallest finger of all which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, "The least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.





# THE BULLETIN BOARD

## What's New For You?



### THE WELL ~ MURRIETA, CA

Jackie Dawson of The Well comes to us from California. She is equipped with vision and a heartfelt, God inspired desire to make a difference.

*“At this point the vision the Lord had given me for **"The Well"** is threefold. First to reach out to the youth through High School ministry and other ministries such as Campus Crusades for Christ, College Campus Newspapers etc. to reveal the darkness of the Adult Entertainment Industry. I have been in touch with several Christian Organizations such as Citizens for Community Values to gather Outreach tools like the Dancer Hotline Business cards and other resources to hand out and publish in areas where people would be seeking/looking into this type of work...Want ads, Fredericks of Hollywood, Victoria's Secret, College Campus Employment Ads etc.*

*Second, but the primary vision for **"The Well"**, is to seek and save the lost. Target those Clubs that the Lord puts on my heart, pray, pray, pray (with lots of prayer partners) prior to an Outreach into the clubs for wisdom on what type of gifts, tracts, what to say, favor with management to enter, protection from. Key verses that encourage myself and other ministries are Proverbs, "A gift opens the way for the giver" and "the heart of the King is in the hands of the Lord". Main purpose in the Outreach to the Clubs is to share the love of Christ and to establish face/trust recognition and relationship (if they have needs; they know they can contact the ministry for help).*

*Which leads to the third part of the vision...being the hands and feet of Jesus. Ideally to have **"The Well"** become a source of mentoring those who have shown a genuine desire to leave the Industry through the feeding of the Word, getting grounded in a Bible teaching Church, job placement, life skills, possible temporary housing etc. So that's the vision from the Lord-Go, Jesus, Go! It's all Him!”*

To contact Jackie directly, you can email her at  
[come2thewell@hotmail.com](mailto:come2thewell@hotmail.com)



## **TREASURES MINISTRIES ~ LOS ANGELES, CA**

In 2003, while pursuing a Master's Degree in Social Work at UCLA, Harmony Dust founded **Treasures** as a dream born from a broken past and a heart healed by the love of God. Her message is simple ~ *"You are loved, valued and purposed!"*

**Treasures** is the only organization of its kind in the Los Angeles area. All gift bags, services, support, and referrals are provided to the women free of charge. **Treasures** operates as a volunteer driven, non-denominational, faith-based, nonprofit organization funded completely by donations.

**For more information, contact:**

**Harmony Dust  
Treasures Ministries  
PO # 2013  
North Hills, CA 91343-2013  
Website: [iamatransure.com](http://iamatransure.com)  
Email: [info@iamatransure.com](mailto:info@iamatransure.com).  
Call: 323-937-9525**



## **JC'S GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS ~RIVERSIDE, CA**

**JC'S Girls** is one of the most amazing new ministries to hit the scene yet....and they have taken a lot of flack from the Christian community as a whole because of it. Simply put, **JC'S Girls** consist of three beautiful, college educated Christian women who have designed a website that is directly in tune with the porn industry in such a way that it uses the beauty God blessed these women with to capture the interest of those would-be porn surfers. But you don't have to travel beyond the first pages of the website to discover their heart and their mission for Christ. These women should be applauded. They are the next generation of ministry and we are thrilled to see the incredible work they are doing through **JC'S Girls** for the Kingdom of God!

**JC's Girls Girls Girls**  
P.O. Box 21316  
Riverside, CA 92516  
Lori, Heather, & Tonya  
[www.jcsgirls.com](http://www.jcsgirls.com)  
[contactus@jcsgirls.com](mailto:contactus@jcsgirls.com)



## **A WAY OUT—MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE**

**CCV Memphis** was founded in 1992 and has offered assistance to the victims of the sex-for-sale industry since 1994. It was **the first ministry in the United States whose target population was topless dancers**. A full-time Director of Victim Assistance, **Carol Wiley**, (Hats off to Carol ~ the originator of dancer ministry!) was hired in 2000 and the **A Way Out** program was established as a structured program.

We provide:

Safe housing ~ Food ~ Clothing ~ Medical Assistance ~ Dental Assistance ~  
Professional Counseling ~ Financial Assistance

All services are free of cost to **A Way Out** clients.

Once accepted into **A Way Out** each client must complete **A Way Out** Intensive Outreach Addictions & Life Skills Program (IOP), weekly counseling, parenting, Bible study, Celebrate Recovery classes, and any classes deemed necessary by **AWO** staff. After spending at least two months in the program, each client is assigned a mentor who works with her throughout her tenure in the program. The goal is to help each woman grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Also it is our intent to give them a hand up, not a hand out.

**Carol Wiley**  
(901) 452-7884  
[carol@ccvmemphis.org](mailto:carol@ccvmemphis.org)

**A Way Out**  
P.O. Box 770775  
Memphis, TN 38117



## **NEW CREATION MINISTRY ~ VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA**

As an ex-dancer and former chairman of the board of directors for the Exotic Dancers' Alliance of Ontario, Paula Howley has much first hand experience of how all aspects of the exotic dancing industry. Thanks to her and several other ex-dancers, there is now a special forum on the web at **Christian Forums** specifically for sex- industry survivors. Then in September of 2005 Paula and Lloyd were interviewed by Cheryl Weber of the national Canadian TV show **100 Huntley Street** as they shared with all of Canada their story of the redemptive power of Christ which aired earlier this year.

To learn more about Paula and Lloyd's efforts in the adult entertainment industry, please contact them at:

**New Creation Ministry**  
GD Edgmont  
British Columbia, Canada V0N 1 N0  
Paula and Lloyd Howley  
[hopefordancers@hotmail.com](mailto:hopefordancers@hotmail.com)

## INSIGHT FROM THE INSIDE

### The Best Husband In The World

This one is for all of the women out there who **think** they NEED a man and can't exist without one! There is only one lover of your soul and He alone will stand by you 24/7.

This reminder of that fact was written by **Terisse Lyle Brown** –ex-sex industry professional and founder of **Freedom Outreach in Columbus Ohio**. I received it as an email from her and was so encouraged by it personally that I asked if I could print it here for you.

The girl hit it right on the money!

Looking back over the last several months, I often wonder how I made it. I had a revelation Sunday morning at church when Pastor preached about “Cave Dwellers”. I confessed and was determined at that point to come out of the cave and face my fears, adversaries, and situations. The spiritual battle did not stop, but I had to remember my past victories just as David did when he reminded himself that he killed a lion, a bear, and an uncircumcised (one without covenant) Philistine. So, I entered into a new realm of Holy boldness and faith in the Lord.

I was challenged that day to confess Isaiah 54:4 daily by saying “I have the best Husband in the whole wide world.” [**“For your Maker is your husband - the LORD Almighty is his name”**] Of course, the enemy wanted me to believe that God will not forget the things of my past, or the mistakes I've made; nor forgive me of the wrong choices and bad decisions that was partly to blame for both my past and current situations. I began dwelling on everything I had done wrong - rather it was one month, one year or twenty years ago. The thought of me doing anything “right” thing that day, that month and the majority of my life never entered my mind.

I realized I was peaking out of the “cave” but would return back in shame; forgetting that regardless of what the enemy was trying to get me to believe about myself, or even what people were saying - God said **“Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth (immaturity)”**. Isaiah 54:4

Day after day I continue to face the challenges of life and my current situation, but I am determined to run farther away from “the cave” and take as many people who dwelled therein with me. Often the cave *seems* like a safe place to be because that's where the enemy wants us to dwell. **“David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam... All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader.”** 1 Samuel 1-2 But the devil is a liar!

I often hear the voice of one preacher say **“If you can give it up, you can have it all.”** In prayer time today, the Holy Spirit said to me “Don't think or worry about anything that is happening to you today.”, Now, in my mind I'm wondering how “I” can do that. I am facing things that many do not understand and when they try to figure it out in the natural, there's still no answer. Right now I am facing a real Goliath in my life...and God says “Don't think about it! Don't worry about it!” **But God!!!**

Then, it hit me. I began seeing His word in a different way. I received a new understanding when God said **“In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me... I have created the waster to destroy. (But) No weapon that is formed against YOU shall prosper;”** Isaiah 54:15-17.

So, what do I need to give up? Man says “your car, your dignity, your integrity, your hope, your ministry...” **Ah..But God!** I realize that I have to give up fear and dread of what will happen next. I have to give up being in debt to people, in my finances, basic lack of things and the poverty mindset. And I have to give up being distressed and worried all the time, and trying to figure “it” all out, and trying to get other's to understand it all.

The bottom line is “it’s” God who is in control. We have to give up the fear when evil is being done against us because God said ***“I will contend with those who contend with you.” Isaiah 49:25*** We have to give up what we think and how we feel we about ourselves and receive God’s love for us. The enemy doesn't want us to understand all of God's ways. The Lord said, ***“For a BRIEF (short, little) moment I abandoned you, but with GREAT (large, extreme) compassion I will take you back. In a MOMENT (split second) of anger I turned my face away for a little while. But with EVERLASTING (never ending) love I will have compassion on you,*”** ***Isaiah 54:7-8 “Return to the stronghold [of security and prosperity], you prisoners of hope; even today do I declare that I will restore double your former prosperity to you.” Zechariah 9:12***

So, why do I have the best Husband in the whole wide world? Who else can forgive and love me like He does? Who else shows grace and mercy and teaches me how to grow and mature in faith? Who else displays the love that I am to show towards others? Who else truly cares for my soul enough to die, so that I can live? Who else loves my children, my relatives, my friends, and even my foes with the same amount of compassion?

Today, I choose to keep running. Running away from the cave and trusting that ***“Peace and righteousness will be (my) leaders!”*** I will stand in the midst of the battle believing that ***“the desolation and destruction of (this) war (in my life) will end.”*** For I know that ***“Salvation will surround (me) like city walls”.*** ***Isaiah 60:17-18***

The Word of God says, ***“No longer will you need the sun or moon to give you light, for the LORD your God will be your everlasting light, and He will be your glory. For the LORD will be your everlasting light. Your days of mourning will come to an end.”*** ***Isaiah 60:19-20***

***“(All) will see your righteousness. And the LORD will give you a new name. The LORD will hold you in his hands for all to see--a splendid crown in the hands of God. Never again will you be called the Godforsaken City<sup>[a]</sup> or the Desolate Land.<sup>[b]</sup> Your new name will be the City of God's Delight<sup>[c]</sup> and the Bride of God,<sup>[d]</sup> for the LORD delights in you and will claim you as his own... God will rejoice over you as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride.”*** ***Isaiah 62:2-5***

***Yes (God said it) and Amen (It is so!).***

God Bless,  
Terrise

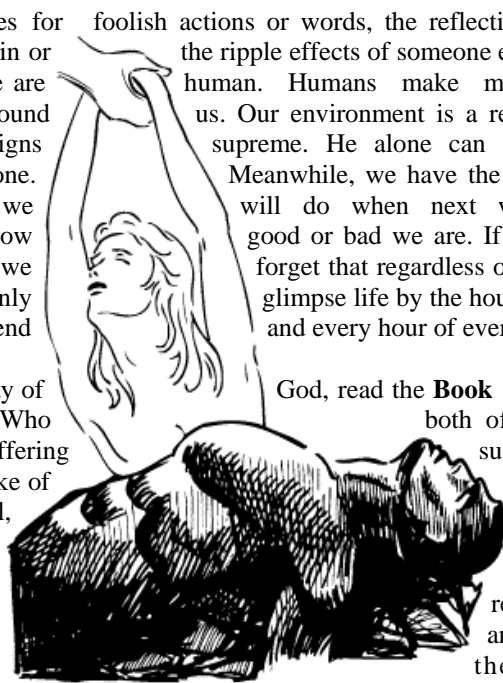
# REFLECTIONS

## Tides of Life

Why is it that we find it necessary to doubt God's best intentions for our lives? Why is it when things don't go the way we believe they should, that we feel that God has forsaken us, forgotten us, or is out to get us? How can we think that we have done something so terrible that warrants Him singling us out so that He can bludgeon us with His wrath? Is it that we truly think so little of ourselves or that we think so little of the One who created us?

Lots of us seem to have a pretty twisted perception of God. My favorite scripture is **Genesis 50:20** which says "*But as for you, you meant evil against me: but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*" Satan has nothing good in store for us. He wants to take our life and will attempt to do so in many ways and if he can't produce others in our lives to drag us down to his depths then he will often make ourselves our own worst enemy. Life is filled with choices and we are free to pick and choose as we see fit. Often times our choices will bring consequences that we did not anticipate. Casting the outcome of those choices back on God as though He were some malevolent entity that relishes in the destruction of His people is a misnomer that the most trusting of His children are capable of making from time to time.

When we are dealing with dire consequences for foolish actions or words, the reflection of our reality can become horribly dark as we stand in the midst of our sin or that brings us to such a point. The truth is we are mistakes. And life happens both to us and around us. The truth is God is sovereign. He alone reigns supreme. He alone can supersede the results of our choices, the misjudgments, the mistakes. He alone results, of how we "go through" and of what we will do when next we are faced with such a good or bad we are. If it were performance based, it wouldn't be mercy, now would it? How often we forget that regardless of our plans and our desires for our life, God knows the outcome. While we only glimpse life by the hour or the day or the year at best, He sees it in its entirety. From beginning to end and every hour of every day in between.



If you want a really good idea of the sovereignty of God, read the **Book of Job**. Job has this incredible conversation with God about who they are. Who both of them are, yet it is not just enough for Job to review his own life after suffering such unbelievably harsh losses. No, this is where he cries out to God in the wake of his brokenness trying to understand why it all is as it is. In the natural, one can look at Job's life and say, "This was a good man who didn't deserve to feel the pain and loss and hurt that he encountered in his life." But as I said, God's mercy isn't performance based and in the process of reflection, in the midst of the very battle for his life (Satan wanted him BAD and his own wife even told him to "curse God and die!") Job comes to realize the magnitude of God's unquenchable mercy and grace, not just upon himself, but upon every aspect of the world he lives in. Job invited Satan to reign over certain aspects of his life by his expression of unbelief (**Job 3**) and since nothing can occur to us without God's consent (**Job 1:12 & 2:6**), it is God Himself who allowed Satan to "sift" Job as it were. To sift....

Sifting is the process of separation by gently forcing the object in question through a sieve in order to separate that which is valuable from that which is of no use. Job was an upright and righteous man. God knew Job's character after all, he created him. Granting permission for the enemy to take from Job and inflict this misery upon him was given because God knew that the process would filter out certain attributes from Job's nature that were ultimately of no value. He knew that as Job "went through" he would remain faithful in spite of what he would encounter. Picture the process of panning for gold. Just as the gold panning mountain man spends hours upon hours investing in the possibility of his claim by way of the time and effort he puts into sifting pan after pan of sand, hunched over in ice cold river water, so it is that God invests His time and His efforts in us. He knows that every effort, every ache and pain, every heartache will ultimately result in the discovery of that one little nugget of beautiful, shining gold that is revealed when the light falls upon it. He recognizes the value in us when we cannot see it for ourselves. And in the moments that we falter and we become sidetracked by the things of life, God is faithful

enough to allow our life situations to hone us and shape us until what we cannot see in ourselves becomes all that is reflected to the world.

I am so thankful that God knows the outcome and I do not. I am equally as thankful that His faith is great enough and His will is patient enough to wait me out and see me through. How dark it can be in the midst of the going through when we don't feel that we can take on one more thing for fear of it breaking us down completely and yet God knows how much we are capable of. It's all such a delicate balance for too often it seems that any small addition to the load you are already carrying can be the one that breaks the camel's back. But if we allow those moments to build us rather than break us, to form us rather than engulf us, to develop our character rather than make us bitter and cynical, we would reap the benefit of experience that we would never have chosen for ourselves. I'm sure that there are a lot of you out there who don't contend with certain things unless your back is up against the wall and you suddenly find that you have to deal with it because you are now nose to nose with the thing that you dreaded most or anticipated least. So it is for many of us but that is when you learn what you are made of. This is the place in life where we either sink or swim. Are you one to sink under the pressure or are you more inclined to at least try to swim beyond the breakers? Many of us will never know until we're in the midst of it and many of us will be very much surprised by what we are really capable of when placed in those positions and faced with that which challenges us down to the very fiber of our being.

My Dad spent most of his adult life on the ocean in one way or another. A few years ago I remember him telling me of how the mistake most people make when they get caught in a rip tide is to fight against the current and try to swim to the shore. This is how they tire themselves out rapidly and why many end up drowning in such a situation. The secret as any surfer will tell you is to just go with the flow. Allow the tide to carry you. It won't take you out to sea as many fear, but rather only down the beach until it finally releases you where you can then make your way to shore. The fatal aspect here is not the current itself, but rather the fear that sets itself inside of us for the unknown and uncontrollable situation that we suddenly find ourselves in. As a kid I grew up on the beaches of New York. I was my Father's shadow tagging along to catch the biggest most fearsome looking wave just to be able to body surf alongside of him back to the shoreline where we would surface out of breath, grinning ear to ear to rise up from the waters shouting, "Let's do it again!" Then as a teenager, I was out there by myself one late summer's day doing my own thing, riding the waves in at my leisure. Suddenly I was caught by a ferocious wave that tossed me about and bounced me all over the ocean floor, holding me under until I thought it to be the last ride of my life. Finally I surfaced with a gasping breath, coughing and choking, dragging my body up the beach where I sat shaking as I contemplated what had just happened. In an instant, I went from doing my thing and enjoying my day to nearly losing my life. And as I sat there staring out at the vast expanse of the ocean I was reminded of it's immeasurable strength and how much out of control certain elements are in this world. I chose to put myself in the ocean that day and in doing so I took a chance and ended up on the downside of forces that I could not influence or control. But then I also chose to not allow that experience to scare me into retreating and keep me from the joy that also comes with what I consider the risk of living. I got a firm reminder that day of how delicate life truly is and a jolt of respect instilled in me for the forces of nature, but I chose to not allow it to paralyze me. It was a conscious choice I made.

So I leave you with this, when you get slammed by the next barrage, be one who chooses to ride the waves of life. Sinking is not an option, nor can refusing to return to the waters become an option. Seek the peace that God can bring and rather than struggling against the tide, learn how to go with the flow until you emerge safely delivered on the other side. Perhaps you will be a little shook, a little ruffled, but all the stronger, all the wiser, and soon ready to return to that place of challenge where you know in your heart that the only thing you can do is to rise above the unknown.

*With Love From Above,*

*Lisanne*

# FROM DARK TO LIGHT

## Poetry

blue tears

To think it over is foolishness.  
To think it done is ridiculous  
Surely my flesh still aches to caress me  
To fill in the blanks  
To fill in the lack

And the loneliness eats away at my soul  
Like a moth is consumed by the flame  
And my eyes drown in pools of fire  
As I cry blue tears of pain

Cascading down my cheeks like a faucet  
Washing over me like rain  
Staining my skin to remind me  
How empty  
How hollow  
My life has been

Where is this all going?  
Why this crashing in the sea?  
How can I rise above the waves  
that continue to smother me?

Taking me down to the depths  
Soaking me in the salt til' I'm pickled  
Blue tears raining down around me  
Blue tears on my pillow.

12/13/05

Redefine

Redefine me  
Mold me  
Create me  
Set me straight  
I wanted to defrost.  
Now I want to freeze.  
But you won't let me chill.  
And the pain is like pins and needles that I sit on...  
unwittingly living on the edge.

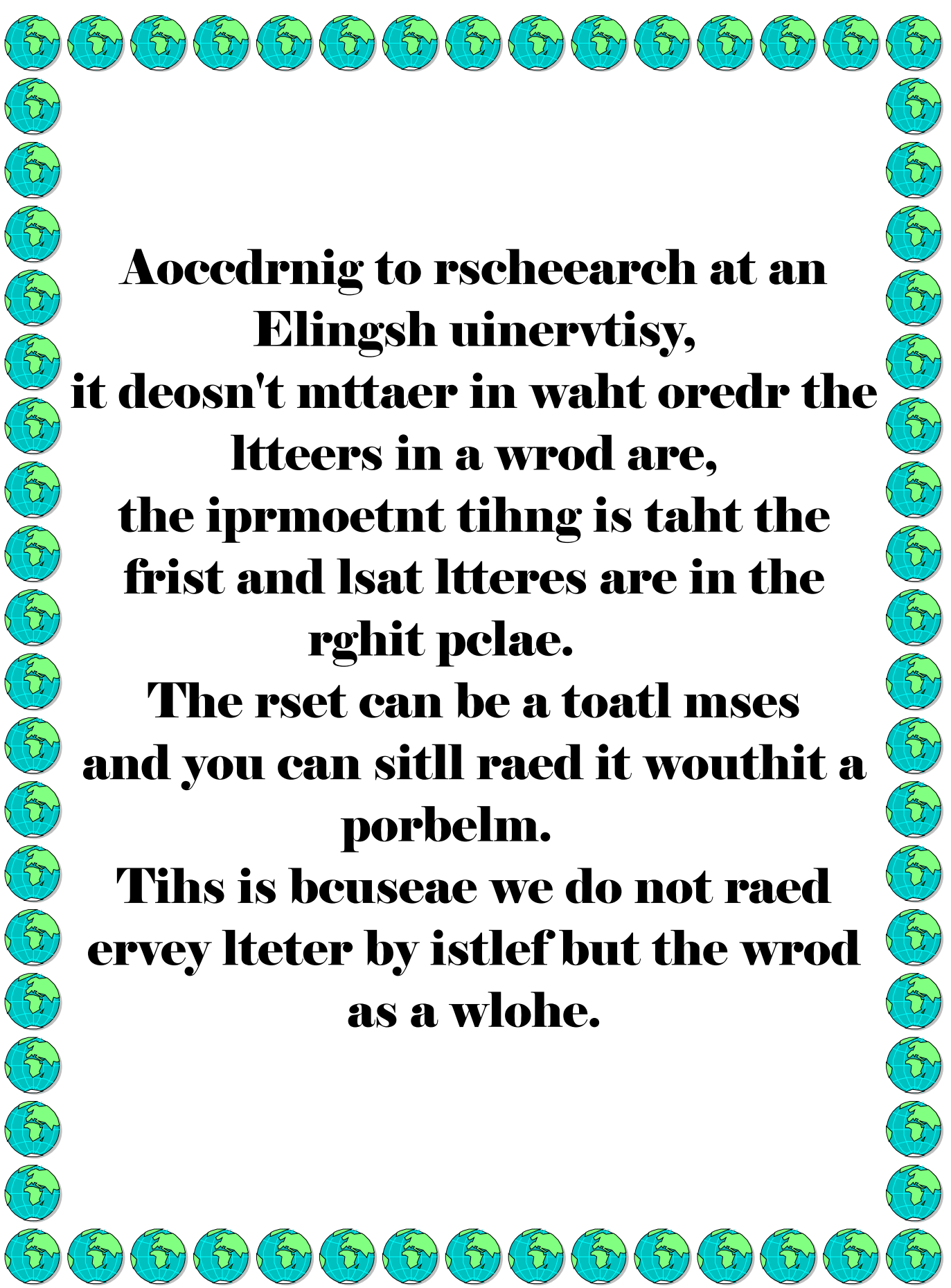
Can't define what you can't feel.  
Can't feel what isn't real.  
Don't see what you thought you saw.  
Only touched what was a rush to your senses.  
Standing all alone in the contact zone.  
Can't seem to find your grounding wire.

And who brought you out of the woodwork this fine evening?  
Who called you to the divine?  
To the sublime?  
Who gave you permission to be out of your mind?

Can't apologize for who I am.  
This is what I am from His hand.  
Too hard to swallow?  
Too hard to take?  
Too hard to make your own?  
Can't embrace what you've never known...  
Oh, but I can!  
You know this is true.  
Can't deny what I feel inside for you.

Forget your excuses  
And all you think you must do.  
You tell me you don't want the world...  
then why do you chase after it?  
Why do you hunger after all you don't have?  
And why do I hunger after you?  
Tell me,  
why do I hunger after you?

11/25/05



**Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at an  
Elingsh uinervtisy,  
it deosn't mttær in waht oredr the  
ltteers in a wrod are,  
the iprmoetnt tihng is taht the  
frist and lsat ltteres are in the  
rghit pclae.**

**The rset can be a toatl mses  
and you can sitll raed it wouthit a  
porbelm.**

**Tihs is bcuseae we do not raed  
ervey lteter by istlef but the wrod  
as a wlohe.**