

Winter 2005



Spiritual Encouragement For The Exotic Dancer

The Color of Light

*Created for the heart
of the exotic dancer!*

LIGHTDANCERS

P.O. Box 223

Anthony, Kansas 67003

Or

Come visit us at

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:

Ken Patterson

Special Thanks:

**To Jesus
for His grace and mercy
and
incredible healing and faithfulness!**

This season we'd like to thank

**Alphonse Mucha
for leaving us with his
beautiful artwork entitled,
"November"**

**that we have chosen
for the cover images of
this edition of
*The Color Of Light.***

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

Tending

"To tend the garden of my soul"...

There are many different seasons in life. The Bible is clear on this. **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** is a thorough expression of some of life's many, ever changing seasons.

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:*

*a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,*

*a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,*

*a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,*

*a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,*

*a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,*

*a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,*

*a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.*

I find that God is quite amusing. As I explored the word "tend" I was taken by surprise. My interpretation of it was one of reflection and limited movement. But in reality, the word "tend" is a verb that denotes action! It is in essence, the means to an end. It is more than taking care of something or somebody. It is moving gradually toward something, giving attention to somebody or something, and denotes the serving of somebody. In all of it's reflective qualities, it is in reality, a time of quiet action. How ironic.

As we move into Winter, we at LIGHTDANCERS are entering into our "Season of Tending". Simply put, it is a time of recharging. A time of falling back and regrouping. A time of taking a good hard look at the charges God has placed in our care and tending to the unspoken, to the unseen. What an exciting time that we enter into!

*During this season, outreach will be minimal as we look inward to the next step God would have us take for the Kingdom of God. We will be in attendance at **the Jeff Williams Motorcycle Swap Meet and Bike Show in Oklahoma City January 21 & 22** and God willing, in **Columbus, Ohio at the Easyriders V-Twin Bike Show February 17, 18 & 19**. What a way to start the New Year! 2006...big stuff awaits on the horizon! There is a shifting about to take place and I know that we are not the only ones who will see such things transpire. What a journey we are all on! Enjoy every step of it! Want only what God is placing before you. Focus. Do your best. Master it all to the greatest heights that any human being is capable of and prepare for the next curve ball that the Lord God Almighty would choose to launch at you.. There is no telling what He might call you to next! It's the only way to live!*

PIECES OF MY HEART

Winter

One bleak November day, winter set in. The north wind blew hard, temperatures plummeted and the first snow flurries flew. It was my day off. A day of getting lost in my thoughts was interrupted without warning when I was called into work. It was the last thing I felt like doing that particular day as I was already in a funk, but I knew it was probably the best thing I could do because I was in a funk. And I have found that in such moments, there is no better remedy for what ails you than in getting the focus off of yourself and onto other people. So I hoisted myself out of the warm bath I was soaking in to brave the fierce north wind blowing outside my door. It didn't take long once I had arrived before one of the residents at the nursing home I work at made the profound statement of the day. As I was covering her with a toasty warm blanket, she said, "I hate winter. But without winter we wouldn't have anything else." So simple, but in that moment, I was left with another reminder from the Father. Here I was, standing in the midst of my own personal winter of the soul...and it is necessary.

In winter, everything dies. That is the only way that new growth can come forth, the old has to die first in order for the new to take root. The old in those around me ~ the old in me. Spring brings forth new things. New growth. Strong and pliable. Fresh and new. It bursts forth through the ground around it. It shoots up from thawing ground that acts as its incubator. But the new growth would never be able to emerge if first the old had not died what looked like a permanent death. Lying dormant for months on the end with no sign of life. With no sign of hope or resurrection until it's appointed and the hour of reemergence, time. Down to the day of new birth, of new life. And in the midst of winter's dormancy, no one could convince another that such a day would ever come. That such a result would occur from the lack. Even the birds retreat in the winter, their homes ravished by the winds and the loss of cover from the falling leaves. Even the birds know that it is time to go. Yet even the birds know when it is time to return, and with them, they too bring new life, making their home yet again in the flourishing new growth of their old habitat.

Winter is a good thing. It gives rest to the things of life. It gives the chance to recharge and renew that which has now suddenly become depleted. It gives opportunity to spy the landscape and see that which is normally overrun by the tendrils of growth in its most lush and fullest form. But it is what lies below the surface, that which normally goes unseen and untouched by human eyes, by human hands, that gives forth life. And it is in winter when these things are stripped of their beauty and laid barren that a true assessment can be made of its deeper condition. Not enough of one thing, too much of another. No balance. Some things are best left to the Creator. God grows the lushest fields, the most colorful flowers, the strongest vines. He alone is the Master Gardener and man's efforts to recreate His design always falls short, for He knows that nothing feeds new growth like the remnants of that which has already died. Strange that nourishment should come from that which is already dead, yet is the key to all life, stronger and more full than ever it has been before.

So in this season of winter, let Him sift ~ through the rocky soil of your heart. Allow Him to prune as He sees fit ~ without telling Him what to cut back from your life and what to leave alone. Be willing to be fertilized ~ even when it stinks so bad and looks so horrid that you don't think you can bear it any longer. For God alone knows what it takes to get the results He desires. God alone knows what conditions must be met in the soil surrounding you into which your roots must travel in order to anchor themselves strong enough so that the storms of life will not topple you. God alone knows the beauty that this next season of your life will bring despite the appearance of death that surrounds you now. Trust Him enough to allow Him the ability to execute His design for your life so that in the season yet ahead, you will be able to spring forth in wondrous ways and with a new strength that you cannot conceive of right now. For despite the cold winds that blow and the ice that permeates all that you can see, it is best to just trust what cannot be seen to the One who created it all and simply let God be God.

SCRIPTURES TO STAND ON

The Fruit of the Spirit is

Love

Joy is love's strength

Peace is love's security

Long Suffering is love's patience

Gentleness is love's conduct

Goodness is love's character

Faith is love's confidence

Meekness is love's humility

Temperance is love's victory

"against such there is no law."



Galatians 5:22-23



INSIGHT FROM OUTSIDE

Worry Stew

Worry stew, It's what we do
Because we're Human Beings.
We know we're weak, but yet we seek
Control when authority is fleeing.

As youth we expect, and often reject
The truth of mortal life,
And often lose, when we choose
Amidst internal strife.

The very hour we have no power
Except that we've been blessed.
We give a nod to follow God
But often fail the test.

And so we fall, not submitting at all
We use God as a seasoning
To add some flavor, when we need a favor.
Most days we justify reasoning.

There's a recipe for you and me,
To eradicate hours of worry.
Into your pot, not cold or hot
Insert these things and hurry.

1. Insert one large Nail, God will not fail
And for us His Son was pinned.
He suffered and died—was crucified
So our life would never end.
2. A Button to press, we must confess
When stresses of life seem high
And easy way out, would eliminate doubt
But scripture suggests, easy is a lie.
3. A Watch reminds, one never finds
Enough time in each day
Yet God designed and refined
Plenty of time to do things His way.
4. A 2 sided Coin—We then join
To remind us to forgive
Cause when we don't, it's true we won't
Experience forgiveness in how we live.

5. The Symbol of Peace, must never cease
To support the Beatitudes we're preaching
To make—(not keep), is when we reap
The benefits of what we are teaching.

6. A Make-up Kit - to cover it
The blemishes of our past
We try to hide, at least outside
But the truths will ever last.

7. A Steering Wheel—it makes us feel
We have some earthly control.
But submission finds, it never binds
We must yield not a part, but the whole

8. A Large Band-aid—when we're afraid
To render others abrasions
But we can't fix, ever with human tricks
God needs—not our invasions.

And so you see—some Holy Tea
Should replace our worry stew
So when in doubt—we just leave out
The silly things we do.

We must rely—until we die
On God who has all power
We won't negate, if daily we meditate.
And believe Him—hour after hour.



Written By Ken Patterson
Based on Danny's Crock Pot Worry Stew Sermon
Oxford, Kansas

INVITATION

Remember My Birthday

Dear Children,

As you well know, we are getting closer to my birthday. Every year there is a celebration in my honor and I think that this year the celebration will be repeated. During this time there are many people shopping for gifts, there are many radio announcements, TV commercials, and in every part of the world everyone is talking that my birthday is getting closer and closer.

It is really very nice to know, that at least once a year, some people think of me. As you know, the celebration of my birthday began many years ago. At first people seemed to understand and be thankful of all that I did for them, but in these times, no one seems to know the reason for the celebration. Family and friends get together and have a ! lot of fun, but they don't know the meaning of the celebration.

I remember that last year there was a great feast in my honor. The dinner table was full of delicious foods, pastries, fruits, assorted nuts and chocolates. The decorations were exquisite and there were many, many beautifully wrapped gifts. But, do you want to know something? I wasn't invited. I was the guest of honor and they didn't remember to send me an invitation. The party was for me, but when that great day came, I was left outside, they closed the door in my face..... and I wanted to be with them and share their table.

In truth, that didn't surprise me because in the last few years all close their doors to me. Since I was not invited, I decided to enter the party without making any noise. I went in and stood in a corner. They were all drinking; there were some who were drunk and telling jokes and laughing at everything. They were having a great time. To top it all, this big fat man all dressed in red wearing a long white beard entered the room yelling Ho-Ho-Ho! He seemed drunk. He sat on the sofa and all the children ran to him, saying : "Santa Claus, Santa Claus"... as if the party were in his honor!

At 12 midnight all the people began to hug each other ; I extended my arms waiting for someone to hug me and do you know... no one hugged me. Suddenly they all began to share gifts. They opened them one by one with great expectation. Then all had been opened, I looked to see if, maybe, there was one for me. What would you feel if on your birthday everybody shared gifts and you did not get one ? I then understood that I was unwanted at that party and quietly left.

Every year it gets worse. People only remember to eat and drink, the gifts, the parties and nobody remembers me. I would like this Christmas that you allow me to enter into your life. I would like that you recognize the fact that almost two thousand years ago I came to this world to give my life for you, on the cross, to save you. Today, I only want that you believe this with all you heart..

I want to share something with you. As many didn't invite me to their party, I will have my own celebration, a grandiose party that no one has ever imagined, a spectacular party. I'm still making the final arrangements. Today I am sending out any invitations and there is an invitation for you. I want to know if you wish to attend and I will make a reservation for you and write your name with golden letters in my great guest book. Only those on the guest list will be invited to the party. Those who don't answer the invitation, will be left out- invitation? It is by extending it to others whom you care for... I'll be waiting for all of you to attend my party this year...

See you soon I love you !

Jesus



REVIEWS

Of The Anointed Kind

Ok ladies, (and those gentlemen who will by the grace of God read this) this is new, old territory for me. But sometimes ***"If you want something you've never had, you must be willing to do something you've never done."** And so it has been with my life over this last year. I have walked down so many roads that I have not traversed until just this year! For me, it has been a year of unparalleled passion as I have moved into areas of ministry that I never would have dreamed I was capable of walking in! My personal trials have been met with more intensity and passion for the gifts God has placed before me than I was aware that an individual could convey. The experience has been incredible! And through all of the joy, the tremendous loss on all fronts, through all of the brokenness of spirit, God has been gracious enough to allow me to see the other side of love. The side that is not all flowers and candy. The side that is not simply martyring yourself as a mercy zombie (as I have had habit to do in the past). No, I'm talking about the kind of love that sacrifices, not passively, but actively standing in a strength that is not your own to fulfill that which you know that you know that you alone are not capable of walking out alone. The kind that requires sacrifice and service and the death of your own desires for the benefit of the circumstances swirling around you and those involved in it. The side of love that hurts so deep and with such intensity that as you are being plunged into the fire, you'd swear every nerve, every fiber of your being is being exposed in the process. Exposed for what it is...exposed for what you truly are.

God's timing is strange. Despite the fact that you are only on page 8 right now, I finish the writing of this newsletter today, on January 1, 2006. These three pages are actually the last to be written. Now by my calculations, I am officially 2 weeks late in the completion and posting of this newsletter. Darn good thing I stopped running on my time schedule years ago! I'm sure that the posting of this edition will be exactly as God intends it to be...*right on time according to His schedule!*

I have always said that you can take away my TV anytime, but I cannot live without my music. I guess that's what happens when you are brought up in a musical household. Which goes hand in hand with the fact that often when you do find me in front of the TV, I either have a book in my hand or paper abounds as I am fulfilling this "blessed rage to write" that has plagued me most of my life. So on the following two pages, you will find the first reviews that I recall writing since the article I wrote for the *Jeffersonian Newspaper* in 9th grade about the Lynyrd Skynyrd concert (which by the way, was their 3rd to last concert) at the now razed Sportatorium in Hollywood, Florida.

I have chosen to close the year and ring in 2006 in this manner, for I know that as much as I have been challenged in this last year, I am not alone. I have chosen to do this because there are hidden treasures out there that need to be shared with others. Others who also struggle. Others who hurt even deeper than I have. Others whose world is as far from mine as I am from theirs, but others who need to be reminded just how much the Father in heaven loves us all the same regardless of our circumstances.

The message of forgiveness and love that come forth through these compilations have proved life changing for me. God succeeded in taking two things that were most important to me, the written word and the song of music and brought to my weary heart a long awaited healing of proportions I have never before known....perhaps because I have never before known the depths of such pain....and the redemption of such love! Both the music and the book hold a special anointing upon them that goes beyond the normal genre that they represent. There is tremendous healing to be had through each of these works of art and it is my prayer that you will desire His peace and His love for you to the point that you will be compelled to pick up one or both of them and discover the journey for yourself. After all, **"If you want something you've never had, you must be willing to do something you've never done."**

*In Peace At Last,
Lisanne*

*(Quoted from former RAMS linebacker *Isaiah Robertson*, founder of *The House of Isaiah*)

MUSIC REVIEW

Scott Stapp

At the risk of really showing my age (42 for those who are wondering!) and infuriating a number of people for other reasons in the process, I'm going to be totally honest here as anything less just isn't my nature. Last year, I ran into a friend at our one and only second hand store for about 50 miles. She was with her son, who as I was looking through the CDs, hands me one and says "This one is great! You should check it out!" So, since I have been known to listen to everything from blues to rap, (the only genre I can't get past is opera...sorry.) I took the then 15 year olds advice and bought the CD.

Once in my car, I immediately popped it in and listened to the song I knew best before investigating the rest of it. The CD was *Human Clay* by *Creed*. The lead singers voice was beautifully haunting and while I enjoyed what I was hearing, when they really laid on the heavier cords, I quickly found that they were a bit too heavy for my tastes at the moment. In the end, I passed my new purchase onto my 15 year old daughter on the condition that I could use it when the mood struck me. She agreed. And so my new *Creed* CD (which was of course old by the time I discovered it), with this incredibly accurate cover art of what I was feeling at the time, now had a new and appreciative home.

Then several months ago, my spirit was immediately captured early one morning with the official debut on one of the music channels of a new music video. I was sitting there pouring out my heart to my God, journaling from the depths, trying to grasp the victory amidst my most recent loss all the while questioning my Maker with the all illusive question of "WHY?!" I was instantly halted as my eyes were drawn to the screen. The cinematography of the video was unique and inspiring in itself. And then there was that voice. That voice that resonates passion and desire... and humbleness. That voice that pries at the corners of your soul and reaches into the secret places by way of it's honest, raw power. At that point, I cranked it. But then the lyrics caught my ear....the lyrics....

*"I have been on Heaven's doorstep,
With the door open,
One foot inside...
I've cried out...Lord, give me answers!
Please hush child. I'll tell you why...
You have...
Loved me when you were weak,
You kept...
Giving unselfishly.
Kept you from...
Falling...falling...
Everywhere but your knees!
You set me free!
To live my life...
You became my reason why to survive the great divide...
You set me free!"*

There it was! This man was not only singing about my weakness, he was singing about what I knew, what I have always known in my heart, that God has done and continues to do for me every time I allow myself to become bound up again...set me free!

I immediately put my request for this CD, *Scott Stapp The Great Divide* on my Christmas list, but Santa didn't deliver. So, Lisanne does what she often does in such times, I bought it for myself! Merry Christmas to me! Again, hearing this one in my car for the first time, I played it through and when it was done, I played it again...and again...and again! I have played it pretty much without ceasing since I got it the day after Christmas. Before crawling under my sheets, I tuck my laptop under my bed and let it loop continually throughout the night while I sleep. The only time when it is not permeating my senses, is when I am at work...and then I am singing it anyway! *Scott Stapp's* music has succeeded in doing for me in one week what the last three months of prayer, fasting, and broken submission have failed to enable me to do....it has allowed me to let go. To release my burden to the Father once and for all and truly put the situation in His hands...and leave it there! The healing balm, the soothing salve for the life threatening wounds my spirit had been struck with, came in the form of this man's beautiful serenades. It has healed me at the deepest levels. Healing like that does not occur unless the anointing of God is present, and the anointing of God is definitely present where *Scott Stapp* and *The Great Divide* is concerned!

Don't expect church music. This man fronted one of the biggest rock bands of the decade. There is nothing contemporary Christian or praise and worship like about Scott's music...there doesn't have to be. It is edgy and raw and real... just like the passion of God. I encourage those who are need a spiritual touch of the deepest kind to invest in this one. To learn more about Scott and his debut solo album, visit www.scottstapp.com

BOOK REVIEW

Redeeming Love

In 1998, two years after moving into a personal relationship with Christ, God set the wheels in motion for what was to become LIGHTDANCERS. It was during that time that He began breaking down the walls in my life of things long buried, but far from dead. In an instant, two abortions of 15 years earlier came flooding into the current flow of my life as fresh as though they had occurred yesterday. I was a mass of brokenness over the horror of my sin. During this time, I began working through the pain of the lose I had perpetrated years earlier and in an effort to halt another life from being so devastatingly effected, God, in His infinite wisdom, births not an post abortion ministry through my hand, but a ministry for exotic dancers. Indeed, God does not operate by what we think would be the most obvious choice!

So there I was in 1998, pounding away at the keyboard, looking over my shoulder continually (at the time my children knew absolutely nothing about the atrocities of Mom's former life...or Mom's former life for that matter!) as I compiled "*Dancing In His Light - A Devotional for Exotic Dancers*", which proved to be the launching pad for the ministry. One night I was converting the files from the big old true floppy discs (remember them?) to my new computer that offered the smaller version of discs. A new computer! More space, more speed, good stuff! I don't remember who, but a friend of mine put a book into my hands declaring it absolutely amazing. It was that particular night as I awaited the computer doing it's thing, that I began read. Immediately, from the very first page, I was hooked. I stopped only long enough to do what I had to do on the computer so that I could wait through it's process again with the book in hand. That night I read until my eyes fell shut. For the next two days I read every moment I had until I reached the final cover. In between I cried from places unknown as I saw the depth of God's forgiveness and love for what it really was. Again, healing through the anointing of God.

The author is *Francine Rivers* and the name of the book is *Redeeming Love*. It is the Biblical story of Hosea & Gomer. In a nutshell, God tells Hosea to take a prostitute for his wife. *Francine Rivers* recreates this Biblical account during the California gold rush days of the 1800s. I recommended the book to everyone I knew! I gave some as gifts, Christmas, birthday, and hey! Who needs a reason? I gave them away just because! I eventually bought one for myself...and gave it away too! Then a couple of years ago, I came across a sale and picked up everyone on the rack for \$5 each! I took those to Ohio with me and passed them out along the way, leaving most with a new ministry in Iowa. The book is absolutely amazing!

Then with the onslaught of my situation over the last portion of this year, I went to the library and checked out *Redeeming Love* once again. Struggling with issues in life is tough enough, but when you are in active ministry, the struggle ascends to new heights because when you feel you have failed or fallen, you know that there is more at stake than just you. I had one half way decent week where I was starting to finally feel more like myself than I had in months...and then I started reading the book. It cracked me open like a walnut. I felt like I was in a tailspin at a rapid pace. The little ground I had gained was being ripped from under me as God exposed the incredible depth of His true nature and the extreme measures of His love. A love that cannot be duplicated. A love that we can only submit too in shear brokenness of spirit. A love that does not end with death. A love that knows nothing less than complete faithfulness. A love that we can only pray we will at sometime in our life, be able to mirror it to another human being, even if only for a moment.

In the end, I did not heal in the same fashion this time as I did the first time around years earlier. You might say I've acquired a bend. But I gleaned insight into our Lord's love and His ways that I was spared the first time around. I say spared in a genuine way. God reveals Himself in layers, kind of like an onion. Peel back too much at one time and you won't be able to endure the pungent aroma of His nature. It's strong. It's intense. He allows us to see only what He would desire us to grasp one layer at a time. Sometimes only a peek are we permitted. Adjustments must be made. This time around, *Redeeming Love* broke me open again. There were my wounds, open and bloody and I was drowning in the pain and stench of my own pool of blood once again. But I knew the entire time as I read, that God was in control and had allowed this new shattering to get to the heart of the matter and somehow, I found the strength to rest in that truth as best as I was capable of.

Redeeming Love has gone through numerous printings since I first read it. The latest has a reflective Bible study built into it. So, now it's on my Christmas list for next year! You can't read a good book just twice! Not when the anointing is upon it as it is with this *Francine Rivers* masterpiece. If you're ready for God to rock your world, then pick up the latest copy of *Redeeming Love* and prepare for one of the most wonderful journeys of love that you've ever encountered!

THE BULLETIN BOARD

What's New For You?

AGAPE OUTREACH ~ LAS VEGAS, NV

Agape Outreach is one of the newest on the list of much needed ministries that has recently arisen in a most needed geographical location ~ Las Vegas. The Director of **Agape** is a wonderful, wonderful woman by the name of **Dayne Albert**. Because Las Vegas is the entertainment capital of the world, her concept is to establish a ministry to women in the entertainment industry, including adult entertainment with the purpose of introducing or re-introducing the women to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The way in which Dayne and **Agape Outreach** intend to go about this is through mentorship helping each woman discover and claim her true identity in Christ based on the mirror of scripture, not on the mirror of this world. Their desire is to provide a place of warmth, encouragement and scriptural support, for it is imperative that they understand that they are not alone. By providing the women with a loving environment it is their hope that they will feel safe to ask questions, request prayer and be honest and open without the fear of judgment. Ultimately, the goal is to bring each woman to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as well as providing an opportunity to join the church family. As their name reflects, outreach is to be a major part of this ministry and will include a Bible study designed specifically for those involved in the entertainment industry among other efforts designed to make those in the industry at ease with the concept of Christianity. **Agape Outreach** is a ministry of **Word of Life Christian Center** at **3520 N. Buffalo Dr. Las Vegas, NV 89129** or if you prefer, Dayne and her team can be reached at **702-672-5221** 24 hours a day.

SEX INDUSTRY SURVIVORS ANONYMOUS

Sex Industry Survivors Anonymous or SISA is a worldwide, non-profit 12 step group of men and women who are either currently in some area of the sex industry, and are trying to quit, or who have already quit but are trying to find recovery. They meet (whether that be in person, online, through the mail, or over the telephone) to share their experience, hope and strength.

Anne Bissell heads up **SISA**. You can contact her anytime at
info@sexindustrysurvivors.com
for more detailed information or check out her website at
www.sexindustrysurvivors.com

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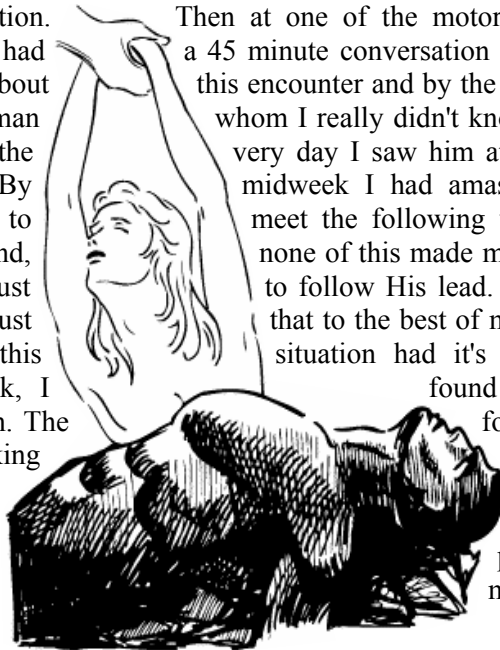
Tollfree 888-702-7273.

REFLECTIONS

Sheep Herds

Do you know why a sheep would stray from the herd? Do you know what happens when a sheep wonders off by itself? God places us together because there is safety in numbers. Since the great commission that we, as His children have been given is to spread the Gospel, He tends to hand select each of us to be among certain others to best accomplish this purpose. This means that there is no coincidence He has allowed you to be surrounded by the people that you find yourself in the midst of.

Earlier this year, I was driving home from doing something God had directed me to do, when God was gracious enough to give me a glimpse of a tomorrow that I could not yet conceive of and yet I knew in the moment I saw it that God was speaking to my heart of that which was yet to be. A year before He brought a very special young man across my path when I was 70 miles from home helping a local church do a fundraiser. This person became my connection to the local Chapter of one of the Christian motorcycle ministries. I had no contact with him other than that initial 10 minute conversation. Then at one of the motorcycle rallies this summer, he crossed my path yet again. This time we had a 45 minute conversation and then parted ways. By that night, I was questioning God intensely about this encounter and by the next afternoon, I found myself whom I really didn't know beyond 55 minutes of conversation in the last 13 months. Starting the very day I saw him at the rally, God had me begin gathering certain items to gift to him. I had me begin midweek I had amassed quite a nice package of goodies and so contacted him to arrange to meet the following weekend so that I could give him this gift. Now to the natural mind, none of this made much sense, but I've learned to question God too deeply, but rather, just to follow His lead. Of course that can sometimes prove easier said than done, but I did just that to the best of my ability. In the past, God has asked me do some unusual things, but this situation had it's own unique, quirky spiritual edge to it. Then throughout the week, I found myself face down for hours on end in deep, gut retching prayer for him. The following weekend, we met for the lunch, spending a couple of hours talking and eating and before we parted, I gave him the package. He was like a little kid in a candy store and we pretty much skipped our way out of restaurant that afternoon, both inwardly amazed and pleased at the outcome of our time in one another's company. I was on my way back home from this time when God then gave *me* a gift!



No matter where you drive in Kansas, there is plenty of open, flat, farm land to traverse. I took the back way, which though I had traveled plenty of times before, I was for the most part, not accustomed to going this route on a regular basis. As is common around these parts, I was surrounded by wheat, milo and cotton fields. There was a place in the road where it shifted from a southerly direction to an westerly one. Of course, that meant slowing down to take the curve safely. The sun was starting to set at that point and as I rounded the bend preparing for the evening sun to fall upon my sight in it's fullness, I was amazed at what I saw. On the right side of the road was a farm house with a large fenced field. It's a field that is always empty. Never had I before seen anything in the safety of the fence....until that day. As I passed by, there they were -sheep, hundreds of sheep. I smiled and out loud to myself I spoke, "*That's cool!*" but I didn't get too far around the bend when I realized, "*No, that's MORE than cool!*" And so I turned around, returning to the multitude where I stopped smack in the middle of the road and stared in amazement. I understood in that moment that God was telling me, "***This is what I will give you. This is the outcome of this union I bring together.***" Meaning that He is going to do an incredible work in the lives of others from this new friendship that He has just struck up in my life. I just sat there with my mouth hanging open with an overwhelming desire to record it for my remembrance. And there beside me, was my handy dandy camera! So, I grabbed it and got out of the car and there, in the middle of the road, as I raised my camera to

encapsulate the moment, they all turned toward me and looked directly at me! As though they were smiling and posing for the camera! Oh, how I laughed at God's utter sense of humor! After snapping three shots, I got back in my car, with the biggest grin you've ever seen across my face and went about my way. I had just received a promise from the Father in a herd of sheep on a back Kansas road!

Sheep themselves are amazing animals. But those that have been domesticated are easily lost and scattered, when without a shepherd, putting them at the complete mercy of their enemies, for they have tendency to become fearful and helpless without the guiding voice of their shepherd to lead them. In scripture, "sheep" often denote the defenseless and innocent, and at times, the abused people of God. (*II Samuel 24:17; Psalm 44:11, 22; 95:7; 119:176; Matthew 10:6, 16; John 21:16,17; Romans 8:36*) An amazing characteristic of sheep is that they will actually answer to an individual name given to them by their shepherd! How cool is that?! In Greece, it is commonplace for the shepherd to name his sheep and when called by name, the sheep will leave the pasture and his companions, and come running up to the hand of the shepherd with signs of pleasure and prompt obedience. But that is only when called by the shepherd, for the sheep are not only capable of learning their names, but most importantly, only respond to the sound of *their* shepherd's voice. They will not respond this way when approached by a stranger. Rather, they will not follow then, but will flee instead. In ancient times, it was customary for the flocks of several shepherds to pen in the same sheepfold at night, by which was stationed a doorkeeper to watch over the flocks by night. Once again, the flock would only respond to the sound of its shepherds voice and follow him out come morning when the doorkeeper allowed the shepherds in to lead out their flocks. So then, you might ask, if that's the case, how does a sheep stray from the herd? Well, there are several ways. One is that the call of a stranger will cause them to flee, which in hearing the voice of a stranger, could cause some confusion and land them in a precarious situation. Another is that striking the shepherd himself, their leader and caretaker, will cause the herd to scatter. And the other, is that if they don't learn to follow, they have occasion to wonder off on their own, often giving way to temptation and curiosity....much like man.

The occupation of a shepherd was looked upon in most places with honor, however in agricultural Egypt, shepherds were viewed with disdain. Nomadic shepherds, like Abraham, would dwell in tents and move about from one location to another in an effort of finding pasture for their flocks. However, there were times when the owners of the animals remained at a certain location and his servants or family members traveled with the flocks. Regardless, a shepherd's life was not an easy one. It is the shepherd's task to walk ahead of the flock, leading them to pasture. The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is one of predictable safety. The shepherd is exposed to the extremes of heat and cold and many sleepless nights. He endures much personal danger to himself as he protects his flocks from predators as well as from thieves. It is the shepherd's responsibility to keep the flock from scattering, to look for lost sheep, to carry the feeble and weary which he does close to his bosom, and to care for the sick and injured, not to mention contending with other less than desirable shepherds that one may encounter at the watering wells. It is indeed a dangerous and tiresome life.

So, with all that considered, why on earth would a field full of sheep be such cause for excitement in my spirit? Jesus is **"the Great Shepherd"** (*Hebrews 13:20*) and the **"Chief Shepherd"** under whose impervious direction the overseers of Christian congregations shepherd God's flocks. It is a position that requires willingness, unselfishness, sacrifice, compassion, eagerness, and obedience to the Great Shepherd. It is a position of caretaker of the most precious and valuable to our Creator God. Choosing the proper paths to walk requires that one keep their eye heavenward, for one misstep and not only does the shepherd find himself in danger, but he then endangers they entire fold as well. Seeing those sheep penned in the sheepfold showed me that I am merely the doorkeeper for that which God will call forth. He is the ultimate Shepherd whom we all follow. He is the One who ushers us onto new paths, allowing new relationships to spring forth, bringing in other sheep to walk with us and all the while, we follow His voice. We answer to Him alone despite the fact that we may travel together. He loves us enough that each has been given a special name by whom the One who created us all will at sometime, call us out by to follow Him down paths unknown. Some of us will make the journey completely. Others will become a living sacrifice. And others will yet stray, and become lost. It is in those moments when the entire flock must hold its position at the urging of the Shepherd while He goes personally and seeks that which is lost to restore him to the herd.

I have a picture on the wall at the top of my stairs of Jesus poised on the edge of a cliff, leaning precariously over a great precipice, staff in one hand while the other is outstretched. He is reaching down to the one lost sheep who

is stationed down the side of a sharp cliff, staring up at the Shepherd. It is entitled "The Lost Sheep." Jesus himself deems the one worth the effort. In the year preceding, in the week before and that very day, He had sent me out on a 150 mile round trip journey for "the one." He does this every time He sends me out into the world to encounter any one of His children, of His sheep who are in need of His care on some level. I may only be called to open my front door to find one or like that day, I may cross great distances and many obstacles to encounter His chosen. I am humbled to be called to such service. When years ago, I spoke the words, "God, send me!" I had no idea what that would entail. I knew only that I wanted with all my heart to be in the places where God would desire me to be for His Kingdom. I am honored to be the doorkeeper of the sheepfold. That's not to say in anyway that I have not flubbed up my job from time to time. I don't think we ever really grasp the value of what we are being brought into until we ourselves make a few trips to the precipice ourselves only to have Jesus Himself bring us back to the fold. And it's important to remember that as each of us have been at one time or another in our lives, (and probably will be again at sometime, as we are only human) those who are scared and fearful and don't know the Shepherd's voice, aren't usually so quick to follow and often choose options out of that fear that places them in even worse situations than they may already be in. But the Shepherd is patient and He is faithful and those He sends forth to retrieve those He cares for, must emulate these qualities as well.

It was a year earlier, when it was spoken to me that ***"He's got a place for you in the body that you can take your little goats and tend them beside the Shepherd's tents and He's got a place for you in the body of Christ there among them and it's a place of communion with Him..."*** Goats?! Ah, the goats which are known for their agility in traversing the precarious and dangerously high places, also have a place in the body of Christ! Jesus compared those doing good toward the least of His brothers to sheep, whereas those refusing to do so He likened to goats. (Matthew 25:31-45) And apparently, He's given me the goats! The ones who have tromped off into the most dangerous places. The one's who have treated themselves and those around them with less than the love that Jesus intended them to receive. What a charge! I get to venture off the beaten path to tend to the one lost, to tend to those who traverse the places that most would fear to tread, to call back the rebellious adventurers to join the rest of us who have been there ourselves. That was me.... and I guess in a way it still is! The rebellious adventurer has become the obedient adventurer that in all honesty, still has that rebellious vein in her! But what an honor, for the One I love most still chooses me despite my shortcomings! And I thought being a dancer was filled with an abundance of adventure. Shoot! It pales soooooo tremendously in comparison to what awaits at the Father's direction! How do I know this is true? Easy! I originally wrote the opening paragraph to this piece 5 years ago! For 5 years it sat uncompleted... until now...until my encounter with the Father's goats and His promise of the sheep that await! Man, God is just so incredibly faithful....and so totally cool!

*With Love From Above,
Lisanne*

LESSONS LEARNED

Peanuts

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schultz,
the creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners .

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one!

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier?

~THE LESSON~

The people who make a difference in your life are ***not*** the ones with the most credentials, the most money or the most awards.
They are the ones that care.



FROM DARK TO LIGHT

Poetry

Black Ice

I want a heart of black ice
The kind that holds nothing dear to it
One where emotions just slide off of it
And fall frozen to the ground

I want a heart of black ice
So that I never have to feel again
The kind of pain you made me feel again
That made me know I have loved again
When I watched my heart crash to the ground

I want a heart of black ice
Slick and solid with no cracks in it
Hard and cold to the touch of it
Dark and resilient in all it's luster
I can't muster the desire to feel anymore

I want a heart of black ice
Well preserved in walls
fortified by the coldest of steel
The kind that makes you feel so surreal
To know that the fortress cannot be broken
Rendered impenetrable by the reflection
of which I've spoken

I want a heart of black ice
A reminder of what happens when love dies
When love goes unrequited as I try to look in your eyes
When love never was all that
I believed with all my heart,
that it was, with all I was

Admire my heart of black ice
Desire my heart of black ice
You can't have my heart of black ice
It is mine to keep....
Until it begins to melt again

Lisanne

11/23/05

Unfinished

I never want to be done

I never want to be finished

**I never want to be the painting with
the last stroke complete**

Leave me undone

So that You can marvel at me

and wonder

And

reach out Your hand

to improve upon me

when the mood strikes

When the need arises

Place Your finishing touches upon me

Add and erase as needed

As necessary

Alter that which is no longer suitable

Exchanging it

for the way it looks from heaven.

Lisanne

11/30/05

**GOD
DOESN'T
CALL
THE
QUALIFIED,**



**HE
QUALIFIES
THE CALLED**