

Strengthening Families Across the World

# ABOVE RUBIES

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

Issue: Ninety

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# From Our Home to Yours



Nancy at Engedi's birthday party. I'm not very good at trying to be a hippie!

The great preacher and author, Dwight L. Moody said, "If I could relive my life, I would devote my entire ministry to reaching children for God!" He understood the power of investing in a child's life. As a mother, you are involved in this great ministry every day and all day! What a privilege. There is nothing more powerful that you could be doing. The investment you pour into your children will not only bless your own family, but the world. Even more-future generations, and eternity!

Life is full of activity as usual in our big family. With so many people, birthdays are part of daily life. And it seems that now the young people are making the tradition of having a Dress Up Party for each one. I'll give you a sampling of pictures in this editorial—wish I had room to show them all to you.

For Callie's 20th birthday she chose to have a "Frozen" party and everyone had to dress as someone from the movie. I could hardly believe their costumes. The grandchildren are so creative. By the way, who is Callie? She was one of our Above Rubies helpers for six months and is now employed by Trim Healthy Mama. In the midst of this, God brought Callie and Zadok

(Evangeline's oldest son) together, and they plan to be married next year. It's all very exciting.

When we celebrated Rashida's 18th birthday and graduation, she chose to have a Fifties Party. Harry (our son, Rocklyn's boy) is a chess player along with his brothers, and consequently they decided to have a Chess Party for his 10th birthday. Everyone had to come dressed in black and white. Engedi's 10th birthday was a Hippie Party. The children's parties, held at our home and on our big lawn, are not only for little children, but for the whole family—adults and children alike have to come dressed up. I have to admit that I'm not as creative as the children who really go "all out."

I hope you enjoy the front cover of this magazine. I decided to recreate the picture of the Above Rubies magazine back in March 1982 when Evangeline was only 16 years old. She is now 49, the mother of ten children, and still spinning at the very same spinning wheel. She got a job and saved up at eight years of age to purchase this spinning wheel. She is a Fiber Artist—from the raw wool she washes, cards or combs, dyes, spins, and then weaves or knits the wool.



Jireh (Evangeline's son) as Olaf.



Crusoe (Evangeline's son) as Kristoff with his reindeer, Sven.

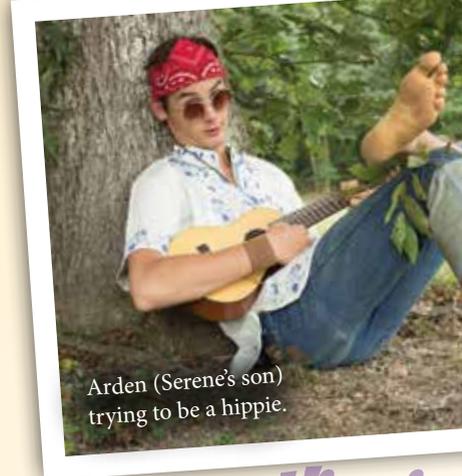


Meadow and Rashida at the Chess Party. Meadow came as the "Queen" in white.



Evangeline (16) at her spinning wheel in Palmerston North, New Zealand. Kimba was our family dog when we lived in N.Z.

## FROZEN PARTY



Arden (Serene's son) trying to be a hippie.

## Chess Party

## Hippie

# FIFTIES PARTY

I have lots of new and exciting products to tell you about in this issue of Above Rubies. Look for the advertisements through the magazine. It is just perfect timing for you to order for Christmas, too. You will love the personalized T-shirts where you will be able to choose from six different husbands and wives (some holding hands together) and different children at various ages, each with their unique personalities—over 40 different characters. You can choose a T-shirt for both you and your husband to wear together.

Grandparents—your Christmas gifts are solved. Personalize them for your married children. Young people—the perfect gift for your parents. You can make each T-shirt personalized and distinctive.

You will love our new devotional book from three generations—Meadow the granddaughter—Pearl's 19 year old daughter, Serene and Pearl of Trim Healthy Mama—my daughters, and me. We each write a message to you for 100 days to minister to the whole man—body, soul and spirit. And if you haven't purchased "100 Days of Blessing, Volumes 1 and 2," now's the time to purchase the three books at the special discount price. You, and everyone you buy them for, will be blessed out of their socks.

Keep on keeping on dear wives and mothers. I know that life is not always easy. We all face daily challenges, but God is bigger than all our problems. In the midst of your daily routine and challenges of mothering you can often forget the awesomeness of what you are doing. Did you realize that your children are not only a gift from God to



Rocky Barrett and Rashida Johnson at her Fifties Party (18th Birthday).



Crusoe Johnson and Arden Allison as newspaper boys at the Fifties Party.

you, but a gift from God to the world? Motherhood is far-reaching. It's not confined to your little home. Each one of your children have been destined by God and have been in His heart from the foundation of the world. God has a special purpose for each one of them to fulfill. What a privilege to raise a child who is "a gift to the world"!



Serene and Sam and Pearl and Charlie (THM) at the Fifties Party.

God said to Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I sanctified you. I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5 WEB). The word "appointed" in the Hebrew means "a gift" and in other Scriptures is mostly translated "give."

Rejoice in the greatness of your calling today. You are nurturing and preparing children who have been appointed as a "gift to the world." As you nurture them, teach them, and pray over them you will one day see the feats God will do in their lives to bless many people. This is the power of motherhood. It is not something you are doing for yourself—you are blessing the world!

Remember above all else that you are needed for your children. No one else will ever love and care for them like you do. No one else will ever be as sensitive to their physical needs, and especially their innermost needs, as you will.

Someone else can always replace you in your career, your organization, or even extra church activities, but no one can adequately replace you as the mother of the children

God has given you. You were born for this mission. It is your destiny. And it is their heritage.

Be encouraged again.



**NANCY CAMPBELL**  
Founder and Editress of Above Rubies

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

EDITRESS: Nancy Campbell

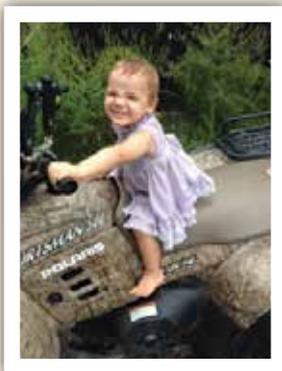
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FRONT COVER: Evangeline Johnson at her spinning wheel, Primm

Springs, Tennessee, USA. Photography by Rashida Johnson

\* Check Facebook at Rashida La'el Photography.



The latest grandchildren craze is four-wheelers. There can be six different four wheelers roaring through the woods around our home. Here is Haven (2) starting early. She is on her big brother, Arden's four-wheeler.



Party

## • God Keeps Surprising Us •



Kevin and Sheila's children are: Sara, married to Brandon and expecting their first child in February 2015, Carolyn (18), Cecily (16), Hayley (15), Jonathan (14), Chloe (13), Simon (12), Julian (5), and Demarcus (4).

*We* became licensed foster parents in December 1995 and Carolyn, our first daughter by birth was born the following summer. Cecily followed two years later. In October 1999, I received a message from our caseworker, "We have a three month old baby girl and she will probably be available for adoption." My heart leapt! We called her back to get more information and I told her we were expecting again. I'll never forget her response, "Congratulations! Will you take her?" We said yes and sweet Hayley was brought to our door the next day. In May of 2000 Jonathan was born.

My dear husband is an only child and was now Daddy to four little ones. Life was getting a little crazy! He was a good sport, helping with feedings as often as he could but he began to say, "Four is good. I'm content with four." So we chose to practice "Natural Family Planning."

All this time God surrounded us with families with children, and

homeschooling families to boot! One mom always told me, "Whatever you do, don't do anything permanent!" Secretly I hoped each month that my cycle would not start, thankful we'd not done anything permanent.

In October 2001 we received another call, this time from a foster mom. She and her husband agreed to take two children from a sibling group but were having second thoughts. They talked to our caseworker and asked if we would we be willing to take one of the children? What would Kevin say? He smiled, said yes, and we met the other families at the hospital to pick up six-month old Chloe.

A week later I realize my jeans are too tight and I am late. I can't tell Kevin we are going to have another baby! We already have five and he is content with four! I have worried myself sick and Kevin is noticing. One night after the children were in bed I told him. He threw back his head and laughed! How I had misjudged him! He was thrilled

and in June 2002 Simon arrived. For a week until Carolyn's birthday we had six children five and under!

In 2003 we finalized Chloe's adoption and our license was closed by the state because we were "full." We thought we were done. For the next seven years we allowed fear to win over God's grand plan.

In February 2009, God used a miscarriage as a wake-up call. We grieved deeply. We realized God wanted to bless us with children and we were standing in the way. I pulled "Be Fruitful and Multiply" (purchased years before and never read) from the bookshelf and began to read. At last the truth of God's Word sunk in and Kevin and I agreed to have as many children as God planned to send us.

However, years of cutting off our seed took its toll, and more children did not come. We talked about adopting again but the timing just didn't seem right. I came to a place in my heart where I chose to be content with

whatever God's plan was. During this time God sent us a student from the University where Kevin worked who needed a home and family due to sad circumstances in her life. She loved our children and we loved her. She became like a daughter to us, and three years later when she married, Kevin walked her down the aisle.

In September 2012, my friend Kim called. She and her husband had also been foster/adoptive parents and were licensed through Catholic Social Services instead of the state. I shared this information with Kevin and he responded, "Okay, let's do it." This could only be God orchestrating His grand plan!

In February we received our license in the mail. In May I was perusing a national database of foster children available for adoption. The most adorable African American boy popped onto the screen. I submitted an inquiry and called the contact person listed. She told me Demarcus had Coffin-Lowry Syndrome, which causes severe mental handicaps in boys, as well as global developmental delays due to low muscle tone. Despite his syndrome he was a very happy, lovable little boy. I showed Kevin the picture and told him what I'd learned. He believed God wouldn't put him in our path for us to do nothing, so we moved forward in faith.

One morning I was praying about Demarcus and asked God, "Are you really going to give him to us?" I heard God whisper, "Yes!" God opened my eyes to Mark 11:22-24 (HCSB): "Have faith in God. I assure you: If anyone says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, all the things you pray and ask for - believe that you have received them, and you will have them." I cried, believing God would keep His Word.

We'd been told many families had inquired about Demarcus and one would be chosen on August 13. Two weeks before this date, I was challenged to read Mark Batterson's book "The Circle Maker." My eyes were opened anew to the power of prayer and fasting on our lives and

circumstances. I fasted for a whole day. The very next day I called our contact person and as we talked about the match meeting she said off-handedly, "Well, the meeting shouldn't take too long. The decision is between you and one other family." Twenty minutes later our caseworker called to say we had been chosen!

Later, Demarcus' foster mom called. I asked her how they could bear the thought of giving this precious boy to someone else after having him for the last three years. She shared how she and her husband felt led by the Lord to foster special needs infants. Demarcus moved in with them at five months. At age two, he became available for adoption. She said, "One morning I was praying for Demarcus and the thought came to me, 'We love him and he's been here so long, maybe we should adopt him.' But I heard God say to my heart, 'He is not yours. I have a family chosen for him.' So every day since then I have been praying that Demarcus would be prepared for the family God chose and that they would be prepared to receive him. When they read your

biography at the meeting I realized that your family is exactly what I prayed for."

Demarcus moved in permanently on Mother's Day 2014, of all days God could have chosen!

In December we were asked to take another special needs boy who would soon be available for adoption. All we knew when we met him was that he was happy and easy-going. After talking with our children we decided that Julian should move in too. He has Cerebral Palsy.

These two boys have enriched our lives already! While physically they are very different, at four and five years old, they both do not talk or walk. But they understand! Our older children loved their little brothers from day one and are the best helpers we could ever ask for. While we wait for adoptions to be finalized we thank God every day for His faithfulness to continuing His grand plan for our family.

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# HIS LEGACY CONTINUES

John and I married in 1994 and eventually found a beautiful home in rural Illinois. My husband started teaching at a local prison.

He loved his work, and as babies came along, I loved being a stay-at-home mom. We both grew in our vocations. Being a teacher, myself, I realized the value of a good education and we discovered the homeschool option. It worked very well for us. We had plenty of room and both John and I loved to teach and gather motivational materials.

Through 15 years of marriage, God blessed us with eight living children. We lost three to miscarriage. When our youngest was seven months John became ill. He was strong and disliked using chemicals of any kind and no one took his illness very seriously. But as weeks passed he became worse. We went to the doctor (again) and discovered he had Leukemia.

I honestly did not believe it was true, at first. It was not until the doctor told me that he had about three weeks to live, unless he was treated immediately that it began to sink in. John and I had divided our work load all through our marriage and suddenly he was going to be in the hospital full time! Thank God we had moved back to family and had a wonderfully supportive network of friends. John worked hard for the next several months at staying alive, and I worked hard learning to do everything that needed to be done—shopping, fixing things, working as a liaison between his work, insurance companies, doctors, and whatever else that came along.

After heavy chemotherapy, John went into remission which lasted almost one year before the cancer came back. At this point the only option was a stem-cell transplant, which his sister, Jennifer, donated. Stem-cell transplants



The Frailey family taken shortly before John passed away: Ian (18), William (17), Kristin (15), Teresa (13), Laura (11), Rebekah (9), Daniel (7), and Elizabeth (5).

are wonderful in that they can keep you alive, but can be treacherous if your body rejects them. John's body eventually rejected his. He got blood clots, skin cancer, skin boils and lesions, nearly lost his sight, and lost all his teeth. He ended up back on disability and was fighting for his life every step of the way.

The last few months of 2013 were very painful, but John wouldn't give up. He kept smiling and tried to be encouraging to everyone. He worked on his carvings and drawings and made plans for the garden. He made jokes at meals even though eating was a very painful experience for him. He also had a habit of finding unique gifts for the children for birthdays and Christmas. He went to church faithfully and believed that God knew best. He never doubted God's wisdom, even during the worst of his suffering.

As a wife and mother I had to bear the grief of his pain, my children's pain, and my own grief. We hated to see him suffer but were helpless to stop the progression of the disease. Just being with him was our solution. Loving someone really well means that you hold on and stay close even when it doesn't feel good—it hurts more than words can say.

John became septic, got pneumonia, went into a coma, and had two heart attacks on Sunday 15 December 2013. He passed away at 7:07 pm that night. He had already gotten the children's Christmas and birthday presents for the year.

He is gone now, but he still lives in spirit. Though we all suffered, we are glad beyond words we were there with him through it all. My youngest is five now and her daddy was sick pretty much her whole life, but she knows she was well loved and she and her brothers and sisters will always know what a good daddy looks like. He left a legacy—to have loved so well no one will forget.

We would have celebrated our 20th anniversary on 28 May but that day passed without celebration this year. Still, as I write this, I know that John lives. God is good, and there is more to life than we see now.

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## ANN FRAILEY

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Check out Anne's books at:  
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During my time as an Above Rubies helper this last summer, I enjoyed supper times at the Campbell's home. Many times Mrs. Campbell would pose a question to those around the table to get us thinking. This particular night she asked, "What is the most beautiful and precious thing that has happened in your life?"

I was the first of the five girls at the table to give my answer. I immediately responded, "When our parents tell us they are going to have another baby!" I went on to say, "It hasn't just happened once or twice; it's happened nine times. Every time my mother planned some sort of grand "unveiling" it was always so exciting because she was so excited. Some of us would be jumping up and down for joy; others crying for joy." What a blessing it has been to experience these precious announcements multiple times.

Mrs. Campbell then asked me to tell everyone at the table some of the ways our parents told us about these blessings. I had to start thinking . . .

*\* Making sugar cookies and decorating boy/girl cut-outs and showing us a piece of paper reading "Which One?"*

*\* Putting a message up in our Sonic drive-in reading "A Boy or a Girl, Segovias?"*

*\* Having us all sit in the same room and sending in the youngest child with a shirt saying, "Big Brother."*

*\* Making cupcakes in baby shower cupcake liners with baby feet sprinkles on top.*

*\* Giving us Hershey bars with HE or SHE exposed.*

*\* Making a cake with pink and blue colored layers.*

*\* The last one I remember was when she made a card with two hair bows (pink and blue), wrote a question mark on the card, and took it to my dad at work.*

As I think of all the different ways my mom has used to share the news with us, I realize how much these little acts of joy have shaped my own attitude towards children and especially towards my future children.

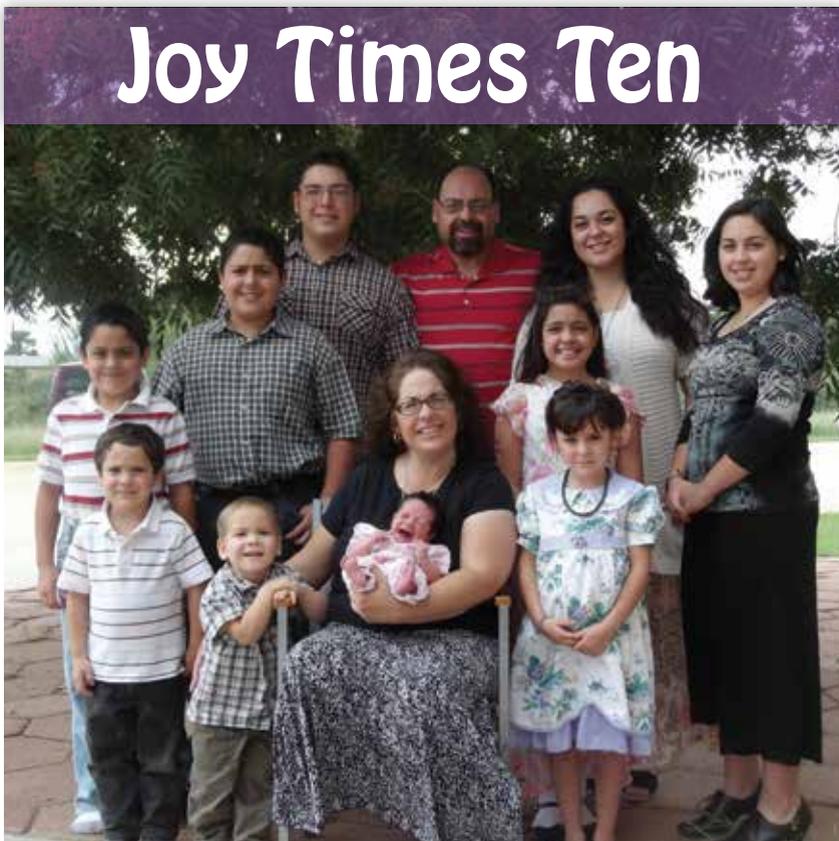
There are many different reactions my parents have received from others concerning the precious new life entering the world. There are those who pity us, those who rejoice with us, those who wonder how my dad will support us all, and those who think we are crazy. The list goes on and on.

I honestly don't understand how anyone cannot want a precious baby. How can they refuse such a sweet bundle of joy with tiny hands and feet? I realize that not all people think the same as us and put a limit to their blessings. I also realize that there are not

many 19-year-olds who view each sibling as a gift from God.

I believe the main reason my attitude towards new life is different from most in our society is because I was taught at an early age that children are a blessing, NOT a burden. Babies don't "mess up life," but rather enrich it. They don't cause marital strife, but instead bring the married couple closer together!

After three months of volunteering at Above Rubies, I am now back home helping my mom with everyday life, and loving my new baby sister, Anna Lucia. I arrived home just "in the nick of time." Anna Lucia was born one day after I returned home! She is such a sweet little baby and I can't imagine the Segovia household without her. It is amazing how God works. One day you are content with your family, and the next anticipating the arrival of a new life entering the world. When the baby is born, you can't remember what the family was like without her! God is SO good!



Frank and Annette with their children: Abbigail (19), Liam (17), Arabella (14), Lucas (12), Adelina (10), Levi (8), Alaina (6), Lennon (4), Leland (2) and Anna Lucia born August 10, 2014.

ABBY SEGOVIA (19 years)  
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# GOD HIT MY RESET BUTTON



Alan and Elissa are the parents of Roger (29), Rachel--married to Luke and they have two children: Tabitha called Tibby (4) and Mark (2), Zecharyah (21), Joseph (18), George (15), Linnea (12) and bonus baby, Joanna (2.5) pictured.

In spring of 2006 our family business failed. We had to file for bankruptcy and in June 2008 we lost our house. Through a series of miraculous circumstances the Lord enabled us to rent a farmhouse on 60 acres owned by Christian friends! In 20 years of marriage, we had not been able to move out to the country, until we went broke! The Lord is amazing.

I am not so amazing. I was a 43-year-old mother of six wonderful children. I was a successful home-schooling mom who had overcome a lot in this life. I was in good physical shape. I was, and still am, married to a wonderful man. But I was not doing well. Life had been very hard for a few years and I had lost my joy. On top of that I am a city girl at heart. I love public transportation, and I went through much of my adult life without a driver's license preferring to take the bus, even with small children. I thought it was easier. I love my large public libraries, museums, beautiful parks and nature centers, and shopping all one short

bus ride away. I enjoy free lunchtime concerts downtown and sightseeing at the Public Square.

## Walking the Dirt Roads

Now, here we were in the land of dirt roads, pick-up trucks, and Amish buggies. Not an art museum anywhere. I have a driver's license but do not enjoy driving. I like to walk to the grocery store when I need things and make big trips occasionally. I cannot do that here. We had lived in a small town for about 10 years before this, but this was still a major change.

I do not like dirt or bugs. I like pretty flowers and fresh vegetables, but I do not enjoy the hot and dirty work it takes to get them. My dream of country life was a gorgeous log home in the woods with beautiful windows out of which I could look at the scenery while reading, painting, and making Waldorf dolls with lavish wardrobes for my children and grandchildren. Now I was living on a farm with roosters and cows (not ours, but still there) and a

huge garden, which someone needed to cultivate, and lots of neglected apple trees. Our farmhouse needed a lot of TLC as well. My husband was energized by these prospects. I have always been one who enjoys a good adventure but this was too much!

On top of all this, my biggest helper, our 20-year-old daughter, Rachel, abandoned me in October 2009 when she married her childhood friend. It was a huge and wonderful wedding, which was a miracle in itself given our finances, but I missed her.

## Hospitality 101

As Rachel and her new husband were flying to Scotland for their honeymoon with the Air Force Hops program (that means free trips on military planes! How cool is that!), we invited a family with ten children to park their RV in our driveway and be our guests while they attended to some business in our area. They wound up staying for two and a half months. It was a wonderfully busy visit full of music, sewing, and fellowship. A few months after that, a young single mother needed a place to stay. She stayed for five months. That turned out to be a disaster; a disaster which God redeemed later, but still a disaster. I was an emotional wreck and had gained weight during these times of busyness and stress.

Exactly one month after our second houseguest, my husband told me he had just invited a young family with three children under age five to stay with us. They had just returned to the USA after living out of the country for two years. Around this time I learned that two women I knew had breast cancer. Like all women these days, I am terrified of breast cancer. These women were both my age and both of them died rather quickly. I was starting to have some of the discomforts and irritations associated with pre-menopause. I was forty-five.

I felt that the Lord saying to me, "I have provided you with a house out in the country, now what are

you going to do with it?" I could see that He was with us but I was in over my head.

### A New Lease of Life

One day I was standing in my overwhelmingly huge kitchen and I prayed: "Lord, I am afraid of breast cancer. Please save me from the disease and the fear of it. I do not like being middle-aged, my body and mind are going crazy. There is too much going on. But, Lord, I would rather be pregnant than have cancer! Oh no! WHAT did I just say? Oh well, if you think I can handle a baby right now, which I certainly do not, I would really like one with blue eyes. That way I will always know You were listening to this conversation."

Guess what! A few months later I found out I was pregnant. My youngest child was nine years and my oldest was 26. Joanna Hope was born on May 16, 2012, at home. Rachel and her husband and daughter Tabitha were there and also my friend, Suzy, who had been with me for most of my births. We had the same midwife, even though she had to drive a lot farther this time. When the baby arrived, I did not ask if she was a boy or a girl but the eye color. They were blue. Everywhere we go, people comment on Joanna's bright blue eyes.

### No Longer Old and Tired

The first summer of Joanna's life our house was infested with giant hornets, two inches long and we had a few episodes of bats in the house. I hate that kind of thing but I was able to take it with a revived sense of humor. Life is an adventure again. I no longer feel overwhelmed with the crazy things happening all around me. I no longer feel old and tired. I look forward to play dough, fall leaf walks, and learning to read with another child--all things I did not realize I missed. I thought my life was too busy to miss anything but I am excited to do those things again. I get to have a child while my daughter has children. I have the opportunity to spend time with younger women with

children and I have lots of years to serve in homeschooling circles. I love doing that stuff.

The big city library has finally expanded its database to reach where I live. Now I can request books from all over the place. I am trying, every year to enjoy gardening a tiny bit more. It is a labor of love since my husband who enjoys it has to work so much. Our oldest son is into organic gardening and he gives me great advice. Raised beds, here we come. Our finances are beginning to recover. Life really is good.

### Cheating Menopause

As an added bonus I think Joanna has helped me to cheat menopause. As soon as I was pregnant, every one of those irritating symptoms went away. I have had very little in the way of monthly cycles while nursing. As I write this, Joanna stopped nursing over a month ago and none of it has returned--not a period, a headache, or cramp; not a heart palpitation, a panic attack, or brain fog. Thank you, Jesus! Now, when my middle-aged friends complain about their pre-menopausal symptoms I smile at them and say, "I know how to make that disappear!" Not all of them are interested in my kind of cure.

I am working on losing the extra weight I gained during the times of stress and pregnancy. Two lovely ladies happened to publish a great book on diet and health just in time to help me with that. In my case, having a baby was His way of pressing the re-set button.

### ELISSA KROEGER

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### IT'S LIKE BREATHING

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than being alive without breathing."

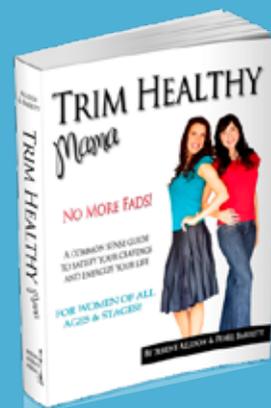
- Martin Luther

## TRIM HEALTHY

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"I say this with tears in my eyes that THM has saved my life. I have lost 75 pounds, 30 inches total, and my blood pressure is now normal! My recent blood sugar lab results were great! A1C was 5!"

"I am in love with this way of eating. It makes sense, it works, and I don't have to do it perfectly. I'm much happier, with more energy, strength, and clarity. I've gone from 'obese' to 'normal' BMI."

"I cried in prayer to God seven months ago because I was tired of being so heavy and unhealthy. Soon after that a THM testimony popped up in my news feed. I've gone from a size 14/16 to 4/6."

"This is my 6th pregnancy but, my first THM one. I can excitedly say it is the best one yet! My OB is extremely impressed and curious (of course I have told her all about THM). She is always pinching me and saying, 'WOW, you just look so great!'"

"I lost 26 pounds with THM and got pregnant with baby #7. This is my first pregnancy ever to NOT be a vegetarian! Bonus: for the first time in many pregnancies I can turn from side to side in the middle of the night in bed without doing it in shifts.. I can just flip and flop right on over."

Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/TrimHealthyMamaUS>  
Or call Ph: 877 729 9861

# Big Bonny Twins



Danelle,  
37 weeks  
with twins



Klara and Joshua (10 days old)

I was in my fourth pregnancy, expecting it to be a boy named Joshua. For the first time I looked forward to having an ultrasound. I am not keen on scans and steer clear of them for the most part. But this time something was different. I was convinced there was more than one baby! My husband teased I was getting my hopes up. We have no history of twins on either side of the family, and none of the other predisposing factors applied to me. But sure enough, the ultrasound revealed twins! Joshua, AND his little sister, Klara!

God willing, I wanted to carry two big healthy babies to full term and keep healthy and active to improve my chances to birth them naturally. I was convinced by previous study that to remain healthy I should eat an entirely raw diet with no animal protein or products of any kind. But I felt awful. Then I received my "Trim Healthy Mama" book. I devoured the book in

days (nights mostly), when everyone was sleeping. I made a few drastic and welcome changes to my diet. A lot less fruit and a lot more protein--even homemade chocolate and cheesecake!

From further study I realized I would probably not have been able to carry the babies full-term if I had not made those changes. Protein is very important for a healthy pregnancy and even more so for twins. The two main concerns with twin pregnancies are pre-term labour and preeclampsia--both caused mainly by a lack of protein in the diet. The fact that I was not eating fruit all day and including protein in every meal also leveled out my blood sugar. I am sure it was also instrumental in the nausea disappearing within days, as well as my usual highs and lows coming to an end. I am so thankful to God for THM!

The pregnancy was still challenging, especially towards the end. The morning's entertainment for the children was watching mama getting dressed, which took a while! Homeschooling consisted of me trying to get into a comfortable horizontal position and reading to the little ones. By God's grace we carried the babies to 38 weeks and 3 days. I had a scheduled C-section due to my breech baby (Joshua) getting big and no care providers close enough, willing, or

experienced in helping me with a breech delivery. It was a very traumatic experience coming from a history of homebirths. My last birth was a beautiful unplanned and unassisted homebirth.

The morning I had to go to hospital I was still grieving the loss of a natural birth. I had never considered any other possibility than birthing naturally. And here we were, hours away from surgery. Maybe if we had more time, maybe if I had different care providers. After crying and pleading with God, it came to me clearly that God was not limited by care providers, circumstances, or more time. I knew in my heart, that after doing everything possible to turn Joshua, that if he did not turn head down, this was what God wanted for us. And His grace was sufficient! If this was the thorn in my side to keep me humble, I would accept it.

Joshua was born first, 3.7kg (8lb. 2 oz.) and then Klara 3.3kg (7lb. 3 oz.), beautiful healthy big babies in my arms and latching within minutes after surgery while still in the recovery room. For months I dreamt and longed for this moment . . . our two babies, safely delivered onto my chest. We were in love, with two, TWO babies!

Recovering from surgery was a huge adjustment from birthing naturally. I lost a lot of blood and



Ian and Danelle are blessed with Margaretha (6), Christianaan (4), Jana (2), and the twins, Joshua and Klara.

had a terrible allergic reaction to the medication used during surgery, which gave me an unbearable itchy skin rash.

My mother could only stay for a week and a half after the birth of the babies and the rest of our family also lives very far away. My husband was going back to work by the end of that week too. I suddenly felt very overwhelmed. As the tears welled up, I heard the Lord speak to me so clearly in my heart, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." I realize I have Help available 24 hours of every day. Not a physical person to hold a baby or cook a meal, but wisdom from the One who created each of my children and knows them better than I ever could.

As I read the Bible the next day, the Lord gave me a promise for when I get very tired or feel overwhelmed, "As for you, come away by yourselves to a deserted place, and rest a while—for many were continually coming and going, and they had not even leisure enough to eat" (Mark 6:31). I was so encouraged knowing that just like the disciples I was also busy serving, discipling, and caring for these precious children the Lord had entrusted to me. He will never let me get beyond a point where I cannot cope, always giving me enough rest to manage what He expects of me. That's not to say that it is not hard and sometimes very trying, physically and emotionally. And there were many tears . . . and still are! Raising children is by far the hardest thing I have ever done. 1 Timothy 2:15 rings truer every time the Lord blesses us with a baby:

"She shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

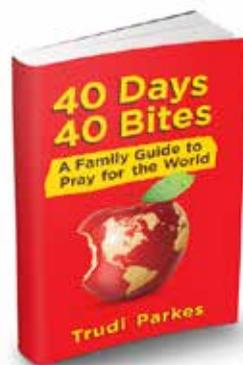
I have never been in such desperation for the Lord to shape my

heart and mind to be more like His own. I had to have children to find out how selfish, impatient, and prideful I am. Our home is by no means perfect; it contains a whole bunch of imperfect people! But when we fail, and we do more than we thought we ever would, we can boldly proclaim: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me" (Micah 6:8).

**DANELLE COETZEE**  
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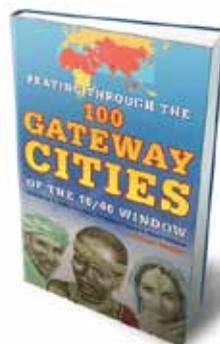
## Books to Help You Pray for the Unreached Peoples and the Persecuted Christians of the World



**40 Days 40 Bites: A Family Guide to Pray for the World**  
by Trudi Parkes

In 40 tasty, easily digestible bites you can travel round God's amazing world and pray! This book covers over 20 different countries including Algeria, China, and North Korea. This family guide will open your eyes to the needs of the world and challenge you to pray.

<http://tinyurl.com/40Days40Bites>



**Praying through the 100 Gateway Cities of the 10/40 Window**

This book will help you to pray intelligently for the 100 most needy and least evangelized cities of the world. Many have less than one percent Christians. It gives you a map, information about the city, and points to pray. It is a powerful tool in helping your family to pray for the needy people of the world. We love it.

<http://tinyurl.com/Pray10-40Window>

# THE NAUSEA HAS BEGUN!

I was pregnant with baby number eight. It had been three years since my last pregnancy, and I felt the strongest, healthiest, and most alive I had ever felt! That was . . . until the morning sickness settled in. It was actually “all day but much worse in the evening sickness.” I had not felt horribly nauseous during my previous pregnancies, more like continuous car sickness. How I had wished I could stop the invisible car and just get out! I was optimistic that this pregnancy would be the exception, that I could say with a smile on my face and a twinkle in my eye, “I love being pregnant!”

Just the opposite happened. I had never felt so bad! My days consisted of sitting on the sofa with my eyes closed, trying to feel better.

My children ran around unattended. Homeschool, which we should have started a month ago, remained untouched. My older children did all the chores around the house and kept it running, though not as orderly or smoothly as I would have. My precious firstborn girl, Areli, carried an enormous burden. She heard my pitiful pleas all day long. “Areli, could you make me some eggs?” “Areli, could you fill up my water glass?” “Areli, could you see who is crying upstairs, please?”

I tried to be a good mom; but mostly I whined, moaned, slept, felt sick, got sick, and slept some more. I felt useless and wretched. I knew theoretically that despite the weakened state of my body, my spirit could still soar high above my circumstances, like

an eagle above the clouds. Yet, after days, weeks, and months of feeling crummy, my eagle had forgotten how to fly. My mind kept thinking about Scriptures such as: “For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever” (2 Corinthians 4:17 NLT).

I knew this was true, but it didn’t help me feel any better. I thought about my joy in a newborn baby and

like too much for me to bear.

The question I kept asking was, “Is this worth it?” and I knew that it was. A new life is always worth it. When a mother holds her precious bundle, her sorrow is turned into joy.

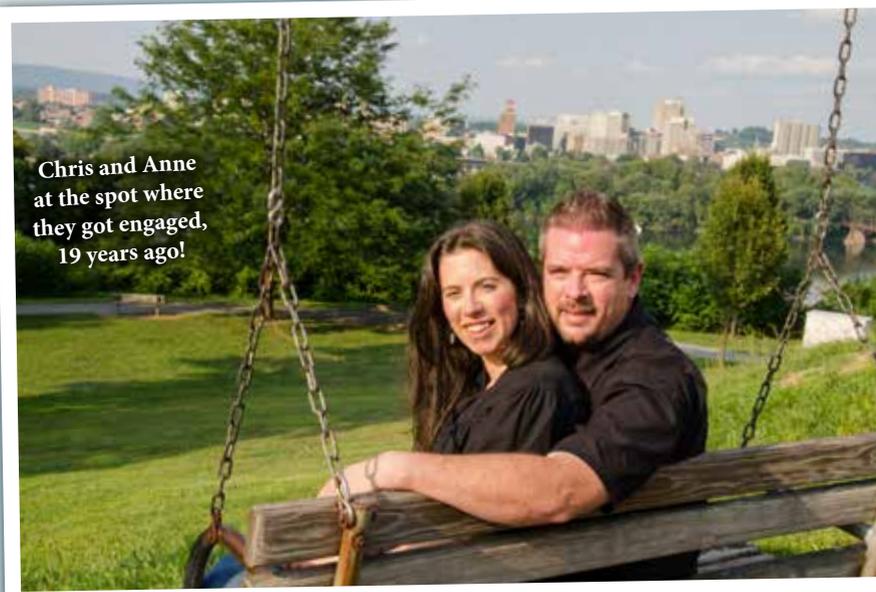
Then the question became, “How much is a human life worth? How much pain and sorrow is one life worth? How much would I suffer for one human life? Would I get pregnant and do this all again for one more human life? How much is a life worth to God? How much suffering did Jesus endure?”

The only conclusion I could come to was this: one human life is worth it all! There is no limit to the value God puts on a life, no price too high to pay, no suffering too severe. Jesus suffered more than any of us. He went through betrayal, slander, hatred, lies, scourging,

mocking, and the cruelest execution ever conceived. He felt the wretched, incurable sickness of the evil of the entire world. He bore the effects of that twisted iniquity; separation with all that is good and beautiful and holy, His Father.

He said that His suffering was worth it because of the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). That joy was human life, redeemed and set free. He said that I am worth it. He said that you are worth it. The child in my womb is worth it. If Jesus was willing to suffer for my child, shouldn’t I? After the suffering of His soul, He saw the light of life (my life, your life, my child’s life) and He was satisfied (Isaiah 53:11).

I knew that my suffering wasn’t in vain, but I still didn’t feel any better.



Chris and Anne at the spot where they got engaged, 19 years ago!

how it was all worth it, but it didn’t make me feel any better. I reread every “Above Rubies” magazine I had ever received to encourage myself. My mind was encouraged but my flesh still felt miserable! My body felt incapable to get off the sofa and do anything productive or enjoyable. My mind continued to churn, swirling in descending circles.

“I just want to die. I can’t live like this. Why do I have to suffer? Why does God allow me to feel so horrible?”

## No Price too High to Pay

Pregnancy is such a miracle, a blessing, a gift! So why did I feel so bad? My suffering was nothing compared to some other women I knew, who kept almost nothing down for nine months, yet my suffering felt



Chris and Anne with their children: Areli (15), Cole (14), Cadin (12), Ashlyn (10), Chai (9), Cooper (7), Calvin (5) and Courage (1).

## God Needs Me

“God, give me a vision of this child! Something to keep me going,” I prayed.

In my mind’s eye I saw beams of life coming from this child and shooting out to the far reaches of the earth. This child would be a blessing to me and my family, yes. But he would also have an impact on the entire world! How? I have no idea! But if I could have some small part in sending life to the whole of mankind, sign me up!

Then I heard God’s loving voice.

“Thank you for being available. Without you, I couldn’t bring this child of destiny into the world.”

I felt the peace that only God’s voice can bring. I felt His gratitude sink deep into my soul until I was saturated by the unbelievable goodness of it. God needs me? The all-powerful God NEEDS ME to be available? What if I had said that seven children were quite enough? THIS particular child, with unique DNA that could never be duplicated, would never exist! His

precious personality, which was a dream in God’s heart since before the world, would have never been realized (Ephesians 1:4).

## No Higher Honor

And now he exists . . . because of me! I cannot think of anything more powerful. I cannot think of any higher honor for God to give me, than helping Him to create something of inestimable value and eternal impact.

I never could say during that pregnancy that I enjoyed being

pregnant. But I could say that pregnancy was when I relied on God the most, sensed His presence the closest, and felt His glory the heaviest. And the moment our precious babe was born, I could say . . . He was totally worth it.

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### ANNE BRANDENBURG

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Anne’s blog: <http://>

[gracismysuperhero.wordpress.com/](http://gracismysuperhero.wordpress.com/)

### Anne’s Update:

“I am now pregnant with our ninth child, due April 2015. After Courage was born, I felt that God had more babies for us and I started praying for my next pregnancy. I started speaking out loud, “I love being pregnant!” “I feel great when I am pregnant!” “I don’t get morning sickness, or afternoon sickness, or evening sickness!” It is amazing how much better I feel this pregnancy, probably the best I have ever felt during any pregnancy. I am so thankful and joyful about every little part of it and every single day of it, because I remember how bad I felt last time.”

**“Prayer has the power to change the world. Without it the world has the power to change us!”**

~ Colin Campbell

# NOT WHAT I HAVE DONE

Two, maybe three.

That's how many children we thought we might like when we were married in the summer of 2000. Six years later we had our first daughter, Vivien. We were

smitten with our newborn--a little overwhelmed, but contented. We had conceived easily and happily prevented pregnancy until we were ready to have another. Nearly three years later we had our second baby, Levi! Life was splendid! With one boy and one girl, some would boast perfect.

On Levi's first birthday I had the surprise of a lifetime. I was pregnant again. I cried. There was no way I could be pregnant. I didn't want another baby. I still had a baby. Over the next few months the Lord worked on my heart. Our initial shock and dismay turned to joy and two days before Christmas 2010, little Ivan joined our family. Our hearts grew a little bigger that day.

Three small children proved to be rather challenging as we struggled through those first few months. In fact, the struggle was so overwhelming we decided my husband should get a vasectomy. We had both grown up being indoctrinated that limiting your family size was normal. In our state, the wife is required to attend the first appointment and sign a consent form. I happily agreed to go and was looking forward to the baby stage ending and finally having my body back. Oh, how we have been deceived!

When the appointment came closer, my husband had a work conflict so we had to reschedule. A few days before his vasectomy, our baby boy, now eight months old, woke up

teething one night. We brought him into the living room to snuggle. Little Ivan began to crawl on the floor and reach for his toy. It was a stand-still moment for both of us. My husband looked over at me and one of us said, "Can you believe we wouldn't have chosen to have him?" We sat there silent and the next day my husband cancelled his vasectomy.

During that time I found a copy of "Be Fruitful and Multiply" while perusing home education material on the internet. The title intrigued me and I ordered the book. As the days went by and the Lord worked in our hearts, we placed our fertility into the Lord's hands. Soon after, He blessed us with another baby in November 2012. After three hospital births, our daughter Genevieve, was welcomed at home.

This past year I have been blessed by the words to one of my most cherished hymns: "Not What My Hands Have Done."

Not what my hands have done  
Can save my guilty soul;  
Not what my toiling flesh has borne  
Can make my spirit whole.  
Not what I feel or do  
Can give me peace with God;  
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears  
Can bear my awful load.

I praise the God of grace;  
I trust his truth and might;  
He calls me his, I call him mine,

My God, my joy, my light.  
'Tis he who saveth me,  
And freely pardon gives;  
I love because he loveth me,  
I live because he lives.

If you had told us when we first got married that we would have four children in a six-year period and welcome as many children as the Lord would give us, I would have never believed you. That alone is proof the Lord intervenes in our lives as only He can.

Our youngest is nearly 18 months old. By now, I had secretly hoped to be pregnant, but I'm not. When I'm weak in my flesh, I doubt what God has for us. Would the Lord actually deny us more children after He has changed our hearts towards them? Would I be okay with that? Will we ever have more children? Why am I not pregnant?

And then I am reminded . . . it is not what my hands have done. Oh how prideful I have been to actually think that having four children was by my own hands. It is only by God's grace and providence that we have four beautiful healthy children and it is by His grace and providence alone that we will be blessed with more.

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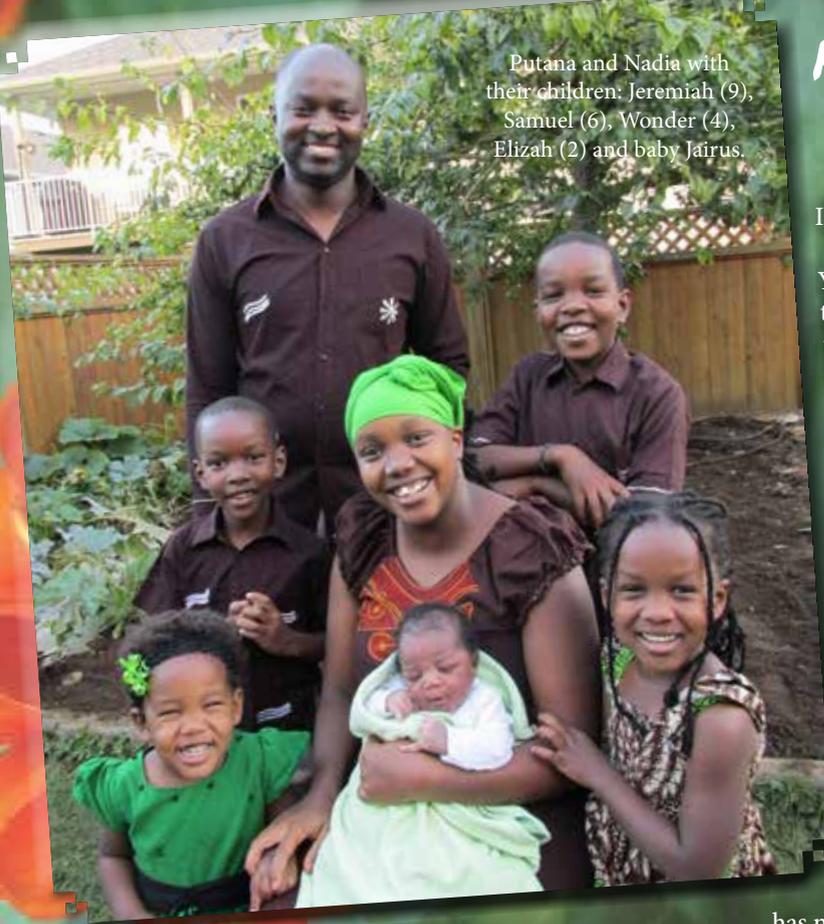
**HAILEY WHITE**  
Indio, California, USA  
derekandhailey@msn.com



Derek and Hailey with their darling children: Vivien (8), Levi (5), Ivan (3), Genevieve (22 months) \_ Good News new baby due April 2015.\_

# A MOTHER DESPERATE FOR GOD

Putana and Nadia with their children: Jeremiah (9), Samuel (6), Wonder (4), Elizah (2) and baby Jairus.



I hear comments such as “You have good children.”

“I thank God,” I respond. It is the honest truth. You see, I have a husband who loves me and looks to me to be his helper. Me? I have nothing in my upbringing that qualifies me to be a good and godly wife. I grew up in a broken Muslim home and every relative I knew had a broken home too. I have to cleave to the Rock that is higher than I.

And there are four, soon to be five, lovely children who call me “Mama.” They expect me to nurture and train them. But who am I that I should undertake such a task? I, myself, have never known the love of a mother. From infancy, my older brother, younger twin brothers and I, were brought up by a single father. Where I was raised in Rwanda, East Africa, this was not common. Single mothers yes, but I never met single fathers. With the help of servants we carried on and my father did his best to care for us.

Now, here I am, called to be a Mother. How do you become what you have never seen modeled? I thank God for the living Word! God

has not left any aspect of our lives, including mothering,

out of His Word. He has given us instructions for all areas of life (2 Timothy 3:16). We can confidently say, “When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up” (Psalm 27:10). Where does a mother, such as I, turn for help? Time and time again, I turn to the One who created the mother of all living!

It is written, “Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). This is absolutely true. Without God I cannot grow the little one in my womb. Once the baby is born, I cannot make it nurse or sleep. How do you explain to me that I could take a child in diapers and somehow get it in his brain to use the potty, without the help of God? Or a child who has never spoken before and teach them to talk or walk, etc.

There are many day-to-day routines in our mothering where we can easily overlook the hand of God at work in our homes. At the end of the day, when I see our children fed, bathed, clothed, and tucked in bed, I thank my God because I know I could not have done it without Him.

Some may laugh, saying, “You couldn’t even make a meal?” No, I could not, not without Him giving me strength and guiding me. Having been brought up with servants, I was not trained in housekeeping and cooking. I never had to do anything! To my shock, in this country of Canada (where I got married and now live) servants are hard to come by, to say the least! You can imagine what life has been like for me as a homemaker. Ha! I still have so much to learn.

I look at my little ones and I am filled with awe. I have not forgotten where I have come from and who I am without Jesus. It is only He who has made them the wonderful children they are. How I cleave to His promise, “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children” (Isaiah 54:13). This has been my constant prayer from infancy to toddler. Every new season we step into, every new change in our lives, homeschooling, and as we travel to each new city or country (we travel a lot as missionaries), I trust Him to teach them and prepare them for what’s ahead.

Does this mean I don’t teach my children and do my part in raising them? No, it simply means that I know my limitations. But I thank God that with Him, nothing is impossible.

People often say to me, “How do you do it? How do you raise all these children? How do you travel with them?” The honest truth is that I am just a woman desperate for God because I know: “Except the Lord build a house, they labor in vain that build it” (Psalm 127:1).

May God help each one of us mothers to cry out to Him constantly for it is “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). What a wonderful God we serve! What a Redeemer! What a faithful God! To Him be all the glory.

NADIA MUTANA

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# Our Prayer Box

The most powerful and world-changing thing you can do together as a family is PRAY!

Don't let anything or anyone keep you from it!

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"  
(Matthew 18:20).

"Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees."  
~ William Cowper.



When all our children were at home we used to have two prayer boxes at our Family Devotions. One was the FAMILY PRAYER BOX where I wrote on a card the name of everyone in the family, plus every person in the extended family--grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. We would pass the box around and each one would take a name from the box. If they weren't very familiar with the name of the extended family member they chose, it was a good time to tell them about them. Prayer is a wonderful way to keep connected with the extended family, especially when they live in different countries as is the case in our family. I am sure you will find this a great blessing in your family too.

We also had another box called the URGENT NEEDS PRAYER BOX. In this box I wrote on cards the names of missionaries we were praying for, the names of people we knew who were facing specific trials or sickness, and the needs in our nation and the world. They would also take a card from this box. This helped the children to pray beyond their little "God bless Mommy and Daddy" prayers.

Now that our children are raising their own families and we have other people living in our home, we only use the URGENT NEEDS PRAYER BOX. (Colin and I pray for all our children and their families together before we start the day). Currently, in this box I write on the cards the greatest needs for prayer in our nation and world today. Oh what great needs there are!

Never has there been a time when there are so many Christians being persecuted and it is continually on the rise. We feel our responsibility to pray. This is not something we should do if we feel like it. We are commanded to do it, and to pray for them as though we were suffering with them. Hebrews 13:2 (NLT) says, "Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies."

I often think as we pray for the persecuted Christians in different countries of the world that if I was being persecuted I would hope that someone was praying for me. I want

to be faithful to pray for them. I want to teach my family to pray for them. Christians are being persecuted in over 60 countries of the world. Some of these countries where severe persecution is happening are: North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Sudan, and Nigeria. You can go to <http://www.worldwatchlist.us/world-watch-list-countries/> to get a full list. You may like to write a prayer card for each of these countries. Or write a card for each country and change it each week in your prayer box.

I know you are burdened, like we are, for the atrocities and brutalities taking place in Iraq and Syria with the ISIS terrorist group. It is hard for us to comprehend the suffering, beheadings, and crucifixions they are enduring. Proverbs 24:10-12 says, "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. If thou forebear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" Read also Psalm 82:3, 4; Amos 6:6; and Ezekiel 9:4-6.

However, although our focus is on Iraq and Syria because of all we hear in the news, we must not forget North Korea, which is the number one persecutor of Christians. Up to 70,000 Christians are in prison and brutally treated. They also use Christians as guinea pigs to test chemical and biological weapons. Make sure North Korea goes in your prayer box. We cannot turn a blind eye to the persecution of Christians across the world. I was very challenged when I read the story from Penny Lea, printed from [www.repentamerica.com/](http://www.repentamerica.com/).

Weeping, an older man told her of how he lived in Germany during the Nazi holocaust and as a young boy attended church. There was a railroad track behind the church and each Sunday morning they would hear the whistle from a distance and then the clacking of the wheels moving over the track. He said that people in the church became disturbed when one



Colin with some of the grandchildren taking their cards for prayer: Cedar Allison, Noble Barrett, and Tiveria Johnson.

Sunday they heard cries coming from the train as it passed by. "We grimly realized that the train was carrying Jews. They were like cattle in those cars," he shared.

He continued, "Week after week that train whistle would blow. We dreaded hearing the sound of those old wheels because we knew that the Jews would begin to cry out to us as they passed our church. Their screams tormented us. We knew exactly at what time that whistle would blow, and we decided the only way to keep from being so disturbed by the cries was to start singing our hymns. By the time that train came rumbling past the church yard, we were singing at the top of our voices. If some of the screams reached our ears, we'd just sing a little louder until we could hear them no more.

"Years have passed and no one talks about it much anymore, but I still hear that train whistle in my sleep. I can still hear them crying out for help. God forgive all of us who called ourselves Christians, yet did nothing to intervene."

How can we continue life as normal when so many families are being tortured? Often we feel helpless to help, but if we can't do anything else, we can pray. It is the least we can do and the greatest thing we can do.

At our daily prayers, we also pray for the unreached peoples of the world (Matthew 9:37, 38; 24:14; 28:18-20). We also pray for Israel, which we are

commanded to do (Psalm 122:6-9; 137:5, 6; Isaiah 62:6, 7; Ezekiel 13:5 and 22:30). Anti-Semitism is on the rise and we had better make sure we are on God's side.

Dear mothers, can I plead with you to make time to pray as a family together each day? We pray morning and evening (after breakfast and at the end of our evening meal) in our home. I think that two times each day is the least we can do, don't you? You may even like to start a once a weekly prayer meeting in your home. We have been doing this since 9/11.

The devil will do everything in his power to stop you praying together as a family. He doesn't want you praying. He knows it is the most powerful thing you can do as a family. He doesn't want his plans brought to nothing by the power of prayer.

This world is desperate for your prayers. You may be doing lots of good things in your family, but this is the most powerful and world-changing thing you can do.

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#### NANCY CAMPBELL

- **Keep Informed In Order to Pray:**  
<http://tinyurl.com/RecommendedLinks>
- **List of Persecuting Countries:**  
<http://www.worldwatchlist.us/world-watch-list-countries/>
- **Articles About Prayer:**  
<http://tinyurl.com/PrayerInTheHome>
- **Biblical Pattern for Morning and Evening Devotions:**  
<http://aboverubies.org/morning-evening-principle>
- **Download the book, "How to Have a Family Altar" by Norman V. Williams**  
<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/Books/Howto-HaveAFamilyAltarbyNormanVWilliams.aspx>

# Be a Missionary

What a blessing it was to travel the world as a young family from 1996 - 2006. When we went to Japan we had a three-year-old son, Micah, and a two-month-old daughter, Hannah. Four more of our children were born in Japan--Josh, Matt, Bethany, and Andrew. And we have had two more children since being back in the United States--Grace and Reed.

## What Memories!

On the mission field we had some unbelievable experiences. These included:

- \* Falling in love with a people group (So gracious!)
- \* Seeing many other countries nearby (Wow, the sights! The people! The clothes! The food!)
- \* Ministering as a family (So fun to be all together, to see your children minister, to see them gain skills and confidence!)
- \* Learning how to be best friends with each other (Oh the memories! The relationships!)

## What Protection!

We had no peer influence to worry about because Japanese children went to cram school in the evenings (sometimes until 10 pm) and had public school even on Saturdays. Our children didn't notice they were "deprived" of peers because they had each other to play with. This foundation has made us what we are today: an imperfect family that loves Jesus, cares about missions, and prioritizes time together.

There were plenty of wrong influences in Japan, but since it wasn't our home culture, the children were oblivious to most of them. It was relatively easy for us to keep them separate from worldliness. There were no Christians saying, "Why can't your children do this? Why can't they

watch that?" People expected us to be different because we were from a different culture and had a completely different worldview. Japanese unbelievers graciously respected that.

## What Imperfect Parents!

If you want your children to have a heart for missions, what better way than to model it to them? Our children consider it quite normal to become a missionary because that was their life for ten years. They don't think we were or are heroes because we're not—Ha! They would probably think that statement is quite laughable. They just think it is normal to be a missionary!

Before I went on the mission field, I thought the "sent life" must be the most exciting life there is. (Well, I still think that!) After all, you get paid to travel to exciting places and tell people about Christ. I was anxious to go, but there were two big misconceptions keeping me from going:

- \* I thought missionaries had to be perfect Christians.
- \* I thought everyone must want to be one and that all the openings were probably filled.

If you have ever been on even a short-term trip, you know neither fallacy is true! On the field I met very imperfect Christians just like me. The only thing different about them was that they were willing to go and serve.

As for all the spaces being filled, well, all the mission houses we lived in now sit either empty or filled by a family who has no idea about Christ. No one is telling the Good News from those spots anymore. Sad!

If my children serve the Lord overseas (and especially now that we've started mission trips to Africa, all eight of my children DO want to be career missionaries as soon as possible) they will have a more realistic view of what

to expect on the mission field than I did. One of our children has already finished seminary in preparation for the mission field.

I did not foresee any problems or loneliness. I did not realize that sometimes we would open our doors, invite all to an evangelistic event, and no one would come. But I am so glad we lived that reality in front of our children, all the while having the privilege of experiencing an entirely new culture, all the way down to our toes.

I saw things I had never seen before:

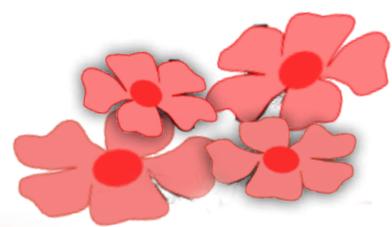
- \* Entire mountains simultaneously splashed with every bright fall color.
- \* Monkeys trying to get our French fries from my car window.
- \* All my children in silk kimonos.
- \* Women who can sit motionless on the floor forever in a perfectly folded position.
- \* Cherry blossoms snowing down like a continual wedding.
- \* Ice sculptures three stories high.
- \* Mount Fuji in all its glory.
- \* And best of all, marriages restored and precious lives transformed for God's glory.

## What an Education!

My children know from experience that the United States is not the only place in the world. And they appreciate their home country even more for it. When they study Geography, there is already a place in their brains for Thailand because we had meetings there. (Would you like for your children to win the Geography Bee for instance)? And there are many sins they shun because they have seen entire cultures broken because of disdain for God.

Our two oldest children speak Japanese. One got 16 hours of college

*How to shelter children from wrong influences, become a tight-knit family, give your children a heart for missions, broaden their horizons, and give them a great education!*



Ronny and Kathy with their children: Micah (age 20), Hannah (age 18), Joshua (age 16), Matthew (age 14), Bethany (age 13), Andrew (age 9), Gracie (age 7), and Reed (age 3).

credit for it. They learned the language naturally during their music lessons. Having learned a language at a young age, their brains are now more able to learn other languages. Even the younger children who didn't speak Japanese, but heard it around them all the time, are constantly pounding out on the computer trying to learn French and German on a free website called Duolingo. They love it!

Our mission board, The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, takes great care of their missionaries financially. They provide an adequate salary, the best language training, counseling support, materials for homeschooling, good medical and retirement benefits, incredible strategy training, and shipping of many belongings. We are so grateful to them.

Are there any exceptions to my recommendations? Well, yes. I don't recommend moving to another country if you have any teens because

the culture change can be very hard on an adolescent. And of course, no matter where you live, you need to spend a lot of time listening to your children's hearts in order for them to want to follow your God.

As I look at the fruit of our missions time, and as my level of spunk and health slows down a little in my forties, I am so glad I gave my young, energetic years to the Lord overseas!

---

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Kathy's blog: tipsforfamilies.com

Go to Amazon for Kathy's book: **"His B.A. Was Only \$8K: Quick, Fun, College For Ages 12 to 99 Years"** about how her son gained his accredited college degree at home through testing.



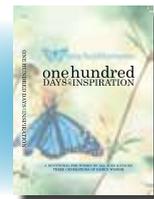
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# There's No Fun like Hard Work!



**S**weat pouring off his body and swinging an axe with one hand, my 89 year-old granddad had almost completed clearing five acres of underbrush. He looked up at me with a huge grin on his face, "Hey Vangi," he yells, "There's no fun like hard work!" And then with a twinkle in his eye he added, "It's just hard to see the joke!" We laughed our heads off together.

Warped sense of humor? Perhaps, because what on earth is so funny about that? The point is that it was, and is, and has to be the point of our whole joyous mothering lives. There's just no fun like hard work. If you get this early on in your mothering, you're "made in the shade." If you don't learn this until later, everyone suffers.

Life is fun, but it's hard work. It ebbs and flows with times that might leave you breathless or sleepless with concern, but it's still jolly awesome. Life takes effort whether you are a child playing in the sand, a twenty year old scuba diving, or a woman mothering.

Hard work was play for an 89-year-old who knew how to live well. A life worth living. A life worth emulating. And us? What are we (or what am I) emulating in this great life of hard works it play or a chore? Is it laughing or whining? Is it living with excitement for all the work brought your way by building a strong family or just existing for a self-centered escape? When I see self centeredness in myself and others it makes me want to barf!

I'm not advocating being trodden over, but treading over other's impressionable lives while delighting in whining and entitlement is a "no go" for a great life. If I'm tired and it's affecting my ability to live big, I tell myself, "Get over it, you whiner! Go for a sleep or go for a walk with your children!"

Whatever you do--embrace the moment, the day, your children, and "play" with the circumstances that come your way!

Children run around and call it "play." Adults run around and call it "work."

Children build forts and call it "play." We build homes and call it "time consuming."

Children play in the mud and call it "the best play." We change one messy diaper and call it "the pits."

Howard and Evangeline with their 10 children--Zadok (22), Sharar (20), Rashida (18), Crusoe (17), Jireh (15), Arrow (13), Tiveria (11), Sahara (9), Iqara (7) and Saber (5).

Children attack life naturally with gusto and an attitude of play until they are subconsciously trained out of it!

Children love to live because life is "play." Fill in your reality . . . "I "....." live because life is "....." STOP. You get one life to play out. You can either work it as "drudge" or work it as "fun play."

Are you playing with your children today? Can you take off for a swim or play a game with them? Yes, go do it!

Is your day filled with the everyday little things that keep you running from moment to moment? Good. Grab the moments and make them look like "play." Undo the "whining, work is bad" attitude until your work becomes your play.

The neighbors will want your secret. They will wonder how you whiz through your home cleaning with a smile. They will wonder why your children are always happy and yes, happy when working. They will wonder why your marriage is great! You will turn down speaking engagements, TV interviews, and book offers. Ha ha!

When they finally ask your secret, you'll say, "I just play, because there's no fun like hard work!"

Love you gals--Vangipangie, pallypie, but mostly mudpie!

**EVANGELINE JOHNSON**  
Primm Springs, Tennessee, USA  
vangibabe@gmail.com





Steve and Jen with their family: Catherine (13), William (12), Isabelle (11), Emma Jane (9), Samuel (8), Gideon (6), Mercy (4) and Jackson (2) and four little babies with the Lord.

# When You Lie Down...

*“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”*  
*(Deuteronomy:6:6, 7).*

These beautiful words are a powerful command to Christian parents. Often used, and rightly so, as an example of the discipleship model of homeschooling and the need to teach our children the ways of the Lord from sun up to sun

down, these verses have become a great encouragement to me in a whole new way.

I am a wife and the mother of eight young children, but for the past eight years I have struggled with severe, often crippling, adrenal fatigue. Sometimes better, sometimes worse, but always presenting a challenge to one degree or another, one of the greatest being difficult pregnancies and long recoveries after my babies are born. Four of those years, including this one, I have spent partially bedridden.

This has been such a heartache to me and very difficult for our whole family. At times I have gained the upper hand and can almost pretend I’ve conquered the fatigue beast, but it is a constant exhausting struggle. Every now and then the monster attacks with renewed vigor, knocks me off my feet and cripples me for a time.

Along with the battle of physical fatigue is the battle against discouragement. Three years ago, when I was expecting Baby # 8 and my health had plummeted yet again, I was laying in bed staring at my boring ceiling

and feeling like a useless blob with a stream of despairing thoughts running through my mind: “I’m missing even more precious time mothering my little ones. The household is once again turned upside down. My husband is bearing a huge burden . . . and to top it off, I’m too sick to read, memorize Scripture, watch Jane Austen films, organize my recipes, or otherwise utilize all this lovely free time. Nope, all I can do is lay and stare. How in the world can I be of any use to the Lord when I can’t even get out of bed or do anything?”

The Lord so graciously brought Deuteronomy 6:6, 7 to mind and drew my attention to the words “when thou liest down.” Aha! The light of truth broke through my dark discouragement as the Lord reminded me again that no matter how hard things are, I still need to be obedient to Him and I still have a responsibility to all the little eyes watching me. I can certainly still love the Lord with all my “heart, soul, and might” even when I am lying down and I can still teach my children to do so too.

Whether I am up reading books, baking cookies, teaching, and going on walks with my children, or whether I am in bed unable to sit up and do a thing, the example I set for them will leave a strong impression one way or the other. Through all these difficult days the hearts, minds, and souls of my young ones are being trained and formed. They are not on "pause" just because I can't mother them the way I long to and in the perfect world I envision. They will either learn to doubt the Lord or they will learn to trust Him.

If I can do nothing more than lay in bed, I can do it with a good attitude and a smile for them when they come in the room. I can still provide a happy atmosphere in the home. I can avoid complaining. I can praise them for the extra work they have to do while Mommy is sick. I can encourage them to be a help to Daddy with a good at-

titude. I can pray for them. I can admire the cards they bring me. I can speak to them kindly. I can talk to them about the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father and the lessons we are learning through this trial.

I can glorify God and point my children to Him by the way I conduct myself in times of trial and adversity. I can repent and apologize to them when I fail at all of the above. I can walk with the Lord even when my body cannot move at all – and it is absolutely imperative that I do so.

I hope these thoughts will encourage you as they have me. Your trials will not be just like mine, but the beautiful truth of the God's Word applies in every circumstance. As mothers, we have eternal souls that we are responsible for no matter what our situation in life is like. When things are going well, we need to point our children to the Lord;

when times are hard we need to point them to the Lord.

May we be faithful to love our great God with all our "heart, soul, and might" and to teach this love for Him and the truth of His Holy Word diligently to our children. When we sit down--whether to read them a book or because we are just too weak to stand; when we walk along the way--whether our steps are strong or faltering; when we lie down--whether it be in green pastures or in absolute weariness; and when we rise up--as we climb the Hill Difficulty, or on wings like eagles.

---

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# Hidden Glory

## Mothers, we are blessed.

God has given to us a domain where we can rule as queen. It is the realm of our home that God intends to be a place of power and authority, contentment and joy, influence and purpose, and yes, of glory. And yet how easy it is to be discontented with the sphere God has given to us. We want more authority. The grass is greener on the other side of the fence.

This discontent happened in the heavenly realm. Jude 1:6 tells us how a group of heavenly angels became dissatisfied with the place God gave to them. They did not guard their domain, but instead rose up with pride, abandoned their ordained home, and consequently received the judgment of God.

Jude 1:6 (NLT) says, "And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the day of judgment." The Weymouth New Testament says, "And angels--those who did not keep the position originally assigned to them, but deserted their own proper abode--He reserves in everlasting bonds, in darkness, in preparation for the judgment of the great day."

The same spirit of Satan still comes to tempt us today. We have to be on guard that we do not become fooled by his tactics to woo us from the domain God has given to us. He seeks to convince women that the home is a place of insignificance and that we can accomplish mightier exploits outside of the home. This is deception.

God's plan for mankind is families and He wants families to live in homes. He wants the mother to raise her children in the home. It is in the home she shapes the future of the nation. We are a nation filled with hurting people (many in prison and on the streets). We have to face

*Bonnie Ailshie with her 12th baby, Brayden Colt. Bonnie and her husband now have six boys and six girls.  
La Center, Washington, USA*



Clarita Yoder with Zoe & Olivia.  
Jesup, Georgia, USA

the fact that it comes back to family. We cannot build strong marriages and families when we are more absorbed in building other things outside the home. We cannot build a home when we are away from the home. We have to be in the home, focusing on the home.

We see another understanding in God's Word. In 1 Kings 6 it tells us about how Solomon built the temple for God. In verse 16 it says, "And he built 20 cubits on the *sides of the house* . . . for the most holy place." What does this mean? Was he adding an extra little room on the side of the house? Oh no. This was the most important part of the whole temple. This was The Holy of Holies, also called The Most Holy Place, The Inner Sanctuary, or The Most Set-Apart Place.

Where was Solomon going to build this place for the presence of God to dwell? The New Living Translation explains it more clearly: "He partitioned off an inner sanctuary—The Most Holy Place—at the far end of the Temple."

The inner sanctuary was a glorious place. It was a cube, 30 feet high, wide, and long. And everything was pure gold—walls, floor, ceiling, the Ark of the Covenant, and even gold chains hanging in the entrance. And the cherubim over the ark were also covered in pure gold. They were amazing—15 feet tall and their wings stretched 15 feet to one wall and 15



Jessica Dassow with her five boys Nicholas, Noah, Kaleb, Alek, and Zachary. Big brothers meeting their baby brother for the first time. Jessica shares: "It was such a joy to have all five of my sons, safely and snugly gathered around me and enjoying the marvelous gift of new life."  
Walland, Tennessee, USA

feet to the other. Everywhere you looked was gold. Absolutely dazzling! The New Living Bible tells us that the Most Holy Place was overlaid with "23 tons of fine gold" and "the gold nails that were used weighed 20 ounces each" (1 Chronicles 3:8, 9). And if that wasn't enough, the glory of God dwelt in this place.

We now come to an amazing revelation. The same phrase "*the sides of the house*" is used in another Scripture that relates to us as wives and mothers. Psalm 128:3 says, "*Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.*" How remarkable that the Bible uses the same words for God's holy inner sanctuary as He does for the inner sanctuary of our home.

The New American Standard Bible tells us clearly: "Your wife will be as a fruitful vine, in the innermost parts of your house." The NKJV version translates it: "in the very heart of your house." This phrase "*on the sides*" is the Hebrew word, *yrekah* and literally means "the rear, the recesses, the most inner part." The dwelling place for God was not to be out in the open for everyone to behold. And it is God's same plan for us in the home. It is a hidden glory.

Are we delegated to the innermost part of the home because our role is insignificant? Oh no. It's the opposite. The inner sanctuary was filled with the glory of God. The inner sanctuary of our home is also our place of glory. It is our sphere of fruitfulness. It is where we yield our greatest power. It is where we fulfill our highest destiny of raising godly children.

When we forsake the heart of our home, we say goodbye to fruitfulness. Most mothers who choose a fulltime career end up limiting their family and leave behind their glory. In Hosea 9:11 God calls conception, pregnancy, and birth the "glory" of the nation. We give our authority of motherhood over to the enemy whose plan is to get mothers out of the home so he can influence their children in his ways.

We see the same understanding when a baby is conceived. Jesus, the Son of the God of Glory was conceived in the hidden place of the womb. This divine miracle happened in "the secret place" which is a term God uses for the womb (Psalm 139:15). The angel Gabriel told her that the Holy Ghost would come upon her and "thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS" (Luke 1:31). Although this conception was hidden, Jesus came forth to be revealed to the world as Savior and Deliverer. Read also Matthew 1:20 and Luke 2:21.

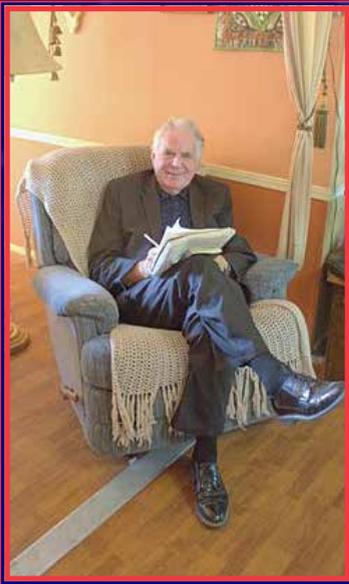
It's the same with every conception. It doesn't take place in the open for everyone to see. God's handiwork (for only God gives conception) takes place in the recesses of the home and in the womb, the hidden part of the woman. But this miracle doesn't stay hidden. Children born in the image of God, will one day come forth from the home to be bearers of God's image in the earth, influence many people, and generations to come.

From the "recesses" come forth great miracles and "sharpened and polished arrows" to change the world.

NANCY CAMPBELL



# Raising Family Standards



## FACEBOOK OR BLOG FOR FATHERS AND HUSBANDS

Colin Campbell writes a post for men each day on Meat for Men Facebook. However, for men who don't go to Facebook, they can receive Colin's powerful messages by going to: <http://tinyurl.com/MensDailyDevotionalBlog>

The Bible tells us that "The children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts" (Numbers 1:52 and 2:2, 3). Each tribe had their own flag or banner on which was painted something that would identify their tribe. I like to think that their flag or standard also had something on it that reminded them of the standards and values of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whom they served.

Every new generation needs its own standard-bearers to rally its people and families to the values and truths of God's Word. Without strong, godly standard-bearers, morals quickly deteriorate. We must pray earnestly that God, in His mercy, will raise up bold standard-bearers who will deliver this generation from the delusions and compromises that weaken, corrupt, and destroy their moral fiber. Our adversary, the devil, can quickly pollute and destroy when the standard-bearers are not prayed up and strong.

The truth is that our moral standards on adultery, fornication, pornography, homosexuality, idolatry, and witchcraft, etc., have become very offensive to millions of moderate Islamics, let alone the extremists. True Christianity believes in godly and righteous morality. The Bible teaches that we must love our enemies, do good, and pray for those who persecute us. This does not mean we should stand by and let extreme religious fanatics take over the world. Absolutely not! Christian-based countries should be living virtuous lives, not decadent ones. Christian countries should lead the world in righteousness and godly living.

Christian parents, we have the responsibility to raise the standards of morality in our families to the point that it will not only preserve our own family, but also have a preservative effect upon the whole nation. Our nations need godly men and women in all government leadership, as well as churches, families, and all work places.

As Christian parents, our example in setting and raising the standards cannot be underestimated. We cannot trust the state schools to teach our children's moral values and standards. We cannot trust the media to elevate our children's moral values and standards. We cannot trust many churches these days to raise the moral standards and ethics for many no longer call sin "sin." They do not speak out against unrighteousness any more. They do not speak out against homosexuality any more. Many of our churches' youth programs are not much different from the programs of the world. It is up to us as true Christian parents to raise the moral values and standards of our children. If we will not, who else will? Will we care enough to do it for them?

### What can we do as responsible and loving Christian parents?

1. We must set for ourselves strong examples of moral godly standards before our children at all times.
2. We must draw closer to God and seek His divine help in order to establish stronger godly values in ourselves as well as our families. It is important to regularly attend a family encouraging church together as a family--one that preaches godly values.
3. We must set up morning and evening Family Devotions. This helps to abundantly sow biblical values into our children's lives. It also promotes dependence upon God by teaching them to pray regularly. I believe family prayer needs to be re-pioneered. The twice daily Family Devotions is, without a doubt, a great assistance to prayer. Prayer should be spontaneous, but it should also be ordered. We love to eat spontaneously. However, what would life be like if we did not organize our families to eat together at the table? It would be a hopeless task for the mother to prepare family meals if we did not have such a thing as order. Prayer is quickly crowded out of our lives if we do not order it. The same happens to the daily habit of reading the Bible to the family. It is speedily overtaken with less important things if we do not apply the rule of order. The Scripture says that we should "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This inspires continuous and spontaneous praying. However, this does not negate the daily order of prayer. In 2 Chronicles 8:14 it talks about the morning and evening praise and prayer to the Lord, "as the duty of every day required."

When God created the universe He created order to accompany it. Just imagine what would happen if every planet, star, and sun decided to do its own thing? It would be chaos. The same principle applies to every area of our lives.

4. We must provide our children with a Christian-based education, either through homeschooling or through a reputable Christian school. I strongly recommend homeschooling.

5. We must be very watchful regarding the peers with whom our children associate. We must actively encourage friendship and companionship with other like-minded families who are also taking care to raise godly morals in their children.

6. We must provide a loving and joyful atmosphere in our homes. Be actively involved and encourage family activities together, which promote good, happy, and fun times.

7. We must provide loving and appropriate discipline, for without godly discipline our children are deprived of that which produces godly character.

8. We must walk in integrity and teach our children to live a life of integrity. This is one of the most important of all moral values which must be raised up as a royal banner over our families. The Webster's dictionary defines this word as: "the entire, unimpaired state of anything, particularly of the mind; moral soundness or purity; incorruptness; uprightness; and honesty."

We have the privilege of raising truthful, honest, loyal, law-abiding citizens who do not have double standards, who do not speak out of both sides of their mouth, and who say what they mean and mean what they say. We are in the business of raising wholesome families who believe in faithfulness, honesty, truth, and dependability.

Integrity protects us and our children from making wrong decisions. David lived a life of integrity (1 Kings 9:4) and confessed . . .

"Let integrity and uprightness preserve me" (Psalm 25:21).

"Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity" (Psalm 26:1).

"But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity" (Psalm 26:1).

"As for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity" (Psalm 41:12).

Job confessed, "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me" (Job 27:5).

Proverbs 20:7 tell us that blessing is poured on the children who have a father who walks in integrity.

Integrity is a most precious jewel to those who realize its worth. We cannot take moral standards and values for granted. We must teach them by example as well as word. If we do not take action now as parents who really care about our children's morals and standards, we will lose the most valuable commodity we have.

**COLIN CAMPBELL**

Primm Springs, Tennessee, USA

### THE PRAYING FAMILY

"God didn't make the course and destiny of nations and of individuals dependent on the decisions of Congresses and Parliaments . . . but rather God placed it in the praying family. This is why the devil cannot ruin nations of men until he has destroyed the homes of prayer! That's why Satan hates the family altar."

~ Norman V. Williams

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# RAISING MOVERS AND SHAKERS

*"The people who know their God will be strong and take action"*

Daniel 11:32 (HCSB)

## Fathers and mothers . . .

We are raising up families of strong, moral character.

We are raising families who are well-taught on all godly moral values.

We are raising children and young people who know their Bibles and know how to pray.

We are raising families who know how to hold their heads up and their shoulders square in the face of all opposition to righteous standards.

We are raising families who know how to resist temptations to be liars, cheats, compromisers, and lazy "good for nothings."

We are raising our children to be movers and shakers of all that is wholesome and righteous.

We are raising young people who are not afraid of devils and demonic forces of darkness who dare to roar against us.

We are raising families who know their God and who will be strong, and do exploits.

We are raising families who have stickability, persistence, and pluck.

We are raising families who are learning how to fight in the battles of life, who will never quit, or throw in the towel.

The whole world needs fathers and mothers who will be prepared to sacrifice everything to make this happen.

COLIN CAMPBELL



## Visiting the Sick

Like Jesus, you can cure the sick or make them better. This truth was shared by Christians that lived at a time that they, or Christians not long earlier, knew the writers of the New Testament personally and could ask them for clarifications or explanations of what they had written. The following article will include these non-biblical authors to show that ancient Christians embraced the same ideas about healing as taught in our own day.

No doubt you are familiar with Christ's command in Matthew 10:7-8 and Luke 10:9 that missionaries and other traveling preachers are to cure the sick before telling them that the Kingdom of God is near. Fewer readers will have heard of a writing from a minority group of early Christians called the Gospel of Thomas. Although different from majority in many ways, it repeats the commandment and extends it to all who travel. Indeed, Mark 16:18 widens the power of healing to all who truly believe.

Christian healings continued after the first century. Irenaeus, a bishop in France, mentioned them as still current in the A.D. 180s (Against Heresies 2.32.4). So did Clement in Egypt, dean of the world's foremost Christian school in the next decade (Eclogae Propheticae 16). So also did Tertullian in Tunisia early in the third century (De Spectaculis 29; see also his Against Marcion 5.8).

Clement's successor as dean was Origen, who recorded in the late 240s that "traces" of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including cure of the sick, remained in the church (Against Celsus 1.46). Although still occurring, they were apparently less common than in apostolic times.

Besides healings, Origen considered among the gifts of the Spirit to be "a marvelous meekness of spirit and a complete change of character" (Against Celsus 1.67). He thought physical healing to be less important and less indicative of the working of the Holy Spirit than works of mercy and love. Even if you cannot perform a cure, you too can perform such works.

A chief way of helping the ill is to visit them. Remember Christ's teaching in Matthew 25:34-39 that it is deeds of love and mercy—such as feeding the hungry, visiting prisoners, and looking after the sick—that will be rewarded in heaven. This agrees with Matthew 7:21-23, where Christ said that performing miracles does not replace such works. What we do for the least sick person we do for Christ (Matthew 25:40). Visiting might not cure the patient but it can make their symptoms less uncomfortable and thus make their lives better, although not perfect.

Visiting the sick was strongly encouraged in early Christianity. Clement quoted Matthew 25:34-40 to remind Christians of this duty in the 190s (Quis Dives Salvetur 30). Tertullian spoke of it as one desirable fruit of a happy Christian marriage (To His Wife 2.8). Another ancient Christian writing considered it a very serious duty (Apocalypse of Zephaniah 7.4).

Shortly before A.D. 249, Three Books of Testimonies 109 classed visiting the sick to be among such important Christian activities as forgiving sins, helping the poor, loving enemies, and the Golden Rule itself—which indicates that Christians held visiting the sick in the highest regard. The author repeated Matthew 25:36 and quoted an earlier author: "Be not slack to visit the sick man; for from these things thou shalt be strengthened in love."

It is particularly appropriate for clergy to visit the sick. James 5:14 instructs church officers to do so, adding that they should also pray for them and anoint them with oil. A church manual written around A.D. 217 encourages deacons to find out who is sick and inform the pastor so that he can pay a visit; ill people, it says, are much comforted when they know the pastor (their "high priest") is mindful of them (Hippolytus Apostolic Tradition 30).

Your loving acts such as visiting can make the situation of the sick better. But can you actually cure them? Remember one thing: the Bible does not say that healing must always be caused by a miracle; you can contribute to their welfare by ordinary means. In describing Christian good deeds in the early third century, Bardesane of Syria included healthy workers giving toward the support of the ill (On Destiny), while one martyr for the Faith around A.D. 165 noted that it was common for church funds to be used to relieve Christians in financial need due to illness (Justin Martyr 1 Apology 67.6). Even the most ordinary person can donate to Christian medical missions and hospitals and thus (help) cure the sick.

While the church fathers saw no miracle in visiting and donating toward the sick, they usually considered actual cures to be miracles and thus evidence of divine power, but did not regard it as necessary for every healing to be supernatural. Divine love was the only essential ingredient for all cures.

According to John 14:12, whoever believes in Jesus will do greater works than His. Although people gifted with the grace of divine healing have never been plentiful, certainly not all Christians, the Bible, and church fathers state that anyone can do great works equal in love and mercy to those of Christ. By visiting the sick, taking care of their bodies, and helping with their finances, we can all make the sick better and so fulfill the law of God.

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David W. T. Brattston is a former lawyer and judge on minor tribunals whose freelance articles on early and contemporary Christianity have been published in every major English-language country. The above is a revision of an article originally published in the Summer 2007 issue of Infuse magazine.

You may have all the doctrines of the Bible in your head, but is God's love flowing through your hands and feet?"  
~ Colin Campbell



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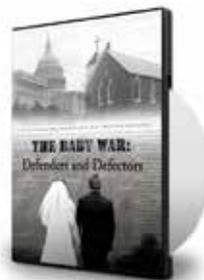
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