



For Such a Time as This

Last month, I wrote more personally for the first time about my difficult childhood and how it brought me to the faithfulness of a Heavenly Father. The readers' comments were as varied as I had expected they would be, from shock to empathy to an interest to know more. This time, I'd like to tell a later part of my testimony, to highlight another facet of God's grace.

Most of us are uncomfortable with others' pain and suffering, probably because we don't know either what to say or what to do with the sympathy that wells up in our hearts and floods our eyes with tears. I believe that God provides a way for us to enter into others' pain without falling apart, so as to relate to them and comfort them and love them. I'd like to share over the following months how our saga of suffering did ultimately have a purpose. Without this particular story, there would not be this particular ministry with me as its director *at such a time as this*.

My first husband was an entrepreneur and an athlete who loved to work hard, invent things, sing old songs and hymns and recite poetry. But he was restless and angry in his soul, due to the childhood grief that he carried throughout his life. We were blessed with five children, including one who died shortly after birth. As both sorrows and blessings came along, our house had sounds of music and good stories, in spite of the anguished souls of both of us parents, who longed for answers like Esther did in the Bible.

When Queen Esther's relative and mentor challenged her to risk her life to save her people, the Jews, he said, "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for *such a time as this?*"

We regularly share in this newsletter the testimonies of those women who had come to the Refuge with their anguished souls full of suffering and pain. Time after time, there are happy endings as God faithfully and miraculously comforts them in the midst of their sorrows and "makes known to them the path of life, and in His presence there is fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). Please read JoAnn's testimony on the back page.

To finish this chapter of what might sound like "The Little Match Girl from Chicago," I can tell you that the music that had served as steady trade wind in our otherwise tempestuous family life flowed into the four children who all sing now, floated to the grandchildren who sing or play instruments, crossed breezes with the grandchildren's husbands who are music leaders in their churches, and is wafting into the great-grandchildren who are being put to sleep with the same songs and hymns that soothed and stirred my soul so many years ago.

Here is one of them just for you: "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see."

I'm hoping and praying that all of you are experiencing this amazing grace today. As we hear of others' sufferings, we need not be overwhelmed with sorrow or overcome with questions. Even as we weep or pray with them and show God's gentle love, we also can be sure that God is doing something amazing through it all. This is at the heart of the restorative work that we do at the Refuge. Please help us with this ministry *at such a time as this*. We need your support so much right now.

Love in Christ, Donna/Mama/Mimi



Raising Up New Leaders

A new Women's Refuge is being raised up in Pennsylvania! Connie first attended one of our luncheons 10 years ago. Since then she has received counseling, participated in groups, and received training every winter when she comes to Vero Beach. Last year she attended our first annual Leadership Conference. She wrote:

"God has used The Refuge to inspire me and give me courage to follow His leading to provide a home for women being released from jail in my hometown. I realize now, that when I came for the leadership training, I already had been in training for many years at the Refuge. I already knew the love that the staff and board had for God. I had experienced the good counseling, and the well run classes and groups. I observed that the ministry was run well, and there were wonderful life changes for the women who come for healing. I feel part of the unity of the Refuge. A unity that only God can create through giving Him the praise and Glory for all that happens! The Leadership Training was like having it all tied together in a beautiful bow. I will be forever grateful to God, and the board and staff for this gift." —*Connie, Pittsburg, PA.*

The Women's Refuge is planning its **2nd Annual Leadership Conference** for women who have a desire to develop their leadership skills and learn the unique Women's Refuge program model so that they can start one in their communities. The sessions will be on topics such as conflict resolution, staffing, board of directors, funding, public relations, biblical counseling, house managing and many, many more. We are accepting women who are eager for God to show them how to lead so they can show other women how to lead. Make plans now to attend the weeklong training **August 13th-18th**. The cost is \$350.

Come Visit Our Store

We moved! Our resale shop has been combined with our furniture store to make one large store, and moved across the parking lot. We are in need of donations of gently used items such as clothing, house wares, artwork, small furniture. Come visit 10-4 M-F and 10-3 Sat. Volunteers Welcomed. **1609 10th Ave, Vero Beach.**

New Scholarship Fund

Praise the Lord! Walter's servant heart will live on at the Women's Refuge! The Board members have unanimously voted to establish a Walter Lee Loucks Scholarship Fund. This fund will be made available to any present or prospective resident who needs financial assistance to participate in the program at the Refuge. You can help perpetuate Walter's giving spirit by making a tax-free donation to this special Scholarship Account.

Testimony from a Weekend Retreat

"My life is so busy. Even though I have a quiet time every day, I still feel like I don't get a chance to have time with just the Lord. At the Weekend Retreat there was nothing to distract me, and no demands of life on me. When does a woman ever not have any demands on her? We laughed and cried. I got to share things I've never shared before and was able to see that others struggle in the same way." — *JoAnn.*

Our **Weekend Retreat** provides a time of renewal through worship and fellowship as well as teachings on: identity in Christ, depression, anxiety, anger management, and temperament analysis, plus individual counseling sessions. Each retreat begins on a Thursday evening and wraps up on Saturday with either kayaking or the beach. This summer we are offering two Weekend Retreats: **July 19th-21st and July 26th-28th**. The cost is just \$75. Space is limited so please call 772-770-4424 to make a reservation.

6th Annual Bridge Tournament



We are grateful to all who participated in our Bridge Benefit, with special thanks to Gail Reams, our chief organizer. Your support of this ministry makes it possible for us to help wounded women become whole again.

We are in the process of re-establishing our grant writing committee since the passing of Walter, our chief grant writer. Pray for us!