



# THE JOURNEY

A Publication of

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“...the ministry of the Word” – Acts 6:4

Teaching – Equipping – Training – Ministering

Brenda Cox, Executive Director

May 2016 “...the Dayspring from on high has come to give light to those that sit in darkness...” – Luke 1:78-79

Newsletter

## *“I will not die an unlived life”*

Dearhearts,

In January of 1982 an Air Florida passenger jet crashed in the Potomac. A male passenger and a flight attendant clung desperately in the frigid waters to part of the fuselage as a helicopter lowered a harness. Though it came to the man he directed it to the woman, helped her in and motioned for the harness to be raised. When the helicopter returned for him, he was gone. On the bank of the river, another man watched a young woman flail helplessly as the numbing cold took over her body. He suddenly removed his coat and shoes and jumped into the river, desperately swimming to reach her before she, too, slipped away. Cameras recorded the scene as he grabbed her and finally made his way back to land where he dragged her limp body to safety.

One man gave his life. One man was willing to.

On the CBS evening news that night Bruce Morton honored the heroism of both men, ending his comments with this phrase from Shakespeare: *and they left the vivid air signed with their honor.*

Heroes come in many shapes and sizes. Some engage in breathtaking acts of courage while others live quietly heroic lives lost to all but the few who know them privately.

Jo Rude was my hero. She was a servant...to her family and friends. To her church. But most of all to her Lord. Not long after I came to know her in 1995, her allergies, especially to perfumes, kicked in so badly she increasingly was sequestered in her home. When I started teaching an ABF class at Lakepointe that year, she and Hollis were invaluable class leaders. Jo was outreach leader. But even after she was forced to stop coming to class, she remained outreach leader, calling people, writing notes...keeping in touch...praying. Most of all praying. I never saw her down...though I'm sure she was at times. Eventually, I stopped teaching my class at Lakepointe and Jo, for the last 10-12 years was

essentially home bound. She lived with her husband, Ed, and was involved with her children, and remained active within her home, but to go outside was always a respiratory threat.

Some years ago, as the demands of the ministry increased, it occurred to me that perhaps she would like to check messages and touch base with people and help me stay on top of phone calls as a way of helping the ministry, and it would keep her connected. She seemed eager to do so and was amazingly faithful year in and year out. Faithfulness was her hallmark. Faithful as mother, wife, friend...servant. To all who were in her life. Faithful to life.

Jo lived heroically in quiet courage and boundless faith. How easy it would have been for her to slide to the sidelines...to let life slip on past her. To coast home. But she chose to live out the gift and not discard it or set it aside. And in the living, to laugh, to pray, to love...to the end.

Dawna Markova's poem speaks to such choices.

*“I will not die an unlived life. I will not live in fear of falling or catching fire. I choose to inhabit my days, to allow my living to open me, to make me less afraid, more accessible, to loosen my heart until it becomes a wing, a torch, a promise.*

*I choose to risk my significance; to live so that which came to me as seed goes to the next as blossom and that which came to me as blossom goes on as fruit.”*

When heroes leave us, it leaves a hole in the human family as well as in the hearts of their loved ones. But heroes always leave a fragrance in the air. Jo did not die an unlived life. What came to her as seed – or thorn – she passed on as blossom, and the fragrance she has left behind has left the vivid air signed with her honor.

I love you,

*Brenda*

# Pine Ridge Update

*With bumpy communication, we have only in the last week known if our Pine Ridge summer would materialize at all. Appearing for much of this year as though nothing would materialize, we now look forward to an early June slate that, hopefully next year, will include VBS.*

## Woman at the Well Women's Retreat June 3 - 4



### Community Church of Manderson

In what many consider the worst place on the Pine



Ridge reservation, there is an outpost of light. It is here in Manderson, South Dakota, that the door is open to speak to the women there of the reality of Christ and His power in our lives.

Following the same theme as our first women's retreat at Sharp's Corner Baptist

Church three years ago, it offers the opportunity to share stories of Christ's reality in our own lives and of His love for them and His provision at the well of their lives.

Here in the center of the reservation God is drawing men and women both to seek Christ through the work of TJ and Janice Jernigan whom the Lord led there almost three years ago. Last year, a Sunday morning group of 35 warmly welcomed us to their services following our women's retreat in near-by Sharp's Corner.



We ask your prayers surrounding our time there...and in preparation for it. Prayers for God's power and provision to become real in their daily lives, and that a flame of His love would be ignited there.

***There seems to be an unusual amount of spiritual warfare this year at every level, and we ask your prayers for God's message to be heard as Jaynie Lamb, Rebecca Drummond and Brenda share Christ with these ladies.***

## If You Would Like to Help...

*We will Need to Take or Purchase There*

- Blankets, scarves, crayons, coloring books, children's books, gloves etc. for approximately 12 women at the retreat and their children
- Toiletries and other items appropriate for retreat gift bags
- Bear Creek Dry Soup Mixes / Bacon bits
- Wooden Cooking Spoons / Potholders / Mittens
- Gum and other treats

## No Volleyball Camp This Year

We have sadly made the decision to forego what would have been our fourth annual Girls Volleyball camp this summer. Scheduling and other complications have brought us to the decision to do our fourth camp next year. The art camp that ran in conjunction with volleyball last year is sidelined as well.

What remains is our women's retreat. From the beginning we have sought for a spiritual footing on the reservation. There is the sense that perhaps that footing is being prepared in Manderson. It is through our prayers that God will accomplish His plans here...they will be for good, to give to those who need it, a reason and a hope.

## An Ancient Spirituality

There was a time, in the last century and before, a time before the white man obliterated their world, that the Lakota Sioux had a knowing of God. They believed in the Great Spirit, Creator of all, who was pure and, therefore, unreachable by corrupted man. So they danced the sun dance around a tree they called the "tree of life". For four days they danced and prayed for all who came to their mind and they pierced their flesh in penance before this mighty Being.

Though this spirituality has faded from many there now, their two great leaders, Red Cloud and Black Elk became Christians in the last years of their lives, perhaps prepared by their ancient ways to recognize the One who was pierced in their stead so that His blood could cover them with grace and bring them into His rest. We pray the faith of these leaders will return to there people.

## *Should We Step into another Realm...*

It is a call to the human heart for meaning...for what really matters in life. That indistinct longing...that restless, unsettled heart that pulls on us as a mid-life crisis, as depression or loneliness. But what are these, finally, but sacred longings? So often we miss the meaning of our restlessness...the message of our aloneness. These places in us are there because the soul will always cry for its food. And until we know what that food is, there will always be a gnawing hunger that will never be satisfied with junk food.

When the angel struck the waters of the pool of Bethesda in John 5, it was brimming with meaning...charged with possibilities. In Galilee, it was the howling wind that smote the waters and stinging darts of sea spray snared their faith in fear as a ghostly visage roamed out there in the waves. And a solitary word charged it with possibilities. "Come." And in the froth of confusion and fear, in the dreadful thrill of the impossible, a lone disciple flung himself out into the briny risk of faith...into the insanity of something never dared before. *Would the call have come to the others had they only asked?*

So what if our response to our restless longings is "If it is you, Lord...bid me come"? God calling us out of the boat we hunker down in...beckoning us to sacred adventure out on the waves of the impossible. What might it mean for you? It might mean the great discovery of your life...the discovery of purpose and power...the knowing of God in new ways.

In the tension between fear and faith, it is what we embrace that grows stronger. Was Peter without fear? No. But, in a moment of Divine insanity, He had less fear than faith. And his faith grew into a rock.

Where are the storms in your life? The stinging darts? Where the impossible places? Perhaps the great miracle will be to dare to believe that He calls to you there and, more, that He is all you need. You don't need your boat. Jump! Plunge into the very waves that are swamping it. Dare to walk supernaturally. Don't let the cautionary tales of childhood consign you to a playpen of protection. If Christ be real...follow Him. Out. If Christ be more than a fairy tale spirit...Out! Into all the world. Out into the stinging sea spray. Go out into the great adventure of life, daring the impossible...with Him, defying the evidence.

If Christ be for you who can be against you. *So you don't know if Christ be for you?* Fix your gaze on Him anyway, and dare the waves. It will either be a ghost tale told by fools or – at the last gasping moment - you will be seized by the certain grip of God Himself.

Listen for His voice. Do not jump out into the deep without it. But when the restless longing comes, when the desperate yearning... take the risk faith always demands. Fling yourself out into the deep toward the One who moves mysteriously there and in the howling wind bids you come.

For Reese, it was a call to walk by faith that brought Him to the train station that day in Scotland. Seeking to return to London, he had only enough money to reach the next town. *Use what you have* came the voice. So he bought a ticket to Llanely and stood in line there with no money. *What do I do?* Only 2 people stood between him and the ticket window. Had the guidance been just a quirk of the wind? Then a man stepped from the crowd, handed Reese 30 schillings and walked away. In the waves he had been caught by the certain grip of God and his faith grew into a rock..

For Amy, it was a longing for the lost. When the voice of that longing called to her she made her way first to China before realizing His voice called to her from India and for half a century she saved a thousand girls from temple prostitution there.

Contrary winds buffeted this man of means and leisure. To seek God in the tranquility of his palatial English manor was the longing of his heart, but a strange restlessness troubled his soul. It was a call to see. *See* the trafficking of slaves...*see* the suffering of human lives. And once he saw...his troubled waters would not be stilled...until he followed the call to the raucous discord of Parliament to devote his life to a singular cause... ending slave trade in the British Empire. For over 30 years he labored in failure. Then finally in 1833, after dozens of failures over dozens of years...the vote came for the abolition of slave trade in the Empire. Three days later, William Wilberforce died. A solitary victory at the bell, and through the winds of earth a voice called bidding him come, at last, to a palatial Manor. His work on earth was done.

The call to faith is the call to the end of ourselves. It is the summons to supernatural living. To dare the bitter winds of hatred with love, of despair with hope, of discouragement with faith. The call of Christ in our lives is always to a larger place. To be a people who defy the facts of earth, the littleness of its demands, the evidence of its gloom. To say with our lives there is something more. To say with our love there is something better. To declare with our faith there is something so much larger than here and to make visible with our lives the Invisible God who longs to be seen and known.

## ...What Great Things Might Await us?

She was born in 1866, six years after her parents, illiterate and impoverished, immigrated to America from Ireland during the Great Potato Famine. When she was 8 she contracted trachoma, a bacterial eye disease that created painful infections and eventually left her blind. That same year her mother died of tuberculosis, leaving her and her brother with an abusive, alcoholic father who abandoned them two years later. They were then taken to an overcrowded almshouse in Tewksbury, Mass. where, three months later, her brother died. Hot tempered and almost blind, Anne remained at the house for four years, unschooled and unable to read or write. .



When a state inspector came to assess the facility, Anne, having heard of the Perkins School for the Blind, persuaded him to send her there. Though her rough manners made her first years there humiliating, she managed to develop relationships with some of the teachers and proceeded to learn to read and write. And her world opened up to the refinements of life, of etiquette and concepts and ideas.

While there, she befriended Laura Bridgman, the first blind and deaf person to be educated in America and, to communicate with her, learned the manual alphabet developed for Laura by Perkins Director Samuel Howe. A series of operations successfully restored some of Anne's sight, and, at the age of 20, she graduated as valedictorian of her class and left her fellow graduates with these words: *"Duty bids us go forth into active life. Let us go cheerfully, hopefully, and earnestly, and set ourselves to find our especial part. When we have found it, willingly and faithfully perform it."*

Shortly after she graduated, a man came to the school desperate for help for his 7 year old daughter who was blind and deaf. He and his wife had despaired of hope since they had learned that the only person who could possibly hold an answer for their daughter had died 10 years earlier and had taken the knowledge of a "manual alphabet" with him. And who would come anyway to an obscure village in Alabama? The school administrator immediately thought of Anne and put her in touch with the Keller's. There, from the harsh storms in her own world, Anne Sullivan heard a voice calling to her to join Him on the waves of Tuscumbia. It was Anne, alone, who held the manual alphabet among the living. She made her way south and lived as Helen Keller's constant teacher and companion for half a century. In speaking of

her, Helen Keller called her coming the "the day my soul was born" and describes the magnitude of that first encounter at 7 with this half-blind 20 year old.

*I felt approaching footsteps. I stretched out my hand as I supposed to my mother. Someone took it, and I was caught up and held close in the arms of her who had come to reveal all things to me, and, more than all things else, to love me.*

Within a month, Anne had broken through with w-a-t-e-r, and suddenly *"my brain felt the impact of another mind, and I awoke to language, to knowledge, to love..."* By the end of the day, she had gone from *"a Phantom having no power of thought"* to learning 30 words. In six months she knew 650 words, and in 1904, at 24, she graduated, cum laude, from Radcliffe College. Anne went with her, signing in Helen's hand every lecture and question. Eventually, Helen was in high demand all over the world as a speaker, having labored for 25 years to learn how to speak in ways that could be understood.

We can walk on water if Christ bids us come.

He calls us from our boats to a larger place. For some it is the saving of a thousand girls, for another it is the touching of a solitary life. Seemingly insignificant. A child imprisoned in the silent dark with thoughts that could not be formed. But in Anne, Helen found her life, and, in Helen, Anne found her meaning. Her "especial part." Whether it be one or many, His call is always to come out of our narrow strictures, our small thinking, our shackles of gloom and doom, our focus on the storms, and dare to claim the mantel of the bold.

We belong to another realm and serve a God who makes irrelevant the impossibles of earth. We are a larger people than our times and the issues of our day and the pessimism that cloaks us now, the paranoia that shrink-wraps us. If people say there is no God, it is because they have not seen Him in our lives. Speak Him with your life. Show Him with your power. The power of love. Of hope. Of Joy. The power of an indomitable spirit. Prove Him to the world with your life.

If God is absent from your boat, He has not abandoned you. Look for Him in the waves...and dare to join Him there. He may be calling you out from a timid faith to a daring faith. Radical in its leap. Perhaps insane "as Him who quickens the dead and calls forth things that are not as though they are." (Rom. 4:17)

We can walk on water if Christ calls to us there.

