

Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished. (1 Chron. 28:20)

With these words of encouragement, David charged his young and inexperienced son (2 Chron. 29:1), Solomon, with the awesome task of building the Temple of the Lord. The task was great, not only because of its size and complexity, but because it was for God Himself. Certainly Solomon would have been overwhelmed and filled with fear and inadequacy. Yet, he was instructed to “act”, for his father assured him that he would not be alone. The LORD God would be his stay. In addition, he was told that the Lord would provide all that was needed through the nation of Israel, and that every “willing man of any skill” would come forward to be with him in this work (2 Chron. 28:21).

Perhaps, Solomon was also emboldened by the Scriptures, as he may have recounted, in the book of Exodus, the construction of the first Tabernacle. God’s explicit instructions to Moses included the specific materials to be used—the quantities needed were enormous. It is estimated that approximately a ton of gold, 7,000 pounds of silver, and over 5,000 pounds of bronze were required, not counting the amounts of acacia and cedar woods, fine linens, dyes and other needed supplies. Furthermore, God had led the Israelites into the wilderness where resources were unavailable. Add to all of that the necessary skills and the task would have been overwhelming indeed.

Yet, the Tabernacle was completed. Solomon may have been as astonished as you and I to learn how. The Lord commanded the Israelites: *from what you have take an offering for the Lord; whoever is of a willing heart let him bring it as the Lord’s contribution* (Ex. 35:5). As the people responded, Moses had to restrain the people from bringing any additional contributions for the material and skills were *more than enough for all the work to perform it* (Ex. 36:7).

The Lord had already provided, through the Egyptians, for the Israelites to have within their camp everything required to complete the task. All they needed

IN FOCUS

—Rosemary Sabatino

was to have a heart **willing** to give their talents and treasures back to the Lord.

Faced with the enormity of ministry to children at risk or in crisis we, too, can become overwhelmed by the obstacles and the massive numbers of

children in need. Yet we can be encouraged to “act” knowing that The LORD God is our stay and that He has already provided within the Body of Christ all that is needed for the task at hand. Our only requirement is a heart that is **willing** to bring the individual talents and resources that He has given us to the One who is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all we could ask or think.

As we focus this quarter on the girl child, we are indeed grateful for those who have come forth with their contribution in order to inform us and inspire us to action.

In her article, “Talk to Me About My Daughter,” Dr. Desiree Segura-April, Assistant Professor of Children at Risk at Fuller Theological Seminary, exposes some of the harsh issues facing the girl child and gives us a basis for response. Heidi Herrman, Coordinator of Anti-Human Trafficking for The Salvation Army Sierra Del Mar Division in San Diego, discusses active ways we can advocate for the worth of the girl child in her article “Beauty for Ashes.” The Caregiver’s Corner features Susan Sutton, author and co-director with her husband of WEC USA, who offers a path to real peace and restoration to those facing the weariness of care giving ministry. In addition, Dr. Phyllis Kilbourn unveils a new collaborative effort in her overview of *Shaping the Future: Girls and Our Destiny*, a book dedicated to the girl child.

May we be strong, and courageous, and act on the things God puts before us as we strive to serve Him together ‘til He comes.

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“Talk to Me About My Daughter”

—Desiree Segura-April, Ph.D.

*“If you talk to me about my mother,
you will get my respect.*

*If you talk to me about my wife,
I will tell you it’s none of your business.
But if you talk to me about my daughter,
you have my eyes, ears and heart...”*

Old Egyptian Saying

Think about a little girl in your life who is, or was in the past, special to you. Maybe you have a daughter, or a niece, or a little sister. Perhaps there is a girl in your neighborhood or at church, or a little one in your ministry who comes to mind. Close your eyes and envision her face, her smile, the sound of her laughter, the warmth of her little arms hugging your neck as you lean over to greet her. Think about the joy she brings to your life and the gifts and talents she has. What do you want most for this little girl? What are your hopes and dreams for her life? What are her hopes and dreams? What does God desire for this little girl?

Do these common “proverbs” and sayings² from around the world reflect what you were imagining for that special girl in your life?

“Girls are maggots in the rice.”

—Chinese saying

“Daughters & dead fish are no keeping wares.”

—18th century English saying

“A girl is merely a weed.”

— Zulu saying

“Happy is he whose children are sons and woe to him whose children are daughters.”

—the Talmudic writings

“Nothing was born.”

—birth of a female Hindu child

While it may seem unbelievable in the 21st century, according to a variety of sources from secular and Christian development agencies, girl children around the world are often the most neglected, exploited, abused, and discriminated-against human beings on earth.³ Unfortunately, most of us are unaware of the problem because “girls are not usually visible on statistical profiles.

Their predicament is blended with those of women or boys,” says Development Education Manager for World Vision Canada, David Kupp.⁴ While it is not usually recognized, girls are often devalued simply because of their gender, their age, and their economic status.

First, they are marginalized for being female. However, “unlike apartheid and racism, gender prejudice is not acknowledged as a formally articulated behavioral precept or doctrine. But it clearly exists and has an impact on the female life-cycle.”⁵ Second, simply being a child is a disadvantage because “until quite recently, all societies placed the well-being of adults above that of children” states Robert Edgerton, a professor of anthropology and psychology at UCLA.⁶ Finally, in many cultures children are among the poorest of the poor. Due to cultural beliefs, the girl child is often viewed as an economic burden because rather than bringing more income into the home, income will be needed to pay for her to be married. In many cultures once she is married she will leave the family and no longer contribute to their economic well-being.⁷

“Despite the almost universal ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the rights and equality of girls and young women continue to be denied.”⁸

Despite the almost universal ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, the rights and equality of girls and young women continue to be denied. Some ways in which this occurs are discrimination against girls from the time they are conceived; a higher value placed on boys leading to a denial of the girls’ equal rights to education, food, dignity, and protection; exposure to harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation; and girls being judged by physical appearance or objectified in media, rather than by what they contribute to society.

***In light of this reality,
how might the church
respond?***

More research needs to be done on the issues girls face around the world and how the gospel can become truly good news that brings transformation in lives, families, communities and cultures. We need to be willing to look closely at the situation of the girl child in our own culture and around the world and ask some tough questions. Are girls being given access to appropriate healthcare and nutrition? Are they able to attend school within an environment and structure whereby they may flourish and graduate? Are they being given the opportunity to learn skills that will help them break the cycle of poverty in their families? How might we challenge the ways they are being exploited in the home and labor force? In what ways are media and society objectifying or sexualizing girls and how might the church seek to change this? Are we speaking out against gender-based violence in their homes and communities?

As we do this research and in our daily lives and ministry, we must listen to the girls themselves and try to understand their realities. Talk to the girls in your own life and intentionally listen to their stories. Read books by and about girls. Give them opportunities to come together to share their stories, ideas, dreams, and goals. With these girls, analyze their experiences to discover how we can work together so that all girls might be welcomed to participate fully in the family of God and be free to use their unique God-given gifts and abilities in building the kingdom of God.

Finally, we must act. How? Analyze how we are unintentionally teaching children gender stereotypes in our churches. Speak out against cultural practices that may be harmful to the girl child. Become advocates for exploited girls so that governments will take notice of the problems. Carefully, thoughtfully and theologically analyze the root causes of violence and seek ways to change them. Consider gender and age in our Sunday School and youth group curriculums and activities and in our outreach ministries.

We can't change "proverbs" or cultures overnight; a complex web of factors work together to create these situations for the girl child.

***These girls are God's creation,
and every one is precious in
God's sight.***

It is time for the church to become aware of the obstacles many girls face and begin to talk about our "daughters." When we talk to people about their daughters, we will have their eyes, their ears and their hearts. Then, as followers of Jesus, we may speak blessings into their lives, instead of "curses," and proclaim:

"You are the daughter of the King!"

*Desiree Segura-April received her PhD in Intercultural Studies from Asbury Theological Seminary E. Stanley Jones of World Mission, Kentucky, U.S.A. Her dissertation focused on the missiological theories and praxis of missionaries working with girl children in Latin America. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Children at Risk at Fuller Theological Seminary Pasadena, California, and is a contributing author for **Shaping Our Future: Girls and Our Destiny**, Phyllis Kilbourn, Editor.*

End Notes

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Beauty for Ashes



The Girl Child: The Role of Advocacy

by: Heidi Herrman

Walter Brueggeman offers us a beautiful vision of hope in his book *Prophetic Imagination* when he states that “we must work to let people see their own history in the light of God’s freedom and his will for justice,ⁱ” and “suffering made audible and visible produces hope, articulated grief is the gate of newness, and the history of Jesus is the history of entering into the pain (of others) and giving it a voice.”ⁱⁱ

As we look around the world and take account of the status of the girl child, the obstacles can create mountains that appear unmovable. Grave human rights violations such as female genital mutilation, child sex trafficking, gender violence, child brides and forced abortions, accompanied largely with poverty, inequality, and lack of opportunities might create barriers toward seeing the hope that the girl child provides. As Christians around the world engaged in the lives of girl children daily, we can change the face of our communities and our world through **advocacy**.

The role of an advocate can be defined in myriad ways. We are called to be like Jesus and enter into the pain and give it a voice. We are the ones to walk alongside the girl child globally and proclaim

***“beauty for ashes,
the oil of gladness for mourning,
a garment of praise
for the spirit of heaviness;
that they might be called trees of righteous,
the planting of the Lord,
that the Lord might be glorified”.***ⁱⁱⁱ

When we advocate on behalf of another we are choosing to enter into the injustices that the individual or group might face, calling for equality, participation and access. As we journey alongside the girl child through the beauty and the pain, we are able to carry, walk next to and hopefully run behind the precious creation that God sees as valuable.

So, what are we advocating for? We can take up the cause of the girl child by using our resources, connections, voice, time, and energy to call for education, leadership opportunities, and an end to violent practices.

If we are able to first grasp the extraordinary place the girl child holds in the kingdom of God, a desire to work toward improving the conditions of her life will flow out of that foundation.

***Most importantly
we can advocate for the
immense worth of the
girl child.***

Throughout the Gospels we have an example of Jesus as an advocate on behalf of numerous girl children throughout scripture from diverse backgrounds and circumstances. He radically reached out to call these children to participate. The mountains we see as standing in our way did not stop Jesus and they should not stop us either. First, we must see the girl child as a creation that bears the image of God and model Jesus’ radical actions toward incorporation.

So what does it look like to give a voice to the problems and potential of the girl child? It is a slow and steady work that demands our *presence, participation, persistence and passion*. If we are going to accept the call to serve as advocates alongside the girl child we must first be present. Our presence a powerful tool in the life of one girl. Giving of our time and attention conveys to the individual girl child that she is of worth. Despite the conditions in that one child’s life, the presence of someone who models true love and acceptance can prove invaluable.

Next, we must take up the responsibility of participation. This action can affect the life of one child but can also translate to the larger need for communal and global change.



As we become active advocates it is important that we partner together because partnership amplifies change. If we are going to tackle the major injustices facing the girl child today, we must take our message far and wide. Through effective coalitions and supportive networks multiple talents and gifts can be shared to benefit the needs of the girl child.

Persistence should cover our work. This work needs to continue on though others might be adversarial. The work toward advocating the worth of the girl child will take time if we are to really change long held perceptions and traditions. That is why we cannot abandon the childrens' side. We cannot move on to another "cause" or "project". The girl child deserves our persistent confrontation of oppressive frameworks and unhealthy attitudes.

Finally, **advocates encompass their work with passion.** As Christians we can serve from a sustained motivation to restore the lives of girl children because they are God's creation.

**We are
empowered in our inner
being
to continue this work through
the Holy Spirit.
We can take joy in the fact
that we are not alone.**

**Here are
some practical ways
to advocate for the girl child.**

- Bring girls together to share their stories.
- Address local church leaders to challenge the churches' perspective of the girl child and increase equality as seen through the Bible.
- Educate your community leaders on the potential of the girl child and her role to transform the community.

- Launch a campaign speaking out against one of the issues facing the girl child.
- Call for cultural accountability when extreme violence is involved.
- Listen to the needs of the girl children where you live, work, and worship.
- Take a survey of the resources available in your community for the girl child and share the results with others.

By highlighting the voices of the girl children within our midst we are taking steps toward change. Articulation of injustice leads to new hope. I think what we will also see as we journey alongside the girl child is the immense joy and resilience present even within unbearable circumstances. Much beauty and gladness stand out behind our first impressions of ashes and mourning. Strong beautiful girls work to overcome each day. Let's take up the call to amplify their power. Let us advocate together for the worth of the girl child, both in our midst and globally.



Heidi Herrman is a graduate of Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, California where she received a pre-med degree in biology and nutrition. She has worked in Africa in areas of gender inequality, HIV and AIDS prevention, and child trafficking. She is currently working towards her masters degree in cross-cultural studies from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California with an emphasis in children at risk and healthcare. There she has been able to further research human trafficking and completed an internship with the Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition this summer.

Heidi currently works for The Salvation Army Sierra Del Mar Division in San Diego, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial counties as their Coordinator of Anti-Human Trafficking program. The Salvation Army works locally and internationally to fight human trafficking since the 1880s and has three programs focused on fighting human trafficking: Network of Emergency Trafficking Services- NETS; Partnership to Rescue Our Minors from Sexual Exploitation- PROMISE; and Save through Awareness of Victims Enslaved- SAVE. As an international organization that comes in contact with society's most vulnerable, The Salvation Army plays a unique global role in the war on human trafficking.

i. Brueggeman, Walter. The Prophetic Imagination, Pg. 116

ii. Ibid, Pg. 91

iii. NIV, Isaiah 61

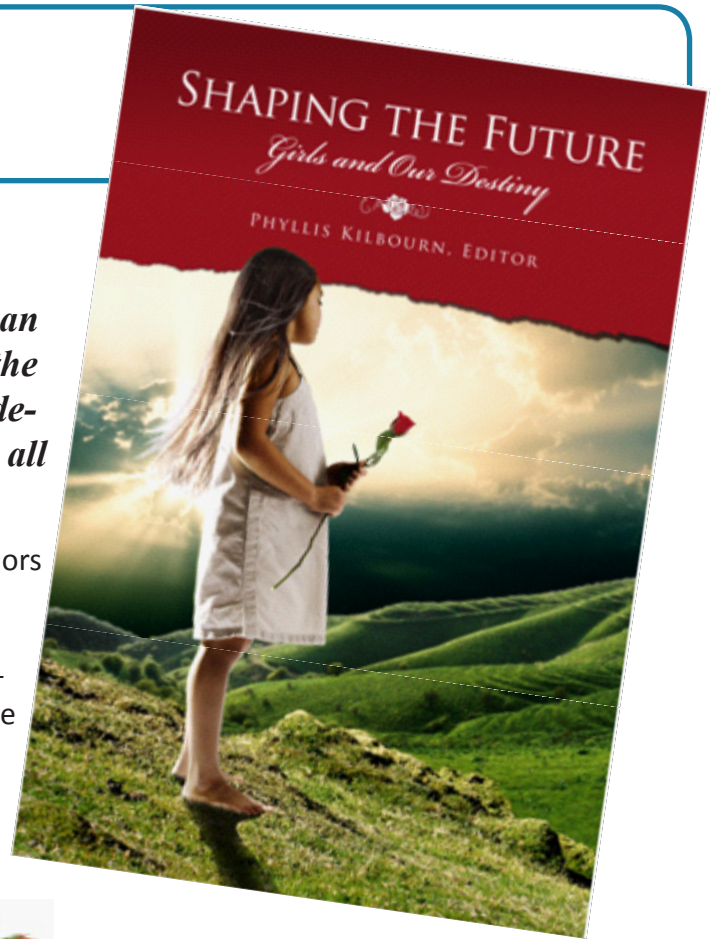
New

“Shaping the Future: Girls and Our Destiny”

Phyllis Kilbourn, Editor

Scripture declares that all children are a gift - an inheritance - from God (Psalm 127:3). To reject the girl child, or to ascribe lesser importance to her, denies God’s justice and character and the truth that all children are created in His image.

It is with great appreciation to the 10 contributing authors who prayerfully gave of their time and talents that we at *Crisis Care Training International*, in conjunction with *The Viva Network*, announce the upcoming publication of *Shaping the Future: Girls and Our Destiny*—a book dedicated to the girl child; to her issues and to God’s heart for who she can become in Him. Following is an excerpt from the Introduction and Overview. May you be blessed and encouraged to become equipped to advocate for and come along side the girl child. The future depends on it.



A recent *World Vision* report stated why it is crucial to support girl child issues: “Girls are the world’s most squandered gift. They are precious human beings with enormous potential, but across the world, they are generally the last to have their basic needs met and the first to have their basic rights denied.” The girl child quickly learns there is a high price to pay for being born a girl.

An ingrained bias against women and girls, exhibited in a culture’s attitudes, treatment and valuing of the girl child, is the culprit behind the “world’s most squandered gift.” These biases imply that the girl child is inferior to the boy child, worthy of drowning, aborting and being denied the basic rights of childhood—simply because she had the misfortune to be born a girl.

From a Christian perspective, we know that all children are equally important and precious to God. To believe differently denies his justice and character and the truth that all children are created in the image of God. Advocates also recognize that today’s girls are tomorrow’s women. And for a girl to reach her full potential, preparing and equipping her for the responsibilities of adulthood, she needs to be nurtured in an enabling environment, where her needs for survival, protection and development are met and her equal rights safe-guarded.

Such an investment in the life of the girl child affects society’s and the world’s future. **Shaping the Future: Girls and Our Destiny** is a tool to help us understand the importance of and how to make such an investment.

The book includes a global overview of girl-child issues stemming from gender discrimination and explores the root causes for this disparity. Further, writers lay a theological foundation for shaping our value of the girl child. The strategies discussed help the girl child surmount the barriers that prevent her from reaching her full, God-given potential and also result in physical, emotional and spiritual healing.

At the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, a rose bud symbolized the life of the girl child. Will the rose bud remain just a forgotten symbol? Or will we have the joy of watching the buds bloom into beautiful roses? Every girl has childhood dreams and aspirations. Her creator has also endowed her with the potential to realize her goals. With your help, and God enabling you, many rose buds will open and bloom fully, causing girls, like Naaman’s servant girl, to realize their full God-given potential in spite of the obstacles.

Phyllis Kilbourn • Crisis Care Training International



Training Opportunities

May 14–17 • Durham, N.C. • La Quinta Inn and Suites

Crisis Care Training International and World Relief will co-host a **Train the Trainer Seminar**. The event will feature a new curriculum, *Hands that Heal: International Curriculum to Train Caregivers of Trafficking Survivors*, produced by Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAAST). This is a comprehensive, Christian curriculum to train global caregivers who are frontline providers of after care for women, children, and men who have been trafficked into the commercial sex industry.

The seminar will be led by curriculum editors Dr. Beth Grant, founder and director of Project Rescue, and Cindy Lopez Hudlin. Also participating will be Dr. Melody Palm, a psychology professor at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, and Lisa Thompson, Liaison for the Abolition of Sexual Trafficking for the Salvation Army. *Participation will be limited to the first 45 registrants.*

June 18–21 • Charlotte, N.C. • Ramada Conference Center

Crisis Care Training International (CCTI) will host a training seminar introducing module 1 of their curriculum, *Offering Healing and Hope for Children in Crisis*. Topics to be covered include: Understanding Trauma in Children, Trauma and Loss, Children and Grief, Children's Emotional Health in Trauma, Attachment and Bonding, Boundaries, Spiritual Nurture for Wounded Children, the Stresses and Care of Caregivers, along with an intervention plan.

The seminar speakers include Dr. Phyllis Kilbourn, curriculum developer and director of Crisis Care Training International, Rosemary Sabatino, CCTI Staff Trainer and Mary Beth Young, Social Worker.

**For Registration Information Contact: Rosemary Sabatino
CCTI - rosabatino@aol.com - 803-548-2811**

World Vision—Hope for The Girl Child

This briefing paper to the member states of the Commission on the Status of Women at its 51st session shares some of World Vision's programs and the lessons learned through their work to improve the status of the girl child. Reports from five nations and four continents describe the context and the significant challenges facing girls, as well as some of the promising practices and recommendations for upholding their rights through education, empowerment, community change and the elimination of discrimination and violence.

World Vision calls upon all governments to address the problem of gender inequity, by providing a framework through which states can act, and citizens and development personnel can help hold them accountable.

Actions required by governments include: documenting the abuses and progress of girls and making that information popularly known; adequately funding initiatives to ensure children's rights; improving school curricula, providing incentives to girls' education and ensuring free, compulsory and quality inclusive education for all children; upholding international treaties and enforcing laws, especially for the prevention of gender-based violence; empowering families economically to prevent worsening poverty and the harmful consequences of child labor and exploitation; providing adequate health services and abuse prevention systems to protect children; and educating all girls, boys, men and women on children's rights, women's rights and human rights, as well as their roles and responsibilities in upholding discrimination, and building gender equity in the home, community and nation.

"Focusing on the girl child also requires a focus on gender equity. Governments, civil society and parents alike must prepare today's girls for adulthood while creating an environment where they will thrive, contribute and fulfil their potential as women. World Vision is committed to mainstreaming gender equity in every aspect of our work. World Vision's hope for the girl child is for her to be valued, loved, educated, empowered and free to live life in all its fullness. It is a hope for boys and girls, men and women to share in healthy, equal partnership. Only then will the girl child be free of all forms of discrimination and violence. May we all be granted the will to make it so." Ruthi Hoffman Hanchett, Gender, Advocacy and Communication Coordinator, World Vision International.

Hope for The Girl Child can be accessed through World Vision at globeempowerment.org

Coming Soon—New Website for CCTI

Look for Crisis Care Training International's new website at crisiscaretraining.org. You will find information on new resources and training opportunities, along with the latest copy of *The Barnabas Letter* (all back issues will be kept in archive). In addition, links to important resource and information sites will be at your fingertips.

All of CCTI's resource material, including books and curricula, will be available through the website as well.

Our goal is to provide access to information in order to encourage, enrich, and equip those with a heart for children in crisis.

We would be happy to publicize any new resources you have available along with your contact information.

Please send requests to: Rosemary Sabatino at rosabatino@aol.com.

Caregiver's Time-out

By: Susan Sutton



Two Doors

A bath product commercial, many years ago, featured a slogan that became a fixture of American pop culture. The commercial opens with a woman surrounded by chaos in her home. We can see her tension mounting until she utters the famous words, “Calgon, take me away!” The next scene shows her relaxing in a bath surrounded by quiet. The idea is that peace and restoration is only a bath product away.

The slogan came to mind more than a few times during our years in Chad. Our home was “grand central station” with people coming and going at all hours. There were days when I felt closed in not only by the physical walls surrounding our yard, but also by the busyness of our lives. I often longed for some, for any, physical space where I could retreat to restore perspective.

There were two doors to our house. The front door was the center of activity. That was the door through which we met the outside world, where we welcomed visitors, interacted with merchants and beggars, and offered glasses filled with strong, sweet tea to drink with friends. The front door signaled by its openness that we were available to anyone who came by.

The second door, directly opposite through the kitchen, led to a small backyard where we threw out dishwater, hung laundry to dry, and set up beds when it was too hot to sleep inside. Rarely did anyone walk around the house to the back door to find us.

One day in a desperate desire for relief from the demands of life at the front door, I exited the house through the back door, sat down on a rough wooden stool, leaned against the house and closed my eyes. When I opened them again and looked straight ahead, I saw only a cement wall, but when I looked up, I saw the sky.

Birds were flying overhead. I followed their unhurried movements on the warm currents of air and wished that I could sprout wings and fly with them, away from the demands waiting on the other side of the house.

After a few moments of quiet, my tangled thoughts unraveled, and I talked with God. I told Him what I was feeling, from the frustration of being little more than a pocketbook for constant requests for money to the weariness of handling a stream of visitors. And, to top it off, there was guilt. I was a missionary. Missionaries are loving and patient, and I, most decidedly, was not.

As I talked with God about how I felt, being real with Him and holding nothing back, the frustrations relaxed their clenching grip. Repentance pushed away the bad attitudes. Grace nudged away the guilt. A Father held his weary daughter. For that moment, I flew with the birds in the wide, open spaces, borne up by unseen currents of air, unhurried in their progress, and free. And I was able to return to the other door with renewed strength (Isaiah 40:31).

What changed me? Sitting for a few minutes alone in the backyard? Closing the door for a break from the challenges of ministry? No doubt these measures helped. Stepping out of chaos into calm is a tried and true method for maintaining sanity, and I highly recommend it. There were other times after that day when I enjoyed a moment in the backyard, but the truth is, real change came from meeting with God.

Real peace and restoration come from a relationship rather than a method. From a Person rather than a place. From the “real me” meeting with the real God. I come to Him as I am—frustrated, worn out, afraid I am unable to keep going. And He meets me as He is—patient, listening, loving, all that I need to keep going. And I am changed.

I don't need Calgon to take me away. I just need to keep the “back door” of my heart open to God. He is with me always. I can step into His presence at any time and in any place ...

... and be changed.



Crisis Care Training International is a ministry of WEC International.
Phyllis Kilbourn, Director <crisiscare@comporium.net>
Rosemary Sabatino, Editor/layout artist

*Susan grew up in North Carolina but now feels more African after serving on the edge of the Saharan desert in Chad for 13 years with her husband and three children. The Suttons are now directors of WEC USA. Susan has written two books: **A Quiet Center** and **A Sure Path** and is now working on her third book which includes this devotional.*