



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

# THE JOURNEY

A Publication of

*Dayspring Discipleship Institute*

505 E. Boydston, Rockwall, Texas 75087 972-722-1905

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

*Teaching – Equipping – Training – Ministering*

*Brenda Cox, Executive Director*

July 2013

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

Newsletter

## *My Wonder Bucket*

*Dearhearts,*

I'm thinking about my bucket list. The surprise is how different it looks than I thought it would. The place I'm realizing I most need to visit is my childhood. I need to bring back some things that have gotten lost along the way.

Nature was magical to me. Discovery was oxygen. It seized me with wonder. I loved searching for the geese when I heard them flying overhead. A million of them would sometimes land a mile away on the Missouri River when I was in middle school. We were in their migration path and their honking would sometimes awaken me in the night. Even then, in the silver darkness of a bright moon I would sometimes run outside to see if I could see the glint of their wings catching the moonbeams, though I don't remember that I ever did.

So I'm making a bucket list of wonder.

I'm going to be getting up earlier and more frequently to sit out on the patio before sunrise. I'll look for Mr. and Mrs. Duck, two mallards that fly daily from the pond near my house eastward to fields near Fate. In late afternoon they return. I can't regularly be there to welcome them back. But I can be up to send them off. It is a life beyond me that cyclically runs to a Rhythm that spins the earth. A rhythm that winds the clock and watches the birds and notes when a sparrow falls. I need to enter into *that* sacred rhythm again. And give thanks.

I'm going to be sitting out in the prayer garden more in the evenings this summer. To be alone in the quiet stillness with God. And to watch the fireflies...really watch them. And give thanks for small beauty.

I'm going to find places along the shore of Lake Ray Hubbard to walk occasionally where the water laps up on the land. To walk where the mud is. And where the tracks are. I want to reclaim the wonder those tracks held for me as a child. Identifying them. Knowing what lived in those woods. What animal had walked there before me. And give thanks. Give thanks for the life, the beauty...the uniqueness of earth.

I'm going to look for spider webs. The ones that catch the dew. The ones bejeweled by the sun. And give thanks.

I'm going to look for mushrooms again. Not to eat, but just to see. To learn of them and how many different kinds there might be in this place. And give thanks for a playful Creator.

I'm going to look for a butterfly chrysalis and keep tabs on it till new life emerges. And give thanks for the joy of miracle.

I think I'm going to walk in the rain one day – maybe more - without an umbrella...and without running to find shelter. And give thanks for the joy of feeling.

I'm going to be sure to be in a dark place to watch the Perseid Meteor Shower this August. It's been many years since I've really watched it. This year, the Lord willing, I'll count the falling stars. Take a blanket...lie down beneath the sky. And give thanks.

Life, over time, tends to dull not just what we see but the wonder of what we see. And something precious gets lost in us when that happens. We need to press against this coming of age. This growing up – and out of our child's clothing. We need to return to our wardrobe, to what clothed us then, and don once more the garment of wonder. It will bring us more alive. It will bring thanksgiving to our hearts...and praise to our soul.

So if you see me stirring up an antlion cone under the awning at the prayer garden, don't call my children. Celebrate with me. I'm discovering wonder again.

I love you,

*Brenda*

“Lord of all creation, of the water, earth and sky  
The Heavens are your Tabernacle...  
God of wonders beyond our galaxy,  
You are holy, holy. The universe declares your majesty...  
Early in the morning I will celebrate the light  
And when I stumble into darkness  
I will call your name by night.”

## *First Mission Outreach to Pine Ridge*

### *July 11-15*

In just 4 months since our initial trip to see how we might be able to minister to the Oglala Lakota Sioux, your response has been pretty remarkable. The result is our first mission trip there this month as eleven women leave on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Four will lead a self-sufficiency workshop, three will explore new possibilities and three will conduct a girls volleyball camp. Two men wanted to go but needed more time to make it work, so we will be making a second trip either later this fall or in the spring for weatherizing, home repairs and veterinarian work with horses.

But it is the volleyball camp that has taken us by surprise.

### *A Happy Problem*

“There are so many girls trying to reach me I am having to stay here at the school,” Nellie, the Pine Ridge volleyball coach, told us a few days ago. Her phone doesn’t work where she lives so she has been driving 40 miles to the school multiple times so girls who were hearing of our 3 day volleyball camp could reach her to sign up. “We’ve never had anything like this,” she explained.

No. They haven’t.

“There was a rash of suicides,” the assistant principal had told us in March. That was it. No other details. But I had been told those details earlier by the pastor of a tiny Baptist church on the reservation. Three years ago, hopelessness that had been smothered in alcohol and poverty crashed in on the teens as 52 of them committed suicide that summer. The oppressiveness that pervades large portions of Pine Ridge finally took its toll in cataclysmic ways on the youth. So when Nellie told us that girls from all over the reservation were trying to reach her, my mind went to the message of the summer of 2010 and I realized our small effort carries another message beyond what we could have fathomed. *126 girls had signed up at the time of our conversation.* Nellie would be going back on Monday to receive additional registration forms.

That number creates some challenges in conducting the camp. It also creates challenges with the t-shirts we had promised as we anticipated no more than 60 girls. It is a happy problem, and though we have been told not to expect all of them to show up, we’re still looking at a daunting number.

So if you feel led to do so, we would welcome any help you might give with the cost of these shirts.



## *Toiletry Zip-lock Bags*

We will be delivering requested items to certain organizations on the reservation. Since toiletry items are mentioned in several lists, Leanne Vlk suggested we create toiletry bags for boys and girls using gallon or quart size zip-lock bags. These will be going to the Emergency Youth Shelter, the Substance Abuse Recovery Center and CASA. If you would like to create some bags and **can get them to us by late evening July 8, we can take them with us; otherwise we will ship them or take them next time.** Please label for boys or girls when content warrants.

**Possible items:** small hair brush and comb, toothbrush and toothpaste, razor, soap or bath gel and shampoo/conditioner, feminine products, hand lotion, nail polish/remover, deodorant, after-shave products, etc.

### *Simple Items for Kids*

*CASA needs coloring books for the children they work with. All other items below are for a youth center in Kyle for some of their kids’ activities.*

- Coloring books and crayons (CASA)
- Art and craft supplies of every sort
- Colored: drawing Chalk, Markers and Pencils
- Cottonballs / Brown paper bags
- Ball point pens (stick)
- Paper: white or colored / construction
- Pasta
- Oatmeal containers
- Glue sticks, glue gun, white glue
- Tempura paint and brushes
- Watercolor sets/brushes/pencils
- Scissors for different ages
- Zip-lock bags
- Sequins
- Scrapbooking supplies including fabric
- Tape: scotch, masking, duct
- Yarn
- Pom poms
- Glitter / glitter pens
- Pipe cleaners
- Drawing pencils / pens / sketch pads
- Easel paintbrushes
- Felt
- Felt-tip markers
- Finger paints
- Craft sticks
- Art aprons / smocks
- Puzzles, board games for all ages
- Movies DVD / VHS (G or PG rated only)
- Flip flops, slippers, sandals
- Raman Noodles

## *A Look at The Great Religions of the World This Fall*

Becky Elliston, retired Rockwall high school history teacher, will be teaching a study on the world's great religions beginning in September. This course marks a turn of direction in some of the approaches offered by the ministry as we seek to offer a variety of teachings over time that will inform and challenge and equip us as followers of Christ.

The course will consider Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism and will look at how each began and developed, how each influenced the culture and politically impacts the world today. We will compare and contrast the core beliefs with Christianity and, perhaps most importantly, will look at how best to relate the love of Christ to those among us of these cultures and beliefs. Guest speakers will assist as they share personal experience in ministering to people of these cultures and religions.

This course will help us better understand our own faith as well as our world today. It will equip us to better understand and relate to the cultures around us. For those who minister in these areas of the world on mission trips or in regular activity there, this course will be a valuable resource.

Please consider this opportunity to open your world to a larger place of understanding...of possibilities...and of impact.

## *Prayer Retreat September 13-14*

The beautiful Country Woods Inn Bed and Breakfast in Glen Rose is the setting for a two-day prayer retreat.

There will be spiritual focus times with ample time for personal and small cluster prayer and intercession interspersed with teaching. We will attend "The Promise" on Saturday evening.

The Inn has nature trails, lots of wildlife, fishing on the Pauluxy and is within walking distance of downtown Glen Rose. If space is available, spouses may come who might not want to participate in the retreat itself. Though not finalized, the cost will be in the neighborhood of \$115 – \$130.00 for the weekend which includes 2 breakfasts but does not include cost of tickets for The Promise.

Originally intended to be only for those who had attended Brenda's Moravian Prayer Vigil talk, there are a few spaces that remain before we have to make the final commitment to the Inn. Several cottages, plus the main house are available but we need to let them know quickly what facility(s) we need to reserve so they can open the remaining space. Should you be interested in attending, please let us know soon.



## *New Step for the Ministry*

The "institute" portion of the Dayspring ministry is taking the first step in offering diverse options for study in areas that expand knowledge of our world and understanding of God's ways in it. We will be offering studies on God and history, the Law of the Generations among nations, Greek and Hebrew insights into God's Word, understanding our world today by understanding the religions that rule them. These are some of the areas we will explore as we seek to expand the opportunities for learning and growth that will equip us to be discerning instruments in our community...to bear witness with our lives to who Christ is.

We will start simply with Becky Elliston's course on the great religions of the world, how they began and how they have influenced their culture and politics today. This course will equip us to better know how to relate Christ's love to those in our own community where these religions and cultures live.

Future courses will be added gradually beginning in the spring of next year.

## *Pine Ridge Prayer Team Forming*

We are in the process of assembling an intercessory prayer team that focuses on the mission outreach to the Oglala Lakota Sioux. Prayer is going to play a vital role in accomplishing what God has in mind here. God always seeks after the person, going after the man in the tree, the woman, alone, at the well, and He will be doing that here. Our prayers will be strategic in bringing to us those whom He is wooing. But God moves mountains as well and is the only one who can. I have the most unexpected sense – and have had for quite some time – that our unique role may be to go at the broken systems that keep these native people snared in a never-ending cycle. I've never been one to do that, thinking there is no use wasting time and energy on what won't change...focus, instead, on helping individual need. But after a century and a half and thousands of people doing all they can to help, the reservation systems are so broken the dreams of generations are entombed...as are their futures.

There is a need for someone to step back and look at what can be done outside the box...the human box. If mountains are to be moved, our role is to walk toward the Red Sea and to be an instrument of prayer through which God moves. Together with God impossible things happen...perhaps even here.

Kaye Sinkule is coordinating the prayer team. Please call the office or let Kaye know if you would like to be an instrument of prayer in a Divine hand.

## *The Discerning Mind*

*“My people perish for lack of knowledge”*

Hosea 4:6

It is called the “dark ages” because the light of knowledge flickered at the edge of extinction between 500 –1000 A.D. It was only through the heroic efforts of a small religious community that the documents of our heritage – of civilization itself – were preserved. What thrived in the dark ages of earth was persecution, superstition and a quagmire that snared the world in oppression spiritually, socially and politically. In another time knowledge thrived, but the ability to process it wisely and with discernment languished as Hitler convinced half the church leaders that he was Germany’s messiah. Those leaders then led hundreds of thousands of their flock into that fold as well.

What is it that causes entire communities of believers to be deceived? What is it that causes any of us to be deceived? Christ warned of being lured by false shepherds and teachers; especially would this be so in the latter days of earth. We must, he cautioned, be wise as serpents and gentle as doves.

Knowledge comes in many packages. It is a gift of the Spirit where supernatural understanding is imparted. It is also acquired through study and is a key to discernment and spiritual integrity. Its purpose, whether a spiritual gift or as something acquired, is to give us what we need to make informed decisions and wise judgments...to sense the spirit of a person or situation. Its absence was deadly for the people of God in Hosea’s day. It was deadly, too, in Germany. It’s lack is destructive to our spiritual credibility today.

We are in danger in this age of *information* of mistaking *it* for knowledge. Of mistaking facts for truth. In danger, therefore, of embracing the wrong messages and thinking them to be God’s. It is likely we *are* that generation at the end that Christ gave warning to...that needs to be wise as serpents. The air is filled with many enticing voices that sound right and appealing but are cloaked with deception and opinion and a spirit that is not of God. It is a spirit that is infecting the body of Christ, engendering a critical, negative spirit in us; transforming us into a fearful, sometimes cynical, suspicious people who are politically-absorbed...We who are called to be gentle as doves. Who are called to be filled with the fruit of a holy Spirit...the fruit of love and peace, of kindness and joy...of grace.

So how do we guard against this human tendency for the herd that grazes, unthinking, with its kind? First, we have to want to guard against. We have to realize the danger and the need.

Two guidelines Scripture offers are important:

**Test the spirits.** “Don’t believe every spirit but try them to see what manner of spirit they are of, for many false prophets are gone out into the world.” 1 Jn. 4:1

- Hold what is being said –and who is saying it – up to the person of Christ and the *spirit* of Scripture.

Listening to the words of Hitler mesmerized the frayed German soul. They never looked at the frenzied, rancorous spirit of the man to wonder what it told them.

- Examine how it affects you.

If we are in the end-times as some believe, it’s especially important that we test the spirits of the purported leaders of our day and their messages. What spirit does theirs stir up in us? More of Christ and His relational doctrine? Or more condemnation? More agitation, anxiety or fear? Is our spirit more critical ...more negative, or are we more gracing and forgiving...more generous? More ready to speak of the hope that is in us or of the hopelessness that is in the world?

Whom we listen to may be laden with facts, but are they buoyed by a spirit of truth? These are two different spirits. Facts can be manipulated and distorted for personal agenda. Truth never can be.

**Study the Word.** “Everyone that is unskillful in the word...is a babe...but strong meat belongs to those who *by reason of use...have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.*” Heb. 5:13-14

When we are not versed in the Word, we will be drawn to other voices that tell us what we should do and how we should believe instead of discovering for ourselves God’s heart through personal study and investment of our time and energy in seeking Him. It is much easier to turn on the tv to see what someone is telling us we need to do or believe. With God it takes time, it takes listening, it takes getting out of His way. All too often we substitute the Fox network for the Holy Spirit. In becoming our source of knowledge they mold what we believe. These and other voices lure us, as individuals and community, into the loss of our authenticity. It is troubling that as a people we are tending to look more like Fox News than Good News. Even more troubling...we don’t seem to know it.

The politicalization of the church, our condemning religious culture, our presentation of Christ as a doctrinal purist rather than a relational purist are but a few of the distortions that sap us of our spiritual credentials. These are the things that snare us into a man-centered theology that fundamentally corrupts the message of Christ and, yet paradoxically, does so in the name of Christ.

Knowledge that is Spirit-purposed, that is seeking truth and how it is to look in our lives, is a knowledge that reduces our susceptibility to false leaders of our day and their messages and equips us to be the people of God required for this day and time.

Being right on the issues does not draw anyone to Christ. Being right relationally does.