

Alleluia

Dove

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Oh No! You're One of Them!

Joanne Paulos

We are continuing the theme of Being an Alternate Society with a series of personal testimonies of Full Covenant members of Alleluia taken from the book "By the Word of Their Testimony" published by the Alleluia Community in 1998 on the occasion of the community's 25th anniversary. Each issue in September will have a testimony taken from the book which will precede a testimony by a Full Covenant member of Alleluia who has signed covenant since that date.

All of my life I have been aware of the presence of God, but it was not until I was 27 that I decided to respond to Him in a meaningful way. As a young child, I was placed in a Catholic orphanage for girls. It was in this place that I came face to face with the Lord. I was only five at the time, but I knew Someone wonderful loved me. This was a great comfort to me during that phase of my life.

Time passed and I was able to return to my family when I was nine and a half years old. Although I was

happy to be home again, I truly missed the order and spiritual environment of the orphanage. Seldom in trouble and desiring to please, I floated through my middle years and soon entered high school. Here I veered sharply away from everything they had taught me in those early years in the orphanage.

In 1974, two of my brothers became involved in the Catholic Charismatic Movement. I just thought it was a passing fad and did not pay much attention to them. However, one of my brothers showed such a remarkable change in his life that I had to sit up and take notice. My own life was falling apart, especially my marriage. I found myself 27 years old with three children and a husband and still very discontent!

"Is this it?" I asked myself, "Is this as good as it is going to get?" I was most definitely depressed with many unresolved issues buried in my memory and a lot of unforgiveness in my heart. I had not been to church in years and had dabbled in the occult. I did not think God cared about me. How could He after all of the things I



had done?

In October of 1975, I found myself at a charismatic conference. I had promised my brothers I would attend some conferences about which they had been talking. I thought it would get them off my back, so I went to please them. Besides, I had never broken a promise to them before, and I wasn't going to do it now.

So I sneaked into the Bell Auditorium because I did not want to waste my money on the price of the daily admission ticket. At some point during the talk, the speaker began talking about evil spirits and I thought, "No way am I going to sit here and listen to this!" I quickly exited the third balcony and was making my way out of the auditorium when I found myself captured by my own mother and her twin sister. "Oh no!" I thought.

My mom and aunt were ecstatic

(Continued on page 2 - JOANNE PAULOS)

Jesus is my Lord and Savior

By Vanessa Milligan

I was born into a broken family. I never knew what a dad really was. My father did provide some financial support and sent cards on special occasions, but my grandparents were the anchor for me in my younger years. I did go to church and my mom read some stories that were biblical, but overall I didn't really learn how to live a Christian life. As a teenager, I was very troubled. Often receiving abuse verbally and physically, I

learned not to care about authority or for my family very much.

I ran away from home often. I wasn't gone long, but when conflict began, I would run out the door. I hated fights. I really hated my family. When I was 13, my mom put me in a program called Straight Inc. She didn't know what to do with me and thought I was going to get into drugs and end up pregnant. I had already begun to kiss boys and was very flirty. In Straight, you weren't allowed to date and it was very strict. So that slowed me down for a while. I had to



write a moral inventory daily and include a blessing, so I wrote letters to God, which stayed with me even in worse years to come.

At nearly 16, my dad said not to

(Continued on page 3 - VANESSA MILLIGAN)

One of Them!

(Continued from page 1 - JOANNE PAULOS)

to see me. I, however, was mortified. We are going to a "Life in the Spirit Seminar," they said. So, off we went! Two hours later, much to my own surprise, I found myself being prayed with for the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit." Someone talked about the love Jesus had for *me* and how Jesus wanted to forgive *me!* They explained that there was *nothing* in my life that was so bad that Jesus could not forgive and forget. All I had to do was ask Him to forgive me and to come into my heart. Something very dramatic occurred when I heard those words. I wish I could say I had been searching for God then or that I had wanted Him to find me, but the truth is I was not looking for God. I had totally lost interest in Him. In fact, I did not even believe in God anymore.

Mercy— only mercy is the answer to why Jesus led me to that auditorium that day. That day in October 1975 became the most unforgettable day of my life. That fall day marked the beginning of the dramatic changes in my life that even today still

amaze me.

Traveling home, I began telling Jesus that I would follow Him wherever He went and would go wherever He wanted me to go. I never dreamed He would lead me into community life.

Upon arriving home, my husband looked at me and moaned, "Oh no, you are one of them." I was shocked! How could he have known something had happened to me? I didn't say a single word to him. He simply looked at me and knew I was "one of them." I was a new creation baptized in the Holy Spirit and overflowing with gratitude because I had been dead inside for years, and now, I was alive! Evidently it showed on my face.

Later he too had a dramatic conversion experience. Then he understood what had happened to me and I could see in him what he saw in me. In a word, it was Jesus!

In 1976 my husband and I felt a great longing for something more than weekly prayer meetings and Sunday worship. We wanted to live everyday for Jesus. We were like a bottomless pit of desire for Jesus and His

presence in our lives. We knew people in the Alleluia Community, including two of my brothers.

One night at the Thursday night prayer meeting, we both distinctly heard the call to community life. At exactly the same time, we had an interior experience of the Holy Spirit speaking into our hearts and inviting us to join with others in the life of Alleluia Community. We joined hands and stood up as an outer sign of our acceptance to this call. The day was Thursday, July 8, 1976. This was yet another step toward a deeper life in Christ—a life in Christ that has thus far spanned 22 years. I won't say it has always been easy or that I have never had doubts, but it has always been a privilege.

Joanne Paulos is an Alleluia Handmaid, one of twenty-three women who provide overall insight to the Community Elders from a womanly perspective and has been serving in pastoral care for about 30 years. She currently serves on the Pastoral Team. Joanne and her late husband, Jimmy, signed covenant in 1976. They have seven children, 21 grandchildren. She attends St. Joseph Catholic Church in Augusta, Georgia.

Crowned Him the King of my Heart

(Continued from page 2 - VANESSA MILLIGAN)

call him "Daddy" anymore because he had never been a dad. I had only seen him and spent time with him three different times, when I was 5, 10 and 11. I told him he was my dad and I was going to call him that whether he liked it or not. But I believe that was a major crossroad in my life. I "fell in love" with a boy who gave me a ring and told me he wanted to marry me. That was the beginning of many boyfriends, each one leaving me longing and aching and in more pain.

I had accepted Jesus as my Savior with my youth group at 14, but I never really felt like I connected with anyone in that church and sometime around 17, I quit going to church. For the next eight years, I don't think I ever went, and, if I did, I don't remember. I still wrote letters to God, but I didn't feel like He liked me much. I was really messing up my life.

I met a guy who became a good friend and after a series of events at home, I ended up leaving home and our relationship took a turn for the worse. It was not good... very abusive, and I got into many things that were not of the Lord. I learned after I became a Christian that I was numbing the pain of my choices. I made MANY more choices only to regret them over and over. I felt like I was all too good at doing everything wrong. I ended up in several relationships to try to find happiness and each time I was left empty.

I cried out one rainy day to God to please not let my heart get hard like this world was making it. Yet I still looked for love and gratification in many wrong places. As the years passed by, I became more hardened

Then in 1993, God somehow got through to me. My eyes were opened to see the mess I had made and that I

could begin to make better choices. He began to teach me that if I would ask if what I was about to do would please God, then that would be a good choice, and if it wouldn't please Him, don't do it. I started to listen to the Christian radio and Bible teachers. I didn't want to go to church because I thought all Christians were hypocrites and that pastors only used money for their own gain. But God showed me differently. God brought me to a great group of believers who were Spirit-filled. I got the Holy Spirit and that really began a life change. I surrendered to Jesus as my Lord and not only my Savior. When I read the Bible, God showed me so many wonderful things. He put a longing in my heart to be His bride. He wanted me to be pure and make myself ready for His return. I was given a chance again at being pure. I went to visit a church and the worship leader looked like Jesus. Then he played Jesus in a skit. Little did I know that one day he would be my husband.

God had told me when I gave my life to Him that if I would give Him what I gave men, He would give me what I always wanted. I wasn't sure what that meant fully, but over several months He showed me it was my heart. If I crowned Him the King of my heart, He would hold it in His hands and show me how to love. He was going to give me a man who would love me for me.

Several months later, David and I started dating. When I opened up and shared things from my life, he said he thought we should wait to kiss until our wedding day. That was something I had never heard of. I was SO excited. Well, it wasn't easy over the next eight months of being engaged, but we learned to communicate and enjoy each other. On our

wedding day, when our Pastor said, "You may kiss the bride," it was THE BEST KISS EVER!!! The morning after our honeymoon, I can't describe the secure and awesome feeling of knowing this man was going to love me and be faithful to me for the rest of my life. I felt so safe. I have learned so much about God's love through this man.

David's family was from Augusta, Georgia, and every time we would visit, I loved it. His family was so amazing and he said he would love to raise a family in Augusta. So we moved. After several years, God brought people into our path who were from Alleluia Community. I loved that Alleluia was a people who wanted to seek God with all their hearts every day of their lives. They wanted to see Jesus' Bride be one and be whole. They loved the Godhead. They were open to all the things the Holy Spirit wanted to do.

I have found so much more love and healing since I came here. It is exciting to see Jesus' prayer in John 17 being fulfilled on a daily basis. I look forward to His return. Until then, I am thankful that I have a group of people who want to seek Him and love Him by loving one another and becoming ALL He wants for us to be on this earth. Life isn't always easy or perfect, but with Jesus and David and my Alleluia family, it is all right. I am all right. Everything is going to be all right. PRAISE THE LORD!!!

Vanessa Milligan serves on the Pastoral Team giving input to the development of the monthly teaching themes for the Prayer Meetings, Men's and Women's Meetings and the Alleluia Dove Newsletter to aid community members in living out their call to growth in holiness in covenant, charismatic, Christian and multi-denominational community. She and her husband, David, have been Full Covenant members of Alleluia Community since 2007. They have four children and are members of Vineyard Community Church in Augusta, Georgia.

Should You Attend a “Gay Wedding” if Invited?

In the current culture we live in, we are having to face choices we never thought possible ten years ago. The following article (reprinted with permission) from Restored Hope Network's newsletter "The Hope Update" and written by Dr. Robert Gagnon, an Associate Professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, offers some very practical and pertinent guidance for Christians today who are committed to biblical morality. It is offered here for your review.

Some who accept Jesus' understanding of marriage as a union of the two halves of the sexual spectrum, male and female, nevertheless think that it is acceptable for Christians to attend a "gay wedding" not by way of agreement but rather as an act of love. The rationale for such a view is that the offender is more likely to listen when convinced of unconditional love.

While I am sympathetic, I think Scripture gives clear guidelines that

this is not an appropriate course of action. Paul's remarks in 1 Corinthians 8-10 are especially apt. Paul dealt with "strong" believers who wanted to continue visiting the temples of idols as a way of staying connected with unbelievers (the restaurants and health spas of antiquity). They themselves did not believe that idols had any real existence, so what harm could come?

Yet Paul absolutely forbade dining there on two grounds. First, such

actions could "stumble" (i.e., precipitate the spiritual downfall of) others with a weak conscience by sending the message that idol worship wasn't such a big deal (ch. 8). Second, those attending such rituals, at which sacrifices would be made to an idol, were actually offending God by aligning themselves unknowingly with demonic powers (ch. 10:14-22).

Earlier, Paul had insisted that the Corinthian church should respond to the case of a fellow believer who was in a sexual relationship with his stepmother by withdrawing from fellowship with the offender, "not even to eat with such a one" (ch. 5). An adult-incestuous bond is a close analogy to a homosexual relationship in terms of the severity of the offense and unnaturalness (i.e., sexual involvement with another who is too much of an embodied same).

Jesus reached out to sexual sinners, but at no time did He attend a ritual that celebrated immorality. I am quite sure that Jesus would not have attended such a ritual celebration—not even as a silent observer—unless the purpose in attending was to call people to repentance.

There are other ways of showing love without attending a "gay wedding." What good would I be at a "gay wedding" anyway since I would be visibly weeping my heart out at a ceremony that solemnizes a behavior that puts a loved one at risk of not inheriting God's kingdom?

Healed Parishioner Carries Gifts

This photo is of a "Mortgage Burning" Mass that Bishop Hartmayer celebrated with Sacred Heart Parish in Warner Robins last May. The planning committee for this special Mass had wanted Henrietta to bring up the gifts since she was so instrumental in getting the land and getting the new church built. But the

committee was concerned that she would not be able to participate due to her severely broken ankle. However, a member of the parish council, Dara Smith, who helped organize the Alleluia Healing service in February, was happy to report to the committee that Henrietta had been healed. She had come to the healing/miracle service at the church in much pain and hardly able to get around with a cane. She told the Healing Team, "It's been a long time and my ankle just won't heal." As she raised her hand in faith and was prayed for, she was instantly healed and tossed her cane and began running up and down the church aisle. Thus, the photo showing Henrietta bringing up the gifts un-assisted.

Please pray and fast for our next up-coming Healing/Miracle Services.

