

# Encourager MINISTRIES



ENCOURAGERMINISTRIES.COM

AUG—DEC 2009

## From Mary Kay...



### CALENDAR:

Jan 30—Women's Banquet,  
Pine Grove Church, AL

Feb 2—Judson College  
Chapel, Marion AL

Feb 14—Weogufka Second  
Baptist Church, Sylacauga  
AL

Feb 28—Evergreen Baptist  
Church, Vance AL

Mar 13—Gideon Auxiliary  
Luncheon, Atlanta GA

Mar 25—Pastors  
Appreciation Banquet,  
Nashville Northeast, TN

Mar 26—Pastors  
Appreciation Banquet,  
Donelson, TN

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*"Trials dark on every hand, and we cannot understand*

*All the ways that God would lead us to that blessed promised land*

*But he'll guide us with his eye, and we'll follow 'till we die*

*We will understand it better by and by."*

The words of old hymns are often a source of strength and comfort to me. There are things we don't understand, and we often ask, "Why, Lord?" Why me; why now; why this? No answers seem to come, but God's answers are there — in His faithfulness. He will guide us, and we will understand, someday. My strength is often found in His promise:

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you." —Jeremiah 29:11-12 (NIV)*

This summer and autumn we seem to have experienced a variety of "trials," e.g., flat tires, a dead battery, computer crashes—all needing replacement. We experienced three family deaths in less than 30 days, sick babies and custody cases, said goodbye to a friend who died unexpectedly, and the shock and fear of a family member with stage 4 cancer. But *"in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else*

*in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

We know God loves us and He has a plan. Even with these trials, God has also opened doors of opportunity for us. Doors that had previously been closed. We are learning to look at what we have rather than what we don't have. I pray you will allow God to encourage your heart—whether through an old hymn, a sermon, the words of a friend or however, God has a plan and nothing has surprised Him, and He will guide you through all the trials you are facing.

## Open Doors

The Women's Work Release Center here in Birmingham houses some 300+ women. Due to the economy, less than 1/3 of these women are employed. Encourager Ministries was asked to help Chaplain Pressley develop a ministry of prayer.

If you have read ROGUE ANGEL or heard me speak, you know that my mother was a woman of prayer. She prayed me into jail, and then through persistence, into the Kingdom of God's Mercy and Grace. I am fully persuaded of the power of a Mother's prayers! I am also persuaded that it does not have to be a birth mother, but can also be a Spiritual Mother.

Currently we have about a dozen

women going into the facility weekly as Prayer Moms. We go from dormitory to dormitory and ask if anyone wants personal prayer time. Our goal is 1) to teach them the basics of how to pray; 2) to encourage them to record their requests and see how God answers.

Our mission is to recruit enough Prayer Moms so that each dorm (13 with 20 in each dorm) will have 2 to 4 women going weekly to pray. Recently Chaplain Pressley planned a Sunday afternoon of Praise & Pies for Princesses. Local volunteers provided music and words of encouragement, each "princess" was "crowned" by a pastor and given a gift.

The gifts were almost an afterthought; the Chaplain said she would like to give shampoo, toothpaste and a toothbrush to each woman. This was communicated on Friday and God brought in the necessary resources by Sunday afternoon for all 300 women to receive not just a small trial size, but a large 18-20 oz. bottle of shampoo and large tube of toothpaste!

This immediate answer to prayer delighted and encouraged the women to believe that God really does love them.

# Called home—



Terry W. Curtis, Sr. 76, died on Wednesday, September 30, 2009. He and his wife, Joyce, (my sister) had been married 58 years. There were estimates of 300 people in attendance at Friday's viewing and/or Saturday's funeral. Many of those present had been friends

since high school, giving testimony to Terry's commitment to relationship. Terry loved God and understood that his role was to "raise children to glorify God"; stories abounded from children and grandchildren about their grandfather. One grandchild wrote: "Grandpa, you are in all my favorite childhood memories." Terry believed "experience is the best teacher". One daughter told of a time when she had to call her dad to come and help her. She had a flat tire and for some reason she

could not get the jack to work properly. Terry drove 15 miles out on a country road and immediately spotted the problem. "Here's your problem," Terry said, as he moved the jack from the side of the car to the front bumper. Handing the tire tool to her, Terry got back in his truck and drove home much to the irritation of his daughter. She expressed gratitude for having been taught how to take care of herself in a very tough world. Several others spoke of his forgiveness and unconditional love.

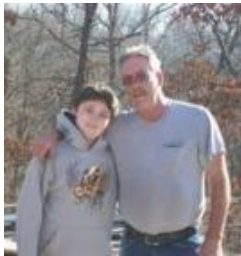
Terry loved his family and although he complained loudly, he worked hard to provide for them materially and he taught his children a good work ethic also. Terry loved his country and although he never served in the military service, there have been as many as six of his family members in various branches of the military service, including the Coast Guard, at one time.

Several have been to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and other far away countries to serve.

Terry didn't talk about God a lot, but his actions spoke volumes. Lent was a sacred thing and he did not allow his children to take it lightly. As an example for them to follow; Terry, who drank coffee all day, often sacrificed this habit for 40 days. Terry understood that as the head of his household, his job was to lead. No matter where the family was on the weekend, Terry would check the phone book and locate the nearest church and announce what time his family needed to be ready to go to service. He never sent them, he accompanied them.

Terry loved his wife, Joyce; he never left without kissing her and he told her early in the marriage: "We will never divorce; I don't believe in it." Terry practiced what he believed; he didn't preach. We celebrated more than a half century of Terry Curtis's life and consider our own lives richer for his presence.

## Mark Edward Clark, January 22, 1955—October 25, 2009



Mark Clark with son, Joey

(from Ilene) I have been struggling with what to say since I heard the news. It is still unsettling. Mark took his own life. He was my husband and the boys' father. He would have been 55 on the 22nd of January. I cannot give a why and that seems to be the biggest lump in everyone's throat.

Thoughts, memories, emotions have all been crashing around in my head about our marriage. My relationship with Mark has too many conflicts. It offers no comfort, especially to his children. I can, however offer a eulogy of sorts, a summary of what I know about Mark Edward

evidence of this, especially in the early years of our marriage.

Each anniversary, we went out to dinner and recalled the events of previous years; highs and lows. During our marriage, some of the things Mark was most proud of accomplishing included getting his GED, cutting the cord when John was born, clearing his credit history, establishing contact with his daughter, Christy and his other two sons; Kerry and Josh, getting baptized, re-establishing contact with his Mom and sisters, reading through the entire Bible, visiting his father's grave, and buying the house he grew up in.

His oldest child is his only daughter, Christy Ann (Clark) Berry. Christy will

forever be Mark's baby girl. Vibrant, smart, self-motivated, independent, bubbly and strong-willed, just like her dad. Christy and her husband, (Chris Berry) gave Mark his granddaughters; Olivia and Hannah. Christy is the glue that holds her and her brothers together. Mark loved her very much.

Mark named his first son, Kerry Alden Clark, after his best friend; Kerry Young. Kerry and Christy both inherited their dad's artistic flair, especially in music. I don't know Kerry well, but I know that Mark loved him and was proud of him.

Joshua Edward Clark was a curly headed, brown-eyed, skinny little boy when I first met him at age 4. He stayed summers and spent one school year with us. He was so smart, all boy, and had endless energy. Josh was his father's first name-sake; his middle name was Mark's as well as Mark's father's; James Edward Clark. Mark loved Josh and wanted the best for him.

John Mark Clark is my first-born and Mark's fourth child. John is the first child Mark was present for at his birth. He cried when he cut the cord. Mark and I both marveled at how smart John was and Mark delighted in showing him off. John is also the first of Mark's children



Ilene and Mark, with John and Joey—2001

Clark. Just before he proposed in 1989, he told me that he had accepted Christ as his Savior. There was much positive



Mark's children—John, Christy, Kerry and Joseph. Not pictured—Joshua

that grew up with him. When Mark divorced me, John was a young teenager, but he fought through the conflicts and maintained a relationship with his dad. He saw a side of his dad that no one else in the family did, and he was able to love him as a child and as a young man. John understood his dad and Mark loved and respected John.

Joseph Daniel (Joey) Clark is Mark's youngest child, my baby. Like his half-brother Josh, Joey was a curly-headed, brown-eyed ball of energy, but he has a tender side much like his Grandma Petet. He was a daddy's boy and followed Mark everywhere. He shared his dad's love for hunting, fishing and all things outdoors, as well as his father's social side. Mark was Joey's hero and he carries so many good memories of his dad. Joey prayed for and loved his dad and his father loved him.

Divorce was never what I wanted and I will always miss being a wife. I miss that shared personal history that grows between two people. I miss Mark's hugs, his humor, and hearing him call me Baby. I miss the future we had planned. But those are small grievances in comparison to the relief of knowing where he resides now. I am so grateful for God's grace. Please pray for Mark's children and his sisters as they work through their grief and loss.

# Toy Soldiers Ministry

Mary Kay met the founder of Toy Soldiers Ministry this summer and was impressed with the quality of work done by this group.

Ray Grimm founded the Toy Soldiers Ministry in 2001 after feeling God's call for him to make toys for children in conjunction with Prison Fellowship and the Angel Tree program. When asked to come up with a name for the ministry, he thought of how we are called to be soldiers of the Lord. In this ministry, toys would be the weapon, thus "Toy Soldiers" was born.

The toys are simple to make from either 2 x 4 studs or hardwood and can be finished as simply or as detailed as wanted. Ray welcomes new toymakers and if you are interested in obtaining the plans, please contact him:

Toy Soldiers c/o Men's Ministry  
2100 Greenfield Drive  
El Cajon CA 92019  
Phone: (619) 368-7429 or email  
raytoysoldiers@hotmail.com

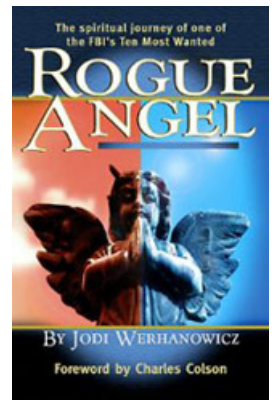
# Angel Tree

Children of inmates are not responsible for the unwise choices made by their parents, but they are the first victims of crime. This truth has been the motivation behind the Angel Tree project. In 1982, there were 556 children in Alabama who received gifts through that first Angel Tree and now over 7 million children have been touched by the Angel Tree ministry.

That number (7 million) grows each year. In spite of our late start, Encourager Ministries was able to provide gifts for the 365 children of the women at the Birmingham Women's Work Release Center. We could not have done that without the support and efforts of our email friends. Thank you! May God abundantly bless you for giving to the "least of his children." **Happy New Year!**



## Response Form—January 2010



I would like to make a tax deductible donation to Encourager Ministries, Inc. in the amount of:

\$500    \$100    \$50    \$25    \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to become a Monthly Supporter for:

\$100    \$50    \$25    \$10    \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to send in my pledge each month

I would like to have my pledge automatically withdrawn from my account. (Please fill out the form on the back.)

I would like to give a one-time gift to be used wherever most needed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like to give a gift in honor or memory of my loved one:

\*In \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Join Encourager Ministries, Inc. and Mary Kay Beard as she shares her ministry of love, redemption and encouragement.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

ENCOURAGER MINISTRIES, INC.  
P.O. BOX 94583  
BIRMINGHAM AL 35220

Phone: (205) 815-9991

Email: ilene@encouragerministries.com

**ENCOURAGER MINISTRIES, INC**  
**P.O. BOX 94583**  
**BIRMINGHAM, AL 35220**

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**ilene@encouragerministries.com**  
**AUG—DEC 2009**

### **Automatically Withdrawn Donations**

We are pleased to offer you an easy way to make monthly donations! The Direct Payment Plan allows you to have your donations made automatically from your checking or savings account.

#### **The Direct Payment Plan:**

- Saves time and postage, no checks to write or mail
- Provides security, no lost checks
- Offers convenience, donations are made regularly at the same time each month
- Is easy to sign up for, easy to cancel

### **Authorization for Direct Payment**

I authorize Encourager Ministries, Inc. to initiate entries to my checking/savings account. This authority will remain in effect until I notify you in writing to cancel it, in such time as to afford the company a reasonable opportunity to act on it. I can stop payment of any entry by notifying my financial institution 3 days before my account is charged.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

\_\_\_\_\_  
ACCOUNT NO. \_\_\_\_\_ CHECKING OR \_\_\_\_\_ SAVINGS

\_\_\_\_\_  
FINANCIAL INSTITUTION ROUTING NO.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
YOUR NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE MY PLEDGE AUTOMATICALLY WITHDRAWN FROM MY ACCOUNT ON THE \_\_\_\_ 1ST OR \_\_\_\_ 15TH