

Women's Life



December 2003

Merry Theological Christmas

Before you skip this “heavy” article that sounds too lofty or too boring for the festive holiday season, let me make theology real via a quote from Carolyn Custis James’ book *When Life and Beliefs Collide*.

Life comes to women in stiff doses. When it does, and we are crushed or shattered or stretched beyond our limits, we need to surround ourselves with good theologians—husbands, pastors, and steadfast friends in fraying red chairs[reference to a friend who James watched die of cancer] – who will encourage and help us. But at the end of the day, it won’t be *their* theology we will lean on, no matter how good it is. We will lean on our own. Adversity and adventures have a way of exposing the state of our theology. We may have heard a lot about God. In the thick of things, we will discover what we really believe about him. (p. 56)

If life isn’t hitting you broadside during the holiday pressures to be all things to all people, it is a reality that may settle in with the chill of winter. How will your personal theology hold up when you face the tougher stuff of life? Though I like to go get my nails done, that act of pampering myself will not cut it in the thick of life in this fallen world! Pain, disappointment, illness, aging parents, stressful suburban chaos, financial setbacks, or relationships with adult family members who do not know Christ personally make me ask if my anchor will hold in the storms of life.

As a college freshman, I received a letter from my pastor’s wife. She reminded me that at a Christian college, there would be spiritual activities surrounding my day. Her letter went on to warn me that if I rested only on the theology of those around me, I would live on “borrowed light.” Leaving the college after four years of such light would render me dark indeed. I believe that women find “borrowed light” a large part of Advent, snatching a few carols or radio devotionals here and there. Happily, we have an alternative – going to the Source of Light ourselves.

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Calendar
Micki’s Corner
Thots and Things

As we women decorate, shop, bake, and serve others this Christmas, we need to add to the list a time of real biblical study about what the season truly means and who the Savior really is. The theme of this year's Christmas Brunch, *The Reason for the Season is Connecting With the Savior*, should remind us that the theology of a young virgin gave her pause to "ponder these things in her heart." Emanuel, God with us, must still stir the heart and the mind. Good theology involves study and meditation. Concentrate on the goodness, love, and sovereignty of the Savior born in Bethlehem. And may the twinkling of the seasonal lights represent the light of understanding we each see because of the good theology we learn from time alone with the Savior and His Word.

Flo Wolfe



Christmas candle holders for elementary children to make:

Cut many 4-6" pieces of boxwood and soak overnight in cold water. Next, take two red apples and, where the stem has been removed, make a hole large enough to a taper candle. Poke in the boxwood pieces until the apple covered. Now trim the boxwood until the "candle holder" looks like a big boxwood ball. Add red or green tapers and enjoy these table centerpieces. The moisture of the apple allows the boxwood to stay green for 2 or 3 weeks.

Flo

Ready, Set, Register!

Women's Retreat registration begins Dec. 7.

After the busyness of the holidays, we will all be ready for the spiritual refreshment, rest, recreation, and renewed relationships to be found at our annual retreat. Join your SPEP sisters and refocus at beautiful New Windsor, MD, the weekend of February 6-8, 2004.

Enjoy hearing speaker Bonnie Zadoretzky, former BSF teaching leader, teach on *Making Connections* that are meaningful.

Come and connect with us!

Cost: \$115-\$160 (depending on the room arrangements you choose). It includes two nights, four meals, and two snacks.

How we celebrate
Christmas ...

send your family's
favorite Christmas
tradition to Micki
(██████████)

for next year's news-
letter.

For what it's worth department

Over the years I have come to appreciate my husband's lack of sensitivity. Let me explain.

Whether they were clashes with my kids, being a good daughter to my late mom, financial problems, broken relationships in the church, or my fatigue from sleep deprivation, his attitudes were so **reasoned** and **dispassionate**. Yes, they drove me nuts and no, I did not always respond with cheerful gratitude.

But over time I came to see that if both of us responded alike to daily provocations it would be much worse.

1. Our children did not need two hysterical parents.
2. My mother never would have responded to Christ if my *sensitivity* was mirrored in my husband's response to her.
3. Somebody had to earn the money no matter how bad it got at home.
4. And I really needed someone to tell me to go to bed – rather than listen to me rehearse my problems. (He finally went even further and said, "Go to the doctor!" Rather than seek medical help, I lived with my anguish and the discomfort of some female problems.)

Similarly, my spouse of more than three decades has said he values my *sensitive* reactions to situations and persons, because he never would have tried the approaches I suggested. He asks me how to respond to business people and his family. So, we work in a team, finally, after all these years.

Barbara Smith

PS - I also learned that sleep is essential to a charming, controlled heart and mind. As we mature, sleep is not always a constant bedtime companion. Now, if I wake up, instead of fretting and watching the clock or trying to read myself back to sleep – I talk to God and let Him put me back to sleep. And to sleep well, I also must watch how much I eat, and what I read or think about before bed. I did not know this for about a five-year span and I think I exacerbated the routine problems of aging.

Gosh! Exacerbated. That was a scary word wasn't it? Almost as scary as telling my family I was wrong.



Enjoy knitting?
Enjoy shopping?
Julie Soltis is always looking for warm baby blankets, hats and sweaters for the newborns born in the refugee camp.

December 2003

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
	1 <i>Bingo invented (1929)</i> <i>Ebenezer I 9:30am</i>	2 <i>Prayer Mtg. 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i> <i>Words Study 9:30am</i>	3	4
7	8 <i>Ebenezer I 9:30am</i>	9 <i>Brainstorming Noon</i> <i>Prayer Mtg. 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i> <i>Words Study 9:30am</i>	10 <i>MOPS 7:00pm</i>	11 <i>3 R's Study</i>
14	15 <i>Ebenezer I 9:30am</i>	16 <i>Ebenezer III 9:30am</i> <i>Jane Austen's birthday (1775)</i> <i>Prayer Mtg. 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i> <i>Words Study 9:30am</i>	17	18
21	22	23 <i>Prayer Mtg. 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i> <i>Words Study 9:30am</i>	24 <i>Christmas Eve Services</i> <i>(4:30, 6:30, 8:30 & 11:00)</i>	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i>
28 <i>Chewing gum</i> <i>invented (1869)</i>	29	30 <i>Prayer Mtg. 10:00am</i> <i>Single Moms 6:30pm</i> <i>Words Study 9:30am</i>	31 <i>Beach Boys' first</i> <i>performance (1961)</i>	

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	5	6 <i>Christmas Brunch</i> <i>Merry Widows</i> 4:00pm
7:00pm	12	13
	19	20
Christmas!	26	27

Next brainstorming lunch

December 9, Noon in the Ministry Center



“The Christian faith is founded upon ... a well attested sober fact of history; that quietly, but with deliberate purpose, God himself has visited this little planet.”

J.B. Phillips



Things change

This newsletter has a long lead time - plans can change before it arrives in your mailbox. Be sure to check the weekly bulletin for updated information.

Thots and Things

Gift Idea: Fill a basket with coffee, soup, or cookie mixes for those cold winter days:

Cafe Mocha

- 1½ cups instant coffee
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa
- ¼ cup powdered creamer
- 6 Tb. confectioner's sugar

Use 1-2 spoonfuls to one mug of hot water.

Toffee Coffee

- ⅔ cup instant coffee
- 1 cup powdered creamer
- 1 cup brown sugar

Use 1-2 spoonfuls to one mug of hot water.

Gingerbread Coffee

- 3 cups powdered creamer
- 1 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground allspice
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp ground cloves
- ¾ cup instant coffee

Place all of the ingredients into a food processor and turn on until a fine powder. Use a couple of heaping teaspoons or more according to taste.

Layered Soup Mix In A Jar

- ½ cup dry split peas
- ⅓ cup beef bouillon granules
- ¼ cup pearl barley
- ½ cup dry lentils
- ¼ cup dried minced onion
- 2 teaspoons italian seasoning
- ½ cup uncooked long grain rice
- ½ cup small macaroni (in a plastic sandwich bag)

In a 1½ pint jar, layer the eight ingredients in the order listed. Seal tightly.

Instructions to attach to jar:

Friendship Soup Mix

Ingredients needed: 1lb. ground beef, 3 quarts water, 1 28oz. can diced tomatoes, undrained. To prepare soup: Carefully remove macaroni from top of jar and set aside. In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, brown beef; drain. Add the water, tomatoes and soup mix; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 45 minutes. Add reserved macaroni; cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes or until macaroni, peas, lentils and barley are tender. Yield: 16 servings (4 quarts)



The recipes on this page came from:

kitchenmixes.com

[recipesource.com/
misc/mixes](http://recipesource.com/misc/mixes)

[http://members.
tripod.com/
~Tweezle/
makemix.html](http://members.tripod.com/~Tweezle/makemix.html)

Micki's Corner

This month I have a book to talk about – *Fine China is for Single Women Too* by Lydia Brownback. She is a member of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

“The church has contributed to the misconception [that we’re not complete unless we’re married]. We hear many a pastor pray for single Christians in the same breath as he prays for the sick and the dying.” That’s where she begins, but she goes on to talk about our calling as Christians and God’s work in each of us.

This book is written for singles, but it was wonderful for me to read. Using Scripture, she shows the way to contentment in any situation. “Life doesn’t begin when you _____. This is your life! You will never find contentment in living for what you hope tomorrow may hold. Contentment is for today.”

Each chapter includes *Making it Personal* questions at the end. There is also a *Deeper Insight* study in the back.

And there’s still time to add china to your Christmas list!

Micki Parkinson



Christmas Eve Services:

4:30 - geared for small children

6:30

and - our regular candlelight services

8:30

11:00 - carol service led by Tom Wenger (PEP Church)

Traveling by car this Christmas season?

Have family members look at the license plates of cars you pass, and turn the three letters on the plate into a three-word phrase or three separate words that illustrate theology. For example, the letters CGY might be thought of as Christ, God, Yahweh. Another example, CRS, might become Christ Redeems Sinners. I’ve done this little mental exercise for years. You’ll be amazed (and calmed in the midst of traffic) at the transformation in your thinking about our great and sovereign Lord.

Flo Wolfe

“The great thing is, if one can, to stop regarding all the unpleasant things as interruptions in one’s ‘own’ or ‘real’ life. The truth is, of course, that what one regards as interruptions are precisely one’s life.”

C.S. Lewis