

GRACE & LACE LETTER

**AN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN PUBLICATION FOR CROSSDRESSERS,
TRANSGENDERED and TRANSSEXUALS. POSTOFFICE BOX 31253 JACKSON MS
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THE RESURRECTION is the epicenter of belief. It is, says C. H. Dodd, "not a belief that grew up within the church; it is the belief around which the church itself grew up, and the 'given' upon which faith was [is] based. (From "The Jesus I never Knew" by Philip Yancey)

Make no mistake: if He rose at all
it was His body;
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the molecules
reknit, the amino acids rekindle,
the Church will fall.

-Novelist John Updyk (Also from the book with
apologies author Philip Yancey)

The Words of St. Paul-

"If we preach that Christ was raised from death, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life? If they won't be raised to life then Christ Himself wasn't raised to life, And if Christ wasn't raised to life, our message is worthless and so is your faith.
1 Corinthians 15:12-15 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

The Governor's soldiers led Jesus into the fortress and brought together the rest of the troops, They stripped off Jesus' clothes and put a scarlet robe on Him. They made a crown of thorn branches and placed it on His head, and they put a stick in His right hand. The soldiers knelt down and pretended to worship Him. They made fun of Him and shouted, "Hey you king of the Jews!" Then they spit on Him. They took the stick from Him and beat Him on the head with it. When the soldiers finished making fun of Jesus, they took off the robe. They put His own clothes back on Him and led Him off to be nailed to a cross. Matthew 27:27-31 CEV.

The soldiers nailed Him to the cross where He hung for 6 hours suffering and dying and fulfilling what God had decreed, "The soul that sins, it shall die" Ezekiel 18:4 KJV. This was God incarnate fulfilling His decree in the person of Jesus Christ.

He died. He was buried.

On the morning of the third day, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus.

Mary. Mary Magdalene. The Mary from Magdala, a town on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. Mary Magdalene of no noteriety but simply being one of certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. "Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven *Demons; and Johanna, the wife Chuzas, Herod's steward; and Susanna and many others who ministered to Him of their substance. Luke 8:2-3 KJV. She was also at the crucifixion. See Mark 15:40 She is not to be confused with the sinful woman who annointed Jesus' feet in Luke 7 36-50.

Could not the Apostles held an "excutive Council" meeting and appointed a committee to greet Jesus as He arose from the tomb and congratulate Him on a successful resurrection? No they couldn't. They had no faith nor did Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, and Johanna and other women (Luke 24:10) when they went to annoint Jesus' body at the tomb with some spices they had brought. with them for that purpose. Thier first eye-opening discovery was that a the stone had been rolled away from the entrance to the tomb. They had been concerned about who they would get to roll it away for them so they could annoint Jesus' dead body. Their second discovery was, the body was gone! Mary called for Simon Peter and John to come and see what happened. They came and checked out the tomb. None of them knew Jesus was to rise from the dead. Perplexed, they went home. Mary Magdalene stayed on and wondering who had taken Him and where they had laid Him. She turned around and saw a man whom she took to be the gardener and asked him where he had put Jesus and he said "Mary!" She immeadiately recognized Him and addressed Him "Master!"

Better believe it! He Arose! and He lives! Ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart and I don't have the exclusive on it. He lives in your heart, His salvation to impart, the very minute you cast your sin-laden soul upon Him. I must write about the sin question as it applies to us; although our soul is no different from any other human being. Our soul is the God hole in us and never rests 'til God fills it and He can, by His Holy Spirit when you call upon Him. I have an empty root beer can or bottle. It says "root beer" on the label but it can never fulfill it's destiny until it's filled with root beer and then it contents can satisfy. Then it is a root beer can or bottle. . Our soul cannot fulfill a soul's destiny until it is filledwith what it was designed for. The life of God in Christ as imparted by the Holy Spirit. It's God's home in us.

Quote: "Little or no real journey into wholeness and healing is done without the inner work of God. He helps us in deep meditative reflection, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to reflect on the mystery of our own lives. those who continue to live without the release of the true self risk making externals (do's and don'ts) the badge of a Christian lifestyle which has no correspondence to *inner* truths. Living the Christian life has become a burden-----a matter of duty more than love. That life of do's and dont's has not become authentic *within*. It only conforms *without*.

Wholeness is a plunging into our inner sanctuary where the true inner self can be

gradually released in Christ; where we can come to terms with the true self in Christ; where the power of the false self can be diminished; where the shadowy dimension of our lives can be healed by the power of the Holy Spirit". Unquote.

In 1 Samuel 16:6-7 you will find where I am going with all of this: ". . .and when they had come, he (Samuel) looked on Eliab and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him. But The Lord said to Samuel, Look not on his appearance or at the height of his stature, for I have rejected him. **For the Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.**" ! Samuel 16:7

Thy creatures wrong thee, O Thou sovereign Good
Thou art not loved, because not understood;
This greives me most, that vain pursuits beguile
Ungrateful men, regardless of thy smile.

-C.H. Spurgeon

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Letters

All of my denial has not worked. Now I am ready to explore the issue. I don't know what I'll find but I am compelled to see what I *can* find. G&LL lets me know I am not alone in my Christian experience as a TG.

I have only recently been able to consider exiting a lifetime of denial and have been deeply troubled concerning 1Cor. 6:9 in the King James translation. Of course my concern is with the word "nor effeminate", in relation to, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

[I sent a note and sample copy of G&LL and got the following reply] Thank you for G&LL and the personal note concerning 1Cor 6:9. yours is the view I have but was still greatly troubled. I am still not quite certain about TG and even more uncertain about TS but G&LL is certainly allowing me to develop a new point of view.

I want you to know that through G&LL you have touched me, along with many others, and helped me to understand that being a transsexual is a blessing and not the curse I had always believed it was. Since turning my gender issues over to God 3 years ago, my life has been a roller coaster ride full of ups and downs. *But* with a serenity that comes from knowledge that my new life as a woman helps fulfill God's plan for me in a major way. You and G&LL helped me to see that.



The Nature of His Love

by James Finley

GOD'S ENDURING PRESENCE places the *false self* in a blessed insecurity. The false self is like a drop of stagnant water thrown into the raging furnace of the love of God. Even in our sins, in God's eyes we remain the great pearl for which He has lost all upon the Cross in order to possess us as His own. Even in the midst of revolt, we remain His one lost sheep for which He has wandered in the wastes of death in order to bring us back to His fold.

God never does violence to the essential freedom by which we can negate ourselves as persons made in His image. But the nature of His love is such that His affirmation of us always overwhelms our negation of Him. His loving advance, His covenant love, envelops and upholds us more assuredly than our next breath.

In this is our hope that nothing shall "separate us from the love of God which comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom. 8:39). In this is our joy that regardless of how distorted our hearts have become, regardless of what our conscience holds against us, "God is greater than our hearts" (I John 3:20).

After one glance of His love, our false self, in spite of all its apparent imbeddedness, dissolves away like a bad dream. That's all it is anyway—a bad dream that passes with the dawning of God's love. Our weakness remains, but it is a handed-over weakness, made strong in its openness and abandonment to God's mercy. □

Taken from MERTON'S PALACE OF NOWHERE by James Finley. © Copyright 1978 by Ave Maria Press. Published by Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana.

DISCLOSURE

by
Becky Allison

The truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

But does it always?

The guys from my Bible study group were gathered in the den, cheering or groaning according to their team preference. Not I. Liberated from the burden of watching football, I joined our hostess and the other women over coffee in the kitchen.

In a group of formerly married women, the conversation often turns to the demise of the marriage. I listened with sympathy, careful to avoid using certain words in my replies, particularly "husband."

"Construct a past history," I have heard it advised for persons who have undergone gender transition. "Know what you will say about your periods, your hysterectomy, your husband and children."

I can't do it. Building such a fabrication is an active falsehood. I was married, but I didn't have a husband; so I refer to my "ex" and my "former spouse," and I use the pronoun "they" rather than "he."

Is this a passive falsehood - lying by omission? Is it always necessary to tell all my past history, to "out" myself? I say it is not. I don't deny my past if asked, but I don't always volunteer it either.

The Bible tells us that, early in his ministry, Jesus withheld some information about himself.

He drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Mark 1:34

This does not mean that I equate my

human circumstances with Jesus's divinity. I do believe that his actions serve as an example to be prudent about our disclosures.

People perceive me to be a woman. Guess what: they are right. I am! My past history is, in almost all circumstances, irrelevant to my present life. In a similar way, people look at a recovered alcoholic but perceive that person to be sober. It is not necessary for either one of us to publicize past events that may cause distress and confusion to persons who know us superficially.

I did not transition in my former home, but moved to another state. I have chosen to disclose to a few close friends and co-workers, all of whom have received the news with acceptance.

If someone special enters my life, of course that person will have to know. It would be totally wrong to withhold anything from one who loves me.

I have chosen to blend into society as an ordinary woman. I spend most of my time dealing with persons who are not in good physical health. They don't have to be accepting and understanding, and it's my calling to care for them with all my skills and empathy. They trust me. Most would still trust themselves to my care if they knew everything; but some would not.

Perhaps even writing this column puts me at risk. If so, it is a risk I must take. I would consider it hypocrisy to discuss a subject such as this anonymously.

Many of my friends have chosen to be completely open about their transition, accepting the risk of discrimination and rejection. In the long run, this may be the best and most truthful option.

Which course is correct? Do we "lie by omission"? Some have called it "blending into the woodwork." Is it really just living in a gigantic closet?

Neither course is inherently wrong, and my plans may be inappropriate for you. I suggest each of us seek guidance from the Holy Spirit for our actions.

If we choose to blend in quietly, we must also be prepared for the possibility of being "outed" by persons or events we can't control. The proper course then is the truthful one, acknowledging without shame or guilt. Our friends and colleagues will still respect the person they have known.

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Colossians 4:6

Salt adds flavor and preserves freshness. If we eat food without salt, we may find it unpleasant and offensive. If our speech is "seasoned with salt" it means our words are well chosen to have a pleasant, positive effect on the listener. We will try to avoid an offensive, confrontational attitude.

Whether we choose to be open about our gender transition, or to avoid declaring it to the general public, our motive should be guided by Christ's love in our hearts.

Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:15-16



Free At Last



CHRISTIAN FAITH HAS the power to free us from the world's particular myths and idolatries and confusions. The Christian's first mission is to live Christian freedom in whatever way God gives us to live it, whether it be in the secular world or in the cloister.

The Christ to be preached, whether by word or by silence, is the Christ of Christian freedom, of Christian autonomy, of Christian independence from the arrogant demands and claims of an illusory world. It is not a freedom from the world as nature or as creation, or a freedom from human society. The Christian is free, or should be, from the psychic determinisms and obsessions and myths of a greedy, lustful, worldly society.

The secular world pretends to exalt liberty, but it actually enslaves us, making us dependent on artificial needs, which it then pretends to satisfy. In fact, it subjugates us to what is lower than ourselves. In and of itself, however, the world does not have any real power over us. It succeeds in inducing these false needs and these false values only because of our inner needs to feel superior to, or at least be accepted by, others.

The real masters who rule us and rob us of our freedom are indeed within us. They are our own aspirations, feelings, emotions, habits, and passions. □

—Basil Pennington

"I don't believe in a God who is directly involved the lives of humans." went the line in a letter I recently received. The curious thing about this communication and hundreds of pages of painfully wrought words preceding it from the same writer, is that virtually everything this person has experienced over about the past five years has clearly resulted from the very thing she is saying she does not believe. Still she rejects Divine intervention in human experience.

The antithesis of this position is one we have all heard in the lovely song from the great musical: "The Student Prince." In this song the lead tenor sings: "I'll walk with God." Clearly, the lyricist believes God cares and is involved in the lives of humans or there could be no resolution on the part of a person to walk with God.

Many who are steeped in Philosophy and even in Theology believe in a God who just set the ball rolling in some sort of manifestation of creative energy, way back when, and who is now merely a spectator on the side looking on to see how it all comes out. To people who believe this way, a spectator God is all they can acknowledge. Actually, for the most part this kind of thinking arises from the unanswered questions of science pertaining to creation, or the origin of the universe. Science generally holds that the Universe, as we can experience it through astronomy and other scientific means, began with what they call: "The Big Bang." There is no progression further back to identify the source of all the matter and energy which were active in the Big Bang theory, but that's another discussion. What some of these people do suggest is, the ultimate origin of all things arose from some sort of creative energy impulse they sometimes ascribe to God. But they hasten to declare that once creation was launched and "evolution" begun, God dropped the ball and became a spectator.

Let me state categorically, I do not ascribe to this theoretical understanding at all. While I am aware the Creation Story we have in Genesis 1:1 was inserted into the sacred writings of the People of Judah sometime about 300 to 500 years before the Babalonian captivity, I see no need to disbelieve the account of Divine Creation retold in St. John's Gospel where it begins: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That's enough detail for me. Incidentally, if you have problems with the issue of the Divinity of Jesus the Christ, read and ponder in your heart the first paragraph of St. John's Gospel. Let God speak to you in those words and your reservations will pass into praise and thanksgiving.

Transgendered people of all sorts come into associating with each other out of their fundamental need for social interaction and the approval of at least one other human being. We come from many educational and religious backgrounds. Writers commonly assume the people reading their work share a common educational or a common religious background with them. This is a dangerous assumption. It leads to things being said which are not understood in the context in which they are said. This leads to disputes and disagreements when what we really need is a commonality of experience in our faith in order that we might be strong and positive proclaiming our faith. Three of the frequent writers featured in G&L are a prime example. Our beloved Publisher Lee comes from a very fundamentalist literalist background. Rebecca Allison comes from a moderately fundamentalist

literalist non-charismatic background. My background is extensively varied having been reared in the SBC, migrating as an adult to the Lutheran confessions, and later to an Episcopal charismatic church. Varied as our backgrounds are, varied as our doctrinal positions may be, and varied as our opinions are on many details of the faith, we stand as ONE to proclaim the Love of God as made manifest in Jesus the Christ, who paid for us the price of individual redemption none of us had the capacity to pay.

Our article title asks the rhetorical question: "Does God Care?" Again, let us consider, as transgendered people from all walks of life and from all religious backgrounds, Does God Care? I believe God does care or I'd not be sitting here at my Macintosh, rather I'd be out riding my motorcycle in the mountains or playing golf at a course near by. If God did not care and if I did not believe God cares, you can be assured I'd be doing something besides this writing. If God did not care, I'm sure you'd never see these words even if I did write them because Lee would not be motivated to publish them and mail them to you. This is a simplistic illustration of how God cares, but it is an accurate one. In a thousand ways, every waking moment of the life of a believer who is tuned in to listening to God, a believer who is turned on to experiencing God in her life, and one who walks by faith, is constantly assured God does care and God takes a very personal role in leading our lives into God's will along a path God has determined for us. Yes, God does care about you, just as you are.

But, even with all these assurances I sense there are those troubled by the legalisms so many people want to impose on believers. They do this by putting obedience to law above the free gift of Jesus the Christ. This happens powerfully to many transgendered people. The answer to the questions so many have about the Old Testament law and crossdressing, for example, has been around for ages and still people are burdened with needless guilt over a law that no longer applies.

Our faith is a gift of God. It is given freely without legal requirements. As a believer, when you walk with God, the way a small child walks with its parent, trusting God totally, there is no room in the relationship between you and your creator for guilt or doubt. Guilt is the handiwork of the enemy who seeks with it to destroy the faith God constantly strives to create in your spirit.

The issue is not: Does God Care? Rather, the issue is one of trust. Do we transgendered people trust God deliberately and totally, in spite of all the efforts of the enemy to confuse us with law and human opinions? Do we walk in a simple child-like faith or is there some sort of performance required of us? Those who would have you believe you have to earn your own way and that with proper performance you can make it on your own, are sadly mistaken. They are in effect doing the work of the enemy of us all. Does God Care? You bet God cares. Indeed, you bet God cares for God sent forth the very Son of God to do for you what you could not do for yourself. In doing this God made you perfect in the sight of God so you can stand before the Holy Throne of God unashamed and unafraid, because you are holding onto the hand of God and walking in a simple child-like faith.

Walk by faith, not by sight. God's opinion is the one that counts. God's opinion was made clear and obvious to all in the life, sacrifice, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus the Christ. If in your heart you believe and place your trust in Jesus the Christ, then you are free from all law because God cares.

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Letters are welcome. Write to:
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Albuquerque NM 97120

The Great Excuse

by Terri L. Main

I was in church one Sunday and during the altar time, the pastor asked for congregation members to come down front and pray with people at the altar. I have done a lot of altar work in my life and there was a tugging at my heart to go down and pray with one individual in particular. Nobody was praying with her, and she seemed to need some support. In my heart I said, "I sure wish I could go and pray with her, but what would people think if they saw me, the church transsexual, ministering at the altar." And in that still, small voice of the spirit God spoke to my heart and said, "How long are you going to keep using that excuse."

Like always, God's voice brings enlightenment and conviction. He was right. In the midst of all my internal posturing about how much I wanted to be used in Christian service he saw me fall for one of the lies the enemy uses to neutralize so many transgendered Christians: "You can't work for God because of your gender issues."

After one particularly distressing incident in a church setting, I decided I would simply arrive late, leave early, sit in the back of the church and avoid speaking or interacting with anyone. I would go to church, but I wouldn't get involved. But God didn't call his people to be uninvolved. He called us to community. He called us to service. And it's time to stop playing Satan's game and kill off this excuse.

About two years ago I decided to do just that. I decided if God impressed me to work at the altar, I would. I started a Bible study in my home for a few friends. Eventually, I went to our associate pastor and offered to work in any capacity I could. He asked me what I was interested in doing. I told him that (with much fear and trembling) I would like to help develop Bible study lessons for our home Bible study program, Branches. He agreed. Today, I am writing the Bible study materials for the church, I help edit the church newsletter and I prepare press releases for the church. As an instructor at a community college, I'm the faculty advisor for the Campus Christian Fellowship. I even help out occasionally with projects my sister gets involved with at another church in town.

I don't tell all this to brag on myself. I could do none of these things without God's help and guidance. Sometimes, when I'm writing a Bible study lesson, I look back at what I just wrote and say, "Wow, I didn't know I could write

that well." Of course, I'm right.

Nevertheless, even today I too often give place to the excuse that my gender issues make me unfit for ministry. This excuse carries many disguises. Let's look at a few of them.

1. *You aren't good enough to work for the Lord.* This one is powerful for two reasons: it piggybacks on our own shame, and it is in one sense truthful. Let's look at those reasons. Most of us carry a load of shame around with us about our gender issues. Being told that you are a pervert or a freak directly or indirectly by so many people you can begin to believe it yourself. But look at what God says about you. He says you are a "royal priesthood, a holy nation." He says you are a "new creation." He says you are a "Child of God." Those are great antidotes to shame. This excuse is also powerful in that no one, regardless of personal issues, is worthy to work for the Lord. We are made worthy by his power working within us. So, when we work for him, it is really him working through us, and who can call the vessel God chooses to use unworthy.

2. *What will people think.* This one is thorny because we can err by being too concerned about what people think. But we can also err by being too little concerned about others. Within the context of your service for the Lord, though, the attitudes of others need to be placed second to the call of God. Yes, some people will have problems with you serving God. But if you serve God with love and humility, they will either get in, get out, or get out of your way.

3. *The church won't let me.* Again, there may be an element of truth to this. The church you attend may not want you serving the Lord in a visible capacity. However, you might be surprised. Have you asked? When I finally went to our pastor and offered myself to work in the church, he said, "I've been waiting for you to ask." If your church is skittish about your participation in ministry, start small. Take brownies to the bake sale. Help clean up the church on work day. Offer to mow the lawn. Volunteer your professional services. These are all discreet and effective ways to make your willingness to be of service known. It also gives the church leadership a chance to witness your commitment. Even if your church isn't accepting of your ministry gifts, you can still work for the Lord. You can start a home Bible study, you can witness to your family and friends, you can volunteer time at a nursing home or homeless shelter. There are innumerable opportunities to work for the Lord.

Excuse (Cont.)

4. *I'd do more harm than good.* Actually, an admission of our inadequacy for the task is the prerequisite for effective ministry. God isn't looking for perfect people. Just take a look at the bunch he chose during his earthly ministry. They lacked faith, acted impulsively, deserted him at the cross, and turned the world upside down with the Good News of Jesus Christ. If God is leading you, your ministry will be effective. If he isn't leading you, then regardless of your gender issues, your ministry will be ineffective. Remember, it isn't the vessel which refreshes, it's the living water in the vessel which quenches the thirst.

5. *Why should I serve God when he stuck me with being transgendered?*

This excuse presumes that God owes me something because he saddled me with my gender-conflicted situation. The corollary to that is that I owe him nothing for the same reason. There are two things I'd like to say about this excuse. First, what made you believe that living the Christian life would be easy. Who told you that you would never have any problems? Why does God owe you a trouble-free life? The fact is we live in a fallen world. For some of us the problem is being transgendered. For others its facing disease, poverty, family problems, abuse and others. God didn't promise a life without difficulty. Indeed He promised that "In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world" (John 16.33)

Secondly, which is more important: your problem or God's salvation. I can imagine standing before God on Judgment Day. When he asks, "What did you do for me on Earth?", what am I supposed to say? "Well, Lord, I didn't do anything. But it was really your fault. I mean, you don't know how hard it was living the Christian life and being transgendered. People didn't like me. They turned on me. I really..." And as I speak, will I see Jesus standing by the Father silence my litany of excuses when he raises a nail-scarred hand.

No, that is not the way I want to face my Father. I want to walk into that throne room surrounded by those I lead to the Lord or encouraged with my counseling or enlightened by my Bible lessons. And when that fire is placed to my works, I want to see gold and silver and precious stones left over after the wood, hay and stubble have burned away. How will your excuses hold up under that flame?

The Femme Mirror

Trust Fund Established for Cystic Fibrosis Victim

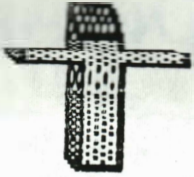
In the best traditions of Tri-Ess and Tau Chi Chapter, The ladies of Tau Chi rallied to help a sister in need this September. Leslie, a very special lady to Judy Daniels and to all of us, had just come from Texas Children's Hospital where her infant grandson lay newly diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis. Many sisters dipped into their purses to contribute funds for those Medical Center parking fees and other expenses, and the chapter voted a special donation of \$150.00 from the chapter Treasury.

A Trust Fund has been established in the child's name. Please consider donating whatever you can to help this family. When tragedy strikes it is easy enough to respond out of the emotion of the moment, but this situation requires commitment over the long haul as well. While medical advances have greatly improved the length and quality of life for Cystic Fibrosis patients, this means Hayden will continue to need care for a very long time to come. Let's all do what we can. No gift is too small; every gift will be gratefully appreciated. Thanks once again, on behalf of Leslie and her family.

Send contributions directly to the bank officer, and be sure to designate the name and account number on your check or money order.

Hayden Solomon Trust Fund
Acct. #31730-17835
c/o Jane Tharp
Guaranty Federal Bank
1110 Loop 336 West
Conroe, TX 77301

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS



by Barbara Jean Jensen

Back at Christmas time I received a card from our dear sister Lee Frances and she said she wanted me to write an article for the Easter Issue of Grace & Lace letter. I had an article started for her, but thinking, I felt that it was not the one for Easter. Perhaps in another issue you will see that.

Perhaps the one set of verses that best comes to mind concerning the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ is Luke 23:39-43.

"One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Jesus. 'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God?' he said, 'Since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deed deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said 'Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And Jesus answered him 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.'"

Have you no fear of God..... I think if someone were to ask me that question I would have to answer with a "Absolutely NOT! God loves me and when someone loves you the way that God loves you, you do not fear them, rather you love them in return."

The cross of Calvary is perhaps God's ultimate sign of his love for mankind. For us to hang on that cross would be just punishment for all the ways that we have wronged God, and yet God had so much love for us that he had his son take that place on the cross for us. What is there to fear in a god that shows such love as our God showed to us?

Is our crossdressing a sin? Many will debate that issue. The religious right would lead us to believe so and because of their teachings so many of us live our lives with a feeling of guilt, a feeling that God does not want us because we are crossdressers. When feeling guilty one only needs to look again at John 3:16.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that who ever would love him would not perish, but have everlasting life."

Ok most of you noticed that I changed a word, but did I change what God has said? I do not believe so. If we really and truly love someone, then we also believe in them. We have no reason to feel guilty about our crossdressing, for the message of the cross is **"WE ARE FORGIVEN"**. We do not need the religious right to tell us we are wrong, for if we are, then our own love for God would replace the need we have to crossdress. Perhaps it is because of our love for God that many of us have found a way to use our crossdressing to his glory, to convey to others his message of love for us.

Many years ago I wrote a sort of poem

LOVE & FRIENDSHIP The two most valuable commodities that our world has to offer. Of so much value one cannot buy them with all the money in the world, they must come freely from the heart of the giver.

One can accept them or one can reject them. If we reject them we have nothing, but when we accept them, we also return them.

And when we return them they grow and they prosper, and they return with unto us richer; stronger; than in days gone by.

With friends and the love that goes with them, we are richer than all the kings of the world.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND!

Yes, God showed his love and his friendship to us, and how do we show our love and our friendship back to him, but by showing love to others. We are saved not by our works, but only by the grace of God. We do our good works not seeking salvation, not seeking special favor with God, but because we Love God, and we show our love for God by showing our love for others. I have often said that to me Femininity represented gentleness. It meant being loving and kind, compassionate and concerned, caring about others. God has given me a feminine nature so that I might know what love was and how to show my love to others. In showing love to

others, I show my love unto God himself for that is what he would want of me. For Jesus himself said:

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest of commandments. And the second is likened unto it, Love thy neighbor as thyself."

Jesus spent his life on this earth showing us how to show love for our neighbor. Through the cross God showed his love for us, and through our love for others we show our love for God.

Anya's Corner

As to coming out to family; I need to do this as The Lord is leading me to be honest with family and friends about what I am. It is in God's time I come out to each person. It is the work of God that each one I have come out to have, by and large, accepted me and support me.

I would like to do something in the area of educational support for transgendered Christians and also for those who don't know Him. I am simply depending on God's timing. Most of all I am simply led to help people where I am. May God help us in this important ministry.

There's still much work to be done. Would a traditional or mainstream church turn a crossdresser out the door? I'm fortunate to be in the church I'm in. I'll never have to find out the answer but I do want to build bridges in this area.

When I broke under the strain and denial of my crossdresser self, I thought at first it simply was a need to become good at dressing up and to find a permissible reason to do so. Now I know that to be a crossdresser is more than that. I didn't think God would ever use me but when I let go and learned He has made me this way, He has been blessing my life and has made me a better person.

Anya Silver/P.O. Box 30873/Memphis TN 31830-0873

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A Prayer to the Lamb

by Trudy Vander Veen

O Lamb of God, long-suffering Lamb,
who came to take my sins away,
I look to You in love and faith
as humbly, gratefully I pray.

O Lamb of God, most precious Lamb,
who are so near the Father's heart,
Draw me to You with cords of love
and never, never let us part.

O Lamb of God, unspotted Lamb,
who took on You my guilt and shame,
Forgive me for the things I do
that bring dishonor to Your Name.

O Lamb of God, dear silent Lamb,
who when abused spoke not a word,
Let me not murmur nor complain
when I must suffer for my Lord.

O Lamb of God, obedient Lamb,
who meekly did Your Father's will,
Help me to humbly serve You now,
and when I die, be serving still.

O Lamb of God, my Paschal Lamb,
who sacrificed Your life for me,
I give to You my heart and soul
for time and for eternity.

O Lamb of God, victorious Lamb,
who stand in light before God's throne
Worthy are You, for You were slain;
all glory be to You alone!

