



TOP

Beauty In Chaos And Disease

JULY 06TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Beauty In Chaos And Disease

*A Special To The
ShowMe Times
By Kathy L. Gilbert*

Tiffany Chartier sees beauty in chaos and disease.

As a professional photographer and youth director of CHAOS (Challenge, Honor, Accept, Outreach and Serve) at Community of Hope United Methodist Church, Mansfield, Texas, she has created a unique ministry for herself: taking “affirmation” photos of young people starting on their spiritual journey and capturing some of the final moments of people dealing with cancer.

“Photography is a form of ministry for me. It always has been. It is just another avenue of expressing God’s love in a different art form,” she said. She is doing all this while dealing with retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic eye condition that will eventually make her blind. She only has 25 percent of her vision left.

“Because I am going blind I give more freely of the talents God gave me,” she said. “And because I’m going blind I refuse to be stingy with joy.

“Retinitis pigmentosa is a degenerative hereditary eye disease that starts by night vision—loss of night vision—and then slowly steals [like a thief] your peripheral vision

so eventually what you see is like looking through a tiny, tiny straw. And eventually it'll just . . . all close."

Ms. Chartier said her lack of peripheral vision is not as much of a challenge as you might think because she doesn't "just take a picture," she "captures a story."

Shifting focus

Hank Wyatt and his wife, Jan, got some bad news in February 2010. The cancer they thought Hank had conquered years ago had come back with a vengeance.

A tumor in his arm led to the diagnosis of Stage IV lung cancer. His doctor wouldn't tell them how much time he had left, but Jan Wyatt did some research and found out the average survival rate was two to four months. The Wyatts are members of Community of Hope United Methodist Church, and they knew about Ms. Chartier's ministry. They wanted some "happy" photos of themselves for their children and grandchildren.

"I think because her vision is narrowing she focuses in on what is important," Hank Wyatt said.

Life has changed a lot in the past year, he said. The photos by Ms. Chartier are now hanging in their bedroom.

"We've had Christmases and birthday parties and anniversaries that we didn't know we were going to have. So when those things come to you and you know you are playing the bonus round, you just learn to enjoy every one of 'em," he said.

Affirmation stories

"I like to use the talent that God has given me and empower young men and women through photography. And how I do that is with something called 'affirmation shoots' and 'self-confidence shoots,'" Ms. Chartier said.

She has the young person list seven positive traits about themselves before she takes their picture.

"I know photography helps people in their spiritual journey because I truly believe that every single person has an awesome, amazing soul that's probably just allowed life to

settle on them and make them a little dusty and rusty,” Ms. Chartier said.

The name of her photography company is SGLY (Smile, God Loves You). The mission of her company is to give back.

“And the joy of photography is to be able to take a snapshot of that one emotion and that one particular moment in their life,” she said.

“And then they can look back on it and see how far they’ve come in their journey. And it’s beautiful, exciting. Sometimes it’s tragic.”

More than anything, she hopes the photos are helpful.

‘A light for Christ’

When she [images/Blog Images/NEWS - JUNE&JULY2011/UM photographer_web.jpg](#) was 15

years old she went with her father to the Retina Foundation of the Southwest, where her father was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. Ms. Chartier was there for moral support; neither she nor her father planned for her to be tested, but the doctors requested it.

She remembers the doctor’s words: “Doug Winters, I need to tell you that yes, you do have retinitis pigmentosa, as well as your daughter. And not only does your daughter have it, she has it worse than you do.”

“We walked out, got into the car. Dad was fumbling around for his keys, put ’em in the ignition, grabbed the steering wheel and just lost it,” she said. “The only thing he said to me was, ‘I’m sorry. I am so, so sorry.’”

Ms. Chartier’s oldest son also has the condition. When she heard the news, she said she was transported back to that moment when she was 15.

“Except this time I was the one fumbling with the keys and trying to find the steering wheel and trying to get a grip literally—get a grip. And I told him the same words that I’ve been carrying around in my mind and heart for years, ‘I am so sorry.’ That’s exactly what I said to him. I literally became my father in that moment and understood the magnitude of helplessness and responsibility knowing that the only reason why your child has this is because you do.”

Ms. Chartier said sometimes she feels angry and sad but she is always reminded to look to God.

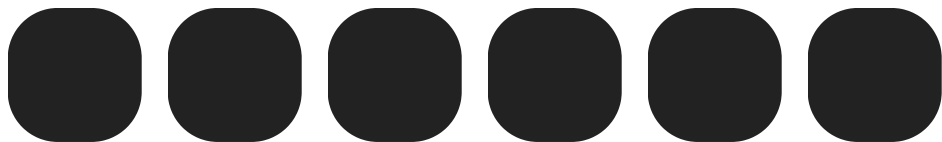
“I am 110 percent filled with peace because of Jesus,” she said. “I try to live every single day with purposeful passion. I try to give that to the youth and to my kids with energy and being positive, and hopefully fulfilling my purpose, which I believe is to be a light for Christ.”

Kathy L. Gilbert is with United Methodist Communications

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Chaplain Wants Shipmates 'To See God In Me'

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Chaplain Wants Shipmates 'To See God In Me'

NORFOLK, Va. - Southern Baptist chaplain Fred Holcombe Jr. pastors a flock numbering 3,500-5,800 people -- the population of a small town. But this "town" is more than 18 stories high, 1,123 feet long, 200 feet wide and takes up 4 1/2 acres. When fully loaded, this town weighs in at 95,000 tons -- yet it floats.

It is the USS Enterprise, the "Big E" -- the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and, when launched in 1962, the longest naval vessel in the world. Its home port is Norfolk, Va., where the Big E has left for one of her final six-month deployments before she is scheduled to be decommissioned -- after 51 years of service -- in 2013.

But until then, Lt. Cmdr. Holcombe, 47, has a full-time job to do. Fortunately, he's not the only chaplain on the Big E. There are three others -- the command chaplain who is Presbyterian, a Catholic priest and another Southern Baptist chaplain.

"The old saying on a ship is that every day is Monday except Sunday," Holcombe said. "On Sundays, we obviously have church. In fact, we have many, many different services go on each Sunday." As a chaplain, Holcombe said he not only prepares weekly sermons but his mission is to share the Gospel and take care of his floating flock, most of whom average 18-25 years of age.

Holcombe assists Enterprise crew members with any kind of issue they might have -- from a sailor who's run afoul of his chain of command, to helping someone salvage or maintain a marriage, to even talking some sailors out of committing suicide. He also spends time just visiting the aircraft carrier's living and work areas -- every nook and cranny -- of the Big E, no small feat when you consider it spans the length of five football fields.

"With all the spaces we have on board the ship, there's always somebody to go visit," Holcombe said, "and they all want a visit from the chaplain, even the folks in the [nuclear] reactors and other places you may not think a chaplain would typically go. But we're always welcomed and well-received because they're happy somebody's coming in to see them."

For six months, it's a ministry that spans 24 hours a day, seven days a week ministry. There's no wife, kids or house to go home to each night, just the claustrophobic close quarters of a tiny stateroom Holcombe shares with another officer -- a complete stranger

at the beginning of the six-month voyage but certainly not at its end.

"You have to have a very forgiving spirit of the people around you," Holcombe said.

"You tolerate what they do and they tolerate what you do. There's a camaraderie that is built and tested in a refining fire. It's amazing to watch the interpersonal relationships that go on and how an individual begins to grow close and the word 'shipmates' becomes a term of endearment, not a derogatory one.

"As a chaplain, there are times you feel like you can never be off, you always have to be on. Yet [crew members] see who you are, and I can tell you I want them to see God in me. I want them to see a person who is genuine ... even with all my bumps, bruises, warts and scars."

What earns military chaplains the right to be heard, Holcombe said, is the very fact that they are present and accounted for among their soldiers, airmen or sailors -- as in the case of the USS Enterprise.

"The saying is true that people don't care what you have to say or what you know until they know how much you care," Holcombe said. "The ship's crew knows I'm there enduring the same things they are -- the separation from their families, the hardships and the long hours. They work 24-36 hours straight sometimes because that's what it takes to get the job done.

"The American people would be absolutely amazed and astonished and proud of these kids -- their sons and daughters -- serving on the Enterprise."

"Orchestrated chaos" is how Holcombe describes activity on the Enterprise's flight deck, day or night. Imagine flying in to land on the Big E's deck on a moonless night when the only light for 100 miles is the carrier's landing lights. To a pilot, the landing deck may look like a floating postage stamp as the aircraft carrier -- although mammoth -- pitches to and fro at the mercy of a much larger ocean.

"You have so many people moving around doing so many different things, if you go up on the flight deck you'd better keep your head on a swivel," Holcombe said. "You're constantly looking around -- over your shoulder, behind you, in front of you."

The Navy chaplain believes the real unsung heroes of the Navy are the military spouses -- both men and women -- who keep the home fires burning.

"When you think about leaving your home for six months and you're married, there are things that happen," Holcombe said. "You leave one person and when you go back home, something mysterious has happened. You've changed and so has your spouse. So you begin to have these anxieties of the reunion because you wonder how she has changed, what's she done and how you have changed in ways you may not even recognize.

"The amazing thing about my wife Wendy is that she is just as sold out to do this for God as I am," Holcombe said. "I think that is such a quality in her life that God is able to give her the strength and dependence on Him to endure the separations and the hardships we have."

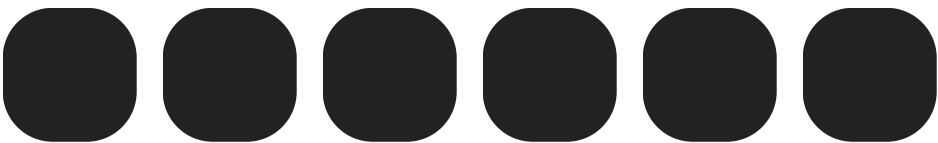
Back home in Norfolk, they have two sons -- Brent, 20, and William, 9 -- who also endure the long months without their dad's presence. Fred and Wendy celebrated 16 years of marriage in May when he was deployed somewhere on the other side of the world serving his country, but most important, serving God.

Mickey Noah writes for the North American Mission Board. NAMB serves as the endorsing entity for more than 1,350 military chaplains serving throughout the world. In addition, NAMB commissions more than 5,000 missionaries throughout North America. To view a video about Chaplain Holcombe, visit www.namb.net/Big_E.

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The Servant of Christ

JULY 05TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

The Servant of Christ

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

1 Corinthians 4: 10-16

"10We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored! 11To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. 12We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; 13when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world. 14I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. 15Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16Therefore I urge you to imitate me."

VIDEO OF THE DAY

In the world of technical climbing, there is one who leads and one who follows. The one who leads has the job of getting the team of climbers up the cliff safely. He does this by "setting protection" along the way. Into one crevice, he places a cam; into another, a chalk or a wedge. And into each of these devices, the lead climber fastens the climbing rope-and, thus, the well-being of his comrades hangs on how well he has done his job. If the climb is successful, the lead climber gets the glory.

On the other hand, the climber who follows-known also as "the cleaner"-rarely gets acknowledged. He has the unheralded job of unfastening or "cleaning" the protective devices set by the lead climber so that the team can advance up the cliff. There is nothing flashy about the role he plays. Consequently, he often goes unremembered.

The role of the Christian servant is like that of "the cleaner" on a treacherous, mountain climb. If he does his job well, the whole team advances. But if he is negligent, disaster can happen. I knew a man who broke his leg on an ice climb-snapped the bone clean in two-because his cleaner had not paid attention to his job.

Paul wanted so badly for the Corinthians to take servanthood seriously, that he highlighted his own service in verses 10-13, and even admonished his readers to be imitators of him. (Verse 16)

Whether one is a "lead climber" or a "cleaner", there is no place for arrogance in the body of Christ. We are all to be servants, just as our Lord Jesus was a servant. When we get this point straight, our journey upward will be a glorious one..

QUESTIONS:

1. In the body of Christ, do you see yourself as a "lead climber" or a "cleaner"?
2. Do you know of any disasters that have happened because Christian leaders were either arrogant or negligent?
3. Think of one servant leader that you know, and list the things that distinguish his servanthood.

LIFELINE:

Discuss the ways you and your family can be servants:

- to each other.
- to the church.
- to your neighborhood.

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Death Sentence

JULY 05TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

Death Sentence

Reprint Compliments of Men At The Cross By Joe White

1 Corinthians 4:9

"9For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men."

VIDEO OF THE DAY

Twice I have written to a dead man. On both occasions, his response showed me I was less alive than he.

When I sent my first letter to Darrell in the fall of '98, I half-expected to receive the ramblings of a stir-crazy inmate. After all, Darrell has been on death row for over ten years. How conversive can a man in his situation be? Yet, his immediate reply was full of wit, country humor, and most impressive, the wisdom of one whose only conversation partner is God -- 24 hours a day. Packed to the brim with scripture upon scripture,

Darrell's letters are almost a Bible in themselves.

Since his incarceration in the 80's, Darrell has died many times. He has died particularly to that old, awful self who pumped a 12-gauge shot into his former drug dealer and two other human beings. He gave his life, what was left of it, to Christ after entering Potosi Correctional Center. Since then, Darrel has become the self-appointed chaplain of death row.

Not long ago, I was watching the news on a TV in a hotel room and I saw that Pope John Paul had convinced the Governor of Missouri to pardon a certain prisoner on death row. That prisoner was Darrell Mease, who had clung to the hope of pardon for ten long years. His letters reveal that he also believes he will one day be released. Then we'll all be in for some preaching, for there is no sermon like that of a man returned from the grave.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:9, "God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death." Have you considered that Christianity truly is a death sentence? Without crucifying our old, evil nature, there would be no chance at heaven. But Christianity is also a life sentence, one in which our cell doors are flung wide and we are freed to walk with God.

Have you died to sin? Like Paul and Darrell, are you a dead man who truly lives? If you are not, consider the cold hard walls inside which you merely exist. Then come to Jesus, the doorway to life, and leave that cell behind.

QUESTIONS:

1. What in your life do you need to crucify to bring you into a right relationship with Jesus Christ?
2. If we as believers in Jesus Christ have been made a spectacle to the world (1 Corinthians 4:9b), what does the world see? A dead man or an alive man? One on death row or one on life row?

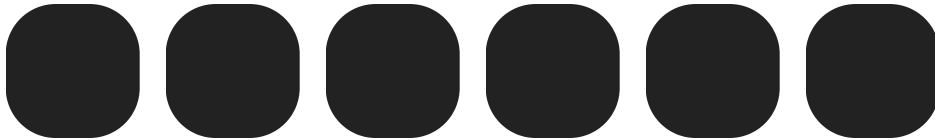
LIFELINE:

Christianity truly is a life & death sentence. Today, choose to live this sentence Christ has instructed us to live. Die to self and live walking in the freedom of knowing you have a right relationship with Jesus Christ. Then show the world, like a beacon in the night, how to experience a life & death sentence.

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Tebow Tells His Story In New Book

JUNE 29TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Tebow Tells His Story In New Book

*By Tim Ellsworth, BP Sports
Special to SMT*

DENVER (BP)--With two older brothers, football was a common activity for Tim Tebow when he was a child.

"One of us would play quarterback, while the other two would face off against each other, with one as a receiver and the other the defensive back assigned to cover him," Tebow

writes in his new book, "Through My Eyes."

"We didn't have a set score that we played to, but rather played until we got called to school, to work or eat, until someone got hurt, until we got into a fight with one another, or it got so dark that we finally could not see well enough to play."

That's just one behind-the-scenes story that Tebow, quarterback for the Denver Broncos and member of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., relates in his new book, co-written with Nathan Whitaker and released May 31 by HarperCollins.

As of June 9, the book was 15th on Amazon's bestseller list.

"It's about my life, from before I was born, all the way up to my first year in the NFL and everything in between," Tebow said in a Florida Times-Union story. "It's a lot of cool stuff. Some of it is stories that have been told, but also what isn't told. There's a lot of stuff in there that ESPN doesn't report, just thoughts of mine before big games and different stories that people wouldn't know unless they were right there with me."

"More than anything, I hope the book encourages kids and helps them accomplish their dreams."

Tebow writes about his mother's troubled pregnancy with him, which some doctors said could have resulted in her death. But she chose to carry Tebow to term.

"God's peace, she later told me, is what sustained her through the pain, bleeding, and uncertainty of the next eight months of her pregnancy," Tebow writes.

Tebow writes about his experience being homeschooled and how he dealt with dyslexia. He tells about his passion for sports from a young age, the process of being recruited for college, stories from his playing days as a Florida Gator where he became the first sophomore ever to win the Heisman Trophy, and about getting prepared for the NFL draft.

"As I tell my story, I hope that you will see that its true focus is on God and on those eternal values that He holds before us as beacons and benchmarks, to help us live lives of abundance that will ultimately glorify Him, while also lifting and bettering the lives of His children everywhere," Tebow writes in the book's preface.

Kevin Brockway, a sportswriter at the Gainesville (Fla.) Sun, gave the book a positive

review.

"In all, Tebow portrays a real account of his life that doesn't come across as too preachy or self-indulgent," Brockway writes. "Christians will enjoy the book for the lessons Tebow tries to convey. Football fans will enjoy the book for its behind-the-scenes access. It's not a book that will change your life, but 'Through My Eyes' is definitely a solid read."

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