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Treasures Among Us

Joan Harris

Joan Harris was born in West Virginia, but when she was six months old, her dad was transferred to Alton, Illinois. That is where she and her brother, Mike McKelvey, grew up. Each year they visited family in West Virginia. They would take a train from Alton to Ohio where they would transfer to a bus to make the final leg of the trip to West Virginia.

While she lived in Alton, her family went to church in East Alton. She was a teenager when they started going to Hartford Church of Christ in that area, and that is where she was baptized. As an adult, she and her family attended the Central and Madison Church (which later became Vaughn Hill Church of Christ). Neal Pryor was the preacher, and Central and Madison was his first preaching work. He was always her favorite preacher because he had such a phenomenal memory, especially for names. During her 50 years at Vaughn Hill, she taught bible classes, and worked with the bus ministry and Chimala Missions.

All her mother's family were strong Christians, and several preachers and missionaries came from that family. Her grandmother taught her to recite Psalm 23, and she also remembers her grandmother singing hymns to her when she was little. Her grandfather died when she was about six, so she doesn't remember him as well. Her father was Catholic but always insisted that she and Mike go to church with their mom. She is grateful that

her mother was a very strong Christian woman who always made sure her children were in church and involved in the congregation.

After high school, she attended Lindenwood University for a while before transferring to Southern Illinois University, Alton campus. She worked for AG Edwards, and later for Edward Jones, as an office administrator for many years.

She has two sons, Michael and Greg. Both boys grew up in Alton, and Joan was always involved in PTO and enjoyed being a "bleacher mom" during their sports competitions. Michael is a city planner in Philadelphia. Greg worked for the government for 20 years, then became the director of Orphan Helpers, a non-profit organization. He and his family now live in Williamsburg, Virginia. A few weeks ago, Joan traveled there to babysit her grandchildren while Greg and his wife were traveling. During the days when the children were in school, Joan enjoyed seeing all the historic sites in the Williamsburg area.

Her favorite places are the Blue Ridge Mountains and by streams of water where she sees God's beauty and feels His peace. Her favorite scriptures are found in Psalms 46:1, 10. Verse 1 says, "God is our refuge and strength." Verse 10 says, "Be still and know that I am God." She says, "These scriptures teach me to let God provide my help, strength and safety." Two songs are especially meaningful to her. They are, "The Greatest Command," and, "What a Day That Will Be."

Joan moved to the Waynesville in 2010 to be near Mike McKelvey and his family. She moved to Rolla a couple of years later. She works in the Clothing Room ministry and helps with Day School when it is in session. She is a regular at the Wednesday morning ladies Bible class and

is involved in the Thursday Bible studies at the Aldi Apartments where she lives.

A number of years ago, her son brought her some Llardo figurines from Spain where he had been traveling. Since that time, he has added to her collection whenever he can find Llardo pieces at estate auctions. Her Llardo collection and some beautiful glass tumblers are displayed in a beautiful curio case in her home.

Joan is always faithful to attend services and help in whatever way she can. She is yet another "Treasure Among Us."

NOTE: *This is the 17th in a series highlighting noble Christian women in our congregation. We truly have many "treasures among us" in the women who exemplify Christianity in all its facets and have much to teach us all.*

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***Kwihwa Parsley,
South Korea***

Kwihwa Parsley and her husband, Malcolm, have been married 40 years and have raised four children. Malcolm was born and raised in America. Kwihwa grew up in South Korea and has been associated with the Church of Christ since her middle school years. She and Malcolm met when she was in college; he was her professor for The Acts of the Apostles and Revelation. They (and others) campaigned together and started a lot of churches in South Korea.

South Korea is a fast growing country, and it is one of the most Westernized in Asia. Respect for older people is still very important in their culture, and the younger people still take care of their aging family members. In the past, it was common for 3-4 generations of a family to live in the same home. Little by little, that is dwindling away. Non-Christians in Korea still remember their ancestors' death dates. The family comes together, and they have a memorial time when they remember their ancestor(s).

South Korea used to be mostly a farming country, but now technology is one of the main industries. Samsung electronics, Kia cars, and LG appliances all come from South Korea. She says the Korean people themselves do not want to do the factory work, so many immigrants from Vietnam, Thailand, China, and India come to do the factory work. In 1988, Kwihwa served as an interpreter

for Greg Gumbel during the Olympics in Seoul, South Korea.

She works with the ladies of the church and, in the past, taught the ladies class for quite a few years. Now other ladies have grown spiritually and have taken on some of the responsibility of teaching. She says Korean Christians need a lot of personal teaching and attention initially. She and Malcolm visit with members who miss services or those who are sick. If there are any problems (for instance, with the building), she has to be there to help solve the problems and make decisions. Their congregation of about 50 has a potluck dinner every Sunday, and she coordinates those functions as well.

In South Korea, it is usually the women who begin to attend first. As they learn and grow, eventually their husbands begin to come and become involved also. She recalls one family where the wife and children came faithfully, but the husband would never come. He was in a position of great responsibility with one of the universities and never "had time" to come. He would promise to come when it was Christmas time; later on, he said he would come when he reached a certain age. Eventually, his position required that he choose one student out of three for a certain advancement. The ones not chosen became angry and caused problems for him—and he eventually had to go to jail for a while. While he was incarcerated, she and Malcolm faithfully visited with him every day, and they gave him a Bible. He read it and began to ask questions. Once he was released, he started coming and brought his family and friends to church. He was very faithful until his health failed. He is now in a nursing home.

Over the years, Kwihwa has experienced many heartaches and much happiness through her experiences in the Lord's church. The heartbreaks usually are for people who serve faithfully and work hard and then, for some reason, quit coming and become unfaithful. The joys come from their Christian brothers and sisters who do attend faithfully and become involved in the work and growth of the church.

For women considering mission work, she says it is very good work. She says, "The church is almost like your child," at least for a preacher's wife. If you and your husband do not have a very strong relationship, it would be best not to go to the mission field. If you can work well together, that's good. Missionaries do not dare show their frustrations and stresses to the members, so sometimes that can be a problem for their relationship. Being a missionary's wife is a good work, and you must support your husband to be a good preacher. Also, it is

important to work with the people to learn the language of your chosen country.

Kwihwa and Malcom Parsley are missionaries partially supported by the Rolla Church of Christ.

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First-time Feature

The following is a first for Sunrise—a short story serialized into three parts.

THE TWELFTH YEAR

A Short Story By Ina Ruth McKune

Part 1

The woman could not understand it. This had never happened before. As certain as the growing and fading of the moon's full face each month, her own monthly bleeding had always been predictable in its appearance and in its cessation exactly five days later. This time something was different. She felt a weakness she could not remember experiencing before, and there was at times a dull, unfamiliar pain. Yet there was something far worse – the five days had come and gone, and still it did not stop.

The sky was cloudless and the sun shone blistering hot even for Galilee, but the woman maintained her steady pace up the hillside path. Despite the lethargy that had recently come upon her, she was a strong woman accustomed to striking out on long journeys by foot, and she refused to alter her ways. With each footfall, dust coated her sandaled feet and boiled up about her robe, but she did not notice. Her mind was too busy turning this strange problem, this new fear, over and over like a mouse with a hardened nut whose shell it cannot crack.

As she reached the crest of the hill above Capernaum, she paused to catch her breath and to gaze upward into the endless blue. The sky, though vast and incomprehensible, was always certain. Jehovah God, the Scriptures taught, had spread it out as a beautiful canopy over the world. Gazing upon that blue so intense it almost hurt her eyes, she felt enveloped in His presence. *O Jehovah, I am only a humble woman, and so many have so much more important matters to bring before your throne – but I am scared. I do not know what is happening. Please take this away from me. Let me awake tomorrow whole and as I have always been. Deliver me.*

Rested, she descended the hill and entered the town. The air was thick with the sounds of people preparing for market day. Yet as she passed one house, above the noises of the city there rose the thin, piercing cry of a newborn baby.

He had always thought new babies looked alike, but then he had never had one of his own before. No baby had ever had such velvety soft skin, such clear dark eyes, such delicate fingers and toes. And no newborn had ever

opened those beautiful eyes so wide and gazed up so intelligently into her father's face. For the briefest moment, the thought that she would someday grow up, marry, and leave his home twisted his heart, but he pushed that thought away. *O my little princess, you can always count on your father to love you and protect you.*

His wife smiled wanly at him from the bed, but inside she chuckled. *O Jairus, is this the man who declared daily that he would surely be the father of a robust, boisterous son? I do believe this little girl has utterly stolen your heart, and with just a glance.*

Unclean, unclean, always unclean – how much longer can I endure this? The woman dropped down into a seat near the window and squinted at the glaring sunlight. There had been times in the past six years when the flow of blood had lessened, her hopes had soared, and she had even prepared two turtledoves to take to the priest for her ceremonial cleansing. Yet again and again the hemorrhage had resumed in its full strength, and for days her tears would consume her. *Still a zabah.* (*Zabah was the term for a woman suffering from this type of complaint. Lane, William L., The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Mark, Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 192, fn. 45.*) She seldom cried anymore, though. She no longer could.

She glanced around the room that had become her world. It was the only way she could stay in the same house with her family without rendering them constantly unclean as well. She seldom left the room and then only for a visit to yet another physician. One had assured her that a potion of wine, alum, and crocuses was the only remedy; another had administered a dose of Persian onions cooked in wine and commanded her "Arise out of your flow of blood!" But each time...nothing. She left unchanged. She smiled wryly. *Unchanged, except for a lighter purse. No more doctors!* But then her cousin had sent her that message about a healer who prescribed carrying the ash of an ostrich's egg in a certain cloth for ailments such as hers (*The Talmud lists these as actual remedies prescribed for this illness at this time in history. Id., fn. 46.*) *Perhaps one more try...*

Bowing her head toward the window, she began to pray. *O Jehovah, please deliver me from this. Make me whole again.* The words echoed in her head. How many times in six years had she said them? She raised her head and looked out the window. *Where are you?* The brilliant blue canopy of the sky stretched endlessly in every direction above her head, but it was empty.

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This is part one of three parts of this story. Parts 2 and 3 will appear in the next two issues.

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SUMMER FREEDOM

The summer I was eight, women from Church in Madison, Alabama, would come over to husk corn for hot, buttery corn on the cob. Southern etiquette and grace flew out the window as we allowed butter to drip off our chins and kernels to get stuck in teeth. Oh, the days of freedom from etiquette...

Then we would go out to the apple orchard and help the ladies gather apples for splendid desserts. While the ladies were there, we children were free to eat as much dessert as we could hold. When the locust or cicada began to sing, we went to bed full, happy, and free. The 1950's would soon end.

I was 10 the summer of 1961 in Huntsville. After a good supper and devotional, it was time to lie down on our hot beds, dreaming and planning our freedom while the noisy locusts finally lulled us to sleep.

The first morning of our freedom, Mother herded the five children into Old Yeller, a very old car of some sort that still moved slowly but surely. Since I was the oldest, I sat up front so I could prop my arm on the hanging baby car seat just in case we had an accident. Those were the no-seatbelt days, and baby car seats were up high so baby was not bored. Blades of grass grew on the floorboards under my feet, and I could watch the road through a hole.

The roll-up-and-down widows were down, the elephant ear windows were swung open as Mama headed down the mountain and out of town. Smells changed from cleaner mountain air to polluted city air and finally to the earthy smell of freshly plowed earth. Old Yeller eventually was stopped near an open field, and all the kids piled out. We wiggled our toes in the soft black earth and soon spread out looking for arrowheads.

I had learned about the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, and Creek Indians in third grade. As I found arrowheads, I thought of the Cherokee and Chickasaw in their deerskin moccasins walking in the same dirt I was in. At one time they, too, were free to roam, hunt, and fish. I still have the arrowheads I found that day.

Back in those days, summer was the innocents' freedom from schedules, studies, and school routines. In the teen years, summer freedom included camp, VBS, the Youth Rally, Revival meetings, and reading a book a day from the local library. We were allowed seven books a week. Summer freedom was more organized and steered me in the right direction.

It was then that I learned about real freedom. *"If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

John 8:31-32. In other words, if you will follow My teachings, you will become My disciple; and if you become My disciple, you will know THE TRUTH, and THE TRUTH will set you free. It has.

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*...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom,
2 Corinthians 3:17.*

FREEDOM

Freedom. America has been the freest country on earth, but that freedom has come with great cost. The blood of millions of American veterans has flowed since the days of the Continental Army in the earliest days of our country. Hundreds of thousands of veterans have given their lives in the search for or in the preservation of freedom—ours—and the liberation of others throughout the world. In our country today, veterans span from World War II through Iraq and Afghanistan. We all owe them a huge debt of gratitude for what they have sacrificed for the rest of us.

The blood of One flowed from the cross of Calvary. It, too, purchased freedom. Freedom from the curse of separation from God—freedom from the law of sin and death.

Our military heroes are wonderful and selfless, but each one of them is flawed in some way. They are, after all, human. Like the rest of us, they also need the freedom provided by the pure, sinless blood of the Lamb of God. He was and is the perfect, sinless Son of God. His offering (sacrificing) of his own body on the cross purchased eternal freedom for the souls of man.

On this Fourth of July let us remember the sacrifice of the vast army of veterans who have given so much for us. Let us also remember the love and sacrifice of the Lamb of God. *Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13).*

Evelyn Waite
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