

Growing Branches

Update from *NEW BEGINNINGS - A Home for Mothers*
Denver, Colorado

I am the Vine, you are the branches. John 15:5

April 2003

By Rev. Doug Bode
Spiritual Director - New Beginnings

Give us this day . . .

“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

At *New Beginnings* we focus on the importance of eating nutritious food to keep the human body strong and healthy. More importantly, however, we keep in mind the importance of God’s Word for the human soul. Daily servings of God’s Word are a part of life here as these residents face the trials and questions that life presents to them.

New Beginnings’ statement of purpose reads: “Here at *New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers*, we are committed to sharing the Good News of Jesus being our Savior from sin.” Although we share with our residents many things that contribute to successful living as a single parent, nothing is more important than their knowledge that Jesus is their personal Savior. Staying in that saving knowledge of Jesus involves hearing what He tells us in His Word.

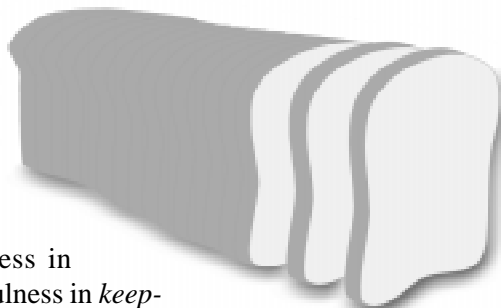
Every meal begins with prayer (often an eye-opener to new residents) and ends with a family devotion (another frequent eye-opener), as we try to show our residents the Christian way – that the spiritual food we eat is all-important. These brief devotions focus our attention as a Christian family, not only on the gifts we receive but also on the Giver of all gifts. Jesus’ cross on Calvary is the daily destination for our residents. The fundamentals of God’s Law point out our daily need for a Savior from sin. Basic Scriptural accounts demonstrate not only God’s goodness in promising a Savior but also His faithfulness in keep-

ing His promise of a Savior. We do not take anything for granted in helping our residents see how and why Jesus’ perfect life in our place, together with his innocent suffering and death on our behalf, add up to the perfect Savior we believe in. A look inside Jesus’ empty tomb reassures faith and reinforces a desire to follow him in daily life.

Each resident also completes a weekly Bible study, ranging on topics from Jesus’ identity, life, death, and resurrection to using our Christian faith to overcome the doubts, fears, failures, etc. that often arise in a Christian’s life. We emphasize God’s sufficient grace to help us through life and into the eternity of glory that awaits us.

By no stretch of the imagination do we have a building full of absolute saints. However, from God’s Word each resident is led to realize where she stands before God because Jesus went to the cross for her. That conviction, together with the thankful love to God that it brings about, leads a resident down a new path she may not have walked very well before. It helps her begin to turn her life around and make a new beginning for herself and her family.

our daily Bread



Although we are here to plant and water the seed of the Gospel in residents’ lives and are not guaranteed the sight of any positive results, we often see fruits in these young women. Sometimes it’s just a little “softening” around those previously rock-hard edges. Sometimes it’s being a little more considerate of others. All in all it’s a step in the right direction. With the Word we aim to solidify saving faith in the hearts of

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By Rev. Doug Bode

What is the highlight of the day at *New Beginnings*? It depends on various viewpoints, but usually it's the dinner hour around the big table in the Commons.

Residents are scheduled each week to cook the one daily meal shared together in the Commons. They are also responsible to set the table and clean up afterwards. For many of them, at first, it seems a daunting task. Some never had to cook a meal before (and it shows!), while others take it in stride and usually put something fairly appealing on the table.


Under the watchful of Charlene, the housemother, they are careful to observe basic nutritional values for a balanced meal that is so vital during pregnancy. If it were not for the one meal we have together, we fear that eating would be one big round of snacks and soda.

Some funny things happen on the way to the dining room table. One resident couldn't figure out why her brownies were burned to a crisp when she had only "baked" them for a half hour. It seems that she had actually *broiled* them for a half hour. Another resident was given the nickname "the cinnamon queen," because she thought cinnamon belonged in everything. The "helper" line (e.g. hamburger, tuna, etc.) also gets a lot of use. Space limitations prevent us from describing all the culinary delights we've sampled in our stint at *New Beginnings*.

Try as we might, we have not been able to duplicate the bib-

lical miracle of turning a little food into a lot. It happens quite often that the resident cook's eye is not a trained one, and what may have seemed like a lot in the kitchen does not look like enough to go around at the table. It's interesting and instructive to see how some train one eye on how much is in the dish and the other eye on the number of still-empty plates, while others generously help themselves, not considering the other hungry residents and children. It gives some food for thought and discussion in our private staff meetings with each resident.

It's not only the food, but also the table conversation that's interesting at *New Beginnings*. Topics may include the resident's activities that day, the cute (and not-so-cute) antics of the children, or in-depth discussion of some of the intricacies of pregnancy and labor and delivery. (Sometimes the temperature gets a bit warm around the housefather's ears!)

We encourage sharing with one another as part of the family atmosphere that we promote at *New Beginnings*. Many residents have not experienced eating together as a family before. Many have never heard of balanced and nutritional meals. Too often in their past it was everybody for herself. There is a better way that we try to teach at *New Beginnings* – everybody for each other. It is heartwarming to see the bonds of friendship and caring that most residents develop toward the others during their stay. Despite their differences in background and culture and upbringing, they learn a daily menu that includes looking to the needs of others, not just their own. 




(Daily Bread continued from front)



our residents, but we also focus on the accompanying fruits of faith that show their faith to be genuine.

God blesses efforts to make church attendance a weekly part of a resident's life. It sets the tone and provides needed direction for the week ahead of studying, learning,

parenting, working, dealing with social agencies, etc. Through God's Word these women and children taste the sweetness of forgiveness and salvation, like nutrition of daily bread for the soul. With your help *New Beginnings* can exist to show residents the empty cross and tomb. God's promise that His Word will not return to Him empty makes it all worthwhile. 

At Long Last!

Life at *New Beginnings* is full of blessings amidst the hardships. We had the opportunity to experience one such blessing as we witnessed the confirmation of our resident, Michele.

She was nervous as she stood before the altar. It was here at this same church, where she first attended last spring, that she announced her intentions: she would never come back again! When asked if there was anything she heard that was contrary to Holy Scripture, she couldn't think of anything. So, reluctantly, she said she would give it another try.

That one try extended to more tries, and Michele kept coming back again each Sunday. Only on several occasions did she fret and fuss – not because she didn't want to go; it was because she could not go to the Lord's Supper. That close communion practice and its biblical explanation frustrated and irritated her. Upon further explanation of its scriptural correction, Michele found some peace.

Finally, Michele asked to take instructions in order to be confirmed and attend the Lord's Supper. She waited (im)patiently until a Bible information class was started just for her in mid-November 2002 at *New Beginnings*. She did her homework faithfully, listened attentively, asked numerous questions, and at every class requested a Bible verse that she could meditate on.

At long last a date was set, and the special mid-March Sunday dawned bright and clear. She stood tall and proud before the altar of *that* church she once had no use for, and she repeated her confirmation vows of lifelong faithfulness to her faithful God. As her new shepherd gave her a special confirmation passage, she was reminded that her spiritual journey was not over: “*..But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,*” (2 Peter 3:18). In addition, Michele partook of Holy Communion for the first time – another source of joy in strengthening her faith that she longed for.

The Word still has power; through that Word the Holy Spirit had done His work in her heart. Through that Word, the Spirit continues to draw her closer to her Lord and Savior to give her the peace, joy, and reassurance that she, too, needs daily. Congratulations to Michele, and may God continue to strengthen her in her Christian faith – through the Word that still works powerfully in and on human hearts!



Doug and Charlene Bode
Houseparents



The following recipe is a *New Beginnings* favorite that we wanted to share with you!

Charlene

TACO PIE

9" unbaked pie shell
1 lb. ground beef
1 medium onion - chopped
1 pkg. taco seasoning mix
1 can refried beans
1/3 C. taco sauce
2 C. shredded cheddar cheese
12 tortilla chips - crushed
chopped tomato
chopped lettuce
sour cream

Preheat oven to 400°. Bake pie crust(s) for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and reduce heat to 350°.

In skillet, cook ground beef with onion. Drain off grease. Add taco seasoning to meat according to package directions.

In a small mixing bowl, combine refried beans and 1/3 cup taco sauce. Mix well. Layer half of the refried beans mixture in bottom of crust. Top with seasoned meat, 1 cup cheddar cheese, and crushed chips. Repeat layers, excluding chips.

Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes.

Cut into wedges. Top with lettuce, tomato, additional taco sauce, and sour cream as desired.





New Beginnings

A Home For Mothers

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NEW BEGINNINGS *- A Home for Mothers*

is a Christ-centered home for single mothers affiliated with Christian Life Resources, Inc. The home has been serving residents since 1993. It is supported entirely by the generous support and prayers of those who are committed to sharing Christ and reflecting His sacrificial love.

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