

Growing Branches



Update from *New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers*

Denver, Colorado

December 2004

Christmas at *New Beginnings*

By Rev. Doug Bode

You may ask what Christmastime is like at *New Beginnings*. Come inside and take a look!

Through the large windows in front of our apartment building you can see our well-decorated Christmas tree which sits on the landing between the middle and upper levels. Some of the decorations were made by our residents, and many were generously donated. A few of the residents also set table-sized Christmas trees in their apartment.

In the Commons – our shared living and eating area – sits another Christmas tree as well as decorations on the window ledges including a nativity set, to especially remind us of the sacred aspect of the Christmas holiday. Leading up to a Christian celebration of Christmas is our Advent preparation. In our devotions we try to stress why we observe Christmas. There are visual aids like a wall hanging we use to show especially the residents' children the "real reason for the season."

Since our girls have a very limited amount of money to spend, we are thankful for the donations of gifts they receive for themselves and their children. Usually the week before Christmas one of our evening meals is a pizza party, followed by children's squeals and residents' grins as they open their gifts.

One of the things often conspicuous in our residents' lives is the absence of family traditions. Recently Charlene, the *New Beginnings* house mother, made cookies with the girls and realized that not one of them had ever made cookies from scratch before! So we try to teach them some family Christmas traditions like singing Christmas carols, baking cookies, and making candy. To show them they don't have to spend much money and still be able to give gifts to others,

stamping and tole-painting are favorite activities in the weeks leading up to the holidays.

On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day most of the residents spend time with their family and friends. If they have nowhere to go, the houseparents take them along to church and include them in their own Christmas celebration.

All too soon the Christmas decorations come down again. But the real and lasting significance of Christmas is something we hope stays planted in their hearts and becomes increasingly evident in their families' lives. It's like the old song goes, "To God be the glory, great things He has done!"





They Keep Coming

From Washington to Florida, from California to New Hampshire, and from Brazil to Zambia – they keep coming. From family names ranging from A to Z – they keep coming. From people who are as regular as clockwork to those who are first-timers – they keep coming. From a young man who wrote after his birthday party: “Instead of birthday presents, my friends brought money for you. Here is \$100. My family is praying for you.” – to church groups and individuals sending gifts – they keep coming. With notations ranging from “in memory of...” to “on the occasion of...” – they keep coming. In amounts ranging from \$1 cash to larger donations – they keep coming. From items like clothing to quilts to candy and toys – they keep coming. With greetings like “God bless you for your work” or “We’re keeping you in our prayers” – they keep coming.

The donations and support sent to *New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers* keep coming.

Will they continue to keep coming? There is no logical explanation for the continuing donations to *New Beginnings*, other than perhaps the emotional appeal and gratification of helping babies and mothers in need. Much greater than that is the fact that each donor possesses something that keeps on coming to them. Far surpassing *New Beginnings’* needs is the rich and amazing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Don’t count out the Father’s love that came down at Christmas and the powerful working of the Holy Spirit through the Word and sacraments. Such abundant grace working in hearts warmed by the Gospel can’t help but show itself in gifts designated for others in need.

Will the gifts ever stop coming? Yes – when God transfers us from grace to glory. Until then, we can’t help but thank our God for His continuing and amazing grace. He came down from heaven as a newborn babe to rescue all who are weary and worn in sin. We rejoice in His appearance as the greatest Christmas Gift this world has ever received.

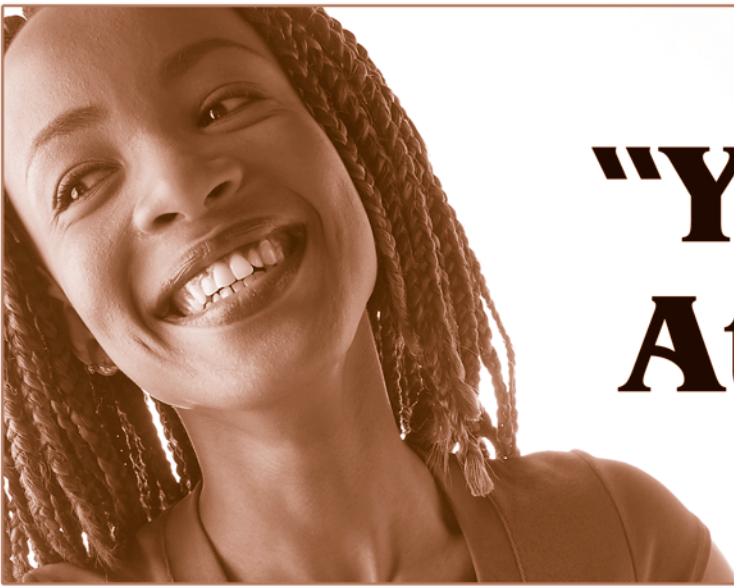


**The donations and gifts
sent to *New Beginnings*
keep coming.**

We also rejoice with and thank you, our Christian readers, who celebrate Christmas year-round by supporting the work of love carried on at *New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers* with your prayers and donations.

God bless you all!





“You got a Attitude!”

That was a remark thrown my way from a resident who was doing something she shouldn't have been doing. After a little talk about attitudes and the kind of attitude one should have, she understood a little better where I was coming from.

We see and hear all kinds of attitudes during a typical day at *New Beginnings*, many of them fine and good. However, we do encounter residents who sometimes think they know everything – a “you-can't-tell-me-anything” attitude. It doesn't matter that they have never been a mother before, or that their own parents often didn't teach them about growing up.

We realize the difficulties caused by pregnancy – the mood swings, the doubts and uncertainties about what is happening to their bodies, etc. We can understand some of the negative attitudes.

But in a sense, that remark, “You got a attitude!” is a positive thing and evidence of something higher and deeper than we could ever produce on our own. It reminds us of St. Paul and his encouragement to Christian readers, *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!* (Philippians 2:5-8).

The upcoming Christmas celebration is a reminder once again of Jesus' attitude of humble service. He left all the glories of heaven behind to come down to this earth to be our Savior. What a model for our thankful response to His saving grace! What a model He made for us to humbly reflect His serving love even in our attitudes about life! Then our Christ-like attitudes flow into Christian actions in living a life of loving service to others.

New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers is but one example of loving service to those in need of help in turning their lives around. Without your Christian attitudes, shaped by Christ's humble and self-sacrificing love, and your Christian actions, shown in generous support of charitable efforts like *New Beginnings* with your prayers and donations, our home for mothers would not be able to survive.

Christ-like attitudes flowing into Christ-like actions of humble and helpful love are convincing evidence of treasuring in Christ-like hearts the Gift of Jesus – Love that came down at Christmas.

Merry Christmas, and thanks for all your year-round gifts of prayers and offerings – all showing “you got *the* attitude!”

Rev. Doug Bode
Spiritual Director at *New Beginnings*



New Beginnings
A Home For Mothers



Rev. Doug and
Charlene Bode,
House Parents



New Beginnings

A Home For Mothers

Affiliated with Christian Life Resources, Inc.
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Milwaukee, WI 53222-4304

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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**Top Three Items Needed
at New Beginnings:**

1. Baby Monitors
2. Changing Tables
3. Dressers

Check out: www.HomeForMothers.com for more information.

Please call if you are interested in donating any of these much needed items.
Thank you!

New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers is a Christ-centered home for single mothers and is 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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E-mail: nbdenver@comcast.net

Website: www.HomeforMothers.com

New Beginnings appreciates your prayers to our gracious God on our behalf. We also appreciate your gifts. Would you consider helping us out?

Yes, I (we) would like to make a contribution to help **New Beginnings**:

☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

☐ Please send me information on having my gifts enhanced through Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

☐ I would like to support this ministry on a regular basis. Please send me information on becoming a Clearly Caring Sponsor.

Mail to: **New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers**
P.O. Box 423
Aurora, CO 80040