

Growing Branches

Update from *New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers*

Denver, Colorado

August 2005

Investment

By Rev. Doug Bode

When we think of investments, we generally think of stock market ventures, 401(k)s, IRA contributions, and the like. Typically, investing has something to do with money.

When we say we are heavily into investment strategies here at *New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers*, we don't necessarily mean the money aspect. Although we do try to help residents learn how to budget as well as how to conserve and save their money, it is not only the financial aspects of investments we are talking about. The idea of investing really has everything to do with putting real effort into something worthwhile that eventually produces good results.

That's why *New Beginnings* is more than just a shelter for unwed mothers and why our program is intended to last for more than a short time. It takes time and patience and effort on the part of everyone involved to help a young woman turn her life around and head in the direction the Lord wants her to go.

Each resident is required to be involved in either education or work. If she hasn't earned at least a high school diploma or a GED, that's the first thing she has to work on. Investing in education is always a worthwhile ven-

ture, and the goal is being better able to take care of their one-parent families. When a high school education has already been achieved, we encourage them to go on to get some kind of vocational training while they are at *New Beginnings*. There are financial incentives and help

available through public benefits to make that kind of investment attractive to them. Medical assistant, medical billing and coding, massage therapy, computer training, personal physical trainer, and paralegal are some of the fields that our residents have pursued.

While our residents are responsible for getting into such investments of their time and energy, it is up to the *New Beginnings*' house parents to make sure they stay on track in their educational efforts. Often they drag their heels in either getting started or keeping their nose to the grindstone. If they could concentrate solely on that aspect of their lives, it would be easier for them. But they have to learn how to do the juggling act between rest, relaxation, school work, and taking care of a child.

We'll never forget one resident who had nothing beyond a 6th grade education. Her mother was going to home school her but never got around to it. All during her high school years there had been no one to encourage her to pursue a basic education. Nor was there anyone to hold

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**It takes
time and
patience
to help a
young
woman
turn her
life around...**

Tentative or Tenacious

By Rev. Doug Bode

By definition the word “tentative” means “hesitant, uncertain.” It refers to something that is not fully worked out or developed. That can include anything from a smile to a career choice, life style, or goals in life. On the other hand, “tenacious” is defined as “not easily pulled apart, cohesive, tough.” One might think of tangible things like industrial Velcro or gorilla glue, or intangibles like values, priorities, or plans for life.

How do these words fit in at *New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers*? We often see babies develop into toddlers during their stay at *New Beginnings*. Initially they learn to pull themselves up using a coffee table or chair. Then they start those first hesitant steps around the piece of furniture (or Mom’s legs). All these are very tentative steps, but they develop into something more solid and sure. Pretty soon they take those initial, unsure actions where they learn to put one foot in front of the other to walk independently. After much practice (and many tumbles!) they can eventually walk steadily and even start running down the halls of *New Beginnings*. Something extremely tentative develops into something much more dogged and determined.

The same holds true in the lives of our residents. It may be education or employment; it may also be spiritual development or a steely resolve to correct a lifestyle and improve her life and that of her child.

What does it take to accomplish this? There are words of instruction, reminders, encouragement, correction — sometimes even rebukes. Sometimes words have to be backed up by actions that show there are consequences for walking down the wrong road in life. Above all, there is the Word to which residents are exposed on a daily basis. As St. Paul reminds us, “*All Scripture is God-*

breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16).

**With His Word...
...what often starts
out as tentative
develops into a
tenacity...**



While we try to help residents turn their lives around in a material sense, it is our goal to share Jesus with them so that their earthly lives are finally transferred to that eventual goal of eternal life with Jesus in heaven. With His Word and its power brought into the resident’s life, what often starts out as tentative develops into a tenacity that, by God’s grace, has the power to guard and keep Christian faith as well as produce many fruits of faith. It’s not uncommon to see demonstrated the truth of Jesus’ words: “*I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5).

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New Beginnings
A Home For Mothers



Rev. Doug and
Charlene Bode,
House Parents

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her responsible and accountable to get her GED. With encouragement, guidance and help, she was able to eventually cash in on her educational investment and then go on to a very challenging two-year paralegal course.

As much as we enjoy success stories in education or the workplace, we need to keep in mind the scriptural question: *"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26). When we realize that every soul is precious in the Savior's sight and that He wants all people to be saved, our most important and pressing investment of time and energy is spent on the human souls in our care.

While the physical upbringing of our residents has often been slighted in their lives, it is the human soul that is even more commonly neglected. Residents may be into astrology and horoscopes, and they find a ready supply of that kind of thing on the Internet. While we don't filter the content of their web-surfing, we do monitor what they are often searching for on the computer. And we do provide information and intervention for their spiritual good when the situation calls for it. Placing trust in man and his opinions will never replace a solid trust in God and His promises.

Church attendance, Bible studies, family devotions, and the like are all ways in which we try to help our residents invest in a value and worth that far outweighs all other investments. Whether it's always appreciated or not, whether or not we see the outward results we're looking for, we keep on planting the seed of God's Word, knowing that it is powerful as well as profitable.

What is one soul worth? The Savior answered that question by His willing self-sacrifice on the cross. He lived and died to benefit every single soul ever to live on this earth. While we try to mirror His compassion for the disadvantaged by helping our residents get their feet on the ground and get their lives turned around, it is the Savior's compassion for souls that really gets our attention and occupies much of the time and energy invested in the everyday activities of *New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers*.

Do you suppose the Savior would have it any other way?



**Find out more about
New Beginnings -
A Home for Mothers
Go to
www.homeformothers.com**

Tentative or Tenacious - continued from page 2

It is always our goal to help residents in their walk with God. We've had girls who did not know God at all, one who thought His name is Allah, and any number of them who simply had to get re-acquainted with God. It is our privilege and pleasure to sow the seeds of God's Word that alone can accomplish the steps of faith that progress from tentative to tenacious. While we can't always see the progress (and sometimes even see regression instead of progression), we have confidence that in each case the Seed of the Word will accomplish what God desires.





New Beginnings

A Home For Mothers

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Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage

PAID

Milwaukee, WI
Permit No. 3539



Most needed items at New Beginnings:

Vacuum cleaners

Changing tables

Floor lamps

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.

Staff: Rev. Douglas Bode - Spiritual Director
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New Beginnings appreciates your prayers to our gracious God on our behalf. We also appreciate your gifts. Would you consider helping us out?

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