

AUGUST - AUGUST
2011 - 2012

OUR STORY

AS TOLD BY MISS KAREN BOORSE WITH A SUPPLEMENT BY CHRIS



Colorado in February

It was very nice to sightsee and share meals. Linda, our hostess, was very kind to spend time with us and share herself with us. Her home was very comfortable and we were able to use the basement apartment to eat together, study, or just spend time together.

✧ *The Story Begins* ✧

It is August... should I go to Arizona? I struggle with the amount of time I will be there. Am I taking advantage of my friends' good natures? A month is a long period of time. I call Chandler Bible and talk to Pastor Jon, he is very encouraging.

I order the plane tickets. Amy and Todd offer to allow me to stay with them. Mara and Bev both want me to visit. The travel agent finds me a deal on a car between 6 & 700 for the month. Better than 1200 that I heard last year.

I get a call from Chris Williams. I had prayed for him this year as his wife had passed away. I liked Kay. She greeted me warmly when I was there before and she greeted my friends. I sat with Kay one Sunday and had lunch once with Kay and Chris, Jon and Jan. I liked her. I was

sorry to hear of her passing and my heart went out to Chris for his pain. Chris called me and told me that his wife had passed and he had 2 vehicles and I could use one of his cars while I was there. WOW, Chris! Thank you! That is an answer to prayer and will save me 6-700! Thank you.

A few days later, he calls again to invite me to his house for dinner. There will be some people from church... one from the CE committee, one from the missions committee... Wow, that sounds Great, Chris!

First Corinthians 13:

vv. 4 - 8a, 13

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails....

And now these three remain: faith hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

September-October, Arizona

KAREN ARRIVES IN ARIZONA

I arrive in Arizona. Mara picks me up from the airport. We have lunch and she drops me at Chris' house. We talk some and the others arrive. I meet Chris's son, Kip. Nice looking single man. We eat dinner. It was very good. But the dinner is Chris' thank you to each of these people for their love and support of him since Kay's death. God is good. But I am wondering why I am here. Visiting missionary... Kip sits next to me, Chris across the table. At one point, Kip mentions his interest in weight lifting... "Yeah, I used to lift 6 days a week." I glance over at him, his hands behind his head, bulging muscles in his upper arms... whoa. I look away... I can't look at you... want to, can't. Whoa. Chris asks his son to drive me to Amy and Todd's... Is Chris trying to set me up with his son?

THE FIRST "DATE"!

Sunday, Chris picks me up for church. It was really nice to sit in the service. I recognize some people, some recognize me. It was nice to be there and worship in the service. I like Pastor Jon and his teaching manner. I like this church. After church is Sunday school. I sit in one of the adult classes. Again, it is very good. I meet Chris outside, now is the time that I can borrow his car... Karen, a few of us are going out to lunch, would you like to come? I hem and haw a bit, not knowing if Amy and Todd are expecting me... we really did not make any arrangements. Pastor Jon stands beside me and nudges me with his elbow... aah, go ahead! Uhh, ok, I guess it will be ok. (He nudged me, what's that about?) I go, it was very nice... Chris, a single man (John Norman) and a woman (Krista Winn) with 3 kids, whose husband had passed away. It was nice. Chris loaned me his car, the sketchboard fits in the back! That can't be said of many cars. Nice car too. Chevy Malibu...sporty. You want me to use that car? Wow, thank you, Chris! Lord, please watch over me and take care of this vehicle...!

Wednesday is Awana. The first one I've been to this fall. That was fun! I was very nervous. There are about 50 kids... a lot of older boys. I believe the story

went well. Praise the Lord! During the evening, one of the ladies approached me. There are a few of us going out to dinner at Paradise Bakery (like Panera Bread) next Wednesday before Awana, would you like to join us? Sure, visiting missionary... I think I can do that. It's Chris' birthday. Blink, uh, ok... ok, what's going on around here? Am I being set up with Chris? I do not think that this is my imagination. I share my observations with my friends, am I making this up?

INTENTIONS REVEALED

I meet with Pastor Jon, to put together our next attempt at a joint message. Hezekiah and Sennacherib will be the topic. Wow. These opportunities are always somewhat stretching. After spending a bit of time planning, I say, ok, before we are done completely, I have a question to ask you. His response, "I've been expecting this." ... I ignore that and ask, is there something going on that I should know about? His response, "I've been authorized to speak to you." What? Did he just say authorized? They have talked about this? Ok, wait... I ignore that to some degree. I say, OK, there is a father and there is a son... I am experiencing a little confusion... is it the father? Or is it the son? Response, "it is the father."

The words begin to sink in... I am not imagining...Ok, there are significant years between us, are there not?! Yes, 18. How do you know that? Do you even know how old I am? Yes, you are 54. What?! How do you know that? I do not tell people my age! I have friends who do not know that. How do you know that? We looked it up. We looked it up?! I can hardly grasp the information that I am hearing... I am both shocked and flattered, mostly shocked to think that someone has "checked me out!"

Pastor Jon now asks me a question... Have you made a vow? Ya mean to stay single? I've made vows to not talk to certain people... (I'm working on that)... But not that one, I do not believe. Then, here is another question, is this totally out of the question? Pastor Jon, I cannot even answer that question.

I have not even considered such a thing. I have blinders on when it comes to men. Most are already taken or they are gay and in either case, I am not interested.

Last year, Chris was MARRIED! I knew his wife. I liked his wife. He was out of bounds! But he's not now. OK, but I have not even considered this.. Good grief, I work with men (OAC) they are for the most part out of bounds!...hands off, don't touch!... I don't even go there. Whoa... Pastor Jon and I end the conversation with "Would you consider opening your heart to the possibility?"

I cannot believe he used those words.... my last few sessions with Mary have been about releasing my bolted down heart and trusting God and opening my heart. Trust God to protect it rather than ME protecting it. "OPEN YOUR HEART" I cannot believe that he just used those exact words.

AN ANSWER TO PRAYER?

I leave that time with Pastor Jon and call Mary from the parking lot. "This is YOUR fault!" I laugh, my nervous energy explodes... "You have prayed for this, I have not prayed for this! This is YOUR fault! Now what am I supposed to do?!!!" We laugh together, I am in shock, I am flattered.... I am a wreck as I pour out what I have just experienced... I pace in the parking lot. I tell her the story as I know it. I am not making anything up.

Chris, himself, shared how he traveled the summers with Kay, visiting places and people. He had done it himself this year, and determined that he did not want to go it alone again. He had prayed that God would provide a strong Christian woman to spend the rest of his life with... Pastor Jon assured me that he did not have a ring in his pocket, but that is where his heart and desire is....

Me? Why me? Why not you? An attractive woman, with a good sense of humor and a strong desire to follow God.... I can't process this... No one has said these things of me before.... attractive? woman? aaaah!... I am Peter Pan! I gave up on any possible relationship a long time ago. I sense panic... a man is sharing this with me, not just one of my buds... not as easy to just set it aside...



CONFLICT WITH MY MINISTRY

But what about reaching kids with the Gospel? What about Open Air Campaigners? My life has been consumed with ministry for years! OAC since 1984! I can't see Chris wanting you to stop, but rather supporting you... coming along side of you. Building support is an issue, right? Yes, as it is for every missionary. What if you could do the ministry and not need the support? Oh my goodness...

FRIENDLY AFFIRMATION

Lord? Is this what you are doing? In the multitude of counselors there is safety... I talk to Bev. Give me your honest impression. I may be blind to some things. Tell me what you see! Let's see, Bev counts on her fingers, you get married, you move to Arizona. I like it! That made me smile, but that was not helpful. I go to Amy, more level headed because she is already married with 3 children. Honest impression, good or bad, I may be blind to whatever. She says, you get married, move to Arizona, I like it! You have got to be kidding... two peas in a pod. heh!

Mara, Be the voice of reason! Honest reaction! 18 years is pretty many! I know! But every time that thought goes through my mind another follows... there are no guaranties! I have a friend that married a man 3 years younger than me and he has so many health issues, it is not funny. And who's to say it will be Chris that would need help? No guaranties! I watch TV with Mara and Taylor... a show comes on about weddings and dresses... there are 18 years between the couple! What?! Why that exact number?! Why not 15 or 20 or 10... 18! You have got to be kidding!

A TEST!

OK, Mara, let's invite Chris on a hike. She is agreeable. I want my friends to view this situation to be able to give me feedback. You are not picking the hike! You have just about killed me on the two hikes you have taken me, YOU are not picking the hike. I do not want the man dying half way through and having to carry him out, you are not picking the hike. I can't pick the hike, let's ask HIM to pick the path. South Mountain has a variety of trails, some difficult, some flatter and easier. We follow Chris... both Mara and I gasp for breath as Chris walks easily up the mountain, waiting for us every so often... OK, well. I guess that's not a problem! Heh, funny. OK, will you now carry me out?! Heh!

Ok, that's enough for now... enjoy. God is good! Never knew so much was going on behind the scenes, did you. Funny.

BEGINNING A RELATIONSHIP

My brain can hardly digest what it has been fed. I do ministry and spend time with this man I do not know, who wants to marry me... I think we have to get to know one another... We will spend the rest of our lives getting to know one another more deeply... But you do not know me, I do not know you, I am not sure that you can handle me (I used to say that it is only Jesus who knows our hearts who would know how to handle me and since he does not walk on this earth any longer... oh well)... I can't see the problem if we both love God and commit to his plan...



We spend the rest of the month seeking opportunities to be together. I am amazed that I have not run, shut things off... Chris has my attention. That is a feat in and of itself. There are several occasions toward the end of October where I sense a strong urge to hold his hand. NO! That would be improper, wouldn't it? We pray for our meal, this time, I reach out and touch his hand. My family held hands when we prayed for dinner. Chris responds positively. He takes me to the airport, again I sense the urge to grasp his hand... NO!! Stop that! What is wrong with you?! I remember one time asking my mom, do I have to hold his hand? I was out of high school. I believe this young man liked me... he had mentioned something about getting married... NO!!! I ended the relationship.... so, WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?! I want to hold Chris' hand! NO! Stop that!

November - God is Working

We part company, wondering what God is doing. I will head to Thailand in January; Chris hopes to come my way in March. I am barely home 3 days when Diane calls me and asks if I would want to take a cross-country trip with her to New Mexico. Diane says, you can take my car and drive to Arizona if you want to.... Diane, you have no idea what you just said to me. You have no idea what a temptation that is!

No, I can't. I JUST got home from Arizona! When do you want to go? That hits two speaking engagements and I have already missed all of October with those programs. I can't call those people and say sorry, can't come! Can you shorten your trip? No, that's 6 days of travel... plus the actual days to help my mom and sister? That would not be good. We hang up.

I e-mail Chris. You are not going to believe this, but I was just asked to drive with a friend to New Mexico and then offered to use her car to come to Arizona! I can't. Chris e-mails me back. Maybe it's time for me to visit my sister who lives in New Mexico. You didn't say where Diane's sister lives, but mine lives in a town across the river from Albuquerque. Funny, I think Diane's sister lives in Albuquerque.

A plan begins to develop. Diane, if you had two people to help you do whatever it is you want to do for your sister and mom, could you shorten your trip so I can make it back? I tell her about Chris. Hummm. If we leave two days early in the front of the trip, perhaps we could leave on Sunday after church... I tell her what Chris said about his sister living in a town across from Albuquerque. Diane says to me, Karen, there is only one town across the river from Albuquerque, and that is where MY sister lives... Not just the same State...the same town! Within 3 miles of each other... is it just me or does it appear to anyone else that God has his hand in this?! Who, but God could have placed both sisters in the same town!

Chris drives from Arizona with sketchboard and paint and paper.... Karen and Diane from Pennsylvania with clothes and supplies... a 3 day journey.

ANOTHER CHANGE

Prior to leaving, Chris and I speak every day on the phone or by e-mail. At one point he says, I want to ask for your forgiveness for pushing the marriage issue so strongly. I have spoken to friends, a couple that was married later in life and they told me that I was pushing the marriage issue too strongly and that I should rather focus on getting to know you. So, I'm not going to push that. Thank you, Chris! Thank you, friends! Praise God for Godly counsel!

A strange phenomena has just taken place... he set me free and I was immediately drawn to him. Instead of sensing the need to hold him back, I was immediately drawn to want to get closer... Stop that! What is wrong with me?!

This is NOT normal behavior for me... This is totally out of character... what on earth is going on? I try to assure Chris, "don't fret, you have my attention." In the past, an almost impossible feat. How did you do that? You gave me freedom.... (I am thinking there

could be a spiritual lesson in this!)... you gave me freedom and I am immediately drawn to you. I am amazed...what is going on?

So, when I see you in November, can I touch you? I have not walked this way before. I fear. I do not want to be inappropriate or do something that would cause another to sin... you or me. We agree that too much alone time could be very dangerous... a hug perhaps... holding of hands... For Chris, a hug is very natural. For me, I am very conscious of who and how... to this point I have had pretty much a hands off policy... I even expressed to Mary that I am untouchable... most women, that just feels weird... except those who are really upset... men? no. Kid's? Ok, to a point, as needed by them. Family? Ok. Chris? (uncharted territory) This is new. We decide that PC done in a public setting would be best and not too long or prolonged. Are we really talking about this? So out of character, it is not even funny.

THE SECOND MEETING

What a trip! Diane and I visit and sing and laugh all the way across the USA. God gives us great traveling weather and safety on the highway even when we drove through most of the night... until deer scared us. We stopped at a rest stop to take a snooze until we were too cold, then drove on! God is good.



What a great time of ministry! Spoke in church, Diane in Sunday school. It seemed like

God was using us to encourage this small church. Chris stayed at his sisters, Diane and I with Diane's sister. We were able to pick up some needed items for Kathy and David and spend some time with Anne and Dan... I am thinking that was an encouragement for both families.

Monday to Wednesday we worked at the church, helping prepare rooms for painting and trying to clean up the mess and dust afterwards. It was good hard work.

Thursday was Thanksgiving. Diane went to be with her mom...Chris and I took a walk... hand in hand along the Rio Grande! (that rhymes..heh) That was really nice... I wanted to hold his hand, close to me...AAAHHH! What is wrong with me?! We greeted people as we walked, most smiled... it was very nice... I could stay here for a long while.

ANOTHER DATE & A DISASTER

Friday, we visited "Old Towne," a shopping district, quaint little area with a couple museums... nice. We got in the truck and started on our way only to discover that Chris' backpack was missing! Someone had broken into the truck stealing his Ipod, backpack and snacks off the front seat.... but left other electronics... as we were discovering all of this, a police car pulled into a lot across the street... we drove to where he was. They broke the lock on the drivers side... the policeman said that something must have disrupted them... and that Chris' truck was very popular and would bring a high price in Mexico... Chris was very disappointed, I think I had a harder reaction than he... we went back and walked around the small park to see if they had discarded any of the contents.. didn't find anything. I think it bugged Chris, but I think it bothered me more than him. Defenses on high alert. (Chris, will you be able to handle me?)

ENJOYING OUR LOVE FOR GOD'S CREATION

Saturday was nice as we headed South for a bird sanctuary... cranes, snow geese, Canadian geese all migrate to or through this area. Wow! 100's of birds. The cranes were huge... the dictionary said a Sandhill crane can be 4 feet tall! I think they were... with a 7 foot wing span... I think they did... they were huge. Very cool. Again we walk a short trail, hand in hand. I like this man. We drive back in time to visit again with Anne and Dan.

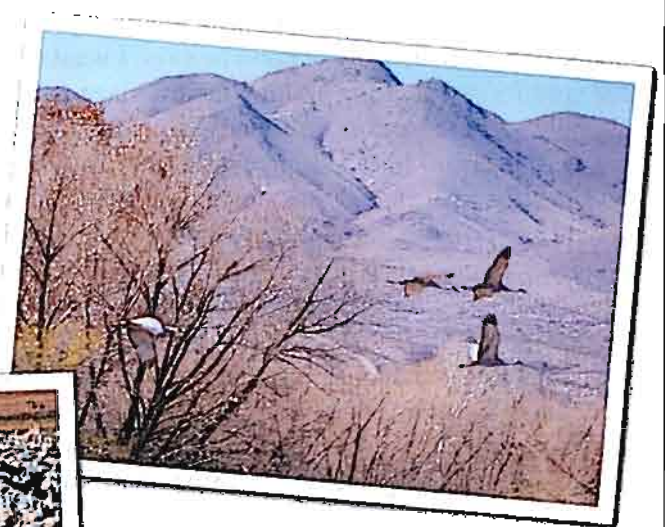
I want to be careful of too much PC in front of his sister... I'm not sure how it is affecting her, how I am reading her response...



THE RETURN HOME

Sunday, we again have the opportunity to speak in church. God is good! Diane leaves to have lunch with other family members. I say goodbye to Chris, who leaves for Arizona. I return home with Kathy to pack and clear out the trailer.

Our ride home is good! We sing and laugh and praise God across the USA. It rains a good portion; we pull off and sleep in a Walmart parking lot. We get moving in the AM, within a few miles, we come across a huge accident with at least 7 tractor trailer trucks in the deep ditch between the lanes, back tires sunk deep in mud, the trucks and trailers all on their sides. Some were smashed big time.... whoa, Whoa...WOW! What on earth?! God had us pull off the highway at just the right time last night! We very well could have been a part of the huge mess! Wow, God, you are GREAT! The storm had snow after the rain, that buried a lot of the area we had just traveled through not long after we passed by. Again, God is good as we rode the crest of the wave in that storm... a day later we would have had trouble! Hours later, we would have had trouble! Hours sooner, we would have had accident trouble! God is amazing! We learned that another storm dropped snow along the Southern route. God preserved us from going that way also! God is and was in control!

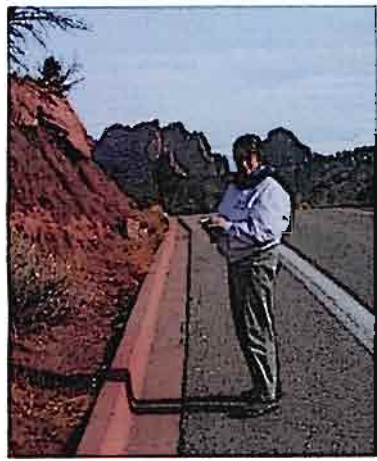


February - Face to Face in Colorado

WHERE WILL THIS LEAD?

We are scheduled to spend five days, February 6-10, in premarital counseling at the Caring for the Heart Ministry office in Colorado Springs. This will build on the workbook lessons we did together in December. Chris leaves on Saturday to drive up while Karen flies out on Sunday.

I (Karen) received the message... Chris was preparing his sons that if all went well, he would be asking me to marry him sometime before we split paths early Saturday morning. That caused both excitement and nerves. We had committed to wait until after the counseling.



But Chris, there is one issue... Yes. I have to be able to look in your eyes. What? Look at the picture of us in New Mexico. Yes. You are looking at me with loving eyes. Yes. Am I looking at you? Ye...I interrupt, NO! My eyes are closed. They are? Yes. Why? I'm not sure... the eyes are the gate to the soul...October, my reaction was What? Married? Me? November, I want to hold his hand and I like it just fine. As of yet, I have not been able to look into your eyes. February, the hurdle... will I be able to look you in the eyes? As time gets closer and we talk quite a bit, I was getting comfortable with looking at Chris' picture. I am thinking that I am caring and perhaps I will be able to look him in the eye and care for his heart. God is sooo good!

FACING THE HURDLE

We arrive at the counseling center, I am nervous. I am having a struggle getting out of the car. Bill makes us feel comfortable. He gives us an overview of how the week is going to work. He said that he wanted us to share our story... we give him a view of how we met. Then he wanted us to share our backgrounds.... who wants to go first? I look at Chris, he looks at me... Chris volunteers. Yes, thank you, Chris.

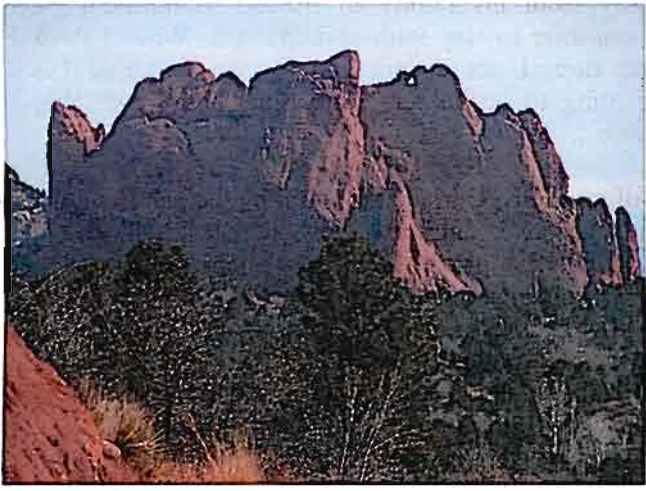
I am testing my theory and attempting to look at Chris and his eyes. Can I care about this man? He gives some background and my heart goes out to this little boy who between the ages of 2 & 3 was sent by train away from his family in Boston to northern New Hampshire to stay with grandparents. Wow. I think I can care. I am encouraged by the fact that I am seeming to be able to look him in the eye. Yes, I think....

Bill says, OK, Chris, take Karen by the hands and look into her eyes and ask how her heart is doing... PANIC!!!! I grasp his hand with my left, my right blocks his view of my eyes.... NOOOOO! Don't do it! Don't ask me that! Chris tries to obediently ask... I interrupt, Noooo! Don't do it! I look at Bill. Wait, we are talking about Chris, it's not my turn... Noooo! Don't do it! Not Yet! Wait till tomorrow! I'm not ready... oh look, time's up! We've run out of time! Neither are daunted. No! Don't ask me that question, for then I will have to answer. I'm sorry, Chris. I can't. I don't think it's you... WOW! It's a trust issue... wow! I suspected... I was ok, caring about Chris, but allowing him in to care about me? Wow. Quite the reaction. Wow.

It was a very good week. We talked in many directions. We laughed, we cried. Bill at one point connected my teenage desire for death / suicide with the spirit of anger and hatred. Although I believe that God settled the issue of taking my own life in my heart, the issues of anger, hatred, and even despair had not been dealt with and often came to surface throughout my life at times of frustration or disappointment.



Bill prayed in regards to evil forces that may have attached themselves to me as a result. Interesting thought, considering the type of dream that I have periodically that focus on the enemy and his assault of me... never really touching me, but scaring me cold... interesting. It was difficult and very freeing to pray through those issues. God is sooo good! It was good to share that time with Chris. I pray that it gives us both insight as we enter a relationship together.



UNDERSTANDING GROWS

It was very nice to sightsee and share meals. Linda, our hostess, was very kind to spend time with us and share herself with us. Her home was very comfortable and we were able to use the basement apartment to eat together, study, or just spend time together. It was nice to sit in front of the fireplace and hold hands or sit with his arm around me, or mine around him and talk, laugh, or pray. I liked looking into his eyes, I liked caring for Chris.

It was Thursday evening. We sat hand in hand enjoying the fireplace... I could sit here a long time. Chris says, so, do you think you are ready to make a commitment? My eyes open, I sit straight up... uuuuh... well, I do believe that God has been in this from the very beginning.... my mind is running... I begin to laugh. I cannot believe that I just did that! I shake my head. Chris is not sure what to make of it...

I can't believe that I just did that! The ladies in Thailand said I was going to do that and I DID!!! I'm laughing as I speak about how they said they were going to make signs to hold up at the wedding...Y...E...S... they said, you never say yes or no, you say, "maybe", or "perhaps", or some

explanation... so in the service when the pastor asks, will you take this man... they are going to hold up the signs. Where are they? I cannot believe that I just did that!

We laugh. Chris says, shall I wait until the end of February? NOOOO! Tomorrow! Wait until tomorrow! Wow. Another "quite the reaction!" Chris is willing to wait until tomorrow. Good grief! What is that about? I perceive that Chris' heart is wide open. I have a trust issue... wow. Will I ever be able to let Chris in? or anyone?

GOD SPEAKS

I go to bed and sleep some, I am awake by 3am. My mind is going. I must talk to Bill. Does he keep mentioning friendship because he doesn't see marriage working? Is the problem insurmountable? Will anyone ever be able to break through and at what cost? I awake with tears... people will be disappointed.. that thought passes through, but doesn't hold much weight...that is not a reason to get married...

Chris. I do not want to hurt him... he will be disappointed... what am I going to do? I had prayed that if this was not good, that both of us would know it, so that neither of us was hurting the other. I am struggling. I meet Chris for breakfast... do I share this with him? Do I talk to Bill alone, first? Do I talk to Chris with Bill there?... As we prepare food, Chris says that he has been struggling this morning with an issue that he has been dealing with. He thinks it wise if before we make a commitment that he spend 40 - 60 days in prayer regarding his issue and then broach the subject hoping to have overcome the issue.

Chris, I say, I cannot believe that you just said that. God is SO GOOD! He is leading even in this! I tell him my concern about his open heart and my not so much open heart. Chris says, I think I understand what Bill was saying about being best friends first. Wow. God, you did it again! We came to the same conclusion from two different angles. No one was hurt, both praising God! Thank you, Father, for answered prayer! You are sooo good! WOW!

February & March - Growing

AFTER COLORADO, DEALING WITH 2,000 MILES!

It seems like our time on the phone is greater than even before the trip to Colorado. Chris reported that Pastor Jon was disappointed and thought perhaps we were being influenced by people's negative comments. Yes, and no. Actually it has more to do with Chris needing to deal with a personal struggle and Karen needing to see if God will open her heart. Chris' heart seems open... I can care for Chris, I'm not so good about Chris caring for me. It's a trust issue. Wow, Lord.

It has been a little difficult not having Chris around. I truly think I miss his company. My schedule has not been totally busy and I find myself needing to force my focus onto other things. Pastor Jon told Chris that his fast ends April 8, if he wanted to get married on the 9th, Pastor Jon was willing, we just would need the license. Heh. I really like that guy. Chris wanted to know if I wanted to visit the Garden of the Gods on the 9th...

OK, you have to tell me when you've stopped joking and when you are serious. I am serious. OK, wait. Pastor Jon's suggestion? or something else? ... because, if that's what you're talking about, I need to pack differently. Chris says, I was thinking more about the Thursday night question... Oh, OK, well, that is your thing and whatever you want to do, I am good with it. That is totally in your hands and I need no details. As you wish. If God's Spirit prompts you, ask the question... as you wish.

CHRIS TRAVELS EAST

It is March and Chris is here! What a joy to see him. Sandy and Matt pick him up at the airport while I am at club. I am distracted, but God is good and allows the story to come from my lips. The leaders help me zoom out of there so I can make sure that Chris had made it safely. I call Chris' cell. Sandy picks up, yes, he has made it! I am so glad that Matt and Sandy have gotten to meet him.

Friday, I have planned to go to the flower show. It is supposed to rain. Chris is to stay at Plush Mills. "Are you sure the door locks between apartments?" Yes,

my friend assures me. I'd hate to have someone walk in while Chris is dressing or showering. No problem. I call Chris in the morning. Did you sleep well? No. NO?! You can hear through the gap in the door to the other apartment, so I heard all that was happening throughout the night and about 6am, a woman came walking into the apartment. What?! The door does not lock. I had on shorts and was about to put on my robe when the door opened and in she came... OH MY GOODNESS! They put a chair under the door handle and it worked out, but WOW! Welcome to Pennsylvania!

PROMPTED BY THE SPIRIT

We went out for breakfast, it was nice. When we came out of the restaurant, I mentioned the flower show. It doesn't look like it's going to rain. How about we take a hike. OK, we can go to John Hines Wildlife, perhaps we can see the eagles.



We walk around the lake, across the bridge, through the woods and sit on a bench in view of the water and eagle's nest. It's an overcast day, but it is nice to sit with my Chris, his arm around me, or mine around him. There are swans on the water and the occasional movement of a fish. It is a beautiful place.

"Will you do me the honor of becoming my wife?" My whole body tightens, my mind racing... don't make it long, don't make it long... Y - E - S... Y - E - S... There is a pause as my mind sprints. Yes. I look up at Chris. The next few moments blur in my mind. Did I just say that? Chris, you asked me to marry you! And you said, yes! Does this mean that we are engaged? Chris, you asked me to marry you! Chris smiles. We sit for a while more, hoping to see the eagles soar. We should go. Chris, you asked me to marry you! Yes, I did. WOW!

TELLING FRIENDS

What shall we do for dinner? Do you know any place that has good fish? Hummmm. I call Kathy Orr. What are you and Bill doing for dinner? Chris would like fish and I know you took me to a place that had good fish. We drive to Cape May, New Jersey and have dinner at the Lobster House. Chris calls Arizona and speaks with a friend who grew up in New Jersey. Come to find out that we had dinner across the street from where she grew up. Chris, you asked me to marry you! Yes I did, and you said yes.

Who can I call? Michelle. No, Megan first. Answering machine. Megan, you have 30 seconds to call me back so you can be the first to hear the news. We wait. Nothing. I call Michelle. The question has been asked and answered. I am engaged! Megan calls. Am I the first? No, I just called your mom. Megan is excited. The news begins to spread. We sit in the car after returning from New Jersey. Chris says, are you waiting for a kiss? I look at him and his lips gently touch mine. Wow. I have never kissed a man before. That was sweet and gentle. It caused me to want to hug him. WOW!

It is Saturday. I call Sherriane. The question has been asked and answered. She screams. She is on her

way to school to proctor the SAT's. She is excited. I call Mary, we are to go there for lunch. I thought a heads up would be good. Congratulations! We meet her and David and go for a walk and lunch. It is a good thing as the men get to talk and Mary and I also. God IS good.

We head out to Chambersburg and do ministry together. I have the opportunity to teach the story of the Good Samaritan at several locations. It would appear to me that I am submissive to Chris. I don't really argue with him, I do not see any need or the sense in it. The decisions that are being made don't bother me. Interesting! I am reminded of Diane

speaking to my friend, Susan, "If you or I were to suggest the same thing, Karen would have given us an argument, but Chris says it and Karen says, ok." Heh. Funny.



March & April - Planning

A SHOPPING TRIP

Mary and I are on the way to look for a wedding gown, it is Thursday. Mary knows thrift stores and often they have bridal gowns so we will go and see. Let's go to David's Bridal first. Ok. We enter the store. I shake my head.

Oh my goodness. This is not a shop I would have ever enjoyed being in, let alone shopping in. The girl sits me at the desk and says you have to register. My eyes survey the store. Prom / party dresses, bridesmaids, dressing rooms, bridal gowns. Oh wait, there is a young lady trying on a gown. My head leans on my hand, blocking my view. What am I doing here?

This is not a store that I would have EVER enjoyed looking through at any point in my life... Mary pats me on the back, it will be ok. You will be ok... it's

alright. I can't even imagine. Signed in. OK, you can go looking. There are 100's of wedding gowns! Go looking? Rows and rows of white and ivory... I do not want to touch any of them.

My consultant helps. How about something like this? She pulls out a dress with sheer type fabric with faint flowers printed on it.. aaah, no. Here let me give you something to shoot for. A line of flower girl dresses hangs beside me. Plain white...Mary says ivory is better for my complexion... ok, ivory... plain, not a lot of fluff, simple is better, maybe some lace, maybe some bead work... simple, maybe eloquent. Most are strapless. Oh my. Cost is also important.

We head to the dressing room. There is a young man seated waiting for a girl who is trying on a gown. They bring the undergarments and gown. Mary helps

me. We get it on. Ok, come out so we can see it. No. What? Is that young man still sitting out there? Yes. Then I'm staying here. You tell me if it looks ok. Ok, wait. The young man and his girlfriend finish and leave.

I nervously emerge... this shortened, this tightened... it looks ok... \$350? We want to see if the thrift stores contain any good deals. Can you hold this? Yes, for 24 hours. Ok. If you need longer, 24 more hours if you call. We leave. We check out some thrift stores. Dresses, yes... none that right fit.

I remember my mom's dress. I try it on... no. I call Michelle, what size were you when you got married? Hummmmm. Can you come and bring your dress so I can try it? Yes, Michelle is excited. That would be cool. Michelle arrives. We try the dress. Too small! Oh well.

I call David's Bridal. Can you hold the dress so my sister can see it? No? Ok then. Michelle and I travel to a closer David's Bridal. They have the same dress... \$350 on sale, a size better. Our consultant this time is very kind and helpful. She finds a second dress on sale for \$200, the right color, needs adjustment, but the price is much better. WOW, Lord!

Mary arrives... two strangers also shopping stop and say how pretty the dress is. Wow, really? Am I really buying a wedding gown?! Michelle says, I'm paying for the gown. Michelle! That's too much. Karen, if your mom was here she would be buying it for you, so I'm getting it for you. Wow, Lord, this is huge. Thank you! (No pictures allowed! Chris may not view the dress until the wedding!!!)

April in Arizona

AN ARIZONA VISIT

I arrive in Arizona; it is Tuesday. Al and Terri pick me up at the airport; Mara comes and meets us at their home. I share the story with them. "Who would have ever thought?!" We laugh a lot. Chris comes. Wow, it is good to see him. We sit and talk a while more.

THE MYSTERIOUS DRESS

We drive to Amy's, drop off some things and take the mysterious suitcase to Ursi's home. Ursi is willing to do the adjustments needed to make the garment fit correctly. Praise the Lord! We laugh and laugh... who would have ever thought! Mara and Amy take pictures and send them to their daughters and to Bev who immediately calls us... it's BEAUTIFUL! It is a pretty dress.

AN ENGAGEMENT GIFT

Mara takes me to church, where Pastor Jon and Chris wait in the parking lot. Chris says, "Close your eyes." He is standing behind me. Dangerous. My muscles tighten as he puts something over my head. I lean forward. It is a beautiful necklace... two tone gold heart with a pearl and diamond. Chris, it's beautiful! It's your birthstone, will you wear it? It is from you, YES, I will wear it! You didn't want a ring so I thought I would take a chance. Chris, it is beautiful.

Mara says, I am so glad that I was here for this. Pastor Jon smiles.

MEETING CHRIS' FAMILY

We say goodbye and Chris and I head to his son Kip's home. Kip is working, but I get to meet Michelle, Chris' daughter in law, Natalie, Cade and then Megan, his grandchildren. Steve is next, Chris' son number 2. They are in from Washington state and are staying at Uncle Kip's house; he has a pool. Kip arrives later. This is a nice family. I am not sure how I will fit in... we shall see.

Wednesday is Awana. Chris takes me to Kip's house where he has set up for Michelle and Steve and the kids to see the sketch go from blank sheet to pre-sketch to finished product at the end of Awana. Natalie tells me of her interest in painting so I let her fill in some of the areas. I share a couple of the magic tricks and laugh as I see their faces. God is good. I am more in my element than the night before.



Awana begins. I am to share with the Cubbies (3 & 4 yr. olds) first. (Pre-schoolers!) Praise God! He allowed the ideas and energy to flow which held their attention. The Spirit prompted me to do motions and reaffirm their verse for the night. Fun.

The Sparkies arrive with the older clubs. We do some motions for the song, they begin to catch on... then the story. I am loving it when God's Spirit grabs ahold. Chris' family also observes. I cannot focus there, I force my focus on the children. God is good!

A WEDDING SHOWER

Thursday, the ladies at Chandler Bible have planned a shower. Mara, Amy, Bev and Terri have all come to join the fun. I had been sent questions on e-mail ahead of time... my favorite color, where I was born...etc. I guess at a couple of answers. Jen has made multiple choice questions... who can get the most answers right? As they give their answers, they look to me for the correct answer. I forgot what I wrote! They laugh because even I would not have gotten them all right! Ha Ha Ha! That was really funny!

They make me tell the story of Chris and I. Michelle, Megan and Natalie are all there. I am not sure how I will be received. Kay (Nana) was and is a very special person. I too liked her. If I had lived in Arizona, I know we would have been friends. She taught 2nd grade. This is her family and here I am about to marry their grandfather (Papa) If I focus there, I will be a mess. God helps me tell the story... it IS funny. Michelle prompts me on a couple of funny details. The ladies laugh and laugh.

Mara and Bev are so funny. They too had the ladies in stitches. Krista has her 4 year old, Ella, with her. Ella gives me a big hug. She is adorable. Ella helps me unwrap



the gifts... whenever an unmentionable appears, I just say, Ella, show the ladies, and she does. I love 4 year olds! I unwrap a package of

nightwear. It is pretty. The ladies make me model it. Oh my. A few items later, I open another nightwear item. It is the exact same outfit. Bev says what are the chances that there would be 3? I open another package....the exact same one. The ladies howled! Oh my goodness! Natalie thought Papa should wear one! We could be a match set. One of the ladies offered to make boxers out of one of them. Funny. Heh.

At the end of the shower, Jan, the pastors wife said, that was the funniest wedding shower I have ever been to. I think that is a true statement. It was really funny! I am also humbled once again at the generosity of God's people. They only know me a little. Wow. Thank you! Michelle approaches me at the end, Karen, will you let the girls and me take a picture with you? Yes, I would love that! We stand side by side, I put my arms around them. Snap. Father, thank you. Michelle hugs me goodbye and says gently, "welcome to the family." Wow. That is huge. Thank you, Michelle. Thank you, Father. Wow



MORE SHOWERS

The week of April 29th begins another round of wedding showers from Karen's friends in Pennsylvania. That afternoon her home church, Folcroft Union, will host a shower with family and friends in attendance. On Monday, friends at Christ the Savior church, who Karen went to Thailand with, will be hosting a surprise shower being scheduled as a follow-up meeting to evaluate their trip. Finally, on May 3rd, the Open Air Campaigners will host a shower during their 2012 conference.

A Supplement

HE CAN'T KEEP QUIET!

Karen has told Our Story in a most delightful and energetic manner and I am reluctant to add anything. However, as I have now read this several times as I laid it out and edited it, I feel that God's hand has been involved in this from before August 2011 and would like to share this perspective.

In the spring of 2009, Karen came to Arizona to help care for a dear friend and college chum who was seriously ill. While here, she called some churches to offer to share her ministry skills with their children's programs. My church, Chandler Bible Church, accepted her offer and as the Awana Commander I was the one who benefitted from this. It was at this time that my wife, Kay, and I first met Karen and enjoyed her energy and commitment to sharing God's Word and the Gospel with children.

It was also in the spring of 2009 that Kay was diagnosed with a tumor in her liver that was cancer. We then began a 2 year battle with this disease that we lost on March 1, 2011. Kay and I had been married for more than 49 years and had two sons, Kip and Steve. Steve is married to Michelle and they have three wonderful children. You have met my family already in Our Story. Some of you have also met them at church.

In the last of 2009, one of Chandler Bible Church's missionaries left his work and consequently we had funds available to either support a new missionary or to give more to our other missionaries. It was decided that we should add a new person. We contacted four missionaries and asked them to make an application for support. They all applied and so we began the process of evaluating their applications and our mission guidelines to see which one would be the best fit. There were two that met our needs the best and so the committee voted to determine which one we would support. I was the only one to vote for the other person, but the rest of the committee voted for Miss Karen. I now see clearly that God controls the vote also.

At our annual meeting in January 2010, the congregation accepted our recommendation to add Miss Karen and we began our support of her ministry. That fall, Karen decided that she would spend some

time in Arizona connecting with our church as well as ministering in other places while she was here. This was Karen's version of a home furlough that our overseas missionaries use to connect with their sponsoring churches. Again, I benefitted as Karen taught our Awana Council time each week while she was here. In Our Story, Karen refers to her connection with Kay during this time.

Thus, when Our Story begins in August 2011, I am widowed and have been praying that God would bring a strong Christian woman into my life. I understood that when God says in Genesis 2:18, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make (bring) him a helper fit for him." that this certainly applied to me. It is also interesting that Kay had taught elementary school for 20 years and I had worked with children and youth in Scouting and at church for 47 years. God has not only brought a beautiful and wonderful Christian woman into my life, but one who loves ministering to children.

Another interesting fact is that Kay's maiden name was Kay Elaine Borchers. Now God brings Karen Elizabeth Boorse into my life. I also find that both of these women were/are committed to spending the first part of every day in a quiet time with God as they pray, read and meditated on the Word and listened to God's voice. They both kept journals during this time as well. God is indeed an awesome and caring Father and has blessed me richly.

THE WEDDING

When I asked Karen to be my wife and we began talking about a wedding, Karen informed me that she had always told her mother that if and when this happened she planned to elope. There just wasn't going to be a formal ceremony! But, she also said she wanted to wear a wedding dress and have one of our pastors (or both) officiate at the wedding.



May - August

PLANNING THE EVENTS

When I asked Karen to be my wife and we began talking about a wedding, Karen informed me that she had always told her mother that if and when this happened she planned to elope. There just wasn't going to be a formal ceremony! But, she also said she wanted to wear a wedding dress and have one of our pastors (or both) officiate at the wedding.

So, after consideration of our schedules, we decided to get married in Arizona and that we would hold the ceremony on the Dolly Steamboat on Canyon Lake. We will sail at 2 pm on Friday, May 11th with a return to the dock at 3:30 pm. It will be held on a Friday afternoon because we must be back in Pennsylvania a week later for Karen to make a presentation. This was not an easy decision because most of Karen's friends in Pennsylvania would be unable to attend and, because of limited seating, Chris would be limited in the number of people he could invite.

However, because we wanted to celebrate with as many friends as possible, there will be two open house celebrations. The first will be on Friday, May 11th, at Chandler Bible Church from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. There will be cake and punch and hopefully a lot of fellowship. The second will be on Sunday, May 20th, at Folcroft Union Church in Folcroft, PA from 2 to 6 pm.

THE SUMMER

We will leave Arizona the morning of May 12th and make our first stop in Albuquerque to visit Chris' sister and husband and go to church the next morning at the church we helped in November 2011. After lunch we will drive to Colorado Springs to visit friends there. We then plan to be in Cincinnati on Wednesday morning and tour the Creation Science museum in Petersburg, Kentucky that day. Our arrival at Karen's home will either be on Thursday or before noon on Friday to prepare for her Saturday presentation.

On the 21st we will leave for Hilton Head, South Carolina for a 3-night stay at a resort hotel with a quick return to Folcroft to attend a wedding on the next Sunday. The rest of this week will be spent visiting and sightseeing between Pennsylvania and Virginia. On June 4th we will go to a friend's cabin in the Pocono's for ten days of recreation in this beautiful setting. The following week begins two months of sharing God's Word at camps and vacation Bible schools in Pennsylvania and possibly Maryland. Sometime after the middle of August we will finish packing up Karen's home and head west for Arizona where we plan to spend the majority of the 2012-2013 school year.

Scriptural Foundation

Our vows and our desire to love, submit and serve each other are based on the following scriptures.

EPHESIANS 5: 21-29, 33

"...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

TITUS 2:4-5

"...and so train the young women to love (*phileo*) their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."

1 PETER 3:1-2, 4, 7-8

"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives—when they see your respectful and pure conduct."

"but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious."

"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind."

November-December, Pre-Marital

ARRANGEMENTS MADE

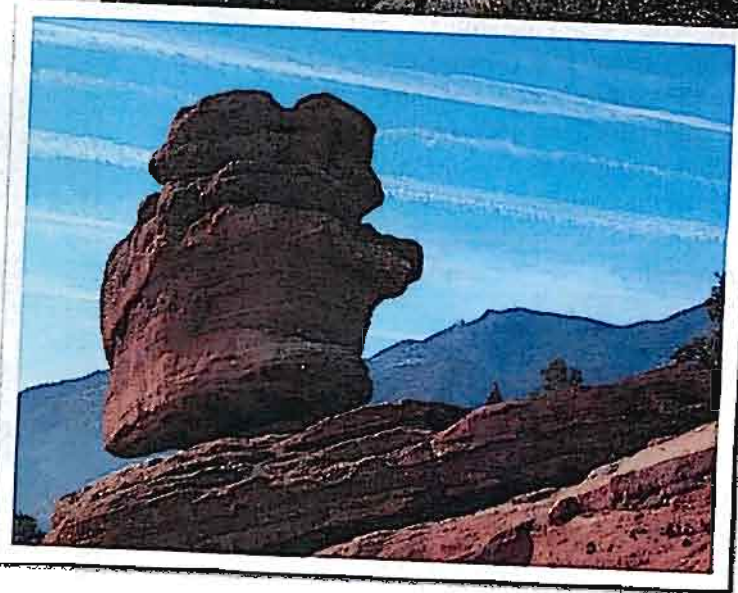
It is Wednesday when I arrive home. I meet Irene and Elaine for lunch. I get home and call Mary... no answer, I leave a message. Mail, paperwork... I am to teach Awana at 7 pm. Mary calls me around 4:30 pm.

OK, tell me about the pre-marital course! I am not seeing God close this door. So, the course would help us determine if there was anything that would keep this from working, right?! Yes. You need to call Colorado right now, the counselor that we think would be good is there, so call Colorado now.... But I should call Chris first, right? Call Colorado, they are still open, 2 hours different... But I should call Chris first, right? YES! And then call Colorado! OK.

I hang up and call Chris... no answer. Great! Now what do I do? I know, I'll call Colorado, order the materials and if Chris does not want to, for whatever reason, I can give them to Mary, she and David will use them in their counseling. OK, I call Colorado. While trying to explain the situation to Cindy, Chris calls.

Hi Chris, I'm talking to Colorado and I am ordering the materials.. I begin to say, do you want me to order for you too.... I stopped with, do you... and thought, what if he doesn't want to... Chris, can I call you right back? I ordered the materials and called Chris. This is what I did, Mary said you needed your own set, do you want to do this? Do you want me to call? Do you want to call? OK, here's the number and if you want to pick a week in February... go ahead.

10 minutes later, he calls me back. "It's all set." PANIC. "What's all set?!" I ordered the materials and we are scheduled to see Bill Walter, February 6 - 10. REALITY CHECK!!!! It takes my breath away! OK, ok. A real step, not just talk, REALLY?! Ok.



THE PROCESS BEGINS

We are beginning to work through some of the lessons... We spoke on the phone for 2 hours and 20 minutes! Unheard of! Time flew by... 2 hours?! What's going on?! I called my brother-in-law who owns the cell phone... tell me about time allotment... what is the limit? I was a bit concerned... unlimited. RELIEF! Praise the Lord! 2 hours?! Today, I drop everything for an unscheduled time... another 2 hours and 12 minutes! Really?! Didn't seem that long. Is it just me? This is totally out of character for me! Whoa!

SHARING OUR STORY

I have not told everyone about this new relationship... new experience... new moving of God in my life, but I must say that I thoroughly enjoy the reaction of people I have told. One friend says, "your life!" And she shakes her head. I KNOW! It makes you furrow your brow and say, What just happened here?! Another friend, as I said, "You are not going to believe this," responded with, "You are getting married."

Married and me fit into the "not going to believe this" phrase. Married and me don't fit in the same sentence... at least to this point. Another friend sat wide-eyed with her mouth open... it was really funny. The whole thing is so out of character, it makes you laugh... and this story has brought joy and imagination to many hearts.

I have a friend whose life is really difficult right now. My friend, Mary, had me stop and pick up flowers to deliver. My friend cried when I delivered them, I felt her pain. I want to protect her and her children. I thought, maybe a diversion. I told her my story. We laughed and laughed and so did the kids. This story is so out of character and so amazing and so... GOD - out of the box, out of the ordinary... (we do have a God of the Impossible!) ...see His hand right in the middle of it, that it brings JOY. *God, you are so good!*

A SWITCH IS TOGGLED

I have trouble saying, "I love you." I do not use those words lightly... I am trying to consider why... I think when I say that it means I am placing you a bar above all the rest... not just like the rest...

Just a few days ago I recognized a switch in my thinking. When I first considered this issue, I thought, ok, get married, live in Arizona, Pastor Jon and Jan... then Pastor Jon mentioned a possible switch in ministry... travel, seminar speaker... I thought, OH NO! Just Chris and I...?! What?! I have recognized a switch in my thinking... As Chris and I spoke of various things in the course and should we be married, it was about him and I, not who else may or may not be around and it did not cause that same sense of panic. *Thank you, God!* A switch has been thrown. Interesting.

DECEMBER ENDS!

THE STORY PAUSES!

Well that is the end of the story as I now know it, but I am sure that is not the end of the saga! Heh. Thank you, Chris! I am sure that you had no idea... neither did I. I will be excited to see what God has in store... interesting. My nephew, Sean, motioned to the script and replied, "that is the book". He then pointed at me and said, "that is the movie." Heh. Mary wanted to know today if I ever thought about writing a book. Funny. God is good. Enjoy!

Karen spends two and a half weeks in Thailand during January with a small team. They lead two women's conferences with about 400 women from the Karen people at each conference.

