

## Reflections

by Alta Nye Oxendine

### MY THREE CHILDREN

Whenever I meet someone new, and they ask me how many children I have, instead of answering "ONE" I say, "I only have one child left. But I had three." Twice, in columns by each of the twin sisters and advice columnists, "Ann Landers" and "Dear Abby," I've read about this subject. The question seems to be: "Should we still count those who used to be with us, but are no longer here?"

Of course it's up to the individual parent. But I don't see how you could spend time and effort loving and mothering a child, and then just forget that he/she was once a vital part of your family. In fact, I met a mother in Montana who still had two children but whose three-year-old little boy had died. She had also had a baby who did not make it through the process of childbirth. How many children did she have? All these children, including the two who had left at an early age, were still a part of her family, the way she felt about it.

Now, I don't believe in allowing the family members we have "lost" (through death, drug addiction, or in some other way) to keep us stuck in a state of despair, unable to get on with our lives. In fact, one of the best things I was told in 1980 (after the accident that took the lives of our three as well as Junior Locklear) was that Leon would want me to go on living. I thought a moment, realized that was true, and decided to do just that. Unfortunately, not everyone receives this kind of pragmatic advice. This is one of so very MANY ways I was blessed back then, and have been blessed during the intervening 21 years!

### FIRST BABY

My Flag Day boy, my first baby, will always have a special place in the back of my mind. Even though I do not feel the need to keep constantly focused on him, his baby brother, or his daddy, I often think of them when I attend "our" church, First Methodist. But when I go the Branch Street, I am with my current, living-in-this-world, family of three, including their sister who has continued to be a part of both my past and present families.

Since I usually think of Donny as just having turned 20 (and have dreamed of him as a young boy) I have a hard time realizing that he would be turning 41 this week if he had stayed with us here in this world.

The night before the funeral, when I suddenly decided I just could NOT give up my first baby (mush as I had felt about my last baby, "Gordon, two years before) I'm so thankful that God reminded me that our children really belong to Him, and do not come to us with a guarantee of a certain number of years on this earth. THAT'S when I began feeling thankful for all those years I was permitted to have with the child who began amazing us by his unique, precocious ways when he was just a few weeks old. I will always have a lot of regrets that we did not do a better job of parenting him. But (with help from God, family and friends, as well as counselors) as time goes on, the good memories have tended to come to the forefront so that I can feel free to go on living a positive life.

### GOD BLESS YOU!

I realize many readers are sick and tired of reading the same thing over and over, for 21 years. But, for those who are going through some stage of grief, I want to share the Good News that we CAN get through the pain and depression and live a normal life again. GOD BLESS each of you who are going through such a struggle!!

## Pediatric Pointers

by Dr. Joey Bell, Pembroke Pediatrics

### HAND WASHING - AN IMPORTANT STEP IN PREVENTING SALMONELLA INFECTION

*Salmonella* belongs to a class of microorganisms that are called bacteria. These tiny organisms can cause major problems in individuals with a weak immune system such as the young, the elderly and those with an underlying disease. It is most common among those younger than five and older than seventy. Symptoms of *Salmonella* infection include diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramping.

The principal carriers of *Salmonella* are animals. These include poultry, livestock, reptiles, and pets. The most common mode of transmission is the consumption of contaminated foods of animal origin. These include chicken, red meat, eggs and unpasteurized milk. Other modes of transmission include drinking contaminated water, contact with infected animals (reptiles, i.e. turtles), contact by the fecal-oral route, and contact with contaminated medications, dyes, and medical instruments. Ingestion of raw or improperly cooked eggs or milk can produce severe disease.

Once an individual becomes infected, the risk of passing it on to another person exists throughout the duration of the diarrhea. For this reason, contact precautions should be used with *Salmonella* infected children wearing diapers. The excretion period varies among individuals. It is longer in younger children than in older children or adults.

There are ways to prevent *Salmonella* infection. Hand washing is very important. It is important when processing and preparing foods that may be contaminated with the bacteria. For example, when preparing chicken to be cooked, one should cleanse both the bands and the area where the meat was prepared using an antibacterial cleanser such as clorox. This should be done before any other objects/humans are touched. Another important tip is to cook eggs and other foods of animal origin thoroughly. Raw eggs and foods containing raw eggs should not be eaten. Other preventive measures include having sanitary water supplies and sanitary sewage disposal. Also the sale of turtles for pets should be prohibited.

by Dinah Hunt, Physician Assistant Student-East Carolina University

### A Call for Spiritual Poems From Pembroke Area Poets

A \$1000.00 grand prize is being offered in a special religious poetry contest sponsored by the New Jersey Rainbow Poets, free to anyone who has ever written a poem. There are 28 prizes in all totaling over \$2,000.00. The deadline for entering is July 9, 2001.

To enter, send one poem only of 21 lines or less: Free Poetry Contest, 103 N. Wood Ave., PMB 70, Linden, NJ 07036. Or enter on-line

www.freecontest.com.

"We think great religious poems can inspire achievement," says Frederick Young, the organization's Contest Director. "Our desire is to inspire amateur poets and we think this competition will accomplish that. North Carolina has produced many wonderful poets over the years and we'd like to discover new ones from the Pembroke area."



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### Religious Poems Sought From Pembroke-Area Poets

Good news for sincere poets! The Bards of Burbank is offering a \$1,000 grand prize in their Poetry Competition 2000, free to everyone. The deadline for entering is July 5, 2001.

To enter, send one poem 21 lines or less: Free Poetry Contest, PMB250, 2219 W Olive Ave., Burbank, CA 91506, you may enter online at www.friendlypoets.com.

"We think religious poems can invite achievement," says Dr. John Scibner, the organization's Contest Director. "We're especially keen on inspiring amateur poets and we think this competition will achieve that. North Carolina has made many wonderful poets over the years and I'd like to discover new ones from among the Pembroke-area grassroots poets."

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