



MOM *Links* MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2020

“Be the change you wish
to see in the world .”

-Mahatma Gandhi

The Power of Beauty

When you think of freedom beauty is not something that usually comes to mind. And yet, beauty is a powerfully freeing element.

While reading a book on the Russian Revolution, I came across an interesting tidbit about Lenin, who was known for his cold, cruel abusive nature. He once admitted after listening to a Sonata by Beethoven, "I can't listen to music too often. It affects your nerves; makes you want to say stupid nice things and stroke the heads of people who could create such beauty while living in this vile hell."

Contrast that with Viktor Frankl, a Jewish neurologist who spent three years in Nazi concentration camps. In his book, "Man's Search for Meaning," Dr. Frankl found those that weathered the storm of the camps could find beauty in the simplest things—memories of family, a blade of grass, a sunset. For some this was survival, for others it generated feelings of profound gratitude. Dr. Frankl witnessed the way those who held on to these things—those who had purpose in their life—seemed not only to bear their horrific burdens better than most, but also, at great personal sacrifice, helped and comforted others.

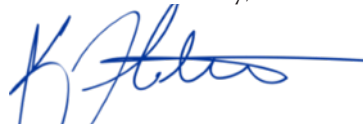
"We who lived in concentration camps," he recalled, "can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances; to choose one's own way."

Even an evil man like Lenin recognized the heart-warming influence of beautiful music. It's sad and horribly tragic that there are those who prefer coldness to warmth. But it also shows that these inspiring influences can reach even the hardest of hearts.

Martin Luther King asserted, "Music is a discipline, and a mistress of order and good manners, she makes the people milder and gentler, more moral and more reasonable.

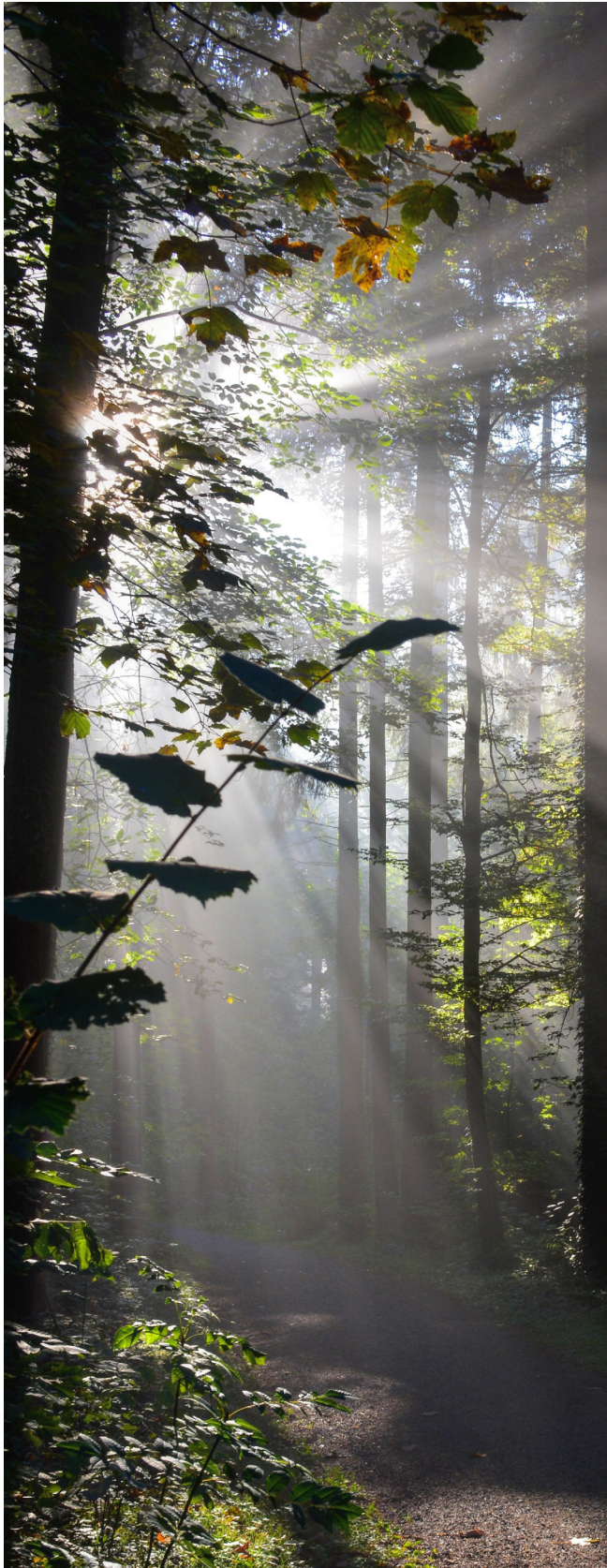
That is the goal of this month's MomLinks magazine.

In Truth & Liberty,



Kimberly Fletcher

President & Founder, Moms for America®



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Capture the Sunshine!

Being the Change

It is hard to see all the darkness flooding our world today and not become overwhelmed by it. In just five short months our entire world has turned upside down with Covid-19, riots across the country, and anything related to God being attacked, defamed, defaced. How did we get here? As I have pondered that question over the last few months, something Victor Hugo once said kept filling my mind, “Even the darkest night will end, and the sun will rise.”

As I have pondered his words, I have come to understand how this simple sentiment has the power to literally turn the world around—and it begins with us!

The time of the Judges was one of the darkest periods in Biblical history. It has been referred to as “the Dark Ages of Israel.” People lived by their own interpretation of right and wrong. The younger generation forsook their faith and history. Anarchy ensued, absolute truths of right and wrong were done away and everyone justified their own behavior. Every evil flooded the nation and it truly was the darkest of times. But then, we turn the page to the Book of Ruth, who we learn lived in the time of the Judges. What an amazing story of light during a dark time.

As I thought more about being the light, it reminded me of an experience I had a few years ago. My husband, Derek, has always wanted to see the Grand Canyon but I was never interested. After all, it is just a big crack in a desert. You look at it, leave and check it off your bucket list. I just did not see the big deal.

We passed by the Canyon many times on the way back and forth from the west to east coast to visit family. We even stayed in Arizona a couple of times with my husband’s sister. For 25 years we passed by that crack in the desert and though my husband always said he wanted to see it, we never stopped because I was not interested. Then, a few years ago my son moved to Phoenix and we decided to visit him. As we were planning our trip, my husband brought up the Grand Canyon yet again. It obviously meant a lot to him and after 25 years, I was tired of hearing about it. “Okay,” I said, “Let’s go see the crack in the desert.”

I’ve come to understand how this simple sentiment has the power to literally turn the world around—and it begins with us!

We arrived at the Grand Canyon just before sunset and my husband insisted we drive straight to the Canyon before checking into the hotel. I was a bit irritated with the delay, after the long drive. But the kids were excited about it, and Derek really wanted to go. So, I put on my happy face and decided to make the best of it. Derek sprinted past me as we got out of the car and the kids followed right behind him. “Honestly,” I thought rolling my eyes at their excitement, “it’s just a crack in the desert.”

We walked along a treed path until we came to an opening with an overlook and there as the path widened, I had my first look at the wonder of the Grand Canyon. A lump formed in my throat as I realized just how foolish and shortsighted, I had been. It was absolutely, beautiful, beyond description. I was simply awestruck. As we walked back through the path, I noticed a sign that said, "Sunrise 6:10." I reached for my husband's hand and motioned toward the sign. "I want to come back," I said. He just smiled.

The next morning, I was the one sprinting past everyone, not wanting to miss a thing. I was insistent we arrive at 6:00am so I could capture every moment. It was a bit harder navigating the path in the dark, but it was worth it. My husband and I sat arm in arm in anticipation of the first ray of sun over the horizon. My heart leaped as the dark sky flowed to pink and there before my eyes, I saw the sun, in all its splendor, rise above the majestic grandeur of the Grand Canyon. Tears filled my eyes. I was absolutely speechless. How do you describe such a breathtaking scene in words?

An immense feeling of joy and profound gratitude welled up inside me. There before me, in that moment in time, I was witness to the majesty of God's hand! I will never forget that moment. It changed me.

As I stood watching that beautiful scene no problem seemed to big, no burden too heavy. I found myself counting every blessing and I wanted to be more and do more to show gratitude for each one. Then a quote by Thomas Tapper came to my mind. There will now and again come to us a scene, a remembrance, so full of beauty and pleasure that we shall feel rich in the possession of it.

And in that moment, that is exactly how I felt.

An immense feeling of joy and profound gratitude welled up inside me. There before me, in that moment in time, I was witness to the majesty of God's hand!

Our world has changed dramatically in a short time, but for a moment, let's look back and remember what our world was like before Covid-19. There's an excellent video on YouTube titled the "The Great Realization." It depicts, in powerful imagery, the change that swept across the world in 2020. The change was the realization that we had become too busy, too disconnected, too self-absorbed; then posing the question, when the doors open, do we want to go back to the same?

We are surrounded by beauty. The majesty of God's hand is all around us. For 25 years I ignored it, dismissed it as unimportant. For 25 years I missed being in the presence of ultimate beauty, denied by my own short sightedness, the feeling of a peace I cannot explain. That day at the Grand Canyon changed me. It made me realize the importance of beauty and light in our lives. It helped me understand that no matter how dark things become, I can be the light where I am. I can be the change I want to see in the world. It begins with me.

We are bombarded daily by the impact of media and culture on our lives. Advanced technology has rendered us incapable of escaping it. We can seek retreat in our churches, homes, or private schools, but the world is always there,

influencing our children and intruding upon our lives. Escaping the world is not the answer. We can't escape from the world, nor does God want us to, but we can learn how to successfully navigate through it and lift others along the way.

So, what do we do? How can we be the light in the darkness? How can we create the change?

First, we need to start with us. We can decide to give into the darkness posting nasty comments or derogatory statements on social media just like everyone else, OR we can use it as a medium to promote the good, true, and beautiful. We can choose to be angry and resentful, OR we can choose to be kind. We can become argumentative when people attack us, OR we can choose to be silent and pray for them. We can be the frown, or we can be the smile, the choke hold, or a warm hug. It may not happen right away, but over time of with consistent love, even the angriest people will be drawn to the light.

Second, we need to create havens of love and light in our homes—places where our children, friends and neighbors will feel peace and want to gather.

The environment we create in our homes is the very thing that has the power to change the

world—in one generation. The books we read, music we play, the pictures on our walls, are the very things that create that environment. When our children see beauty, they will gravitate to it. When they see pictures of Jesus with children, they will come to know Him and know that He loves them. When they hear patriotic music, they will become patriots. When they see artwork depicting courage, grace, love, and beauty, they will want to emulate it. We are creating the future of America right now, in our homes, today. If we do not like what we see in the world, it is we who have the power to change it!

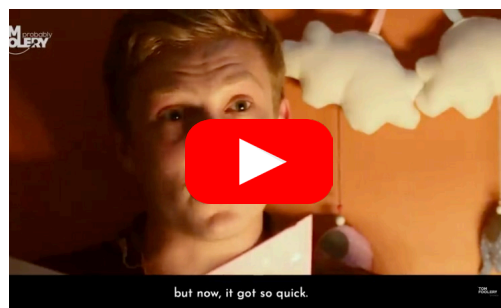
So, what do we do? How can we be the light in the darkness? How can we create the change?

In these dark times, knowing they would be dark times, God has raised up a mighty generation of mothers to be the light where we are and create the change HE wants to see in the world. He is counting on us.

In the time of the Judges there was Ruth. Today, there is you!

Tom Foolery: The Great Realization

This beautiful poem, told in the form of a bedtime story, dreams of the blessings that can come through the challenges we face today. Hindsight is 2020, and if we focus our eyes on what could be we will look back on this year with gratitude and hope.





In case you didnt know...

You can change the world from your living room!

If you knew there was a program that would have a profound influence on your life, preserve America's history and heritage, promote the principles of liberty and build a foundation of freedom in your family and community, simply by inviting friends in your home, would you do it? The Cottage Meeting Project does just that.

The Cottage Meeting is our signature program, teaching women about our nation's foundation of liberty. Each of our foundational presentations lays the groundwork for understanding the principles that made our country great.

This summer, we are taking these Cottage Meetings to your living room couch with an all new VIRTUAL Cottage Meeting! You will get an up close look at the material and see a Cottage Meeting in action as our team walks through each of the presentations over the next few months.

**VIRTUAL Cottage Meetings will be held EVERY Wednesday*
for 12 weeks June 3 - August 19 at 10:00 AM Eastern
(*No Cottage Meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 22)
[Register here](#) to join us for the next presentation**



The Lens of Hope

By Cherie Cawley

2020. I remember thinking about the year 2020 in college. My school even published a lengthy set of goals called Vision 2020 and you would see the logo posted all over campus reminding students of the grand vision set before our University. It seemed like such a distant, futuristic year to my 18 year old self - like one of those numbers where you think either Jesus will surely come back by then or we'll all be flying our own cars like the Jetsons. Even at the end of 2019, I remember thinking, as I'm sure many people did, there must be something glamorous or significant about this year, 2020 - people have practically been talking about it my whole adult life. I dare say it has been significant, just not exactly what we all planned and initially hoped for.

Fast forward to January and the glamour of the New Year 2020 and adulthood I dreamt of at 18 wore off as quickly as the gold on a diamond ring from the gumball machine.

I can easily say at several moments since January I have had to pull out of feeling desolate, not because I didn't pray or believe or try to stay connected to people but because one thing after another kept popping up and backhanding me just when I thought I was starting fresh. The pandemic shut down didn't necessarily throw me off, it was that piling on top of things I had already been facing and I know I'm not alone out there.

As moms, we are often pulled in too many directions to count and we have the false expectation of our human selves to be superhuman - remain calm at all costs, be the best mom, go the farthest and strive the hardest. Then, a crazy pandemic hits, a fluctuating economy comes barreling in, many moms were suddenly given the new title of teacher, jobs were put on hold or working from home on a screen all day became normal while your kids are making noise in the background and then they say we can't even get out of our house! Shopping for sanity - gone. Playground dates - gone. Friend dates so your kids can be distracted for 2 seconds - gone. The expectations list just grew: sanitize, don't get COVID-19, homeschool, clean up, breathe, do my job from home and wake up and do it all over again. Or even worse - I lost my job during the pandemic and I don't know how we will make ends meet, I have to figure out how to do online school with my kids, still buy groceries and the stimulus package will only cover my expenses for a month, maybe two. Can someone please cut me a big slice of hope and clarity?!

This year has been hard for many reasons in all ages and walks of life, but amidst my own struggles this year a phrase from one of my favorite authors and speakers keeps coming to mind. It is definitely a God thought! Graham Cooke, says, "We become what we behold." His context focuses on the nature of God's character. The more we behold the goodness of God, the more we become more like Him - generous, kind, sacrificial and extravagantly

hopeful. So how do we behold or focus on the goodness of God when we don't "feel" it or we don't "see" it? In my personal experience sometimes I have to go to war with my mind and emotions and say, "You don't get to win today." In that place of getting to tell myself what to do, I often begin beholding God's character by going through a long list of testimonies of His faithfulness in my walk with Him. I find it amazing to remember how I felt when God answered that prayer or saw me through things I never thought would change. He is truly kind and faithful to His children. It is so easy to look around and find what is wrong, but when I tell my heart to remember His faithfulness and the miraculous, my attitude shifts and my heart knows that my hope and joy is something more concrete than the next exciting circumstance. His hope and joy are the foundations of His character I get to marvel in everyday. It's just up to me to stand and decide what lens I really want to see through.

When I'm looking to change my lens, this go-to Psalm is an easy place to start. I encourage you to read it aloud and watch your attitude begin to shift into a place you can behold His goodness.

Psalm 100 - The Passion Translation

"Lift up a great shout of joy to the Lord! Go ahead and do it - everyone, everywhere! As you serve Him, be glad and worship him. Sing your way into His presence with joy! And realize what this really means - we have the privilege of worshiping the Lord our God. For He is our Creator and we belong to Him. We are the people of His pleasure. You can pass through His open gates with the password of praise. Come right into His presence with thanksgiving. Come bring your thank offering to Him and affectionately bless His beautiful name! For the Lord is always good and ready to receive you. He's so loving that it will amaze you - so kind that it will astound you! And he is famous for His faithfulness toward all. Everyone knows our God can be trusted, for He keeps his promises to every generation!"



The Friendship Train

A Bright Light in America's History

“You’ve probably never heard of it. Most people haven’t.”

That’s how Dorothy Scheele, curator of [the Friendship Train website](#), introduces one of the most amazing yet mostly forgotten stories from American history. It was Dorothy and another American, [Earl Bennet Sr.](#) (now passed on) who dedicated their lives to preserving this beautiful story.

I found out about it through Turner Classic Movies old [newsreels](#). I was so moved by the story I immediately went to my computer and began googling everything I could find on the Friendship Train. What I found were the websites of two incredible Americans who spent years collecting stories, photos, and news footage so the Friendship Train would not be forgotten.

The year was 1947. The people of the world were still recovering from the ravages of World War II. Europe was hit especially hard. Drew Pearson, a popular American journalist, while touring post-war Europe, noticed the Communists were being lauded for delivering a few carloads of grain and it deeply troubled

him. He knew America could do better. On Oct. 11, 1947, Drew Pearson opened his famous radio show with his vision of the “Friendship Train” a cross-country collection of food from the people of America to the people of Europe. This project would be much different than the proposed Marshall Plan which was government imposed and government regulated. While the Marshall Plan was government-to-government, the Friendship Train would be people-to-people.

Pearson sent out the call asking Americans to donate food from their homes, kitchens, gardens, and fields and the American people responded beyond all expectations. Immediately communities formed plans to collect food coordinating efforts to meet up with the Friendship Train along the published route. On Nov. 7, 1947, five weeks after Pearson’s announcement, the Friendship Train began its incredible journey across America, beginning in Los Angeles with a spectacular Hollywood send-off. All along the route ordinary Americans brought bags of flour from their homes, vegetables from their gardens and canned goods from their storehouses. It was an amazing site.



Eleven days after leaving Los Angeles the Friendship Train arrived in New York City to great fanfare. Drew Pearson, who was there to greet the train, never could have imagined what he saw. The goodwill and compassion of ordinary American citizens far exceeded his expectations. The 80 boxcars he had hoped to fill grew to 270 boxcars filled with merchandise worth \$40 million.

Every package on the train was labeled with the same message:

“All races and creeds make up the vast melting pot of America, and in a democratic and Christian spirit of good will toward men, we, the American people, have worked together to bring this food to your doorsteps, hoping that it will tide you over until your own fields are again rich and abundant with crops.”

No money was ever spent for the project: the food, trains, ships—everything was donated for the cause, even the unions participated. When this demonstration of brotherly kindness arrived in Europe on December 18, the people were overcome with gratitude.

The French people were so moved they organized a gratitude project—the “[Merci’ Train](#).” Forty-nine boxcars were filled—one for each of the 48 states, the 49th shared between Washington, D.C., and the territory of Hawaii. The people of France had very little after the war, so they gave what they had—precious pieces of their lives. Despite their dire circumstances, over 6 million families contributed some 52,000 gifts which included things like children’s drawings, hand crocheted doilies, and 50 rare paintings. Also included were a jeweled Legion d’Honneur once presented to Napoleon, a Louis XV carriage and the bugle which signaled the Armistice signing.

By 1948 the boxcars were filled to capacity and loaded onto the ship Magellan. When the ship

sailed from France, 9,000 gifts had to be left on the docks because there was not enough room for them. When the ship arrived in New York, it was greeted by waves of Air Force planes, and a parade of boats, with the Magellan boldly displaying the message, “Merci, America!”



In the next several weeks, each state held parades and ceremonies as they welcomed their designated boxcar. Many of the states who received these beautiful gifts of gratitude still have their box car, and the items it carried, lovingly preserved and on display. North Dakota has an impressive interactive display of the 500 gifts they received. I wanted to drive to North Dakota to see their train, when I remembered that every state received one. I looked up the Nebraska Train, where I live, to find out where I could see it. What I found, however, was not at all what I expected.

According to the Merci’ Train website, Nebraska’s boxcar was shunted from place to place...first to the state historical society, then to the Nebraska Forty and Eight Society, and finally to a playground in Lincoln. In 1951, an attempt was made to return it to the historical society, but they did not want it. So, it was sold to an Omaha junkyard for \$45. Its wheels and metal parts were pounded into scrap and its body converted into a storage shed. Its humiliation finally ended in 1961 when the

junkyard was relocated, and the box car was demolished.

My heart sank as I read the story of the fate of this priceless gift given to the people of Nebraska. I thought of all those families who showed up by the thousands at train stops across our state to give what little they could to their brothers and sisters across the sea. What would they think of how we treated this precious gift?

It reminds me of what is happening in America today. Generations ago, families sacrificed everything to give us the precious gift of freedom. They signed their lives away when they put their names to the Declaration of Independence; and they dedicated their lives to the creation of a more perfect union with the United States Constitution. And just like the Nebraska Train some carelessly dismiss it as old, out of date, and discard it as scrap.

I am deeply grateful for two people who decided keeping the story of the Friendship and Merci' Trains alive was worth their time. I am so grateful to be a recipient of the blessings of



liberty America offers. And, in spite of everything our country now faces, it is truer now even more than ever—the United States is still the freest place on earth and our freedom, our legacy of liberty is something worth holding on to.

An Unexpected Pleasure

In the summer of 2019, our family took a vacation to Oregon. We spent seven days enjoying the breathtaking vistas, landscapes and coastal towns that make up western Oregon. Then, while driving through the small town of North Bend a quick image passed my view. “Stop the van!” I yelled out, pleading with my husband to turn around and go back. “What’s the matter?” he asked.

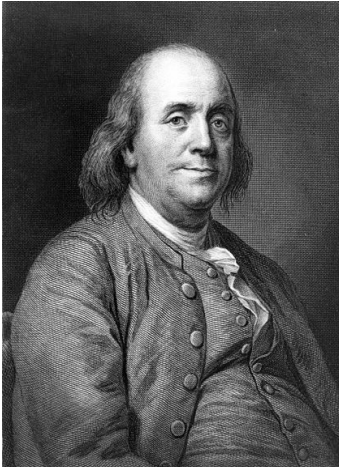
“It’s the train! It’s their train,” I shouted, pointing behind me.

I had heard the story, was inspired by it, shared it with my children, wrote about in media, and here, in North Bend, Oregon, I had the amazing opportunity to see one the remaining Merci Trains!

Our children jumped from the van to see what it was that causing all my excitement and then, they saw it too. My husband went into the visitor center and found that the woman who ran the center knew nothing about the story behind the train. After my husband repeated the story, he heard me tell so many times the woman was speechless. “I had no idea,” she said. “I thought it was just a train car.” She was so inspired by the story she said she was going to have it printed on a flyer to hand out to visitors and present it at the next meeting of the City Counsel. And I left with an awesome picture to add to my memory book.

Read more about the [Friendship train here](#) and [Merci Trains at this link](#), and [watch the news reels at here](#).

In Their Words

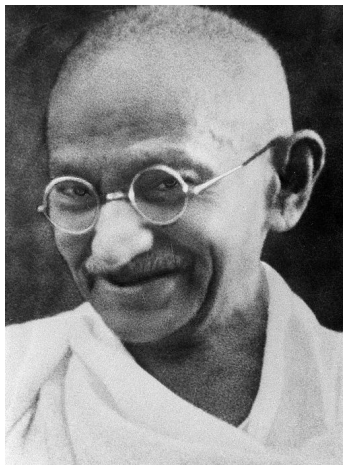


Those who sacrifice liberty for security deserve neither and will lose both.

~Ben Franklin

When I admire the wonders of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in the worship of the creator.

~Mahatma Gandhi



Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful, for beauty is God's handwriting.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson



Join the Movement

Unleash the Power of your Voice through your Vote.



YOUR VOICE. YOUR VALUES. YOUR VOTE!

The two places where our voice has the greatest influence and impact are in our home and with our vote. We need to wield the power of both!

MomVote is your source for information on everything from how and where to register to vote, to information on the issues and candidates on your ballot. Our voice is our vote!



[MOMSFORAMERICA.US](https://www.MomsForAmerica.us)



Meaningful Conversations about Race

by Cherie Cawley

As I sit down to write this piece, my heart is hurting for our nation. Many of us know the saying hurt people, hurt people. From unnecessary deaths, whether it was George Floyd or officers who have been killed during protests, to horrific looting of public property and not to mention the often skewed and misinformed slurs we all see on social media - I think we can agree - our nation is hurting.

In the past two months I have had to explain things to my three year old daughter that I am not sure I would have chosen to tell her at this age. She overheard a family member and I talking about the George Floyd incident, so I decided to be honest with her and tell her what really happened. I did not go into great detail but I did tell her. In her mind, police officers look like Chase, a cartoon police dog from Paw Patrol, and a bad guy is Mayor Humperdink and his kitty catastrophe crew. I

know the comprehension was minimal but she still understood it was a very bad thing.

As a mom, I can only imagine the conversations or even non-conversation being held in households across our nation. How are we talking about race and the issues of our country in our homes? How do I as a Christian handle these subjects and keep love at the forefront? How do we even know what information to share and when? How do I know the information I am sharing is accurate? It is overwhelming to think about it all.

I decided the best way to gain information for myself was to talk to people - not read another article, not read social media personalities - talk to real people. I talked to people all across the country from California to Florida. Old and young, black and white, Believer or not - I wanted to ask

If you are looking to start conversation or add to ones you have already begun, we have put together some topics for you to consider by age.

Pre-school

Does your child understand that all people are born in the image of God? What differences did God form in his creation that reflect his creativity and wisdom?

Elementary

What do our kids understand or what have they heard friends talking about in light of recent incidents? How do they feel about what is happening?

Has your child become fearful in certain circumstances? Read the following verse together and talk about the confidence we have in Christ, "You have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7 - NKJV) Does your child understand how trusting in God's Love helps us to overcome fear?

questions. I heard stories from moms who feel that black men do not typically get the due process of law the same as a small children at home while he had to go on duty, I talked to people who have lived in the south their entire lives and last, as well as my favorite, was a long talk with a 90 year old man who has ministered all through our nation and across the globe.

Where did all of these conversations lead?

Through all the discussions, my stance has never changed - any and all racism is wrong. In the beginning I thought I would be led to a political stance, a conclusion that would make me feel safe. However, the deeper in thought I went or the harder I tried to disseminate information from these conversations, it only led me straight to my knees in prayer because not one person has all the answers. These conversations led me to tears for our country who can only find true justice in God. These conversations led me to worship and pray for moms in our nation to rise up for truth, not for my opinion is right and yours is wrong, but as Christians who have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, LOVE and a sound mind.

It is time for us to remember we are not fighting against flesh and blood but against evil in the unseen realms (paraphrased from Eph. 6:12). One nation, under God, is the ONLY way we will be indivisible. If we can understand our position as Believers first, we have opportunities to be light in darkness. Our faith also allows truth to be spoken - wrapped in love, preceded by grace. Hurting people need healing found only in the love and identity of Jesus. They do not need our latest opinion brought to you by social media.

These are not easy times or conversations for anyone, but mom, please know your voice matters! It matters in your home and it most certainly matters in this nation because our homes make up this nation. I want to encourage you - you CAN do this. You can stand for injustice while instilling victorious Christ - centered values into your children. Have them join you in prayer for our country and trust God to lead you through these conversations and trust Him to give you wisdom.

Middle School

If my child has been exposed to racism, what did they choose to do in the moment and how can they be an example of Christ in those situations? Do they believe God's Word that says all men and women were made in His image?

If your child has been hurt by racism, are you able to lead them into forgiveness and healing, teaching them that when they forgive they are the victorious one because Christ lives in them?

High School

How much does my child know about amazing historical figures like Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver and Harriet Tubman? How did the faith of these men and women inform their responses to racism and oppression?

College Kids

Don't be afraid to talk to your college age kids directly about how policies affect the racial climate, positively or negatively. Do they see policies such as Affirmative Action as positive or negative for easing racial tensions and promoting justice? Where do they see evidence of Systemic Racism in history? How about today? Are organizations deemed popular by the media truly helpful to bring clarity, peace and God's mindsets to our nation? If they seem like good organizations or movements on the outside, are you digging deep enough to find out if they align with Christ-centered values?

Corrie ten Boom on Forgiveness

It was in a church in Munich that I saw him, a balding heavysset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. People were filing out of the basement room where I had just spoken, moving along the rows of wooden chairs to the door at the rear.

It was 1947 and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives.

It was the truth they needed most to hear in that bitter, bombed-out land, and I gave them my favorite mental picture. Maybe because the sea is never far from a Hollander's mind, I liked to think that that's where forgiven sins were thrown.

"When we confess our sins," I said, "God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever."

The solemn faces stared back at me, not quite daring to believe. There were never questions after a talk in Germany in 1947. People stood up in silence, in silence collected their wraps, in silence left the room.



And that is when I saw him, working his way forward against the others. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat: the next, a blue uniform and a visor cap with its skull and crossbones.

It came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights, the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor, the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister's frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment skin. Betsie, how thin you were!

Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of Holland; this man had been a guard at Ravensbrück concentration camp where we were sent.

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: "A fine message, fräulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!"

And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me, of course—how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women?

One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat: the next, a blue uniform and a visor cap with its skull and crossbones.

But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. It was the first time since my release that I had been face to face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

"You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk," he was saying. "I was a guard in there." No, he did not remember me.

"But since that time," he went on, "I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fräulein"—again the hand came out— "will you forgive me?"

And I stood there—I whose sins had every day to be forgiven—and could not. Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. "If you do not forgive men their trespasses," Jesus says, "neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality.

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that.

And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will,

and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.

If there is one thing, I have learned at 80 years of age, it's that I cannot store up good feelings and behavior—but only draw them fresh from God each day.

"Jesus, help me!" I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling." And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

"I forgive you, brother!" I cried. "With all my heart!"

For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard, and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then.

And having thus learned to forgive in this hardest of situations, I never again had difficulty in forgiving: I wish I could say it! I wish I could say that merciful and charitable thoughts just naturally flowed from me from then on. But they did not.

If there is one thing, I have learned at 80 years of age, it's that I cannot store up good feelings and behavior—but only draw them fresh from God each day.

Maybe I am glad it's that way. For every time I go to Him, He teaches me something else. I recall the time, some 15 years ago, when some Christian friends whom I loved and trusted did something which hurt me.

You would have thought that, having forgiven the Nazi guard, this would have been child's play. It was not. For weeks I seethed inside. But at last

I asked God again to work His miracle in me. And again, it happened: first the cold-blooded decision, then the flood of joy and peace.

I had forgiven my friends; I was restored to my Father.

Then, why was I suddenly awake in the middle of the night, hashing over the whole affair again? My friends! I thought. People I loved! If it had been strangers, I would not have minded so.

I sat up and switched on the light. "Father, I thought it was all forgiven! Please help me do it!"

But the next night I woke up again. They had talked so sweetly too! Never a hint of what they were planning. "Father!" I cried in alarm. "Help me!"

His help came in the form of a kindly Lutheran pastor to whom I confessed my failure after two sleepless weeks.

"Up in that church tower," he said, nodding out the window, "is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the sexton lets go of the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First ding then dong. Slower and slower until there is a final dong and it stops.

"I believe the same thing is true of forgiveness. When we forgive someone, we take our hand

off the rope. But if we have been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we must not be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They're just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down."

And so, it proved to be. There were a few more midnight reverberations, a couple of dings when the subject came up in my conversation. But the force—which was my willingness in the matter—had gone out of them. They came less and less often and at last stopped altogether.

And so, I discovered another secret of forgiveness: that we can trust God not only above our emotions, but also above our thoughts.

"But if we have been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we must not be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They're just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down."

And still He had more to teach me, even in this single episode. Because many years later, in 1970, an American with whom I had shared the ding-dong principle came to visit me in Holland and met the people involved. "Aren't those the friends who let you down?" he asked as they left my apartment.



“Yes,” I said a little smugly. “You can see it’s all forgiven.”

“By you, yes,” he said. “But what about them? Have they accepted your forgiveness?”

“They say there’s nothing to forgive! They deny it ever happened. But I can prove it!” I went eagerly to my desk. “I have it in black and white! I saved all their letters and I can show you where—”

“Corrie!” My friend slipped his arm through mine and gently closed the drawer. “Aren’t you the one whose sins are at the bottom of the sea? And are the sins of your friends etched in black and white?”

For an anguishing moment I could not find my voice. “Lord Jesus,” I whispered at last, “who takes all my sins away, forgive me for preserving all these years the evidence against others! Give me grace to burn all the blacks and whites as a sweet-smelling sacrifice to Your glory.”

I did not go to sleep that night until I had gone through my desk and pulled out those letters—curling now with age—and fed them all into my little coal-burning grate. As the flames leaped and glowed, so did my heart.

“Forgive us our trespasses,” Jesus taught us to pray, “as we forgive those who trespass against us.” In the ashes of those letters I was seeing yet another facet of His mercy. What more He would teach me about forgiveness in the days ahead I did not know, but tonight’s was good news enough.

When we bring our sins to Jesus, He not only forgives them, He makes them as if they had never been.

Originally published in [Guideposts Magazine](#)

Lessons from a

Life Well Lived

Corrie Ten Boom faithfully served the Lord for almost a century. She has so many life lessons to teach us on so many topics. Corrie’s book shares stories and lessons from her family life and walk with the Lord, as well as perseverance in the face of a oppression, and faithfulness in ministry.

If you have struggled with prayer or feel discouraged about unanswered prayers, Corrie has some helpful words to get you stepping into your God-given anointing as an intercessor. You maybe surprised by the simplicity of her message but there is no denying the effectiveness of her prayers.

Take a look at the video below where Corrie reminds us, it is not how great our faith is but how great our God is!





Day 1 Watch A Video/Share A Story

Show the video of the Friendship Train and share the story with your children

Day 2 Share A Quote

Those who sacrifice liberty for security deserve neither and will lose both. ~Ben Franklin
What do you think Ben Franklin meant by this quote? How does it apply to current events in our world today?

Day 3 Ask a Question

What is the most beautiful thing you have ever seen? Why did it impress you so much?

Day 4 Share A Story, Ask A Question

Share the Story of Beauty and the Beast. Why did the Beast become a beast? What changed him back into a Prince? Why was Beauty, beauty?

Day 5 Share A Quote

Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.
~Robert Brault

Day 6 Share A Video

[Tom Foolery: The Great Realization](#)

Day 7 Ask A Question

What kind of world do you want to live in? How can you be the change you want to see in the world?

Keep the Conversation Going! [American History Stories](#) by Mara Pratt is a great Table Talk conversation starter. You can also download our [TableTalk Sampler](#) for more ideas.



Cottage Meeting

PREPARATION

In preparation to lead the Cottage Meeting Presentation, read through the presentation and read “Being the Change” from the MomLinks Magazine (August 2020 Issue) Highlight areas you would like to share in your meeting.

MEETING OUTLINE

Welcome & Gathering

We recommend starting your meeting with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance

Hostess Presentation & Group Discussion

Read, or have someone read, the opening message from the MomLinks Magazine (August 2020 Issue)

Read Acts 16: 23-25

Q. How do music and things of beauty help us through difficult times?

Show Video: [Mysteries at the Museum--Pavel Jordanowitch](#)

Hostess Presentation & Group Discussion

Q. What is the difference between classic and modern art?

Watch and discuss the video [“Why is Modern Art so bad?”](#)

On January 10, 1963, Representative Albert Sydney Herlong Jr., a Democratic Congressman (1949-1969) introduced [“Current Communist Goals”](#) into the Congressional Record. The list was an excerpt from the book “The Naked Communist written by Cleon Skousen. Goal #23 reads, “Control art critics and directors of art museums. “Our plan is to promote ugliness, repulsive, meaningless art.”

Q. How can we be the change we wish to see in the world? How can we bring beauty into our lives and homes? How can things of beauty heal our nation and sustain a free society?

Share the Video [“Tree Change Dolls”](#)

Take Home Assignment:

Encourage attendees to find beautiful music, art, and poems to share with their children through the week.

Announce date, time, and location for next meeting. Close with prayer if desired.



Momi U

Weekly Discussion Outline

WEEK 1:

Read & Discuss "The Heart of Education" from the MomLinks Magazine (August 2020 Issue)

How does the United States today compare to Germany at the rise of Hitler?

WEEK 2:

Read & Discuss "Corrie Ten Boom on Forgiveness" from the MomLinks Magazine (August 2020 Issue) How does forgiveness play a role in healing.

WEEK 3:

Read "Being the Change" from the MomLinks Magazine (August 2020 Issue)

Watch the Video "[Playing in the Subway](#)"

How do our busy lives distract us from the beauty around us? What can you do be the change beginning in your own home and family? How can you bring beauty into your home?

WEEK 4:

On January 10, 1963, Representative Albert Sydney Herlong Jr., a Democratic Congressman (1949-1969) introduced "[Current Communist Goals](#)" into the Congressional Record. The list was an excerpt from the book "The Naked Communist written by Cleon Skousen. Goal #23 reads, "Control art critics and directors of art museums. "Our plan is to promote ugliness, repulsive, meaningless art."

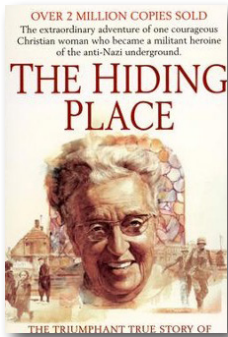
Watch the video "[Tree Change Dolls](#)"

Watch the Video "[Lindsay Sterling Haleluja](#)"

How can beauty enrich our lives? How can it help us see and share the light in the darkness of the world or our own pain and trials?



Mom Reads



Book of the Month: The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom

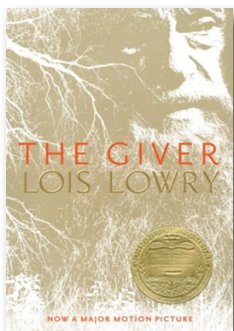
When the Nazis invaded Holland, Corrie ten Boom's quiet life turned into a nightmare. Because she made her home a "hiding place" for Jews, she and her family were sent to a concentration camp. Refusing to despair, Corrie discovered how Jesus can turn loss to glory! This unforgettable story will move you to tears and to joy.

Corrie Ten Boom stood naked with her older sister Betsie, watching a concentration camp matron beating a prisoner. "Oh, the poor woman," Corrie cried. "Yes. May God forgive her," Betsie replied. And, once again, Corrie realized that it was for the souls of the brutal Nazi guards that her sister prayed.

Both women had been sent to the camp for helping the Jews. Christ's Spirit and words were their guide; it was His persecuted people they tried to save—at the risk of their own lives; it was His strength that sustained them through times of profound horror.

Here is a book aglow with the glory of God and the courage of a quiet Christian spinster whose life was transformed by it. A story of Christ's message and the courage woman who listened and lived to pass it along—with joy and triumph!

In the years since the closing chapter of this book, Corrie Ten Boom has traveled ceaselessly, carrying her message of triumphant living all over the world, especially behind the Iron Curtain. The author of devotional books treasured by millions; she is also a colorful, amusing speaker with a hold on young audiences that is but one of her many intriguing personal mysteries. This is the full story behind the faith that has touched and stirred and changed so many lives everywhere.



Read-a-loud Book "The Giver" by Lois Lowry

The Giver, the 1994 Newbery Medal winner, has become one of the most influential novels of our time. The haunting story centers on twelve-year-old Jonas, who lives in a seemingly ideal, if colorless, world of conformity and contentment. Not until he is given his life assignment as the Receiver of Memory does he begin to understand the dark, complex secrets behind his fragile community. Lois Lowry has written three companion novels to The Giver, including Gathering Blue, Messenger, and Son.

The book was also adapted into [a film](#). It creates great comparison discussion to read the book and then watch the movie.



Family Lobby

Family Lobby is the MomLinks group that engages the entire family and provides stories and projects for families to read and do throughout the month to promote the monthly theme. Once a month, families can join together in a 3 hour “Activity Day” to do engage in projects and fun activities in a group setting. Family Lobby is organized by stories and activities individual families can participate in all month long, followed by an Activity Day Plan in co-op type setting where multiple families can share what they’ve learned and enjoy a fun day of activities, stories and games highlighting the monthly theme.

Monthly Theme Activities (Things families can do at home all month long)

This month’s theme is “Be the Change” from the quote by Mahatma Gandhi, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” This month is great opportunity to learn about individuals who, through their lives, became the change for good they wanted to see. Some ideas are Irene Sendler, Harriett Tubman, Martin Luther, Penelope Barker, James Madison, and Joan of Arc.

Book of the Month: The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom
See Book descriptions in MomReads section.

Read-Aloud Book of the Month: The Giver by Lois Lowry
See Book descriptions in MomReads section.

Recommended Books :

- Sleeping Beauty
- Beauty and the Beast
- We Are the Gardeners by Joanna Gaines
- The Jolly Pocket Postman
by Janet and Allan Ahlberg
- The Wonderful Things You Will Be
by Emily Winfield Martin
- Anne Arrives by Kallie George,
illustrated by Abigail Halpin
- Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
- Lola Dutch by Kenneth and Sarah Jane Wright
- 1 is One by Tasha Tudor
- Ordinary, Extraordinary Jane Austen
by Deborah Hopkinson

Art Projects
[Colorful Butterflies](#)
[Fluttering Butterflies](#)



Suggested Films for this month’s theme:

- [Miracle at Midnight](#)
- [The Giver](#)
- [Johnny Lingo](#)
- [Beauty and the Beast](#)
- [Anne of Green Gables](#)
- [Pete’s Dragon](#)

Activity Day

Play some games, tell some stories, and learn foundational truths with your kids! This month’s Activity Day Outline features to reinforce the truths in this issue. Gather your family and friends for a summer day of fun and learning!



The Heart of Education

Theodore Roosevelt, 26th president of the United States asserted that, “To educate a person in the mind but not in morals is to educate a menace to society.”

There is a lot of focus in our nation about educating the minds of our youth. While we agree that education is a vital component to a free society, we are deeply concerned that all the discussions on “reform” or proposals to “fix” the problems of education focus on the mind and completely neglect the heart. It is our hearts that guide our actions, not our brains, so if all we focus on is the brain, the result is a nation of highly intelligent people with no moral foundation, and that is a very dangerous thing.

Oliver DeMille, former president of George Wythe University, addresses this very concern in his book, *TJED for Teens*. He states:

“As Allan Bloom pointed out in his classic bestseller, *The Closing of the American Mind*, the last society to be as highly trained and as poorly educated as the current U.S. was Germany in the 1930s. A significant number of German engineers were highly enough trained to build cutting-edge weaponry, submarines, missiles, airplanes and so on, but not well-read enough in history to vote against Hitler or refuse to do his bidding.

“Same with German scientists, who understood chemicals and genetics enough to experiment on their neighbors when they were thrown immorally into prison camps, but not learned enough in ethics, morals, history, psychology or basic politics to not elect Hitler or refuse to torture their countrymen.

“Critics could say that by the time submarines were being launched and people were being tortured, it was too late to do anything. But only the combination of top technical training and poor Leadership Education could have allowed this all to happen. A less highly trained people could not have done it, and a truly educated people would not have done it. This may seem extreme to some, but seriously, what is education all about? If it is not to teach us what is good, ideal, and right, then it isn’t really education.”

We are all deeply concerned for the moral decay in our society and the violence that has erupted because of it. Strengthening the mind will not cure what ails us. As J.K. Rowling so poignantly states, “It is our choices.... that show who we really are, far more than our abilities.”

It is not what is in our minds that inspire greatness; it’s what is in our hearts. A moral nation of freedom-loving, intelligent, devoted citizens must start there.



MOM *Links* MAGAZINE