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I HEARD THE CALL

BY TACYANA BEHRMANN

When I think about my story thus far, I think of the story of Peter in Matthew 14 — Jesus’ call for Peter to walk upon the water. For years, I knew Christ was calling me to walk on the water; yet, it wasn’t until I was 18 years old when I had the courage to “get out of the boat.” My story was one of great loss but, with the acceptance of Jesus Christ, my story is no longer one of loss but the greatest gain my life can know.

I grew up not wanting or needing anything. My mother, a fashion designer, and my father, at the time a financial planner, provided my sister and me with everything children could ask for. Our home life was one of love, forgiveness and always this overwhelming feeling of Christ’s presence. I could never doubt His existence or turn away from a knowledge of the undeniable fact that Jesus lived because of the example of my parents. Everything they did exemplified who He was; whether at church, work or home, my parents were consistent in their daily commitment to love and serve Christ and reared us in a way we would experience Him, not only through their words but through their lives.

My loving parents could not protect me from the pain life seemed to bring me. The devil always seems to find ways to prey on the youngest of God’s children. My young heart experienced much pain and loss that resulted in an extremely low self-esteem. As a result, the view of a loving Christ was extremely tainted in my young mind. By this time, my father had accepted the call to ministry and had become a pastor. His decision confused me. *How could he leave the money, lifestyle and bonuses to serve a God who allows humanity such pain?* I developed resentment toward my father, which, in

retrospect, was resentment toward who I thought Jesus was. In spite of my resentment toward my father, he never stopped being Jesus to me. My dad’s heart for me and his longing for a relationship with me was evident.

As my rebellion grew, I could anticipate my dad’s, the pastor’s, reprimand. I would wait to see how he would react toward my behavior. Time and time again, I found myself crying in disbelief and conviction because the Jesus whose character I wanted to deny was ever evident in my father, and even in his reprimand. I could see Christ’s heart for me through the example of how my father spoke to me, no matter the situation, good or bad. My father’s love for me, his pursuit of me and his decision to see that the devil not have the victory in my life is the reason I am dedicated to serving the Lord today.

Many times I hear of pastors’ kids who are wayward, and I think of the example of my father. I think of the fact that I could, indeed, find fault in him, but I could never deny the fact that, even in his faults, he was honest in admitting, surrendering and growing in Christ — to be the man Jesus called him to be in order to raise me to be the woman Christ called me to be. His heart for me and for my

salvation overwhelms me with tears to this day. I wouldn't be who I am today if it was not for my parents' ever-loving pursuit of my heart for Jesus.

In 2008, my parents encouraged me to take part in a mission trip to India that our conference youth director was planning. In preparation for India, I came to the realization that I needed Christ in my life. I was going on a mission trip to tell people about a transforming love that I had yet to accept and experience.

During my experience in India, I found Jesus. I'll never forget being in my hotel room and hearing the voice of God speak to me so clearly, urging me to surrender all to Him. In surrendering to Christ, there were things I would have to leave behind. I knew this. Finally making the decision to "step out of the boat" was extremely transformative. I knew that, for years, Christ had been calling me out on the water to find Him, in the mystery where His redeeming love could transform my heart. I finally understood in that moment, in that hotel room, that I had nothing to give in this life but to retell the story of Jesus. The story that for years I tried to overlook, dismiss and reject was the same story that brought my heart, mind and soul a renewing peace and an overwhelming amount of joy and fulfillment in Christ Jesus. The transforming power of the story of Jesus, from that night on, has been my song. And every day, I pray that it will be my story — a story that, through the ages, will ring true about the grace of a Father upon my wayward heart, the love of a Son for the will of the Father to be accomplished, and for the transforming truth that comes with the call of the Spirit to step out on the water. This is my story, this alone is my song. With my eyes fixed on Him, I have no doubt that my story and feet, that are forever longing to step out deeper on the water toward Jesus, will never fail.

On July 31, 2009, I was baptized. It took place in our family pool in the backyard of our home. My father stood with me, and I could see in his eyes this tremendous amount of love. I closed my eyes as they welled up with tears. This day was not only about committing to Jesus, it was also the beginning of a better relationship with my parents — a commitment to honoring them and letting them know how

much their love, prayer and continual urge to remind me of my higher calling changed my life. They never stopped pursuing me, and, from that day on, I'd never stop pursuing them with the same love and prayer that they displayed to me for so many years.

The day of my baptism was the best day of my life. As we stood there in the pool, my dad told me how proud he was of me and how he had longed for that day. His eyes filled with tears as he plunged me down into the water. As he lifted me up, I felt a joy I had never experienced. I felt free. I knew this cleansing wave signified my commitment, from that day forward, to never "get *back* in the boat" but to stay out on the water, where I must surrender to the Spirit as He leads me.



I do plan to attend the Seminary in a year (perhaps two). I knew I was called to be a worship leader, and have been leading worship since I was 13. The call on my life became evident my senior year of high school when I became a primary worship leader at the Christian school I was attending. I have never felt closer to God than when I have the opportunity to sing to Him.

I know He has a place for me in pastoral ministry, especially in the realm of worship and planning of worship events. I know God has called me to lead worship and be a worship pastor. Eventually, I feel called to be a teacher of theology in reference to worship. I also feel called in the areas of outreach ministry and missions. Worship and justice go hand in hand, and there is no greater duty as a Christian than to seek and help those in need.

My prayer is that my trust in the Lord's steadfast love and guidance will never waiver and that I'll eternally keep my eyes fixed on Him, the Author and Finisher of my faith. All my hope is in He who called me out unto the water, and my prayer is He will lead and I will follow as He leads me deeper still.

Tacyana Behrmann is currently a student chaplain at Andrews University and praise leader at Pioneer Memorial Church. She will be graduating in May 2013 with a bachelor's degree in religion, a minor in public relations and a certificate in leadership. She plans to continue her studies at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.