

f prayer for the
venant family!

FEAST



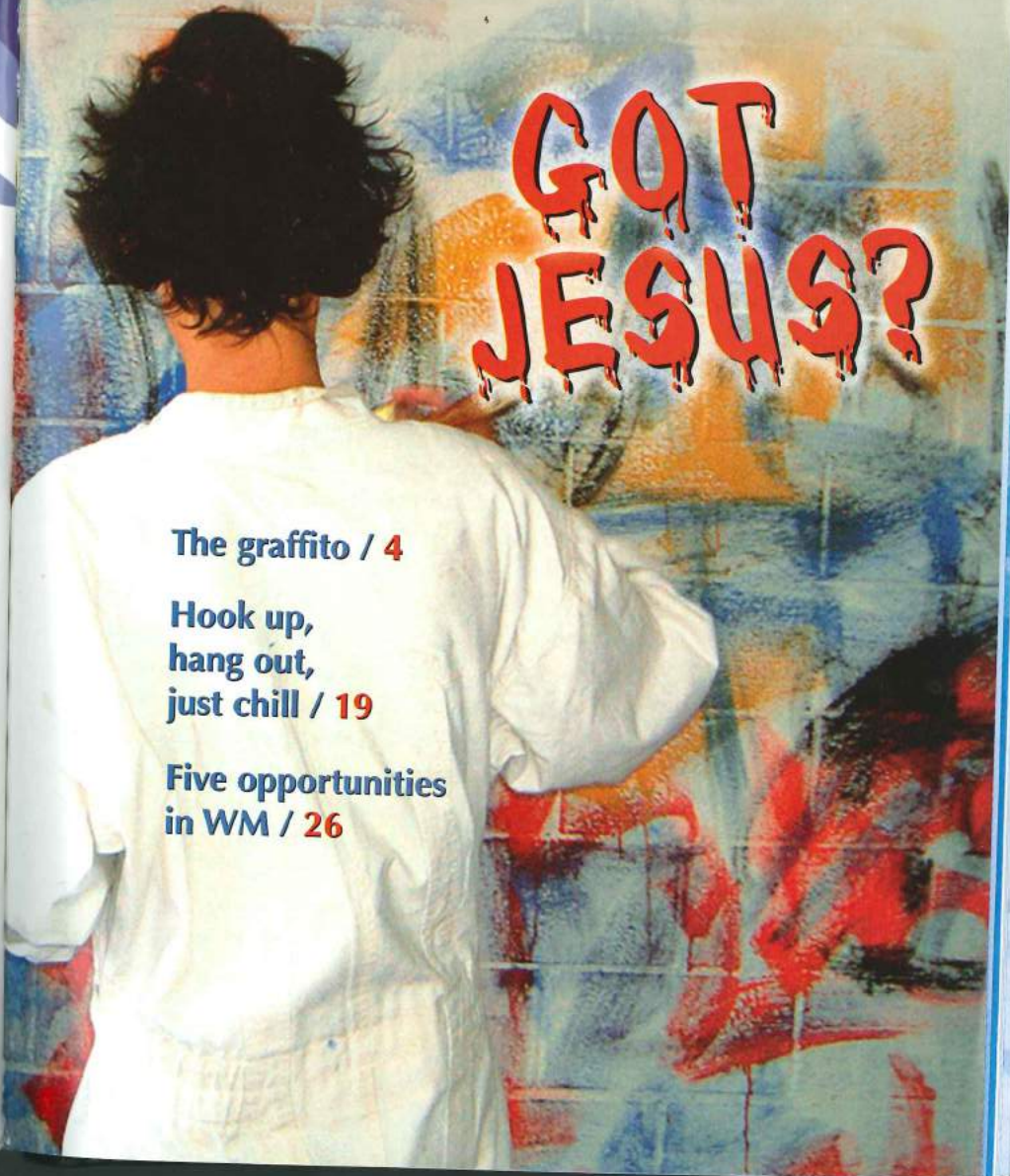
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In Spirit

THE MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN OF THE COVENANT CHURCH



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**Hook up,
hang out,
just chill / 19**

**Five opportunities
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Jodi Bryant (right) and her friend Andrea Stone reached out to members of Andrea's family at a Women Ministries event.

Receiving a special gift

By Jodi Bryant

Evangelism is such a scary word for some of us, but it is so often simply sharing our story with someone. It was our stories and a special gift that changed one woman's life.

Andrea, a newer woman in our church, and her fiancé became engaged and asked my husband, pastor of our church, to marry them. She asked me to help with the music and décor for their wedding. As soon as we were introduced, we became friends. Over the months, we got to know some of their family members.

My heart became close to some of her relatives, especially those who weren't walking with Jesus. At a wedding shower hosted by Women Ministries, two of Andrea's sisters-in-law came. My heart's desire was to see one of them come to a saving knowledge of God's grace. I began to pray fervently for the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and provide divine appointments to share the hope of Christ. After Andrea's wedding, I was hoping to continue the relationship with her sisters-in-law. I decided I would invite them to one of our Women Ministries events.

Our WM group was open to the idea of an outreach banquet around Valentine's Day to show our love to our community. After months of praying, we formally invited women, going door to door, in the two apartment complexes behind our church. We called the evening, "Stories of the Heart," and invited our own women to share their life stories. It was a powerful night for all of us. The food, drama and musical entertainment were moving, and each guest received a handcrafted card and a small gift of homemade bath salts.

*My heart's
desire was
to see one
of them come
to a saving
knowledge of
God's grace.*

It was very well attended. Half the women were not regular church attendees. Guess who was among them? Andrea's mother-in-law and both of her sisters-in-law. I rejoiced when I noticed them all sitting right in plain view. As I emceed, I looked around at all the new faces and felt a lump in my throat. God had been at work in the lives of many long before this evening had been planned.

We had typical games, lots of fun and door prizes. One woman donated a substantial gift, one that was too precious to give as a door prize. After each speaker shared her unique spiritual journey, I asked the women to take out their comment cards and read through the questions. One

of the questions was about accepting Jesus Christ. As they began reading these sheets, I asked God what to do with this beautiful gift and who should receive it.

*I thanked
the Lord
for how
he had
orchestrated
this amazing
night.*

After discussion with a few women, I sensed from the Holy Spirit to go out of my comfort zone and take a risk. I was to lead a prayer for those who wanted to become a Christian. I could feel the adrenaline rise in me and I felt slightly weak as I obeyed. As I closed my eyes and led in prayer, I heard women whisper the parts of the prayer where they were to dedicate their life. Wow! After the whispers and the prayer, I took out the large silver foil-wrapped package with a large white bow and took the risk.

"I have a special gift that someone here is to receive tonight. I believe there is someone here who may have just recently become a Christian, maybe in the last month or week, or in the last few days, or maybe even tonight in the last 7 minutes?" I waited nervously, yet sure that God had led me to do this. The seconds seemed like minutes.

Soon, Andrea's mother-in-law voiced that something special had just happened to a younger woman at her table.

She had heard a quiet calm voice say, "I did, just now." At that moment, this young woman stood up, smiling and crying.

"I have to share with you. Before you prayed, I filled out the comment card as I read through it. Tonight as I listened to all you women share, I saw a piece of my life in each of you. You are the most real women I have ever met. I realized that I needed what each of you has." The young woman was Andrea's sister-in-law.

You could have heard a pin drop. Tears welled up. I started to cry, as did others. I went over and hugged her and gave her the gift. I shared a few words of encouragement with her and thanked the Lord for how he had orchestrated this amazing night.

As we were cleaning up and reading the response cards we were greatly encouraged that God had used this night for advancing his kingdom by using us, ordinary women who wanted to reach out to their community. By the power of prayer, he blessed our desires. We included Andrea and her sister-in-law in a Bible study that took place the next year in a restaurant and gave her *The Purpose-Driven Life*, by Rick Warren. I still pray for her and the other women who were ministered to that night.

Little did we know that we would all receive such a special gift from being a part of that divinely inspired evening. Sharing faith stories is truly life-changing.

*God had
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night for
advancing
his kingdom*

Jodi Bryant, a teacher, is involved in women ministries in her church and community, and served as co-coordinator of the Canada Women Ministries Executive Leadership Team and its Growth and Outreach Chair. Her husband Darryl is senior pastor at College Park Covenant Church in Saskatoon, Sk. They have three young boys.