

Divine Interruption

by Janice Dressander



A long day...a long week...call-ins from volunteers...sick employees...ice storm...wind chill...white outs...behind on my documentation...calendars due for next month's activities. "Did I remember to lock all the cupboards?" "Did I leave a note with instructions for tomorrow?" It was a Friday evening in the winter of 1990. I was the full time Activity Director for a large nursing home in Holland, Michigan. I loved my position and ministry, however on this night, I was very frustrated and worn out. I was already late to leave for home and had ordered Chinese food to go. My husband was waiting for the food and for me, to come home. Thoughts were racing through my mind; thoughts of self-pity with a touch of anger. "I have so much documentation for the state; does anyone care that the activities still went on this week in spite of all the obstacles?" Needless to say, I was having a "pity-party" and feeling pretty low. Tired and discouraged, I leaned down behind my desk to put on my boots, getting ready to face the drive home in all of the snow and ice. Lost in my own thoughts, I hadn't even heard the slow, familiar sound of a wheelchair moving quietly into my office. I looked up and recognized Marian, one of our residents in the nursing home. I admit that my first thoughts weren't warm and receptive. Marian is so confused and she probably wants me to take her "home." By the time I console her and redirect her, the Chinese food will be cold and my husband's temper will be "hot." Marian wheeled in closer to

me, so close in fact, that she totally blocked me in behind my desk. I looked up at her and asked, "Marian, what can I do for you this evening?" I was trying hard to be positive and polite. "Nothing," she said. "Well, did you stop by to say Hello?" Marian, to my knowledge had never stopped by my office to chat before, so I thought that perhaps she had lost her way. "Nope", she replied with a smile and then a look of concern. I could tell this was going to take a while. "Well then, what did you come to see me about?" I asked. "I came to encourage you in the Lord." said Marian. With my attention now totally focused on her, I asked, "What did you just say?" She continued, "I see what you do for us here; your care and your Christian love. And I want to thank you and to encourage you. As Christians, we need one another and I want to be faithful to the Lord and to serve Him in whatever way I can." With a lump in my throat, I said, "Thank you Marian. I'm glad that you took the time to wheel all the way over to my office to tell me that. I really needed to hear those words of encouragement tonight. What you've told me has helped me very much. Is there anything I can do for you?" "My neck hurts so badly," she answered. "May I pray for you and for your neck?" I asked. Marian answered, "Yes," so I prayed. Then she slowly backed her wheelchair out of my office and as quietly as she had come in; she was gone. "God, was that you?" "Did you just use an ordinarily confused resident to gently remind me that "My labor in the Lord is not in vain?" "Thank you Lord!" I needed to be reminded. Somehow in this rushed, busy week; I got my priorities all scrambled up. I am here to serve the residents. My paperwork will eventually get caught up and things will work out. All the way home, the sleeting rain didn't bother my vision nearly as much as the tears running down my cheeks. They were tears of joy and awe of a very real and very personal God. A God who cares enough to make a "divine interruption" into the busy day of an ordinary person like me. And to think...if I hadn't taken the time to stop and really listen...I may have missed Him.