



# Marriage & Family Savers Institute

## March 2010

NEWSLETTER



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It was a tough winter, wasn't it? We're glad once again to begin seeing signs of new life wherever we go, whether we're driving along the road and see the new budding trees, or we're watching a couple discover new life in their marriage, the feeling is always one of a better tomorrow. We're excited about the Poughkeepsie Marriage Initiative, the ministry at the Restoration Nest (read below), and so many other good things that God is doing to revive the Christian family. We still have our challenges. Please pray that the Lord would provide sources of funding to help us continue this work. If you are not a regular partner please pray about becoming one. You can return the enclosed response form or just go on our web site [www.marriageandfamily.org](http://www.marriageandfamily.org) and click on the donate button. If you know anyone who is looking for a worthy cause to invest in, here we are. If your church is not yet supporting us regularly, mention us to your pastor. Anyway, read on; be blessed in the power of His resurrection!

### RESTORATION NEST

**The Restoration Nest was built in December 2004** by Chris and Juanita Gisentaner under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to provide a place where couples can go to find restoration and rest.

The Restoration Nest is a spacious bi-level structure tucked away in the secluded beauty of the Catskill mountain-side of Fallsburg, New York, within walking distance of the Neversink River. Here a couple can find rest, spiritual renewal and the rekindling of the marital covenant under the ministry of Chris and Juanita.

Chris and Juanita were married in 1977. They have learned much through the pain of divorce, remarriage and growing a blended family. They pass on to others what God has shown them. They served as area directors of the Lower New York division for Marriage Ministries International, and will be part of the team effort to reduce the divorce rate as we advance the Hudson Valley Marriage Initiative by providing a resource for intensive marriage ministry.

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### POUGHKEEPSIE INITIATIVE LAUNCHED

Under the supervision of the Institute the Potter House Inc. in Poughkeepsie has received a state grant to launch the Poughkeepsie Marriage Initiative. Curtis and Marry Whitted, directors of the Potter House have had a vision to save marriages and restore families for years. Now with the help of a coalition of pro-family groups, they have received the seed money to begin a work modeled after the Community Marriage Policy™, a strategy that has effectively reduced the divorce rate in more than 200 communities nationwide. Curtis and Mary are graduates of our first Marriage Mentor Class (2008). Our first step is to meet with the clergy of Poughkeepsie to begin bringing the vision into manifestation. You can find out more about the Potter House by logging onto their web site:

[www.potterhouseinc.com](http://www.potterhouseinc.com)

### PORNOGRAPHY STUDY



New Yorker's Family Research Foundation (NYFRF) and the Washington-based Family Research Council released a new study that comprehensively details the effects of pornography on marriages, children, communities and individual happiness. The study, "The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family and Community," synthesizes all available research on the effects of pornography on families and communities. Pornography distorts an individual's concept of the nature of conjugal relations, which, in turn, alters both sexual attitudes and behavior. It is a major threat to marriage, to family, to children and to individual happiness. In undermining marriage, it is one of the major factors in undermining social stability. Social scientists, clinical psychologists, and biologists have begun to clarify some of the social and psychological effects, and neurologists are beginning to delineate the biological mechanisms

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## The Liberty of the Crucifixion . . Rev. Bill Banuchi

During the Easter season we typically think of the crucifixion and the resurrection, the crucifixion being the necessary painful part before you can get to the resurrection –the good part. But I would like to look at the good that can come from crucifixion, namely, freedom! Liberty. Liberty from the hurts and devices of others. You see, you can't hurt a dead man. I challenge you to go to any cemetery, stand by any tombstone, and call the person whose name is engraved in the stone every name in the book and see how they respond. Nothing. You can't hurt him (or her). That person has been set free from your insults or actions. In fact, that person is now free to pursue their own eternal agenda either in heaven or in hell (if they don't know Jesus) without depending on you or anyone else. Can you see why the apostle Paul would say, "I have been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me." (Gal. 2:20)

Until we are truly crucified with Christ we are still in bondage to the hurtful words and actions of others. To the extent that anyone can make you angry, sad, frustrated, unhappy, disappointed or whatever, to that extent they have that much control over you. To the extent that you are controlled by others you are not controlled by God. As the great philosopher (-sarcastic-) Bob Dylan once said, "Everybody's got to serve

somebody."

The apostle Paul was obviously not crucified with Christ literally, but his sense of self-importance and self-will was crucified. That's why he was able to be used so powerfully by God. He wasn't worried about himself. As far as he was concerned Paul was dead. He was now free to be used in any way God wanted to use him. No one could insult him with effect because his reputation was already ruined. God could send him wherever He wanted because a dead man has no plans to go anywhere himself. Paul was totally free to be all God wanted him to be, because Paul was dead to himself so that he could be alive to Christ and His will. He wasn't brought down by insults. He wasn't puffed up by empty praise. No one had control over Paul but God, and God alone.

Yes, we all like to be liked. But when it doesn't come from people do you have the assurance in your heart that you are still loved by the One who knows you best? Do others control your mood, your happiness? If that's the case than it's time to die. It's time to be set free from the control of others. It's time to die to self, and be free to live for Him who died for you. There's no greater joy, no greater privilege, no greater honor,

## Testimony: Resurrected from the Idolatry of Addiction

It has been 5 years since my wife, Ivy, gave me an ultimatum: either we sought counseling or she was leaving me, and taking our two children with her. I got angry (as usual), but I figured I'd go once or twice, just to please her.

Ivy made an appointment with a "Christian" counselor. I wasn't too happy about that. You see, I had been running from God for a long time. I was what people call a "PK" - a pastor's kid.

At that very first session we had to fill out a form that listed potential problems. Ivy checked "addictions." I didn't. So, when Bill asked about it I didn't want to talk about, but Ivy spilled the beans telling Bill & Penny that I was addicted to pain pills, and she went on to say that I was controlled by my meds and she thought they were a big factor in my moods, my anger and my depression.

Ivy turned and looked at me, and I had to be honest. Those pills were my lifeline.

At that point Bill told us if there was any kind of addiction involved it was, in effect, an idol that had to be torn down before any kind of marriage counseling could have any effect. He recommended I go get help for the addiction before we try marriage counseling. I remember thinking to myself: This guy ain't

too smart telling us to go somewhere else. That can't be good for his business. I didn't know Bill and Penny then the way we know them now.

I guess that was the wake-up call I needed. My wife and children moved in with her parents while I went into a 12 month program to work on my addiction. If I hadn't done that I would have lost my family for good. Speaking the truth in love at that first meeting with Bill and Penny sent us on a journey that God used to restore my relationship with Him, then with my wife and children. During my time in the program I threw away my idols, and for the first time I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior. You see, all these years I played the game. After all, my father was a pastor. I knew the lingo, but in my heart while I thought I was in control, the truth is that my addiction was in control. The pills were my god.

When I graduated from the program Ivy and I went back to Bill and Penny for about another year of counseling. But now it was working. I'm sure Bill and Penny could have counseled us in the beginning dealing with just surface issues, but nothing would have really been resolved as long as I had my idol. They loved us enough even then, when they didn't know us, to tell us the truth: the addiction has to be taken care of before any

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**(Pornography study From P.1)**

**TESTIMONY From P. 2**

through which pornography produces its powerful negative effects. Among the study's findings:

- ◆ Men who view pornography regularly have a higher tolerance for abnormal sexuality, including rape, sexual aggression, and sexual promiscuity.
- ◆ Married men who are involved in pornography feel less satisfied with their conjugal relations and less emotionally attached to their wives. Wives notice and are upset by the difference.
- ◆ Pornography engenders greater sexual permissiveness, which in turn leads to a greater risk of out-of-wedlock births and STDs, which in turn lead to still more weaknesses and debilities.
- ◆ The presence of sexually oriented businesses significantly harms the surrounding community, leading to increases in crime and decreases in property values.
- ◆ Child-sex offenders are more likely to view pornography regularly or to be involved in its distribution.
- ◆ Pornography eliminates the warmth of affectionate family life, which is the natural social nutrient for the growing child.

NYFRF President, Rev. Jason J. McGuire said, "For thousands of years Christians have known the truths confirmed in this study. It is the duty of the Christian Church to remind the culture that sex was God's idea, and that His restrictions on sexual activity are just another expression of His infinite love for His creation. Intimacy outside the bonds of marriage (whether actual or virtual) has devastating consequences on the family. God's way is still the best way."

To see the complete study go to [www.nyfrf.org](http://www.nyfrf.org)



marriage counseling could really have effect. The drugs had to go before the relationship could even begin to heal.

A lot has changed in the last five years. I am so grateful to God for putting people in our lives who were willing to speak the truth in love without condemnation. They have taught us so much; things I never knew that I didn't know!

There have been a lot of ups and downs in the last 5 years, but I know God has been my #1 encourager and my partner. Ivy has also been there all the time. God has resurrected the ashes I handed Him when I took the pills off the thrown of my life and gave it all to God.

Five years ago that one 45 minute session set our family on a journey that turned into a marriage saving –life saving- blessing. We are praying that God will use us as Marriage Mentors in the future. I know we have been able to overcome stuff that others are faced with every day. I think we can help. As Bill and Penny say, "One beggar telling another beggar where to find a piece of bread."

Thank God for the victory yet to come. Thank God we can reap the rewards of the resurrection!

By the way, my name is Dan and I've been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and I have a second chance at marriage and life. Praise God !



**Whatever your past was,  
your future is a blank page  
to be written by  
the choices you make today**

This ministry headquarters also serves as a haven for Pastoral and leadership couples to come and set themselves apart to receive from the Lord. Understanding the need for time away from the great demands of ministry, Restoration Nest provides for a time of personal refreshing. This rustic atmosphere invites those who visit to see God's craftsmanship on earth and in their lives.

For more information about the Restoration Nest call Chris and Juanita at **(845) 434-1592** or visit their web site at [www.uhwpsalm91.com](http://www.uhwpsalm91.com).



*I'm my beloved's  
and my beloved is mine.  
-Song of Solomon 6:3*

**RESOURCES AVAILABLE**

On our web site:  
[www.marriageandfamily.org](http://www.marriageandfamily.org)

**FREE!**

- ◆ Marriage Minutes
- ◆ Teachings and Sermons by Bill and Penny Banuchi

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**FOR PURCHASE**

- ◆ Book: "A Threefold Cord"
- ◆ Marriage Saver Seminar on DVD
- ◆ "America Bless God" Bumper Stickers

Also be sure to check the "MARRIAGE EVENTS" calendar to find out what events are happening in your Community.



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**HE IS RISEN!**

Dear Friends,

We pray this newsletter finds you and your family in the very best of His resurrection power and grace.

We're blessed every time we hear of another marriage that was saved through attending a seminar, reading our newsletter or our book (*A Threefold Cord*), or just reading the "Marriage Minutes" that are published weekly and distributed to local churches. In fact, we have been asked by a Christian radio station to record them so they can be played over the air. Please pray with us that we can make that happen. Then there are about 25 couples we see weekly in our counseling room who are doing the hard work to make their marriage all that God wants it to be, and all that their children need it to be. God is so faithful! We are making a difference. Thank you for being such an important part of this ministry. We couldn't do it without your faithful support in prayer and finances. Let's keep fighting for our marriages and families until we see a full blown revival in the land or until Jesus comes -whichever comes first!

May God bless and equip you for the battle!

*Bill & Penny*

