

Reach UP

The Magazine to Empower and Enrich Today's Urban Woman

Winter 2011

4 YEAR BIRTHDAY ISSUE



Faith

Believe -- The Sign, the Mug,
and the T-Shirt

Lifestyle

Bring on the Crowds

It's birthday season, you know.

Have you ever wondered why the mother who gave birth doesn't get the celebration, but the child does? After all, she did all the work and bore all the pain! Yeah, my crazy mind thinks about these things. One thing we can be sure of -- that tradition will never change. We celebrate the new life and make the newborn child the center of attention.

Which brings me to Jesus. Christmas is the celebration of His birth, yet we give each other gifts.

Who more than Jesus gives new life? No one! And the life He gives is eternal. How wonderful to realize that the eternal God took on human form to identify with us to give us eternal life! He reconnects us with the Heavenly Father. That is cause for great celebration!

The truth is, you are the only birthday gift Jesus wants. You make His heart sing. When you make the choice to ask forgiveness for your sins, that makes His sacrifice worthwhile. Your choosing to live according to the Bible is the best gift.

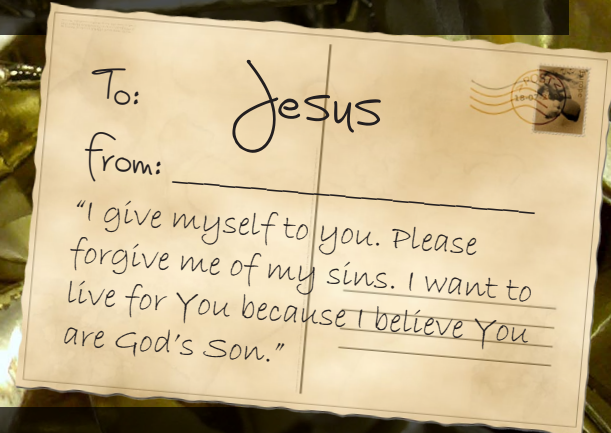
Scripture says that all of heaven rejoices over one coming back to the Father. (LUKE 15:7) Wouldn't you like to peek in on that celebration? I bet it would make even the biggest and most expensive party planners jealous. Can you even imagine the celebration and rejoicing over you? That should not only give you great comfort, but cause you to stand a bit taller today realizing that the King of the Universe is thrilled beyond human imagination over your choice to accept His Son as Savior and live for Him.

So go ahead and celebrate Christmas with family and friends. But take a few quiet minutes and give

Jesus the gift of you. If you've never talked to Jesus, relax. It doesn't take special words. Just be real with Him and tell Him you're sorry for your sins and want Him to forgive you. Tell Him that you know He's God's Son, even if you can't understand how that all works. He'll take it from there. Be sure to tell someone what you did.

Celebrating Jesus,

Crystal Wacker
Editor-in-Chief



P. S. Why not take this gift tag and place it somewhere special to you and Jesus as a special reminder?

This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

JOHN 3:16 The MSG

Table of Contents

Faith

Reach UP	Page 1
Believe -- the Sign, the Mug and the T-Shirt	Page 3
Saying Goodbye	Page 7

Lifestyle

"Reach Up"	Page 4
Bring on the Crowds	Page 5

Editor-in-Chief	Crystal Wacker
Writing Editor	Christina Williams
Spanish Translation	Jodi-Kay Ellis
Spanish Editor	Mona Ré Shields
Contributing Authors	Babs Kincaid Doreen Mytryshyn Jeanette Rivera Crystal Wacker
Graphic Artist	Robert Gibson
Photos	Diana Faruqui

Dreams Do Come True

by Crystal Wacker

Reach UP celebrates its fourth birthday with this issue. Each year is special to me.

Maybe you don't know the story of *Reach UP* and me. I've been told I should tell it so you will know why it's my passion.

Reach UP is actually older than four years old -- more like eight years.

And then the years of preparation took -- well, just about all of my life. God tends to use your life experiences when He calls you to do something.

Going back to the summer of 2003....

I had been asked to speak for a women's retreat at a church in the inner city where I'd worked for nine years.

Many of these ladies were my friends from the ministry or on my route in East New York. I lived as they did in tenement housing.

They knew that I knew what it was like to hear gunshots in the night (or day), smell marijuana through the windows, sweep up coke vials on the sidewalks, stop up the holes in the apartment so rats couldn't squeeze through, guard every belonging so that it wasn't stolen, walk outside 'on guard,' aware of who's around at all times, wear little to no jewelry so as to not attract an attack -- as well as why we get brown water in the summer. They may not have known that in one apartment I had holes in the flooring so big I could see through to the basement or that I had to wear a coat inside if I didn't turn the oven on for warmth in the winter. They knew that I knew what it was like to live in an oppressive environment and pray to God for relief.

"Peace in the Home" was the subject given to me to speak about. I decided we would discuss peace in spiritual terms with practical application.

The response by the women was amazing and immediate. They told me they went home and cleaned the bathroom; others began a total overhaul of their living environment. Something new was happening in old neighborhoods.

That's when the idea of a magazine designed to encourage and empower women came to mind.



Actually, I became ALIVE with the idea: A magazine with articles of spiritual encouragement and practical tips on any number of subjects. The possibilities were endless. I talked about it all the time. I can even recall how its name, *Reach UP*, came up in conversation.

I asked lots of questions and did my "due diligence" trying to figure out how to start a magazine.

Unfortunately, I didn't have enough faith to see how God would help me do what He wanted done. I told the Lord I couldn't do it; I wouldn't do it. I went so far as to tell God in prayer in the summer of 2007 that He had better tell someone else to do it, because it needed to get done.

September 2007.... As I was exercising, I spun around and looked at my computer. INSTANTLY I knew how to start *Reach UP* magazine. It was a God moment. I quickly forgot about Tai Bo and sat down to write out a plan.

The first issue came out on my birthday, December 6, 2007. It's hard to describe how excited I was. Every issue since that first one has almost been like my child.

Since the very beginning, God has blessed us with professional and passionate men and women who have given generously of their talents. We've become a team who loves to encourage women to reach up. Our writers have stories similar to mine of living or working in tough circumstances. They have lived it and overcome.

Reach UP is being read all over the U.S. and in some closed, oppressive nations throughout the world! God has dropped even more dreams in my heart working with the mission of *Reach UP*.

But I just wanted to say, "Happy Birthday" to *Reach UP*! It's such a joy and a delight to bring articles of encouragement to women everywhere, no matter their status or circumstances.



I Got the Sign, the Mug and the T-Shirt!

by Babs Kincaid



I love the Christmas story, and each year I pray that God will show me something new about it. This year, God reminded me of the true meaning of the word *believe* that we read in LUKE 1. There we hear about two divine visits from the angel Gabriel, which led to two different outcomes.

The first person visited by the angel was Zacharias, a priest. It starts out with him serving in the Temple. Gabriel had been sent from God's throne in heaven to bring the miraculous news that Zacharias' wife was going to have a baby. It was big news to someone whose wife was way past having kids – a real show stopper! His response to this news was anxiety and unbelief.

Do you think he might have thought, "Holy cow!?" He was ready for the rocking chair and now he was going to be a daddy! Because Zacharias had such fear and unbelief, God made him unable to talk for nine months. That's quite a long time in the time-out seat. Zacharias missed out on the great rejoicing and celebration because he couldn't believe God could make the impossible possible! In his eyes, the natural order of things were larger than God!

In contrast, Mary received the shocking news from Gabriel that

she, a virgin, would give birth to God's Son, Jesus. Unlike Zacharias, Mary was a poor Jewish girl with no title or status. Mary's response was joy and thanksgiving! She believed God could make the impossible possible! In her eyes, God was larger than the natural order of things.

Mary broke out in song and Zacharias broke out in silence. Because of her faith and belief, Mary got a free three month vacation to celebrate with Elizabeth. Mary surrendered her rights and received the heavenly blessing!

Mary understood what believing is! She said, "From now on all generations will call me blessed." (LUKE 1:48) I think she understood this

seemed to understand that God was in charge and that He was going to make good things happen for her!

Two divine visits led to two different outcomes. Mary got the treasure and Zacharias got the time out. Who do you identify with -- Mary or Zacharias?

Remember, your choices can lead to treasure or time out! Your choices lead to a road of rejoicing and celebration or a road of isolation and regret. One road leads to the mountain top experience and one road leads to the mud hole experience.

I can honestly say, I've done both, so I'm not there yet either. But I want to be able to say to God, "Bring it!" I want to be able to say to my friends, "See ya on top of the mountain!" I am determined to change my thinking and my ways and cross over to the bright believer's side!

All around my home, I have the word *Believe* on cute little signs and wall hangings! I have two mugs which say, "BELIEVE." And I was just given a "BELIEVE" t-shirt and a "BELIEVE" platter! So, I have the signs, mug, platter and t-shirt; do you think I need the purse?

One thing I know. I am going to go

Your Choices can lead to
Treasure
or
Time Out!



truth: "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...." (PHILIPPIANS 1:6) Mary

into the new year determined to meet what comes my way with "Believe!" I believe God's word!

Yea God! Happy Birthday **Reach UP!** How awesome is that?

Reach UP Magazine inspires us to reach up for the Master's Hand and to fearlessly live the rewarding life He planned for us.

This is a poem I wrote a while back based on how I believe Reach UP Magazine impacts all of its readers, including myself.

Babs Kincaid

Cut out and fold to make a Reminder like Babs.

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."
(HEBREWS 11:6)

Believe!

Reach Up

Reach up for the Master's Hand.
He wants your life to be beyond grand.

God never meant for you to travel alone.
Heavenly drops like *Reach Up Magazine*
are gifts from His throne.

You are a lovely Bride in His eyes.
Jesus came to break all your fearful ties.

Your past failures do not define you.
You are family from His point of view.

You weren't created to settle for less.
Dependence on Jesus releases God's best.

Reach up for the Master's Hand.
He wants your life to be beyond grand.

*"Where will my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth."*

PSALM 121: 1, 2

Reach UP is a welcome oasis full of hope and joy, sprinkled with colorful pictures and meaningful life-giving words! I love that it challenges, encourages and inspires women to live strong, free, and satisfied lives because of God's unfailing love for them.

April McCallum
Destiny's Women



Bring on the CRO WDS!

Designs by Doreen Mytryshyn

Make all your friends and family times special!

We asked Doreen Mytryshyn to help us make simple changes to a room when company comes over to watch a game.



Keep mouth-watering fruit within easy reach

Watching a game?

Don't put a bag of chips and jars of salsa on the coffee table. Instead find a basket or a bowl and line it with a napkin or paper towel, print side up, for a nice look. Now pour in the chips for a tasty and fine looking snack.

When you add salsa and dips, be sure to set them out in a dish or bowl to complement your look. If you're serving crackers, layer the crackers on a plate instead of just putting out a box for everyone to grab.

Snack food can also be healthy food. Put your freshly washed fruits and vegetables in bowls or baskets and make them easy to reach. The result is a nice presentation with snacks that says, "Eat me!!"





Easy and warm decorating for Christmas.

Pull out the kids' stuffed animals and bunch them up on the sofa for a fun kids' Christmas.

Use objects you have around your home in Christmas colors. Doreen took a spaghetti jar filled with marbles to use as a colorful candle holder, then added a crown of garland for that twinkly splash. Next she used cut greens from outside for a look that is as cheery as it smells. Note, always keep items in odd numbers, i.e., five boxes, one candle, etc.

A Christmas tree doesn't have to gobble up all your space to be festive

Also, use fruit in your arrangements on coffee tables or kitchen table to naturally encourage family to eat healthy treats.

It's with sadness we tell you that our friend and author, Doreen Mytryshyn went to be with Jesus October 27, 2011. She had been battling an aggressive form of cancer for over a year.

The mission of *Reach UP* was personal to her. After her second husband died, she found herself raising three boys alone and on public assistance. While helping set up this photo shoot she'd say, *"When you don't have money, here's what I did...."*

It would bless her to know that you used some of her ideas and had a great time with family and friends. For she would tell us: Treasure each day as the gift that it is.



Saying



by Jeanette Rivera

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (JEREMIAH 29:11)

Saying goodbye is never easy. Last year was a challenging year for my family. My husband and I and four children are always on the move.

This was the year of planning. We had been planning for a special 10th Anniversary wedding celebration, one that we never got to have. Everything seemed to be going so smoothly. Then one night my husband said, “I feel as if God is saying we are done here [meaning: where we were living and our ministry] -- like we are at a standstill.” Being the strong Latina that I am, I responded, “Are you nuts?! A standstill?” My mind was spinning. We are both finishing our degrees, have four kids and that was just the tip of the iceberg!

But deep down inside I knew he was right. God had also spoken to me, but I didn't want to hear it. Maybe

I just didn't want to say goodbye. Maybe I felt as if some people would feel let down.

This reminds me so much of other things that we think we want or need. We want love, affection, attention, materialistic things, friends, men etc. It can be hard to hold those things with an open hand -- letting go when God nudges us. We don't know how to let go.

But going through this experience has taught me that not only is it okay to let things go, but it is good to trust God when He's first prompts us about something. Even if I am afraid to let go of what I love the most, I must remember that my life is a sacrificial offering to God. In obedience, I let go and trust God to provide for us. I want to follow His plans. If I'm a follower of Christ, I actually have to follow Christ and

give myself as an offering. That's true for all of us.

Saying goodbye is also the beginning of a hello. I know we have exciting adventure ahead of us. Saying goodbye isn't always bad or sad. So I wonder what else I can say goodbye to? It's the start of a new beginning.

What are your struggles? Maybe you'll join me in saying goodbye to loneliness, anxiety, self harm, neediness, bad friendships, envy, the wrong men, sex outside of marriage, drugs.

It can be hard to say goodbye. Just know, the first part of letting go is just saying it! The second part is actually doing it. God's got a plan for you and He will give you a future and a hope!

Happy Birthday *Reach UP!*

It has been my joy to be associated with *Reach UP*. The stories that moved me the most were about the tragedies and abuse that women experienced in the past. I have learned that the past does not have to define who we are today, and that our past does not have to become our future. Someone said, “If you try to change your past, you will always be unhappy.” I love the command that the apostle Paul gave: “Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.” (PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14)

Christina Williams
Copyeditor of *Reach UP*



Given to you by:

