

Beverly Marjeanne Barnett

September 2, 1954 - September 25, 2004

Beverly Barnett gave us an inspiring example of faith in Christ in all circumstances, including during her fourteen-year battle with cancer. Her gentle spirit, commitment, trust, and visible faith in Christ, could be seen by all who came in contact with her. Her love for life, her family, and others was apparent in the way she approached each day, always grateful for another day of life.

Beverly Marjeanne Daly was born September 2, 1954 in Glendale, CA, and died September 25, 2004 in Fairbanks, AK. Married to Timothy Barnett on December 23, 1978, her family life, including sons Jonathan (b. 1987) and Robert (b. 1990), gave her immense pleasure. Aware of the fragility of her life, she decided to write reflections for them, to pass on “a spiritual inheritance, the spiritual treasures I have collected through my years in my walk with God and from my life experiences.” This written treasure of wisdom has blessed her family and many friends as well.

Bev’s parents, John and Margaret Daly, served for many years with Wycliffe Bible Translators in a small village in Southern Mexico. This unusual childhood, shared with her sisters Elaine, Sharon, Kelly and her brother Chuck, taught her to value a life of service. In Mexico at 18 years of age, Bev suffered from hepatitis and encephalitis and was not expected to come out of an eight day coma alive and well. But God miraculously healed her and, in gratitude, she wrote: “God must have had this planned for all of us, because it has taught us so much. It’s taught me to trust and depend on the Lord more and not to worry but to have peace, and to have His words abide in me more.”

The following fall she began to attend Wheaton College in Illinois, graduating in 1977. After her marriage to Tim, she worked first as a teacher, then as an assistant at the Christian camp Tim directed, and then as administrative support at various Christian colleges where her husband worked in Student Affairs. She obtained her MA and license in Marriage and Family Counseling in 1991, and served many clients at Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota in Aberdeen while Tim was Vice President for Student Affairs at Northern State University. Her work at Samaritan Counseling Center in Fairbanks was cut short by the recurrence of cancer.

Bev touched hundreds of lives through her work as a counselor and an active member of the churches she attended. During this recent time of illness, a former client wrote to say, “Because of the confidentiality that surrounded Bev’s work, you may not be fully aware of how God has used her as an instrument to help hurting people like me. One thing that I remember about my sessions with Bev is that she had so much hope for me – she made me realize I had so much potential. She shared about her faith with me, and for the first time in my life, I actually opened my Bible. She had really planted a seed of faith in my life, and when I went to college, that seed began to grow. I don’t know where I would be if it hadn’t been for Bev. When she went to work every day, she did not just offer her clients mental health guidance; she also offered them spiritual guidance.” Another friend from church who had suffered from depression wrote, “I’m so thankful for the honor and blessing to have had Bev in our lives. Flashbacks of the many times she rescued me come rushing through my mind and heart. Oh how she ministered to me!” Another friend wrote to Bev, “Many times after

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talking to you, I thought, 'I wanted to encourage Bev, but she is the one who encouraged me!' I have always been amazed at your positive outlook, your hope in the Lord and your ability to continually reach out and minister to others."

Bev and her family enjoyed fishing, camping, skiing, hiking, traveling, and caring for their two golden retrievers. Her enthusiasm for the move to Alaska included the opportunity to experience the drive across beautiful landscapes in Canada, seeing the wildlife, and visits to Denali Park, the Arctic Circle and the glaciers near Valdez.

Bev's artistic talents included her many performances as an accomplished violinist with orchestras and small groups. She excelled at many crafts, including making pottery, stained glass, and needlepoint, and she left crocheted blankets for her future grandchildren. In recent years she wrote an annual poem to remind herself and others of the amazement and wonder in the Christmas story.

After being a patient at the National Cancer Institute in 1996, Bev was asked to make a square for a quilt which is hung permanently in the foyer. Her written description says:

"My experience with cancer has been a challenging, stretching journey. I climbed the first mountain of a mastectomy, chemo and later radiation in 1991 after discovering a lump under my arm while nursing my second child. I enjoyed a green valley of health for 4 1/2 years, then struggled up a more difficult mountain in 1996 after a recurrence treated by a stem cell transplant. There were dark storm clouds over each mountain (coming to terms with disfigurement, loss of my hair, facing my mortality), and the clouds became black during the complications I experienced following my transplant (severe infection, physical pain and weakness, a temporary colostomy...)

"But the clouds have silver linings – I have become stronger from the challenges of my journey and have grown as a person. My faith in God has been tested and deepened. I am clearer about who I am and what is and what is not important to me. I am more open with giving and receiving love. I live more in the present, aware most days of the gift today is. Throughout my experience I have felt surrounded and supported by so much love from family, friends and my medical team, represented by the heart border. Sometimes I walk in the shadows of my cancer experience (fears of recurrence, anxiety about the future), but gradually the shadows are being washed away by the sunshine, my hopes for a bright future. The dove above my pathway symbolizes God's presence with me each step of the way which has given me strength and peace, and a growing confidence that I'll be OK no matter what the future holds."

The cancer metastasized to her lung in 2001 and intestinal tract in 2004.

Bev is survived by her husband Tim and their two sons, Jonathan and Robert; her parents John and Margaret Daly; three sisters, Elaine (Stephen) Elliott, Sharon (Todd) Cooper and Kelly (Jack) Bradley; one brother, Chuck (Chris) Daly; and twenty nephews and nieces.