

February 26, 2000

Dear Friends,

I am writing to let you know that I will not be attending meetings anymore. This is a decision that I have been praying about for three years. It is not made lightly, and it has been very difficult. In leaving, I know that I am disappointing my family. For that, I am very sorry.

I am thankful for God in my life. I remember when He entered my life--I was about nine, and in meeting we sang, "more precious than rubies can be... to sit at the feet of my Master Divine, and hear when He speaketh to me." Those beautiful words became a song in my heart, and I felt His presence near so often. I trusted Him. I would put my burdens in His Hands, and I could feel His help and care.

My grandma was my mentor. She loved God so much, and would sing hymns every day, with love and peace and joy. I appreciated God's Spirit dwelling within her heart.

I married very young, to a nonprofessing young man, who proved to be abusive. He left me with an infant daughter after three years of marriage, so he could marry someone else. The workers and friends treated me very well. Sharon Rostad helped pull me through some very dark days. William Lewis told me that I would be free to remarry, as long as I remarried within Truth.

When my daughter was four, I met a gentle, dear man at work. I fell in love with him. I knew that I was supposed to marry within. I could have invited him to meetings, and could have tried to convert him.....but I didn't. I tried to run away from God. I left the meetings. I didn't open my Bible, I didn't pray, I did things that my conscience told me was wrong.....For that, I am sorry, and God in His grace has forgiven me. I married my gentle husband, and he is the right one for me. We have had almost nine years together, and we love each other deeply.

Even though I tried to run away from God, He never left me. His still, small voice would speak to me, letting me know He would like to hear from me in prayer. He let me know He was waiting for me. He would put hymns in my heart and mind. He was beside me throughout it all, because I was His child, and He loved me. So, I finally gave up my rebellion and prayed. I went back to meeting, because that is where I always understood God to dwell.

**It was only a few months after I professed again, that my understanding was turned upside down. I was at Emo convention in Ontario, Canada. A brother worker stood upon the platform, and told us about the beginnings of truth. I learned that it is only a hundred years old, started by a man through a revelation from God. I felt physically ill and emotionally distraught. I sobbed into my pillow for much of the rest of convention, praying desperately for help.**

I had never questioned anything about Truth. I thought that Jesus began it, and all throughout

the ages, people have been meeting, just like us. I felt special. I was willing to do whatever I was told, because I thought that Truth was perfect, and the only way to heaven. I thought that everyone else would lose out.

I prayed earnestly and desperately---daily. It didn't take long, and I understood that Truth can't be the only way. God would never let His way die out. I came to understand that Jesus is the Way, and the Truth. I have always known that God is love, and I had tried to live by it, but the rules kept bringing me down. I often felt discouraged, because I fail Him every single day. I knew that if only a small group of professing people were going to make it to heaven, I would not be included. Everyone else was doing much better than I was.

Then I learned about grace. It finally washed over me, that I will never, ever be worthy of heaven---but that Jesus gave us the gift of salvation, by His grace. Pure joy has entered my life. God has answered my prayers. I have so much love for Jesus, and I am so very thankful. I do not fear to live my life anymore, because I don't worry about each failing that I have. I pray for forgiveness, yes. God's Spirit has been filling my heart and life, and I am letting Him lead me.

I have cried many tears of joy and love. God is greater than I ever knew before. I am a part of a network of Christians around the world, of many denominations, who love our Lord. I live gladly in grace, letting the Spirit lead. The works that come as a fruit in my life are a beautiful blessing, because they are from Him. They are His works, that I have been privileged to carry out.

I tried to stay in meetings with this understanding, but it is not working for me. I am frustrated by the "only way" attitude, and the putting down of "false churches." I am saddened when I see people valiantly trying to "be good enough," because they don't seem to have joy. I do not think there is a perfect church. I think that it is all in our relationship with God, and it is very individual. I belong to God. I do not feel bitter toward Truth, and I don't want to hurt those that are there. I am very sorry for hurting those who love me, but I must follow God's leading.

It is still the song of my heart, to sit at the feet of my Master Divine, and hear when He speaks to me.

Love in Christ,

Wendy Schell