

Happy Birthday to my Sister, Virginia Ruth

Author and Director of "The King of Glory" Passion Play

(Written by Yvonne. April 2012)

With tears streaming down my face, I sit watching. Watching. Two thousand miles away, yet by the miracle of internet I am watching ... and reflecting. It's Palm Sunday and scores of people, including the choir, are dressed in costumes of Jesus' time and re-enacting the triumphal entry of the King of Glory to Jerusalem. The voices soar in marvelous harmonies to proclaim "Prepare ye the way." The children wave their palm branches and shout with glee, "Hosanna! Hosanna!" My mind begins to take a backward journey. I'm intimately acquainted with Jesus—the center of this drama; and I'm acquainted with the lady who wrote and designed this presentation. I'm blessed and proud to call her my sister.

My only sister, my younger sister, my little sister....(she lacked two months being five years younger than I)...wrote and directed many wonderful church dramas over the years. However, more than a decade ago, she was inspired to write, "The King of Glory," a magnificent drama of the life of Jesus from birth to resurrection. Hundreds of people supported her vision and worked together for months to build the scenery, sew the costumes, learn the music, and rehearse their parts. Over the years, thousands upon thousands of people have come from far and near often waiting in line for hours to get in. While attending, hundreds decided to become followers of Jesus Christ. All who participated or watched will forever hold that experience in their memory.

But who is this author, this Virginia—this sister of mine—whose drama has impacted the lives of thousands of people? Let me take you back to April 1945.

Sunday, April 8, 1945.

Elzie and Nettie Hively were at the hospital where their daughter, Virginia Ruth, was born. Nearly three years earlier, this young couple had lost a son just after birth due to complications from RH factor. Now their newborn daughter was exhibiting some of these same

issues, and it looked like she too would die. They called for pastors in the area to come to the hospital and pray for her. I remember vividly the testimonies of our parents about how Rev. Ross Taylor touched heaven with his prayers that day. By God's grace, prayers were answered and Virginia Ruth lived and miracles in her body continued to come.

So first of all, my sister was a gift from God—and a miracle. Even though she was given life, I'm sure our parents had a nagging concern about her health. Her first year was rough. She had severe colic, and I remember both Mother and Daddy being up with her often during the night as her cries penetrated the darkness. Those nights soon passed and she grew into a beautiful young lady.

Our family was poor but we children didn't know it. Our parents loved us. Our daddy was an itinerant preacher with bad grammar that faded into oblivion because of his Holy Spirit anointing. We loved him and loved to hear him preach. In whatever small church he was preaching, there were special programs for holidays. Mother saw to that. And she always included us children—regardless of age. **So the seed of communicating the Gospel through drama was planted in Virginia by the time she could talk.**

At the age of 12, Virginia felt the Holy Spirit tugging at her heart and responded to Him. **So now my sister was a follower of Jesus, the daughter of the King of Kings.**

Through the remainder of her school years, Virginia continued to grow spiritually. She made a declaration that she would be a pastor's wife and mother. She met the love of her life—a high school football star who was planning to be a coach. Even though she thought he was **the one**, she had to let him go because his plans were not compatible with her calling. She met another young pastor and a pastor-to-be, but neither was a match. Why? Because **the one** she had thought was **the one** was truly **the one**. James Wright changed programs in the middle of college and responded to the call of God to be a pastor. By God's grace, they got back together and were married. Without question, the marriage of James and Virginia was God's divine call. **So now my sister was a pastor's wife.**

Three weeks ago, they retired from pastoral ministry to pursue their dream of mentoring young pastors and helping small congregations. After their forty-four years in ministry, three children and 13 grandchildren, I sit here at home in Las Vegas watching the Palm Sunday drama as it is webcast from their church in West Virginia. God called them to plant this church nearly 36 years ago and it has grown to nearly 2000 in attendance—a vibrant church of excellence, preaching the uncompromised Gospel of Jesus Christ, with passionate praise and worship, outreach to a diverse population with a myriad of needs, a pre-school, a Bible college, and two growing satellite campuses.

Our daddy was all for the marriage, but our mother was slow to affirm it. Eventually she, too, came to realize it was of God. Today very few people know her life story, but everyone who knows Virginia can see that God indeed called her to be a pastor's wife and mother and in those roles she has truly excelled. Very few people actually know about her writing and programming, but her contributions to Kingdom Ministry will live beyond her life. Just as she and I remember being in those little dramas in the country churches, these children and young people will always remember accompanying *Jesus* down the aisle on the colt and shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." Yes, "The King of Glory Passion Play" is a dream fulfilled that will continue to be performed for years to come.

Thanks, Virginia Ruth—my sister—for being obedient to the vision God gave you. I love you. Happy Birthday! From your big Sis, Yvonne

P.S. Next to Jesus, she loves her family most--husband, children, and grandchildren.

