

THE VISION:

- Bethesda Rescue Ranch
- House of Grace, Place of Outpouring, Land of Restoration
- A retreat belonging to God where broken and weary people can find peace, love and restoration amidst God's creation.
- A therapeutic horsemanship Centre where abused and hurting people are paired up with unwanted and neglected horses to aid healing and restoration in both through the Holy Spirit.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- A name is born 1
- How it all began 2
- God or Chocolate? 2
- Food for thought 4

The Journey

ISSUE 1: CONCEPTION

AUGUST 2011

Why a newsletter?

God is sooooo good and this newsletter is for all of you who have encouraged and inspired me to believe in ALL that God has for me. I would not be here today without many of you and this is my way of thanking you this side of heaven for your input. Scripture says we should "not despise the day of small beginnings" but take each step of faith as it comes and give glory to God in everything, knowing He is faithful and true to fulfil ALL that He has promised. His word is "yes and amen".

Many of you have expressed interest and even amaze-

ment at what God has done in my life and the way He has done it. In sharing the small beginnings of my journey so far, I hope all of you will be encouraged in the



faithfulness of God. He is "no respecter of persons". What is true for me is true for you, too.

I give honour to all of you for your influence and input into my life. Perhaps you don't

think you have really done anything to have had any input. But sometimes it's the smallest thing that has the greatest impact. A simple smile can brighten someone's day. It doesn't take a bible expository or a thunderbolt from the sky for God to speak. On a tough day, having someone simply say "Hello" can change your perspective – instead of feeling low and alone, you suddenly realise the truth of Emmanuel, 'God with us'. Through someone else He simply says "Hello" so we don't forget He is there, right in the middle of our troubles, walking that valley with us.

A name is born

In May 2010 I visited Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch in Oregon, USA to attend a course for those with a similar vision of reaching people for Christ through horses.

I didn't know what to expect except that I would meet like-minded people and see something of the vision God has placed on my heart, in action. It was an amazing experience, full of testimonies I will share in later issues...

The first step to setting up a ranch in the USA is to register the name as a charity. All else follows, and so I returned to England knowing I could not proceed until I had a name. This became the focus of my prayers. And then it came to me...

God had named my house in England many years before after the pools of Bethesda (John 5) where a crippled man was healed and his body restored to full func-

tion when Jesus visited there. Bethesda means 'house of grace' or 'place of outpouring' and the ranch was to be an extension of my home...

The word 'Rescue' came much later as a way to convey God's saving grace and the redeeming power of His blood, and 'Ranch' was to make it known that horses and land were involved.

How it all began



believe in yourself

I was 29 years old when I first discovered church. The Holy Spirit was moving powerfully and people fell over in most of the meetings. It was an exciting time. Thirteen years later it was a very different story. I was really disillusioned with church. Do you ever get that way? Looking at the people and wondering if they really know God at all, if they

really care about honouring Him, or whether they have settled for a ticket to heaven and the mediocrity of home comforts. I can't do that, Lord! I know I was made for more. But I feel stuck here, somehow passed by, watching all my friends move on into their destinies, leaving me behind. Have I done something wrong? Have I missed an opportunity?

Depression was crouching at my door, 'deferred hope makes the heart sick' and I didn't understand, couldn't see what God was doing – that in the midst of an ugly storm He was preparing me for conception.

Whenever I prayed the answer was always the same: "What do you want?"

How does one answer

"Blessed be the God... of all comfort: Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." 2

Cor 1:3-4

God or chocolate?

While at a conference once I heard a message that touched me deeply. The Holy Spirit is our Comforter and we don't need to turn to other things, like food, for comfort. In fact, doing so could be considered sin as we lean on something other than God, allowing it to replace God in our life and become an idol. I had an issue with food. And I prayed the prayer of repentance and forgiveness for my idolatry and felt God's presence,

but immediately after the message we had a coffee break – and there was the food! As I queued for my coffee I prayed in desperation for

God to comfort me in a physical way – to meet my need for comfort so that I wouldn't turn to the chocolate bar that was so temptingly looking at me from the counter. I prayed and prayed and cried and prayed and in my brokenness admitted to God that if my need for comfort was not met before I got to the till, I would be buying the chocolate! I confessed my weakness but also the desire to have Him comfort me alone, the willingness to do things differently, to not need food to fill that hole that only He should fill. I became more specific and more frantic in my praying as the queue slowly diminished in front of me and the chocolate ap-

proached..."Lord, I really need to feel your arms around me, to feel you hold me and love me. I need a person (moved by you) to be your arms to me right now. In my head I know you love me and I know your Spirit is my Comforter, but I NEED to physically feel that comfort right now. I can't stand this emptiness, this feeling of not being loved. If nobody hugs me, I will have to feed on chocolate just to get through the next few hours... I'm sorry, Lord. I really love you, but I can't go home like this..."

I was at the till now. And I bought 5 bars of chocolate!

I found an empty table to



sit at and started to sip my coffee. I was still praying for a miracle as I reached for the first bar, when I heard a voice,



“Excuse me, can I join you for a moment?” A lady I had previously seen in the conference hall was looking at me. Before I could answer she said, “Or we could walk a little, outside?” I looked at her and looked at the chocolate bars and decided to give God one more chance. “Let’s walk...”

The gardens were teaming with people who all had the same idea about taking a walk – not really what I wanted at that moment. We walked in silence towards the fountain, a slight awkwardness between us. “Lord,” I prayed, “I can’t minister to someone now. I’m not strong enough. What does this lady want?” She seemed very nervous. We stopped at the fountain and she spoke. “I’m glad we walked to this spot. It seems very appropriate for what I want to share. I believe God wants you to know how much He loves you; that His love is like this fountain - it never runs dry – the supply is endless.” Then she

seemed really nervous again... “I also believe He wants to show you just how much He loves you... and He has asked me to be His arms and give you a hug.” She held me until all the tears were gone and only His peace remained.

I don’t remember her name, but I do remember her willingness to obey and the impact that had on me. It was God I saw and felt that day, not her, but she was His chosen vessel for me in that hour and it made all the difference.



How it all began - Part II

that?! I don’t know, Lord. Isn’t it supposed to be your will that’s done, not mine? Aren’t you supposed to lead and me follow? What do you want?

“What’s in your heart? I give you the desires of your heart.”

To follow you, Lord. To give you glory. To make a difference.

“If you could do anything, what would it be?”

I don’t know, Lord. I think about the church and I’m not encouraged. I think about ministry and I have no faith it really makes a difference. I don’t

see people wanting to change, wanting to know you. I’ve tried, Lord. I’m fed up trying.

“What do you want?” ...

And so it would continue, round and round, me getting more disillusioned and more frustrated because I wanted answers, not more questions! After several months of this I was more than fed up. Oh God, help me!

“What do you want?”

I don’t know what I want! Silence from heaven. The anger was at the surface now and there was no holding back.

Sack the church! If I could do anything I wanted, I would go and live somewhere beautiful and breed dogs and horses! Well that was it, the truth was out and there was no going back. I felt so selfish, so angry at myself for not wanting something more noble, more self sacrificing, more humble. So much for serving God. My thoughts ranted on for what seemed like half an hour before I ran out of things to think about myself and just waited, in silence, for the response from heaven.

“Yes” He said.

**“What’s in your heart?
I give you the desires of your heart.”**

Bethesda Rescue Ranch

Petra Gashi
11 Birdwood Road
Cambridge
CBI 3ST
England

E-mail: petragashi@ntlworld.com



House of grace

Place of outpouring

Bethesda Rescue Ranch is in the process of being established as a not-for-profit organization in Colorado, USA

All guests will be welcome to stay on the ranch free of charge, whatever their background. The ranch will be funded through donations

Home cooking, family dinners and overnight hospitality will accompany sessions with the horses, freedom to roam and prayer ministry

Personal retreat packages tailor made for each individual will be prayerfully put together as the Holy Spirit leads, to enable healing and restoration for His glory



Food for Thought

Do you rely on daily manna or do you plant and harvest the word God gives you? When the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years, God provided food from heaven in the form of manna to sustain them. But this manna could only be eaten on the day it was gathered and fresh manna had to be gathered the next morning. Once in the Promised Land, provision of food came in a different way. Instead of gathering food on a daily basis, throwing out what had not been eaten the day before and collecting more each morning, the people had to learn to plant, wait and harvest.

I wonder how often we, who have been given the Promised Land choose to remain in the wilderness, asking

God for a fresh word every morning, every gathering, at every conference and prayer meeting, forgetting what was spoken to us the day before and hungering instead



after a fresh word, a new prophecy from heaven. “Taste and see that the Lord is good” we think, wanting a new taste and forgetting that nourishment to the body comes not in the tasting but in the digesting. If we would meditate on the word

God gave us yesterday, fully digesting it for all its spiritual nutrition, allowing it to change who we are and how we act, giving God full permission to imbibe every part of our being with that Word, would we not benefit much more than when we only taste? The Promised Land is a place of sowing and reaping, a waiting and watching what will become of the seed that was planted, a discovery of God’s abundance in the multiplication of that Word as it grows in the soil of our heart. Let us not forget His word to us is not just a lovely feeling or a momentary comfort, but an eternal life-changing power that can transform us from glory to glory into His very likeness, if we will nurture it unto harvest.