



## “I Speak About Christ”: The Greatest Christmas Gift

by Courtney Lemon

While teaching a session in Africa on The Marriage Triangle, Walter Trobisch delivered a closing sermon that remains the climax of our teaching at retreats and small groups in a session titled, The Mystery of Marriage. This sermon is also included in his book, “I Married You”.

Whether single or married, everything we teach comes back to the truths taught in this sermon. I am moved every time I hear or read it. In this Christmas season, we want to share it again. We pray that it blesses you and reminds you of the greatest gift that has ever been given to us - that of Christ, himself.

*“I decided to choose only verses 25 to 32 of Ephesians 5 and read Paul’s message:*

*‘Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be spotless and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body! ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one.’ This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church.’...*

*In the text I just read, the Apostle Paul adds a new dimension to this triangle. He says: ‘This is a great mystery.’...*

*Indeed, I continued, this is a great mystery. But then Paul continues: ‘I take it to mean Christ and the church.’*

*Continued on Pg. 2*

### Mission Statement: *Hope For The Family*

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*Paul says: A man leaves his father and mother- I speak about Christ.*

*A man cleaves to his wife-*

*I speak about Christ.*

*The two become one- I speak about Christ.'*

*I unfolded my wooden triangle again.*

*In other words: The deepest mystery of our triangle is Jesus Christ himself. When I gave you the triangle- leaving, cleaving, one flesh- as a guide for marriage, I gave you nothing else, no one else as a guide except Jesus Christ himself...*

*Because he loves us, Christ left his father at Christmas. He became man. A child in the manger. Did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. Emptied himself. Humbled himself. Was obedient even unto death, even death on a cross...*

*Because he loves us, Christ left his mother on Good Friday...*

*Because he loves us, Christ cleaves to us, the Church, his bride, cleaves to us faithfully and inseparably.*

*The Bible conceives of the alliance between Christ and the Church as a marriage. 'For the marriage of the lamb has come, and his Bride made herself ready' (Rev. 19:7)...*

*It is not always a marriage without crisis. The Church is sometimes a difficult wife. We are ungrateful, disobedient, unfaithful to Christ. We refuse to be subject to him...*

*But Christ never walks out on his wife completely, even if she deserved it over and over. He never goes farther away than the door. 'Behold I stand at the door and*

*knock'...*

*He is always ready with his forgiveness. He sanctified her. He cleansed her. He washed her. Just as a slave washes the feet of his master. He made her appear in splendor. Without spot. Without wrinkle. Without blemish. There can never be a divorce between Christ and his Church. He gave himself up for her. For this unsubmissive, difficult wife, he gave himself up...*

*Because he loves us, he becomes one with us, just as the head and body are one. He shares everything with us.*

*Whatever is ours becomes his. Our poverty becomes his poverty. Our fear becomes his fear. Our suffering becomes his suffering. Our guilt becomes his guilt. Our punishment becomes his punishment. Our death becomes his death.*

*Whatever is his becomes ours. His riches become our riches. His peace becomes our peace. His joy becomes our joy. His forgiveness becomes our forgiveness. His innocence becomes our innocence. His life becomes our life.'...*

*You may forget many things which my wife and I said about marriage, I continued, 'but one thing please do not forget:*

*That Christ left his father for you, because he loves you, loves you personally.*

*That Christ left his mother for you, because he loves you, loves every one of you.*

*That Christ wants to cleave to you, because he loves you, loves you in spite of your not cleaving to him.*

*That Christ wants to become one with you, one flesh, in a very intimate and personal way, because he loves you, loves you eternally.*

## Responding to Our Annual Ingathering

**Again this year, many were blessed by Family Life Mission programs and communications. We are so thankful for the faithfulness of our supporters. Your financial and prayer support have led us through another rewarding year. We trust in the continued partnership that makes this ministry effective in serving couples and families. Pledge cards and envelopes are enclosed for your convenience.**

## **This Fall Couples Enjoy Participating in FLM Small Groups**

This fall Gerrad and Courtney Lemon led two small groups through the FLM Retreat material in a different session format.

They took the weekend retreat material, based on the teaching of Walter and Ingrid Trobisch, and adapted it to weekly evening sessions.

Couples who participated spent time learning about the Biblical teaching on marriage, practical ways to improve their marriages and enjoyed fellowship with other couples.

One participant said she particularly enjoyed the interesting dialogue questions for discussion with her husband.

Small group sessions are proving to be a good option for couples when time or cost is prohibitive to participating in a weekend retreat. Childcare is provided and couples are welcome to donate to the ministry as they are able.

There will be a break in sessions for the holiday season, but we hope to begin new sessions in January or February. Please call or email the office if you are interested in attending or referring someone to be part of a small group.

***Gifts to FLM have been recently received in the memory of Elin Peterson.***

## **New Business Plan for Family Life Mission** *By Linda Sterling*

In October, board members Courtney & Gerrad Lemon, Joyce Cutright, Linda Sterling and Nichole Cravens met to develop the 2010 FLM Business Plan.

Led by Joyce Cutright, they devoted two days of brainstorming to formulate the new plan.

Members began with a situational analysis to identify who we are as an organization, who we serve, and what resources and funding are available. Goals, both short-term and long-term, were set in the areas of ministry, service, operations and funding.

Among FLM's strengths, the group identified the rich history and faith based, Biblical foundation of the organization. They also noted God's divine hand in leading and guiding the ministry by bringing new members equipped with unique gifts and skills required to continue the ministry started by Walter and Ingrid Trobisch.

Among the many opportunities mentioned were the potential to grow the ministry into new formats suited for Bible studies or Sunday School curriculum, growth in book and printed material ministry, continued outreach through small groups, and networking with other existing ministries.

As a part of the process of formulating the new business plan, board members reviewed the plan of action and goals set in the previous year's business plan. They were delighted to discover that most of the short-term goals had been achieved. Because of the financial gifts and prayers provided by Family Life Mission supporters, the organization was able to produce and mail newsletters, hold small group sessions, continue renovation of the FLM Cottage, and print and distribute the Retreat Manual. The Retreat Manual has been sent to ministries throughout the U.S. and in other countries. The FLM board also experienced rejuvenation through the election of first-time board members, Linda Sterling, Treasurer, in 2008, and Loretta Knutson and Gary Soderberg, in 2009.

Board members finished the business plan with a list of goals and a detailed plan of action that sets specific tasks for board members. Goals for 2010 include utilizing the FLM cottage as a ministry tool; updating our Web site, filing system, and membership list; expanding fundraising through garage sales, bake sales and grant writing; and continuing to use and expand our ministry methods.

The Family Life Mission board finds strength in Paul's message to the Philippians, "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*" Philippians 4:13.

## Give an FLM Gift

By Joyce Cutright

The FLM Book Store at

<http://familylifemission.org/bookstore.php>

is a great place for Christmas shopping.

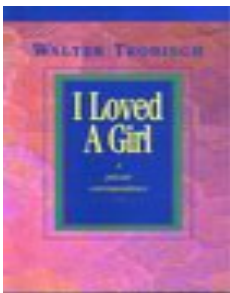
You can also order books by calling

(417) 886-9337.

Ingrid Trobisch Youngdale and Walter Trobisch wrote books that continue to touch hearts and change lives. Books in the FLM Bookstore range in price from \$9 to \$18.



**“On Our Way Rejoicing”** by Ingrid Trobisch is an adventure story appropriate for the young reader or an adult. When God takes away a faithful missionary and father of 10 children, a story of survival and Christian service on multiple continents begins. The story surges with movement, partings and reunion, sorrows and joys, adventure and romance, shining courage, and above all, the warm love that knits together a large Christian family. If you are new to the Trobisch ministry and books, many suggest this is the one to read first!



**“I Loved a Girl”** by Walter Trobisch is also one of the FLM Bookstore selections. It is the first book Walter Trobisch wrote. This deeply moving, direct story has become a classic with its frank answers to frank questions about young love. As a missionary in Cameroon, West Africa, in the early 1960s, Trobisch became intensely concerned about the sexual and

marital problems of the people.

The book shares the correspondence between Trobisch and a young African who sought his help. There are also letters from the young African's girlfriend and another pastor.

Linda Sterling said the book reassured her that even established couples can sometimes struggle with communications including expressing their needs. Linda and Husband Rick have been married for 32 years.

“In the book Walter and Ingrid Trobisch struggled at times with their own relationship, but they grew together as the book progressed and that was encouraging,” said Linda.

It has been said that “Walter Trobisch was like the Dr. Dobson of Africa. Although set in a different time and culture, the message in “I Loved a Girl” speaks to our society, who also needs Walter Trobisch's wisdom and spiritual guidance concerning young love and marriage.

The book has been translated into more than 50 languages.

## Family Life Mission

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### Sponsoring a stay at the FLM Cottage for that special couple is another great gift idea.

The cottage, located on the FLM Property, Springfield, Mo., is a cozy retreat with bedroom, bathroom, library, and living room with kitchenette. You can book the cottage for private renewal and relaxation, or you can experience a one-couple to one-couple retreat with FLM Retreat Coordinators, Courtney and Gerrad Lemon.

David Trobisch, after a stay in the FLM Cottage, wrote this in the cottage guest book - “A hospitable place. A home away from home. A home on my way home. A home.”

To the right is a recent guest book entry from a couple who has shared 60 years together.

**There is a small donation suggested for a night's stay at the FLM Cottage. We also welcome love offerings to provide this service.**

**For further details, or to book a private renewal stay or a retreat weekend call (417) 886-9337.**

