

Letter to Pastor and Other People's Letters is a series of letters that introduced me to the concept that "All that glitters is not gold" (Shakespeare). Perhaps you have been there but shame and embarrassment have robbed you of the opportunity to give voice to your testimony. Let me encourage you by stating that giving voice to this particular testimony put me on the road to deliverance and recovery.

## **Letter to Pastor and Other People's Letters**

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*Letter to Pastor*  
and  
*Other People's Letters*



*Dr. Yvonne A. Anderson*

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## *Introduction*

*When Jesus comes to live on the inside of the believer, His light and life are shed abroad in the heart of the person who has made a quality decision to receive Him as Lord and as Savior. By the same token, the believer is then charged with the task of letting his light shine in someone else's life. Letting your light shine where light already exists is fine, but a light among lights yields little distinction; however, the light that shines in the darkness will dispel that same darkness. It is my belief that darkness does not have to be associated solely with the unbeliever. I think that even we, as believers, have areas in our lives that may still yet be in the darkness due to spiritual immaturity, disbelief, ignorance, disobedience, rebellion, etc.; in which case, we are all in need of light (understanding, revelation, mind renewal, etc.). None of us have arrived, but we are encouraged as the apostle Paul reminds us in Philippians 1:6 that Jesus is still doing a good work in all of us, and that He will bring it to its full completion.*

*The believer can share his light with other believers and non-believers when God gives him experience and/or testimony in Him. While testimonies are good and beneficial, they encourage us*

*to continue believing in God and His ability to set free, to deliver, to make whole, and most importantly, to save.*

*Without a verbalization and sharing of our testimonies, the Body of Christ will continue to reinforce the existing "culture of silence;" in which case, a false sense of security within ourselves is nurtured and conveyed to others. I don't mean this in a negative way, but God wants the props of self reliance to be knocked out from under us so that we can totally and completely rely on Him.*

*As believers, we sometimes walk around giving each other the impression that we have never been through anything when the reality on the inside may be that we are hurting, suffering, and/or full of various types of physical, emotional, and/or mental pain. An even worse case scenario is when we refuse to share with others out of the fear that someone else will see through the exterior façade that we have created. We may also fear that people will use any shared information against us and/or be judgmental, and to be honest, sometimes they do. The irony is that when we experience difficulties that eclipse the day to day normalities, we seek companions who can offer commiseration through their account of what their experience was like, how they went through it, and how they survived.*

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*I didn't know for the longest time that someone else was waiting on my testimonies about the goodness of God. No one ever explained that to me. In retrospect, I think that silence carries with it an element of selfishness. Sometimes, we are so focused on ourselves in the midst of the situation that we may forget that there are others out there who are going through something similar. As a matter of fact, we can sometimes be so self-focused that we may be insensitive to and overlook others in the process.*

*What a blessing we could be to one another during these times if we would just begin to share one with another, become transparent, and allow ourselves to remember the things that God has done in our lives in times past. As I stated earlier, He has already been and will continue to be at work in our lives, and just because a challenge or two comes our way, it will not alter nor impact the will of God which is the Word of God from working effectively in our lives. He is not caught off guard concerning you and me because a situation or circumstance has arisen, and it is so vitally important to remember that these kinds of things do not change the will of God. Jesus told us upfront that in the world, there will be tribulation, but we are to "cheer up" because He has*

*already overcome the world depriving it of its ability to harm us (John 16:3).*

*In some instances, shame and embarrassment robbed me of the opportunity to share with others. I was so concerned about what people would think of me. I loathed their anticipated judgment. Perhaps you have felt that way too? Let me encourage you by stating that giving voice to this particular testimony put me on the road to deliverance and recovery. By sharing, I now had an opportunity to love someone else and allow them to love me, in both instances, with the love God. While my faith in God was being stirred up and strengthened via the process, I could also encourage someone else to hold on to His unchanging hand through the power of my testimony. Allow me to take this opportunity to remind you, as well as myself, that testimonies are powerful. We must remember that our duty as Christians is to win souls for the Kingdom of God. Testimonies can be instrumental in this process.*

*Remember that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), and what He does for one person, He will do for another. When was the last time you shared your testimony with someone else? When was the last time that you became so transparent that someone else accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? The bottom*

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*line is to become an “everyday” Christian who is “ever ready” to be a witness for Christ in thought, in word, and in deed.*

*I beg to put before you my testimony of hurt, brokenheartedness, betrayal, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, disappointment, disillusionment, and finally deliverance and restoration. I discovered the hard way that “All that glitters [in the Body of Christ] is not gold” (Shakespeare).*

*Please note the dates of each of the following letters as you read them. They were written at various times to provide an outlet for my feelings with the utmost honesty and sincerity of heart. In some cases, you may notice a more recent date and/or time reference. They have been added to provide understanding for the reader.*

*My letters are followed by an aftermath and an epilogue. They are what they are. I invite you to extract your own meaning and applicability from them as you read, but I also encourage you to get understanding via the Holy Spirit.*





## *Letter #1*

*May, 2003*

*Dear Pastor,*

*Permit me to take this opportunity to thank you for calling recently, via the telephone dial out system, to wish me a happy birthday. I appreciate the fact that you would take time out of your busy schedule to acknowledge me. Your telephone call was truly the highlight of my day. I was so excited about the call that I saved the message and invited my family members to listen in on the extension. We were all completely overwhelmed and just plain thrilled to hear from you, and even though the call was prerecorded, it meant a lot to me personally.*

*If this is part of the effort being made throughout the church to assist and shepherd members, especially new ones who are transitioning into the ministry, by all means, keep up the good work, I applaud your efforts!*

*As a former partner with the ministry, who lived out of state, I want you to know that my spirit was continually challenged to mature through the television broadcasts. From them,*

*I received so much in the way of how to live the life that God has predestined and prearranged for me to live.*

*Now that I have moved and relocated to become a new member of the church, I feel like the bar of expectation has been raised even higher in the area of spiritual maturity for me. Because I am here, I am now able to hear and receive the Word of God "real time" on a regular basis as opposed to being limited to watching a television broadcast of a service. I thank God for the television broadcasts. They have certainly been a blessing to me, but I love being able to be present during the live services.*

*In retrospect, I can remember that when I would watch the television broadcasts, I would wish with all of my heart that I could be there. I would daydream about being a member of the congregation and what it would be like to be a part of something wonderful and exciting. God was giving me a vision, even then, for what was to come. I was hungry for a more intense level of the Word of God, and I was receiving some of that from the television broadcasts.*

*As a partner with the ministry, I wanted to visit the church and the ministry each year that it was opened and made available to the partners, but money was always an issue, and the lack of it*

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*prevented me from taking the necessary steps to arrange a visit. Furthermore, I lived in another state, approximately 800 miles away, and that in itself was a huge challenge for me.*

*You taught a message once on being in the place in which God has called you to be: "A Place Called There." The Bible says that the Lord told Elijah to go to a certain brook, and "there" He had commanded the ravens to feed him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evenings (1 Kings 17:2-6). Although I heard the message several years after becoming a member of the church, this Word only served to confirm what I originally heard from the Lord about moving and joining our church some years earlier. I hadn't missed Him on what I thought He was telling me to do, and I was so glad that I had obeyed His instructions.*

*Relative to arranging the move to join our church, I didn't know that God chooses our church for us. Along with so many others, I thought this choice was mine to make. Although I was not one to float from church to church, I thank you for clearing up this matter for me by giving me some understanding during one of the messages. I had never heard about the idea of God choosing the church for His children. Furthermore, like Elijah, I have come to a*

*certain brook (our church), and God has fed me bread and meat in the mornings along with bread and meat in the evenings (1 Kings 17:6). I realized rather quickly that I had never had this kind of opportunity to mature in the Lord, and I planned to take full advantage of it.*

*One of my friends told me later that she would observe me in service during my new member days. She said, "Yvonne, you always looked so hungry when you came to service." I was hungry. I had never eaten spiritual food like that before, and because I continued to draw near to God, He matured me quickly. I received more spiritual maturation and manifestation in those first few years, at my place called "there," than at any other previous time in my life, and I want to thank you for being a vital part of that maturation process.*

*At the time appointed by God, I finally made it to the annual partners' convention. I had expressed a desire to visit during this time, and in a roundabout way, a member of the congregation heard about my desire. In response, he sent two airline tickets for my daughter and me to fly over the 800 miles that it would take for us to be "there" at the appointed time. I knew that this had to be God and His timing because as I stated earlier, I couldn't afford to*

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*take on the expenses that would have been associated with the visit. I was on my way and extremely excited about the possibilities of being “there.”*

*On the very first day in the city that would later become my new home, I arrived early enough to attend the mid-week Bible study. At the end of the service, I heard the Lord tell me to join the church. At first, I wasn't sure about what I had heard even though what He was telling me to do echoed in my spirit. I began to search through my mental rolodex in search of a rationale for what I had just heard, but I couldn't find one. At the time, I didn't know nor did I understand that what I had heard had to be spiritually discerned which is the reason why my natural mind could not make sense of it. Join the church? Lord, are You serious? I scarcely allowed myself the opportunity to enjoy the thought because I already knew that a move like this would present many challenges.*

*Knowing the type of person that I am, along with the way that I think, the Lord followed up His instructions by reminding me that He had given me His Word several months before by taking me to Genesis 12:1-3. He told me, for my advantage, to go away from my country, from my relatives, and my father's house to a land that He would show me. “There,” He would bless me with an*

*abundant increase in favor, make my name famous and distinguished, and allow me to dispense good to others. He said that He would also bless those who blessed me and curse those who cursed me.*

*When I heard His Word months before my visit, I was thinking along the lines of a job change. It never occurred to me that the move would actually require me to pick up and move to a state in which I had no friends or relatives. As a matter of fact, I had never even visited the state until the partners' convention that took place that year. I had been actively seeking a new job, since receiving my doctorate in education, a short time before I received the Lord's instructions relative to a making a geographical move. I thought that the Lord was opening up a new local door for me in the employment arena, but in hindsight, I realized that if that door had been opened, I would not have moved to my place called "there," and my new job would have been my excuse for not moving and disobeying God.*

*I don't mind telling you that everything associated with what God was telling me to do was extremely overwhelming for me to mentally process. I had clearly heard from God, and I knew what He was requiring me to do, but I wasn't ready to carry out His*

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*instructions. I was afraid of what I did not know so much so that I chose to temporarily push it all to the back of my mind. I just wanted to enjoy my visit to the church during the partners' convention without having to try to figure out the impact upon my life of what the Lord was telling me to do. I finally realized that He wasn't asking me to apply any reasoning to the situation. He simply wanted my obedience and child-like trust in His knowing what was best for me.*

*I am sure that you can imagine that I had all kinds of questions for God. If I was obedient and followed through with His instructions, I knew that my life would be changed forever and thank God that I was right. I can honestly say that my life in the Lord is so much fuller now than it would have been had I remained where I was when He called me. It was a lot like living in Lo-debar (2 Samuel 9:3-4) only I didn't know it then. In my ignorance, I was content to go on living both my natural and spiritual lives there. We can only do better when we know better, but we have to be careful to realize when God is imparting understanding to us and not reject it out of ignorance and/or disobedience. I have learned that, initially, it will not make sense to the mind, but the spirit will receive and understand it. The mind catches up eventually.*



*On the final day of my visit, during the Sunday church service, God chose to deal with me again. He had not changed His mind about His original instructions; and as a result, I heard him say the exact same thing that I had heard Him say just a few days before during the mid-week service. This time, He added that if I didn't follow through, I might not have another opportunity. I didn't know then that God was not obligated to bring that or any other opportunity my way again. With my mind racing in several different directions, I ran to find the individuals who would take my new member information so that I could join the church.*

*OK, so now what? You may recall that I stated that I had made the trip with my daughter. My husband was at home. I had to now return home and trust God. If this was really His will for me, He would have to work things out for me and my family. As I stated earlier, there were a number of challenges that presented themselves to me, and after I got tired of trying to overcome them in the flesh, I turned each and every one of them over to God, and He worked them all out. This testimony can be found in my first publication entitled Meditations of the Heart, Life Lessons for Renewing the Mind, Volume 1. It is listed in the table of contents*

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as “Put out into the deep [water], and lower your nets for a haul” (Luke 5:4).

*A short time later, my family and I made the move to our place called “there,” and I became a new member of the church, possessing undaunted excitement. I even allowed myself the pleasure of feeling special as a new member. During my initial visit, I had heard other members, during the corporate prayer time, praying for new members to come from the North, South, East, and West. Well, here I was, folks, answered prayer from the North. Aren’t you all glad? Be sure to receive me.*

*Call me naïve in that I lacked the spiritual maturity that I have now, but I can remember being greeted with the anointing each time I would enter the church lobby. It saturated the air so strongly that I could feel it all over me from my head down to my feet. I could even inhale it. That’s how intensely I felt it when I came through the lobby doors. When I watched the broadcasts, I could feel it then as well, but it was less intense. During the early days of my church attendance, I had the opportunity to be seated near the front of the sanctuary, and I could sense the anointing emanating from you so heavily that I couldn’t even hold my head up to look you in the face. I was always respectfully in awe of*

*God's anointing in and on your life. I remember thinking that now that I was a member; I could partake of that anointing because I was going to sow into it. With this understanding, came a desire to be a true and sincere armor bearer. I wanted to assist and serve your position as pastor as well as God's authority in you through the ministry. Allow me to clarify the previous statement. I was not seeking any position to serve you beyond that of a simple congregation member serving in one of the sub-ministries. I understood that by helping you to fulfill the vision that God had given you, God would raise up others to help ensure that my dreams and visions were fulfilled. Additionally, I knew then, as I know now, that respect and submission would be vital characteristics of any effective armor bearer, and I pray that God never allows me to take what He has placed in you for granted. I never want to slip over into complacency, inattentiveness, familiarity, or insensitivity to God or to the anointing that He has placed upon your life.*

*No matter where I am or what I am doing, the Lord continually reminds me that I am on an assignment that is not about me. It's about His will and what He's trying to accomplish through me. I am so grateful that you have answered the call of God on your life so that I might have the opportunity to not only*

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*do my part by serving in the ministry, but in the process, continue to discover and fulfill the will of God for my own life.*

*In closing, I just want to say that I love you with all of my heart, and I thank God for a man who studies to show himself approved (2 Timothy 2:15), and one who is a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22) who will continue to fulfill the will of God for his life. I will continue to lift you and your family up in prayer and support you in every possible way.*

*I look forward to the day when I can be more of a blessing to the ministry.*

*His Love and Mine,  
Yvonne A. Anderson  
A new member*

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