

Extra

“The two highest callings of all Christians are to love God and to love others. Enough said.”

Jane N. Geiger,
M.A., D.Min

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A bit of grace in a busy world

By Mary Ellen Stancill
Special assignments writer

For 20 years, Jane Geiger, M.A., D.Min., has dedicated her life to serving others as a professional counselor and more recently as an ordained minister, public speaker and author. Though the average burnout for counselors is a mere two years, Dr. Geiger's contagious, upbeat attitude, passion and enthusiasm for her career remain steadfast.

“It's so encouraging because people get well, marriages get well, teenagers decide that their parents aren't evil and will speak to them at the dinner table,” said Geiger. “I'm not close to burnout because that's how encouraging Christian counseling can be.”

But Geiger didn't start her professional life as a counselor.

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Coupons in college

Coupons in college or as a young adult can really save you some money when you're on stipends, student loans or an allowance. Not all students can work,



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Ministry includes book series, tolerance training

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She worked in marketing before she felt the call to counseling and quit her job to go back to school. “My boss thought I was a complete nut for walking away from the money and success,” she said. Geiger enrolled in UAB’s graduate school of counseling and has never looked back.

After working in private practice for several years, Geiger founded Grace Ministries Inc. in 1996, a nonprofit organization offering counseling based on Christian principles, open to anyone no matter their beliefs or background, and supported by donations with patients paying what they can afford. Her practice attracts a diversity of patients — Christians, Buddhists, atheists, gays, Native Americans — all seem to find their way to Geiger’s practice. “The two highest callings of all Christians are to love God and to love others. Enough said,” explained Geiger of her eclectic client base.

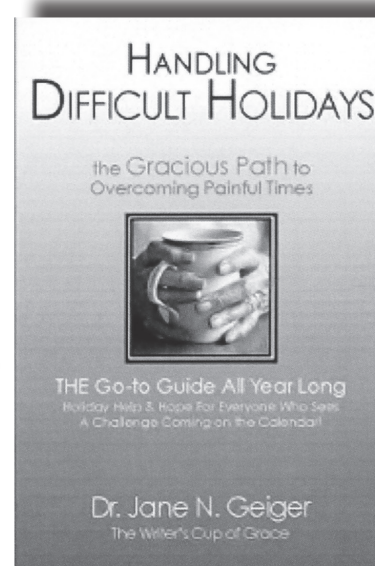
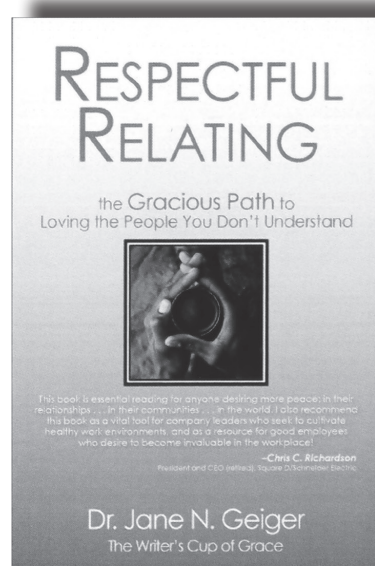
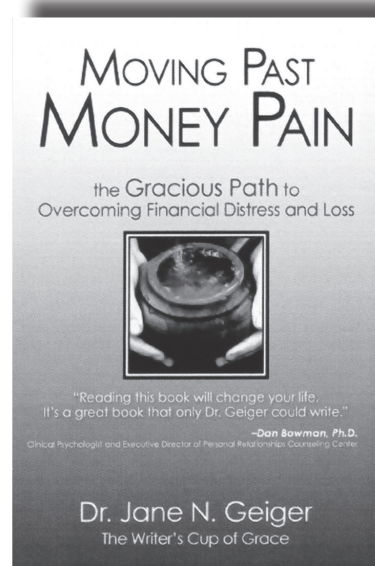
What began in a single rented room in an office space on Southside has now expanded to include offices in Birmingham and Chattanooga, with five additional counselors on staff — Alicia L. Scott, Scot Simmons, H. Edward Stone, Ph.D.; Lillian Barnwell, M.A. and Duane L. Wade, M.A. — covering an array of specialties. “Less than one percent of all counseling practices are set up the way we are,” Geiger said. Because it’s a nonprofit, Grace Ministries is not dependent on insurance payments and can keep all their patient info confidential.

And though it takes a lot of time and energy to run a successful nonprofit and work as a counselor, Geiger and her staff have found time to expand Grace Ministries to include a successful publishing



**Jane Geiger,
M.A., D.Min**

Founder of Grace Ministries and Writer’s Cup of Grace



arm, Writer’s Cup of Grace. Over the past year, they have also launched two programs targeting specific needs: the Divorce Wellness Center as well as the Respectful Relating series, teaching tolerance on college campuses.

Through Writer’s Cup of Grace, Geiger has published three books — “Moving Past Money Pain,” “Handling Difficult Holidays” and “Respectful Relating.” A fourth book under the working title “Divorce Wellness 101” will be published later this spring. Geiger said each of these books came out of practical responses to her clients’ needs. “We’re always booked during the holidays,” explained Geiger. “I told the (Grace Ministries) board, I could work through issues with sessions every day, but it will save us a lot of time for me to just write a book.”

This year, Grace Ministries launched Divorce Wellness Centers in Homewood and Chattanooga. “Christians who divorce, especially in the Deep South, often feel like they are part of a smudged, underground group of damage-labeled less-thans,” said Geiger. “Our goal is to bring the reality and the virtue of a good divorce to the forefront.” Services range from premarital counseling and divorce prevention to divorce adjustment counseling. “We are pro-marriage and pro-divorce both,” said Geiger.

“Grace, not judgment, for those who need healing balm while they go through this painful process.”

Through the “Respectful Relating” project, Geiger travels to college campuses throughout the country, speaking and training students where race, gender and sexual orientation issues have caused tension, suicide and harm. “All painful encounters on these campuses may be turned into redemptive spiritual fruit,” said Geiger.

“Our goal is to help people get well, and we rarely schedule weekly appointments,” said Geiger. “We give a lot of outside homework and trust the growth and healing process. ... Coming to counseling at Grace, for a large portion of our practice, is like going for a well baby visit. It’s a check-up, maintenance, preventive.”

Grace Ministries is located in downtown Homewood. In April, Grace Ministries celebrates its 15th anniversary with events and fundraisers throughout the coming year. Please visit www.writerscupofgrace.com for more information.

Food



Whiskey livens up wild salmon

By Linda Gassenheimer
McClatchy Newspapers

Salmon, potatoes and whiskey combine to star in a perfect, quick dinner. It takes only a few minutes to saute the salmon. The sauce is made by adding lemon juice and whiskey to mayonnaise. Broccoli and potatoes complete the meal.

Start the potatoes first and the entire meal can be made in 20 minutes. This dinner has 570 calories with 38 percent of calories from fat.

Whiskey-Soused Salmon

Olive oil spray
10 ounces wild salmon fillets
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1/4 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon whiskey
Several sprigs of watercress (optional)

Heat a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Spray with olive oil spray. Add salmon and saute 5 minutes, turn and saute 4 more minutes for a 1-inch thick fillet. If thinner, saute 4 minutes, turn and saute 2 minutes. Test by pulling the flesh away with the point of a knife. It should be opaque, not translucent. Remove to individual plates.

Whisk mayonnaise, lemon juice and whiskey together in a small bowl and spoon over salmon. Place several sprigs of watercress on the side.

Broccoli and Potatoes

1 pound red potatoes, washed, not peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces (about 2 1/2 cups)
1/2 pound broccoli florets (about 2 1/2 cups)
2 teaspoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1/4 cup snipped chives

Place potatoes in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Cover with a lid and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower heat to medium and simmer 10 minutes. Add the broccoli florets and continue to

cook, covered, 5 minutes. Drain. Remove to a bowl and toss with olive oil and salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with chives.



Junior’s Mushroom Barley Soup

1/2 cup dried mushrooms, preferably shiitake or porcini
1 cup boiling water
3/4 cup peeled and diced carrot
3/4 cup diced onion
1/2 cup diced celery
1 cup pearl barley
4 cups water, more if needed
4 cups beef or chicken broth, more if needed
Salt and pepper

In a large, heavy-bottom saucepan or small pot, soak the dried mushrooms in the boiling water until hydrated, about 15 minutes.

Stir in the carrot, onion, celery and barley, along with the water and broth. Bring the liquid to a simmer over high heat.

Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer, loosely cover and continue to cook for about 2 hours, until the barley is tender and the flavors are developed. Add additional water or broth to the soup to thin as desired, and season to taste with salt and pepper. This makes about 1 quart of soup.

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and for those of you who work three jobs for spending money, you have to know by now that your money and time are valuable. That’s why you want to stretch it and save it for the big things – road trips or entertainment – instead of spending it on basic needs.

So what did I say?

1 School supplies are a great way to start saving money – you buy new notebooks, gear, supplies etc. each semester. I used to work in a bookstore, and I know some of the prices can be totally undercut by using coupons or reward card programs at office supply stores. www.staples.com, www.officedepot.com and www.officemax.com all have rewards cards. Basically, you earn store credit with your purchases.

2 Learn how to shop at Walgreens, Rite Aid and CVS, all of which have in-store credit rewards programs. Basically, you buy certain items that earn in-store credits. Use your coupons to help pay for those items. Then you’ll earn instant in-store credit to use on something else, like make-up, toiletries, hygiene items, etc.

3 Avoid the Freshmen 15 by only eating out when you have a coupon good towards the meal, not a free appetizer or dessert. Those are low-cost loss leaders that restaurants use to get you in the door. If you get a coupon for a free entrée, use it. If not, consider passing it to someone who will. You’ll save money, spend less, and save on calories too.

4 Student ID discounts are gold and are everywhere. Always ask if establishments give student discounts. It doesn’t hurt. Don’t forget the CampusSpecial – offers deals on stores, restaurants and more. It’s a free service. Find out more at www.campuspecial.com.

5 Be frugal in areas in which you don’t want to spend a lot of money. This will help you save more money for the road trips, entertainment and concerts you’ll want to hit with your friends. The more money you save on toiletries, food, hygiene, school supplies, paper products and more, the more money you’ll have for having fun.

Stay up-to-date on the latest free offerings from Birmingham’s Bargain Mom Christie K. Dedman. Follow her at www.facebook.com/birminghambargainmom and <http://blog.al.com/bargain-mom>.