

Faith on the Move

By Sheila Johnson

There were times in my life when I thought that I should give up on dreaming, because each dream seemed to meet a dead end. My vision of becoming a medical doctor was blind-sighted by my Mother's refusal to allow me to accept a full ride scholarship to a college or university outside of my hometown. I attended the University of Texas at El Paso and majored in biology but dropped out after the second year with no interest of ever returning to earn a degree. But I kept the vision in my mind and in my heart, and I believed that my faith in God would one day allow me to finish my education in my desired field of study.

My hope of becoming a nun was shattered when my mother had a nervous breakdown immediately after I voiced my desire at the dinner table. But I kept the vision of one day taking those sacred vows in my mind and in my heart. My faith in God allowed me to move past the dinner table disaster and glean the humor in Sally Fields' *The Flying Nun*, which proved to be a temporary band aid for my bleeding heart.

My desire to one day becoming a pastor was shaken when the pastor (my uncle) of the church that my family attended told me that women could not become pastors. So I continually asked God the question, "Why not women pastors?" But I kept the vision in my mind and in my heart, steadily pushing forward with my faith in the driver's seat.

I've had many shattered and delayed dreams over the years, including a failed marriage, career opportunities gone sour, and the desire to teach in a foreign country. But hindsight tells me that God prepared and continues to prepare me through my life's experiences for each new and unseen adventure that continue to flood my days with joy. Through faith, I earned a degree in counseling, finance, and pastoral care. Through faith, I pastored a church for eight years and served as a chaplain for over sixteen years. Through faith, I raised three amazing individuals. Through faith, I became a home owner in a wonderful community. Through faith, I am able to express myself through the speaking, cooking, writing, textile, and painting arts. Through faith, I've traveled to many beautiful places in the world. Through faith, I've been given an awesome opportunity to discern what I love in life and what my life loves.

Step by step, block by block, mile by mile, journey by journey, my faith has, does, and will continue to move me to awesome places and to awesome people. My faith moves me.