

Ladies Retreat Friday 16th – Sunday 18th May 2008

Venue: Cefn Lea Park, Dolfor, Newtown, Powys SY16 4AJ, Wales

We thank God for the marvelous time we had at Ladies Retreat 2008!

Our ladies piled on to the coach on the afternoon of Friday 16th May with expectant hearts and minds geared for worship, ready to get away from the hustle and bustle of life to focus solely on our Saviour. We arrived in Wales and were blessed by our very surroundings. We marveled at the Lord's masterpiece in creating the Welsh mountains and valleys. We were miles and miles away from home but ready to draw closer to God in prayer, devotion and self-examination.

Our God-inspired theme was ***"Empty Me from Self Oh Lord"***. The coordinators were Sis Jennifer Thompson and Sis. Wilhelmina Brown and they did a sterling job in putting the retreat together with the Lord's guidance. From the first song during Friday night's devotion, we just knew that God was with us as we could feel his sweet spirit. The accommodation was very modern and comfortable. We were truly blessed when the Lord provided a car, YES, a car, for one of our sisters to use to ferry our elder ladies between our living quarters and our meeting room. One of the managers at the complex simply handed his car keys over to us telling us we could use his car for the weekend.

This article could never do justice to describing the way the Lord manifested himself to us over the next two days. The programme on Saturday was jam-packed. Sis Jennifer started the day with a wonderful devotion on the theme. We sought the Lord in earnest prayer asking Him to empty us so that we would be ready to do his will. In the morning session on the Saturday there was a time of healthy debate on subjects that are pertinent to the Christian woman. We learned from one another and bonded with each other as we shared our experiences and testimonies. It was truly a special time.

In Pastor Beverley Anderson's message, she challenged the congregation with the question ***"Is thine heart right with God?"*** Pastor Anderson conducted a powerful demonstration where she had a transparent jar containing numerous slips of paper. Everyone was encouraged to take one and to keep whatever word was written on their slip, to themselves. Whatever the word said, we were to accept it as being something in our lives that we need to get rid of in order to move on in God. Once the jar was empty, Sis Anderson filled it with sweets and gave everybody one. The sweets were 'moreish' and Sis. Anderson showed us that when we are empty from self, God could fill us up with all good things and leave us wanting more! The demonstration was visually effective and we thank God for the inspiration he gave to her.

The Holy Ghost was certainly on spot because Sis. W. Brown's presentation, entitled ***"What is in your Box?"*** followed the same line as Pastor

Anderson's. We were all given empty boxes which Sis. Wilhelmina had pre-filled with bits of paper. She encouraged us to look into ourselves and see what needs to be removed for God to have his way. It was a valuable demonstration. The ladies felt such release when they were then told to empty their boxes into a rubbish bag. Oh the joy of that moment! We worshipped God throughout.

I thank God for speaking through me as I preached on the topic **“Set your House in Order; Get your Vessels Right”**. I was moved by the Lord to focus upon the importance of his house being clean and tidy. In the same way that we see to it that our own homes are clean and germ-free, buying products to meet every domestic need, we are to look to keep the house of God clean with the same diligence. The Lord's presence could be felt in the sanctuary and I thank Him for His leading.

We were blessed by special singing from Sis. Angela Clarke. Other songs on the programme included old favourites like **“Whiter than Snow”**, **“Cleanse Me”**, and **“Jesus is Tenderly Calling”**. We were blessed in our singing; we clapped, knocked the tambourine and sang praises to the Lord. We reflected on Saturday night on the experiences we had already had and there was one more day of the feast to come!

Words cannot explain Sunday 18th May 2008. To describe it in one word, **“FIRE”**. The programme was entirely the Lord's. There was no set time, no set plan, God was in absolute control. Despite it being Day 3, the ladies were in no way tired. I discarded my pen and notepaper after a while because there was no time to write anything down. The Lord just had his way with us. We tarried together in prayer, and that was it! Some were on their knees, some prostrate, some standing with arms outstretched, there were shoes that had been kicked off around the altar, the chairs were strewn around the room. It was awesome. It was like we had a taster of the Pentecost experience. Two were filled with the Holy Ghost and 1 was saved. Pastor Anderson anointed the sick with oil under the power of the Holy Ghost. We thank God for the mighty move of his Spirit on Sunday morning. One commented that it was almost as if God would have it that we spent time being emptied and then on Sunday, He filled us up again with meat from above.

The retreat was a huge success and the attendees were left wishing it was longer. There is something sacred about getting away from your normal surroundings and the pressures of everyday life to spend time with the Lord. We are already looking forward to next year's retreat. Thank God for the many blessings He bestowed upon us at Ladies Retreat 2008.

Submitted by Claudine Brown – National Reporter