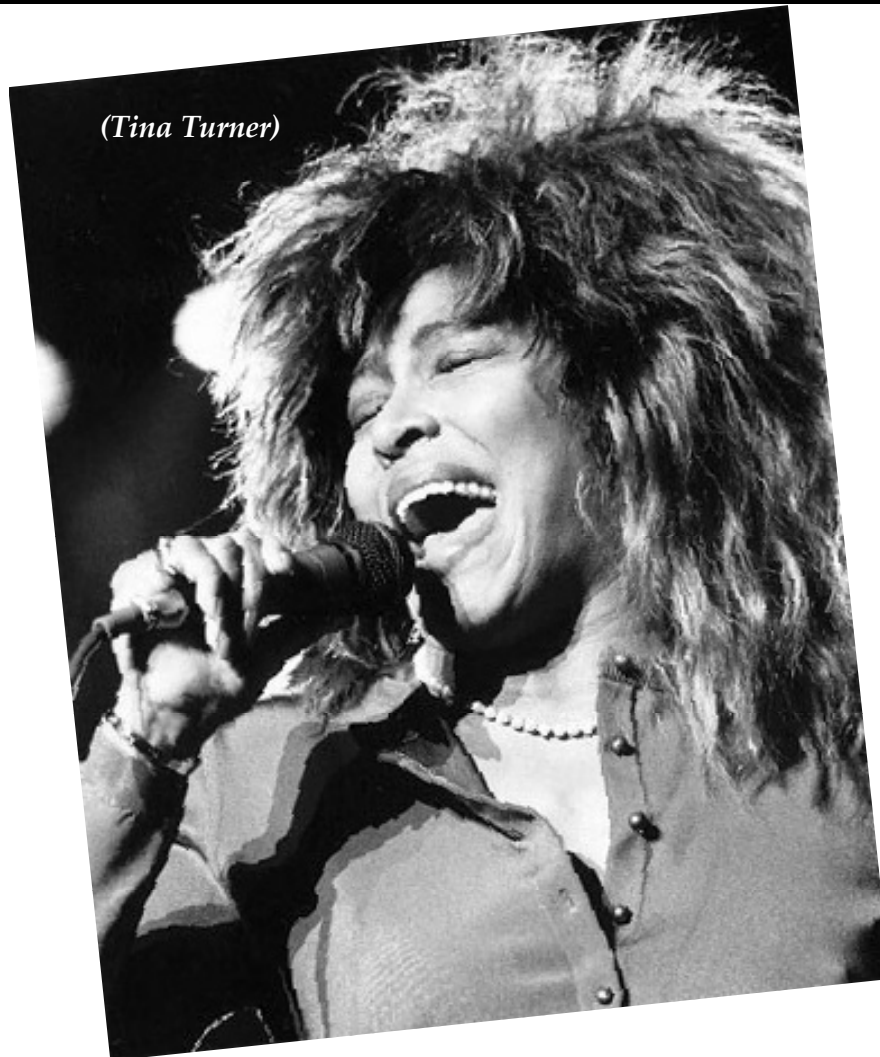


THE LAMP NEWSLETTER

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105 KJV).

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(Tina Turner)

What's LOVE Got to Do with It?

...EVERYTHING!

-By Wanda J. Burnside, Publisher



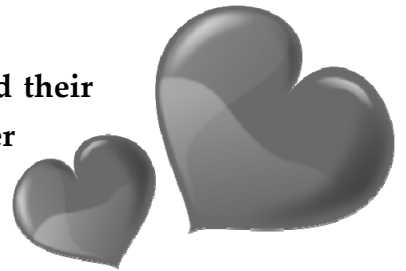
Dear Readers,

Alright readers, some of you know who is famous for this question, "What's love got to do with it?" You're right if you said, "That's a Tina Turner song from way back in the 1970's!" Some of you are probably singing it now and kinda swaying side to side, too. Okay... Be careful there!

Tina Turner is a multi-award-winning music legend. Her songs span several decades. Anyway, this newsletter is not about Tina Turner's music, life and story. So, here is my story for you, my readers.

In 1995, God called me to write my first gospel tract, "Matchless Love." On Valentine's Day, February 14, 1995, my heart and life was tremendously changed by heartbreaking phone calls that I received from friends who were deeply hurting on that day. Within two hours that evening, I received about six to eight phone calls from men and women who were upset, depressed, and crying about their hurts on that Valentine's Day.

I heard from those who were expecting to go out on a big date and their date never showed up. There were some who thought that their former relationships were going to be restored, but that did not happen. I heard from a married person who expressed that they were having an affair and wanted my advice...on what to do. Then, I had a phone call from a young man who said that he wanted to confess that he was gay. He said that He could not go on living and pretending to everybody that he was okay... *he said that he was torment and so confused...*



I was so shocked by the rush of phone calls. My heart was rapidly beating by all that I had heard. I cried and cried. I went into my living room and sat on our couch and just cried. All of those hurting people...some were friends and others were acquaintances from my various jobs and contacts. Tears ran down my face like a waterfall. Their sadness and pain became mine, too. I felt helpless about what to do. I worried if I had said the right things to those who told me about an affair, their crumbling marriage, a person's homosexual lifestyle, and on and on. I felt like I could not breathe for the crushing weight of these heavy problems and concerns. The pressure squeezed my chest. But, then I felt the presence of God standing near me. He was there. He came and drew very close to me.

GOD CARES

As I sat crying, I heard Him say, *“Wanda, there is no love like My love. There is no one who can love them and you like I can love you. I love the world. My love cannot be compared. My love is always true. I am Love.”*

I wiped the tears from my eyes.

“Wanda,” He continued, *“I am God. My love is incomparable. Nothing and nobody can top my love. I cannot be matched! My love is matchless!”*

I sat there and did not move. I waited as still as I could be.

“Tell them,” I heard God say. *“Tell everybody everywhere...My Love is matchless.”*



GOD'S ASSIGNMENT

And then, He became quiet and did not speak another word... But, as I remained in His presence, He gave me the words and scriptures to write...His message... *“Matchless Love.”* Over the next few days, He guided me to fine tune and design it. I made plans to have it printed and distributed somehow and some way to as many hurting, discouraged, troubled, and broken people as I could at that time.

It has been a journey like none that I have ever had imagined or even expected. God has helped Simmie and me to work in this ministry of giving out the *Matchless Love* tracts and special gifts to go with them. We have reached thousands in the 20 years of this special assignment from God.

GOD, LET ME DECIDE!

Anyone who was or is hurting has been so gracious to receive our ministry. They have shown heart touching appreciation from the acts of love that we have expressed to them through the tracts and the gifts. We feel sincerely humbled to have this assignment from God.

Down through the years, I have prayed and asked God to direct us. I have asked Him to lead and guide us to those He wants us to touch with His Love. I have always wanted to give gifts and the tracts to the people He led us to reach out to. He is in total and complete control. I have followed His voice and leading. He has shown us great needs. We have faithfully done as He instructed.

IT'S A SHAME!

However, at times, I got to the point where I just knew that someone was discouraged and in need of God's Love and our special gifts. I felt that they deserved to be blessed and loved by God. I DECIDED who should get the Love packages! A few times I judged who looked down and needed a

lift. Then I have decided that another person looks like they don't need the tract or gifts, because they look like nothing is wrong in their lives.

I will always remember one of our mission trips to spread the love of God. It was Valentine's Day, February 14, 2011. I made over 100 gift packages filled with candies, a key chain that had the word "LOVE" on it, a mini-flashlight that had "JESUS SAVES" printed on it, and a bookmark that had John 3:16 printed on it. Well, we were ready to get out and go to several places to bring these individual packages, along with the gospel tracts and bags of tiny stuffed puppies to give away, too.



To tell the truth, I wasn't happy to have those puppies to give out. Simmie is the manager and he usually purchases stuffed tiny brown or white teddy bears to give each year. I just love those teddy bears! To me, they are the cutest!

That year, Simmie looked everywhere, but he could not find any teddy bears! I was so disappointed! I tried to play the silent treatment of not even talking to him when he came home with bags of puppies. But, that did not last long.

"Honey, why did you bring me these stuffed puppies?" I asked. *"Where are the little bears? We always give bears. You know that,"* I said with my hands on my hips.

"Yeah, I know," Simmie said. *"I'm tired of looking everywhere for those bears this year! They are all sold out. Wanda, you should have started earlier looking for them!"* he shouted.

"I don't want the puppies!" I yelled as he walked away from me.

"We will HAVE TO use these puppies!" He yelled out to me from another room. *"What's wrong with them? I like them!"*

"Who cares?" I yelled back to him.

"I DO!" He said walking back into the dining room where I was sitting and staring at the bags and bags of stuffed puppies.

IT'S BETTER TO GIVE

Well, our "little disagreement" was over that evening. We worked very hard to pack-up everything for our mission work the next day. I put the finishing touches on the gift packages by tying on red bows, while Simmie took the large shopping bags and boxes with the items to the car. We were ready with our deliveries for the next day.

The next morning and all afternoon, we were busy with last minute things to do. So, we decided to have dinner at one of the restaurants where we planned to give our gift packages, the tracts, and the puppies. Several of the waitresses there always shared some of the difficult things that they were going through. So, we wanted to be sure to minister love to them.

That evening, we arrived at the restaurant. Simmie and I had our hands full of shopping bags with a big red heart on each side of it that read, "Happy Valentine's Day!" We came into the restaurant and the head waitress greeted us. "Table or a booth?" she asked with a smile on her face. "We would like that big booth in the back by the window," Simmie answered pointing to it. "Follow me," she said. And we did. We sat in the booth. She gave us menus and said, "Your waitress will be right here."

Before she walked away I said, "Happy Valentine's Day!" I reached into one of the bags and gave her a gift bag and a tract. Then I gave her a puppy.

"Aw! How cute!" she said and gave it a hug. "Thanks for everything. How nice," she said and walked away.

"See, I told you so," laughed Simmie, looking over at me from the top of his opened menu. "She loves that puppy!"

I did not care to respond. I just read my menu.

"Hey! Happy Valentine's Day you guys," said another waitress who was putting our glasses of water on the table for us.

Simmie and I looked up with big smiles because it was a waitress we really liked. "Hi, Judy! Happy Valentine's Day to you!" I said giving her a gift bag, a tract, and puppy.

"Isn't he so sweet!" she said. "Oh, thanks for this... 'Matchless Love'...umm...I'll read it on my break. It's so pretty. Thanks!" she said. I tried to ignore looking over at Simmie who was pointing his finger at the puppy held so tightly in her hand.

"Excuse me, Judy," I said. "All of the waitresses are so busy today...can you please give this bag with everything in it to them for us?" I asked.

"Sure, no problem. How nice and sweet of you two," she said taking the huge bag from my hand. "They'll love all of this. Did you give them one of these brochures about... 'Matchless Love'? She looked into the shopping bag. "Oh, here they are in the bag. I know that they will read it. I know I will!" Judy said.

"Well, since our waitress is not here yet to take our order, I'm walking over to those regular customers and give them some of our gift packages," I said to Simmie. But, before I could get up, one of the men came to us and wished us a Happy Valentine's Day! I loaded his hands and arms with items to take over to his booth of friends.

The men at his booth were senior citizen men who usually come to talk about old times, the wars that they were proudly now a veteran of, their jobs that they had retired from, politics, their wives or dating as a senior, their grandchildren, and their beloved dead ones. These men looked like they





were having the time of their lives, but they had deep scars and wounds that I often overheard them talking about among themselves.

It wasn't long before our waitress came with apologies for not getting right to us because it was such a busy day. We assured her that it was alright and said that we understood. She looked grateful that we were not fussing at her like some of the other customers that I overheard arguing at her. She took our order for dinner.

After we finished eating, one of the men came over to us from that senior group of men. He took his hat off and bowed, *"Madame and Sir, sure appreciate the gifts. I'm giving the puppy to my granddaughter Shirley who is seven. I'll share everything else with the other grandchildren. My wife died 10 years ago...and I sure needed this here paper, 'Matchless Love.' It means a lot to me. Thank you."* He wiped his eyes.

I said, "Sir, what is your name?"

"Fred," He said with tears rolling down his rough unshaven face.

"God bless you, Fred," I said holding my hand out to shake his trembling hand. But he firmly shook my hand and Simmie's, too.

Fred said, *"Oh, yeah... my buddies...said...uh...they sure do appreciate everything, too."* Then Simmie and I waved over to them as Fred slowly walked back to join his group of dear friends. They all waved back with big smiles on each face.

Judy, our waitress came back to our table. She wiped sweat from her face. *"Sorry, it's hot in here today. Thanks for the gifts for me. Sure need some love!"* She giggled. *"I'm giving you a dessert on me. What would you like?"*

WHO IS SHE?

We thanked her. Simmie and I made our selection, but asked to have it wrapped to go. As we were putting on our coats and wrapping the scarves around our necks, I noticed a lady who often ate there with her adult son. She was staring at us. She was always well dressed, well-groomed and looked like she would never come here to eat. She looked like she should be dining at the Ritz or some elaborate expensive restaurant.

I reached for my purse, and to my surprise there was one gift bag, gospel tract and puppy in the shopping bag. I thought for sure that it was empty. Simmie went to the cashier counter to pay for our food.

The lady continued to look at us. I had noticed many times before. She had only spoken a few times to me and Simmie. I looked right into that lady's face. She was looking at me. I tried to pretend not to see her. I put my purse and shopping bag in my hand and started walking.

The waitresses start coming over to thank Simmie and me for their gifts. Suddenly, I was swarmed with hugs and kisses from them. Some ran over to Simmie and did the same thing to him, as he walked back to me to carry our dessert bag.

"It's been a busy day for you two I see," said the well-dressed lady. Her silver gray short hair glowed in the sunlight coming through the somewhat frosted window. *"I've been watching you. Sure is nice to give those lovely gifts away. What did you do? Did you win the lottery?"* She laughed as her face turned red and redder.

"No...we just want to show some special people in here that we appreciate what they do and...we love them, too," I said trying to walk on.

"Well, I heard somebody say you wrote a book or paper... and you gave them a copy. I'm a book lover myself. Are you a writer or teacher?" she asked, smiling at me. *"You look like both...you look like me. I'm a retired English literature teacher...I taught high school for years. I wrote a few articles and short stories in my life. What about you?"*

"I...uh...I am both, as you guessed! A teacher and a writer..." I said.

"I always thought so. I've been watching you for a while," she said and winked at me.

"I have one of my tracts here...", "I began to say.

"Tracts? What is that?" she said.

I reached into my shopping bag and handed her the only one left in the shopping bag. She read it aloud, *"Matchless Love."* She opened it and read the inside of it. Then she flipped it over and read the back of it, too. She said nothing.



A MYSTERIOUS THING HAPPENED!

I handed her the only gift package and the only little puppy left in the bag. She burst out and said, *"Oh! He looks just like my little...little... Charlie! Charlie! You have come back to me. All of these years...Charlie!"*



He was the only puppy that had a big black spot on one eye and one on the middle of his back. He was the one that had a funny grin and floppy ears that looked lopsided. He was the one that I put in the bag at the last minute... the one that I wasn't going to bring with me today. To me, he was the one that was imperfect. I did not want to give him to anyone. He looked messed up.

"Charlie! Sweet Charlie...oh, my sweetheart," the lady cried. She kissed and kissed him. *Charlie, there's your spots, lopsided ears...one shorter than the other...and that silly grin that I love so much about you!"*

"I'm glad you like him...He is..." I started to speak. But she cried out...

"He's the puppy I had when I was a little girl....years ago...we were the best of buddies...I played and played with him...and one day...we were playing catch...I tossed the ball and it bounced into the busy street...and Charlie ran out from the yard and...Charlie...Oh...my Charlie....," she cried and groaned.

I was crushed. I could not move. I cried...

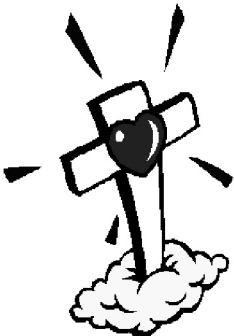
GOD'S HANDS ARE IN OUR PLANS

"I want to pay you for my gifts and my sweet Charlie....My Charlie... Here, take this \$20.00...take it... please!" she begged.

"No, I'm giving him to you...it's your gift," I said chocking back the tears.

"Why? Why are you giving all of these gifts away? Why?" she asked holding Charlie, the puppy to her tear-wet cheek. *"What does Matchless Love mean? I read it all...I feel so loved now. Why?"* she cried.

And with my heart so full, I told her about how Jesus loves her. He cares about her. He died for her and lives for her.



She asked me how. I explained how and why...I spoke of God's love and His Only Begotten Son. I told her about John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him; should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

She took my hand and said, *"I believe. I accept that kind of love."*

I bend down and whispered a prayer over her.... She answered, *"Yes! Oh yes!"*

She kept on kissing Charlie the stuffed puppy... that was just like her old best friend... Her son came over to her table and said, *"Mom, what do you have there?"* Simmie and I walked away. I looked back and she waved and blew me a kiss.

IT'S SO UNBELIVABLE!

We finished our *Matchless Love* Valentine's Ministry at the end of February on February 28, like we have done for these 20 years. That year, was an amazing year of God's goodness, as always. We were very grateful.

Later in the spring, around the end of May, Simmie and I went back to that restaurant for lunch. We were still greeted by the waitresses who expressed their thankfulness for our love and ministry. Several of them told us that they hung the tract up in their house or apartment in a special place.

We saw some of the men in the senior group. They waved at us. We felt so glad to see them. Two men came over to chat until our waitress came to take our order.

As we were being served, I looked for that well-groomed English literature teacher who cried about the stuffed puppy that we gave to her that she called Charlie...her Charlie... I thought I saw her at a table over on the other side of the room, but it wasn't her. Then, up came her son. I smiled and said, *"How's your mom and Charlie?"*

"My mom....she...died...uh..." he said, looking down at the floor.

"Oh No!" I screamed. *"How? When?"* Simmie bowed his head.

"Mom died in a strange accident...about a month ago now..." He said weeping. *"Uh, mom felled...she split bones... and she was rushed to the hospital. Everything seemed alright...and so...they sent her home. But...she got sick and had great pain...I called 911, they came and, as they were taking her out of the house...she screamed, 'Bring me Charlie!' I got the stuffed puppy and she laid it on her chest.*

Simmie and I just could not talk. We could not believe what we heard from her son. We just sat there...and listened.

"I asked the men if I could ride to the hospital with them to be with my mom...I jumped in and...all the way there...mom told me everything that you told her that day on Valentine's Day...and so, I know now for myself. God's love is matchless," he said trying to hold back his tears and deep pain.

"And so...mom lived long enough to tell almost everybody who asked her about her stuffed puppy that you gave....the story about Jesus Christ and how...uh...he died and loves us... Folks in the ambulance and hospital heard it no matter what. She took the puppy with her everywhere in the hospital for tests and exams...and so mom died...not long after."

Simmie and I were speechless... I grabbed the man's hand. He held on tightly squeezing my hand in firm grip, as if he wasn't going to let go.

"Let me tell you folks this...when mom died...I was going to put that puppy in the casket with her...But...I felt like I needed him...to always remind me of what you both did and said...to my mom. When mom was alive, she was neither the happiest nor friendliest person, but those last months with her were so different...so loving..."

He continued on, *"And so, I will live to see my mom again. She told me she is going to live in heaven...because she believed and accepted Jesus...she has eternal life now. I believe now...I read your paper, 'Matchless Love,' that she kept on her nightstand and now... I have it on mine along with Charlie...I also have Jesus...living with me. It is up to me to tell others...now..."*



“JESUS IS THE ANSWER”

My eyes are filled with tears. Each time I retell this story that happened in our ministry in 2011, I can't do nothing but cry. God changed the life of this dear and precious mother who was a high school English literature teacher. Through His love and way, He drew her to Him. He loved her and used us to reach out to her.



I must confess, I was judging her on the outside by her looks, clothes, and polished personality. I was looking for someone who looked roughed up with hard times in life. Yes! Yes, this is what we are to do, too. We cannot overlook anyone by what we think or assume to be. God's power and love goes deeper and deeper into the core of our hurts, disappointments, fears, struggles, and sorrows. He wants to touch each one of us right where we hurt. He wants to heal the hurts. He wants to make us whole.

I could have messed it all up! I could have been right in the way of God's eternal plan for this mother, the English literature teacher. I cannot help and reach others only by what I feel and see. I cannot pick and choose who is in need of God's precious love, His tender mercy, and His mighty works in their lives! I am wrong! I am not right! Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. I have repented and sought God to show me what He wants from me!

People of God, Tina Turner asked in her song, *“What does love have to do with it?”* Please listen to me! God's love has EVERYTHING to do with it...the problems, brokenness, disappointments, suffering, and confusion in our heart and lives. His love is the answer, as Pastor Andrea Crouch, the late legendary and multi-award-winning gospel musician and singer, wrote and sung from his soul down through the years.

There is a void and emptiness in all of us. Only the love of God can fill it. Jesus must abide there, to live inside of us!

God wanted to use that mother who cried out when she received our stuffed puppy. I despised getting the bags of the stuffed puppies to use in our ministry, because I wanted to continue to use only the teddy bears. I was going to box up and block this ministry, God's ministry with my formality and what was my norm. God comes to free us to live and to do His will!

What I considered a misfit and lopsided-ear and big spotted tiny puppy...was a key to open the heart of that dear lady to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We must move out of God's way to allow Him to work in the lives of others.

The Bible says, *“Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.”* God will change lives if we stay out of His way. Let Him work and speak in your life so that you can do what He wants you to do! Only God has MATCHLESS LOVE!

A Special Prayer...

Dear Precious Heavenly Father,

We come to You in the Name of Your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. We need You in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones. We earnestly ask that You touch our lives. Move by Your Spirit upon us now. We seek Your will and Your way. We need You.

Our lives are full of things that we cannot bear alone. There are situations and troubles that have overwhelmed us beyond our strength and power. We want Your help. We cry out for You to take control of every hard thing and difficult circumstance in our lives. Change us. Come in, lift and carry every heavy load from us. We cast them all upon You. You are almighty. You are awesome!

Where we are broken, please fix us so we can function and move as you have divinely planned for our lives. Mend us by Your power! We are weak, but You are strong! We are trusting in You to do a mighty work in our lives. Only You can do what needs to be done in our lives. We are depending upon You to make all of the deep hurts and wounds in our lives to GO NOW, in the Name of Jesus! Change our lives, Oh Lord.

We thank you for Your Matchless Love. Your Love satisfies all that we need and are searching for to give us satisfaction. You totally and complete make the difference in our lives. It is because of the work of Your awesome Spirit, the Holy Spirit, that we are released from the bondage of fear, lack, discouragements, failures, and every kind of evil scheme and device of Satan!

We thank You, Father. We praise You forever. We worship You. We surrender all into Your hands and receive your bountiful provisions for our lives. Thank You. Thank You.

Amen.



The Matchless Love Tract

Please contact me if you would like to order 4 free copies of "The Matchless Love" tract to give to others. I will send one package of them if you contact me by email or Twitter. Deadline: March 31, 2015.

A GLORIOUS ANNOUNCEMENT!

*Our Ministry,
Write the Vision Ministries and Media Production, International,
Proudly Announces
The Opening of Two Great Chapters
And
The Blessing of Two Great Chapter Presidents*

WELCOME...

**THE AUSTRALIA CHAPTER
Chapter President:
MINISTER SANDRA HICKMAN**



And



**THE UNITED KINGDOM CHAPTER
Chapter President:
FIRST LADY CHRISTINE V. MITCHELL**

We thank and praise God for expanding our ministry into two countries!
We give Him all of the glory.
Be sure to read the March issue of The Lamp newsletter for further details.

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