



# THE CHURCH CONNECTION

## GRANDFATHER HOME FOR CHILDREN

### The Ornament

A Christmas Story By: Mae D. Weed

I have always loved Christmas! It was my favorite holiday from as early as I can remember. What I loved most was the decorations – especially the Christmas tree with its shiny glass balls, lights and glittering tinsel and icicles. I used to keep a box of small ornaments, some tinsel and some icicles with my toys all year round and would build a Christmas tree out of tinker toys and decorate it throughout the year! My personal Christmas is July! Several years my parents gave in to my insistence and even let me have my own small live tree in addition to the big family tree.

The glass ornaments, especially the big shiny single color balls were among my favorite decorations. Any time one was broken I wanted to cry. One Christmas when I was about 8 years old the inevitable happened as we moved the ladder we used to reach the top branches. Three large glass balls were bumped by the legs of the ladder and broke on the plywood platform under the tree. My mom swept up the pieces and was going to throw them out but I said, “No, let me try to put them back together.” Even the pieces were too beautiful to just throw out! I put the pieces in a shoe box and after the tree was fully trimmed and admired, I got a bottle of Elmer’s glue (the only glue I was allowed to use) and slowly and carefully reconstructed one red and blue ornament from the pieces of the three broken ornaments. I was so proud of my creation! It was a full round ball with no holes or gaps formed by overlapping then gluing pieces of different colors together. The surface was uneven and the ball was very heavy. Very little of the glue showed and after it dried I carefully hung it on the tree in a very prominent place.

When we took down the tree that year my mother carefully packed that ornament away with all the others and put it on the tree each year thereafter. For several years I was very proud of my special ornament and pleased that mom put it on the tree each year.



*Like the ornament in this story, the children of Grandfather Home have been terribly broken. However, the joyful message of Christmas is that God can take the broken pieces and create something beautiful!*

Sometimes Elmer’s glue gave way, pieces came loose and I had to re-glue them, this time with super glue. However, as I moved into my teen years my feelings changed. My “beautiful creation” in the eyes of a child looked like the hodge podge attempt of a kid that

was just downright ugly! I was embarrassed by the fuss my mother made when she lovingly placed that ornament on the tree and told the story of how it was made to people who noticed it. I was especially embarrassed when she told my boyfriend! I was tempted to get rid of it or “accidentally” break it! But because it meant so much to mom, I instead continued to repair the ornament when pieces came loose and let her put it on the tree each year – in a less prominent place.

Time passed rapidly and my boyfriend became my husband. As the mother of young children my feelings toward that old ornament changed again. Then my own children brought me “ugly” handmade ornaments that in my eyes were incredibly beautiful and had more value than any perfect Lennox collector’s ornament ever could! I again felt pride and joy in that beautiful/ugly, broken/whole ornament when I watched the wonder and appreciation in my children’s faces as grandma told them the story of how it was made.

(cont. pg. 2)

Now, with two adult children living in different states and no guarantee they will be home for Christmas, I understand with a vengeance why it was so important to mom to put that ornament on the tree each year. My ornament was placed on my parent's tree every year until my mother died. Then Daddy gave it to me and it goes on our tree every year – hanging there in memory of Mommy who has been gone from us now for 15 Christmases.

In a very real sense that beautiful/ugly, broken/whole ornament has become my personal symbol of Christmas. Each of us has broken God's beautiful creation, brought ugliness into the world. All of us are "broken" – we have all failed ourselves, others and God. The children of Grandfather Home have been terribly broken. They have been hurt by those they should have been able to trust and abused instead of loved. However, the joy of Christmas is that with Jesus' coming, God fulfills his promise that ugliness won't have the last word. God will take the broken pieces of creation, the broken pieces of us, the broken pieces of the children at Grandfather Home, and recreate something beautiful! Christmas' Incarnation is the rebirth of everything! Through the gift of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, we are again made whole. All the cracks, seams, uneven places and glue spots of our failings or the abuse inflicted on us are overcome.

We as the church are a community of beautiful/ugly, broken/whole people seeking to bring God's healing to others around us. Each of us is a valuable, unique and functional ornament for God's creation and, God loves and treasures each one of us. I pray that we may come to so treasure each other.

Christmas is still my favorite holiday and I hope someday one of my kids will have that hodge podge blue and red ornament on their tree and tell its story with a tear and a smile.

(© Mae D. Weed)



*The beautiful/ugly, broken/whole ornament on our tree.*

## Dates to Remember:

**December 16<sup>th</sup>** Christmas Gift Deadline  
**April 6, 2012** Circle of Courage, Noon  
**May 4, 2012** Circle of Courage, Noon

## Grandfather Home for Children

PO Box 98  
Banner Elk, NC 28604  
828-898-5465

[www.grandfatherhome.org](http://www.grandfatherhome.org)  
(Click on "Connect" tab for church information)

Mae D. Weed, Director of Church Relations  
828-260-7584

[m.weed@grandfatherhome.org](mailto:m.weed@grandfatherhome.org)

## There is still time to give Christmas gifts



There are still opportunities to participate in our Christmas Gift drive for our residential children in Banner Elk and our children in family placements in communities across North Carolina. Please contact Mae D. Weed if you can help in any of the following ways:

- Sponsor a child providing gifts on their wish list.
- Donate gift cards to major chain stores to provide gifts for our foster families.
- Supply filled Christmas Stockings for our children in family placements.
- Donate gift cards for McDonalds or other restaurants for a fun outing for the children.