

FOCUS – Leap of faith

by Amanda Reardon, Captain –

The Reardon family will never forget this year's spring break. We were denied the anticipated trips to the skateboard park, movie viewing, and bookstore browsing. For this spring break ushered in the "Blizzard of 2003." We were immobilized by nearly four feet of snow.

On the second day of the snowstorm, the shoveling began. Even though there was no hope of going anywhere, everyone had to shovel his driveway and sidewalk to prevent further accumulation. The snow was wet and heavy. The top foot or so was still quite soft, and underneath it had become more compact. My fifteen-year-old son Kyle and my husband Rob spent quite a long time shoveling the driveway.

Eventually one side was cleared, but, of course, the street was still covered with many feet of snow. Kyle turned to me and said, "Watch. I'm jumping into the street." He ran from the top of the driveway to the bottom, where he sprung into the air. Every limb was stretched out to its greatest length. His six-foot tall frame sailed through the air. I winced. He did not. When he landed he was well embedded in the soft snow. He managed to pull himself out, laughing, and completely proud of himself.

Even though I knew Kyle would be safe, the moment his feet left the ground I felt a twinge of panic. After all, a mother does not normally allow her children to fling themselves into the middle of the street. While warning lights were blinking in my head and alarms were sounding, Kyle didn't even flinch. That's the thing I cannot forget. His body never recoiled. He had made a leap of unwavering faith.

Perhaps age has made me more guarded than my son. The younger a person is, the more likely he is to trust in other people, in objects, in life in general. Over time, that person learns that neither everyone nor everything is reliable, and that life can disappoint. As a child he may have learned Proverbs 3: 5, 6, but as an adult he struggles to follow it. While every instinct he has tugs against it, a Christian must strain to learn to trust in God more as he "grows up" in Christ.

Let us compare the propensity of Christians to trust in God to Kyle's wild sprint into the snow. One Christian stands at the top of the driveway, unwilling to even begin the run. He should be teaching the



junior soldier class. But there are some unruly kids in that class; he doesn't trust God to help him be patient and effective. Another Christian begins to run down the driveway, excited by the possibility, but loses her nerve and stops short of the leap. She felt led to write a check for World Services for \$100, but she hasn't seen this month's electricity bill yet. So as her pen touches the check, she changes her mind, and writes it for \$10. There is another saint who runs and leaps, but fear strikes him while he is midair. Instead of extending his limbs in complete abandon, enjoying the experience, he draws his body in. He takes the risk, and applies for training college. As he leaves home, he asks himself, "What am I doing?" The first few months are spent in disbelief and doubt. Eventually he settles in and understands that all is well, but trusting God was not as natural as he had hoped.

But some Christians manage to soar through the air without reservation. Years ago, a friend of mine was enjoying a great career and a comfortable apartment. He was happy and active at the corps. One day he suddenly told me that he was quitting his job, leaving everything he had and everyone he knew and going to a foreign land, where he did not speak the language, to serve as a lay missionary for the Army. Just like that. And in the blink of an eye he was gone. It all came as such a shock to me, because though he loved to travel, I never really considered him the adventurous type. He became an officer while he was there, and has lived there for over a decade now. Of course, he's fluent in the language, and fluent in the culture. In fact, I quite think he now considers Russia home.

Now that was a no-holds-barred, uninhibited leap of faith. His life was going in a particular direction, at quite a nice clip. But when God told him to change direction, he immediately obeyed.

And he landed in the soft snow (literally).

I had another friend who had been treated quite badly by her husband, and they finally divorced. After some time she met another man, who wanted to marry her. But although she wanted him, she felt that marrying him would turn him into a monster. Though she loved the Lord, she went against his word and moved in with the man. I chastised her repeatedly about it. But she said she could never truly trust a man again, and she would rather live in sin than take a risk.

She never even made it down the driveway.

Trusting God is hard. But I continually remind myself that God is smarter than I am. He cares more about me than I care about myself. God is the safe bet. The real risk is leaning on your own understanding.