



## IT'S TIME TO TAKE OFF THE Rose-Colored Glasses

**A**mber\* (age six) was carefree and captivating. Her shoulder-length curls bounced as she danced across the room. She loved coming to church ... especially Missionettes. Who knew that when she turned eight, Amber would be molested by her grandfather?

Jody, a beautiful, talented, vivacious teenager, seemed to have it all. She was involved in Teen Talent at church and audition-only vocal groups at her school. What no one could see was the hurting heart Jody secretly carried. As early as elementary school, she had struggled with a poor self-image. To compensate for her perceived "ugliness," Jody poured herself into academics and music. Jody soon found herself battling an eating disorder, the secret addiction of many Christian girls who are desperately seeking physical perfection.

Katie, a quiet 13-year-old, was the oldest child of a divorced couple. From all her parents could see, Katie was coping well with the situation. Her grades were fine, her peer relationships were healthy, and she enjoyed being involved at church. No one recognized the signs of her secret coping mechanism – "cutting." Small scars crisscrossed Katie's forearms, each one an attempt to escape the pain of her broken family and perceived rejection by her father.

These girls are real. They are all from Pentecostal Holiness churches in different areas of the country. The names have been changed, but the situations are frighteningly real. How many of us see girls

at church each week and smile at their "Pollyanna" existence? It's time to take off the rose-colored glasses.

Missionettes sponsors and Girls' Ministries leaders around the country are immersed in a war against a culture that threatens our girls. Television, movies, the recording industry, print media, and the Internet have created an environment that glorifies physical perfection.

According to Nancy Alcorn, founder of Mercy Ministries, one in four girls in America wrestles with an eating disorder. This issue probably affects the church more than most because, while "good girls" don't sleep around, use drugs, or get drunk (though some may), the drive for physical perfection can be overwhelming.

What does this mean to the average church member? Look around. For every four teenage girls you see, one is probably struggling with an eating disorder.

Most Missionettes sponsors in local churches minister to girls with their eyes wide open. They recognize the dangers that stalk our daughters, sisters, nieces, and friends. Missionettes' fivefold purpose is designed to help local sponsors prepare girls for the challenges of life in the real world.

Collette Prough, Girls' Ministries coordinator at Meeks Chapel in Oklahoma City, sponsors a Girlfriends Club (combining Friends Club and Girls Only). She says she focuses primarily on the third Missionettes Purpose: "Provide encouragement, support, and accountability through lasting Christian

relationships." Since adolescent girls have a group mentality, their identity often comes from their group. Collette enjoys the opportunity to support and encourage the girls as they build a Christian lifestyle based on God's Word. "It's such a thrill to see them overcome life issues," she says. "I'm their biggest cheerleader."

Collette is only one example of the dedicated women around the country who want to "change the world, one girl at a time." Although the forces struggling against them are numerous and varied, these women hold on to our girls with determination and purpose. ♦

*\*The girls' names have been changed to protect their identity.*

*To learn more about Girls' Ministries and Missionettes, visit or call the Women's Ministries office at 405-787-7110, ext. 3229.*

### ***Missionettes' Fivefold Purpose***

1. To win girls to Jesus Christ through love and acceptance
2. To teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded us – developing girls spiritually and mentally
3. To provide encouragement, support, and accountability through lasting Christian relationships
4. To provide an environment for girls to develop their gifts and abilities
5. To acquaint girls with the Great Commission of Jesus Christ our Lord