



# Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

## In the face of adversity

*It's seems too unimaginable — like one of those movies where my husband reminds me, "It's just a movie, Shauna. It's not real; it's just a movie." But the events of Sept. 11, 2001, were real, and they forever changed people at home and abroad.*

*That isn't all bad. We can't let it be. If we do, those who perished died in vain. We share a responsibility to make sure that doesn't happen.*

### At home

When our editorial artist Christy Benigno first told us a plane had crashed into one of the towers of the World Trade Center (WTC), my first reaction was disbelief. It had to be an absurd joke by a radio host with a bad sense of humor. We went on with the day's work, focusing on getting this issue to the printer in the day's last FedEx package.

Reality slowly sank in as Christy reported the crash of another plane into the second tower and as we heard of the strike on the Pentagon, the crash of the fourth plane near Pittsburgh, Pa., the collapses of the twin towers and subsequent collapses of the other WTC buildings.

In horror, our hearts went out to those in New York City and Washington, D.C., and to their families. They were our countrymen. It was our country under attack.

Then it hit even closer to home. We realized the brother of one of our co-workers was working at the Pentagon that day. My

husband remembered that the father of one of our church youth worked in the Pentagon. Co-workers and family were stranded at airports across the country. FedEx would have no flight to Grand Rapids, Mich., to deliver our materials to the printer as usual.

This was an attack on the American people by cowards who don't believe enough in their cause to take responsibility for their actions. I think they assumed we would retaliate on whole nations without mercy and that in doing so we would justify their actions and provide reason for other nations to back their cause.

But the terrorists didn't understand America because they didn't understand Americans.

New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said Sept. 13 that 4,763 people were missing after the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, N.Y. The Associated Press (AP) gave these comparisons:

- That number is more than the death tolls of the Titanic (about 1,500), Pearl Harbor (2,400) and the worst plane crash in history (582, Canary Islands, 1977) combined.
- It's more than twice New York City's record murder total for an entire year (2,245 in 1990).
- It's almost equal to the number of Union and Confederate troops killed (4,800) in the Civil War battle of Antietam.

It's different now.

But just because we haven't dealt with this kind of tragedy before doesn't mean we can't. Stories of bravery are slowly being revealed. The priest who died giving last rites. The passengers who foiled their hijackers' plans and saved uncounted lives. The two individuals who carried a man down 68 stories to safety. Hundreds of firefighters and police

officers who died trying to save others.

We're inspired by these heroes. We're impassioned by the heart-wrenching stories of those who received phone calls amidst the chaos from a loved one who didn't get out.

If America had lost focus on its purpose, its foundation — it found it Sept. 11 and during the week that followed.

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**The positives**

As with anything, there are silver linings. The death toll could have been much higher when you consider some 50,000 people worked at the WTC.

We have a new awareness of what other countries deal with on a daily basis. Maybe we will be quicker to sympathize with them in their hours of need. Maybe we will become more aware of the issues surrounding political confrontations before we judge those making the decisions too harshly.

Where many countries have been openly envious or hostile toward the United States, we've witnessed an outpouring of sympathy and support. We've found common ground with countries that would have seemed impossible only decades ago.

Other countries are beginning to realize that a strong America is good for the world. The reaction of other countries' economies brings to light that much of their affluence is dependent on the American economy and that they have a large stake in America's safety.

Maybe we'll again be a country "under God." Perhaps our nation's finest hour thus far took place Friday, Sept. 14, as the country joined in a day of prayer at President Bush's request. The president himself, surrounded by our nation's leaders, joined in the prayer service at the Washington National Cathedral. That gives me hope.

**Join in prayer**

Please pray with me for America, for us.

God, have mercy on those who died and were injured in this tragedy. Bring their families comfort and Your peace.

God, grant our leaders and the leaders of all nations wisdom in making the choices they will have to make in the coming days, months and perhaps years. Grant us, as a people, the patience to give them time to make the right decisions and the fortitude to stay the cause.

God, grant us forgiveness so that this incident does not put hate in our hearts that would destroy our souls. Grant us compassion for those Americans who share physical characteristics with those believed to be our enemies. And help us always to base our actions on what You would have us do.

Thank you, Lord, ever so much for the gift of Your Son and the hope that His resurrection offers. In His name, forgive us for our sins.

God, please bless America. In all things, let Thy will be done.

