

## In Case of Emergency

I was late coming home. I lied and said I was at volleyball practice, when instead I went to a pizza party at one of the churches I attended.

My parents checked up on me because they knew how much more I wanted to attend this church function than volleyball practice. As soon as I walked in the door the interrogation began.

"Where were you? What time does my watch say?" he yelled as he waved his watch a fraction of an inch from my face, "Where were you supposed to be? Answer me damn it!"

The chanting seemed never ending. My stepfather, being an atheist, found no reason for this ridiculously intense interest in church.

My answers to his questions were, "I don't know, I don't know, I'm sorry!"

He had been drinking that day, just like all the days before leading up to that moment.

Mother walked into the kitchen, as she always did when she didn't know what else to do. Clean something, make something, just so she could do something with all her anxiety and wouldn't have to acknowledge what he was doing to me in the other room.

She strangely disappeared, though I knew she was nearby because I could hear the rattling of pots, pans and dishes.

I would start screaming in my mind as soon as he would grab a hold of my wrist. I would clench my teeth as soon as I felt him raise the paddle up in the air with his right hand.

I can't describe the spanking. I remember sharp pain and him hitting the palm of my right hand as I would wedge it between the paddle and my body.

I was getting dizzy and could no longer think when I screamed, "God!"

The paddle stopped in mid air as if an angel had grabbed his wrist. It was as if God had been waiting for me to scream His name before His divine intervention.

As an adult, that experience reminds me that regardless of what I think or no matter what my circumstances may be, God is only a voice away.