

Revelations Where You Least Expect Them

By Mary J. Ferrill Brown

"Would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart?"

Psalm 44:21 (NIV)



I looked out on my lanai one afternoon and saw my cat, Snowman (aka Snowy), sleepy soundly. Snowman is predominantly white; his name is derived from the distinctive black markings on his head (like “the eyes made out of coal” and hat on Frosty), but he also has black patches on half of his tail and a few other random places. He looked so peaceful while lounging in his favorite spot on the lanai, so I decided to snap a photo (see picture) to share with a friend. Who doesn’t love a good cat picture or video to brighten up your day? I included a caption that read, “Bliss...” My friend responded: “Awww, Snowman has a heart on his foot!” That caught me by surprise because I never noticed the marking before, but indeed, there it was. “How cool,” I responded.

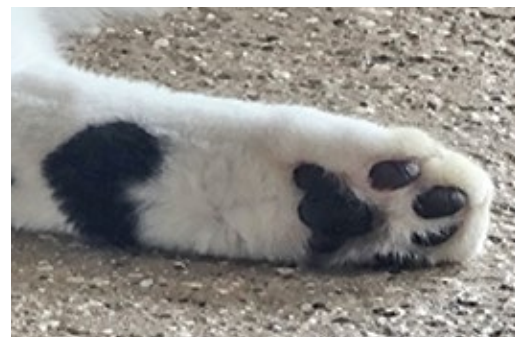
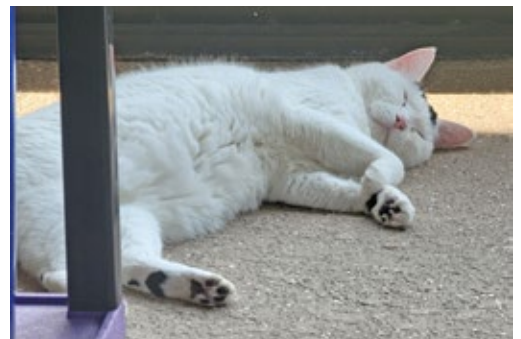
Snowman is a 14-year-old cat that I rescued when he was just a few months old. He is very friendly and the most photogenic of any cat I’ve had (and I’ve had many... but you can never have too many). I have more pictures of Snowy than any pet I’ve owned. He likes to be picked up and snuggled often. I thought I knew everything there is to know about him, but the small heart-shaped marking on his

foot unveiled in the photo has enabled me to see Snowman in a whole new light. What a perfect physical representation to remind me of the special relationship that I enjoy with one of God’s creatures.

Reflecting on this story made me think about my relationship with God. Although I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior at the age of 5, attended numerous Bible studies and church services, and read and studied at least 12 different translations of the Bible, God still finds ways to reveal new characteristics of Himself to me. He does this through prayer, the Holy Spirit, delving into His Word, and revelations from articles/discussions/presentations from other Christians.

No matter how many times we read and study God’s Word, there are always new and exciting things to discover. But we must also remain open and receptive to God’s subtle, less obvious sources of revelation. The word “reveal” is found 80 times in both the Old and New Testaments of the NIV translation. One of my favorite verses about revelation is found in the seldom quoted book of Amos 4:13 (NIV): *“He who forms the mountains, who creates the wind, and who reveals His thoughts to mankind, who turns dawn to darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth – the Lord God Almighty is His name.”* Perhaps the Lord is revealing that passage to you for the first time as you read this editorial, with a unique message intended solely for you! Or maybe you need this reminder from Daniel 2:22 (NIV): *“He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.”* Even from Old Testament times, the Maker of heaven and earth wanted to communicate His thoughts to us and include us in His perfect plans! We also know from John’s writings in the Book of Revelation that in the end times: *“Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”* Revelation 15:4 (NIV).

The disciples often had difficulty understanding Jesus’ messages, especially when He spoke in parables (a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson). On several occasions, the disciples had to ask Jesus to explain or reveal the meaning in His stories. Now that Jesus has ascended to the right hand of God, believers can rely on the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s plans: “However, as it is written: *“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”—the things God*



has prepared for those who love him—these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 (NIV).

Each time we delve into the Word, we must pray and ask God to reveal new and exciting things to us so that we can see the “heart” of God’s message. I also like to think that God revealed the heart on Snowy’s foot to me as a sign that He loves me and cares for me. Another friend with whom I shared the picture responded: “Oh my goodness! Yes, love that, leaving an imprint of His love every step we make. The greatest commandment is to love Him above all and love others.” I always smile when I see my fur babies (I also have a dog)... but when I now look at Snowy, I get an extra big smile as I remember God’s love and revelation. Let’s strive to be more alert and aware of the beautiful surroundings God has provided to us. In that way, we will easily recognize His signs and wonders that guide us to the heart of what matters most to Him.

Two Months in West Africa as a Pharmacy Student

** Due to safety and security concerns, the author will remain anonymous and any information that could identify locations where the author visited or the agency that operates the hospital will be kept confidential. Also, some names have been changed to protect their identity.*



Getting There: - Sultan’s Story

Two common questions I was often asked before going to West Africa were: “How hot will it be there?” (It’s normally over 100 degrees) and “How long will the flight be?” The answer to that question is a whopping 13.5 hours, during which time I saw the Lord work in an incredible way to affirm that He had called me to travel to West Africa for a purpose; and also to show that He had a reason for prompting me to leave two weeks earlier than originally planned. While on the plane, I sat next to an individual from Ethiopia who had become an atheist after attending college in the United States. During the long flight Sultan asked me why Ethiopia is a Christian country, and using scripture alone, we walked through Acts 8:27-40, and subsequently Isaiah 53, and detailed how Christ was prophesied over 600 years before his coming to earth. As a result of solely explaining scripture – and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit – Sultan eventually told me, “I think I’m going to read the Bible this summer. I mean, life without God just seems pointless... and I think I need to

give Jesus a try.” While this obviously wasn’t a moment of salvation, I believe it was a clear testament that God had been working through this entire process.

Welcoming a brother into our family: John* was at the end of his rope

He had been a devout Muslim all of his life and he had a loving family, but he was unfulfilled in the Islamic faith. John came to the hospital with over half of his body covered in severe burns, clinging to life. The surgical team determined they couldn’t do anything to help him; but for some odd reason, they asked the pharmacy student to visit John after rounds – along with an interpreter/evangelist – to attempt to give him hope at the end of his life.

The evangelist, James,* was led into the patient’s room by this pharmacy student. Upon some questioning, James learned that for reasons known only by God, John’s burns were the result of an attempt to end his own life. He was broken, tired, and in hopeless despair. From his own religious beliefs, he assumed that his god, Allah, had abandoned him. James quickly discovered that John had

