



Going Beyond

by Tammy Bennett, Women's Ministry Strategist

Car packed, snacks ready, radio on—ROAD TRIP! It's a girls' getaway—Emily, Holly, Charlotte, and Dorothy are "going beyond." For the weekend of April 15–16, the SBC of Virginia partnered with LifeWay and Thomas Road Baptist Church to host the Going Beyond Conference, featuring Bible teacher Priscilla Shirer and singing artist Anthony Evans.

After two and a half hours of talking, sharing, and side-splitting laughter, the girls arrived at Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg just in time to find seats before the start of the event. Promptly at 7:00 PM, Anthony Evans took center stage and led more than 2,300 women in an awe-inspiring time of praise and worship. Women from all walks of life joined their voices together singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty..." God was in the house, and the Holy Spirit seemed almost tangible. As the song came to an end, Priscilla Shirer entered the auditorium and led the ladies in a powerful time of prayer. Gals from differing backgrounds gathered at the altar, praying, weeping, and repenting—putting their harried lives on hold in order to get real with the Master. Afterwards, Priscilla opened her Bible to the Book of Judges and encouraged the women from the Word, referencing Gideon as the example. "God doesn't change the circumstances of our lives; He changes us through the circumstances," Shirer said.

Once dismissed Friday evening, the gals—Emily, Holly, Charlotte, and Dorothy—ran into the women from Centerpoint Baptist Church of Mechanicsville. The girls from Centerpoint were highly exhilarated and greatly encouraged over the event. Brittany reported, "I haven't felt God's presence in my life in quite a while, but I really felt

it tonight." Jennifer added, "I know God Has used this night to prepare me for things to come."

Once outside, they were greeted by another 40 women from Raleigh, NC. "Come on over to the Hampton Inn—we're havin' a slumber party!" one gal yelled as she boarded the bus. The four gals chuckled at the thought but headed to their place of lodging to have their own little get-together. Once settled in for the night, the girls did what all girlfriends do—they shared, encouraged, and prayed together. Lights out.

Early the next morning, at 7:30 AM to be exact, the conference reconvened for a special time of prayer with Priscilla Shirer. Approximately 300 from all seasons of life stood in the gaps, laying hands on one another and lifting specific needs up to the Father. As the prayer time came to an end, another 2,000 women filed into the auditorium for another amazing time of worship through song, the Word, and prayer. At the conclusion of the conference, Priscilla commissioned the ladies in attendance with a challenge—"Go home, get into the Word, and set a plan into action to obey it."

As Emily, Holly, Charlotte, and Dorothy piled into the car for the long ride home, they all agreed it was a weekend they'd never forget, and it was way beyond what they had expected.



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