

8/24/17

Week 35: WFL - Last Week

James and Betty Robison

Anna LeBaron

Betty: Thank you so much for joining us on *LIFE Today*. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: Unusual story today, *A Polygamist's Daughter*. Now this is the title of the book, *The Polygamist's Daughter*, Anna LeBaron. And her father was, let's say, a very extreme father; had 50 children by many different wives. There is a story of his life that was made into a movie. It is still available. The man not only fathered many children, had many wives but he actually ordered the death of people that in some way crossed the line in his opinion.

And Anna was pretty well, let's say, on the road to being totally destroyed. But a miracle occurred. I'm happy to say -- and by the way, this is just a phenomenal story of what happened to a little girl, and that journey with a man that was known as the Mormon Manson, like Charles Manson.

The Mormon Church certainly, in no way would approve one thing about this man and what he did. So don't even imply that.

But the point is that this young lady is a miracle. And when, Betty, she was able to tell us that the church that you and I are a part of, I'm blessed to be an elder in the church. The pastor was one of the young men that grew up, traveling with me in ministry, Robert Morris. And to know the impact that Gateway had on her life is nothing short of miraculous; and that means the individual members who share the love of God in what was called Freedom Ministry; it really blessed me.

This is a phenomenal story. I want you to welcome *The Polygamist's Daughter*, Anna to *LIFE Today* -- Anna LeBaron. Would you welcome Anna?

We do welcome you.

Anna: Thank you!

James: I want you to tell us what you think is important for people to know about your journey, what you experienced and what happened to enable you to let's say overcome what was imposed upon you even as a child. What you witnessed.

Anna: Well, I was born into and raised in this violent polygamist cult. I was born in colonial LeBaron, in the LeBaron colony down in Chihuahua, Mexico. That's where generations of my family have lived and practiced polygamy all the way back to my great-great-great-grandfather, Benjamin F. Johnson. So polygamy runs in my family all the way back to Joseph Smith's days.

So that's where I was born. At the time my father and his brother were co-leading a group. There was some dissension between them. So my father and his followers broke off and left the colony.

James: Were you around? Were you born at this time when this happened? Were you troubled by what you saw?

Anna: I was a baby. I was little so I wasn't aware of what was happening at the time. So when I was three years old, though, my father ordered his first hit on his very own brother.

James: And they did kill him?

Anna: They did kill him. So at the age of three we began living a life in fear. We didn't know what was happening. The children didn't know. The adults were hiding and on the run from the law. Then more hits were ordered after that. It just snowballed into this big giant mess of a life.

James: Were you able to feel this as a child that there is tension here that actually did put a legitimate fear in you? And could you tell the others around you -- like you said he had many wives so they would be there in the area; right?

Anna: Well, we didn't all live in the same home or in the compound as it's generally believed or seen in the news these days. We lived all over California, Colorado, and Texas mainly, and some in Arizona. So we moved a lot trying to stay ahead of the law. So we would move up in the middle of the night. People would come and go in the night time because that wouldn't be detected. Their coming and going would be less detected that way. So we would go to bed at night not knowing who was going to be in the home when we woke up. Who would have arrived or who would have left. So it left our life in a lot of chaos, a lot of insecurity and no roots -- no roots at all.

Betty: So you hardly ever knew you were going to move the next time because you never got settled in.

Anna: We never got to be settled in. We never got the settled feeling anywhere we went.

James: Were you aware that danger was coming to certain people?

Anna: No, we were not.

James: Did you just notice that some people just seemed to not be around anymore?

Anna: People would come and go and we were taught not to ask questions. So that was something that we weren't allowed to ask, "Oh, where is so-and-so?"

James: Were you physically hurt in any way while you were a child growing up?

Anna: Well, we were spanked a lot. [Laughing] I don't know if that's the question you're asking.

James: Well, we spanked our children. I think we were nice parents. And they actually are very grateful for very appropriately applying the board of education to the seat of understanding.

Anna: Some of the spanking, some of the discipline, if you can call it that went way beyond what -- it became abusive for a lot of children. And so we lived that life. That was how we accepted it. We were taught not to ask questions. We were taught to lie to any outsiders -- and we weren't allowed to talk to outsiders.

James: So in this journey, where did you reach a point that you either realized something was terribly amiss or you began to try to find some way of escape? Or did you try to find a way of escape from that environment?

Anna: I did eventually when I was 13 years old. So after living on the run for a whole decade of my very impressionable childhood years we were living in Houston at the time and my father had been imprisoned. When I was 11 years old, he was arrested and then --

James: What did they arrest him for?

Anna: They arrested him and tried him for the death of a rival cult leader that he had ordered the death for.

James: And so he was convicted?

Anna: He was convicted and he was sentenced to life in prison.

James: So you knew that story. You knew what was happening? Or not exactly?

Anna: We were not told why he had gone to prison. We were told that we were being persecuted because we were God's chosen people. So that was the explanation that we had for that.

So he was in prison when I was 12; he died in prison under very mysterious circumstances. And then within months, six months or so, where we had been living prior to that in extreme poverty and squalor in Denver, the man that was in charge in Denver had talked my mom into moving back to Denver. It was the life that we were living in Houston that opened my eyes to the possibility of something different because of the way they were managing their little faction of our group.

James: So you say something different meaning you could see something better or you needed to get away from what you were in to find something better?

Anna: Well, I needed to stay there to continue what they were doing. They had started a school in their garage. They had read in TIME Magazine, I think, an article about accelerated Christian education, which provided curriculum to help students so they could learn at their own pace.

James: So you were doing homeschool all the time; right?

Anna: We were in public school for a long time but we moved around so much there were so many gaps in our education. So they started this little school in their garage. And it was lovely.

James: But were they part of the cult that started?

Anna: They were still part of the cult but they started this little church so they could have this little school in their garage. So I really consider them the heroes of my story.

James: Do you think they actually were doing positive things?

Anna: Yes, they were!

James: So were they more or less seekers even though they were trapped in the cult so to speak?

Anna: I wouldn't necessarily call them "seekers" at that time. I think they wanted the curriculum. So they started a "church" so they could fulfill that requirement so they could have this little church school in their garage.

Well, eventually my dad died. My mom decided to move back to Denver. I didn't want to go to

Denver. I loved the life we had in Houston. It was better than any life we had ever had before. So I called my sister when I found out my mom was going back. I said, "I don't want to go back to Denver."

She said, "Start walking."

James: So you left? You ran away?

Anna: So I ran away from home. I walked out of my house with just...

James: What happens after that?

Anna: She found me. I guess she went looking for me.

James: The mother found you?

Anna: My sister.

Betty: Was she out of the cult?

Anna: Not yet -- not yet.

James: But she told you to start walking. But why did she come find you?

Anna: Things were really shaking up. The whole group was kind of divided. So she came and found me. She hid me for three days.

James: Like as a positive way of helping?

Anna: Yes. And then my mom looked for me that night and when she couldn't find me she took all the other kids and did exactly what I thought she was going to do and that was move back to Denver. They left everything behind because that's how we moved almost all the time.

James: Okay, so what did you do now? Here you are 13, and they're gone.

Anna: So they have this little church school with only one little student which didn't make a lot of sense. So they enrolled me in the little Christian school that was just down the road from their home and that's where I came to know Christ.

James: Really? In that particular place?

Anna: In that little church school.

James: But now were those people still part of the cult?

Anna: More or less, yes.

James: But they were breaking away from it?

Anna: They were breaking away from it.

James: Okay, now take us a little bit quicker on the journey here. You're now finding the Lord but you still have a troubled life. So take us rapidly up to where you actually end up at Gateway finding everything that began to make everything better.

Anna: So lots more happened and I talk about it in the book. Then a lot of things happened that were very troubling. I ended up finishing school, went to college, and then got married and started having children of my own.

Well, some events happened that created the situation where I had this horrific nightmare. A friend asked me if she made an appointment for me, would I go to counseling. So I did. I ended up in counseling with a professional. Then that was 1995. So for five years I worked with this professional counselor doing what she called "peeling back the layers of an onion." She was a Christian counselor.

When we got to the core of that onion, what I found there was just a little girl who wanted to have a daddy. And I grieved the thing that should have been but was not.

And then you can fast-forward even some more in 2005. I moved to Dallas, I began attending Gateway church and there I started attending Freedom Ministry. So the first night, the first class, "Levels of Change," I heard what he was saying about how you have to find your identity in Christ; knowing who you are in Christ. And so I thought, well, this is it. If this is where it needs to be, then I'm camping out right here.

And I basically had what I call my Jacob's ladder moment where I said, "I will not let go until you bless me." Then pressed in. Attended, sought for and prayed for and asked for and did my part in the freedom journey.

Then lo and behold, several years after that I just had a moment with God where I finally, finally felt like a daughter.

James: And knew the Father.

Anna: Very much so. So I went in that transition from what I call "having a fatherless existence" to what I now call "having a well-Fathered heart" with a capital F. I feel well-fathered today.

James: How long now have you been enjoying that relationship -- how many years now you say?

Anna: Probably about five.

James: So when did you start writing the book and when did you start telling the story? It is published by Tyndale. So what is it that you believe people who read, who didn't grow up with this but a father-hole is in people's hearts.

Anna: Yes, I definitely want people to know that no matter what has happened in their life, any kind of trauma or any of the abuses, not just abuse that leaves marks and scars on the body but the hidden abuses that leave marks and scars on the heart, the soul, and the spirit, all of those can be healed. All of those can be -- you bring them to the foot of the cross and those hurts, those can be healed and that was my experience.

Betty: He wants to be a Father to all of us if we'll just receive him.

Anna: Yes! And really, what I want people to know is that sometimes the healing can be miraculous and instantaneous but sometimes it is a process. So whether it is miraculous --

James: I think probably with most it's a process. The Damascus Road experience is one of very few in the Bible. The others are more Simon Peter, James and John, and all of them a process and Simon Peter being the more challenging in some ways.

But the point is they're not all dramatic and instant like you said, it is progressive. We don't need to feel like God is failing; he isn't.

Anna: It is as much as you can receive and contain of him that he allows. So for me, the receiving and the containing -- my container has grown. Let me put it that way.

James: And now you want to share which is the reason you're talking, it is the reason you wrote the book.

Do you appreciate her being willing to tell her story, coming out of the pain -- unbelievable, unbelievable story! You might say it is as horrific as anything you've seen historically. It is as horrific as anything you've read in the Bible. The drama, the dramatics of it. They don't -- Tyndale doesn't come publish a book that doesn't have merit, that's not important. I know, I know the publishers well and Ken Taylor, I was just a great encourager of all the things that he did. And it is just a great publisher. I've done several books with them.

But the point is that there is a reason that this is here. A reason for what God did. And a reason for freedom ministries in churches like Gateway. I just praise God for it.

We just thank you. The book is in the bookstores. You can get it. We always, just like right now, we are offering because we want to bless our viewers, we're offering *The Words of Jesus*. Now you can't miss with that. This whole book is a red book. It ought to be read -- it is red. It's all there. It's what he says.

Then *Words of Healing*. We've just had some miracles happen. There's people getting out of bed that couldn't walk and just suddenly they're well. And then we check back and they're still well. I mean it is miracles. It is not like a fleeting thing. So we want to put good things in people's hands.

Do you know what our viewers like? They love being someone's miracle. You see, you were so happy to tell us that somebody helped you. First of all, a little school but then somebody helped you at Gateway and your life was changed. Well, what you're doing -- please don't miss this because I think the viewers of our program are very unique because once you say, "Well, you've helped me" you don't just check out. Because you know, that we're going to give you the great joy of becoming someone's miracle or being the avenue or the way or the channel of miraculous healing -- changing everything, and not wishful thinking. And there's nothing more miraculous than giving someone fresh clean water, meeting that need and changing everything. That's precisely what you can do.

You're about to witness a miracle. You're going to witness love meeting a need and then that love bringing someone in need to the greatest relationship with Christ. Watch this. It will bless you. It will bless you a lot.

On the mission field

Announcer: They say that the sure sign of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. For Naror, she has no choice but to repeat her steps even when she knows those same steps cost the life of her baby girl. Now as she draws water yet again from the same contaminated source she hopes this time will be different, that her older daughter won't fall ill and die the same terrible death as her baby girl.

Open Captions:

>> My baby girl became ill so I took her to the clinic. They said nothing was wrong with my baby girl and they sent us home. She died that night. [Crying]

My baby needed clean water. If I was not so poor my baby would still be alive.

Tammy: It's so hard for me to sit here and listen to her story and see such pain in her eyes. It's so raw, it's so fresh, but the biggest thing is just hearing her say that all she needs is clean water and knowing that that could have changed everything for her. Like she is fully aware of what she needs but she can't do anything about it.

I would love to be able to speak hope into her life and tell her that things are about to change.

Announcer: Indeed, change began that day as Naror prayed to receive Jesus as her Lord and savior. Now her soul will never thirst again and it is our prayer that like so many others around the world, with your help, she will no longer thirst for clean drinking water for her family and village.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Wow! That is just such a beautiful picture of love. Tammy Trent, praying there and leading that precious mother to the Lord, who lost her baby.

Tammy lost the love of her life, she lost her husband to water. Her husband drowned and he was an almost professional swimmer. He's gone.

But the love that God put in Tammy's heart has taken her around the world as well as a gifted musician, communicator and a great friend and co-laborer with life.

Betty, we know how that mother felt to lose a child. There is not a person watching us, not one of you, that if you could have saved our girl you would have done it.

Well, you can save the children like she was talking about by giving them a water well, and our goal is to give 400. Betty, we can't do that. You and I give a well, we've asked God to let us always do that. He just answered our prayer. Every time the missionaries say, "Okay, now here is our goal," bless God, we're able to give a well. Some of you can do that now. I just believe everybody doing their part, we're going to get the 400 wells we need.

Betty: I do too. I trust that you will join with us. And let's give hope to these precious mothers that know that every time they go to that dirty waterhole that there's death in it. But what do they do? Their babies have to have water to live very, very long.

Now we have the opportunity to reach out in hope and drill the water wells and the filters where we can't get in to drill the water wells, they offer the filters to them now and it makes such a difference. You see such joy come on their faces when they see that water come up out of the ground, it's like dancing in the streets. They just love it because they know what it means, especially the mothers. They know that it can save the lives of their children. Please join with us and let's make the difference.

James: I'm confident that our viewers will. You've been so special. You're amazing. I wish I could know all of you. I wish I could hold your hand. I wish I could give you a hug and just let you know how grateful we are that you've given so many people a chance at life -- given them Water for LIFE while we point them to the water of life, the love of God through Jesus.

This is our last week. We need to hear from every one of you. We need those of you who can drill a well to do it, they're \$4800 -- or give a portion of a well, \$1200 or \$2400 and pray others join you. I believe they will.

If you can give \$48 or \$144 those two amounts, let me break it down for you: \$48 will give ten people water the rest of their life, \$144 will give 30 people water the rest of their life.

Betty mentioned the filter systems. If we can give three families their own filter, it works like dialysis, it will take everything unclean out of the water, all contaminants, all bacteria. And we can give three families their own system for \$100. That's in the areas where the terrain will not allow the drilling rigs to get in. But they are way up in those areas. They too need clean water. So they have access to contaminated water. We can give them a filter system for \$100, three families.

All right. There's a level at which you can help. I want you to go online, please, see the online site or dial that number that's always there as a prayer line. Now you're turning it into a life line. You're going to give life on that line -- Water for LIFE.

Would you please right now take your bankcard, go get it, go online, make the call. Please do it now. It's just so easy. You're going to get distracted in a little while and this is the last week. So we really need your help to complete this goal. I believe you want to do it. I believe you want to be the miracle someone is praying for and longing for. And you literally can be.

So please go online or make that call. Thank you so much for doing it. We have some gifts to bless you but you're giving the greatest gift, you're giving life.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day children living in extreme poverty are forced to make a dreadful choice: Drink polluted water filled with deadly disease or perhaps die of thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

The good news is there is a solution. **Mission:** Water for Life is one of the most proven and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything!

With your gift today you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in 15 nations. A gift of \$48 will provide disease-free water for ten people, \$72 will provide for 15 people, and \$144 will help provide clean water straight from the ground for 30 people.

Please also consider an additional gift of \$100 to help provide three families with water filtration kits in emergency areas where our drilling rigs are unable to reach. As our thank you, we'll send you the books, *Words of Jesus* and *Words of Healing*. One contains only the words of Jesus and the other scriptures for healing in your body, mind, and soul. With your \$100 gift you can receive both hardbound and softbound editions of these scripture promise books.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people. Or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well and you may request our beautiful hand sculpted "Determined Eagle" bronze.

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

In the studio

James: We're going to be sending you the *Words of Healing*, *The Words of Jesus* and some beautiful study guides that will help you as you go through this.

If you would like to have Anna's book *The Polygamist's Daughter* and the miraculous story, we'll be happy to send it to you. Say, "James, I think there are things in there I just need to hear. I need to read. Would you mind sending it to us?" It is in the bookstores. You can get it online

but you help us give water and we'll be glad to send it to you to say thanks.

Join Betty and me in saying thanks again to Anna. Would you please?

Anna, thank you. Thank you so much for sharing your journey. May many be set free.

Thank you so much for watching. We really do thank you for helping us. Remember this is the last week. We need to hear from you. Thank you. Thank all of you!