

**Article on Lee Hodges
for Christian News Connection**

Q. When did you become a Christian?

A. I grew up in a home where God's name was not used other than as a curse word. My parents did not "need" God. I was 10 years old when I knelt on the linoleum floor in my neighbor's humble farm kitchen to receive Jesus Christ into my heart. I had been in Vacation Bible school that whole week, and they weren't letting any kid out the door the last day without answering the question, "Do you have Jesus in your heart?"

My answer was "No".

"Do you want to have Jesus in your heart?"

I thought, "Well, you'd have to be crazy to answer 'No' to that", so I said "yes", without having a clue what she meant. But God was faithful in seeing that I grew in understanding and my faith deepened as I renewed my commitment to the Lord at various significant ages in my life. My parents were not thrilled.

Q. How about your personal life?

A. God brought me a godly husband, Bill, when I was 35. He gave me a life partner, and an art patron, all in one. We will celebrate 20 years of marriage this August. God has truly given me the desires of my heart.

Q. Do you, like most artists and musicians, have a day job?

A. I retired from the part-time job of 14 years that I loved, Gallery Director of the Buenaventura Gallery last year, and have been blessed to be a full-time artist since then. For the past 10 years God has shown me how to bring together my two passions: my love of creating artwork and my love for God and His Word.

Q. How does God use your art to minister to people?

A. People viewing my artwork have told me over and over that these pieces are anointed by the Holy Spirit. And, since each artwork usually contains a portion of the living Word of God, they speak to a deep place in peoples' hearts and souls.

Q. Why do you think this artwork appeals to people?

A. It's complex and it requires some closer examination and thought. I love to paint landscapes, but a viewer can get everything at a glance. By mixing collage and paint, I can play with space, create different angles, perspectives, and incorporate words. I collage and paint Biblically-themed paintings which are designed to intrigue the viewer and cause them to reflect on eternal truths while enjoying the beauty of the artwork.. I often recycle paper and plastics that are castoff by our throw-away society, making a redemptive statement with the very materials I choose.

Q. Why would someone want to have this art in their home, office, or church?

A. One couple was looking at a mixed media piece of mine entitled “Christ the Healer”. Tears sprang to the wife’s eyes, and the husband noticed. He said to me later, after they decided to take it home, “I liked the piece immediately, but when I saw how it affected my wife, I knew it had touched her spirit deeply and meaningfully.”

Q. What else do you do besides create art here at the Ventura Healing Rooms?(see article in the May issue of CNC)

A. Because the Lord has provided me with this very special place that is so spacious, with such great natural lighting, I hold art classes and help other people create their own artwork. We put on praise music, and have fun creating work that is exciting, joyful, and edifying to the spirit. I love to help others explore new techniques and avenues to express their own God-given creativity.

Q. What other activities do you engage in that are related to your artwork?

A. I have spoken at church women’s groups, Christian women’s clubs, service clubs like Rotary Club. Sometimes I do a brief demonstration of how I create one of these very complex, and often intriguing pieces of art.

Q. Have you had any interesting incidents happen?

A. During this spring’s Ventura downtown Artwalk, my studio was open to visitors. One lady walked in and glanced around, did a 180 and ran out like a turpented cat! You might not think so, but I was highly complimented by her reaction. It was abundantly clear to her that this was not just art, but Christian art. There’s a saying, “If being a Christian were illegal, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” I want to make sure that there is plenty of evidence on these walls that Christ is the paramount passion of my life and that He is exalted and magnified, visually speaking.

Q. Do you have a website where people can see your artwork?

A. www.LeeHodgesArt.com

Or they can visit the Healing Rooms, and see the artwork first hand. I welcome visitors weekdays noon to 4:00 p.m. My phone number is 805.302.3167 for further information.

Q. How do you share the space with the Ventura Healing Rooms?

A. The VHR is open for healing prayer on Thursday nights from 6:00-8:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and my artwork is on the walls to enhance the experience, further inviting the presence of the Lord in a visual way. It is an incredible place in which to do my artwork during the week, and I am deeply thankful.