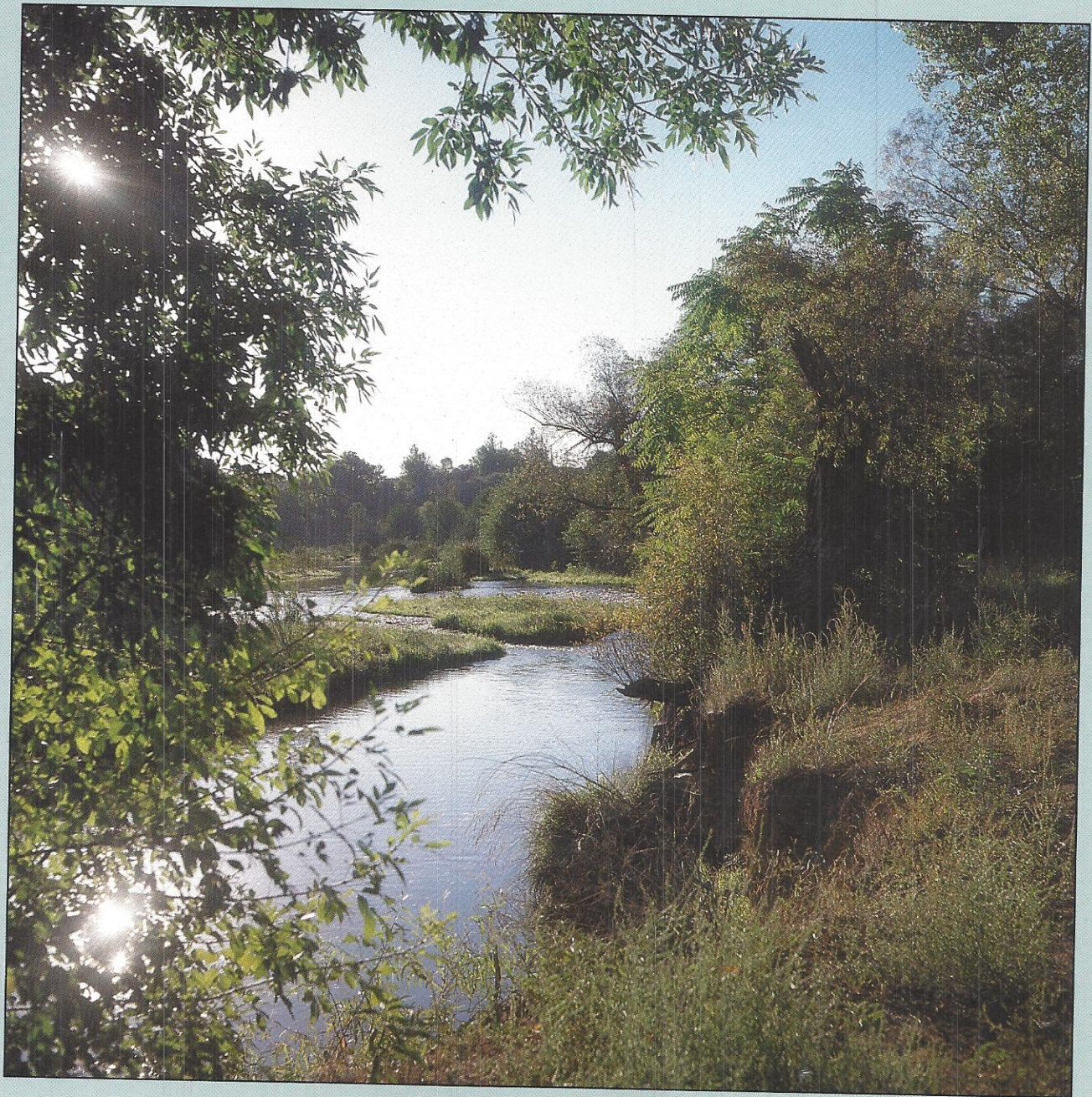
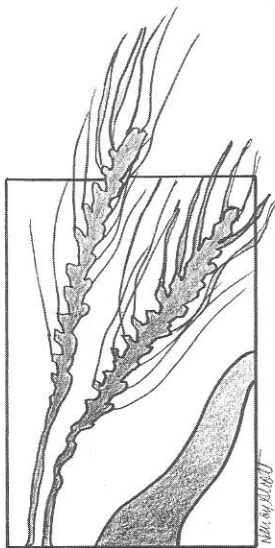


A WORKING PLAN FOR THE SUCCESSFUL RETREAT



Foreword by
Jamie Buckingham



Sooner or later, everyone involved in ministry will get involved in a retreat.

I attended my first retreat as a junior in high school. The youth pastor in our Southern Baptist church in Florida was a single man who had recently graduated from Stetson University. Because of his personal interest—and because of the urging of a pretty young blond whom I married five years later—I became part of his youth group. That summer, between my junior and senior years in high school, the church sponsored a youth retreat.

We used the facilities at a Methodist Retreat Camp in the center of the state. Located on a large lake, it was to be a time of recreation and spiritual inspiration.

The youth pastor put me in charge. It was a five-day retreat and about 50 kids—junior and senior high ages—attended. With the help of a “youth committee,” I drew up the daily program and assigned all the duties. A classmate of mine did the preaching and I led the singing at the evening services. It was a direction-setting time, not only in my life, but in the lives of a number of other young people who attended.

Ever since I have been a strong supporter of Christian retreats.

Later, as a pastor of Southern Baptist churches in South Carolina and Florida, I led summer youth retreats and adult weekend retreats. Across the years, I’ve seen the value of getting away for a period of time, either with a group from our church, or to attend a specialized retreat with a group of strangers all interested in the same subject. I’ve also seen wonderful results in the lives of the people who have participated in these retreats.

Several years ago my friends, John and Barry French, felt God’s leading to build what a number of people have described as the “ideal retreat center.” The Community of Living Water in Cornville, Arizona, is located on beautiful Oak Creek in the high desert midway between Phoenix and the Grand Canyon. It is self-contained with provision to sleep 110 individuals. There is a modern kitchen and dining hall, beautiful chapel, dormitory and motel type rooms, plus recreational facilities.

I’ve led annual retreats sponsored by the Community of Living Water since it opened. I’ve also led writers’ conferences and pastors’ retreats each Fall—also organized by the retreat center. During the other weeks of the year the center is used by churches of all denominations and other Christian

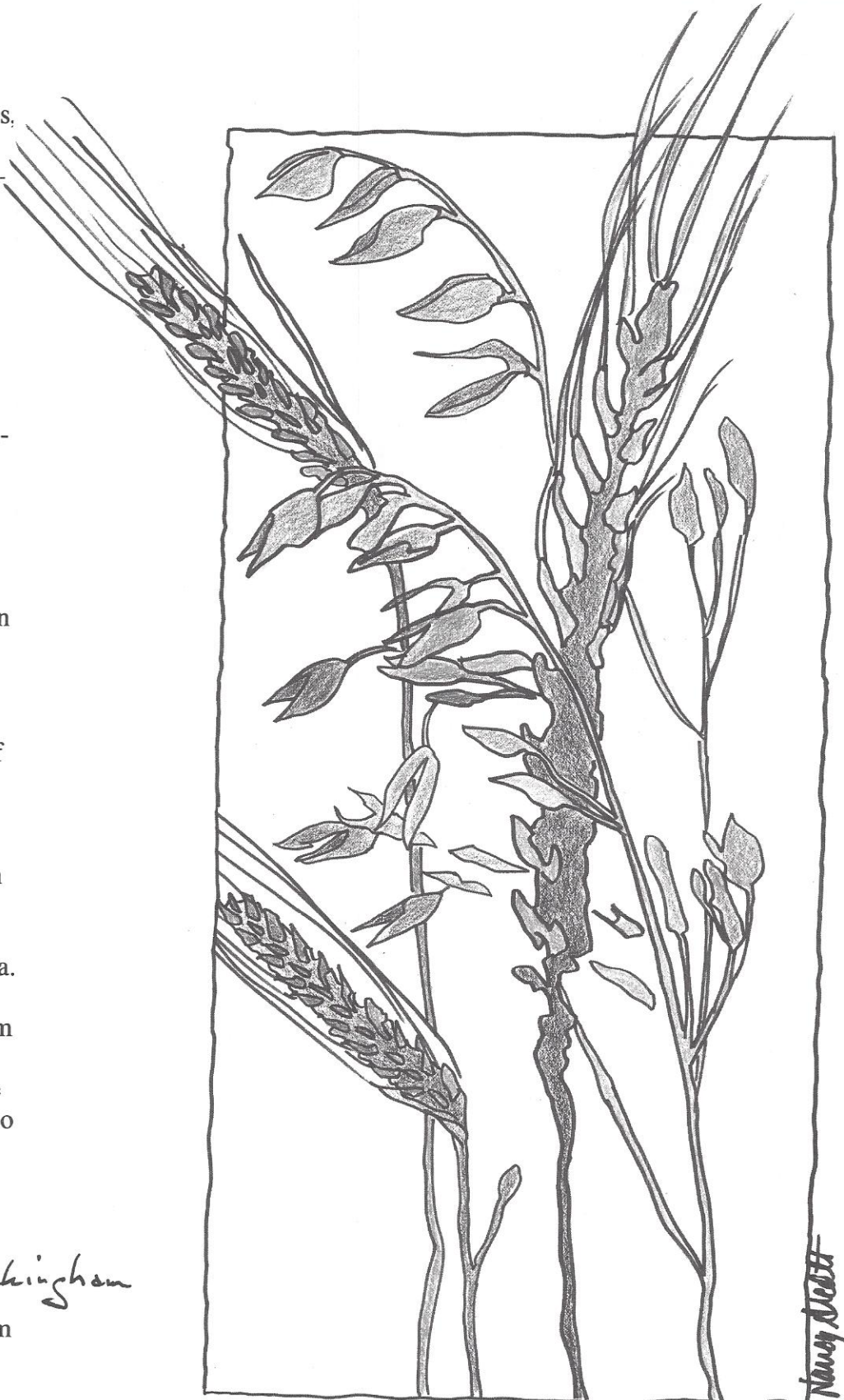
organizations. These groups sponsor conferences for singles, couples, women, men, senior adults, youth, church leaders—you name it.

Despite the reports of outstanding results, one problem seems to plague nearly all the retreats—the problem of planning. Although most are attended by highly motivated people, the leaders at the Community of Living Water have said the retreat leaders invariably say things would have worked much better if there had been some kind of manual they could have used in planning the retreat.

Stepping in to fill this need, the center leaders started by putting together various lists of “things to do.” It soon became evident that what was needed by the organizations using the Community of Living Water in Arizona, was also needed by every group planning a retreat at any retreat center in America. The result is this book, which you now hold in your hands. I’m not sure what you paid for it, but whatever it was, you’ll save many times that amount—not to mention the heartache and frustrations you’ll miss—because you bought it.



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