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**Proposed (Working) Title:** *LET'S ROLL!*

**Proposed Sub-title:** *Finding Hope in the Midst of Crisis*

**Descriptive line:** The widow of one of the United Flight 93 heroes, Todd Beamer, tells their story.

**Author:** Lisa Beamer, with Ken Abraham

**Represented by:** Alive Communications, Inc.  
7680 Goddard Street, Suite 200  
Colorado Springs, CO 80920  
(719) 260-7080 (719) 260-8223 (fax)

**Description:** A hope-filled account of the faith, courage, and character of Todd and Lisa Beamer, and how one of the heroes of United Flight 93 and his wife were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice.

## OVERVIEW

*If we would endeavor, like men of courage, to stand in the battle, surely we would feel the favorable assistance of God from Heaven. For he who giveth us occasion to fight, to the end we may get the victory, is ready to succor those that fight manfully, and do trust in his grace.*

THOMAS ‘A KEMPIS

*I felt as if I were walking with destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial.*

WINSTON CHURCHILL

(on his call to lead Britain  
through it’s darkest days of  
World War II)

A Vietnam veteran sent Lisa Beamer the purple heart he earned on the battlefield.  
A World War II veteran did the same.

The U.S. Congress gave Lisa a prolonged standing ovation.

Lisa Beamer was recently selected by *People* magazine as one of the “25 Most Intriguing People of 2001” for the way she has spoken “eloquently of the need to move on in life without hatred.” Similarly, according to an editorial in the *Dallas Morning News* (12-23-01), the most admired individuals in America today are President George W. Bush, former New York City mayor Rudy Guiliani, and . . . Todd Beamer.

Why all this interest in a quiet, unpretentious couple from New Jersey?

Todd and Lisa Beamer have become heroes to the American public—Todd for his brave actions that cost his life, Lisa for her response.

Todd Beamer never intended to be a hero; he was just an ordinary person, who, in his more contemplative moments, wondered how brave he really was--if he'd have the courage, faith, and resolve to face a terrifying, life-or-death situation. A bright, young father in his early thirties, Todd and his wife Lisa spent most of their time carving out a comfortable living in their community, buying a beautiful new home, building a successful career, and enjoying their two toddlers, David, three-years of age, and Drew, their eighteen-month old. They had it all. Better still, Lisa was pregnant with their third child, due in January, 2002.

Then early on September 11, 2001, Todd Beamer boarded United Airlines Flight 93, from Newark to San Francisco. He never got off the plane, but his last known words, "Let's roll!" have resounded as a rallying cry among Americans nationwide and around the world.

President George W. Bush cited Todd's example and his final words in a speech to the nation in the aftermath of September 11, and the phrase galvanized the U.S. Congress and the country behind the president. Already the phrase is showing up on cups, t-shirts, mouse pads, and a plethora of other places. Pop-rock singer, Neil Young, wrote and recorded a song about Todd's actions and final words. Todd Beamer's phrase, "Let's roll," seems destined to be immortalized similar to Roosevelt's "Day of infamy," or Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you . . ." Todd Beamer's enjoinder has come to symbolize national and personal strength of character in the face of crisis, and Lisa Beamer is the living epitome of her husband's final words.

Many people have heard bits and pieces of Lisa and Todd's story, but the Beamer's full story runs much deeper than a catchy phrase. Yes, their children will grow up with the legacy that their father was a hero, but they'll never know him (including their third child, Morgan Kay—the daughter born January 9<sup>th</sup>, four months after her father's death).

While Lisa Beamer's story is certainly unique, she also recognizes that her husband is but one of many heroes who rose to the occasion on September 11, 2001. Similarly, she is acutely aware that she is not the only person still reeling from the vicious attacks on America, and the ramifications in our lives. Nevertheless, she has become an example of hope and resiliency. She unobtrusively exudes a quiet spiritual strength founded firmly on faith in God, patriotic appreciation for our country, and a deep commitment to family.

In *Let's Roll*, Lisa will recount the events as she now knows them regarding what really happened aboard Flight 93, what she was doing at the time, and how she has responded since that frightful and frantic day when she last saw her husband.

Shortly after breakfast was served aboard Flight 93, terrorists hijacked the aircraft and diverted it's course toward Washington, D.C., ostensibly planning to crash it into the Capitol or the White House as the fourth prong of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Todd Beamer was herded to the rear of the plane along with nine of the other forty one passengers and five flight attendants. The terrorists forced twenty seven other passengers toward the first class section of the plane.

Several passengers successfully completed cell phone calls to loved ones, but Todd's call was diverted to a GTE Airfone operator, Lisa Jefferson. For thirteen tension-packed minutes, Todd talked with the operator, calmly for the most part, considering the

circumstances, informing her of the hijacking and providing as many details as possible about the terrorists who had commandeered the aircraft.

From their loved ones on the ground, other passengers learned of the attacks on the World Trade Center, and the Pentagon. When Lisa Jefferson confirmed the events to Todd, he and several other passengers recognized that this was no “ordinary” hijacking. They decided they could not sit back passively as pawns in another terrorist attack. Time was not on their side. Somewhere above Cleveland, the terrorists had already managed to turn the plane around and were pointing it back toward the nation’s capital. Another twenty minutes or so, and it would be too late. Todd Beamer and his companions quickly devised a plan to mount a counterattack against the hijackers.

An intense athletic competitor, Todd was a take-charge guy, a person who could come up with a plan, and then lead others into action. But never in his life had he anticipated being the point man on such a real life-or-death mission. Todd’s courage had peaked and dipped since the terrorists had first taken charge. At several points, Lisa Jefferson could hear Todd calling out to God, thinking the plane was about to crash. But then Todd drew upon a deep reservoir of courage and faith. “I’m going to have to go out by faith,” he told the operator.

Todd then asked the operator to promise to call Lisa if he didn’t make it home. He told her about David and Drew, and the third baby due within a few months. Then Todd told the operator that he and several of the passengers planned to jump the hijackers. “It’s what we have to do,” he said.

Todd deliberately quoted the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father, which art in heaven; Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven . . ." Lisa Jefferson joined Todd in reciting the prayer aloud.

"Amen. Jesus help me," Todd said. Then just before he motioned to his fellow passengers, he quoted from memory the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

On the ground, Lisa Jefferson clearly heard Todd's next words.

"Are you guys ready?" Todd urged his makeshift army. "Let's roll!"

Todd Beamer did not want to die. Indeed, he had everything to live for, but he willingly sacrificed his life and went out fighting against evil; in doing so, he no doubt saved hundreds, possibly even thousands of other lives, and perhaps one of our nation's most esteemed symbols of freedom.

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The events of September 11, 2001 shook our nation unlike anything most of us have ever before experienced, and for millions of men, women, and children, the events shattered our sense of safety and security. Our own vulnerability and finiteness have never seemed more obvious. Lisa Beamer, however, suffered more than a national tragedy or even a personal loss—hers was a devastation of the heart. Pregnant with their third child at the time of Todd's death on September 11, Lisa's attitude remained amazingly positive, and at times, even joyful, despite facing the overwhelming responsibilities of raising her children without their dad.

Lisa's warmhearted, yet frank, insights and candid recollections concerning that fateful day are devoid of glib clichés, moral platitudes, or wishful assurances that

“everything is going to be all right.” She speaks straightforwardly of the pain, loneliness, and the sense of loss she feels without her marriage partner. Yet the poise, confidence, and wisdom displayed by this young woman evoke hope in even the most hard-boiled, crusty cynics.

A phrase Todd often used to motivate family members and others to action, “Let’s roll,” has taken on new meaning to Lisa Beamer. “It’s standing up for what you believe in and taking action without thought to the personal consequences,” says Lisa. In telling her story, Lisa Beamer will share how her husband Todd developed such character, and how she hopes to impart similar values to their children. She will honestly admit her own vulnerability as a result of September 11, as well as the keys to her calm demeanor, how she has changed, what she has learned through her experience, and the new, deeper meaning of the phrase, “Let’s roll,” in her life.

Ironically, Todd’s death was not the first time Lisa’s security has been shaken to the core by the unexpected loss of her provider. She had just turned fifteen when her father, a physicist working for IBM, was suddenly struck down with an aneurysm in his aorta. A bubble literally exploded in his heart, and Lisa’s father was gone in an instant. She never had a chance hug him one last time, or to tell him good-bye. Lisa was devastated and disillusioned. Questions rankled her young mind night and day. *Why did this happen? Why was her father suddenly snatched away from their family? Where was God and why didn’t He do something to prevent this tragedy? What am I going to do now? How are we going to make it?*

These questions and others weighed heavily on Lisa’s heart and mind. In a real way, at fifteen years of age, Lisa dealt with many of the same questions we are grappling

with as a nation today. Moreover, the answers she came to as a teenager have helped sustain her through the loss of her husband, and the father of her children, and those answers will encourage and inspire readers as they grapple with their own concerns for the future.

Lisa Beamer is a new role model for many young women, and an example of courage for all of us. “I don’t need to understand why,” says Lisa. “I just need to carry on for my children and offer others what help we can give.” In response to President Bush’s encouragement that we get on with our lives following the attacks, Lisa boarded a United Airlines jet in Newark and completed the flight to San Francisco, the exact route Todd was scheduled to fly on September 11.

She continues to be an encouragement to family members of the passengers on Flight 93, maintaining contact with many of them, and visiting the crash site of the doomed airliner on which their loved ones perished. She has met with some of the family members who lost loved ones in the attack on a Pan Am flight downed by terrorists in Lockerbie, Scotland. She has established a non-profit foundation to help the victims of Flight 93 and other terrorist attacks, as well as to promote the values and programs among young people that Todd Beamer represented.

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The lives of Todd and Lisa Beamer have been grounded on much more than mere slogans and jingoism. Todd Beamer lived by the adage he heard so often at Wheaton College, a motto of martyred missionary, Jim Elliot, who said, “When it comes time to die, be very sure that all you have to do is die.” What did Todd Beamer know about living that allowed him to die so nobly? In *Let’s Roll!* Lisa Beamer will share the foundational

experiences that shaped the couple and their families for the moment when they would be thrust upon history's stage.

The President of the United States referred to Todd Beamer as “an exceptional man,” and indeed he was, though not simply for the reasons most people remember his name. In *Let's Roll!* Lisa Beamer will allow the reader to meet the real Todd--strong, yet not infallible; principled, but not perfect—a man who had found the inner strength to do what was right when the cost of his actions were unknown and success was anything but a certainty.

Lisa will also describe how she has coped with her personal loss of security, her sense of vulnerability, and the fear of an uncertain future. She will address questions many Americans are asking publicly and privately such as, Where do we go from here? How should we react to the attack on America? How can I ever feel safe again? How can we explain this to our children and to generations to come? How can we find hope in the midst of devastation? How can we move on with life, without hatred, when so many of our dreams and so much of what we have known and loved have been dashed?

## **TAKEAWAY VALUE**

The attack on September 11, 2001 was national, but it was also personal . . . we will never be the same. Positively, our nation will be more united, more resolute, more committed to relationships and values that really matter, and in the long run, we will all be stronger, with a fresh appreciation and love for our country. Lisa Beamer's book, *Let's Roll!*, will be an integral part of that healing process. Moreover, it will evoke hope in the

hearts of readers, as they face reality with Lisa, mourn, cry, and laugh with her, all the while discovering the secret to her inner strength.

Through Lisa and Todd Beamer's story, we will also learn much about ourselves. How many of us could have mustered the courage to do what Todd Beamer did? How many of us could respond the way Lisa Beamer has? Where does such confidence come from? How can we face our worst nightmares, the fear of pain, injury, even possible torturous death? How can we cope when unexpected calamities come our way? *How can we find hope in the midst of crises?* Readers will be inspired by the Beamers' willingness to risk living to the max, and trusting God for a great future.

## **UNIQUENESS**

Although numerous books will be written about the events of September 11, 2001, Lisa Beamer's book will be the only major book done by a woman, tugging at the heartstrings of every person who has loved and lost someone. Her story will appeal particularly to women, as Lisa shares her concerns and hopes in raising her children.

## **SPECIAL MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS**

Although Lisa has no desire to be a public personality, she handles interviews in an articulate, gracious, humble manner. Her youthful and attractive features evoke memories of the late Princess Diana, and not surprisingly, the media has adopted her as somewhat of an icon, a hero in her own right, as the world watches closely, and follows her every move. She is a woman of faith, soft-spoken, and kind, yet intelligent and an extremely good

communicator. She will provide interviews for all major media upon the book's publication.

## MAJOR MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

The media opportunities for Lisa Beamer are almost too numerous to count. She has been featured on or interviewed by:

*Good Morning America* (ABC-TV)

*The Today Show* (NBC-TV)

*Larry King Live* (CNN)

*Time*

*Newsweek*

*People*

*New York Post*

*Christianity Today*

Most major television networks have requested follow up interviews with Lisa, which will be done upon the publication of her book. *Ladies Home Journal* has already requested serial rights, and Lisa's representatives have already been contacted concerning the development of a "made for TV" movie. *People* magazine has asked if they could do a cover story on Lisa in conjunction with this book, *The Oprah Winfrey Show* has committed to having Lisa a guest to discuss her book, and every major news program (*Dateline*, *60 Minutes*, *20/20*, etc.) have requested time with Lisa to talk about her book and the events of September 11. *Today's Christian Woman* intends to put her on the cover of that magazine. We are working with a marketing company to ensure that major media events are held off until closer to the book's release, in order to maximize publicity for this project. President Bush has already asked Lisa to be the speaker at this Spring's National

Prayer Breakfast on the Capitol Grounds, and the Disney corporation plans to feature Lisa when they host a “national day of healing” at Disney World—bringing in the families and survivors of those lost in the plane crashes of September 11.

One of the most exciting media events scheduled is the announcement of the Todd Beamer Foundation, which will be done this Spring in San Francisco. The event will be covered by all the major networks, and should help keep Lisa in the public eye while her book is in production. We have already received hundreds of requests for Lisa to speak in 2002, and we plan to take full value of her celebrity in giving the book exposure.

#### **ABOUT THE COLLABORATOR**

This book will be written with noted collaborator, Ken Abraham, who knows well how to apply the right elements of pathos, suspense, humor, and sympathy in such a poignant book. Ken’s book, *Payne Stewart, the Authorized Biography*, a collaboration with Tracey Stewart, wife of golf’s late U.S. Open champion, who died in a freak plane crash in October, 2000, was a *New York Times* bestseller (nonfiction hardback), and remained on the NYT bestsellers list for thirteen weeks.

Other heartrending, but encouraging books on which Ken Abraham has collaborated include:

*The Burden of a Secret*, (Random House / Ballantine, 1995). Ken collaborated with Dr. Jimmy Allen, former president of the 16-million member Southern Baptist Convention, to tell the story of Dr. Allen’s family crisis as they discovered truth and mercy in the face of AIDS. The book was a finalist in the 1996 Evangelical Christian Publisher’s Association’s Gold Medallion Awards.

*I Was Wrong*, with Jim Bakker, former PTL president and televangelist, in which for the first time, the fallen preacher reveals his side of events leading to his resignation from PTL and his subsequent 45-year prison sentence, one of the longest ever handed down for a “white collar crime” in American jurisprudence (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996). This book was a finalist in the 1997 ECPA Gold Medallion Awards.

*Coming Clean* (WaterBrook - Doubleday- Random House, 1999), Ken’s collaboration with former Medellin drug cartel leader, Jorge Valdés, provided an inside look at one of the most powerful and corrupting forces in our society—the cocaine industry and its influence on top government officials, Hollywood celebrities, as well as kids in the streets. The transformation of Jorge Valdés from the American head of the cartel to a Christian evangelist is a compelling and fascinating testimony of God’s power to change anyone’s life.

Ken also collaborated with professional golfer, Paul Azinger, whose rise to the top of the PGA tour, only to discover cancer in his shoulder, and his remarkable recovery and comeback are recorded in *Zinger!* (Harper-Collins / Zondervan; 1995). Additionally, Ken has co-authored *The Gamer*, the baseball autobiography of All-Star catcher, Gary Carter (Word Publishing, 1993).

**MANUSCRIPT LENGTH:** 70,000 words, depending upon the needs of the publisher.

Each chapter will be ten to fifteen pages at most. The book should also include an eight page, color photo section of Todd, Lisa, and their children, including the new baby born in January, 2002, as well as other photos relating to the story.

**MANUSCRIPT COMPLETION DATE:** April 1, 2002.

### **PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL--WHAT'S NEW HERE?**

Because so much of Lisa Beamer's story has taken place in public, it is fair to ask what new information, insights, and intrigue will be explored in her book. This material will include:

- New information regarding what federal authorities now believe actually happened aboard Flight 93, leading to its crash in Somerset County, PA.
- How Lisa first heard of the attacks on the World Trade Center, then the news of the crash of Flight 93—her worst fears confirmed. Lisa knew that Todd had died, but at that point she had no idea of his involvement in the attempt to overcome the hijackers aboard the plane. This left many questions in her heart and mind: Why hadn't he called her? He always called. Todd's cell phone was his constant companion. Lisa learned early during the aftermath of September 11 that other passengers aboard the flight had completed phone calls to their loved ones... Why hadn't Todd called *her*? Three days after the crash, Lisa received a phone call from

the grief counselor informing her that Todd had indeed called. The call had been routed through Verizon's Airfone division and had been passed on to a supervisor, Lisa Jefferson, when the operator who received the call first learned of the hijacking. The complete conversation with Lisa Jefferson, as well as her thoughts, comments, and feelings will be included in the book.

- The events leading up to Lisa's and Todd's last morning together. Todd had won a free vacation to Rome through his company's incentive programs. The excitement of traveling overseas early in September; flying was a frequent activity for the Beamers; they had no reticence about air travel, and they enjoyed many exotic vacations due to Todd's success in his work. Todd and Lisa had returned from Rome only the night before, late on September 10, 2001. Todd literally didn't even have time to unpack, but simply threw some clothes together for his next day's trip to San Francisco. Conversations between he and Lisa that last night together, including their late night thoughts and the early morning departure for Todd.
- Lisa didn't see him off, but went back to bed, without saying good-bye. Her regrets concerning that last morning together.
- The state of Lisa and Todd's marriage relationship. Ironically, one of the few points of tension in their relationship was the balance between Todd's work-related travel responsibilities and his family responsibilities; especially his desire to be home with his boys and Lisa. While Todd was growing up, his father had traveled

extensively and the family had moved frequently to facilitate Dad's career. The absentee father and the resultant insecurity left indelible impressions on Todd. He did not want the same to be true in his own children. Yet while Todd was passionately in love with Lisa, and uncompromisingly committed to her, as well as a devoted and extremely active father to his sons, he also tended to become obsessed with his work. He had achieved a high level of success as a salesman for Oracle, dealing only with a half dozen or so high profile clients such as the Sony Corporation—representatives of whom he was traveling to meet with on September 11. The couple frequently discussed this tenuous balance between work travel and Todd's time at home. Because Lisa had previously worked for Oracle, she knew the pressures and opportunities, as well as the temptations to obsess over work issues.

- The “accountability groups” in which Todd and Lisa were members for several years prior to September 11. Todd met with a group of guys at 6:30 AM each Friday morning. The group's primary purpose was to help each other keep a proper balance between spiritual priorities, home, and career responsibilities. Todd had missed the previous few Friday morning sessions, prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, but one of the last phone calls he made before boarding Flight 93 was to one the members of that group, just to encourage a fellow member.
- Lisa met weekly with a women's study group, comprised mainly of women from the couple's church. This group served a similar role in Lisa's life as Todd's Friday morning accountability group. The couple also met regularly on Sunday

evenings with a “couples” discussion group at their church. Members read and discussed a mutually selected book, usually topics of spiritual growth, husband-wife relationships, or parenting. Todd and Lisa had frequently prayed along with other members of the group, as various couples experienced traumatic events in their lives.

- The immediate response of the members of these groups, coming to Lisa and Todd’s home to console, comfort, and to help deal with the instant “celebrity” Lisa never sought or desired.
- Todd’s early years: events that shaped his life and instilled values in his heart. His love of sports; he was a good athlete, and especially loved baseball and basketball. The Beamer family lived in the Chicago suburb of Wheaton, where Todd attended school at Wheaton Academy, a conservative religious elementary school. Todd was a big Chicago Bulls fan during the “Michael Jordan years.” Todd was not always the best player on the team, but he had a reputation as a “gamer,” the guy who wouldn’t give up, wouldn’t quit—the “go-to” guy in clutch situations. Some games will be discussed in which he pulled out some last minute “miracle,” to save the day for the home team.
- Lisa’s early years growing up in the Albany, then later the Peekskill, New York area. Her dad was a physicist with IBM, her mom a school teacher. She grew up in

a conservative family, spent summers in rural Pennsylvania. The irony that United Flight 93 would go down in a rural section of Pennsylvania.

- The full story of Lisa’s dad’s sudden and unexpected death, and the ramifications his death had in Lisa’s life. Her anger with God for allowing such a thing to happen. Her faith shaken, and how she dealt with the many “why” questions. How she came through her teenage years more committed to her faith than ever. Lisa guarded her heart when it came to dating and serious love relationships, however, carrying a lingering reluctance to get too close to any man for fear that if she loved someone too much, that person could suddenly go away, or be taken away, as had happened with her father.
- How Lisa and Todd met. Lisa and her brother Paul attended Wheaton College. Paul played on the baseball team, and had a good friend—Todd Beamer. Lisa attended many of their games and came to know Todd as a friend. They dated only after becoming good friends, and eventually fell in love with Todd and they decided to marry.
- Both Todd and Lisa were unusually analytical about their future. They both were extremely ambitious in their careers. Todd worked as a sales representative for Wilson Sporting Goods during the early years of their marriage. He frequently gushed to Lisa about various “big name” sports celebrities who he happened to see at Wilson, including Michael Jordan, Carlton Fisk, and others. Lisa and Todd both

took jobs with the Oracle Corporation, a technology company based in San Francisco, with offices in Chicago, New York/New Jersey, and other locations. Todd's ambitious career achievements led him up the ladder at Oracle. Eventually he was offered a more prestigious position with special accounts, which involved a move to Newark, New Jersey. For Lisa, the move was not difficult, since she had grown up in the Albany and Peekskill areas of New York.

- The events surrounding the birth of their children, David and Drew. Todd, the “hands on father” type, wanted to be in the delivery room and involved in the birthing process. When David was born, Todd hoisted him in the air, like a champion athlete holding up a prized trophy for all to see. Todd was not averse to rocking the baby to sleep, changing diapers, etc. It was the same with Drew—the biggest struggle came after both boys were born and the couple had to contend with the issue of family busyness. Todd was extremely active in the lives of the boys, playing ball with them from earliest ages. Shuffling his work schedule more and more to be home with Lisa and the boys, when the family moved to New Jersey, Todd turned down a position in management so he could continue in sales, calling more of his own shots. In fact, he had called the shot to make the trip to San Francisco to meet with representatives from the Sony Corporation on September 11<sup>th</sup>.
- The love and support that Lisa received almost instantly from her church and her Bible study members, as well as the men in Todd's accountability group.

- Explaining to the boys, David (3) and Drew (1) that Daddy won't be coming home.  
 "Jesus loves Daddy so much that he took Daddy to live in heaven with him."  
 Attempting to answer the unanswerable question: "If Daddy loves us so much, why did he go to live with Jesus?"
- The quirky, almost surreal circumstances surrounding Lisa's travel aboard the United Airlines flight, "completing" the trip her husband had begun on September 11. The decision to take the trip. Meeting the First Lady, Mrs. Bush. The press applauded Lisa's bravery but little did they know the awful fears that haunted her. Traveling to the airport, with all the awful thoughts and fears looming as she approached the departure area. What had Todd been thinking that day? Was it safe for her to be flying? What would happen to her children if anything happened to her? They had already lost their daddy—did she dare risk taking the flight? There was significantly increased security at the airport. Jarring enough for anyone, let alone for someone whose husband had died as Todd had. Lisa prayed and asked God to calm her thoughts. Going through the security lines, with all the fears surging through her heart and mind, then glancing furtively at the other passengers. Could another terrorist be aboard this flight? The rumble of the engines. Airborne. The flight across America.
- Being greeted by Oracle representatives, Todd's former employers. Lisa already had in mind that she wanted to do something in Todd's name to help the family

members who had lost loved ones due to the terrorist attacks, and the management of Oracle pledged their financial assistance.

- The invitation to attend President Bush's televised speech to the joint sessions of congress and to the nation. Should she accept? She had already done an interview on television concerning Todd's death. Did she really want to be seen on national television as the mourning widow. Or would it appear disrespectful to decline the invitation?

- What it felt like when President Bush introduced her, and the U.S. Congress rose to their feet, acknowledging Todd's bravery and giving Lisa a standing ovation as well. Lisa's thoughts at that moment. Other important people Lisa met during the trip to the Capitol.

The president's quoting Todd, "Let's roll!"

- Lisa's feelings and thoughts, laying aside her own loss to help galvanize the country.
- Going to the crash site of United Flight 93 in rural Somerset County in Pennsylvania, along with other family members who had lost loved ones in the crash. Lisa's thoughts. Conversations with other victims' loved ones. The stomach wrenching emotions she experienced walking away after looking into the

giant hole in the ground where her husband and forty five other human beings had been obliterated in the crash.

- Back home, Lisa placed photographs of the boys with Todd at the boys' eye-level, to elicit memories of their dad, and to let them know that it is okay to talk about daddy.
- The memorial services. Lisa's decision to have a service early for the victims of the crash, rather than to wait until weeks or months later.
- The overwhelming outpouring of support Lisa received from people around the world.
- Famous personalities who have contacted Lisa.
- Letters, money, gifts, toys, etc. pouring in to Lisa's home. Although she had every right to keep the gifts for herself and her children rather than to profit selfishly, she decided to form the Todd Beamer Foundation to help the families, especially the children, of victims of Flight 93 and other terrorist attacks, and to help support youth work, similar to that she knew Todd loved. To avoid a conflict of interest, Lisa excluded her own children from benefiting from the contributions to the foundation.

- Celebrating Todd's 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday in November...without him.
- The first Thanksgiving without Todd.
- Decorating the house for Christmas. Hanging Todd's special ornaments with the boys. Each ornament had special memories, and she shared them with the boys.
- David's fourth birthday; party on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002 – the first of many without Todd.
- The birth of the Beamer's third child, daughter Morgan Kay, on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2002. Lisa decided to have her doctor induce labor to avoid the media frenzy around the birth (she'd been offered a king's ransom to have the media in the delivery room with her). Lisa chose to have her baby with the least amount of publicity as possible.
- The future activities for Lisa Beamer, which will include speaking, writing, encouraging victims' families, and working one-on-one with families who have been victimized.

Perhaps the key piece of information in this book will be Lisa's hope. In seeing her on television and in print, people have wanted to know, "*How* can she be so composed?

Where does she derive her strength from? In light of the terrible events of September 11,

how can we move forward with a sense of hope?” It is that story we expect to tell throughout the pages of this book.

## **PROPOSED OUTLINE:**

### **Chapter One—The Crash**

The book opens with a phone call from Todd Beamer, trying to call home from aboard United Flight 93, on September 11, 2001.

Meanwhile Lisa learns of the attacks on the World Trade Center

The dramatic events aboard the plane—the actions of the hijackers, as well as those of the passengers.

Todd's fears—cries to God for help. He overcame his fears. The decision to attack the hijackers.

Todd's conversation and prayer with Lisa Jefferson, the GTE operator.  
His final known words: "Are you guys ready? Let's roll."

The plane see-saws from side to side as it plummets toward the earth. (This information will be drawn from eyewitness accounts, as well as previously unpublished descriptions of the crash site from local fire and rescue workers.)

While the world gasps in horror as the World Trade Towers crumble, Lisa Beamer learns that her world, too, has suddenly, irrevocably, collapsed. Her husband Todd, father of their two children, and a third on the way, is dead.

Lisa is left with a question gnawing at her heart: "Other passengers contacted their loved ones. Todd practically lived with a cell phone connected to his ear. Why hadn't Todd called?"

## **Chapter Two – Todd’s early days**

His family background.

Todd and his two sisters grew up in a conservative, Christian family; had moved quite a bit so Todd’s father could advance in his career. Finally settled in the suburbs of Chicago.

Influence of his family members, school, and church that shaped his values and encouraged his faith in God.

Fun stories about Todd’s competitiveness as a boy; always loved sports, especially baseball and basketball. Hated to lose. Was willing to risk doing something unconventional to pull a win out of the bag. Events during his high school years that shaped Todd’s personality and values.

His decision to attend Wheaton College.

## **Chapter Three --Lisa’s early years**

Her family background. Both Lisa’s mom and dad grew up in south central Pennsylvania. Lisa, however, grew up in New York. Her father worked as a physicist for IBM and her mother taught school. Born in Albany, the family lived in Westchester County, north of New York City. Moved to Peekskill when Lisa was still a little girl. Church was important to the family. Attended a Baptist church, where Lisa first came to trust God for her future.

Enjoyed the best of both worlds: Peekskill not far from the hustle and bustle of New York City, yet she spent many of her childhood summers visiting with her grandparents in the rural Pennsylvania community of Sunbury, near to Pennsylvania Dutch country. Small

town atmosphere, along the Susquehanna River. Many God-fearing people with Bible-based values and a strong work ethic.

Lisa enjoyed outdoor activities with her mom, dad, and brothers Paul and Jonathan, and sister Holly. Lisa was the oldest of the four children. The family had a passion for competition and athletics. Enjoyed camping trips together, sitting around a campfire, and getting soaked in a tent. Extended family was also important to Lisa's mom and dad, so they visited relatives often.

Lisa played on community softball, soccer, and basketball teams. She was a good student with almost straight A's on her report card. Math, Science, and American History were her favorite subjects. Had a "Norman Rockwell" type family, occasional disagreements and friction but mostly wonderful security, until one night, in the wee hours of the morning, Lisa heard the commotion coming from her parents' bedroom.

## **Chapter Four – Crushed**

Lisa's dad was the youngest of seven children. His brother had died suddenly of a heart attack, but Lisa's dad seemed to be the picture of health. A brilliant man, who had an earned doctorate in physics, he was also a very devout Christian; his faith was a reasoned faith, scientific approach to Christianity rather than emotionally oriented. He was a balanced man, always home for dinner, rarely traveled for business, he was available to Lisa, consistent, a man of unquestionable integrity. A strong leader in the family, and very loving. Dad could always fix anything. Lisa often thought, "Daddy will fix it," and, "As long as Daddy is here, everything is okay."

Lisa had passed her father in the upstairs hallway earlier in the evening. They had jokingly jostled one another. “Get out of my way!”

In the middle of the night, Lisa’s dad suffered an aneurysm. Rushed to the hospital, where he died the following morning, around 6:30 AM. Lisa never got a chance to say good-bye. She was fifteen years old.

### **Chapter Five – Where is God When You Need Him?**

As a teenage young woman, Lisa grappled with difficult questions such as, “If God really exists, why would he allow my father to die?” “It’s not fair!” “Why didn’t God prevent this from happening?” She was angry with God. Externally, she didn’t let it show, but inside she was a seething volcano of emotion. Struggling with understanding her faith, she nearly gave up. But she knew too much. She was certain of God’s existence even if she could not understand his ways, or his seeming indifference to her dad’s death. Eventually, she fought through the issues of why would a good God allow evil in the world, and gradually her faith grew stronger. No longer was it Mom and Dad’s faith, now it was her own relationship with God. Nevertheless, she was not unscathed.

She became more independent, and was active in high school, dated occasionally, but refused to allow herself to get close to anyone. Unlike most young women her age, she was reluctant to fall in love. She didn’t want to be hurt again. She didn’t want to have someone she loved snatched away with no explanation ever again. “I’ll take care of myself and never rely on anyone else, because you never know if that person is going to be there.”

### **Chapter Six – The Jock and the Economics Major**

Lisa chooses to attend Wheaton College because some of her cousins and friends had gone there. She visited the campus and was quite impressed. A bright student in high school, she didn't even apply at any other school. She felt certain that Wheaton was the place she should be . . . almost as if God was directing her there.

She majored in business. Her brother Paul played on the baseball team and she often went to the games to cheer him on. One of the players on the team caught her eye—Todd Beamer. Todd was the captain of the team, but not overbearing. He enjoyed leading others, and he was the kind of man the other guys wanted to follow. When the chips were down, Todd often stepped up to the plate with the attitude, “I’m going to make something happen.” Often, he did.

Todd and Paul were friends so Lisa became familiar with Todd long before they ever went out on a date. Todd was a business major so he and Lisa shared some classes, but Lisa was engaged to another guy.

When Lisa broke off the engagement during her senior year, her roommate encouraged Lisa to date Todd, but she was uncertain of her feelings. After graduation, she took a job in the Chicago area. In October, Todd finally called her to go out on a date.

The first date could have been a disaster, went to a restaurant with exceptionally slow service, but consequently they talked for hours.

Lisa recognized that Todd was extremely focused, seemed to have an agenda of things he wanted to accomplish in life.

## **Chapter Seven—Dating and Marriage**

Todd's and Lisa's unusual dating relationship. Lisa found herself willing to be vulnerable with Todd. Similar to her attitude toward her father, she developed a sense of "As long as Todd is here, everything is okay." Todd had a healthy self-esteem and was someone who Lisa was not going to walk all over, and was a good leader in the relationship, but didn't demand anything inappropriately. They weren't afraid to challenge one another. Also developed a strong degree of trust in their relationship. Analyzing their relationship, future goals, and what they wanted from life. One of Todd's favorite phrases was "Let's roll!"

Lisa admired Todd's strong work ethic. Todd graduated from Wheaton College in 1991, and finished his MBA degree in the summer of 1993.

As they looked at the relationship, they saw more pluses than negatives; they decided to get married. In November, 1993, on Todd's birthday, Todd asked Lisa to marry him. He later teased Lisa as to why he wanted to get engaged on his birthday rather than Thanksgiving or Christmas. "If we get engaged on a holiday, the ring is considered a gift, and if something happens, and we break up, I can't get it back!" There was no danger of him getting the ring back. Lisa was head over hills in love with him.

## **Chapter Eight – Going East**

In January, Todd took a job with the Oracle Corporation, a high tech company for whom he worked as a field marketing representative selling computer software. He was only 25 years of age, which was extremely young for this sort of position, but Todd had tremendous confidence that he could do the job. Lisa had been working with Oracle in the Chicago area. Todd and Lisa moved from Chicago (Glen Ellen, IL) to New Jersey. With

Todd's family now in Washington, DC, and Lisa's in New York, the couple looked at New Jersey as a good in between location

Became involved in Princeton Alliance Church, formed many solid friendships which would prove invaluable in the years ahead. In addition, Todd and Lisa became involved in working with the teenagers at the church. Taught the teenage Sunday school class together. One of them maintained order while the other taught. Some of the kids in the class had the same sort of questions Lisa had battled with, so she was able to identify with them, and help them work through their answers. Todd always went straight for the tough guys. Used sports to relate to the guys, winning them over as a friend.

Todd often drove the church van for youth group trips, camps, and weekend retreats. Loved country music, and the kids hated it, so he'd put his country CDs in and cranked them up! Kids would go wild!

The kids loved Todd, and Lisa knew he was having a good influence on them.

## **Chapter Nine – Babies: Adding to our Team**

With their personalities, Todd and Lisa allowed little to chance. They planned for children and were right on schedule. Children born two years apart. Todd loved teaching the boys how to throw a ball, bought a catcher's mitt and pads for David. Special trips to Cape Cod with the children.

Took David along to England as an 18-month old baby.

## **Chapter Ten – Building our Dream Home**

Todd moved up quickly in the ranks of Oracle. Became one of the top performers in sales. Won numerous trips to exotic places such as Bermuda, Maui, Mexico, Venice, and other places. Todd working hard, wanted to further his career, but not at the expense of his family. He and Lisa often discussed his travel time away from home. Moved to Cranbury in the summer of 2000.

### **Chapter Eleven – Roman Holiday**

Early in September, 2001, Todd and Lisa went to Rome on a vacation trip Todd won through his company. They had a fabulous time, and returned the night of September 10<sup>th</sup>.

Todd was drained of energy, tired, and tempted not to go to San Francisco, but he had an important meeting with representatives from the Sony Corporation, for whom he was working on a major project. He arose early on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and headed for the airport. Still exhausted from their long Trans-Atlantic flight, Lisa decided to stay in bed a bit longer, and not get up to see Todd off. It was a decision that would haunt her.

### **Chapter Twelve – Make the Nightmare Go Away!**

Lisa arose to an entirely new world—a world in which terrorism was a word even little children understood . . . and a world of which her children would understand all too soon.

The whirlwind of events. Lisa's response to September 11.

Fortunately, Todd and Lisa had their financial affairs in order. Their home was paid off, and they had good insurance coverage. But all the money in the world could never assuage the horrendously awful hole Lisa felt in her heart.

### **Chapter Thirteen – The Call**

For three days, Lisa pondered what had happened aboard Flight 93. Why hadn't Todd called. Then a trauma counselor called, and informed Lisa that Todd had indeed attempted to call her and the boys. The FBI had not previously permitted the information to be released. The counselor told Lisa about Todd's conversation with Lisa Jefferson, the GTE operator who had prayed with him before the counterattack.

The next day, Lisa called to speak with the operator, who tearfully conveyed Todd's last messages to her.

Lisa was relieved in many ways.

But it was also the beginning of an entirely new saga in her life. She was not the only person to learn of her husband's heroic acts. Other people now knew of his last words, "Let's roll!"

People were calling Todd a hero. "A hero? He was a hero to us; our boys had always thought of their dad as a hero. Now, the whole world was calling Todd a hero." And news media representatives from every place imaginable were calling for comments.

The decision to appear on "Good Morning America," and "Larry King Live." The outpouring of support as a result of those appearances.

### **Chapter Fourteen – Hello, This is the White House Calling**

The invitation to attend the president's speech to the nation. All the butterflies playing hockey in her stomach! A bitter-sweet sensation when introduced by the President of the United States, and given a standing ovation by the U.S. Congress.

## **Chapter Fifteen -- Survivors**

Lisa starts receiving information and phone calls from other family members whose loved ones had perished aboard Flight 93. She tried to be an encouraging voice to them. She quickly realized that many of them were decimated, not simply emotionally, but financially as well. Wanted to do something to help, but what?

The idea of using the gifts of money and influence to help others who desperately needed it. She hit upon the idea of forming a foundation to help victims of the terrorist attacks and promoting values that Todd promoted to the youth with whom he loved to work. Lisa has remained on front lines of the relief efforts for those needing fund and other resources as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11.

## **Chapter Sixteen – The Ghost Flight**

President Bush had encouraged everyone to get on with our lives, so Lisa decided to go to San Francisco to discuss the possibility of Oracle's support of the Todd Beamer Foundation.

Booked a flight – any flight—that would get her there. It was the exact same routing that Todd would have taken on September 11. It was not done as a gimmick. But it turned out to be an emotionally charged venture. Tough on Lisa, but when people learned of her brave actions, the country responded overwhelmingly. It was as if the

nation breathed a sigh of relief, saying, “If Lisa Beamer can get on with her life, I can, too.”

Her actions and attitudes were not because she didn’t care deeply for Todd and all that he meant to their boys. On the contrary, Lisa Beamer decided that with faith in God, she could face whatever life brought to her, and she’d do so as a testimony of Todd’s and her faith.

### **Chapter Seventeen – Visiting the Crash Site**

How and why the trip was arranged. Other family members of crash victims and Lisa viewing the site on a brisk fall day in Western Pennsylvania. More than 800 rescue workers had combed the area searching for fragments, anything that could identify victims. Little could be found. Many of the survivors looked at Lisa, asking, “How can you face this? Where do you get the power to carry on? How can you be so courageous? I know you are hurting as much as I am; how can I have the same sort of peace I see in you?”

Lisa also was contacted by two families who had lost loved ones aboard the Pan Am flight downed by terrorists in Lockerby, Scotland. Two dramatically different reactions to the events. One family had grieved and moved on, going on with life. Lisa said, “I want to be like those people.” Another family still bitter, hateful, resentful toward everyone involved in the downed flight.

Stories of others aboard Flight 93, whose family members have looked to Lisa for hope. Lisa has stayed in communication with more than thirty of the families.

### **Chapter Eighteen – Reality Check**

Life must go on . . . but without Todd. Another trip to Washington to meet with congressional leaders. The emotional pain of going through Todd's birthday, a reminder of their engagement. Thanksgiving, Christmas. Each ornament that held special thoughts. Lisa's tears and thoughts during the holiday season. David's birthday in January.

Birth of the baby . . . without Todd. A reminder of how much Todd loved being a father.

## **Chapter Nineteen – Rolling Along**

New challenges for Lisa Beamer. Being involved in the foundation.

Lives that have been changed as a result of the events of September 11. Letters from some of the kids in the youth group and Sunday school class Todd taught.

Going back into the Sunday school class for the first time. Almost tougher than getting back on an airplane. Those kids were all so special to Todd.

The bigger picture: The World Trade Center represented economic power, success, and security, yet it was shaken and destroyed in one hour or less. The Pentagon as the symbol of our nation's military might, yet it, too, proved vulnerable. Where can we find true security in these days? Lisa Beamer had found security in a loving, heavenly Father, who cannot be shaken, who will not ever leave her or forsake her, and in whom she can trust completely. For those looking for hope, she recommends snuggling in as tightly as possible to your heavenly Father. He is a hero who will always be there when you need him.

## **Chapter Twenty -- It is Well With My Soul**

Story of Horatio Spafford whose daughters died at sea during a freak storm.

Spafford was a successful Chicago lawyer, a contemporary and friend of D.L. Moody, the famous Chicago preacher. In 1873, the family doctor recommended a vacation for Horatio's wife, so the couple planned a trip to Europe by ship.

Right before their departure, a matter arose that delayed Mr. Spafford's plans. Rather than ruining the vacation for his family, Spafford sent his wife and four lovely daughters on ahead, promising he would join them in just a few days. Mrs. Spafford and the girls set sail for Europe without him.

On November 22, in a tragic, freak accident, the ship on which the women were traveling was rammed by an English vessel. The Spaffords' ship sank in less than thirty minutes. With the cold, roaring waves of the Atlantic Ocean rolling over them, Mrs. Spafford and the girls were tossed from the ship as though they were tiny porcelain dolls. Mrs. Spafford was miraculously rescued, but all four of the girls drowned in the sea.

On December 1, Mrs. Spafford cabled her husband a stark message: "Saved. Alone."

Horatio Spafford bought passage aboard the first ship he could find that was sailing to England. Out on the high, rolling seas, the ship passed close to the spot where the accident a few days earlier had claimed the lives of his four daughters. With tears pouring down his face as he looked out over the rolling waves where his daughters had died, Horatio Spafford penned these words:

When peace like a river attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll,

Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,

“It is well; it is well with my soul.”

(© Horatio G. Spafford and Phillip Bliss, “It is Well With My Soul,” 1873, P.D.)

It was the song that I chose to be sung at the memorial services following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Horatio Spafford had every reason to curse God and die, but he refused to wallow in despair. Instead, he focused his faith on God, choosing to trust in the face of crisis, and his words have become a source of inspiration to millions of people.

Similarly, I have chosen to believe God. I don’t claim to understand, but I choose daily—on some days I find that I must consciously make that decision moment by moment--to have faith in that which cannot be seen, but is hoped for. I refuse to give up. Life must go on, and I have faith, hope, and love. Sure there are days when I feel like crawling back into bed and never getting up, but I force myself out of the bed and into the world. I have many reasons to be joyful; I have a great family, wonderful friends, and a strong community of faith. I have people who need me, some whom I have never met, others with whom I communicate regularly. Most of all, gathered around my knees, I have three good reasons to carry on . . .

One day shortly before the first Christmas following Todd’s death, I was half-heartedly going through the motions of decorating, and getting the house ready for the holidays. Our son, David, looked up at me, and in a voice far too reminiscent, said, “Come, on, mom! Let’s roll!”

I fought back the tears, turned my head away long enough to gather my composure, and then turned my face back to our son. “You’re right, David. Let’s roll!”

It is well . . . it is well . . . with my soul.

