



Connections

◆ A Journal by & for Women in Ministry ◆

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Summer 2010

The Joy of Helping

By Cathy Emerson

We need to see where God is working and join him in what he is doing.” This statement reflects our understanding that we do not have to feel responsible for saving the people we come across. This is God’s job, for which I am very thankful. I was getting tired of sometimes being made to feel guilty I hadn’t saved anyone.



So how do we see where God is working? I think my grandson Isaac may have the answer.

Where we go to church, the responsibility of setting up and taking down tables and chairs are ours. There are racks to put chairs on and then they are wheeled into a back room. The tables are middle school cafeteria tables that fold up in the center and are pushed to rows along the walls. Everything is neat and tidy.

From the time he could take his first steps, Isaac has been determined to help with those tables and chairs. I recall one particular day when he was still unsteady on his feet and he saw his dad pushing one of the tables to the wall. I watched Isaac, his arms pumping, little feet flying as he stumbled across the cafeteria floor to help his father put the table away. There was a look of consternation on his face because he was so-o far away and Dad was almost done. Then he face planted on the floor.

Oh the wails, not because he was hurt, but because he couldn’t help Dad. Our son pulled the table back several feet and waited until Isaac, with Mom’s help, was set back on his feet. The consternation had been replaced by a big smile because Isaac knew he was helping.

◆ Contents ◆

- *Tam 2U
A Full Cup*
..... page 3
- *Putting Up With Putting
Up*
By Hannah Knaack page 4
- *It Made Me Think...
In Perfect Harmony*
By Sheila Graham page 5
- *Christmas in July*
By Sue Berger page 6
- *Our Best Friend*
By Anne Marie Caristi . . . page 7
- *Positively Ageless*
By Joyce Catherwood . . . page 8
- *Zorro and Me
Hi Neighbor!*
By Barbara Dahlgren . . . page 10
- *Send It Right Down the
Line*
By Anne Gillam page 11
- *Connecting & Bonding
The Waiting Room of Life*
By Jannice May page 13
- *Power Failure*
By Norma Thibault page 14
- *Book Review*
Furious Pursuit—Why God
Will Never Let You Go
Reviewed by Lee Berger
..... page 15
- *Lighter Side* page 16

Continued on page 2

The Joy of Helping

Continued from page 1

I wonder if we as Christians are as concerned with helping Christ as was my little grandson? Do we *see* a need, do we *run* to help, do we *cry* in frustration when we *fall* and our mother the church has to pick us up? How many times does Jesus have to *wait* for us, or hold up events, so we can do something *together*?

I am struck by the lack of self-consciousness this tiny boy shows; he sees a job that needs to be done and totally delights in doing it. He puts his whole body into it.

So the next time I complain about things being too hard or too overwhelming, I need to appreciate the opportunity I have been given to work next to my older Brother and Dad in heaven.



Cathy says: "My younger son and DIL decided I needed a cat for Christmas so Misty Morning came into my life, much to my husband's chagrin. He likes cats though, so I find the two of them sleeping in his big recliner as the TV blares on. Go figure! This bundle of energy has certainly stirred up our staid household." You may email Cathy at ceewee@juno.com.

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Connections

Mission Statement

Primary: The Connections for Clergy Support Department provides intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual support and encouragement in the personal lives of GCI ministry families.

Three primary means of serving are the *Connections* journal, the Connections for a Successful Ministry and Life web pages, and the Nurturernet forum. We highlight women in ministry but are inclusive of the needs of the entire family.

Secondary: To promote respect, understanding and support for women, their personal ministries and ministries that serve them.

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• CALIFORNIA •
TAM 2 U

A Full Cup

I like a nice, hot cup of tea, so much so that I dream of a cup that never empties and never cools. Hey, if it worked for the widow in 1 Kings 17, why not for me? Just kidding. But there is something comforting about a full cup. Empty cups make me sad.

I learned a new song at a women's retreat in Newfoundland, Canada, called "Fill My Cup, Lord." The retreat was several years ago but the lyrics and melody have stuck with me. It's a prayer for the Lord to quench the thirsting of my soul, to fill my cup and make me whole.

In ministry, we often say we can only be effective if we're working from a full tank. I think this is especially true of introverts, but none of us can pull up water from an empty well. A relationship with God that is alive and growing is the best way to keep ourselves ready for ministry.

Sometimes my cup gets a little empty. When I get low on spiritual energy, and if I'm low on physical or emotional energy at the same time, it can be difficult to bring the level back up to full. I'm not alone in this. As I'm sure you can attest, those in ministry often need a little time to recharge after the weekly church service or any ministry opportunity. I'm always in need of down time after speaking at conferences.

So how do we fill up the cup? Besides vegging out a little, the best way is to spend some quiet time with God: a little scripture reading, meditation, solitude and especially prayer. It's easy to let life crowd out these disciplines, but

we all know they are essential to enjoying and nurturing our relationships with God.

Nurture and enjoy—that's how I've started thinking of staying close to God. I used to stress about my relationship with him. I wondered if I even knew what one was supposed to look like. I worried I didn't know how to have a relationship with someone who's invisible. During a silent retreat last spring, I stumbled upon a timeless truth, one practiced from the beginning of the early church and one the significance of which I had not fully realized. That truth: prayer is a gift of God to help us discover, uncover and recover the relationship Jesus has always had with the Father, and which he now shares with us.

I felt as if the proverbial light bulb had switched on over my head. I had been looking for something more dramatic, more romantic and certainly more exciting than prayer as the way to be in relationship with God. Of course I already knew this, and so did you. But don't we all sometimes take prayer for granted? And it's easy to let it become the time we bring our list of needs to him, rather than a time of nurturing the relationship and enjoying his presence.

Filling our cups isn't only about being ready for ministry. It's about letting God fill our souls with himself and his never ending supply of Living Water.

Tammy



Putting Up With Putting Up

By Hannah Knaack

By the time I'd matured (age 11 in my mind), helping Mom can garden produce—or putting up, as she called it—had lost its appeal. When young, a child can be bribed into almost any type of work, given the carrot dangled in front of her is extra juicy. By now, the carrot trick wasn't working, nor was Mom's often repeated phrase, "This is a good learning experience." Work was work, and besides, what good was all this experience when I knew I would be a rich and famous interior designer one day?

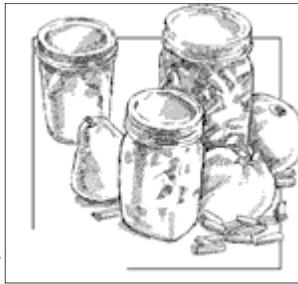
Dad was a true master gardener—not on paper, but in deed. If he couldn't grow it for lack of space, he'd load up the family and head to the orchards. Cherries, peaches and apples were a few fruits we picked, and they'd fill the kitchen with the sweetest scents at canning time. Cherries held my interest more than most, as I'd pop every other one I pitted into my mouth. But while I was physically in Mom's kitchen, in my mind I'd be dreaming up design ideas for my future home.

If memory serves me correctly—a problem of late—rhubarb was the first garden food my mother gathered. An acquired taste, this plant requires copious amounts of sugar to bring it to an edible stage as sauce or pie. Soon to follow were strawberries, also requiring plenty of white sugar to convert into jam.

The currants we laboriously picked needed even more of the white sweetener forbidden at our table. But did I point out to

Mom her obvious double standard here? Certainly not, as I liked to think I was mature for my age. I also liked lots and lots of sweet jam on my toast.

By July several of our family's lawn chairs became semi-permanent fixtures in the shade of the huge mock orange bush, and we were deep into shelling or snapping bushel after bushel of produce. We started with peas (English, for you Southerners), followed by green beans and lima beans. A good percentage made it into our stomachs or on the ground when we broke into food fights. Those were rare, as mother had ways of handling our mischief that kept the guilty ones busy far longer than their siblings.



These foods were wonderfully unmessy though, compared to what followed. If you've never canned beets, I might offer a word of caution. Canned as is or for pickles, the red color from the beets stained our hands for days. And while no dye is involved in converting cucumbers into pickles (or Mom's famous watermelon rind pickles), the smell of vinegar permeated our clothing and hair to the point we didn't want to leave the house without a full bath.

There were more messy veggies—such as tomatoes and corn. Canning tomatoes was a juicy affair that required an entire kitchen wipe down afterward. Shucking corn usually involved a race, so husks and silk flew everywhere outside, and once canned, we'd find kernels on the kitchen floor for weeks.

My sisters and I may not have always appreciated our greens, like lettuce and spinach, but at least we didn't have to can them. Root veggies, jokingly referred to as basement food, were easiest of all for us kids. Dad dug the white, red and sweet potatoes, carrots,

Continued on page 5

Putting Up

(Continued from page 4)

parsnips and turnips, and after they dried a day or so, we put them in bushel baskets before Dad carried them to the basement. Finally, putting up was done for the year.

Now that I've matured a bit more, I can honestly admit to missing some of the work we childishly thought was no fun. I can still hear the snap and pop of jar lids as they found their final resting place when canning jars cooled. I recall the gleaming jars of multicolored foods after a bountiful harvest. Any artist could have made a perfect color wheel using those jars filled with vibrant colors from God's good earth.

My interior design dreams went the way of many childhood fantasies, and I found myself harvesting my own share of fruits and veggies for jams and freezer. I surely don't measure up to Mother's vast expertise. Speaking of the canning queen—what I wouldn't give for one of her watermelon rind pickles right about now.



Hannah says: "Mom and I have enjoyed watching the spotted fawns in our back yard; also the ducks and geese at the pond. We especially love the ruby-throated hummingbird that visits our hanging fuchsia. Nature abounds and we feel blessed!" You may e-mail Hannah at justmomhik@gmail.com.



It Made Me Think...

In Perfect Harmony

Our little community has a chapel service for 30 minutes every Sunday. It's early enough so people can have breakfast afterward and attend their regular worship services (or play golf).

I belong to the choir. We wear blue robes with our chapel's initials in white. Our director plays several instruments, sings and composes music as well. Most of us have some musical experience, so we're not totally lame. We actually sound pretty good. We practice once a week and perform once a month, and somehow or other he gets the best out of us.

But one thing bothers me. It's the way we march in. The front row is led by our church lady who does announcements. She marches in like a general leading her troops. If the second row lags at all, she doesn't wait. The second row leader has a powerful alto voice and is missed when absent, but at times she's a little confused about where to go and when.

The tenors and basses may march in the first or the second row, whichever they decide that day. Sometimes we march down the middle of the aisle and at other times we separate and go on each side. I'm appalled.

But our director doesn't seem concerned. We never practice marching in. His concern is how we perform once there. It made me think about *our* Director. Christ draws us from all different directions. Some of us, as they say, march to a different drummer, but when we're all working together in him, using our various gifts, we're in perfect harmony.

—Sheila Graham

Christmas in July

By Sue Berger

I love summertime. I love warmth, the feel of the sun on my skin, being outside all day in a tank top, shorts and flip flops, working in my yard and flowerbeds. Granted July in Texas can be a tad wilting, but I'll take it any day over the cold, endlessly dreary days of winter.

So perhaps you can understand my consternation when I wandered into my favorite hobby and craft store (newly remodeled and expanded) to find the four aisles of lawn and garden décor compressed into one aisle with a huge "60% OFF" sign hanging over it.

Now normally I'd be pretty excited about this, but with an ache in my gut I knew it spelled the end of summer. And to add insult to injury, I had to walk past 15 (count them, 15) aisles of Christmas stuff to locate my favorite, now almost nonexistent, section of the store. Trees, wreaths, garlands, artificial snow, light strings, Santas, ornaments, reindeer—everything imaginable.

Mind you, it's July. It's 103 degrees outside. Come on. The kids aren't even close to going back to school yet and we're decked out for Christmas? Give me a break.

Grudgingly I picked through the garden décor one last time, not wanting to concede defeat to winter while still at the height of summer. The few small purchases I made didn't feel very satisfying, and I was still grouching as I walked across the scorching parking lot to my baking-oven-hot car.

Halfway home with cold a/c air aimed right at my chest, it hit me. Emmanuel. God with us. He's still here. He's here all the time. I suspect my hobby store is going to have permanent year-round Christmas aisles now, and perhaps that's fitting. It'll serve as a constant reminder that Christ Incarnate is still just that—fully God and fully human at the Father's right hand. And he always will be. By the amazing grace of our loving God—Father, Son and Spirit—Christ is in me and I am in him, every day, all year.

That's good news worth celebrating—even in July!



Sue's considering hanging a section of garland or a pretty ornament on her desk hutch year-round as a constant reminder and conversation starter. ©2009 Sue Berger. Email her at sueberger2000@gmail.com.

Nurturennet

Nurturennet is a computer forum for women in ministry. Its purpose is to help you stay connected through digest-mode communication (each day's messages compiled into one e-mail). You may use it for requests for information, prayer requests, to share



ideas and resources, to receive updates on *Connections* news or just to stay connected! To join or change your e-mail address, please send Tammy a message at tammy.tkach@gci.org. Please do not reply to a post unless you want to address the entire list.

Our Best Friend

By Anne Marie Caristi

I love to read biographies. They're inspirational stories of real people I could meet now or in the life to come. I read a biography of Natalie Wood, the legendary actress whose career spanned the 1940s to the 1980s.

Natalie led an accomplished life with many movies and TV shows to her credit. She was married three times, twice to the actor Robert Wagner, and was the mother of two daughters.

Unfortunately, her life was filled with fears and phobias. Many of her fears were instilled by her mother, who, having grown up in Russia, learned a lot of superstitions and taught them to Natalie. Natalie was the main breadwinner for her mother, father and two sisters from the time she was 6 years old. This put tremendous pressure on her to be a successful actress. She knew if she lost her job, her family would be out on the street. As an adult, Natalie said most of her anxieties were from the pressures she felt at age 6 to succeed in Hollywood.

Another source of her anxieties was that her father was an alcoholic. When he was sober, he was kind and caring, but he would often fly into drunken rages. Natalie's mother had to leave the home with her children to find refuge with a neighbor until her husband was sober again.

One of Natalie's biggest fears was being alone. All her life, she did anything she could to avoid being in a house alone or traveling alone. If she had to go anywhere by airplane, she bought at least two tickets and got at least one person to go with her.

I remembered something Christine, a Christian friend of mine, said last year. Christine had to fly solo to get medical treat-

ment. Someone remarked that flying alone would be tough. Christine said, "I'll be OK. I'm going to be with my best friend!" Now some would find that a bit loony, but we know she meant Jesus would be with her and she could talk to him on the flight.

Not long after, I was taking my dog for a walk, and while I was praying, I started feeling anxious and fearful. I became overwhelmed by all the problems in my life. I knew I needed Jesus, but I didn't know what to ask for exactly. Suddenly, I remembered what Christine said about Jesus being her best friend and I imagined him sitting next to her on the plane. I thought, If Jesus is my best friend too, then he would be walking with me right now.

As I imagined him walking next to me, I realized I had nothing to fear because he was not far away at all. The most powerful, loving Being was right next to me. I asked him to put his arm around me and hold my hand. I immediately felt comforted and calmed.

The biography didn't divulge whether or not Natalie Wood turned to Jesus in her life. My guess is she didn't, but only God knows the whole story. All I know is he's there to comfort any of us at any moment and we never have to fear being alone as Natalie was.

What a friend we have in Jesus!



Anne Marie Caristi graduated from Ambassador College in 1987. She is married to Joe Caristi, an assistant pastor for Living Hope Family Fellowship in Middletown, New York. They have three children: Michael, 16, James, 13 and Angela, 10. They live in Blairstown, New Jersey, and just moved into a brand-new home on their 52-acre farm. You may email Anne Marie at jacaristi@gmail.com.

Positively Ageless

By Joyce Catherwood

Have you seen Raquel Welch lately? I have, and it's downright depressing. She's 69. Believe me, when it comes to that particular age bracket, I know what I'm talking about. After watching her interview on *Oprah*, I took some small consolation in learning Raquel's very demanding about the lighting in the studio when she is on camera. That's it, it has to be the lighting! And it did make me feel slightly better to consider she has probably had some expensive help to look like that, which I obviously can't afford.

And have you noticed the many gravity-defying cosmetics on the market with a promise to smooth out the wrinkles, erase the lines, make your skin glow so you will look positively ageless? It's confusing. Where do I start? At this stage in my life, I refuse to be one of those people who throws in the towel and says: "I love my wrinkles! I earned them!"

As I made up the bed this morning, I glanced at the full-length mirror in our bedroom and was again mildly shocked at the person I saw. Must be the lighting in the room. That's what Raquel Welch would say. When did I start looking like that? All the

time, effort and money spent on anti-wrinkle creams and potions supposed to make me look positively ageless don't seem to be doing much good. In my more desperate moments, I think maybe I should get a facelift. Would that be so bad? I know I don't have the nerve to do such a thing, but merely entertaining the idea makes me feel a little risqué—and younger somehow.

I am only a year away from my 70s, and as you may have already discerned, the art of aging gracefully has thus far eluded me. I remember in my early 60s thinking, wow, in ten years I will be 70. Now, 70 doesn't seem that old. And maybe in ten years, 80 won't seem that old either. I've observed my beautiful 40-something daughters, and they are already doing face peels and sharing tips on looking younger. What, are they nuts? Oh, to be 40 again.

So, as time marches on and drags my body along with it, I've discovered a new priority—getting more in touch with the truly ageless part of me. But what is it in me that is supposed to live forever? I certainly won't find it looking at my reflection in the mirror. Eternity is invisible to the human eye and is, in so many ways, a mystery. Therefore, it is often difficult to believe it's real.

In the 1600s, Christian writer Blaise Pascal wrote that we sometimes see "too much to deny and too little to be sure." After all, we are only human. Over time, we have to grow more comfortable with the mysterious aspects of infinity.

At unexpected moments the certainty of life everlasting takes my breath away and makes my heart soar. But more often than I would like, my mind seems dulled to the concept. And I'm left with a vague sense something is missing and a longing meant to

The truth is that self-sufficiency is a myth perpetuated by pride and temporary success. Health and wealth can disappear instantly, as can life itself. Rejoice in your insufficiency, knowing that my power is made perfect in weakness.



—*Jesus Calling*
Sarah Young

Continued on page 9

Positively Ageless

(Continued from page 8)

keep me searching. It's as though my soul is hungry.

Jesus' words promising eternal life are sprinkled liberally throughout John's Gospel. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (3:16, *NIV* throughout); "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life" (3:36); "Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (4:14); "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (5:24); "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand" (10:28). And my favorite: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (17:3). I am deeply strengthened by these words.

The Triune God reveals himself to us in the person of Jesus. According to Jesus' own words, knowing him in a close up and personal way equals eternal life. Jesus left the glories of heaven, became flesh and dwelt

among us. He lived and breathed, laughed and cried, loved and cared, and ultimately experienced pain and death so we could more readily relate to him and genuinely know him.

So, finally, I am beginning to get it. I could throw out all the creams and lotions that promise to make me look positively ageless. (Of course, I won't—gotta keep trying.) But, most important, I'm determined more than ever to deepen the relationship I have with my Savior and friend. It is my unique relationship with Jesus that will endure forever. That's the authentic, positively ageless part of me.



Joyce says: "I finally gathered the nerve to join the thousands who have a blog. I am loving the format which satisfies my constant creative need to write. Whether or not anyone follows my blog is immaterial at the moment because I am having so much fun posting my stories and articles with a focus on Jesus and women. I recommend blogging! You can find my blog at <http://i-love-to-tell-the-story.blogspot.com>." You may e-mail Joyce at joyce.catherwood@gci.org.

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Zorro and Me

Hi Neighbor!

By Barbara Dahlgren

To say Zorro and I are polar opposites would be an understatement. Nowhere are our differences more evident than in the way we meet and greet people. Whereas I will be cordial to people I'm introduced to, Zorro might embrace them with open arms. Whereas I smile faintly at people I meet in passing, Zorro might engage them in conversation. Whereas I might—well, you get the drift.

When we moved to Tacoma, Washington, and settled into our new neighborhood, Zorro waved at everyone on our street as he drove by. One elderly couple sat on their front porch in the evening, and Zorro never missed an opportunity to make eye contact and grin. We were still unpacking when they stood at our front door with a yummy homemade cake saying, "We have never done this before but your husband seems so friendly, we just want to welcome you to the neighborhood."

Zorro met everyone. They didn't know each other but he got to know all of them. However, Zorro's *Hi Neighbor* approach didn't seem to have much effect on Mr. Fudge, a retired military man. He lived right next door and could have won the prize in an unforgettable character contest. I'm not sure he had a first name. Everyone called him Mr. Fudge—at least to his face. Behind his back he was known as the grumpy geezer. Even his wife called him Mr. Fudge. I'm not sure how she referred to him behind his back.

Mr. Fudge could have been the prototype for any cranky, curmudgeonly, cantankerous

villain in children's literature. He was average height, had a thin stature and a craggy face with a bit of a hook nose. One steely eyed glance from Mr. Fudge made everyone, children and adults, break out in a cold sweat. He did not smile. He did not talk. He did not acknowledge your existence. He appeared not to like people or life. He did spend a lot of time in his lovely vegetable garden, but never seemed happy about it.

Once when our daughters were at school, Zorro was watching our 8-month-old son Matthew while I took our car to the Department of Motor Vehicles to get my license renewed. Somehow I locked my keys in the car. I called Zorro and he said not to worry, he would be there in a flash with the extra key. Imagine my surprise when I saw Mr. Fudge driving up with Zorro and Matthew to the rescue. Zorro thought nothing about asking Mr. Fudge for a lift. After all, isn't that what neighbors do? I thanked Mr. Fudge profusely and he replied with a "grumble, grumble, grumble."

It wasn't long before I noticed Mr. Fudge leaning over the backyard fence and petting our family dog, a snow-white Spitz named Lady. Was that a little smile on his face? It was always so hard to tell with Mr. Fudge. When he saw me he frowned and snapped, "You ought to pay more attention to this dog!"

Once when we had to leave town for a week Zorro asked Mr. Fudge to feed Lady while we were gone. When we returned we gave him a little alabaster figurine that looked sort of like Lady. He softened and said, "Oh, you didn't need to do that." Soon



Continued on page 11

Hi Neighbor!

(Continued from page 10)

he was sharing his home-grown vegetables with us.

Now I'm not saying Mr. Fudge was a totally transformed man because of Zorro's friendly nature. However, more than one neighbor shared with us they had not seen Mr. Fudge smile before. One said, "You must be doing something right."

What an interesting phrase. All Zorro was doing was being friendly. Isn't that what Christians are supposed to do? Sometimes we feel we must preach the gospel with words. Although it's true we should always be ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within us, sometimes we accomplish more when others see how we live our lives. Zorro was friends with everyone in the neighborhood, the likable and the unlikable.

Mr. Fudge was never what I would call the most amiable or easygoing person we've ever met, but he was one of the best neighbors we've ever had. Sometimes people with all their flaws and idiosyncrasies just want to feel like they are part of the neighborhood.



Barbara and Zorro just returned from a Mediterranean cruise to celebrate their 40th anniversary. Actually, last year was their 40th but they weren't able to go. So this year they celebrated twice: one big cruise for the 40th and one small dinner for the 41st. Barbara says: "Life is grand with a husband like Zorro! I'm either in denial or in love—maybe a little of both!" Read her blog Barbara's Banter at www.barbdahlgren.com. You may contact her at bydahlgren@pacbell.net.

Send It Right Down the Line

By Anne Gillam

It's our third trip to Portland, Oregon, this month. The trip is a six-hour drive each way and it's beginning to feel familiar. My husband chose an energy drink at the last stop, and I can tell by his chattiness it's beginning to kick in. I'm too tired to drive and I'm listening with only half an ear. This trip wasn't planned, but the doctors needed one more test before my husband's surgery, so we jumped in the car and took off without a complaint.

My husband's first love is bass fishing and he was talking about one of his fishing tournaments when something he said got my full attention. He gave a pep talk to another fisherman who was getting discouraged. He said, "You have to have a positive attitude and you have to send it right down the line to your lure." He continued to say that you could fish the same way, at the same time in the same place, but if you don't have faith in what you're doing you will not catch a thing.

As we walk day to day in our faith, how true that statement is. We can do the same things, in the same way, at the same time in the same place, but if we don't have confidence in the one we claim to put our trust in, it's not going to get us anywhere.

How important our attitude is. The Israelites were told to stand firm and put their trust in the one who would deliver them. They were willing to follow Moses into the desert, but as soon as the first obstacle came in view

Continued on page 12

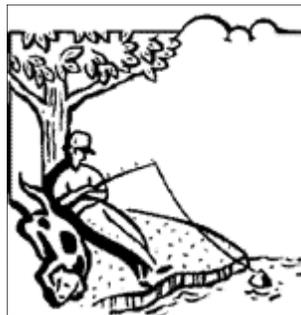
Send It Right Down the Line

(Continued from page 11)

(in this case the Egyptian army closing in as they stood by the shore of the Red Sea), they lost their confidence in the one they chose to follow. Moses said the Lord their God would fight the battle and show them personally by his defeat of their enemies he was in full control.

We may not be chased by a hostile enemy army, but as we go through the trials of life and the pressures build up all around us, it may feel as though an army is right behind us. God knows firsthand how that feels. He understands we sometimes need to see our deliverance to rebuild our faith in his works. We have a saying in this world, "Seeing is believing," and at times we need a little seeing to bolster our faith.

As followers of Christ we do not earn a free ride from pain, but if we are willing to suffer when necessary, sin loses its power over us. Our focus must turn away from ourselves and our troubles. We must put our faith and trust in the one who is able to deliver us from our enemies. The Israelites needed to turn away from looking at the armies of Egypt and trusting in Egypt's power over them. For us, our battles may take another form altogether, but the battles are real nonetheless. We need to focus on our source



of deliverance. We must focus on Jesus Christ.

The love of Christ never ceases to amaze me. We need faith to believe in God and God gives us of his faith so we may believe. God provides us with all we need so there need be no worries and our focus may be clear. "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today," said Moses in Exodus 14:13-14.

As my husband finally comes to his surgery and the stay lengthens and his issues seem to increase and multiply in size, he begins to lose focus and confidence. This did not happen all at once, but in trickles of disappointment he allowed to take over his mind. It began to take away his confidence in his goal, in this case the repair of his leg.

We can do this as well in our walk of faith. Satan and the world will stick out a foot to trip us as we continue in our walk. A little hump in the floor of the hospital keeps taking me unaware, and I lose my focus each time it trips me. When we are tripped and lose focus we must refocus on our goal and not stay where we fell. We must move on with Jesus our Savior.

I had to help my husband remain focused and remind him of his lesson for me. He said, "But I was talking about fishing." I reminded him the right attitude applies to everything we do in life. We have to believe in the one we put our trust in and place our trust in him for the right outcome.

I reminded my husband during his stay in the hospital that attitude works in our everyday life and not just in fishing. We must also

There is perhaps no better way to enjoy God than to see him for who he really is.

—*Enjoying God*
S.J. Hill



Continued on page 13

Send It Right Down the Line

(Continued from page 12)

put our faith (our attitude and focus) in our Savior as well. Commit yourselves to your creator!

Prayer: Merciful Father, it is hard to remain focused as the world roars around us and our heads begin to spin in our trials and troubles. Help us to keep our eyes on you. You are our deliverer and sustainer and will never fail us in this promise. Forgive us for our lack of faith in your strength and help us to, not only maintain our faith in you, but also to bolster up those around us.



Anne says: "Here in the Klamath Basin it feels as if spring were caught on a nail and unable to move forward.

We keep getting glimpses of warmer weather, but today we have the possibility of snow. We have a saying here if summer falls on a Sunday, we all go swimming. I have been spending a lot of time and effort just trying to recover our flower beds and garden and trying to outwit the weather. I am not so sure I am winning the battle." You may email Anne at webeboss@aol.com.



Connecting & Bonding, 2010

Los Angeles, California: September 3 to 6

Plan now to attend one of these inspiring conferences.

Website: www.connectingandbonding.org.

E-mail Jannice at conbond@acninc.net.

Connecting & Bonding

The Waiting Room of Life

By Jannice May

Have you ever been in a hospital waiting room? When our first grandchild was born last year, our family and friends gathered at the Huntington Hospital around 8 a.m. to await the new arrival. The time went slowly as we waited with great anticipation to find out if we had a healthy baby, a boy or a girl, and who he or she would look like.

Our son Bradley updated us many times on how things were progressing. His wife Jeanine was fine and he told us the baby should be born by 2:30 p.m. Well 2:30 came and went, and still no baby. Around 4:30 p.m. our son came out and announced they had a baby girl. She weighed 6 pounds, 12 ounces. Her name was Jaden Elizabeth. We were excited and happy to get out of that waiting room and go see Jaden.

At our March *Connecting & Bonding* Conference in Lexington, Kentucky, one of our speakers, Judy Hampton, spoke about the waiting room of life. She shared that we all are waiting for something in our lives. Perhaps it's a call from the doctor's office, our children to change, finances to improve, or our marriage to get better.

It's easy as Christians to put our lives on cruise control as we go through life. Sometimes when God gets our attention, we find ourselves in a waiting room. While in that waiting room God wants to spend time with us and we get to spend more time with him. There is no clock in this waiting room. It is a

Continued on page 14

The Waiting Room of Life

(Continued from page 13)

time to look back over our lives and recall just how faithful Jesus has been in our lives. Jesus hopes we spend this time renewing our relationship with him as a time of rejuvenation.

Following are a few comments from conference attendees on how this session helped them:

- Everything in life is about waiting. God is transforming our lives daily.
- Many times we beg God to remove the very thing that will change our lives.
- Change is good. That is what being in the waiting room is all about.
- Opportunities to share the gospel are present while in the waiting room.
- God wants to change us more than he wants to change our circumstances.

Judy's session helped me put a frame around trials. I know I will have them, but I know God is working in my life. I just need to trust his faithfulness and realize I am never alone. The waiting room of life is a place where God can do a work in our lives, so there is no need to despair when we find ourselves there.

I am sure many of us at the conference were in the waiting room, but we left encouraged. We were reminded God is faithful to us and he is working in our lives.

If you find yourself waiting, you are not alone. When we were waiting for our grandchild to be born, we were surrounded by lots of family and friends. In the waiting room of life we are surrounded by God's love.



You may email Jannice at conbond@acninc.net.



Power Failure

By Norma Thibault

Our son frequently stays overnight at our home as he has business in our area and uses the opportunity to visit us. On one of his visits, my husband was away on his job.

I arose that morning with a plan for my day. We were preparing for a family vacation so I had a lot of things to do. I was barely out of bed and in the process of getting dressed when I saw a couple of flashes and the power went off.

I always have a candle ready in the kitchen and matches handy in the cupboard, or so I thought. Today they were nowhere to be found. My son found a flashlight in the garage and I was able to locate matches in another part of the house. My husband had borrowed the matches a few days before to light the furnace and left them in the basement.

My son left for work and I lit a few more candles around the house, expecting the power would come back on shortly. After a while the sun came up and I no longer needed the candles. I learned from a battery radio that a car accident nearby had taken down a power pole. The power was expected to be off for several hours. After a cold breakfast I decided I needed some groceries. When I went out to the garage I realized the electric garage door opener wouldn't work. Oh well, I said to myself, I will walk over to the nearby shopping center.

By now it was pouring rain so I took my umbrella and went out. *En route* I saw several hydro employees working in the rain to repair the downed pole. Here I was feeling

Continued on page 15

Book Review—

*Furious Pursuit—Why God
Will Never Let You Go*

Authors: Tim King and Frank Martin. Water-
brook Press, Colorado Springs, CO. ©2006

Reviewed by Lee Berger

I love this book. I stumbled across *Furious Pursuit—Why God Will Never Let You Go* at a Christian-owned dollar store. I wasn't in

Power Failure

(Continued from page 14)

frustrated and upset with my ruined plans and these men were working in adverse conditions to fix something for me. They had quickly responded to the problem, no matter the weather conditions, because we are so dependent on electricity.

Looking back on this event made me realize how frustrating it can be when that power is off. It made me think about the greater power in our lives that is never turned off. Jesus is the light of the world and his light never goes out. The power of God is always there for us to tap into and he has promised he will never leave nor forsake us.



Norma says: "My husband and I are continuing to enjoy pastoring the Castlegar congregation. We are eagerly awaiting the birth of our 3rd great grandchild in October and our 10th grandchild in November." You may email Norma at dentbo@shaw.ca.



the market for another book (I'm way behind on reading the books I already have), but the title caught my eye. I walked past the book, then circled back when I couldn't get it out of my mind. I looked at the chapter titles and scanned a few sentences here and there. Seemed to be worth buying.

I started reading the book one evening and had to stay up to finish it—till 2 a.m. Page 1 grabbed me with the story of Andy, a Christian coached for years to seek God, to diligently practice spiritual disciplines, to continually chase after God in the hope of landing the perfect, intimate relationship. In frustration and discouragement Andy surrenders: "You know what, Frank? I'm sick of chasing after God. I want God to chase me for awhile."

Then authors Tim King and Frank Martin share chapter after chapter of good-news encouragement, confirming the nature of God in the context of the Trinity—that God is the Master Pursuer, the Includer, the "Hound of Heaven" (title of a classic poem I'm studying—I'd recommend anyone to read it).

Sure, God loves it when we respond to him, live our lives purposely for him and feel emotionally connected to him. But even when our weakness or laziness gives us an attitude of rebellion or I don't care, God remains always connected to us. When we feel a chill on the relationship from our side, God remains as hot as ever as he pursues us in his love.

Because of the Father's love as demonstrated in Jesus and maintained in the Spirit, our relationship with God is not a place we run *toward*, but rather a place we rest *in*.



You may email Lee at lee.berger1@gmail.com.



Being a Light...has a lighter side!

Groaners to tell in church, if you're brave enough:

Two antennas meet on a roof, fall in love and get married. The ceremony wasn't much, but the reception was excellent.

Two hydrogen atoms are talking over coffee. One says, "I've lost my electron." The other says, "Are you sure?" The first replies, "Yes, I'm positive."

A jumper cable walks into a bar. The bartender says, "I'll serve you, but don't start anything."

Two peanuts were walking in a tough neighborhood and one of them was a-salted.

A sandwich walks into a bar. The bartender says, "Sorry we don't serve food in here."

A dyslexic man walks into a bra.

A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm and says: "A beer please, and one for the road."

Two cannibals are eating a clown. One says to the other: "Does this taste funny to you?"

"Doc, I can't stop singing *The Green, Green Grass of Home*."

"That sounds like Tom Jones Syndrome."

"Is it common?"

"*It's Not Unusual.*"

An invisible man marries an invisible woman. The kids were nothing to look at either.

A cookie went to the doctor, who asked what was the problem. The cookie said, "I feel crummy."

Atheists don't solve exponential equations because they don't believe in higher powers.

I was going to buy a book on phobias, but I was afraid it wouldn't help me.

I really do have a photographic memory—I just haven't developed it yet.