



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – December, 2008

## LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR...The Greatest Love

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.*

**Matthew 22:36-40**

Jesus summed up all the law in these two statements. If we love the Lord God with all our heart, soul and mind, loving our neighbor is the natural result. The question then is, who is our neighbor, and how do we love him or her?

### Love thy neighbour...

New research reveals that complaining about the folks next door has reached epidemic proportions. What is it about our neighbours that annoy us so much? We are, according to a clutch of recent statistics and surveys, a nation at war with our neighbour.

Is our neighbor more than the guy next door? Could he or she be someone in our church or community or almost anyone we meet? Could our enemies also be our neighbors? Jesus says we must love one another.

When we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we grow to recognize that everyone is part of His creation and we are called to be His witness. In order to fulfill that calling, we must love others enough to desire their salvation and be reconciled one to another.

We know loving the 'unlovely' is humanly, not an easy task. If we view others as Christ views us, however, and offer His love; it is amazing how one's attitude towards them will change.

We should aim to be a good neighbour in every circumstance as well as in the community we reside. Remember, ALL God's Children are worthy of His Love.

## Merry Christmas



*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.*

**Amen**

~ 1 Peter 4:10-11 (NKJV) ~

**Warmest Blessings Always,  
Marg Pollon  
Bridges of Love Ministry**

## The Lord's Light Within

Lord we reflect with thankful hearts  
On the wonder of your birth  
The love you expressed when you left  
Your glory to come to earth  
For your life was like a beacon,  
Lord  
Shining brightly in the night  
Filling the world with the radiance of  
The Father's glorious light  
And we, too, long to have inside  
Your light for others to see  
The beautiful reflection of your grace  
And the wonder of your majesty

For as your life indwells our hearts  
We can shine wherever we are  
And arise to take hold of each new day  
With your light ablaze in our hearts

So rekindle the flame within us  
Lord  
So it will not flicker nor dim  
Ignite us with the light of your love

So you will shine brightly within.

By M.S.Lowndes ~ 2007





# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – November, 2008

## Standing Room Only

**"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." James 4:10**

This past month a fellow brother in Christ joined His heavenly Father after being involved in a tragic automobile accident.

By earthly standards, we would consider Blake an individual, who did not stand out from the crowd. Due to a hunting accident he was unable to work much of his life so was dependent on Government assistance to provide for his families needs.

Why then, was there *standing room only*, at his funeral? Why did Blake's life make such an impact on all who had the privilege of knowing him? What character trait did he possess which drew others to admire and love this seemingly ordinary individual?

One didn't have to know Blake long to feel that special connection. As others shared at the funeral what made this man a giant of the faith, I learned that Blake at 66 years old, had accepted the Lord only 6 years prior to his death. He was indeed a babe in the Lord but had already touched so many individuals with the Love of Christ.

What quality did Blake exemplify which made him a friend of many? Blake had a truly servant heart and he spent much of his time since becoming a Christian, volunteering wherever he could. He touched the hearts and lives of those he served, doing so because of the Savior he loved.

One venue where Blake and his wife Pat served was the Mustard Seed. They never missed our monthly commitment and won many hearts with their contagious smiles. I had just thanked our volunteers the week before his death, commending each for their willingness to serve joyfully with passion each month.

Blake will be missed by many due to a life well lived. Did he leave a legacy of fame and fortune? No, but he left a trail of love and inspiration for others to follow.

We know God met him in heaven with; **"Thank you Blake Bothwell - Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant!"**

## COALITION BUILDING

**What is Coalition Building?** A coalition is a temporary alliance or partnering of groups in order to achieve a common purpose or to engage in joint activity. Forming coalitions with other groups of similar values, interests and goals allows members to combine their resources and become more powerful than when they each acted alone.

**How to Build a Successful Coalition?** The early steps center on the recognition of compatible interests. In order to identify potential members one needs to demonstrate:

1. The goals are similar and compatible,
2. That working together will enhance both groups' abilities to reach their goals, and
3. The benefits of coalescing will be greater than the costs. Notes from Brad Spangler, June 2003

### Benefits of Coalitions

- ✓ Win on more fronts than a single organization working alone thus increasing the potential for success.
- ✓ Can bring more expertise and resources to bear on complex issues.
- ✓ A coalition can develop new leaders. The new emerging leadership strengthens the groups and the coalition.
- ✓ Will increase the impact of each organization's effort. More people who have a better understanding and advocating for the issue.
- ✓ Will increase available resources. Not only will financial resources be increased, but each group will gain access to the contacts, connections, and relationships established by other groups.
- ✓ May raise its members' public profiles by broadening the range of groups involved.
- ✓ Can build a lasting base for change. Once groups unite, each group's vision of change broadens and becomes more difficult to dismiss.
- ✓ A successful coalition is made of people who have never worked together. Coming from diverse backgrounds and different backgrounds they will learn how to respect each other's differences to achieve "Unity of Purpose". They will decide how each group can make their different yet valuable contribution to the overall strategy. Inquire!

**THE REGIONAL FAITH COMMUNITY  
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COALITION**

## You Have Our Attention, Lord

A prayer by Max Lucado

Our friends lost their house.  
The co-worker lost her job.  
The couple next door lost their retirement.

It seems that everyone is losing their footing.

This scares us. This bailout with billions.

These rumblings of depression.  
These headlines: ominous, thunderous -  
"Going Broke!" "Going Down!"  
"Going Under!" "What's next?"

What is next?

We're listening. And we're admitting: You were right.

You told us this would happen.  
You shot straight about loving stuff and worshipping money.  
Greed will break your heart,  
You warned.

Money will love you and leave you.

Don't put your hope in riches that are so uncertain.

You were right. Money is a fickle lover and we just got dumped.

We were wrong to spend what we didn't have.

Wrong to neglect prayer and ignore the poor.

Wrong to think we ever earned a dime. We didn't. You gave it.  
And now, tell us Father, are You taking it?

We're listening. And we're praying.  
Could you make something good out of this mess?

Of course You can.  
You always have.

You led slaves out of slavery,  
Built temples out of ruins,  
Turned stormy waves into a glassy pond and water into sweet wine.  
This disorder awaits your order.  
So do we.



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – October, 2008

## Give Thanks in ALL Circumstances – 1 Thessalonians 5:18

**"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:18 ( NIV)**

Giving thanks in all circumstances is not always an easy command to follow but Thessalonians 5:18 states this is God's Will. When one is going through difficult times the natural response is normally not one of thanksgiving. This is when our love for God needs to supersede our own feelings of despair, so we are able to rise above our circumstances, keeping our eyes firmly fixed on our Lord.

This past week, our daughter was struck while riding her bicycle to the University, by a car driven by an elderly gentleman. We know the out-come could have been much worse than scrapes and bruises, so we are indeed giving thanks for God's protection. Lindsay's bike, however, took the greater beating leaving her with no transportation for school and work.

A few days after the accident, I was at the Dentist, relaying the story to the doctor. He asked if her bike was okay. After hearing it was not, he offered her a replacement, as he just happened to have one in his vehicle... It was a ladies bike that his wife no-longer rode but still was in great shape. I neglected to ask why he had it in his car that day, but I am sure God provided as only He can.

Trusting God through tough times is incredibly difficult but as we look back to see His handy work, we can be confident He is looking after impossible situations. Experiencing His provisions and protection certainly increases our faith and helps us believe.

This Thanksgiving season let us give thanks to God in **ALL** circumstances.

### Mutual Assistance Groups (MAG'S)

A church response to a pandemic or any other emergency is a shared commitment from the whole church body. Since Pastors and other ministry leaders could be over-extended it will be necessary to have mature individuals who are ready and willing to stand in the gap. Laity will have the opportunity to minister to the lives of friends, neighbours and fellow church members.

Small groups (Mutual Assistance Groups) can play an integral role in building community support groups, prayer gatherings, house churches, counselling and support services, food preparation, delivery services, child care, communication centres...and the list goes on. These task orientated small groups will have service already built into their DNA so would be a great resource for community care.

### Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada Community Impact Seminar

#### Topics

- **A Mission to Respond** – The Biblical model to be a first responder.
- **A Ministry to Respond** – The practical do's and don't in responding.
- **A Method of Response** – How to mobilize a crisis care team from your church.

**Speakers:** Bishop J.D. Wiley  
Jack Munday

**Location:** 20 Hopewell Way, NE.  
Calgary, AB T3J 5H5

**Details:** November 8, 2008  
Registration: 8 AM – 9 AM  
Course: 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM

**Cost:** \$50.00 (\$40.00 for groups of 5+)

**Please Contact:** Melanie Neufeld,  
403.219.2300 [mneufeld@samaritan.org](mailto:mneufeld@samaritan.org)

### Anyway

Some people are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered.  
**LOVE THEM ANYWAY**

When you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.  
**BE KIND ANYWAY**

When you succeed, you may win some false friends and true enemies.  
**SUCCEED ANYWAY**

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.  
**DO GOOD ANYWAY**

Honesty and frankness will make you vulnerable.  
**BE HONEST & FRANK ANYWAY**

What you spend years building might be destroyed overnight.  
**BUILD ANYWAY**

People need help but may attack you when you try to help them.  
**HELP THEM ANYWAY**

In the final analysis, it is between **YOU & GOD**.

It was never between you and them anyway.

(adapted from a poem by Mother Teresa)





# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – Sept. 2008

## Walking in God's Love

*"Therefore, be imitators of God, as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma." Ephesians 5:1-2*

The Bible is the manual for God's love, and when we follow His instructions we will be walking in His love.

When we make the decision to let Jesus reign in our life we receive His agape love. Since God is love, we cannot make Jesus the Lord of our life without the love being part of the package. It is the same as faith, it is in us, but it cannot manifest until we **act** on it. The way to act on it is by reading God's Word about His love and the ways He shows His love, meditate on it, confess it and **observe to do it**.

The love of God is released in our life by acting on the knowledge of God's Word. Without the knowledge followed by the **action**, the love will not develop. Continuing to act on carnal love, we will remain loving with conditions. By faith, we must love God's way.

1. When we walk in love we are **patient**, because love is patient.
2. When we walk in love we are **kind**, because love is kind.
3. When we walk in love we are **not envious**, because love does not envy.
4. When we walk in love, we do not **boast**, because love does not boast.
5. When we walk in love, we are **not proud**, because love is not proud.
6. When we walk in love, we are **not rude**, because love is not rude.
7. When we walk in love, we put our self aside to **help others**, because love is not self seeking.
8. When we walk in love, we are **not easily angered**, because love keeps no records of wrong.
9. When we walk in love, we **hate evil**, but rejoice in the truth. Author Unknown

**So how do we live 'OUT' an authentic life of Love? By faithfully serving others demonstrating Christ's LOVE.**

**Pandemic/ Emergency Preparedness is an outlet for walking in God's Love.**

### A Life of Holy Sacrifice

*God's purpose is not simply to make us beautiful, plump grapes, but to make us grapes so that He may squeeze the sweetness out of us. Our spiritual life cannot be measured by success as the world measures it, but only by what God pours through us—and we cannot measure that at all. Oswald Chambers.*

#### A Vision of Authentic Love...

- ✓ Partnerships and alliances with a common vision and goal of connecting with their communities through Emergency Preparedness.
- ✓ Government and Health leaders valuing the participation of the church in Emergency Preparedness and seeing them as a force for good in the community.
- ✓ Church members actively engaged in, and passionate about community service, using their gifts and abilities in ways they never thought possible.
- ✓ A **'Movement'** of churches who are working together, actively living out their faith in positive and tangible ways. Putting their efforts and resources to the benefit of the whole community.
- ✓ Fulfillment of the goals set out by the National Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness and Response:
  - To ensure the Faith Community is effectively integrated into a local pandemic response structure before a pandemic/emergency occurs;
  - To create a meaningful dialogue to ensure the Faith Community is addressing pandemic or any other emergency; proactively, responsibly and with meaningful action.

### WALKING IN GOD'S LOVE

### The Converted Cannibal "A Transformed Life"

Rick Warren, in his book *"God's Power to Change Your Life"*, tells the story of the converted cannibal, who lived on an island in the South Seas.

He was sitting by a large pot reading his Bible when an anthropologist wearing a pith helmet approached him and asked, "What are you doing?"

The native replied, "I'm reading the Bible,"

The anthropologist scoffed and said, "Don't you know that modern, civilized man has rejected that book? It's nothing but a pack of lies. You shouldn't waste your time reading it."

The cannibal looked him over from head to toe and slowly replied,

"Sir, if it weren't for this book, you'd be in the pot!"

The Word of God had changed his life—and his appetite.

*"The more we act on God's Word; the more the LOVE of God will be perfected in us. That is when love will start to flow from us to others."*



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – August, 2008

## “Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant” Matthew 25:21

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.’” Matthew 25: 21*

This familiar phrase **“Well done good and faithful servant”** still resonates clearly as I recall my Mother’s words. She stressed the importance of living life to serve the Lord, if we were to someday be the recipient of this affirming phrase. I am very thankful today she instilled this desire in my heart.

Jesus used these words twice in one of His parables in Matthew 25:21, to give a picture of the way God will settle accounts at the end of a life well lived. I am sure we all are familiar with the phrase but do we really know what it takes to be deserving of this statement.

I am sure most Christians want to finish well but are we willing to commit making this phrase the purpose of our lives? Those who prove faithful will someday hear God say “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

God is looking for people whose hearts are completely His. Those who are set apart- in the world but not of the world. They realize there may be a cost to their service and obedience but they are willing to commit no matter what. They make a difference...and perhaps may have an opportunity to make a significant change in the world.

Four years ago I made the radical decision to commit my life to follow Christ in building Bridges of Love. This month is the start of our fifth year and as I reflect back it has been the most challenging yet fulfilling and satisfying moment of my life.

We all know the problems of the world are overwhelming and we can not change everything. We can, however, commit to change something!

We have opportunities as never before to practice what we believe. It is time for Christians to be available for God to show the world what His people can accomplish. Perhaps soon the Lord will return, and we ALL will want to hear His words...“Well done, good and faithful servant”.

*“The eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.” 2 Chron. 16:9*

### MAKING THE VISION STICK

Andy Stanley, a few years back, spoke at the Leadership Summit. He gave a message entitled; “Making Your Vision Stick”. To have our vision ‘stick’ we must:

- ♥ **Caste it strategically**
- ♥ **Celebrate it systematically**
- ♥ **Live it continuously**

Please allow me to share the vision of Bridges of Love which is the same since its inception.

**“To influence the Christian life to be expanded beyond self-interests to the greater concerns of the community and world around them. To embrace the Great Commandment, to love God and our neighbour, displaying **LIVING PROOF of a LOVING GOD**”.**

Stanley says, if the vision isn’t clear and compelling we have no focus, and with no focus we have random activity. Have we been effective in ‘casting the vision’ with clarity?

Beginning a new fiscal year I would like to bring clarity and focus by stating the:

1. Problem
2. A Solution
3. Why Bridges of Love Ministry exists to bridge the chasm between Church and Community.

**The Problem:** The church has faded into isolation, disconnected from community lacking a compelling witness of God’s Love. Is the church the church if it does not exist for others?

**A Solution:** Living out our faith means putting our love for God in ACTION! Emergency Pandemic Preparedness is an open door of opportunity to not only connect with our communities as ‘salt’ and ‘light’ but it provides an arena for Christians to engage with the public sector fulfilling the Great Commandment and thus attaining Biblical Reality.

**WHY BRIDGES OF LOVE MINISTRY?** Bridges of Love Ministry provides opportunities to engage in activities that will not only strengthen the Christian Community but will be an authentic witness of God’s existence, narrowing the gap between ‘Religion and Classic Christianity’. In the early church, the thing that most impressed people during the Roman Empire was the community of love they witnessed among believers demonstrating Living Proof of a Loving God. Recent events in the world have reminded us that safety and comfort in this world are uncertain.

### PRISON MINISTRY A Bridge of Love

Kevin Power - Eastside Baptist  
Community Church

*“When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?”  
The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” Matthew 25:39-40*

I am sure that you are aware that there is a growing population with in the prison system that yearns for the word of God. The good news is there is tremendous work being done by volunteers who share God’s Holy Word, with those who need His message most.

Many of these inmates are reading their Bible for the very first time and have begun their journey of faith through the support of these volunteer programs. In fact, Bible study, Christian fellowship and Sunday Chapel are some of the best attended programs offered in our correction system.

The real challenge for these new Christians comes after their release from prison; they are keen to continue their journey of faith but do not have a network to support them in their real time of need.

- Inmates continually ask for:
- Priest or Pastors to contact
  - Churches that support Prison Ministries
  - Bible Study Groups
  - Men’s Breakfast Groups
  - Christian Fellowship Groups
  - Accountability partners

We would be very interested in hearing from any church group that could provide spiritual support for individuals upon their release. For further information, please contact Bridges of Love at 403.263.5683. Thank you



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – July, 2008

“EQUIPPED FOR WHAT?” 1 Peter 4: 10-11

**“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” Matt. 16:24**

There is an old saying that it is better to try and tame a wild stallion than it is to ride a dead horse. Which one are we more like? The dead horse that needs to be brought back to life, or the wild stallion, filled with passion and desire for life? God’s desire is not to corral us but to set us free to accomplish all that he has prepared for those who love Him.



*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 4:10-11*

We have been entrusted by God with a special calling, a sacred duty to serve. Service is the overflow which pours from a life filled with love and devotion. Our success, therefore, can be measured by how much we love others and it becomes a reflection identified with the nature of God. Our objective can then be achieved by loving and serving others motivated by an absolute love for God.

*“Service to God is the deliberate love-gift of a nature that has heard the call of God. Service is an impression of His nature. Therefore, when we receive His nature and hear His call, His divine voice resounds throughout His nature and mine and the two become one in service. The Son of God reveals Himself in us, and out of devotion to Him service becomes our everyday way of life”. Oswald Chambers*

## PEOPLE OF INFLUENCE

Are we trying to build Bridges based on truth alone while the watching world is looking for living proof that the Gospel is true? Is the Gospel message often cancelled by the way we live? Imagine the bridges of love that could be built if we truly became known not only by the corner which we inhabit but by the community in which we impact. The influence and thus the investment in the lives of others is one of the more significant out-comes of serving.

When the people of God turn from the purposes of God, the power to influence lives is lost. God calls us to give ourselves away as we serve. Often the giver’s heart is changed along the way with the greatest joy and rewards being experienced as a result of the love shared.

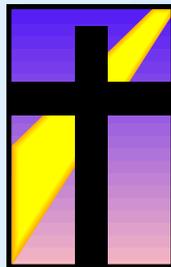
### GREATER VISION... WITH A HEART TO SERVE

God has opened a door of opportunity to show the watching world that we truly and practically care for and love our neighbour.

Like never before, disasters are occurring more frequently and with greater severity. Could it be feasible for the Christian Community to spearhead Emergency Preparedness across Canada? Could we be ready with a Christian response for a Pandemic or any other crisis?

Can you imagine the impact this display of solidarity with unity of purpose could have on our communities, emergency management and health regions? We know the need is real and reachable. God is calling His Church to stand in the ‘gap’ to be equipped to **serve** with His Love.

### Let us be a people with GRANDER VISION HE DESERVES OUR BEST!



**“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His Power that is at work within us”  
Ephesians 3:20**

## DOES ANYBODY CARE?

*A man...operated a giant drawbridge. One day he took his young son with him in order to show him what he did every day. He led the young lad down into the cavernous workings of the bridge that they might marvel together over its powerful machinery. While down there the man received a phone call that a train, well ahead of schedule, was speeding toward the bridge. There was just enough time for him to race to the top of the tower and flip the switch to lower it into place. Patiently he instructed his son not to budge from his tight position of safety.*

*The father reached the tower with just enough time to lower the bridge. In the same split second he looked down to find his son had moved into the jaws of the powerful machinery. He had to decide between the hundreds of lives speeding toward him in the train or the precious life of his only son. In great pain and anguish he flipped the switch. Down came the bridge, grinding the life out of his son.*

*The train rushed by and as it did he could see people sitting there, in the comfort of their dining cars, chatting merrily with one another, totally oblivious to the enormous sacrifice that had just been made for their lives. Beating his fists on the tower window, the man screamed out against the stiff faces streaking past, a people for whom he had made so dear a sacrifice: “Don’t you know that I gave my son for you? Don’t you know that you are alive now because he yielded up his life?”*

### DOES ANYBODY CARE?

*“In the Shadow of the Cross”  
Randal Earl Denny*



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – JUNE, 2008

## THAT WE MIGHT BE ONE

*“...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*  
**John 17: 21**

Many lessons have been learned through building Bridges of Love. One of the most striking and unmistakable is how the watching world appreciates Christians working in “Unity” - a picture of the lion and the lamb lying down together.

This was observed in our first event almost 4 years ago through a concert in Airdrie called, “Country Love”. Our vision, to gather all denominations in this smaller city to work towards a common purpose, taught us we can make a greater impact for Christ as we serve the community as one. As different as many of us were, we were developing a spiritually authentic common ground.

In John 17:21, Jesus prays, “That they all may be one...that the world may believe that you have sent me.” Jesus is praying for the oneness of the church, the oneness that should be found specifically among ALL true Christians. If an individual does not show love toward other Christians, the world has a right to judge that he is not a Christian. We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus’ claims are true, and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians.<sup>1</sup>

### Can you imagine?

- ♥ Churches working in unity of purpose through Emergency Preparedness.
- ♥ Reaching communities showing the observable love of Christ.
- ♥ Working with Municipal Health Regions and other stake-holders in our communities.
- ♥ The observable love & oneness among Christians exhibited to the watching world crossing all lines that divide-language, culture, and denominational.
- ♥ The local church reaching their communities with the impact envisioned in Matthew 5:16.

**Emergency/Pandemic Preparedness affords God’s Desire of ‘oneness’ to become a reality.**

<sup>1</sup> Francis Schaeffer; “The Mark of the Christian”

### “The Renewing of Your Mind”

**Romans 12:2**

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

**1 Peter 1:15:16**

*But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”*

In our zeal to serve God are we allowing ourselves to be influenced into thinking we know what God has called us to? Do we fixate on the belief we must do good deeds? Are we driven by the desire to help others and to spread the “good news?” These are noble thoughts and goals but are they of God or of ourselves?

Romans 12:2 speaks of being transformed by the renewing of our minds. Until we can reach that goal will we ever know what God’s will is? Clearly it is stated, only when our “thinking” no longer conforms to the pattern of the world, “then we will be able to test and approve what God’s will is.” The struggle in transforming our lives by the renewing of our minds is we often begin our relationship with Jesus from a worldly perspective. We may have knowledge of Our Savior but our thoughts take us to what we think is the way to go by what we have learned from the world.

**1 Peter 1:15:16** states that we must be holy in all we do. That is the key to our relationship with Jesus. As we focus on this uncluttered statement, we move our thinking away from a world which legalizes sin, to the morality of how we live. This is the daunting task before us but it is the greater goal than our desire to do good.

As we embark on our “**Call of God**” the test will be in our reaction to the actions of others. Will we be frustrated or angry because others do not conform? Will we be anxious if the results are not what we had expected?

When we transform our thinking we will become an ambassador for God for we will be one with Him and know His will. Others will see Jesus in us for we will have the character of Christ. God’s perfect ‘Will’ being fulfilled as we live our lives with a renewed mind and changed heart.

Written by Steven McDonald

### “UNIFY”

O how sweet to walk together,  
down this road You’ve placed us on.

Walking side by side,  
walking hand in hand,  
Lord, lead us on.

Open up our ears to hear  
Your voice;

Open up our eyes to see  
Your plan

Open up our hearts,  
open up our minds;  
Help us understand.

We’re lifting up our hands in  
sweet surrender  
We’re calling out Your Name in  
love and praise

We’re bowing now with humble  
hearts of worship  
To You, O Lord, this song  
we raise.

Lifting up our hands in  
sweet surrender

Calling out Your Name in love  
and praise  
Bowing now with humble hearts  
of worship

Unify Your church,  
O Lord, we pray.

For Your church we are so  
thankful, for these loved ones  
here today

Lord, we give You thanks, we  
offer You our praise; together  
now we say:

We want to be Your hands to  
those who need us

We want to be Your feet to  
spread the news

We want to be Your arms that  
reach around this neighborhood.

Unify us, Lord, as we glorify,  
Exalt You, and lift You high, unify  
Unify. Remove all our  
stubborn pride.

Work in our hearts and  
lives to unify.

Words & Music - **Mike R. Schuster**  
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# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – May, 2008

## “GET READY”... “GET SET”... “GO”... Putting Feet to our Faith

*It is easy for us to imagine that we will suddenly come to a point in our lives where we are fully prepared, but preparation is not suddenly accomplished. In fact, it is a process that must be steadily maintained. It is dangerous to become settled and complacent in our present level of experience. The Christian life requires preparation and more preparation.*

Oswald Chambers

When disasters strike, people of all communities will be looking to the church for peace, comfort, care and direction. With the right preparation and training, the church will be able to meet the demands of people seeking shelter, food, medical aid, child care in addition to Pastoral Care and funerals.

If you are struggling with whether this Summit is something you should attend, David Collins, Founder of Paradigm Ministries, will address “**Understanding the Tension as Christians Grapple with the Pandemic Issue**”. Come and hear what the Bible teaches and why we should engage.

Are churches thinking of their missionaries on the field in the countries which will be hit the hardest during a Pandemic? Come and explore what could be implemented now from Dr. Wayne Whitbourne, ACTION International Ministries, for “**Preparing the Missionfield for Pandemic.**”

**How do we deal with grief and how do we care for the Care Giver?** Lt. Col. Irene Stickland and Major Roy Langer will address these two very important topics and give practical tools for dealing with these difficult issues. Tools for today!!

When and how to isolate and quarantine citizens who have fallen ill or have been exposed to the pandemic strain of influenza? Dr. Rob Blackaby, will address some of the **Ethical dilemmas** that need to be considered during a Pandemic Influenza.

Steve Dalbey, Author and Trainer will be speaking on the “**Inter-Organizational Collaboration and networking for Pandemic Preparedness**”.

**The Regional Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness is an opportunity to learn from the experts on the many facets of Pandemic Preparedness. This Summit is for YOU...**

### Ten Steps for Pandemic Preparedness for the Christian Community

#### Get Ready...

- 1) **Prayer** – Before we can effectively engage with our neighbours, we should be praying for those in our community. Prayer is the calisthenics that get us in shape for the marathon of service and will ignite our faith for ACTION.
- 2) **Spiritual Readiness** – Will God find our hearts ready and available when the pandemic comes? Only through God’s Strength and Protection will we have the courage to step out in times of peril. Our close walk with God, our willingness to face trials and our desire to ask God for wisdom and understanding will produce a settled spirit in face of fear, isolation, sorrow and doubt.

#### Get Set...

- 3) **Be Informed** – Education is one way to combat fear. Be informed by reading up-to-date resources to be prepared to teach others.
- 4) **Local Partners/Building Loving Relationships** – Pandemic planning will require a response from people in a variety of occupations and disciplines.
- 5) **Pandemic Planning Committee** – Will require those who are committed to gather background work and will encompass several areas of knowledge, skill and ability.
- 6) **Proprietary Plans** – Develop your proprietary plans while cooperating with other planners in areas of mutual interest and concern.
- 7) **Taking Stock of Resources** – A church inventory is helpful to assess what resources are already in place.
- 8) **Physical Readiness** – The focus of a disaster preparedness plan should be to anticipate not only the resources that will be needed but to have individuals trained and ready to respond at a moments notice.

#### Go...

- 9) **Relational Readiness** – Once the Proprietary plans are in place and the resources on hand assessed, it is time to be intentional in getting to know our neighbours.
- 10) **Mutual Assistance Groups** – A church response to a pandemic is a shared commitment from the whole church body.

See. [www.bridgesoflove.net](http://www.bridgesoflove.net) for complete article.

### Regional Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness and Response

**Date:** May 14/15, 2008

**Where:** Rocky Mountain College in Calgary AB.

**Audience:** ALL

- **Key-note Speaker** – Dr. Danuta Skrowronski, BC Centre for Disease Control
- **Welcoming Address** – Dr. Raj Sherman, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and Wellness
- **Alberta Plan** – Sue Kessler & Brad Andres, AB Health & Wellness Pandemic Managers
- **Master of Ceremonies** – Andrew Nikiforuk, Author
- **Break-out Sessions (8)**
  - Care for the Care-Giver
  - Understanding the Tension as Christians Grapple with the Pandemic Issue
  - Moving Towards Relevancy – A Practical Strategy for Mobilizing Faith Communities
  - Inter-Organizational Collaboration and Networking for Pandemic Preparedness
  - Emotional and Spiritual Care
  - Preparing the Mission Field for Pandemic
  - A Pandemic Simulation – Table Top Exercise
  - Personal Preparedness
- **Panel Discussion**
  - Including Congregations in Pandemic Plans
  - Communications during Pandemic
  - Ethical Considerations for Pandemic Planning.

**Register: 403.263.5683**  
or [www.bridgesoflove.net](http://www.bridgesoflove.net)





# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – April, 2008

## AN OPPORTUNITY TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER... 'True Christianity'

*By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*  
John 13:35

During Roman times, Christians practiced inexplicable sacrifice and love during times of disaster. Riots, floods, earthquakes, fires, military sieges and plagues constantly threatened to wipe the centers of Roman civilization off the map.

Plagues during these times sealed the fates of 30 to 40 percent of a city's inhabitants. At the onset of plague, the wealthy fled to their country estates. Paganism didn't teach that human life was sacred.

Those who called themselves Christians believed each human being was made in the image of a loving God. They were to extend God's love not merely to their families and friends but to their enemies as well. **"Love one another"** became their standard.

The care Christians showed often did result in their succumbing to the plague. But paradoxically, their compassion did not deplete Christian ranks in the long term – quite the reverse. Tending to the sick increased the disease survival rate by as much as two-thirds, and this witness attracted many new converts. By acting on the teachings of Christ, without regard to their own welfare, these Christians, against all expectations, progressed from being a small sect to the dominant cultural group.

The unprecedented teachings of Christianity gave people a reason to care for the sick and destitute. Only Jesus taught that His followers could find Him in their neighbour.

What was witnessed in the times of the Roman plagues is true Christianity—sacrificial love, concern for all people.

*Excerpts from "The Faith" Given Once for All*  
Charles W. Colson & Harold Fickett; 2008

### Low Impact...High Probability

A major flu pandemic is a "low probability, high impact" event. Such an event is unlikely. But if it happens, it's awful...

Dr. Jeremy Farrar at the Hospital for Tropical Disease in Ho Chi Minh City says...

"I think you have to say we really don't know the odds of pandemic, and people are not comfortable with that," Farrar said. "It could fizzle out or it could be something like 200 million dead."

If we focus on the high impact, then even the most improbable scenario is unacceptable, because the outcome is so awful. If we focus on the low probability, then even the prospect of worldwide catastrophe is tolerable, because it is such a long shot.

With respect to a flu pandemic, some people indeed take the approach that this low-probability event is so unlikely it's not worth worrying about. But that approach loses its appeal as you consider higher and higher potential impacts. At some level of impact, the price for being unprepared – the loss – becomes unacceptably high. At that point, we're not only justified but prudent to take protective steps.

Why are federal and local governments, hospitals, major corporations, and others so busy making pandemic plans and preparations? These entities have thought about 'low probability, high impact'...have looked at the characteristics of current strains of the H5N1 virus...have thought about the chances of successfully containing any pandemic virus that might emerge...have thought about how high a 'high impact' might be...and have decided that even if the probability of a pandemic occurring is low – the potential loss demands mitigating action. So they're taking action! Should we not be following their lead??

That describes my opinion with respect to the "bird flu" virus influenza A (H5N1). The potential loss is just too great to leave unaddressed and the opportunity to serve our neighbour has never been better...

**"Low Probability" does NOT mean it "never happens"**

[http://reports.typepad.com/pandmic\\_plan/2006/11/low\\_probability.html](http://reports.typepad.com/pandmic_plan/2006/11/low_probability.html)

### Regional Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness and Response

**Date:** May 14/15, 2008

**Where:** Rocky Mountain College in Calgary AB.

**Audience:** Those who see the 'GRANDER VISION'.

- **Key-note Speaker** – Dr. Danuta Skowronski BC Centre for Disease Control
- **Alberta Plan** – Alberta Health and Wellness Representatives
- **Master of Ceremonies** – Andrew Nikiforuk
- **Break-out Sessions**
  - Care for the Care-Giver
  - Understanding the Tension as Christians Grapple with the Pandemic Issue
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# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – MARCH, 2008

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH PURPOSE

*“There is a complex relationship between a great bridge and the city in which it resides. Research, understanding, and reflection must precede the work of construction. The engineer’s greatest pursuit is not so much in making a bridge stand as in making it “a fit”; that is making it an integral, complementing and deepening reality within the community it serves. Bridges, as works of art, do not simply function; they are sensitive, well-conceived, and well-thought-out catalysts of change unique to each community.”*

*The Church of Irresistible Influence*

When it comes to building a bridge of meaningful spiritual influence to a community, our first act must be to ask, what is this community all about and what their real needs, issues and problems are. We tend to act without asking and therefore minister in a context void of facts and objective understanding.

Only when we have real, objective answers about our community can a ministry strategy begin to emerge that wisely and effectively connects the church to the community. Contextual analysis includes demographics, understanding the power structures of a community, understanding the economic base and understanding what gives the particular ethos of that community.

### Pandemic Facts

- Despite widespread exposures to poultry infected with avian influenza A (H5N1) viruses, influenza A (H5N1) disease in humans remains very rare.
- The median age of patients with influenza A (H5N1) virus infection is approximately 18 years, with 90% of patients 40 years of age or younger and older adults underrepresented.
- Most patients with influenza A (H5N1) virus infection were previously healthy.
- Direct avian-to-human H5N1 virus transmission is the predominant means of human infection.
- The influenza A (H5N1) virus can also infect multiple mammalian hosts, including domestic cats and dogs.
- After exposure to infected poultry, the incubation period generally appears to be 7 days or less, and in many cases this period is 2 to 5 days.
- Avian influenza A viruses are readily inactivated by a variety of chemical agents and physical conditions, including soaps, detergents, alcohols, and chlorination.

New England Journal of Medicine, January 17, 2008

### Regional Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness and Response

**Date:** May 14/15, 2008

**Where:** Rocky Mountain College, Calgary AB

**Key-note Speaker:** Dr. Danuta Skowronski: BC Centre of Disease Control.

**Master of Ceremonies & Speaker:** Andrew Nikiforuk – Author; “Pandemonium”

**Pandemic Preparedness Plans in Alberta:** Sue Kessler, Senior Manager, Pandemic Preparedness – Alberta Health and Wellness Brad Andres, Emergency Management Officer

### 8 Break-out Sessions Panel Discussion

Pandemic Preparedness is an “Open Door” of opportunity for churches to unite their efforts building loving relationships within their community. Before we can help a community we have to grow in understanding and pray how we can meet the needs; before, during and after a pandemic occurs.

The development of a Pandemic Plan in each community will reduce human suffering, the economic impact and will serve as a testimony for our faith in Jesus Christ.

**For more information, register for the Summit or to arrange to have this topic presented to your church, please call 263.5683 or visit [www.bridgesoflove.net](http://www.bridgesoflove.net)**

**Being Prepared = Prior Contingency Plans**

Country	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		Total	
	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths	cases	deaths
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	0	0	0	0	8	5
Cambodia	0	0	0	0	4	4	2	2	1	1	0	0	7	7
China	1	1	0	0	8	5	13	8	5	3	3	3	30	20
Djibouti	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Egypt	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	10	25	9	1	0	44	19
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	20	13	55	45	42	37	12	10	129	105
Iraq	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	3	2
Lao														
People's Democratic Republic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2
Myanmar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Nigeria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Pakistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Thailand	0	0	17	12	5	2	3	3	0	0	0	0	25	17
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	4	0	0	0	0	12	4
Viet Nam	3	3	29	20	61	19	0	0	8	5	4	4	105	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>234</b>

Cumulative Number of Confirmed Human Cases of Avian Influenza A/ (H5N1) Reported to WHO – February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – FEBRUARY, 2008

## IS IT TIME FOR THE 'PARABOLANI' TO RE-EMERGE?

*"In the wake of the First World War a huge influenza pandemic swept the world, and it is estimated to have killed up to a 100 million people world wide. 20,000 died in Canada – the so-called Spanish Flu saw more people parish in 25 weeks than AIDS has killed in 25 years."*

Over the past few years we are hearing more and more on the Avian Flu (H5N1) as being the next Pandemic. The jury is still out on whether this is the 'big one' that folks have been expecting; but, as researchers say, even if it isn't, it is only a matter of time before influenza or something akin to it mutates, jumps from other species, and begins to wreak havoc.

We have learned from previous influenza pandemics there is compelling evidence that preparation by governments is not enough to completely lessen the impact of a future influenza pandemic without the support of the private sector.

We have an opportunity like never before to put our faith into **action**. The early church was characterized by generosity and sacrifice. Christians were not afraid to die. There was an association of men and women called the *'Parabolini'* the gamblers. It was their aim to visit the prisoners and the sick, especially those who were ill with dangerous and infectious diseases. In AD 252, plague broke out in Carthage; the Bishop, gathered his congregation together and put them to work burying the dead and nursing the sick in that plague-stricken city; and by so doing, at the risk of their lives, they saved the city from destruction and desolation. (Barclay). They knew that death was not the end...

This small group of early Christians had introduced a new vision of humanity to the Roman World that was observable – not in organized programs of the church but in the lives of those outside the church which drew many to the faith.

Do we know that a pandemic will occur in the next year or two? No... Does it matter? No... Why not? A pandemic is a near certainty and the signs have never been accumulating wider and faster. Whether it comes or not is not the defining matter, however. What should compel our actions is our love for God. The process of becoming more Christ-like as we grow in compassion and love for our neighbour is the gift we give ourselves. 'BBYSSIW' (Luke 5:5 – NIV)

### Practically Speaking... What Can the Church do?

When many normal services break down, quite elementary nursing will greatly reduce mortality, simple provision of food and water, for instance, will allow persons to recover who are temporarily too weak to cope for themselves.

- 1) **Spiritual Readiness:** Any intention to practically meet the needs of sick and dying people, should a pandemic become a reality, will be actualized by people who are intimately connected to Jesus. It depends not so much on how merciful we are, but on how deeply we ourselves love the Lord.
- 2) **Physical Readiness:** Personal commitments and uniting our efforts under God's Authority bring power. Could a system be in place to network, mobilize and equip brothers and sisters in Christ to be prepared?
- 3) **Relational Readiness:** Do we know our Neighbours? Building relationships in a 'real' way is the key. It is critical to be intentional in our efforts to meet others where they are.

### A Church Prepared

- **Biblical Response** – During any crisis, many questions arise about God. As such, we need more than ever to be ready with a response for the hope that lies within us.
- **Prayer Opportunity** – Prayer should be the first response and priority in any situation.
- **Small Groups** – Will play an integral role in building Neighbourhood mutual assistant groups (MAGS). Prayer gatherings, home churches, counseling, food preparation and delivery, child care, communication...
- **Education/Training/Equipping** – The focus of a disaster preparedness plan should be to anticipate what is needed to respond to warning and to take action **prior** to the emergency.
- **Partnerships** – Necessary to collaborate with other stakeholders demonstrating a spirit of teamwork.
- **Communication** – A pandemic of global proportions will require a global response.
- **New Sites** – In times of crisis people often seek a church for peace & comfort.

### Regional Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness and Response

**Date:** May 14/15, 2008

**Where:** Rocky Mountain  
College

#### Speakers/Topics

**Dr. Danuta Skowronski:**  
BBCDC Key-Note Speaker  
**Andrew Nikiforuk** – Author  
"Pandemonium" (Master of  
Ceremonies & Speaker)  
**Sue Kessler**, Senior Manager,  
Pandemic Preparedness –  
Alberta Health and Wellness  
**Brad Andres**, Emergency  
Management Officer –  
Pandemic Preparedness in AB  
**Lt. Col. Irene Stickland** – "Care  
for the Care-Giver"  
**Pastor David Collins** –  
"Understanding the tension as  
Christians grapple with the  
Pandemic issue"  
**Dr. Bill & Sharon Bieber** -  
"Moving towards Relevancy"...  
A Practical Strategy for  
Mobilizing the Faith Community.  
**Steve Dalbey** – "Inter-  
Organizational Collaboration  
and Networking for Pandemic  
Preparedness"  
**Major Roy Langer** – "Emotional  
and Spiritual Care"  
**Dr. Wayne Whitbourne** –  
"Preparing the Mission Field for  
Pandemic"  
**Calgary Health Region** -  
"Personal Preparedness"

#### Panel Discussion

**John MacDonald** – "Including  
Congregations in Pandemic  
Plans"  
**Dr. Rod Elford** –  
"Communications during a  
Pandemic"  
**Dr. Sheryl Reimer Kirkham** –  
"Ethical Considerations for  
Pandemic Planning"

FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE SEE...  
[www.bridgesoflove.net](http://www.bridgesoflove.net)



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – JANUARY, 2008

## THROUGH THE EYES OF LOVE...

### Follow Me...

Since God has commanded us to firstly, love Him and then our neighbour, Pandemic Preparedness is an open door for the Great Commandment to be fulfilled...we can look at this adventure through the eyes of love!

Ten years have passed since the H5N1 strain of avian influenza first grabbed international attention by causing the death of a 3 year-old boy living in Hong Kong. Since this time, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported this novel virus moving across the globe, causing 332 known human illnesses and 204 deaths in 12 countries. Not only is there human suffering but also there has been the slaughter of hundreds of millions of birds, as a preventative measure, to try and keep the virus under control.

The avian flu and the prospects of a potential human pandemic has risen and fallen in public attention. Are we becoming complacent to this threat which has the ability to turn our world up-side down? Even though the threat of an Influenza Pandemic is low priority for most ... the scientific attention to the H5N1 continues its quest for a vaccine against this formable enemy.

According to a recent article written from the Center for Infectious Disease, Research and Policy..."after almost a decade of research, a safe, effective, affordable, and abundant vaccine against H5N1 flu remains disappointingly out of reach. The search for a human avian-flu vaccine that could be developed and delivered in time to short-circuit a pandemic has been dogged by multiple obstacles across many sectors. They include patchy scientific knowledge, sparse government funding, thin manufacturing and packaging capability, and restrictive regulatory structures—along with the wily immunology of the H5N1 virus itself." ...Maryn McKenna

As the WHO admitted in its Global Pandemic Influenza Action Plan published last year, "At the present time, if an influenza pandemic were to occur, the potential vaccine supply would fall several billion doses short of the amount needed to provide protection world-wide.

*"Only human love can overpower fear"*  
Andrew Nikiforuk...Author - Pandemonium

### Awareness and Education

There is a great deal of effort under way, at a global, national, provincial and regional level to anticipate and respond effectively to pandemic influenza. Minimizing the impact of this pandemic will be through education and prior preparedness as well as collective efforts from many stakeholders in a community. The church can play an integral role to assist the health authorities as a Pandemic influenza will place great pressure on health and social services alike

### What is pandemic influenza?

Pandemic influenza is a type of influenza that occurs every few decades and spreads rapidly to affect most countries and regions around the world.

### Some facts about Pandemic Influenza...

- Until the virus is identified it is not possible to make a vaccine.
- Pandemic influenza will spread very rapidly because people will have no immunity.
- Experts predict the global death toll could range between 2 million to over 50 million deaths. (conservative figures)
- Groups at particular risk won't be known until the disease starts to circulate—but may be different from those age groups normally affected.(similar to 1918 Flu)
- Antivirals are being stockpiled but they have limitations---their effectiveness won't be known until the virus is circulating.
- Pandemic is NOT a Health Issue...it is a SOCIETAL Issue.

### How does an influenza pandemic start?

Influenza viruses are constantly changing, producing new strains and varieties. Pandemics occur when a virus emerges that is so different from previously circulating strains that few, if any, people have any immunity to it. This allows it to spread widely and rapidly, affecting many hundreds of thousands of people. A new pandemic virus may be the result of an animal virus and a human virus mixing to produce a new strain. The animal virus usually comes from birds. Three pandemics occurred [in the last century](#). Scientists predict that another pandemic **will** happen, although they cannot say exactly when.

### Regional Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness and Response

**Date:** May 14/15, 2008

**Where:** Rocky Mountain University College

**Target Audience:** Leaders in the Faith Community

Last June 19/20, 2007 a National Conference on Pandemic Preparedness and Response took place in Winnipeg. To keep the momentum moving forward Bridges of Love in collaboration with other stakeholders is facilitating a Regional Summit to bring our planning down to the local level.

*"While the major sources of pandemic influenza planning can provide volumes of background information on the nature of the threat and make recommendations for a global or national response, it is the **local response** which will have the greatest impact on minimizing the effects of a pandemic."*

Vernon Dorisson

*Pandemic Influenza Planning*

For more information or to arrange to have Marg present this topic to your church, please give her a call at **263.5683**.

### SHARE IN BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE MINISTRY



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THANK YOU