



# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – December, 2007

## LOVE REMEMBERS

Memory can be a blessing or a curse. If you remember a person or an event so you can bring honor, that's a blessing. If however, you remember for the sake of revenge, it is more like a curse.

The terrorist attack "9/11" is one of those events seared in the memory of every person. As with the assassination of John F. Kennedy, most remember the exact place we were, when the tragedy occurred.

A memorial was planned in the immediate aftermath of the attacks to remember both the victims and those involved in rescue. Positive thoughts can be taken from this tragedy as written by Tony, a life-timer from New York.

*"Tony holds a belief in the human spirit of ordinary people - that when faced with the worst of situations they chose to help one-another instead of letting chaos consume them. A re-kindling of brotherhood - to see that we are part of our community, especially in the darkest hours, and that even one small person's contribution can help us all. And finally in the goodness of people - that when times are tough the people who know what is right will step forward and do what they can to keep it right."*

Christmas is a time for memories as we look back at past holidays and the people who have shared in this special time. I will never forget the Christmas we spent with our friends and neighbour, Gayl & Jay. We both were living away from extended families so decided to share our holiday with one another. Gayl and Jay are Jewish and it happened this particular year that Chanukah was very close to Christmas. This special time was over 20 years ago but it still stands out in my memory as one of our best Christmases ever!

We shared traditions, friendship and a closeness that has remained strong to this day.

Happy Chanukah, Gayl & Jay!

Marg Pollon, Bridges of Love Ministry

### THE SHACK

by William Young

Occasionally we come across a book that impacts our life and we are never the same. The Shack, by William (Paul) Young is one of those books.

I don't want to spoil the story by saying too much, but please allow me to share a few quotes from others who have been touched by this remarkable story.

Eugene Peterson says, "*This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress did for his. It's that good!*"

*"This story reads like a prayer—like the best kind of prayer, filled with sweat and wonder and transparency and surprise. If you read one work of fiction this year, let this be it." Mike Morrell, Zoccarnate.com*

*Wrapped in creative brilliance, The Shack is spiritually profound, theologically enlightening and life impacting. It has my highest recommendation. We are joyfully giving copies away by the case. Steve Berger, Pastor Grace Chapel Leipers Fork.*

*"An exceptional piece of writing that ushers you directly into the heart and nature of God in the midst of agonizing human suffering." David Gregory, Author*

#### About the Author:

William P. Young was born a Canadian and raised among a stone-age tribe by his missionary parents in the highlands of what was New Guinea. He suffered great loss as a child and young adult, and now enjoys the 'wastefulness of grace' with his family in the Pacific Northwest.

To further the ministry of "Bridges of Love" please log on to [www.bridgesoflove.net](http://www.bridgesoflove.net).

To make a donation, click on the 'Canadahelps' icon. You will receive a tax receipt and to say thank you, a copy of 'THE SHACK' will be sent to you or a friend.

#### Bless it forward...

Thank you for your kind support and be blessed and bless others by this very remarkable story.

### Kneeling Santa Prayer

Author Unknown

The sleigh was all packed, the reindeer were fed  
but Santa still knelt by the side of his bed.

'Dear Father,' he prayed, "Be with me tonight,  
There's much work to do and my schedule is tight.

My sack will hold toys to grant all kid's wishes.

The supply will be endless like the loaves and the fishes.

I can do all these things, Lord, only through you.  
I just need your blessing, then it's easy to do.

I do this only to honour the birth of the one, that was sent to redeem us, Your most Holy Son.

So to all of my friends, lest your glory I rob,  
Please, Lord, remind them who gave me this job."



Warmest Wishes for a most Joyous Christmas and Holiday Season as we give thanks for God's Precious Son.

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# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – NOVEMBER, 2007

## THE BRIDGE IS AGAPE LOVE

*"The differences that cannot be bridged by intellectual agreement offer an opportunity to learn a deeper dimension of agape love and enhance eternal rank. The schism in the Body produced by broken fellowship is far more damaging, and therefore is a greater sin than the supposed errors that keep the segments of the Body apart. Increased Agape LOVE is the remedy."*

Agape love is the love which loves because of its own inherent nature, not because of the excellence or worth of its object. (W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words – Vol. 3 Page 20)

In his book, "Love Covers" Paul Billheimer states, "disunity in the Body of Christ is the scandal of the ages." He says that the greatest sin of the Church is not lying, stealing, drunkenness, adultery—not even murder—but the sin of **disunity**. Because disunity in the Body is more prevalent than those other sins and just as truly ties the hands of the Holy Spirit, it causes more souls to be lost than these flagrant offenses. The Holy Spirit cannot deal effectively in the conviction and conversion of sinners where the 'saints' are divided.

### The First Step

What is the first step toward the healing of the wounds of Christ's Body? It may be the recognition and acknowledgement of the enormity and the heinousness of this sin. The next step is sincere repentance for our unloving attitudes toward one another, revealed by our critical judgment and broken fellowships. These are the 'wicked ways' among the Lord's people which require repentance. More than anything else, this disunity is preventing real revival and the Lord's return.

If spiritual leaders will lead the way in humbling, confession and repentance, the rank and file will follow. This is not a call to compromise sincere convictions. The most vital and tangible cornerstone and foundation of love—and therefore of unity and fellowship—is an ancestral or family relationship rather than a common opinion.

Taken from "Love Covers" A Biblical Design for Unity in the Body of Christ, Paul E. Billheimer, Bethany House Publishers, 1981.

### IN DEFENSE OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

We appreciate the opportunity to share our passion to improve marriages in Calgary. We've been blessed with 48 years of marriage and as local advisors for the Marriage and Marriage Preparation Courses used around the globe. We enjoy encouraging churches to get involved and help train leaders. Other marriage courses are being used locally but could we do more?

A recent television news item showed churches collaborating to affect a dramatic turnaround in divorce rates. In Clackamas County, Ore., 170 churches banded together in defense of love and marriage. Churches run courses, organize couple's date nights, and encourage older couples as marriage mentors. Could we collectively do the same? How can we raise awareness for Christian couples to have confidence to be transparent about their own difficulties, explaining how they surmounted them with God's love and help, and a few simple tools?

We methodically maintain cars, homes, and a host of things yet spend little time on relationships, resulting in marriage breakdowns with children as unwilling victims. Christian couples have not fared significantly better. This must bring great sadness to God. Most couples in their twenties avoid marriage even though statistics show stable and fulfilling relationships will not result. Can churches offer practical help to these and all couples? Our prayer is many will see the covenant of marriage worthwhile. Better equipped Christian couples can be better role models, able to come alongside family and friends in challenging times. Especially when unpredictable challenges happen - financial trouble, loss of a job or the grief of losing a loved one.

We hope those reading this article will be encouraged to help next time a marriage course is run at their church or perhaps run a course in their home. There is something very fulfilling about preparing for guests to arrive for a life changing experience. Please let us know if you would be willing to join a roundtable discussion to work collaboratively on improving marriages in this city.

Contact: Barry & Jennifer Pendergast  
Telephone: 403.281.4876  
Email: [barrypendergast@shaw.ca](mailto:barrypendergast@shaw.ca)

### A DOG'S LIFE

Being a veterinarian, I had been called to examine a ten-year-old Irish wolfhound named Belker. The dog's owners, Ron, his wife, Lisa, and their little boy, Shane, were all very attached to Belker, and they were hoping for a miracle.

I examined Belker and found he was dying of cancer. I told the family we couldn't do anything for Belker, and offered to perform the euthanasia procedure for the old dog in their home.

As we made arrangements, Ron and Lisa told me they thought it would be good for six-year-old Shane to observe the procedure.

They felt Shane might learn something from the experience.

The next day, I felt the familiar catch in my throat as Belker's family surrounded him. Shane seemed so calm, petting the old dog for the last time, that I wondered if he understood what was going on. Within a few minutes, Belker slipped peacefully away.

The little boy seemed to accept Belker's transition without any difficulty or confusion. We sat together for a while after Belker's death, wondering aloud about the sad fact that animal lives are shorter than human lives. Shane, who had been listening quietly, piped up, 'I know why.' Startled, we all turned to him. What came out of his mouth next, stunned me.

I'd never heard a more comforting explanation.

He said, 'People are born so that they can learn how to live a good life -- like loving everybody all the time and being nice, right?' The six-year-old continued, 'Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long...'

Author Unknown



# BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – october, 2007

## Obstacles to love

***There is no ill that love cannot heal,  
no problem love cannot solve, and no  
evil love cannot overcome.***

Why do we deprive each other and deprive ourselves of what we all possess in abundance? Why do we withhold the thing that everyone wants, the one thing that can bring us true happiness? Who has poisoned the stream of love? Why are there so many walking wounded in faith communities? What has turned the human heart into stone? What prevents us from doing the most natural thing – to love and be loved?

When we observe human interactions in families, churches and organizations, often it is the trivial things that obstruct the free flow of love. These include petty jealousy, envy, competitions, personality clashes, careless remarks, angry words, rudeness, inconsideration, insecurity, mistrust, suspicion, pride, elitism, miscommunication, misunderstanding, gossiping, backstabbing, and one-upmanship...to name a few.

These are stuffs tragedies are made of. They may appear to be the rather innocuous, garden-variety human foibles, yet they are capable of destroying countless lives, families and church communities.

The ability to love ALL people, including those who hurt us and cause us troubles, can only come from individuals who have been transformed by God's unlimited and unconditional love. Love is not just one of the attributes of God; it is the essence of God's nature, because God is love (1 John 4:8). To participate in divine nature is to transform love from a state of feeling into a state of being.

Mother Teresa's life is an embodiment of compassionate love. In her book "A Simple Path" (1995, p.99) she says... "We must grow in love and to do this we must go on loving and loving and giving and giving until it hurts – the way Jesus did."

In journeying down that simple path with Mother Teresa, we may be surprised by the discovery that love in all its purity can only be found in realizing our own brokenness and our need for healing. The paradox of love is that it is more likely to be found in the midst of suffering and pain. Dr. Paul T. Wong

### AN INTERVIEW WITH GOD

"What questions do you have in mind for me?"

"What surprises you most about humankind?"

God answered...

"That they get bored with childhood, they rush to grow up, and then long to be children again."

"That they lose their health to make money... and then lose their money to restore their health."

"That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that they live in neither the present nor the future."

"That they live as if they will never die, and die as though they had never lived."

God's hand took mine and we were silent for a while. And then I asked...

"As a parent, what are some of life's lessons you want your children to learn?"

"To learn they cannot make anyone love them. All they can do is let themselves be loved."

"To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others."

"To learn to forgive by practicing forgiveness."

"To learn that it only takes a few seconds to open profound wounds in those they love, and it can take many years to heal them."

"To learn that a rich person is not one who has the most, but is one who needs the least."

"To learn that there are people who love them dearly, but simply have not yet learned how to express or show their feelings."

"To learn that two people can look at the same thing and see it differently."

"To learn that it is not enough that they forgive one another, but they must also forgive themselves."

"Thank you for your time," I said humbly.

"Is there anything else you would like your children to know?"

God smiled and said,  
"Just know that I am here... always."

-author unknown

## FORGIVENESS MATTERS

### Seminar/Workshop

#### PRESENTERS:

Pastor Dale Lang  
Pastor Les Stahlke

Special Music  
The FEHR Family

**WHEN:** October 19-20, 2007

**WHERE:** BGEA/Samaritan's Purse, 20 Hopewell Way

#### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Pastors, Ministry Leaders and any who want to know God's Heart on why...

### "FORGIVENESS MATTERS"

#### REGISTER:

Marg Pollon  
Bridges of Love Ministry  
263.5683 or  
[margpollon@bridgesoflove.net](mailto:margpollon@bridgesoflove.net)

#### MORE THAN KNOWLEDGE...

### EXPERIENCE GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Loving others requires that we be willing to forgive. Forgiving others requires that we be willing to love. Both require an ever-deepening relationship with God to make us a reflection of His good heart to those with whom we have relationships. For then and only then, is love "made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the Day of Judgment, because in this world we are like Him" 1 John 4:17



# BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – August, 2007

## A Year in Review

**"The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save.  
He will take great delight in you,  
He will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."**  
Zephaniah 3:17

As I re-read my first Annual Report written three years ago, it began..."Would you like to take a walk as I follow Christ in His Great Adventure?" God has a habit of asking people to do things that are often fearful to them. There is always resistance. There is always a decision. There is always a changed life. Those who say yes to God's call don't walk the walk perfectly—but because they say yes to God, they learn and grow, even from their failures. They become part of His actions to redeem the world.

This month, Bridges of Love has completed its third year of operation. The past few years have certainly been an adventure and the road God has taken this ministry is certainly one that I could never have anticipated. The path has not always been clear and smooth but it has been a time of growth both spiritually and learning to navigate through this ministry. The learning curve has often been one where I have been stretched beyond my comfort zone taking us into unfamiliar waters but the words in Zephaniah 3:17 have given great comfort and carried us through.

Please let me share a little of the journey from the past year... (Complete report on Web-site)

After my return from Africa last July, I took some time to unfold what I had learned at the Vision Conference and all that I experienced from a culture that vastly changed my worldview. I knew that God had a reason for taking me on this trip so I wanted the memories and lessons learned to be captured. I spent a few months working on a 4 week-workshop called "**Living it Out**...**Love is ACTION**". It encapsulates so much of what God has taught me since I started Bridges of Love; drawing from my great appetite for reading good books to the life experiences since being a follower of Christ. Topics covered in this document are 'Love', 'Compassion', the 'Biblical Worldview', the 'Mystery of Community',

'Is Church a Relevant Institution?', and ends with 'Christians in Times of Pandemic/Disaster.'

The main focus of this ministry for the past few years has been on mobilizing the church community to be prepared in the event of an Influenza Pandemic. The most ambitious initiative undertaken was to plan and implement a National Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness and Response. This event took place in Winnipeg this past June and was a collaboration between the International Centre of Infectious Diseases and the Canadian Mennonite University. From the positive feed-back received, we feel the goals were achieved. There is now much work to keep the momentum going in a forward direction.

Another activity which was undertaken was the application for Bridges of Love's Charitable Status. I am very pleased to report that as of August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 we are now a **Charitable Society** of a Religious Order. Our goals have been revisited since application three years ago for Society Status. The objectives suggested by the CRA which thankfully fit with our vision have been registered with the Alberta Registry and read as follows:

- To educate and instruct religious leaders and their parishioners on emergency preparedness and the church's role in pandemic situations.
- To preach and advance the teachings of the Christian faith and the religious tenets, doctrines, observances and culture associated with that faith.

As I reflect over the past three years, I thank the Lord for the open doors and opportunities to serve Him. I have grown to trust Him one day at a time as I see Him working through this ministry for His Glory. I know only by His Authority and Power can we accomplish the tasks for which He has called Bridges of Love.

Thank you to so many who have prayed, encouraged and just been a valued friend. I know that this is only the beginning of a great adventure as we serve God together. Even though the road is often hard and full of "bumps", I would not have missed this time of growth and maturing in my faith. Please stay tuned as God's plans unfold...☺

### "WALK FOR WATER"

By Louise Post

How far do you have to walk to get clean fresh water? Ten steps...? How about 2 km one way? What if the water is not clean? Do you walk another 5 km or in desperation and fatigue collect the dirty water just happy to have some drinking water for your family?

It is traditionally the women and children who fetch the water for the family. The supply of clean water is a great problem in much of Africa and in other developing countries.

St. Andrews Guelph Presbyterian Church decided to take action to help alleviate this plight with an initiative called "**Walk for Water**". Women were asked to collect pledges for an evening walk-a-thon, to simulate what females do on a daily basis in Sudan.

Not only did the congregation members donate but neighbours, businesses and even a taxi driver gave to the cause. After driving a lady to the church and hearing why she was traveling at such an hour he donated the taxi fare and gave an extra \$10.00. What a blessing!

The walk started at 7:00 PM and carried on throughout the night ending with a church breakfast in the morning.

Individuals walked throughout the night, some for an hour and others bringing tents, lawn chairs and sleeping bags. There was special fellowship as we visited and cheered on the walkers.

Our goal to raise \$5000, the amount the Presbyterian World Service quoted for one well in Sudan, was surpassed. \$10,000 was pledged; enough for TWO WELLS!! The spirit of our church family was great and even though we had sore muscles, the smiles on everyone's faces said it all. We were indeed blessed, feeling God's pleasure by our Mission initiative – "Walk for Water".



# BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – July, 2007

## The Operations of Divine Love

"True godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enable them to live better in it and excites their endeavours to mend it."

William Penn

The power to be the kind of people we were created to be and the power to do the works of God upon the earth places us on solid ground to engage the demands of the social arena. And no place is in greater need of people full of the Holy Spirit and divine Love. The Social Justice Stream of Christian life and faith focuses upon justice and shalom in all human relationships and social structures. This compassionate way of living addresses the gospel imperative for equity and magnanimity among all peoples.

Streams of Living Water – Richard Foster

Jesus lived in this broken, painful world, learning obedience through the things that he suffered, tempted in all the ways we are, and yet remaining without sin (Heb. 5:8, 4:15). We are, to be sure, reconciled to God by Jesus' death, but even more, we are "saved" by his life. (Rom. 5:10)

Author Richard Foster vision is one of an all-inclusive people, gathered in the power of God, filled with the love of God and empowered to do the works of God.

Jesus went about proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and its availability to all. He also demonstrated the reality of its presence. Thus dual action of proclamation and demonstration is found throughout the Gospels.

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.*

Luke 4:18-19

### GOD AT THE HELM



*"That they may all be one" John 17:21*

*Shalom* conveys the idea of a great beacon. A full-bodied concept that gathers in but is much broader than peace - shalom means wholeness, unity, balance. Shalom embodies the vision of a harmonious, all-inclusive community of loving persons. Shalom conveys the idea of a harmonious unity in the natural order: the wolf and the calf become friends, the lion and the lamb lie down together, "and a little child shall lead them" (Isa. 11:1-9) We are in harmony with our neighbour; justice and mercy abound. We are in harmony with nature; peace and unity reign. This is the vision of *shalom*.

How do we achieve 'shalom' in this world that is divided by culture, religion and economic and social diversity? How do we love our neighbour as God has commanded in His Great Commandment of Mark 12?

Truman Capote stated that Love having no geography has no boundaries. Love is in very short supply, while the demand has never been greater. Let an act of Love be the agent to give hope to others.

### Kindness Pays Off

I have wept in the night  
For the shortness of sight  
That to somebody's need I was blind.  
But I have never yet  
Felt a twinge of regret  
For being a little too kind.

Author Unknown

Kindness makes for hope in fellow human beings, hope in God, and hope that if God can change another human being, He can also change me.

### The Order of the Red Blanket

By Lt. Col Irene Stickland

Three years ago I was traveling at Christmas, by bus, returning from a visit with my family. They had given me a warm red travel blanket as a gift—so needed on that stormy, snowy 16 hour overnight journey. During the night we were delayed in a bus station partway across the county and needing to change buses. Cold and tired as I was, I looked up to see an older woman pass by – with two plastic bags around her feet, held by elastic bands. Some inner voice nudged me out of my own discomfort and said, "They lady needs help!" I ran after her and learned she had frostbite, her shoes would not go over her wounds, she was poorly clothed, she was mentally challenged and could not find the bus to take her to her relatives. With only 10 minutes to my bus time, I found her bus, took her there, pulled off my boots and pulled my warm socks over her plastic bags. I gave her my coat, my lunch and the money I had in my pocket, and then took my new red blanket and wrapped her snugly in the front seat of the bus, just as the door was closing and her bus was leaving. She looked up and smiled, and said, "God has sent an angel".

The reason I tell you this story is that I have learned that I need to be alert and aware and sensitive to human need. And we also need to be prepared. A Christian should always have a red blanket to give to those in need. The red blanket can represent our plans and preparations for pandemic, the training and education we need in order to meet the needs of people along the way, the resources we have as individuals or as faith groups, or simply, a warm blanket in the car, so that in time of need, we have a practical and basic means of helping someone or saving a life.



# BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – JUNE, 2007

**“But Seek First the Kingdom of God”...Matt. 6:33**

**“But seek ye first the kingdom of God,  
and his righteousness; and all these  
things shall be added unto you.”**

Matthew 6:33-7:13-14

Jesus gave His mandate throughout scripture for living a life pleasing to Him. We are to first **LOVE** God and **seek His Kingdom** and everything else will fall into line. We are instructed to not worry about our life (Matt. 6:25). This, however, is one of the most difficult disciplines of the Christian life yet so very critical for following in His Steps.

Once we have our priorities in order, it will not be difficult to keep our eyes on the Saviour and step out to serve others with His Love. There are many opportunities to serve in Calgary such as the Mustard Seed, NeighbourLink, Inn from the Cold, the Salvation Army and many others. We often give sacrificially without much thought to our own comfort or safety. Are we willing to love our neighbour enough to take care of someone who is sick, perhaps dying and very contagious? **Do we love God enough to take that risk?**

H<sup>5</sup>N<sup>1</sup>, the new killer strain of avian influenza spreading out of Asia, has only killed 153 people since 2003. Why then is there so much concern about bird flu? This Avian virus has happened before in the Spanish Flu of 1918 and it became the deadliest plague in human history, killing up to 100 million people around the world. This virus killed more people in 25 weeks than AIDS has killed in 25 years—yet in 1918 the case mortality rate was less than 5%. H<sup>5</sup>N<sup>1</sup>, on the other hand, has officially killed half of its human victims.

An Influenza Pandemic is a frightening thing and a legitimate human reaction to threat is **fear**. As Christians, we know that we are not to be ruled by fear so the best way to overcome this reaction is to trust God with our lives. Then, become knowledgeable on this subject and make decisions based upon this knowledge. There are facts that no one will be able to change but there is information available that you can act upon now to increase your feeling of security. The prospect of an influenza pandemic presents a unique opportunity for the Christian community to stand-up for God as we step out with His Power demonstrating His **LOVE**.

## A SIMULATION... PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS “A Real-life” Exercise

Pastor Arnie at St. John Lutheran Church is preparing his congregation with a church response for an Influenza Pandemic. Simulating an actual outbreak in his church, helped the congregation see that there were major gaps in being really prepared for such a catastrophic disaster.

Some questions that arose after this exercise where a congregation member came in contact with an infected person at the Calgary Airport who had the deadly strain of an Influenza virus and she too was now showing symptoms.

- Who is our ‘point’ person for an Emergency Church response?
- Do we have a team of responsible individuals who are prepared with a pandemic strategy in place?
- Do we have proper communication and data bases set up for our community?
- Do we have adequate food on site if the church should suddenly be quarantined?
- Do we shut down all operations and activities as a church?
- What is our responsibility to the members/community around us?
- Do we have masks, sanitizer and other protective clothing?
- Do we have a contact name for our municipal health authority to receive instructions?
- Do we know individuals in the church who have medical training in specific areas?
- Do we have individuals trained in elementary nursing?
- Do we know our community intimately to know those neighbours who are going to need an extra hand if the case of an emergency situation.

This exercise was taken very seriously by the congregation. A Pandemic simulation is a very effective tool. Please call for more details. 263.5683

## “WAVES OF BLESSINGS”

90 Days of Blessings (GDOP), Celebration 2007 (EFC) and Bridges of Love are joining arms to exhibit ‘Waves of Blessings’ throughout our city.

**Bridges of Love’s** focus for this initiative is to raise awareness and then facilitate action for a church response to an Influenza pandemic.

The World Health Authority has stated that even though the timing of a Pandemic cannot be predicted there is little doubt that one is anticipated.

There is historic precedent that during times of epidemics in Roman Empire times, the Christian response made a significant contribution to the apparent “miraculous” growth of the church.

In his book, ‘The Rise of Christianity’ Rodney Stark, a sociologist, contributes this growth to the **practiced** belief of Roman Christians. Their hope—and the real life evidence that this was no “wish theology” – was compelling and attractive to ‘those without hope.’

Also, Christians had a moral obligation to love others and they could not please God until they loved one another. This belief was certainly alien to pagans who did not provide sacrificial care and only looked after themselves.

This summer, Calgary Churches have an opportunity to learn how the local church can respond to an emergency that has the potential to bring widespread illness, death and economic disruption.

Please watch for further announcements for locations where you can attend an information and question time on how to bring continual waves of blessings through Pandemic Preparedness to your church and community.



# BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – May, 2007

## Love is Spontaneous - 1 Cor. 13:4

*Love suffers long and is kind...1 Cor. 13:4*

**Love** is not premeditated—it is spontaneous; that is, it bursts forth in extraordinary ways, there is nothing of precise certainty in Paul's description of love. We cannot predetermine our thoughts and actions by saying: Now I will never think any evil thoughts, and I will believe everything that Jesus would have me to believe." No, the characteristic of love is **spontaneity**. We don't deliberately set the statements of Jesus before us as our standard, but when His Spirit is having His way with us, we live according to His standard without even realizing it. And when we look back, we are amazed at how unconcerned we have been over our emotions, which is the very evidence that real spontaneous love was there. The nature of everything involved in the life of God in us is only discerned when we have been through it and it is in our past.

The fountains from which love flows are in God, not in us. It is absurd to think that the love of God is naturally in our hearts, as a result of our own nature. His love is there only because it "has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit..." Romans 5:5

If we try to prove to God how much we love Him, it is a sure sign that we really don't love Him. The evidence of our love for Him is the absolute spontaneity of our love, which flows naturally from His nature within us. And when we look back, we will not be able to determine why we did certain things, but we can know that we did them according to the spontaneous nature of His love in us. The life of God exhibits itself in this spontaneous way because the fountains of His love are in the Holy Spirit.

My Utmost for His Highest  
Oswald Chambers



### A TRIBUTE TO A SPECIAL MOM

This week-end, we celebrate Mother's Day. I cannot help thinking back to my own Mom, Birdie Mann/Armstrong and the love she had for God, her family, and for her many friends and acquaintances.

After our Dad passed away, at a young age, Mom went back teaching school as a substitute teacher. A few years later she was taken on at the Calgary Children's Hospital where she remained until her retirement.

Our Mother was dedicated to her profession and she loved her students with the love of Christ. She had some difficult students over the years, however, and I will never forget 'Gracie' who was born without the outer layer of skin. She was brought in as a pre-schooler and had been kept in a closet as her parents were ashamed of her appearance. Mom used to bring her home on week-ends as her parents had abandoned her. Gracie was given a little touch of love during those informative years that hopefully gave her a sense of the Father's Love.

Our Mother's greatest desire was that each of her children & grandchildren would serve & love the Lord. This Mother's Day I appreciate the gift of a firm foundation in which to grow. I know she spent much time in prayer for each of her family members and we owe our little Mom much gratitude for her sacrificial giving to others and her **spontaneous love** for the many lives she touched.

She taught us through example, the great joy that comes from serving others, and how faith in a loving Father gives hope and a passion for life that cannot be surpassed.

Thank you Mom  
I'll see you in Heaven...

### ONE DAY AT A TIME

The most useless thing to do  
...**Worry**

The greatest joy...**Giving**

The greatest loss...**Self-respect**

The most satisfying work  
...**Helping others**

The ugliest personality trait  
...**Selfishness**

The most endangered species  
...**Dedicated leaders**

The greatest "shot in the arm"  
...**Encouragement**

The greatest problem to over-come  
...**Fear**

Most effective sleeping pill  
...**Peace of mind**

The most crippling disease  
...**Excuses**

The most powerful force in life  
...**LOVE**

The world's most incredible computer...**The brain!**

The worst thing to be without  
...**Hope**

The deadliest weapon...**Tongue**

The two most power-filled words  
...**"I Can"**

The greatest asset...**Faith**

The most worthless emotion  
...**Self-pity**

The most prized possession  
...**Integrity**

The most beautiful attire  
...**A Smile!**

The most powerful channel of communication...**Prayer**

The most contagious spirit  
...**Enthusiasm**

The most important thing in life  
...**GOD**

*Author Unknown*



# BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – April, 2007

Developing a Marathon Mentality...

## AMAZING GRACE IN THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

JOHN PIPER

Against great obstacles William Wilberforce, an evangelical member of Parliament, fought for the abolition of the African slave trade and against slavery itself until they were both illegal in the British empire. The battle consumed almost forty-six years of his life. The defeats and setback along the way would have caused the ordinary politician to embrace a more popular cause.

What were the roots of this man's endurance in the cause of public righteousness?

John Piper, in his recent book "**Amazing Grace in the life of William Wilberforce**", says what made Wilberforce tick was a profound biblical allegiance to what he called the "*peculiar doctrines*" of Christianity. These, he said, give rise in turn to true "affections" for spiritual things, which then break the power of pride and greed and fear and lead to transformed morals, which lead to the political welfare of the nation. No true Christian can endure in battling unrighteousness unless his heart is aflame with new spiritual affections, or passions. "Mere knowledge is confessedly too weak. The affections alone remain to supply the deficiency."

Wilberforce says this is the key to public and political morality. "*If...a principle of true Religion (the Spirit-given new affections) should...gain ground, there is no estimating the effects on public morals, and the consequent influence on our political welfare.*"<sup>1</sup>

Wilberforce was a great doer...as stated by one of his biographers...'He lacked time for half the good works in his mind.' He lived to do good—or as Jesus said, to let his light shine before men that they might see his good deeds and give glory to his Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:16)

**"The breadth of his heart and the diversity of his action beckon us all the more to ponder the source of his constancy."**

<sup>1</sup> William Wilberforce, *A practical View of Christianity*, ed. Kevin Charles Belmonte (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996)

## KNOWING OUR NEIGHBOURS

**How many can name neighbours,  
on both sides of your home  
and across the street?**

During the years of raising our children, knowing our neighbours was not a difficult task. I was home, as many other Moms were in those days, and our lives were intertwined with a common purpose of raising our families. Many of these relationships built many years ago are still thriving today.

Building lasting friendships has changed over time, however, with more and more women in the work force. Also, with increasingly busy lives and children's activities, these special bonds with our neighbours that came easily and naturally in the past are a little more difficult to cultivate today.

We know that our relationship with God is directly proportional to the love for our neighbour. The more we love God the more we desire to reach out in love to those around us. Our neighbours may be quite different than ourselves so it is necessary to have God's Supernatural Love in order to truly love those whom we would not normally connect. The Covenant Love of God will release us to love people and be willing to share anything in life, willing to lay down our lives for each other, and pay any price because of our love for each other.

As we look towards a looming threat that could turn our world upside down...that of an **Influenza Pandemic**, building loving relationships with our neighbours is a critical & key factor for caring for one another. Bonds of trust that will emerge will allow communities to work together in times of crisis.

This month, I would like to encourage you to get to know someone on your street that you do not already know. As the weather begins to warm up, a barbecue would be a great way to show hospitality, to someone in your community. I know from running our Bed & Breakfast that once we dine together, a special bond is built. Enjoy and receive a special blessing...

## Faith Community Summit On Pandemic Preparedness and Response

June 20 and 21, 2007

### Presenters:

**International Center for Infectious Diseases**  
in collaboration with the  
**Canadian Mennonite University**  
Winnipeg, MB

### Greetings & Opening Remarks:

**Dr. Gerald Gerbrandt**, President (Canadian Mennonite University)  
**Terry Duguid**, President (ICID)

### Confirmed Speakers:

**Lt. Col. Irene Stickland**, Deputy Chief & Chief of the Scarborough Grace Hospital during Sars

**Rev. Canon Douglas Graydon**, Anglican Church of Canada & Representative of Ontario Multifaith Council: Pandemic Preparedness Guide for Faith Groups

**Dr. Tracey Parnell**, BC Ministry of Health – Pandemic Preparedness Secretariat

**John Webb**, head of NS Emergency Social Services

**Dr. Tim Foggin**, Burnaby Family Physician

**Dr. Terese Modesto PhD**, Chief Critical Incident Thanatologist with the TEAR Center and the Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY

Please visit [www.icid.com/faith](http://www.icid.com/faith) to register for this very important summit and hear how the faith community can play a critical part in pandemic preparedness.



# BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – March, 2007

God loves us despite our unfinishedness, incompleteness and

*One of the most insidious maladies of our time is: the tendency in most of us to observe rather than act, avoid rather than participate, not do rather than do; the tendency to give in to the sly, negative, cautionary voices that constantly counsel us to be careful, to be controlled, to be wary and prudent and hesitant and guarded in our approach of this complicated thing called living.*

*Arthur Gordon, A Touch of Wonder*

As many of you know, I have had my office in St. John Lutheran Church for the past 3 years. It has indeed been a great gift to have the companionship of Dorothy, Marshall and Pastor Arnie. We don't spend a lot of time together, but I know that there is always a listening ear and our 'Round Table' discussions over coffee in the Pastor's office are always appreciated and a blessing.

The past week I witnessed an act of kindness that touched my heart. Dorothy had something meaningful disappear from her desk (as a former church secretary, I can appreciate this occurrence). It was an old letter opener that had come from the Fuller Brush Company and had been passed on to her from her father, many years previously. It was not valuable but it had memories and she was saddened to loose something with sentimental value.

This past week, the Pastor came in with a little bag and he announced that he had a gift for Dorothy. You guessed it...a letter opener like the one that had been lost. Pastor Arnie had been browsing in an antique shop and had come across an identical little letter opener and had purchased it for Dorothy. I know that the thoughtfulness that was shown was of greater value than the gift and it was a testimony of God's Love to us both.

**Live your life so that when you die, people will know that you:**

- ♥ Loved others clearly
- ♥ Loved your family dearly
- ♥ Loved God completely

Bruce Bickel & Stan Jantz

## MESSY SPIRITUALITY

Gods Annoying Love for Imperfect People by Michael Yaconelli

Yaconelli says that spirituality is not a formula; it is not a test. It is a relationship. Spirituality is not about competency; it is about intimacy. Spirituality is not about perfection; it is about connection. The way of the spiritual life begins where we are now in the mess of our lives. Accepting the reality of our broken, flawed lives is the beginning of spirituality not because the spiritual life will remove our flaws but because we let go of seeking perfection and, instead, seek God, the one who is present in the tangents of our lives. Spirituality is not about being fixed; it is about God's being present in the mess of our unfixeness.

The Bible is full of messy people. The biblical writers did not edit out the flaws of its heroes. Noah, for example...everyone thought he was crazy. I can honestly say that I have often felt like Noah with the work I am doing with Pandemic Preparedness. Noah was a man of great faith and courage as against the backdrop of unrelenting ridicule, Noah followed God in obedience even though no one believed that the rains were coming.

With continued talk of an Influenza Pandemic becoming a reality, Christians have an 'open door' of opportunity to provide a living demonstration that the Christian message is genuine. In every age, the most persuasive evidence for the gospel is not words or arguments but a living demonstration of God's character through Christians' love for one another, expressed in both their words and their actions.

*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

## A GOOD PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help us remember that the jerk who cut us off in traffic last night is a single mother who worked nine hours and is rushing home to cook dinner, help with homework, do the laundry and spend a few precious moments with her children.

Help us to remember that the pierced, tattooed, disinterested young man who can't make change correctly is a worried 19-year-old college student, balancing his apprehension over final exams with his fear of not getting his student loans for next semester.

Remind us, Lord, that the scary looking bum, begging for money in the same spot every day (who really ought to get a job!) is a slave to addictions that we can only imagine in our worst nightmares.

Help us to remember that the old couple walking annoyingly slow through the store aisles and blocking our shopping progress are savouring this moment, knowing that, based on the biopsy report she got back last week, this will be the last year that they go shopping together.

Heavenly Father, remind us each day that, of all the gifts you give us, the greatest gift is love. It is not enough to share that love with those we hold dear. Open our hearts not to just those that are close to us, but to all humanity. Let us be slow to judge and quick to forgive, show patience, empathy and LOVE.



# BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – February, 2007

"The Gracious Gift of Love..." - 1 John 4:7

Today is the day to celebrate **LOVE**. I think God would be very pleased if we lived everyday like it was Valentine's Day. So, how do we keep this love alive after this time has passed, the chocolates are eaten and the roses have died?

What prevents us from doing the most natural thing – to love and be loved? Why do we deprive each other and deprive ourselves of what we all possess in abundance?

We know that love is more than a feeling. It is the motivational force that compels us to **ACTION**. When we love we want to act on this love. Authentic love is a principle to live by and is a core value that defines the essence of our being and the touchstone of true religion.

Love is intentional without being conscious of its noble intention. To love is more than doing what is right; it involves doing what is good and kind. In giving, one receives. In enduring love, one finds happiness.

If love comes from God (1 John 4:7) do we always exhibit His Love? As Christians are we practicing the law of Love that God has laid out in the Great Commandment? These two commandments to love God and our neighbour are two sides of the same coin: it is not possible to fulfill one without the other. We are created for God and for each other so that we may experience, express and realize the full potential of love.

The ability to love all people can only come from individuals who have been transformed by the Source of unlimited and unconditional love. There is no ill that love cannot heal; no problem that love cannot solve as love is the cardinal principle of true spirituality.

***We must grow in love and to do this we must go on loving and loving and giving and giving until it hurts – the way Jesus did.***  
***"A Simple Path" by Mother Theresa***

## INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS IN CALGARY "A Call to ACTION" To Love Your Neighbour

**"MEET, GREET, LISTEN & LEARN"**  
Bridgeland/Riverside Community Assoc.  
March 7<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Monthly informal learning sessions are open to all residents, members of the Bridgeland Riverside Community Association and the general public.

Bring your friends and join for coffee, learning and interaction. Make new friends as you enjoy great speakers on a variety of timely topics.  
\$2.00 per person - includes a beverage.

The Bridgeland/Riverside Community Association in conjunction with Bridges of Love Ministry invites you to a panel discussion to hear contingency planning for an Influenza Pandemic. Hear from:

- ✓ City of Calgary Community Worker, Rob Wiles,
- ✓ Director of Disaster/Emergency Response Planning for the Calgary Health Region, Cheryl Bourassa, and
- ✓ Glen Bjolverud, Superintendent of Emergency Medical Services.

You will hear from the experts on the basics as well as the high level plans of **CHR's Pandemic Preparedness**, **high level City plans** as well as **Personal Preparedness**. Learn how you and your family can be prepared for an Influenza Pandemic and how we can be prepared to work collectively in our church, community and city to achieve more.

**BRCA Community Centre  
917 Centre Ave NE-Salon D  
Corner of 9<sup>th</sup> St. & Centre Ave NE**

## Do We Practice Love?

- Engage in deeds of kindness?
- Bring happiness to others?
- Embrace those different from you?
- Consider other people's feelings?
- Have other people's best interest in mind?
- Share with those who are less fortunate
- Help others without expecting any return?
- Stand up for the oppressed?
- Fight against injustice?
- Show gratitude and repay kindness?
- Show compassion to those who are hurting?
- Empower and build up others?
- Sacrifice self-interest in order to serve others?
- Love and pray for your enemies?
- Forgive those who have hurt you?
- Overlook other people's faults?
- Remain faithful to your friends when they are in trouble?
- Treat others with unconditional positive regard?
- Treat people with sincerity and honesty?
- Apologize and make amends whenever you have hurt others.

By Paul T. P. Wong,  
Ph.D., C.Psych.



# BUILDING BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – JANUARY, 2007

## "Wilbur was indeed Humble..."

This Christmas we were fortunate to have our two little grandchildren home for the holidays. Hannah, who just turned four, received the book 'Charlotte's Web', and after hearing the story, she asked what it meant when Charlotte described Wilbur as being 'humble'. I must say, it was a challenge putting the character trait 'humility' into words that a four year old could understand...

I don't know who wanted to see Charlotte's Web more...Hannah or Nana, but we decided that it might be helpful to understand why Wilbur was humble by seeing him in action. This little movie was packed with lessons on sacrificial giving, caring for others, showing humility, building loving relationships and showing what it means to just be a friend. I humbly say...we all shed a few tears!!

### FUNCTIONAL DEFINITION OF HUMILITY

#### Humility is accepting our selves as we really are before God.

Humility is a person's recognition of his dependence on God, of his absolute need for submitting himself to God, which is the only remedy for pride. Humility is true self-knowledge -- regarding oneself as God sees him. It is truth in self-understanding and truth in action. The humble person does not trust in his own strength, but in the power and love of God. True humility is a servant-like quality which enables one to place his life at the service of God and others.

True humility involves the readiness to place oneself at the disposal of others, to serve with God's LOVE.

So how does having a humble spirit work in today's society? Is the desire for success, power, and competition, clouding our ability to be truly 'humble'?

Christian humility is paradoxical. Christ has promised: "The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:11-12). James reinforces this point: "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you" (James 4:10).

If we truly follow Christ's example, then humility will be a way of life, a habit of submitting to God's will and a lifelong commitment of devoting ourselves to God's calling. In daily practice, humility means to put aside self-interests in order to serve God and others wholeheartedly. Such an attitude would allow no room for a private agenda as we are set apart for God's purposes.

As long as we firmly believe that winning is the only thing that matters, it is not possible to develop humility. However, once we realize the enormous benefits of humility on both personal and societal levels, we will experience all other virtues and blessings, including God's commendation for eternity, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

K. Neill Foster, in his book "Revolution of Love" says "Revival", the revolution of love, comes only to those who will love God enough to humble themselves before others. The launching pad for revival was, surprisingly enough, not prayer but humility and transparent honesty among Christians.

*"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face..."*

*2 Cor. 7:14*

### Practicing Humility

- Acknowledging our wrong doing.
- Receiving correction and feedback graciously.
- Refraining from criticizing others.
- Forgiving others who have wronged us.
- Apologizing to others who have been wronged by us.
- Enduring unfair treatments with patience and a forgiving spirit.
- Thinking and speaking about the good things of other people.
- rejoicing over other people's success.
- Counting our blessings for everything, good and bad.
- Seeking opportunities to serve others.
- Willing to remain anonymous in helping others.
- Showing gratitude for our successes.
- Giving due credit to others for our successes.
- Treating success as a responsibility to do more for others.
- Willing to learn from our failures.
- Assuming responsibility for our failures.
- Accepting our limitations and circumstances.
- Accepting social reality of discrimination and prejudice.
- Treating all people with respect regardless of their social status.
- Enjoying the lowly status of being an outsider and nobody.

By Paul T. P. Wong,  
Ph.D., C.Psych.