



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – December, 2010

“THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS IS FAITH EXPRESSING ITSELF THROUGH LOVE” GAL. 5:6

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. Galatians 5:6

We are saved by faith, not by deeds. Love and kindness for God and others, however, is the response of those who have a relationship with Christ. Since faith expresses itself through love, we can check our love for others, as a way to monitor our faith.

We have opportunities both large and small to demonstrate kindness, especially during the Christmas season. Every community no matter where we live has extra needs this time of year. Perhaps there is an opportunity to serve in our neighbourhood such as shoveling a neighbour's side walk. Often the smallest gestures of kindness are the most appreciated.

We might ask why we are more willing to participate in helping others during the Christmas season more than any other time of the year. Perhaps it is because we are already in the gift-giving spirit and appreciate how very fortunate we are, therefore, giving to others becomes more important.

Or maybe it is because two thousand years ago, the earth received the most perfect, most loving gift of all, helping us understand true kindness...our gift - the birth of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Living for God means ready to say and do what seems contradictory to the world's ways. We must be willing to give when others take, to love when others despise, and to give up our rights in order to serve.

As we live for Christ, our actions show our commitment to God is real. Deeds of loving service are not a substitute for, but rather a verification of our faith.



LEADING WITH KINDNESS

“Leading with Kindness” authors William Baker and Michael O’Malley concur that being kind is one of the most crucial attributes of some of the world’s most successful leaders - far from a euphemism for ‘soft’ or ‘wishy-washy’.

They emphasize that true kindness demonstrates a powerful confidence in oneself and those one lead. Not some intangible quality that you might have or not have but an amalgamation of quantifiable, learnable, and refinable traits and skills.

“Leading with Kindness” identifies six ingredients of kindness—compassion, integrity, gratitude, authenticity, humility, and humour. None of which might readily spring to mind when envisioning the archetypal business leader but they are absolutely essential to powerful leadership.

Is it possible for a leader’s character to get in the way of their message? The character of a leader and what he or she expresses are intimately connected so a message is only as reliable as the source.

Jesus contextualized His message in such a way that the recipient of His blessings was in tune with the messenger, and ultimately, the message itself.

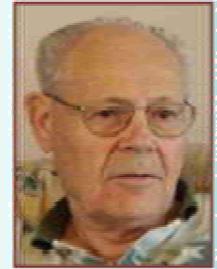
A person who readily comes to mind who exemplified the kindest heart I have known was my Mother, Birdie Mann. (Armstrong) Our early years were not easy ones, with our Father passing away due to cancer, at an early age. Even though we did not have a lot Mom always shared with others; often giving sacrificially.

My memories of her continue to warm my heart. The interests and concerns of others took priority over her needs and she never asked for, or wanted anything in return.

Mom did not received accolades for her humble serving heart but the lessons we learned as we watched her actions and listened to her message of love for the Lord, taught us what it meant to be a follower of Christ. She lived the life she spoke and taught her family the only thing that counted in life was a faith expressing itself through loving kindness.

“Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.”
Albert Schweitzer

A LIFE WELL LIVED



Don Ford, 1934 - 2010
“Well done, good and faithful servant”

On November 13, 2010 Don Ford’s earthly life came to an unexpected close as he joined his heavenly Father whom he loved and served. At his funeral we heard testimonies of a life well-lived.

For the past four years, Don served faithfully on the Bridges of Love’s Board. He was a committed Treasurer and had recently accepted the position of Board Chair for the coming year. Don’s compassionate heart, strong belief in God, and value-based life, spoke louder than his words.

Dr. Wayne Elford, past Board Member expressed this sentiment, “Our colleague Don Ford was a great example of someone who had attained a wholesome balance of truth and graciousness.”

Thank you Don - well done, good and faithful servant.
You will be missed, dear friend.



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – November, 2010

“...Interests of Others” Philippians 2:4

*“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
Philippians 2:4*

God says we are to consider others interests as more important than our own. During a crisis, sacrificial service to others in Christ’s name is a true example of humility and love.

Erwin Lutzer offers Biblical insight for our responsibility in a disaster - **“WHERE WAS GOD”...**

“Natural disasters cause us to pause, they cause us to ask hard questions, and if we care about the world, they drive us to tears. Can anyone staring at the destruction caused by the tsunami not weep? Surely a heart of human compassion identifies with the loss, the suffering, and the hopelessness of fellow human beings. We should not approach disasters with an accusatory finger or a detached attitude. Grieving hearts can only be touched by other grieving hearts—sharing pain and mingling tears.

Any answer must begin with personal compassion and a heavy heart.

Tears, if they are not wasted, should lead to deeds. The church is called to suffer and to die with the world and nowhere is that more necessary than where tragedy strikes. Some believers suffer because they are caught in the tragedy itself; others suffer because they are willing to sacrifice for others. I commend those who are willing to leave the comforts of home in order to bring hope and healing to the victims. Not everyone can go, but we can all give; we can all participate in helping relief agencies as they serve those who are so utterly destitute. When disaster strikes, the church should be the church.”

Where Was God? by Erwin W. Lutzer
A Billy Graham Library Selection

To be the Hands and Feet of Jesus ... to our Neighbours

On March 18 a fire destroyed 159 units at a Millrise condo complex, impacting residents, some of whom lost everything they had in the flames. But, in the wake of disaster, local businesses, organizations and community members reached out to help the victims of the fire in whatever way they could, and Southview Alliance Church was presented with a unique opportunity to serve.

Within an hour of the start of fire, Southview had become the designated reception centre for the victims of the fire. As the reception centre, Southview’s Evergreen Campus became the headquarters for Disaster Social Services (DSS) staff and a meeting place for the Fire Department, various aid agencies and the media. It was where victims received counselling, referrals and vouchers for food, clothing and temporary accommodations.

A grateful Millrise resident shared...

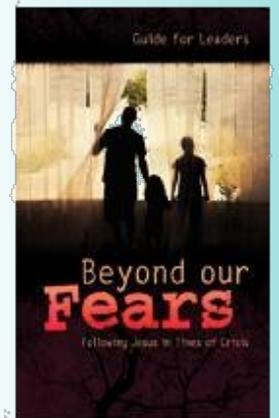
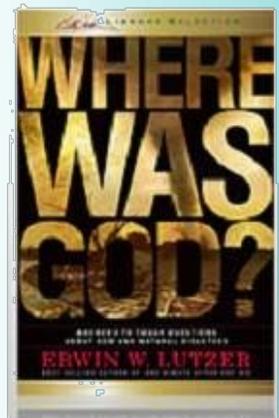
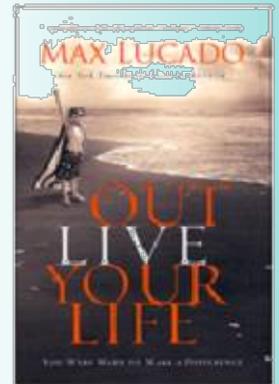
“It was help, real help in a difficult situation,” said Vlad Ostrovski, one of the residents who lost almost everything he owned in the fire.

Thank you to Alyssa & Jayne Burnham and Southview Alliance Church for allowing us to share their God honoring experience with others.

“On March 18, an aggressive fire forced the evacuation of over 500 residents of a condo complex in the community of Millrise. Working in concert with the Calgary Emergency Management Agency, Southview Alliance Church graciously opened their doors to the evacuees as a reception centre. During the next few days, over 180 evacuees received essential assistance from the caring staff and volunteers of the church, community members, and staff of the City of Calgary. As if that was not enough, the church organized a donations campaign, and also provided meeting space for those evacuees left homeless to complete the initial steps towards recovery. On behalf of the City of Calgary, I would like to extend my great appreciation and thanks to all those involved with Southview Alliance Church for their compassion and care for fellow Calgarians in their time of need.”

Deputy Chief Tom Sampson
Calgary Emergency Management Agency

BRIDGE BUILDING



To order and to locate the appropriate link, please see [Bridges of Love website](http://www.bridgesoflove.net).



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – October, 2010

“AND THIS IS LOVE...” 2 John 1:6

**“And this is love:
that we walk in obedience to his
commands. As you have heard
from the beginning, his command
is that you walk in love”
2 John 1:6**

Truth and love are frequently discussed in our world but as Christians are we practically living out these values and principles which represent Christ's character?

We have been disappointed by others whose words may not match their walk. Integrity and credibility unfortunately have been lost in our fast paced society. Truth and love are vital to the Christian and are inseparable in the Christian life for God is truth and love in person.

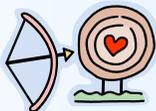
Obedience is the key to God's heart so to live our lives reflecting His love brings a smile to His face. We each must ask ourselves the question...

Do we represent Christ well?

Jesus contextualized His message in such a way that the recipient of His blessings was in tune with the messenger, and ultimately, the message itself. Unity with love for one another, according to Jesus, is the one thing that proves discipleship to the world. Unity is the one thing that authenticates Christ's divinity and over-comes the world's unbelief.

As we reflect God's love balanced by a personal commitment to share the good news of Christ's sacrificial life, death and resurrection, we will indeed walk in truth, love and obedience and be an authentic witness to the watching world.

**“We must become
the change we want
to see in the
world.”
Mahatma Gandhi**



Bridges of Love to our Communities

Pastor Scott Peterson
Prince of Faith Lutheran Church

What does it mean to be a community in support of a community? Our congregation has been asking itself this question for the last few years as we have struggled in our identity within the context of NE Calgary. We asked ourselves, “What would be the difference in the local community if we no longer existed in this place?”

As we began to see the reality and truth of our answers often being “there would be no difference”, we decided to make an intentional effort to become an integral part of the local context. One of the opportunities that came before us was to become part of the Bridges of Love Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative. As a congregation, we had already started to put together a plan on emergency preparedness and so it was an easy transition to become part of a wider concern in the city of Calgary.

In response to the leadership of the congregation, members began to become more aware and open to what we offer to the community (and those things that are beyond our capability) and invest themselves in the wider happenings in the community. Our outreach efforts changed from trying to ‘bring people in’ to serving those around us in the love of Christ.

We began to change from a community that gathered together in the locale of NE Calgary to a community gathered with and for all those that are in NE Calgary. We are part of the local community and believe that if we were no longer here, we would be missed.

Blessings in Christ...

A PRAYER FOR OUR CIVIC LEADERS

- Pray that our leaders will:
- * Love the truth
 - * Have Godly wisdom
 - * Display courage, humility and integrity with servant hearts
 - * Have sharp insight with a discerning spirit
 - * Surround themselves with staff members and advisers who display Godly character
 - * Be accountable to the Lord and those to whom they serve
 - * Enjoy God's protection over themselves and their families

Come! Let Us Pray..

Heavenly Father, we come to You in the name of Jesus, asking for divine protection for the people of this city. I pray for the safety of every man, woman and child. Keep us from harms way and provide protection for those who find themselves on our streets at night.

Give wisdom, understanding and discernment to our Mayor and City Council, give guidance to those who provide protection and emergency services.

Provide insight to our local authorities on ways to guard, defend and insure the safety of all. Help us to unite with our city leaders and law enforcement personnel in making this city a safe place to live, work, play, and enjoy freedom without fear.



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION –September, 2010

“PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU...” John 14:27

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” John 14:27 (NIV)

There are times in our lives when our peace is disrupted often due to our own lack of trust and understanding. True inner peace is impossible unless it is received from our Saviour. This peace comes from looking into God’s face and fully understanding and receiving His quiet contentment.

Reflecting God’s peace offers proof that we are right with God, because we are exhibiting the freedom to turn our troubles and circumstances over to the only one who can handle the outcome. Allowing anything to interfere with God’s plan will only cause continued struggles or may even give a false sense of security.

Oswald Chambers says when we allow anything to hide the face of Jesus Christ from us it causes confusion because we have not taken Him into account. When a person confers with Jesus Christ, the confusion stops, because there is no confusion in Him. Therefore, lay everything out before Him, when faced with any difficulty.

“Let not your heart be troubled...”

TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

Helen H. Lemmel, 1922

*O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There’s a light for a look at the Saviour,
And life more abundant and free!*

*Though death into life everlasting,
He passed, and we follow Him there;
Over us sin no more hath dominion—
For more than conquerors we are!*

*His Word shall not fail you—He promised,
Believe Him and all will be well,
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*

**Faith is absolute trust in God—
Trust that knows He would ever leave us.**

OUR LIFE MISSION



Aliyah Allison – 3 weeks, 5 lbs. 2oz.

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” Ephesians 2:10

As we celebrate our new little grand-daughter, Aliyah’s birth we know God has a plan already mapped out for her life. We pray she lives out those dreams and purposes.

Most people never discover the ‘one thing’ that is uniquely ours that brings a state of joy and feeling of great satisfaction. We desperately want to find it but we don’t always know where to look. Once found, however, it enables one to make a difference.

Bob Buford, Author of Half Time, states we need to take the time and solitude before God to find our “one thing” that will bring the significance we seek; which usually comes with a change in attitude. Significance need not be a 180-degree course change, however. Instead, he says we just need to do some retrofitting so that we can apply our gifts in ways that allow us to spend more time on things related to what is our ‘one thing’. God has a wonderful plan to allow us to serve Him by doing what we like to do and what we are usually good at.

I am so very thankful to have found my ‘one thing’ as we build Bridges of Love. It may not offer success as the world sees it but I know God called me to a task which operates out of strengths He has already given me and fulfills the purposes He planned for my life. I know He moved me beyond belief into ACTION.

Finding significance brings satisfaction and a peace knowing we have the courage to live the dreams that God has placed within us.

HANDBOOK TO PRACTICAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

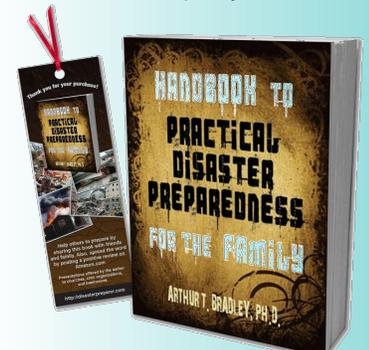
By ARTHUR BRADLEY, PHD

The forward written by Curtis A. Bradley, offers a good summary.

The world of late has been in upheaval: earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, terrorist strikes, pandemics...the deadly list grows with each passing day. It is as if we are being given a warning to ready ourselves for things to come. Whether that warning is from God or simply a result of our own empirical observations is up to every individual to decide. What is undeniable is that the world is demonstrating its ferocity.

Recently there has been an awakening in our country. People are realizing that there truly is strength in numbers. Churches, fraternal organizations, veterans groups, friends and neighbours are discussing more and more how best to prepare for uncertain challenges.

Having learned much from my many roles in life, including marine, police officer, father, and priest, I can attest to the three things necessary for survival: knowledge, preparation, and determination. This book represents the first of those three steps. The Arthur has done his part to lay out commonsense approaches to meet your family’s needs during nearly any crisis. The rest is up to you.



Order: <http://disasterpreparer.com>



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – August, 2010

“KEEP ON LOVING EACH OTHER AS BROTHERS.” Hebrews 13:1

“Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13:1-2

Before moving back to Calgary, 81/2 years ago, we owned and operated a Bed and Breakfast Retreat ‘Downe in the Valley’ in the beautiful Okanagan Valley.

As we look back on those years, we have wonderful memories and even though life was not easy, we enjoyed and appreciated the many guests we served in our home. We made a practice of eating breakfast with our guests and found it truly amazing how quickly warm relationships were made, sharing a meal together.

We’ll never forget the phone call we received one Christmas from a guest who had stayed just one evening with us. They were calling from Holland to wish us a Merry Christmas.

Having enough property to house horses or dogs we often had guests who came for competitions with their animals. Two young ladies with boarder collies arrived year after year so they were like family. Coming through the door we would hear “Mom...we’re home!!”

Another guest, a business man from Edmonton, who regularly travelled through the Okanagan to visit his customers, would drop his suitcase and slippers at the door and call, “Buddy” (our Jack Russell Terrier) it is time for a walk...and away they would go.

We had a difficult time saying good-bye to our beloved “Downe in the Valley” Bed and Breakfast Retreat. We will probably never know the impact we made on our special guests as we served with love, but we know the blessings we received from the many angels we entertained from all over the world.

***People will forget what you said.
People will forget what you did.
But people will never forget,
how you made them feel.***

AN INVASION OF LOVE

Greg Sumner, Assoc. Pastor
Grace Bible Church, Vernon BC

An article of a special event recently appeared in the Vernon Morning Star. The title “**Church Gets a Welcome Invasion**” is a true story worthy to be shared.

Every once in a while a person experiences something extraordinary in their life. A few weeks ago was one of those experiences.

I was just about to complete the final point in my sermon when a group of approximately 200 people entered our church, Grace Bible. The pastors from Community Baptist and St. Johns Lutheran Church joined me on the platform and announced they had come to bless us with a lunch they had prepared which would be served in our rear parking lot.

For once in my life I didn’t know what to say! Should I finish my sermon or just dismiss in prayer? I decided to finish and at a certain point in the message Pastor Rick Corak came to the front and asked if he could close the service.

God in his creative ways had brought these 200 folks to be a visual example of what I was trying to say. Pastor Rick said their presence at our service was the application for my message.

How fitting as I could not have made the point any clearer. I had been preaching on **UNITY** in the Christian family and their visit was a visual application of what that really meant.

“What a beautiful ending to a wonderful Father’s Day Sunday. The place was packed with more than 450 people. We made new friends that day, as we sat around tables eating and talking about what just took place.”

The Christian family of faith is sub-divided into different denominations and congregations who often do not experience the level of unity that God intended for us to have.

This “Invasion of Love” by these two churches was a wonderful encouragement to stay the course serving our community for the cause of Christ. Our congregation was totally blessed so we plan to ‘**pay it forward**’ as every church can use a hug from the Lord.

SHIRLEY AND MARCY

A mom was concerned about her kindergarten son, Timmy walking to school. He didn’t want her to walk with him. She wanted to give him a feeling of independence but she also wanted to know he was going to be safe.

When she expressed the concern to her neighbor, Shirley offered to follow Timmy to school in the mornings for a little while, staying at a distance so he wouldn’t notice. Since she was up early with her toddler anyway, it would be a good way to get some exercise.

All week long, Shirley and her daughter followed Timmy as he walked to school with a neighborhood friend.

As the two children walked and chatted, kicking stones and twigs, Timmy’s friend said, “Have you noticed that lady following us to school everyday? Do you know who she is?”

Timmy replied, “Yes, I know her. That’s my mom’s friend Shirley Goodnest with her daughter, Marcy.”

“Shirley Goodnest? Why is she following us?”

“Well, Timmy explained, every night my mom makes me say my prayers and repeat Psalm 23 cuz she worries about me so much.

In the Psalm, it says, Shirley Goodnest and Marcy shall follow me all the days of my life.

I guess I’ll just have to get used to it!!” ☺

Author Unknown



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – July, 2010

“...THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH” – Nehemiah 8:10

***“Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the JOY of the Lord is your Strength.”
Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV)***

We learned in the book of Nehemiah that Ezra was the official religious leader - not Nehemiah. Nehemiah was a layman and was motivated to do what he did because of his love and relationship with the Lord. He devoted his life to doing God's work in a secular world and he accomplished His purposes by being a man of prayer and persistence.

Life did not come, however, without discouragement. Nehemiah had many problems, spiritual and emotional struggles, and faced great difficulties as a leader.

Nehemiah's success in Jerusalem was due to Ezra's diligent and faithful ministry among the people of Israel before Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem and challenged them to trust God to help them rebuild the walls. Ezra was deeply committed to teaching others the will of God so this set the stage with his years of preparation. Without his teachings, the people would not have been ready to accept the challenge which from a human perspective was an impossible task.

Ezra not only taught God's statutes and ordinances but he put them into practice. He made sure he applied their truth to his own life before he tried to get others to respond in obedience. In other words, he did not try to have people to do something he himself was not willing to do. Ezra was personally committed to both **knowing** and **doing** the will of God.

Once Nehemiah led the people in Israel to successfully complete the wall, it motivated them to know more of God's law. The people were broken hearted as they realized how far they were from obeying God's will and were filled with sorrow as they wept before the Lord.

Israel's sincere repentance eventually turned to JOY as Nehemiah and Ezra and the Levites encouraged them to mourn no longer, but rather to celebrate and give gifts to those in need. Ezra connected celebration with giving.

When we celebrate and give to others we are strengthened spiritually and filled with joy.

***“Joy is the echo of God's life within us”
-- Joseph Marmion***

FINDING JOY DESPITE OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

There are people in life who are endowed with a universal appeal which attract others to them. They are ordinary people who have not attained great position or fame but they possess an attribute, which is contagious.

Jesus exhibited this special quality as he walked the earth which drew others to seek this secret condition of the soul? Jesus possessed an inner **joy** which radiated love to all He met. His joy did not depend upon emotional experiences but was constant despite His circumstances.

One might question what joy could possibility be found in the aftermath of a major disaster such as a hurricane. After hurricane Katrina, however, we heard story after story recounting the heroic roles of hundreds of ministries/agencies who played a pivotal role bringing hope and joy when this emergency overwhelmed the existing disaster response architecture.

Few realize in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, hundreds of pop-up shelters—often simple churches with nothing but a few cots and a strong sense of compassion—opened their doors to evacuees. Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) stepped in to fill the gaps bringing joy and a sense of God's presence as they generously and sacrificially provided for 'unmet needs.'

We know preparedness is the 'key' to a successful response in order to have a significant beneficial impact during and after any emergency. Historically, FBO's and NGO's have not been included in government pre-disaster plans and training.

Bridges of Love through **“The Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative” (FEPI)** is continuing its quest to provide opportunities for the local church to be coordinated with the Emergency Management Agencies; ready to offer expertise, skill, resources and compassion to suffering people.

We will be circulating a survey over the summer to research the limitations and challenges to FBOs and NGOs in performing these services. Also, what best practices could be developed related to those services? We would appreciate if a representative from your church could kindly fill in this survey when it is distributed to your church/ministry. Thank you so very much.

THE JOY OF LOVING

Quote- Jesus Man of Joy,
Sherwood E. Wirt

*“God did not invent murder,
He invented kindness.
He did not invent cruelty,
He invented gentleness.
He gave us faces,
not to scowl and bite,
but to greet each other with
smiles of friendship and
embraces of love.
He gave us voices,
not to curse and scream at
one another, but to speak
truthfully and
compassionately as our
Saviour did.
He gave us hands, not to
punch and strangle each
other, but to greet and
caress and help each other.
He gave us feet,
not to kick each other,
but to walk in love and
companionship.
In other words, God
designed us specifically to
love Him and one another,
and to function on that love.”*



WE IS FRIENDS!
Me and You is friends
You smile, I smile...
You hurt, I hurt...
You cry, I cry...
You jump off a Bridge
I gonna miss your E-Mails.



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – JUNE, 2010

THE PRIORITY OF RELATIONSHIPS – Matthew 6:25

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”
Matthew 6:25 (NIV)

Two years ago a storm seized our city with torrential rains causing major havoc. Cars floated freely down streets like logs on a river and water crept into homes causing damage and loss of property to many.

We had lived in this neighbourhood for three years having little involvement with our neighbours but on this fateful day when disaster hit our community, we were truly connected by our common circumstances.

Building relationships come easily when there is an emergency but how do we over-come the relationship gap which often exists in our day to day activities? In these times with busy lives and independent life styles it may seem like an impossible task to bridge such a distance.

Tom Holladay states in his book, *The Relationship Principles of Jesus*, **“Place the highest value on relationships! Not on money, but on relationships—first with God and then with others. Not on time, but on relationships—first with God and then with others. Not on things, but on relationships—first with God and then with others. Not on your work, but on relationships—first with God and then with others.”**

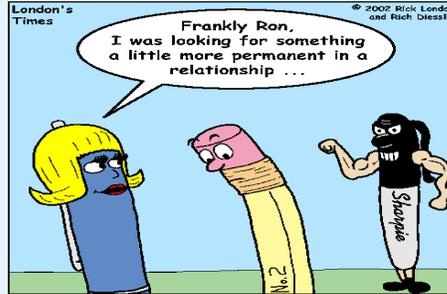
Jesus taught...**NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN RELATIONSHIPS** so they must be given the highest of values. God created us for relationships because nothing will last longer or be more fulfilling. A life without relationships may well be a simpler life but without meaningful relationships it will be missing the greatest joy possible. How often do we put the task ahead of the relationship?

The problem we have with valuing relationships is not in the knowing but in the doing and the sustaining.

The more intimate our communion with Jesus through the Holy Spirit, the more accurate our translation of that life will be into the relationships of daily life.

Andrew Murray

LASTING RELATIONSHIPS



We'll never change our relational priorities until we are ready to make different choices in building lasting relationships. Jesus taught to simply love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength...Love your neighbour as yourself. When Jesus taught that love for God and love for our neighbour are to come first, he showed which values are to have first priority.

My husband and I recently returned from a little R & R in Hawaii thanks to our great children who treated Mom and Dad to a holiday for our special Anniversary. Returning was difficult, as I am sure anyone who has travelled to this island paradise (a little taste of heaven...) can attest. We will always have wonderful memories of the beautiful landscape; with ocean breezes, silky sands, and the people we met along the way.

To recount one special story on our flight to Maui; we were sitting beside a University Student returning to work at a resort for the summer. Excited as we neared our destination, I asked Jeremy if they still treated visitors to a Lai upon arrival. He said, “No, as this tradition had been lost over the years.” As we were waiting for our baggage, Jeremy appeared with two beautiful Lai's he had purchased, giving a warm welcome and great start to our vacation!



The lovely landscape was breathtaking but the kindnesses shown by our children & Jeremy touched our hearts which will be ever-lasting.

GREAT SERVICE COMES FROM THE HEART

Barb Glanz shares a true story **“The Simple Truths of Service”**. A 19 year old Down Syndrome young man bagged groceries at the local supermarket. Johnny chose to make his customers feel special making a difference in his community.

Please view this video to see how Johnny's **“Thought for the Day”** left an imprint creating special memories for his customers.

“It is not how much you do but how much love you put in to what you are doing.”
Mother Teresa

Short Course in Human Relations

By an unknown author

The six most important words:	"I admit I made a mistake."
The five most important words:	"You did a good job."
The four most important words:	"What is your opinion?"
The three most important words:	"If you please."
The two most important words:	"Thank you."
The one most important word:	"We"
The least important word:	"I"





BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – MAY, 2010

THE REALITY OF GOD'S HEART

"We love, because He first loved us"
1 John 4:19

God's love is the source of all human love. As God kindles a flame in our heart, it flows out to others who are warmed by His love.

Learning to love others before receiving God's love is negating an essential first step. We often instruct people to be generous, kind, forgiving, and to love without telling them how much they are loved. So, the secret to loving is to allow God to pour out His love drawing nourishment from our Heavenly Father. His love will fill us to over-flowing with a love worth giving.

A lovely description of Jesus' Heart...

He was young, He radiated good cheer...The real Jesus, a man of such merriment, such gladness of spirit, such freedom and openness, that He was irresistible...a keen sense of humour...filled with eagerness and anticipation. A dazzling display of love...elated, triumphant young man...His happy, radiant, loving personality, so different from the solemn religious types He constantly encountered.

Jesus, Man of Joy, Sherwood Wirt

God calls us to a higher, nobler concern. Not "What are my rights?" but "What is loving?"

Loving others as God loves us shows when we follow His example in the way we treat the people right in front of us—our family members, fellow believers and those who come across our path each day.

Jesus was a man of excitement, a man of giving, a man of passion founded in desperate love and celebrated in everything He said and did.

SURRENDERING ALL

A story is told of a little girl who adored her dad. His business often took him away for days at a time so he enjoyed bringing something special back for his little Anna. After returning home, being away for an extended period, the father asked his daughter if she loved him. Her reply was, "Of course, Daddy, I love you more than anything." He paused for a moment. "Do you love me enough to give up your most precious pearls?" "Oh, Daddy," she replied. "I couldn't do that. I love my pearls!" "I understand," he told her as he tucked her into bed.

After a restless night, Anna came to her father and said, "Daddy, I love you more than my pearls." Here, you take them." "I'm so glad to hear that," he said, standing and opening a box he had hidden in his attaché case. "I brought you a gift." She opened the small flat box and gasped. Pearls. **Genuine** pearls."

Often we hold on to imitations unable to surrender them when the genuine highest GIFT of knowing God is waiting for us?

Carpe Vita...Seize the Life
Gifts of the heart for Haiti relief.



A Gift of the Heart

"Your loving kindness is better than life"
Ps. 63:3

A STATE OF THE HEART

EVERYDAY WHICH PASSES
BRINGS US CLOSER TO THE
DAWNING OF THE KINGDOM
OF HEAVEN.

AS WE LEARN TO WALK IN
UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, WE
WILL EXPERIENCE THE
REALITY OF GOD'S HEART FOR
HIS CREATION, A GLOBAL
HEART. WE BECOME THE
EXTENSION OF GOD'S LOVE TO
THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.

Steven Lavaggi

TREASURES

*One by one God took them from
me,*

*All the things I valued most,
Till I was empty-handed;
Every glittering toy was lost.*

*And I walked earth's highway,
grieving,*

*In my rags and poverty,
Till I heard His voice inviting,
"lift your empty hands to Me!"*

*so I turned my hands toward
heaven,*

*And He filled them with a store
Of His own transcendent riches
Till they could contain no more.*

*And at last I comprehended
With my stupid mind and dull,
That God could not pour His
riches*

Into hands already full!

Martha Snell Nicholson
(taken from *Living Beyond the
Level of Mediocrity*,
Chuck Swindoll)



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – April, 2010

“BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE...” Galatians 5:22

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

The only way to experience freedom from our own desires is through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. As we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit it leads to a transformed life. No longer are we in control of our own desires but we are ready to obey God’s Word and discern between our own feelings and His promptings.

As we are controlled by the Holy Spirit, the words of Christ will be foremost in our minds with the love of Christ behind our actions. We will have God’s power to overcome our own choices which might be selfish in nature.

The fruit of the Spirit is then the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit in us. The Spirit produces the character traits found in Galatians 5. As we open our hearts He is ready to produce in us these character traits that are found in the nature of Christ. These are the by-products of Christ’s control—we can not obtain them without His help. If we want the fruit of the Spirit to grow in us, we must join our lives to His by knowing Him, loving Him, spending time with Him and imitating Him. It is a conscious choice we make.

As a result, we will fulfill the intended purpose of the law (Great Commandment) to love God and our neighbour. A person who exhibits the fruit of the Spirit fulfills the law far better than a person who observes the rituals but has little love in his or her heart.

No Christian should ever think that they are totally independent and do not need help from others or feel they have no obligation to help those who need our help. The body of Christ functions only when the members work together for the common good of others.

This Easter we give thanks for God’s gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Let us each be open to the work of the Holy Spirit leaving our own agendas at the foot of the cross.

“I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself.”

Jeremiah 31:3

Thank you Jesus

If you never felt pain,
How would you know I am a healer?

If you never had to pray,
How would you know I am a deliverer?

If you never had a trial,
How could you call yourself an over comer?

If you never felt sadness,
How would you know I am a comforter?

If you never made a mistake,
How would you know I am a forgiver?

If you knew all,
How would you know I can answer all your questions?

If you never were in trouble,
How would you know I would come to your rescue?

If you never were broken,
How would you know I can make you whole?

If you never had a problem,
How would you know I can solve them?

If you never had any suffering,
How would you know what I went through?

If you never went through the fire,
How would you become pure?

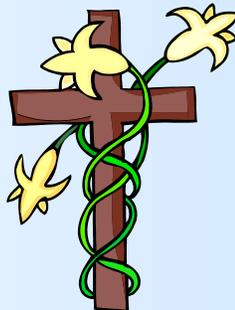
If I gave you all things,
How would you appreciate them?

If I never corrected you,
How would you know I love you?

If you had all power,
How would you learn to depend on me?

If your life was perfect,
Why would you need me?

Love Jesus



HAITI CHALLENGE

**CARPE VITA
A Gift of the Heart**

DATE: May 8, 2010

**7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Dessert/ Silent Auction/Auction
MC & Auctioneer –
“BEARCAT” MURRAY
Entertainment – Corpus Christi
Male Choral**



**Emergency Preparedness Week
Activities and View Auction & Bid
on Silent Auction Items.**

TIME: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

LOCATION

**BGEAC/Samaritan's Purse
20 Hopewell Way, NE
(Off McKnight & Barlow Trail,
- behind the Sandman Hotel)**

TICKETS/DONATIONS:

**Call or email Bridges of Love -
403.263.5683**

**Download Donation Form at
www.bridgesoflove.net**

Fax: 403.514.0907

COST: \$10.00 - \$15 door

Items for the auction can be dropped to BG/SP warehouse May 3 - 6. (Rear Entrance). The Donation Form must be filled out and faxed to Bridges of Love prior to drop off in order to have your item itemized for the auction.
Thank you for your Gift



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – March, 2010

WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US - 1 John 4:19

“That’s what love does. It puts the beloved before itself. Your soul was more important than His blood. Your eternal life was more important than His early life. Your place in heaven was more important to Him than His place in heaven. So He gave up His so you could have yours.”

John Maxwell, A Love Worth Giving

“God showed how much he loved us by sending his only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear Friends, since God loved us that much we surely ought to love each other.” (1 John 4:9,11 NLT).

Once we receive God’s love we are ready to share that passionate, generous love with others which brings great joy to the giver. A classic example of joyous and passionate love was evident in the book of Exodus.

The people of God are now out of Egypt and on their way across the wilderness to Canaan. God instructs Moses to raise a contribution in order to build a first class portable building, a fund raising drive for a tabernacle....

God gives instructions to the Israelites for what they are to make and how they are to make it. It was an ingenious plan and beautifully designed. Moses gathers all the people and asks **“whoever is of a willing heart”** give generously and joyfully to build a great place of worship!

These people had just left their homes in Egypt and were now living in tents in the wilderness. What did they have to give? Well, they had some valuables they had taken with them and not one of them held tightly to those possessions.

God stirred their hearts so they came by the thousands, bringing their finest offerings before their Lord. Not only did they give of their material possessions but they gave of their talents and gifts to perform the work in the construction of the sanctuary.

In fact, the people brought much more than were needed for the construction work. Moses issued a command, “No more offerings. Please don’t give any more!” The people were restrained for the material they had was sufficient for all the work.

CARPE VITA – Seize the Life

With the recent devastation in Haiti many organizations across Canada have been lead to assist. Bridges of Love Ministry is planning a Benefit Auction to also help with the relief efforts. “Carpe Vita” is a unique approach to raising funds and like Moses we are asking individuals/organizations to give with a willing heart – **“A Gift of Love”**. We have so much to be thankful in this country so we are asking for a treasure that is precious to the beholder. This is not a garage sale...but a time to give of our finest!

“Carpe Vita” - Seize the Life Auction is scheduled for Saturday May 8, 2010 at Billy Graham/Samaritan’s Purse lovely facility. Emergency Preparedness Week is on at this time so we have invited the Public/Private Sector to offer instruction (2:00 PM – 4:00 PM) on how we each can be prepared for any emergency. Samaritan’s Purse will also be on hand to share what they are doing in Haiti.

Why is Bridges of Love engaging in such an activity? Our focus is three fold.

1. To raise funds for the work being done in Haiti with 100% channeled through the relief efforts of Samaritan’s Purse.
2. Raise awareness of the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative and how we each can be prepared in the event of an emergency.
3. Gain a greater understanding of the loss Haiti has suffered by giving something near and dear to our hearts sharing God’s love with those devastated by the earthquake.

Could you imagine the joy which will accompany such an offering? When there is a spirit of giving with a truly willing heart, our ability to give, outstrips the need.



What a privilege...what an opportunity!

REMEMBERING HAITI

CARPE VITA
A Gift of the Heart

DATE: May 8, 2010

TIME: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Emergency Preparedness
Activities and View Auction & Bid
on Silent Auction Items.



7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Dessert/Entertainment
Speaker: TBA
Auction of our Finest...

LOCATION: Billy
Graham/Samaritan’s Purse
20 Hopewell Way, NE
(Off McKnight & Barlow Trail,
- behind the Sandman Hotel)

TICKETS/DONATIONS:
Call or email Bridges of Love
Ministry - 403.263.5683
Download Donation Form at
www.bridgesoflove.net
Fax: 403.514.0907

COST: \$10.00 per person

Items for the auction can be dropped to BG/SP warehouse after April 24. (Rear of the building) The Donation Form must be filled out and faxed to Bridges of Love prior to drop off in order to have your item itemized for the auction.

Thank you for your
“Gift of the Heart”



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – February, 2010

Conforming to Christ Results in Unconformity

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6:19-21

Since the devastating earthquake in Haiti we have seen a great out-pouring of financial assistance to aid the thousands of people who have been left with little hope. For those who live in a country who have much and little need to worry about such an occurrence happening in our land, it affords an appreciation for what we have and is a reminder we can live with much less.

We know many hearts have been touched and moved to assist in countless ways. God loves to watch His children as they live out His love. Not only is He watching but He is recording absolutely every act of righteousness, every act of kindness and sacrifice, which will result in eternal rewards.

Serving our Lord brings unimaginable benefits. Taking risks, stepping outside our comfort zone and letting God take care of the outcome builds faith, as we learn to trust God one step at a time.

Our grown son recently returned from an adventure in South Africa. We relived a few highlights of his trip via photos and video. One video displayed Mark, in a metal cage submerged in the ocean, while sharks swam all around in an attempt to nab the tuna bait. (And perhaps to enjoy a little nibble on those inside the cage). I am not sure if this is the type of risk God expects of us but with risks come exciting opportunities to experience all He has to offer. It is the failure to overcome irrational fears and misconceptions that keep us from becoming who God wants us to be.

Faith is not the elimination of risk. Perhaps risk taking is at the heart of righteousness using our God-given gifts for His Glory.

“To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways; we do not know what a day may bring forth. This is generally said with a sigh of sadness; it should rather be an expression of breathless expectation.”

Oswald Chambers

Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.



This column is dedicated to Hannah, our very special 7 year old grand-daughter, who is a reflection of God's Sweet Love. Hannah invited Nana and Poppa to be part of an exercise with her grade 2 class.

For those educators, who are probably familiar with the story of 'Flat Stanley' by Jim Brown, you will remember the situation Stanley found himself when he was flattened by a bulletin board. He was able to continue with life as usual but due to his thin stature, he was able to do amazing feats and accomplish deeds which were normally impossible. Everyone envied the exciting life he now lived.

Our assignment, to have Flat Hannah accompany us for the next few weeks documenting our journey, was more fun than we could have anticipated. Hannah's follow-up, to collate the adventure, was her exercise as an oral presentation

As soon as Flat Hannah arrived in Calgary (from Kelowna) she was off to Texas with her Poppa on a training course. The pilot kindly posed with Flat Hannah in the cockpit!

The next week, Hannah accompanied her Nana to Red Deer to attend a meeting with the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative Advisory Council. That same week she was fortunate to have a photo taken with three Bishops while attending a prayer time at the FCJ Centre.

Why was this exercise so much fun for all who participated? Even though Hannah was just a piece of paper it allowed us to go back in time and relive with child like imagination. Perhaps deep down inside there is a longing to do something that may appear a little foolish.

I learned a valuable lesson as we journeyed with Flat Hannah. Spiritual maturity is becoming more like Christ and more like a little child with fewer ungodly inhibitions. Does conforming to Christ result in nonconformity? It is never foolish doing something crazy for God.

DETERMINATION

Deciding to Hang Tough

Press on.

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not;

Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.

Genius will not;

unrewarded genius

is almost a proverb,

Education will not;

The world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are important.

Author Unknown

Vision is the ability to see above and beyond the majority.

Vision is perception—reading the presence and power of God into one's circumstances.

Looking at life through the lens of God's eyes, seeing situations as He sees them. Too often we see things not as they are, but as we are.

Charles Swindoll -"Living Beyond the Level of Mediocrity"

“Faith believes in spite of the circumstances and acts in spite of the consequences.”

Adrian Rogers



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – January, 2010

THE FIRST LOVE, Revelation 2:4

Twenty years have passed since George Barna wrote *'The Frog in the Kettle'* making predications of the changes in approach and the new awareness to which God is calling His people in order to connect with society. The signs we need to perceive are not vague predictions about the future—many are present realities. The trouble is that they occur so gradually we often do not notice.

We are familiar with the story of the frog and the kettle of water. When the frog is placed in boiling water it will immediately jump out. Place a frog in a kettle of room-temperature water, however, and it will stay there, contentedly. As the temperature increases in his environment, he will be unaware of the gradual change, until it is too late to save himself.



Are we as Christians undergoing a rise in the "temperature" of our spiritual environment? Is there more concern for the material than for the spiritual, with God no longer at the center of our communities' agenda?

Barna emphasized the countless changes which will take place in the 90's. *"The local church will have to earn its place in people's hearts. Institutional loyalty, the presumption of their credibility and altruistic support will largely disappear. Only is the institution provides high quality benefits to the individual will it stand a chance of gaining attention and support. We need to provide creative responses to the changes we are facing.*

Please consider Barna's ten critical goals for the 90's that he felt essential to further God's Kingdom. Have we moved toward the fulfillment of these goals?

TEN ESSENTIAL AND ACHEIVABLE GOALS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

1. **Win people to Christ** – Be intentional in building authentic, loving relationships.
2. **Raise Bible Knowledge** – Strive to have the majority of all adults reading the Bible every day.
3. **Equip the Christian Body** – Refocus on the fundamentals of our faith.
4. **Establish Christian Community** – All people and organizations who love Jesus Christ and wish to serve Him, put aside their differences, find their areas of commonality, and develop an agenda for powerful cooperative ministry.
5. **Renew Christian Behavior** – What we believe dictates what we do.
6. **Enhance the Image of the Local Church** Refine the thinking of Christians so they see themselves as ministers of the gospel, and as 24-hour-a-day marketing agents for the Church.
7. **Champion Christian Morals** – Support leaders who articulate the Christian position and serve the cause of the Church in areas such as poverty, justice, discrimination, and abortion presenting opportunities to apply the gospel.
8. **Live by a Christian Philosophy of Life** – Teach & model the means to, and the benefits of, a Christian perspective.
9. **Restore People's Self-esteem** – Encourage people to seek their self-worth through Christ. Refocus attention upon the concept of love, making it a core element of our thoughts and driving motivation behind our behavior.
10. **Focus on Reaching the World for Christ** We must take the Great Commission seriously. In an era of change and turbulence, there is little hope that the Church of Jesus Christ will make a difference unless each of us initiates an unbreakable covenant with God that we will serve Him with all of our heart, mind and soul and only, for His Glory.

"The Frog in the Kettle" 1990
George Barna

CREATIVE RESPONSE TO A CHANGING WORLD

Even though these ten goals were written many years ago, I am sure you will agree they are still very relevant objectives we should continually strive to attain. Two decades later, however, why is our influence in the community diminishing? Perhaps our impact is limited as we act as a splintered Body, striving without vision and a set of priorities for **outreach**. To be truly effective, it is imperative we recapture God's vision for ministry and prepare a thoughtful plan that defines our priorities. We must then diligently pursue the completion of our plan, acting in ways which provide purpose for living, and hope for our communities.

Bridges of Love continues to mobilize Alberta's Christian Community to engage in an activity which might seem a bit radical to some. Emergency Preparedness is not an activity in which we have traditionally been involved. As you reflect on the ten goals just outlined, please consider how the **Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative** could be a vehicle, assisting your church to attain these achievable goals.

Could the Body of Christ come together with the common goal to serve and care for our communities, during any emergency? Only as we make **Christ our First Love** and create an agenda for action.