



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – December, 2011

“LOVE IS WHAT BINDS US TOGETHER....” Colossians 3:14

*“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”
Colossians 3:12, 14*

Paul gives us a strategy to help us live for God each day, as found in Colossians 3:12-14. All the virtues that Paul encourages us to develop are perfectly bound together by love. In order to practice any list of virtues without practicing love it will lead to distortion, fragmentation, and stagnation.

Christians should live in peace. To live in peace does not mean that suddenly all differences in opinion are eliminated, but it does require that Christians work together despite their differences. To live in love leads to peace between individuals and among members of Christ’s body.

Once a month, a group of dedicated volunteers, the “Bridge Builders” serve at the Mustard Seed. We came together to help at the shelter when it was located in the old Brick building and after it was torn down we have carried on in the Foothills facility.

That first evening came with trepidation for many; leery of what we might experience. Five years later, however, this group of faithful servant hearts is still meeting each month to serve others in love.

What has kept us together? Even though we are not attending the same church we continue to meet each month and experience the joy which comes from helping others. We try to bring a little treat to hand out after the meal is served. We mingle with the guests and on one occasion a man grabbed me by the arm. I was a little taken back until he said; “You know how much we appreciate you coming out of the kitchen and sharing a little treat with us.”

Rather than watching from a distance or keeping the needy safely at arm’s length, these special servants of God experience the joy which comes from getting involved, offering assistance that alleviates some of the pain of others.

Jesus said that His servants would be the salt of the earth and they would be the light of the world.

MY DREAM

Gifts by the Side of the Road

I saw a covered wagon travelling along the road and finally arriving at a most welcome watering hole. After filling their canteens with the refreshing liquid, the travelers realized that they had more canteens than they could ever use. Knowing others would be following in their path, they decided to leave the extra ones by the side of the road.

A little later another solitary wagon arrived at the watering hole and they were overjoyed to discover the discarded canteens. After replenishing their supply of water, they decided to leave some of their excess blankets for other pilgrims, who were yet to arrive.

Later, a wagon arrived whose habitants were truly in need of blankets, and they joyfully accepted the gifts from their unknown benefactors. Getting into the giving spirit, they left some harnesses which they no longer needed.

And so it went, each wagon would leave something for those who were to follow and every wagon grateful to those who had come before...

When I awoke, I realized how much like life my dream was. As one poet said, “We have all drunk from wells we did not dig; travelled on roads we did not pave, and received blessings we did not create.”

A grateful heart opens itself for more blessings, and an appreciative attitude inspires one to become creative and make contributions.

To truly live, we must give...
And treasure the gift we have been given.



HOW TO 'C' YOUR WAY INTO BETTER TEAMWORK

--John Maxwell

Teamwork makes the Dream work
“Together with Christ we can accomplish the Impossible”

It takes a team to achieve a dream.
But what does it take to create a team?

COMMITMENT that inspires results

CONTRIBUTIONS that make a difference

COMPETENCY that raises the standard

COMMUNICATION that increases effectiveness

COOPERATION that creates harmony

CHEMISTRY that enhances personal connection

CREATIVITY that enlarges the team’s potential

CONFLICT management that reduces tension rapidly

COHESIVENESS that allows change to be rapid

COMMUNITY that makes the journey fun

To achieve all that is possible, we must attempt the impossible. To be all we can be, we must dream of being more. To reach our dreams, we must reach out to others.

Matthew 5:16



It is possible to give without **LOVING**,
But it is impossible to love without **GIVING**

Richard Braunstein



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – November, 2011

“GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS, THAT HE LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.” John 15:13

*“This is my command: Love each other.”
—John 15:17*

We are to love each other as Jesus loves us. We may not have to die for someone as He did, but there are other ways to practice sacrificial love: serving, listening, encouraging, and giving. We can help others discover His presence in the midst of their suffering.

Mother Teresa was a shining example of God's love in action. People flocked to her, attracted by her kindness and simplicity; for everyone she had time, a word, a smile. She was able to provide solace, because it was Jesus she wanted to give to all. She never thought of herself but always thought of others.

Giving to others may come at a cost. Taking risks is often a component of serving as we reach out to help others in need. How can we be equipped to serve in love?

Being prepared to serve means not only being ready spiritually having the full Armor of God, (Ephesians 6) but it also means having some practical emergency training.

Recently, as a partner of the Calgary Emergency Management Agency, Bridges of Love was invited to participate in “CERT” (Community Emergency Response Training). This three day course offers the necessary training to be ready to offer the most effective assistance during a disaster.

Topics covered: Fire safety, Disaster medical operations, Light search and rescue, CERT organization, Disaster psychology and CERT and terrorism. We looked at the roles and responsibilities for community preparedness, discussed the various types of hazards that affect community, people, health, and infrastructure; how best to undertake personal and organizational preparedness actions and described functions of CERTs.

CEMA is presently evaluating the course and how best to implement in the City of Calgary. Once discussed internally partners will be invited to further discuss implementation in our own communities.

Please watch for further information on CERT as we all have a responsibility to participate in community preparedness.

A BEAUTY FOR ASHES SLAVE LAKE STORY

Pastor Sid Chalmers
Community Christian Centre
Slave Lake

A young couple in our church, Shayne and Nicole, had their plans made for their wedding in Slave Lake for June 11. The fire on May 15 destroyed the house they had just purchased, along with all the wedding decorations and shower gifts. The only thing Nicole saved was her wedding dress.

They didn't know what they would do, but soon people began to offer to help with their wedding. A wedding planner offered to plan the wedding, another lady said she would make the wedding cake. A venue was found at Beaumont, and the wedding was planned to go ahead.

While they were at the evacuation center, CTV did a report on their situation. As a result, through a relative, it was arranged that Paul Brandt would surprise them by singing at their wedding. Paul came and sang "I Do" at the end of the ceremony.

Following, Paul decided to do a benefit concert for Slave Lake. He came up to Slave Lake and interviewed people and made a couple of video clips which he showed at the concert. The sold out concert was held on Sept. 14 at the Winspear Center in Edmonton and raised over \$150,000 for Slave Lake, which Paul donated toward the contents of the library which had burned down.

Also, the Town of Slave Lake decided to give 25% of the concert benefit away to a ministry in Haiti to build a soccer field and other things needed by Pastor Leon in Haiti. There were many people from Slave Lake at the concert, which was greatly enjoyed, and was a witness for Christ.

All of this because of the story of one young couple who experienced great pain and loss, but their loss has been turned into a great story of joy. Shayne and Nicole are happily married, and will be building their new home in the spring.

Community Christian Centre's building burnt to the ground but they will be rebuilding their church. If you would like to help, donation cheques can be made to Community Christian Centre
612 6 St. SE Slave Lake, AB. T0G2A3

“BEAUTY FOR ASHES”

Fire Chief, Jamie Coutts shared his experiences from the devastating Slave Lake fire at Bridges of Love's, Fund Raising Event "Beauty for Ashes."

He did an awesome job!

We appreciate his dedication and commitment and those of his team. We know it was a group effort, however, so we also appreciate Calgary's involvement with Deputy Chief Tom Sampson leading Calgary's contingent. The collaborative effort of many in the face of adversity is a shining example of the power and strength which comes from working together. Ecclesiastes 4:12



Calgary Deputy Chief, Tom Sampson
Bridges of Love, Marg Pollon
Slave Lake Fire Chief, Jamie Coutts

[Jamie's comments from Beauty For Ashes shared in the Calgary Journal by Lauren Gilbert](#)

“With two fires burning at the same time and with only a couple dozen firefighters at the scenes, it had looked to Coutts like all hope was gone. But then firefighters began arriving from all over Alberta and British Columbia, determined to do what they could do to stop the fire from spreading anywhere else. The firefighters were fighting for their homes. Seven firefighters lost their homes and they knew that while still fighting. Coutts explained the importance of spreading the message about what happened and helping people be prepared in case a catastrophe happens to their community.”



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – October, 2011

“TO GIVE UNTO THEM BEAUTY FOR ASHES THE OIL OF JOY FOR MOURNING...” Isaiah 61:3

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”
—Isaiah 61:3

The ashes in this passage represent the destroying of former beauty and the tragic end to former loveliness. They are the beauty and loveliness who at one time were sweet and delightful in our lives, but through tragedy, the beauty and loveliness were made bitter and sorrowful. Ashes in Scripture are a symbol of mourning and repentance.¹

God replaces the bitterness and sorrow with oil of joy and a garment of praise. *Psalm 23:5 says “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”* God anointing the head with oil refers to joy of the heart. Oil represents the kind, sweet, comforting words that give encouragement and new hope to the heart of the wounded. It refers to the healing power and the strengthening power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Garment of praise describes the radiance, the happiness, and the sweetness that fill the heart and the life of the child of God who loves the things of God, and lives for the glory of God. This garment is entirely from heaven, and must not be tainted in any way by human works, merits, or activities. The Lord wants to replace our spirit of heaviness with praise.

“Trees of righteousness” and “Planting” is when the people of God are restored, and are again growing and fruitful.

Isaiah 61:3 is relevant for today as it is God's desire to replace the ashes of loss, bitterness, and sorrow with the beauty of joy, new hope, healing, and strength to the heart. God wants His Holy Spirit and His Word to comfort our heavy spirits. With God's help, we can be restored, move forward with our lives, and again become fruitful and productive.

God's Word reaffirms that we can indeed experience “Beauty for Ashes.”

Exert: Zion Baptist Church Devotional

WE ARE THE CHURCH

When the building burned

“LAWYERS ROAD Baptist Church is on fire!” The dispatcher got my attention. “Respond immediately, chaplain. We may have firefighters down!” I was immediately in the car on my way to the fire scene.

“Chaplain, it's serious,” the battalion chief greeted me. “I almost lost my whole crew.” He explained that his crew had been caught in a back-draft, and it almost incinerated the firefighters inside the church. The chief was still visibly shaken by this near miss.

“Look at that front window,” the chief continued. “It looks like a massive cannon ball shot right through it. That's the result of the backdraft. He led me back into the smoldering fire scene. My heart was wrenched as I surveyed the once-lovely worship center, now just a pile of smoking rubble. The pulpit was gone. The choir loft stood in charred silence—no music in this one. Pews where people worshipped the Lord were now just stinking coals.

“How are you doing, Chief?” I sought to assess his mental state.

“I'm stunned,” the chief replied. “As a Christian, this one has really hit me hard. It could have been my home church.” Then he added, “There's a little cluster of church members outside. Please go and see how they are.”

Praying as I went, I crossed the little lawn to speak with my shocked brothers and sisters. “Have you reached the pastor?” I asked them. They replied that he was on his way, returning from a conference in a distant city.

“But how are you all doing?” I asked the patient, strangely calm congregation members as they stared at the burned-out shell of their beloved church. Their worship would never be the same again.

“Oh, we're fine, Chaplain,” they amazed me. They pointed to the fire scene. “You see, that's not our church. We are the church...!”

“You yourselves are God's temple, and ... God's Spirit lives in you.” 1 Corinthians 3:16

Reverend Wayne Detzler, PhD, Chaplain (Retired) – Charlotte, NC, Fire Department; Fellowship of Christian Firefighters Regional Director

Stories of Faith & Courage from Fire Fighters & First Responders”, Gaius Reynolds & Sue Reynolds

“BEAUTY FOR ASHES”

Presenting – **Jamie Coutts**
Slave Lake Fire Chief

October 13, 2011

7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Host: St. John Lutheran Church
204 – 6A St. NE Calgary, AB
Sponsor: Bridges of Love Ministry
Fund Raising Event (Love Offering)
Followed by a Reception



BRIDGES OF LOVE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
October 13, 2011

Engaging the local church in
Emergency Preparedness

Jamie Coutts, Slave Lake Fire Chief will share his experiences and those of his community. As well, Jamie and Ken Hoffer, Calgary Coordinator for Disaster Social Services will lead a discussion for church leaders and answer your questions for the role of the local church in disaster preparedness, response & during the recovery stage.

Presentation & Round Table
Discussion with dessert

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Followed by a light dinner

Bridges of Love, AGM

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Please R.S.V.P. for afternoon
activities only. Thank you

margpollon@bridgesoflove.net

403.263.5683



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – September, 2011

“...Spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.” Romans 15:5

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5 (NIV)

There is a lesson we can learn from church history and that is Satan’s primary strategy is to destroy unity among Christians. As followers of Christ how can we defeat his tactic? Turning to the Bible, we soon discover our power comes from “one-mindedness” in the body of Christ.

In Christ’s prayer in John 17, His major request to His Father was—that His disciples would experience unity and oneness revealing the very essence of the Christian Gospel. This essence reveals the truth that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19). Oneness in Christ’s body in some marvelous way demonstrates to the watching world, that Christ is indeed God.

Paul gave the same message to the Ephesians when he wrote: “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). This unity is indeed possible.

A quote from Gene Getz’s book, **‘Building Up One Another’...**

“We conclude that a functioning church must be a unified church. In fact, unity is a reciprocal dynamic. Unity creates effective body function; effective body function creates more unity. Where there is unity, there will be a dynamic witness for Jesus Christ. Body visibility that reflects oneness also reflects the heart of the Christian Gospel—the Jesus Christ is truly the God-Man. He was in God, and God was in Him. He was (and is) one with the Father.”¹

Getz summarizes...

“Realize that the key to unity is Christian maturity, reflecting God’s love.”

Gene A. Getz; Building Up One Another, Victor Books, 1979

LOCAL RESPONSE IMPERATIVE

“Hot on the heels of Hurricane Irene, the Conference Board of Canada is urging community leaders to get working on plans to deal with extreme weather events.

Without a position on the climate change debate, the board says its imperative local communities not only identify the threats, but have pro-active response plans in place.

Director of National Security and Public Safety for the Board John Neily tells 660News, emergency response plans have to be built at the local, not provincial level.

Neily says Calgary has some of the best emergency response plans in the county, but they need to be constantly updated in order to stay on top of blows delivered by Mother Nature.

He also says it’s important that local leaders include the private sector as well, because of the expertise those business’s offer.”

This message from the Director of National Security and Public Safety of the Conference Board of Canada, stresses changing weather patterns which requires emergency preparedness at the local level.

We have an unprecedented opportunity through the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative to demonstrate a unified, coordinated approach; prepared to assist our communities through a disaster.

Unity in the Body of Christ is an important function for the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative. Not only united within our own congregations but also willing to work together with other churches in our community. What a message of God’s love as churches collaborate with the common goal and practical mission to care for their neighbours.

Heralding Unheard Voices

The Homeland Security Institute did an extensive study on the role of Faith Based (FBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) during disasters resulting in greater understanding in order to work more effectively with these organizations in future disasters. FBOs and NGOs stepped in to fill gaps when the geographic scales, durations and intensities, of Hurricane Katrina overwhelmed the existing disaster response resources. They undertook a surprisingly large, varied, and demanding set of activities with extraordinary effectiveness.

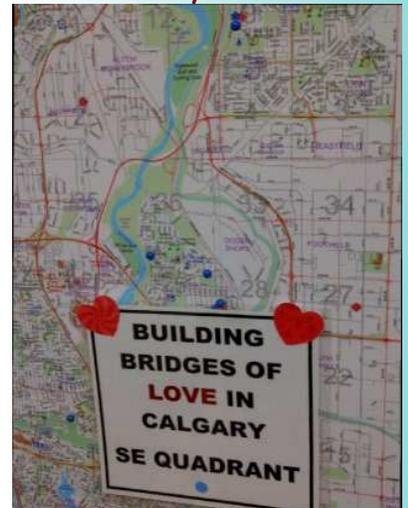
This was due to three reasons:

1. Their specific mission and strong motivation to be responsive to whatever people needed.
2. Their closeness to and familiarity with the communities they served.
3. Access, either directly or through networks, to unique resources and capabilities directly applicable to the types of services needed following a disaster.

Recommendations were made...

“Investigate inclusion of FBOs and NGOs, particularly local ones, in planning, coordination, integration, training and exercises.”

FAITH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVE
Thank you CEMA





BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – August, 2011

“...My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.” John 15:11

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” — JOHN 15:11 (NIV)

True joy transcends the everyday ups and downs of our circumstances. Joy comes from a consistent relationship with Jesus Christ.

We are filled with joy through the power of the Holy Spirit. Real joy comes from touching the lives of others in a positive and meaningful way. As we give, share and love others, joy follows as a fruit of God's Spirit.

Jesus Himself, as a true Man of Joy, had a wonderful outlook on life. His good-natured approach to life seemed to be rooted in His inner joy. The Bible tells us that the message of salvation in Christ is a message of love bathed in joy.

An inspiring film I have viewed many times over the years is “Patch Adams.” You may remember this true story based on Hunter Adam's life experiences as an idealistic medical student. Patch desired to serve beyond the normal practices of the medical profession and his methods were often unconventional; offering laughter, joy and creativity, as an integral part of the healing process. Dr. Adams urges medical students to develop compassionate connections with their patients.

Come! "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus!" Let us sit at His feet: let us hear His heart and feel His embrace; let us gaze into His smile, hear His laughter, touch the hem of His garment, and be liberated into His joy! Ultimate joy! The joy of Jesus!

Bruce Marchiano

Where love radiates its joy, there we have a feast.
— John Chrysostom

SLAVE LAKE UPDATE

Tracy Ottenbreit, Pastor of Slave Lake Alliance Church and Chair of the Slave Lake Ministerial kindly wrote a note giving an up-date.

Thank you, Marg, for your note. The cards and letters were such a hit! In the last few weeks, life has come back to normal on a physical level for those who haven't lost their house. However, on an emotional, spiritual, and psychological, there are still some who did not lose their homes that still live in trauma from the experience of fleeing their town and being in exile. Plus, many have had to work extra hard to make up for those who left and never came back.

For those who lost their homes, life is still not normal and won't be for some time. The sense of loss, of anxiety, of uncertainty is hitting some hard. For others, they are taking things in stride.

Your cards and letters were a huge encouragement to all groups. It reminded us that we are not alone, that people are thinking of us and that people are praying for us. Basements are now being dug out and construction will begin soon. Temporary housing is being moved in, as I speak, to tie people over until after the winter. There are many unanswered questions and everyone is doing their best to make some progress in a crazy situation.

Thank you so much for thinking of us. May God bless you.

Tracy

Charity Begins At Home

Banquet-Show-Auction Fundraising Relief for Slave Lake Wildfire Victims
Saturday August 13, 2011, 6:00pm -11:30pm
Chinese Cultural Centre, 197 - 1 Street SW

Event is put together by the Calgary Reaches Out coalition, including Wayne Cao & many caring individuals, with participation from Canada Red Cross and many cultural associations.

For tickets (\$60.00) or auction donation, email wayne.cao@assembly.ab.ca 403-813-4125.

Wayne Cao, MLA, Calgary Fort Deputy Speaker & Chairman of Committees

PATCH'S PRESCRIPTION 10 Everyday Actions

1. Pick up all the trash in an area in your hometown; be its guardian. Tell others about it.
2. Be friendly to everyone at all times; experiment outrageously.
3. Offer a shoulder or foot rub in any environment.
4. Always speak up for justice, no matter how much it costs.
5. Go once a week on a "house call" to a nursing home to cheer people up as a friend.
6. Turn off your TV and become interesting. Perform yourself
7. Consider being silly in public. Sing out loud. Wear funny stuff.
8. Find ways to need a whole lot less money; share beyond belief.
9. Have potlucks frequently, with neighbours, co-workers, and strangers. Work toward living in extended families.
10. Take your vacations in your own hometown and spend the money working on projects there that help build community.

"Patch says he owns nothing yet feels like the richest man in the world."





BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – July, 2011

“I HAVE LOVED YOU WITH AN EVERLASTING LOVE...” Jeremiah 31, 3-4

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt...” Jeremiah 31:3-4.

The Bible tells us that God has a plan and a purpose for each of our lives and that His plan is specific and personal. Psalm 37:23 says, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and He delights in his way.”

We are familiar with the story of Job, a man who feared God and continually turned away from evil. This man who so loved and was favored by God, later cried out, “...so I have been allotted months of futility, and nights of misery have been assigned to me.” Job 7:3-4. Job never strayed from God in unbelief, yet God allowed this precious man to endure a time of sorrow. Why?

Why does God allow tragedies to come to men and women of faith? It seems to contradict everything we know and believe about a loving and protecting Father.

As we look further into the story of Job, he himself shines a powerful light upon this mystery when he speaks to God at the end of his affliction, “My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.” Job 42:5

Something incredible happened to Job during that very difficult time. This dark period caused Job to spiritually ‘see’ or experience his Creator as he never had before. During that long season of loss, God’s faithful servant was transformed into God’s intimate friend. The Bible ends his story with these remarkable words, “...the Lord blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the first.” Job 42:12

Suffering comes from a Creator who yearns for us to see Him and to experience Him as Job finally saw and experienced Him. God leads us away from depending upon self and what we can see, feel and experience to depending totally and completely upon Him.

God is the One who enables us to withstand the storms of life that bring tragedy and disappointments. As we keep our eyes on Christ using our difficult circumstances to lift us higher, we will not be over-come, but will be empowered into the presence of our Lord and Saviour.

BEAUTY FOR ASHES

Our trip to Slave Lake, June 17 was a difficult experience, as we witnessed first hand the devastation from the fires, which consumed homes and businesses. Trying to pick up the pieces of one’s life after such a disaster is a daunting task – emotionally, physically and also spiritually. It is a time where one can easily fall into discouragement, fear, doubt and unbelief.

God allows circumstances into our lives, however, to glean amazing treasures from that hardship. Rather than being destroyed by suffering, we can be enriched by it, for His best purposes developing greater faith and courage.

During times of disaster, followers of Christ have an unprecedented opportunity to offer hope and encouragement. As letters and cards were shared from Calgary Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative Churches, we asked God to bring to those who had experienced a great loss; “**Beauty for Ashes**” to keep on trusting, to keep on obeying and to keep on enduring.

The Pentecostal (ACOP) Church in Slave Lake was completely consumed by fire but their sign stood untouched standing for God’s unfailing Love. We know God has not done “without cause” all that He has done.

GOD’S CHANGING POWER

**God is a changer.
He changes darkness into Light...
Bondage into Liberty...
Ashes into Beauty...
Conflict into Peace...
He has changed death to Life!**



SERVING OPPORTUNITY

Habitat for Humanity, Calgary

Bridges of Love continues to be very thankful for our office space at St. John Lutheran Church. We felt a fresh coat of paint and new flooring was in order, however, and the “**ReStores**” was recommended as a good place to shop for materials. It turned out to be a great referral and after speaking with the manager, he expressed a need for volunteers. We are happy to pass on this serving opportunity.

ReStores are building supply stores run by Habitat for Humanity affiliates that accept and resell quality new and used building materials. Shopping at a ReStore is a socially conscious decision, as funds generated are used to fund Habitat homebuilding projects. As well, shopping at a ReStore is also a socially conscious decision, as much of what is sold at ReStores is product that is new, gently used or customer returns that would otherwise end up in a landfill.

Anyone who would like to volunteer at the ReStore or assist at one of their construction sites needs to first register online.

Volunteering:
<http://volunteercalgary.volunteerhub.com/SignIn.aspx>

Calgary ReStore:
<http://www.habitatcalgary.ca/users/folder.asp?FolderID=58>

Please drop by Bridges of Love’s office at 204 – 6A St. NE
The welcome mat is always out!



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – June, 2011

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up...” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

The command for Christians to encourage one another is found throughout the Bible. In fact, encouragement can drastically change a person's life!

Encouragement goes straight to the heart. The word itself comes from a combination of the prefix “en” which means ‘to put into’ and the Latin word ‘cor’ which means heart. Knowing what a big difference encouragement makes in a life, what it can do to give a lift to another, should be reason enough to offer words of hope.

Studies show the primary factor in resilience is having strong caring relationships and maintaining a supportive network. Learning to replace worry and fear with hope and courage is the key.

The Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative is an endeavor offering hope to others who perhaps have lost the ability to see past their circumstances. Living through a disaster is an emotional roller-coaster so when we come alongside others during difficult times; it gives renewed courage, spirit and hope.

Larry Crabb says encouragement is not a technique to be mastered: it is sensitivity to people. Others might miss it, but the encourager sees it. The effect of encouragement is to stimulate the hope that solutions exist for every problem and that, seen from an eternal perspective, life does make sense.

Encouragement requires a genuine concern, willingness to take risks and persistence in service; being alert to the needs of others and seeking to provide relief from pressures that burden them.

Please remember to pray for our Emergency/Health Agencies. With the many disasters happening in our Province and around the world, there is a need not only to offer hope to those affected by the disaster but to our first responders who are surrounded by grief and often over-whelming circumstances.

Clearly, the ministries of encouragement stands near the top of God's priority list. It is an act of worship which gives God the glory.

BofL/FAITH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVE-CEMA, SERVICE AGREEMENT



A MOMENT TO CELEBRATE!
Ken Hoffer, Coordinator, DSS/Marq Pollon

Indeed a day to celebrate! May 30, Bridges of Love signed the Service Agreement for the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative with the Calgary Emergency Management Agency. What does this agreement mean for churches who have signed on to participate?

CEMA's Comprehensive Emergency Management Model identifies areas where FEPI can assist during the community restoration and rehabilitation phase. FEPI may also be activated during a “D” level response where the following triggers are indicated:

- Widespread evacuations involving large numbers of evacuees.
- Widespread “sheltering-in-place” events such as pandemic or severe storms.
- Activation of the Emergency Operations Centre and Recovery Operations Centre
- Declaration of a State of Local Emergency.

FEPI VISION STATEMENT

“To create a climate of mutual respect and understanding between the local church and public/private sectors where the spirit of agreement and common focus has become a foundation upon which to build; creating an amazing future for our communities linking arms together focused on what connects us, rather than what separates us.”

Words of Encouragement

“Emergency Preparedness... Ready or Not!!

I had a great time at the presentation...what a fascinating man (Dr. Arthur Bradley)...so accomplished and yet so able to put everything in layman's terms.

Two new people from our Church who attended and will be helping with FEPI - had a great time also and found the presentation very educational and informative. They were so happy to be included already in our activities!! You did your usual magnificent job

Marg...the displays were outstanding-the morning was extremely organized, the snacks were perfect and Dr. Bradley was superb!!!

Thank you so much again, for including us and now that we know the power and excellence of Dr. Bradley-the next time won't be too far off and we'll really work harder to get more people out!!

Wayne McCune, FEPI SW
Quadrant Lead Coordinator



“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – May, 2011

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...” 1 John 4:18 (NIV)

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” 1 John 4:18

Recently, our son welcomed a Jack Russell/Corgi mix into his home. Pluto is an adorable puppy, full of life and love. We were amazed how quickly he and our daughter’s baby, Aliyah took to each other. With Aliyah’s first introduction to this furry little bundle of joy who smothered her with kisses; it was evident there was no fear, but it was clearly ‘love’ at first sight/lick!!



“Preparedness should always be motivated by love and concern, never by fear and paranoia.” Dr. Arthur Bradley

Love explains:

1. Why God creates—because he loves, he creates people to love;
2. Why God cares—because he loves them, he cares for sinful people;
3. Why we are free to choose—God wants a loving response from us;
4. Why Christ died—his love for us caused him to seek a solution to the problem of sin; and
5. Why we receive eternal life—God’s love expresses itself to us forever.¹

¹ Life Application Bible Commentary. 1 John 4:9,10

BASIC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Just as it takes understanding to feel the extent of God’s love in order to serve our communities through the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI), it also takes understanding of the emergency management field to be confident to fully engage.

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency offers free on-line introductory courses. The Basic Emergency Management course is a pre-requisite for other Alberta Emergency Management Agency courses and is an excellent starting point to familiarize with the terminology and operations in the emergency field.

It provides an overview of emergency management in Alberta including the systems and processes for preventing, mitigating, preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies and disasters. You will learn about the key provisions of the Emergency Management Act and have the opportunity to identify the roles and responsibilities of various levels of government and other key organizations involved in emergency management.

<http://apsts.alberta.ca/on-line-courses/bem/>

MUSTER STATION

FEPI Churches are coordinated, designated ‘gathering places’ for the community during a disaster.

Please view [FEPI Operations Manual](#) and become a FEPI Church in your Community.



BRIDGES OF LOVE EXTENDS A WARM INVITATION TO:

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS...
READY OR NOT!!**

Speaker - Dr. Arthur Bradley

Rocky Mountain College

April 30, 9:00 AM - Noon

CALGARY - AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Developing a disaster preparedness plan
3. Food - What type and how much
Break
4. Water - Staying hydrated and clean
5. Shelter - No need to head for the hills
6. Sampling of 11 other topics
7. Questions and answers

CrossRoads Church

May 2, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

RED DEER - AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Introduction to Disaster Preparedness
Break
3. Food
4. Water
5. Additional topics
6. Questions and Answers

Please invite your friends and neighbours in your community. FREE but please register Marg @ 403.263.5683 or margpollon@bridgesoflove.net



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – April, 2010

“YOU ALSO BE READY...” Luke 12:40

*“You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”
Luke 12:40 (NIV)*

*“Perhaps a revolution is under way, a revolution of the Spirit that is about to shift our core energies away from arranging life to make it as satisfying as possible to drawing near to God, Jesus seekers across the world are being prepared to abandon the old way of the written code for the new way of the Spirit.”
Larry Crabb*

A Christian worker's greatest need is a readiness to face Jesus Christ at any and every turn. This battle is not always against sin, difficulties, or circumstances, but against being so busy serving that we are not ready to face Jesus Christ Himself. If we are to be ready for Jesus, we must be spiritually real. The greatest need is not facing our beliefs or doctrines, or even facing how to serve Him, but the need is to face Him, setting our heart on what He wants, thinking His thoughts.

Jesus pointed people toward a spirituality that was and is still subversively simple. He wanted people to “know” God (John 17:3) and believe in Him leading to a transformed life. (John 6:28-29) We do not need any system of rules, rituals, and routines to approach God. He has come to offer directly; divine love, forgiveness, and blessings.

The goal and challenge for each of us, is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus as the only source and goal of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2). Those who follow Jesus are called to represent God's love to others, being an authentic witness.

When sinful, broken, hurting people are pleasantly surprised at how accepting we are, there is a good chance we are starting to live like Jesus. Knowing Christ comes through direct engagement, not through academic study.

How can we have an authentic spiritual life? We must know God intimately with a priority to focus on others through a lifestyle of compassion. For our faith to be real it must be expressed through Love.

**“What religion to I preach?
The religion of Love.”**

John Wesley

FEPI SE QUADRANT LEAD CHURCH PREPAREDNESS PLANS

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and god of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

It has been an interesting journey these past couple of years being a part of Bridges of Love's Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative. A day does not go by that we are not confronted in our news with the disaster in Japan. It seems like just yesterday we were reeling with the earthquake disaster in Haiti. This should serve to remind us that devastating experiences can and eventually will, hit us with little to no warning and then our world is turned upside down!

Bonavista Evangelical Missionary Church has agreed to be the lead Quadrant Church for the S.E. section of the city of Calgary. In the month of January we hosted our first Quadrant meeting, inviting other member churches in the S.E. to engage in dialogue; introducing ourselves and generating ideas such as ...

- 1) What is our church prepared to provide in this initiative?
- 2) What is the preferred mode of communication between the lead church and other quadrant churches?
- 3) What expectations do we have of supporting churches?
- 4) What can we do to inspire other churches to join the initiative?
- 5) What does moving forward look like?

As a further response to our commitment as a lead church to be better prepared for an emergency, we hosted an Emergency First Aid and Level C CPR and AED training course on March 12th and 19th. We had 17 members of our congregation attend who are now qualified and certified to administer First Aid and CPR.

Another SE Quadrant meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 18th at 7:00 pm at Bonavista Evangelical Missionary Church. All SE Churches are invited to attend and we welcome your presence and your support. To register or make inquiries, please contact Lori Glass at (lorigg@shaw.ca) or (403) 613-3285. We look forward to meeting you and further discussion on how to engage with our communities through this important initiative.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS... READY OR NOT!!

Speaker - Dr. Arthur Bradley

Dr. Arthur Bradley is an Army veteran, father of four, martial arts expert, and homeschooler. He is active in volunteer youth organizations, including the Boy and Girl Scouts of America. He holds a doctorate in engineering from Auburn University, and currently works as a senior engineer for NASA. Having lived all across the United States, Dr.

Bradley writes from personal experience about preparing for a wide variety of disasters, including earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, floods, house fires, and massive snowstorms. He prescribes to the philosophy that **preparedness should always be motivated by love and concern, never by fear and paranoia.** His practical approach to family preparedness has received widespread praise from individuals, emergency preparedness consultants, and religious organizations.

A Warm Invitation

Rocky Mountain College,
Calgary

April 30, 9:00 AM - Noon

CrossRoads Church
Red Deer

May 2, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

**Free event but please register
403.263.5683
margpollon@bridgesoflove.net**



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – March, 2011

“...Always be prepared to give an answer.” 1 Peter 3:15

**“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”
1 Peter 3:15**

True faith always results in deeds, but the deeds do not justify us. Faith brings us salvation; active obedience demonstrates that our faith is real.

Responding in love, as we serve others, is being sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s prompting. During an emergency it is essential to respond with Christ’s eyes and heart.

During or after a disaster, people often search for meaning and hope amid the rubble of destroyed homes and lives. Those involved in a major disaster are forced to make a decision whether to become more devoted to their faith commitments, or to turn away from God in disappointment and anger.

How do we answer...**“Where was God”** during a disaster and does He really care?

Erwin W. Lutzer¹ says, “God does not delight in the suffering of humanity. Surely this would be consistent with His basic nature of caring about the world. It is not necessary for us to know God’s purposes before we bow before His authority. And the fact that we trust God even though He has not revealed the details is exactly the kind of faith that delights His heart.

Through the tragedies of others, we have the opportunity to be pried from our comfortable lifestyles and enter the suffering of the world.

Disasters help us to see what is truly valuable and what is not. Tragedy separates the trivial from the weighty, the temporal from the eternal.

Tragedies rid us of the overconfidence we often have that we are in control of our own destiny.”

¹ “Where Was God? Erwin Lutzer

FAITH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVE (FEPI)

Churches in major centres traditionally have not been formally integrated with the Municipal Emergency/Health Management Agencies. Uncontrolled mobilization and over response are thus common problems in emergencies. Due to lack of coordination and integration, well-meaning volunteers have difficulty with physical access to disaster areas and associated activities. They are blocked from delivering resources and services due to lack of proper credentials identifying them to serve in some official capacity.

When a disaster occurs, coordination of response is a critical and crucial factor. The benefits and means to a solution with responders/facilities identified and credentialed are critical steps to an effective church response. The Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative offers the missing piece for a truly effective church response.

Major emergencies pose problems for resource management that are different from those in routine crisis events. Significant emergency responses may require the use of resources (personnel, facilities, supplies, and equipment) from multiple organizations and jurisdictions as well, may require the use of non-traditional resources.

Dear Ms. Pollon:

“When it comes to emergency management and emergency preparedness, we all have a role to play. Individual citizens and communities, academia, emergency first responders, the private sector, volunteer organizations, and all levels of government must work together to provide an effective and coordinated response to disasters.

I commend you and your initiative in strengthening the emergency preparedness and response relationship between faith community members and their local governments. Good partnerships based on effective collaboration, coordination and communication are a key component of effective emergency management systems.

Yours sincerely,

Vic Toews, P.C., Q.C., M.P. Minister Public Safety

(Shared with Permission)

“EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS... READY OR NOT!!”

Emergency Preparedness Week is an annual event that takes place during the first week of May. This national event is coordinated by Public Safety Canada. During this week, activities are organized across Canada to raise awareness of the importance of having an emergency kit; making an emergency plan; and identifying risks in the region.

This year Bridges of Love in support of [Emergency Preparedness Week](#) and the **Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative** invited **Dr. Arthur Bradley** – author, [“Handbook to Practical Disaster Preparedness for the Family”](#) to share his expertise.. Rocky Mountain College, Calgary and CrossRoads Church, Red Deer are co-sponsoring the sessions and are our hosts. Please join for a very informative time on how you and your family can be better prepared for any emergency.

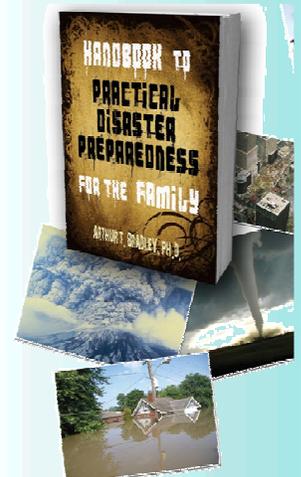
Rocky Mountain College – Calgary
April 30: 9:00 – Noon

CrossRoads Church – Red Deer
May 2: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

No cost but please register.

Marg - 403.263.5683

margpollon@bridgesoflove.net



Pre-order Session Price - \$20.00



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – February, 2010

“God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power.” 2 Timothy 1:7

*“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”
2 Timothy 1:7*

As Paul was facing death, he passed the torch of leadership to Timothy reminding him what was truly important and encouraging him in his faith. Paul loved Timothy and encouraged him to remember his call and to use his gifts with courage.

Every day we make choices that show whether we are courageous or cowardly. Do we seek comfort, pleasures, or approval finding ourselves going with the flow instead of stepping out and making decisions which might seem foolish, embarrassing or ridiculous. It takes a great deal of courage to be a Christ follower and sometimes we feel like crawling back in our shell staying where it is safe.

Cowards do not last long on their spiritual pilgrimages. They soon retreat as it takes enormous courage to follow God’s call.

How do we become courageous? We grow in courage when we face our fears. Courageous people are ordinary people like you and me who began at some point to face their fears rather than running from them.

Ten years ago, I faced a fear which robbed me, from achieving all I could be. My entire life was lived as a very shy and timid person where speaking in public was enormously difficult. God had plans for my life which did not include this crippling handicap.

The power of the Holy Spirit can help us overcome our fears. Paul mentions three characteristics of the effective Christian leader: power, love and self-discipline. These are available to us because the Holy Spirit lives in us. It is difficult to love if we do not have the courage to do what needs to be done.

PRACTICING COURAGEOUS LOVE

What does it take to do the will of the Father? It takes courage to join a family that is often misunderstood by the world. It takes love to hold God’s family together and to reach out and invite others to take that first small step of courage and say, “Yes, Lord, I want to be like Jesus. Please take me into your family and love me into your likeness.”

It also takes courage to say “Yes” as we invite churches to partner with the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI). Emergency Preparedness and reaching out to our communities is not easy as it may cost more than we can imagine or anticipate.

We believe FEPI is a bridge of courageous love displaying the character of Christ. Can you imagine city churches mobilized, coordinated and ready to take action when a disaster occurs? Can you imagine churches with a common goal serving together building strength and love into their communities?

The FEPI triggers have been identified by the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) as follows: *The work to develop our protocols aligned to the Comprehensive Emergency Management model is moving forward, and I’m pleased that you see a role for FEPI in the larger scale responses. As events warrant, we would also communicate with you in smaller events depending on the identified needs of evacuees in response and recovery stages; so I’m again pleased that you welcome this communication if events call for it. This will of course be clearly evident if we utilize one of your partner BOL church locations as an “information” or “reception” centre – we will be scheduling these site inspections in the next while.*

I look forward to meeting with you – most likely in February – to complete a service agreement between CEMA and BOL that clearly outlines our agreed upon activation protocols and triggers. As the CEMA Training Plan for 2011 is developed, I also look forward to discussing plans to include BOL in a table top session this year...

Thanks very much for your continued partnership with CEMA.”

Ken Hoffer –Coordinator, DSS/CEMA

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Emergency Preparedness Week is an annual event that takes place during the first full week of May. This national event is coordinated by Public Safety Canada. During this week, activities are organized across Canada to raise awareness of the importance of having an emergency kit; making an emergency plan; and identifying risks in the region.

In support of Emergency Preparedness Week, Dr. Arthur Bradley, Author of “**Handbook to Practical Disaster Preparedness for the Family**” has kindly accepted Bridges of Love’s invitation to conduct seminars on practical disaster preparedness. Please plan to attend “**Emergency Preparedness...Ready or Not?**” Calgary’s workshop will be held April 30 and in Red Deer, May 2. Please watch the [Website](#) of Bridges of Love for more details.

Dr. Bradley works for NASA Langley, and travels across the US (and now to Canada) speaking on the need for families to prepare for our world’s many disasters. Having experienced firsthand the dangers of hurricanes, snowstorms, tornados, house fires, and floods, Dr. Bradley offers practical advice with a very personal perspective.

His handbook has been touted as the first “well researched” guide for families seeking to prepare for a wide range of emergencies. Dr. Bradley’s book is included with registration for those attending Calgary’s workshop.

For those who are unable to attend the Calgary session but wish to pre-order Dr. Bradley’s book, please contact [Bridges of Love](#) for more details.

Bio, Click Book

