

Inspire Uplift Renew

April/May 2009

Hebrews 13:5- "Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you".

Deuteronomy 31:6- "So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you."

Joshua 1:5b- "For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you."

In these days during the recession, it's easy to focus on the uncertain times and feel panicked about what could happen to our jobs, our families, and us. Especially if we watch the news every day; it doesn't look good and they say it probably will get worse before it gets better.

But as Christians, we shouldn't lose heart or faith! Notice in the verses above the recurring theme: "I, God, will never fail you." "I, God, will never abandon you." "The Lord God will personally go ahead of you." Where is our focus? Let's be sure and keep our focus on Him, the One who promises to take care of us. He is not surprised by what's happening in the world. He already knew it was going to happen way before it did. Take comfort in Him, His provision, and in His unfailing and unending love.

Sheri

Getting Ready

By Helen Martin

Last year, Ephesians 2:10 was following me around like a puppy, tugging on my pant leg and barking for attention. It says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

He had new works that He had prepared for me, but strangely, nearly 20 years as a "real Christian" did not *prepare me* to simply step into doing them. Yet this work would not be left undone.

Anyone who knows Jesus can guess what came next. Waiting, weeping, learning, searching... a relentless compulsion toward an authenticity I didn't know I was lacking; a stripping down of myself to a state I don't always want to be in; a calling to a measure of courage I was quite content to do without. I had no idea how much I thought about myself, how much I didn't trust Him, and how bereft of holy risk my life was.

At first, I wanted to be useful without undergoing the process of being made useful. Later my hearts cry became, "Whatever it takes!"

It can seem like an endlessly long process; but suddenly, without being anywhere near "finished" and certainly without feeling ready, God increases your sphere of

influence. And there you are in the midst of it. And it would be terrifying all the time, but for God. Not to mention how funny it is that He would use... *us*. It's scary and hilarious.

Is that what you thought the Christian life would be like? Me neither!

"Senior Belles" Luncheon

On April 25 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, the Cool Water Ministries team will welcome all of our lovely Senior Ladies to the annual luncheon in their honor. This year's theme is "Southern Hospitality," so expect a menu that reflects culinary delights from below the Mason-Dixon line. Please feel free to join us as we "dress the part" of genteel southern ladies in all our frilly finery.

Mary Lou Sanders is sharing the devotional. Maybe we can get her to do it with a Southern drawl!



SPECIAL INTERVIEW: Insights into Carla Barnhill

By Cindy Schwerdtfeger

Since meeting her at the MN/LaCrosse Fall Women's Retreat, a few of us have gotten to know Carla Barnhill a little better through Facebook and her blog, www.themommyrevolution.com. We wanted to introduce more of our ladies to Carla, and she kindly agreed to an interview with Cindy Schwerdtfeger. Carla lives in Minneapolis with her husband, Jimmy, and her three great kids: Emily (12), Isaac (8), and Madelyn (4).



This web version of the interview includes what wouldn't fit into the printed newsletter.

CS: Will you share your favorite Bible verse and why it's meaningful to you?

CB: When I was younger, it was Phil 4:13. It gave me a sense of God's presence in my life, that I didn't have to do anything on my own. After college, in my "wondering what to do with my life" years, it was Jeremiah 29:11. I needed the hope and the promise of that passage, that God would bring goodness out of my life.

Now it's Micah 6:8. It reminds me that Christianity is not about following rules. It's about following God, caring for God's people, and being part of what God is doing in the world.

CS: What did you learn in seminary that you use in your life and/or occupation right now?

CB: I went to Fuller Theological Seminary. I studied for my Masters in Theological Studies. Fuller students come from all over the world, from every denomination and culture. It has given me such a world view that I realize how we do things in America doesn't necessarily work in other parts of the world. Christianity is big and broad and our faith looks different in different parts of the world. To me, that makes it a richer, more meaningful faith because it expands and includes so many different kinds of people and cultural expressions.

CS: I heard you worked at Trout Lake Camp with our own Karen Paul. How did you get connected to Trout Lake?

CB: My cousin, who was part of the Baptist church, invited me to go. I fell in love with the place, went every summer and then worked there for six summers during college and grad school. My daughter recently went to camp there and I love knowing that she's going to make memories in a place that means so much to me. The friends I made there are still my best friends in the world.

Carla's interview continued on page 4...

April/May Birthdays and Anniversaries

April

- 4 Phyllis Swanson
- 7 Scott & Sue Carlson
- 12 Wendy Albrecht
- 15 Jeff & Tina Rosillo
- 18 JB & Karen Beck
- 19 Mary Sanders
- 26 Elizabeth Carlson
- 27 John & Chantilly Frantzen
- 28 Renee Olson-Iverson



May

- 3 Hope Brizuela
- 7 Craig & Barb Zimple
- 9 Evelyn Turner
- 15 Carolyn Paul
- 17 Fred & Millie Herr
- 22 Sheri Pope
- 24 Michael & Joanna Lerud
- 24 Milt & Marge Jahn
- 28 Elaine Surface
- 30 Ramona VanCanneyt
- 30 Daniel & Karen Paul
- 31 Audrey Eiyneck

Suffering

By Cindy Schwerdtfeger

One of my ponderings lately has been around the word, “suffering.” In the past couple of weeks, we have had three families lose a loved one. I can’t begin to understand the pain and suffering of the families who have had to deal with the loss of ones so dear. How much suffering can one take and for how long? Why do we have to go through suffering on this earth?

Peter tells us to “not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” (1 Peter 4:12-13) Even in the midst of my sufferings (or minor irritants in comparison), I have a hard time rejoicing that I get to participate in this “suffering,” especially when it seems like it’s going on *forever!* Out of this suffering, God’s Word promises that I will be overjoyed by seeing how God has been revealed through what I have been through. I can’t begin to count the number of times that I have received a blessing in my life (God’s glory being revealed) after a time of suffering. I try to remember to thank God for this blessing. If I forget, then it seems I am allowed to participate in these sufferings again until I learn what it is God wants to teach me. I often feel like I am a preschooler who learns by repetition.



In addition to not being surprised, we see that our “brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings” (1 Peter 5:9b). God knew that we needed to know this. Why? Because once we have gone through much pain and suffering, we develop perseverance,

character and hope (Romans 5:3-4). Not only that, we can comfort others by what we have learned (2 Corinthians 1:3b-5). God can comfort us because He knows the suffering that Christ endured on our behalf. As we have gone through these sufferings and are comforted by God, we can then comfort others with the comfort of Christ flowing through us. We learn from the trial and then encourage others who are going through a similar trial. What an awesome picture of Christ working through us and in us as we try to comfort those around us!

If you feel like you have been going through a time of suffering for whatever reason, be encouraged that “the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast!” (1 Peter 5:10)

Craft Night 2

Five dollars is all it takes to join us for our next craft night on May 15th, starting at 6:30 pm.



Build your dinner at our full Baked Potato Bar and enjoy a dessert to make your eyes roll back in your head! We’ll have a craft to teach and do, and free childcare (by prior reservation only). You can come to catch up on anything you have to do (even your bills!) or for no reason but to hang out! We’ll have some White Cross options, too! Look for sign up forms in upcoming Sunday bulletins.

Mother/Daughter Days

May 1-3 let’s get away for the weekend for some quality time with the special girl(s) in our lives and get a spiritual boost in the great setting of VCBC.

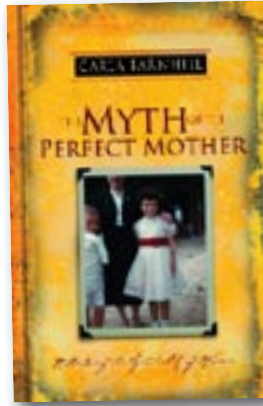
The “Women and Girls” retreat can be attended by a variety of combinations of females, including moms and their daughters. And \$115 covers food and lodging for the pair of you. There are a few optional low cost activities you can add, but even without those, your weekend will be full (and so will your tummies)!

Register via the church office so we can coordinate travel and rooming arrangements.

Carla's Interview, continued

CS: Tell me about the premise of your book, *The Myth of the Perfect Mother: Rethinking the Spirituality of Women*, and why you wrote it.

CB: I wrote the book after reading about the Andrea Yates trial. She is the woman from Texas who drowned all five of her children in her bathtub. The more I read about her, the more I realized how preventable that tragedy was. She had been suffering from depression for years and no one noticed—or wanted to notice. It got me thinking about all of the pressure there is for Christian moms to fit into certain molds, to parent in certain ways, to feel certain emotions. I wanted to explore where these molds and expectations came from so we could get rid of them and the damage they cause in women and their families.



CS: What's the most common misconception you get about your views on motherhood?

CB: That I'm trying to destroy the family. I was told that if I read my Bible more I would have the correct view; that I'm a bad Christian for encouraging mothers to follow God instead of telling them that they all need to stay home with their kids even if they feel led to some other kind of work. And of course, there are people who think I'm just bitter and angry because I don't believe motherhood is the sole calling in a woman's life. [In fact] I didn't feel God call me to motherhood. I chose to be a mom and God has equipped me to parent the children I have been given. It's a blessing, it's a privilege, but I don't believe it's a *calling*—not in the truest sense of the word.

CS: You've said that as moms, we want so much to do a great job that sometimes our fears motivate us to be rigidly attached to our ways of doing things, which can cause us to be judgmental of other women and their choices. What would you say to the woman who may unknowingly be ruled by such fear?

CB: When we have children, we love them so desperately and we are terrified that we will somehow ruin them. That fear can cause us to dig in on parenting decisions we've made because we want so much to believe that we've made the best choice. When someone does it differently or questions our decisions, we dig in our heels and lash out in judgment as a way of protecting ourselves from that fear, [telling ourselves,] "I have to be right because the cost is too great if I'm wrong."

If you're ruled by that fear, my advice is to figure out what you're really afraid of. Are you afraid your method of discipline isn't going to work? Are you afraid other people will think poorly of you or your kids? Name the fear and then you can start to dismantle it, to figure out why you believe it and why you are giving it so much power. Once we unpack fear a little bit, it is a lot easier to replace it with grace and encouragement for other women.

Carla's interview concludes on page 5...

Cool Water Ministries' April/May Calendar

April 1 - August 31

Dead Sea Scrolls at the Minnesota Science Museum



Thursday, April 2
Self-check Day

Saturday, April 4

11:00 AM
MN/LaCrosse Association Women's Spring Luncheon, hosted by Riverview

Friday, April 10

White Cross 10 am - 12 pm

Sunday, April 12

Easter Sunday Drama

Saturday, April 25

11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Sr. Ladies Luncheon

Saturday, April 25

St. Paul Farmers Market opens



Saturday, May 2
Self-check Day

May 1 - 3

Women and Girl's Retreat
Village Creek Bible Camp

Thursday, May 7

National Day of Prayer

Friday, May 15

White Cross 10 am - 12 pm

Friday, May 15

Craft Night!
6:30 - 11:30 pm (or whenever...)
Free childcare provided by reservation!



Carla's Interview, conclusion

CS: How did you come to birth the Mommy Revolution concept?

CB: My friend Caryn Rivadeneira and I started [www.themommyrevolution.com] to explore the issues in my book and in her new book, *Mommy's Got a Fake ID*. We feel like it's time for new conversations about motherhood, that the old ones aren't really relevant in the lives of women anymore. So we want to challenge some of the assumptions about what motherhood looks like and replace them with a new vision of motherhood that comes from women themselves.

CS: How did you come to be in the editing business?

CB: I started working for Campus Life magazine and a few years later, moved to Christian Parenting Today magazine (both were part of Christianity Today, International). Now I do freelance book editing and a little writing.

CS: As an editor you must see a wide variety of work. What are some of the most common mistakes that writers make in their writing?

CB: There are two types of mistakes. The first is overwriting. Overwriting is when you try so hard to sound smart that you end up sounding stuffy. I tell people to write the way they talk. Most of us got the opposite advice in school because we were being taught a more formal style of writing. But good writing feels more like a conversation than a business report. The other mistake is telling instead of showing. Good writers can give you an example of what they are trying to communicate and you know exactly what they mean. They don't spell everything out for you with words. Instead, they tell stories that make their point for them.

CS: How hard is it to edit the work of someone who has written something you disagree with?

CB: It can be tough. When I worked with magazines, the article content reflected on the magazine—people remember what is written in an article and connect it to the magazine, not the author or the article. If they didn't like what they read, they cancel their subscription. So my job was to make sure the articles said what we wanted them to say. Books are different—it's the author who takes the heat for what they write, so they get to say what they want. I will help them say it better, but I don't change what they want to say. If I think they are using sloppy logic or poor theology, I try to point that out and encourage them to support their point with stronger examples or more relevant theology.

CS: What other writing projects do you have going right now? Anything you can share with us?

CB: I worked on a book [that just came] out in March called *First Comes Love, Then Comes Money*. It's about learning healthy financial communication and it's written by a great couple, Scott and Bethany Palmer, who are young and funny and sharp and who turn all those boring budget books upside down.

CS: Just for fun...what is your favorite genre of literature that you enjoy reading (when you are *not* in edit mode)?

CB: I read fiction and magazines. I never read non-fiction. Even before I edited books, I wasn't a non-fiction reader. I think it's because my head is so full of ideas already that I get overwhelmed by more. I read to get out of my head for a while, to just let someone else's life unfold. For non-fiction, I read magazines because they let me take in new ideas in small chunks.

CS: What is your favorite hymn or praise chorus, and why?

CB: Be Thou My Vision, The King of Love, Beautiful Savior, This is My Father's World. If they are sung by the Concordia Choir, they are even better. For me, old hymns are a testament to the long history of our faith.

We thank Carla, and Cindy, for bringing us these intriguing insights!