

Creating Healthy Family Life: A God Story

—Kathy Dow-Burger and Don Burger

When Crisis Care Training International (CCTI) asked my husband, Don, and I to write an article about creating a healthy family environment, it brought to mind that ours is truly a God story. Only the mighty hand of God could bring beauty out of a seemingly impossible situation. Family life is complicated enough when you have a nuclear, or original, family with one set of parents sharing one starting- and ending point. However, imagine raising a family where you have five children from four different beginnings: his, hers, ours and theirs. Additionally, imagine raising children coming from divorce, remarriage, foster care, and adoption. Finally, imagine raising children consisting of three different races or ethnicities. As what is now called a “blended family,” we had to somehow join with six other parents and an unending number of extended family members who had some decision-making power and influence in our kids’ lives. How did we create a healthy family? The answer to that question came first through the contributions of our adult children, who shared their thoughts as to what it would take in our home to foster a healthy family environment. Through family collaboration and prayer, three overarching themes emerged that we thought would be essential to the children’s upbringing: *Intentionality, Purpose and Consistency*. Illustrated below are Christ-given, life-changing decisions that built healthy family relationships.

Intentionality in our family’s life meant paying attention and assigning special value to the moments we spent with each other. We knew that our lives would be fragmented due to weekend visitations, split holidays and birthdays as well as different family rules and values. Introducing faith in our family required Intentionality.

It was not until Don and I surrendered our lives to Christ that *Purpose* was added to our conviction for raising our children in a way that honored God. In this, our journey was laid out before us and our kids did not just come along for the ride.

In theory, *Intentionality and Purpose* sound nice, but if not for *Consistency*, they do not mean much. It is in the day-to-day faithfulness that healthy family relationships are developed, nurtured and preserved. *(continued on page 2)*

Intentionality
Purpose
Consistency

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INFOCUS



“God Sets The Lonely In Families”

Psalm 68:6

—Rosemary Sabatino

The Hebrew word (*Bayith*), translated as families, carries the meaning of a *dwelling place*. (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance Online*) While *Yachiyd*, translated as lonely or solitary, has an interesting definition; *a one-and-only unique person with a need to be united to others*. (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance Online*) This is the state of every human being. Each one made uniquely in the image of God and created to *dwell* in communion with Him and others ultimately making up the *family of God*.

(continued on page 2)

Creating Healthy Family Life... continued

Raising a healthy family has not been easy. We made our fair share of mistakes along the way. Knowing what *Intentionality*, *Purpose* and *Consistency* looked like was a process of exercising our faith, hope and love in Christ. But, if not for the grace of God, our family was at risk of being another broken statistic. As one looks back at the themes communicated above, do we not see a model of what our Father in heaven does for us through His Son, Jesus? He is very intentional in communicating faith – His faith. He fosters community and fellowship with people and is a role model in service. Through His Word, He fosters open discussions about how to respond to everyday struggles. Christ also knows His purpose and is a master communicator, who is unwavering as our advocate. Therefore, Don and I are convinced that our actions, as parents, are to point our children to Christ and let Him do the rest. ■

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12–14 NIV)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. (Philippians 2:3 NIV)



Kathy Dow-Burger

Kathy Dow-Burger and her husband, Don Burger, live in Silver Spring, Maryland, with their youngest son, Luke, and their dog, Daisy. Their four adult children all have a heart to service in medicine, education, agriculture and the military. Kathy and Don are trainers for CCTI and have taught the Trauma and Crisis Care core module and Train the Trainers module

INFOCUS

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As a result of the fall, man's intimate communion with the Creator was broken leaving our hearts with a desperate yearning *to belong*. One of the most important roles of the family is to model the character of *Father God* by creating a relational environment where children are unconditionally loved, accepted and encouraged in their uniqueness. The family was intended to pave the children's way to Jesus; the ultimate relationship for which their hearts long.

For most children at risk and in crisis a healthy family environment is absent. The traumatic effects of abuse, abandonment, neglect and exploitation oftentimes leave the children with an inability to trust or believe in the goodness of God. They need someone or ones who will stand in the gap; a place where they experience the love, acceptance and encouragement of Christ. This role belongs to His Church. "The most important factor of care for all children is the influence of parental support. Therefore, the most significant prevention and intervention strategy the Church could employ, to mitigate the effect of trauma-related injury to children, is to promote and teach a healthy family lifestyle, which includes Godly parental support." (*Healing Hurting Hearts: A Handbook on Counseling Children and Youth in Crisis*; Phyllis Kibbourn; CLC Publishers 2013)

This quarter Barnabas addresses the need and implementation of healthy family life and our sincere gratitude goes to our qualified contributing authors. In a survey of African bible colleges, done some years back, only two was offering courses in Godly / Healthy Family. Hopefully those statistics have changed.

Traumatized and hurting children and families are well within the reach of every church and faith community. May we, His Church, ... rise-up in His strength and accept His mandate to bring healing and hope to their hurting hearts by being *fathers to the fatherless*. (*Psalm 68:5; NIV*) Only then will they find what their desperate hearts are longing for: Jesus!

Kim Hoover is a child/adolescent psychiatrist in Winston-Salem, North Carolina with over 20 years experience working with children and families. She maintains a private practice as well as serving as Medical Director of Youth Opportunities, a non-profit agency providing mental health services for financially needy families. As a volunteer with CCTI, she serves as a contributing author and a trainer, most recently helping to conduct training seminars in the Philippines



How to Foster Healthy Family: Forget About Me

by Kim Hoover

At a spiritual retreat I attended, I was given the following acronym for FAMILY: Forget About Me, I Love You. These six simple words convey a great depth of meaning and tell us all we need to know about healthy families.

Families come in all different shapes, sizes and colors. There are parents (married, singled, widowed), children who join a family by birth or through special bonds of love, and generations of extended family or close friends on whom we bestow family titles. A family might be defined by a village or a church community or by special bonds formed through shared tragedies or joys. Ultimately we are part of a global family, and as creatures made in God's image, we are part of God's family, which transcends time and space. Whatever configuration a family might have, there are two features that all healthy families share: selflessness (Forget About Me) and a special love (I Love You).

Selflessness means an awareness that the whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts. In a family, individual members come together in a way that allows each individual to somehow be better than the person he or she would be alone. Imagine an Olympic basketball team. Each individual is the most talented player in the country at his or her specific position, but the very best center is not exceptional without the forwards

and the guards. Team members draw on each other's strengths, fill in for each other's weaknesses, and take turns scoring points or making assists. Likewise, healthy families are flexible in dividing the duties and responsibilities so that strengths and weaknesses are recognized and supported. Flexibility allows for a natural ebb and flow, not just in carrying out day-to-day tasks, but in providing each other emotional support. If one member of the family is having "an off day" or dealing with stress outside the family, then other members automatically carry and support that person, secure in the trust that they too will be supported when needed.

Just as a team needs a captain, a family needs a head to provide selfless leadership. A selfless leader commands respect by setting an example and does not demand respect by setting arbitrary rules. A selfless leader takes pride in the success of family members even more than in his or her own success. A selfless leader knows there are times to stand firm, but there are other times when strength is demonstrated in compromise, negotiation and even in yielding.

Selflessness means there is open communication. Each member of a family matters enough to be heard. Being heard does not always mean getting one's way, but it also does not mean that one person will forcefully

impose his or her way on others. In order for a person to feel heard, more than open ears are required. An open heart and an open mind are necessary, along with full attention. Being heard requires a selfless listener.

The second component of healthy families is love. The word "love" is used in many ways that do not reflect the special love that families are called to share. I love the beach, I love pizza, I love to read, but these loves are all about me. The love of family is a selfless love. I must first "forget about me" before I can love you. Saint Paul expressed this love most eloquently in his letter to the Corinthians: "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast, it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Healthy families share this selfless love. Although individuals in the family will at times be impatient, unkind, envious, boastful, irritable and resentful, the love that binds the family together will be nurturing and sustaining.

As we look to God for His leading, let us also resolve first to "forget about me" so that selfless love will strengthen and bless our families. ■

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First Spanish CCTI Module One Seminar!

*“El Cuidado de Niños en Crisis”
Care for Children in Crisis*

**CCTI Trainers: Marissa Phelps and
Tami Snowden**

It was encouraging to see a group of about 85 committed workers discussing and seeking solutions for children who are victims of violence and have gone through traumatic circumstances.

We were personally touched by their heart for the children and their passion for their work. During a time of prayer for children in crisis a young man came to me with tears in his eyes said, “I do not know what has happened to me but I am deeply touched and broken for the lives of these children.” God was truly in our midst. Reconciliation and forgiveness also took place among organizations which included Christian counselors, tutors, psychologists, pastors and social workers. While all of them work for the same purpose, misunderstandings had created a barrier of mistrust between them.

We are grateful to know that God will continue encouraging and sustaining these precious workers. ■



OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES



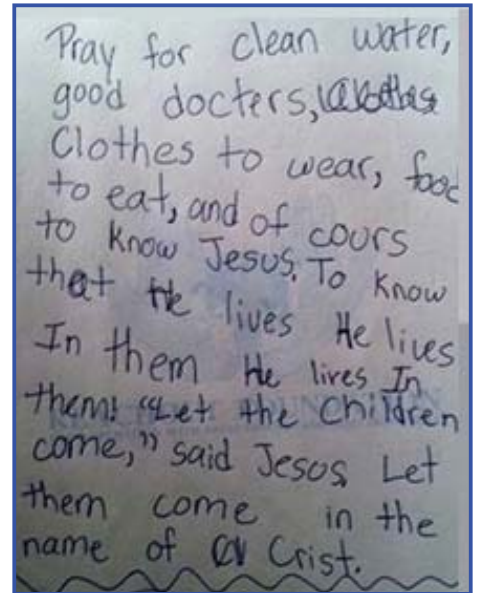
Dedicated to children who hear their Father’s voice

What I Learned at the Prayer Conference

—Abriel Phelps

The Prayer Conference at the United Nations in New York City last November was touching to me because I got closer to God by prayer. I learned that I need to stay connected with God by praying more for kids that are struggling. I remember a girl who said, “Some people cannot see God’s heart.” She said, “To come to God does not cost us anything, it is free, but to know His heart cost us our lives.”

I learned that life is all about God and what He is doing in the world. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16



Abriel is a happy, thoughtful and caring ten year old. She lives with her parents in Artesia, NM. Abriel has a younger brother, Ben and a sister, Haylie who are her favorite playmates. Abriel is homeschooled and loves to sing, travel and learn about other cultures. God has a very important place in her life and She has a great desire to honor Him in all her ways.



Children in Prayer Conference Part One

— *Marissa Phelps*

I am so grateful for the life-changing experience that my daughter, Abriel, and I had as we attended the Children in Prayer Conference / UN Prayer Initiative in New York City this past November. Children and adults from more than 40 countries came together to pray for the nations. It is evident that a powerful global community of children is being built as many of the children shared their daily challenges, faith and their genuine love for Jesus. This global-minded generation is already witnessing and being involved in the transformation of their communities and countries through prayer.

Many Christian leaders who came to this event testified to their “second conversion” as God convicted them of the importance of welcoming and teaching children the Bible. This was the case for Bishop Peter from South Africa. In the past, Bishop Peter used to run children away from his preaching tent. He shared with us that he even employed several people to keep the children away while he preached! However, God intervened on behalf of His children and Bishop Peter is now ministering to more than 9,000 orphans



Marissa Phelps, originally from Mexico, graduated from Asbury Seminary with a degree in Education and a Masters Degree in Missions. She has been serving children in crisis for more than 14 years; first with Go International as their Children's Ministries Coordinator, and since 2010, with CCTI as Children's Prayer Coordinator and Director of Latino ministries. Marissa resides in Artesia, New Mexico with Her husband Dan, who serves as a pastor, and three children; Abriel, Haley and Benjamin.

in Africa. They have been praying for opportunities to receive an education. Bishop Peter was happy to share with us how the prayers of these children are being heard. There are now changes that are taking place to the laws in their country regarding the education of children. Yes! God does listen to the cries of children and He answers their prayers.

Pastor Anton Cruz, a former Catholic priest from India, was one of the main speakers during the conference. He spoke to us of orphanages filled with the children of lepers, prostitutes and gypsies. These children would have no hope for their present or their future circumstances without any intervention. However, by God's mercy, these children are responding to God's love and are now themselves ministering throughout India by hosting a prayer ministry on TV.

These and many more testimonies resonated in my heart and mind. God is making Himself known among children. We can already see this “new wave” as a movement of the Holy Spirit changing our countries, communities and lives.

■
For more information go to:

The 4/14 Window Movement <http://www.4to14window.com>

UNICEF <http://www.unicef.org>

International Prayer Council <http://www.ipcprayer.org>

Royalkids Ministry (India) <http://www.royalkids.org/#royalkids>

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Family Is God's Idea!

By Liz Durben

God, our heavenly Father, created family to meet our human need for love and security.

I was blessed to grow up in a stable home with a loving family. Unfortunately, in our fractured world, many do not have that privilege. Some have never known love or security. For others, what they had was disrupted by natural disaster, war or other devastation. However, God is looking out for children (and adults) who need a healing sense of family, and He has creative ways of doing this. Let me share some of my personal experiences.

As a teen, I did not feel my parents understood me. Sound familiar? My need to talk things over was met by a young couple who ran a youth group and whose children I babysat. I loved being part of their family. While I was away at college, they became Christians and it was in their home that I received Jesus as my Savior. I thus became part of God's family, and a whole realm of new relationships opened up for me with other Christians.

As a single in Africa serving in a secular job and knowing no one, I was welcomed into the homes of missionaries and became part of the mission family. Later I and then my husband joined the mission. Our colleagues represent some of our most treasured relationships.

While serving overseas as a family, we intentionally welcomed singles into our home for a meal, a haircut or a chat. They became beloved surrogate aunts and uncles for our children, who in turn gave them the joy and grounding that being around children can give. Some African friends, who as youth looked on us as parents, continue to keep in touch. One lady, married but without children of her own, took our girls for bush walks during vacations. Ties with schoolmates and staff at boarding school continued to be close for our girls long after we left the field. It was also inspiring to see single ladies create a family for themselves by adopting a national family and putting on birthday celebrations for those children (and ours), doing crafts with them and so on. Some older ladies are Mama to hundreds.

God's heart is to "set the lonely in families" (Ps. 68:6). Let's do all we can to give the lonely and vulnerable the joy of human love and family.



Liz Durben is originally from London, UK. She served a single with WEC in Liberia and then in Ivory Coast with her husband Dan. They have been serving at the WEC US Sending Base since 2002 and have 3 grown daughters. Liz's passion is to serve missionaries and their children as Accommodation Hostess and MK Caregiver.

He Longed for a Family

**An Excerpt From *Healing Hurting Hearts:*
A Handbook for Counseling Children
and Youth in Crisis**

Editor: Phyllis Kilbourn
Available at www.crisiscaretraining.org

He was just six or seven years old when he took to the streets of Dakar, Senegal, West Africa. Some months prior, due to poverty and dysfunction at home, he was given over to an Islamic priest called a Marabout. His new home was called a dara--a small, shabby room shared by dozens of other boys in the same situation. Their ages ranged from four or five to twelve or thirteen; many were malnourished and visibly ill. Each morning at sunlight they were forced to take a tomato can in hand and go to the streets and beg. Upon their return in the evening, the Marabout would take inventory of their cache for the day. If certain quotas were not met, harsh consequences would follow. Most often there would be severe beatings accompanied by a withdrawal of food.

With such abuse, it's not hard to see why he left the dara for life on the streets. However, the streets held new and different cruelties--abuses and exploitative situations too horrible to mention here. Although it wasn't an option, he longed for home, dysfunctional as it was. It was at this point that he met the missionary.

He had encountered Christians before, but this was different. Usually they would give him a piece of candy or bread and a piece of paper saying, "Jesus loves you." The missionary just sat and talked to him, like a friend. He came back several times, and the boy was always happy to see



him. One day the missionary asked the boy to come to his house to see if he would like to live there. Guardedly the boy said yes.

When he got to the house he was amazed. There were four or five other boys there who had come from the streets as well. They had on clean clothes and they didn't look hungry. He decided to stay. That was 10 or 12 years ago. Today the boy is on his way to university, where he will study to be a teacher. What he found at the house was more than just a shelter. It was a real home with family, respect and responsibility where the love of Jesus was experienced.. The boy found it to be a place of healing where, over the years, through many ups and downs, the missionary and his wife remained strong, consistent parental figures in his life.

When the boy was about 15 he needed a serious eye operation, and he asked if perhaps his biological father would come to see him. After talking with the boy about possible outcomes, the missionary agreed to contact the father. The reply was stinging, hurtful and discouraging: "I didn't want him then and I don't want him now." This was a devastating blow that could have set the boy back into depression and despair, but it didn't. Hard as it was, he got through it in the loving arms of his surrogate parents. They were with him then and they are with him now as he takes the next step into adulthood at the university. His heart's desire is to be the kind of godly parent that his new "mom and dad" have been to him. Their display of godly family life and unconditional, consistent love made all the difference in his life, and he wants to pass it on! ■

CCTI Curriculum



“Healing and Hope for Children in Crisis”

is now available as a PDF download.

Modules 1 through 4 are available (Train the Trainer is not available yet). These are downloadable for only \$25 per module. This includes the Spanish version of Module 2.

The PDF download includes the PowerPoint visual aids.

We are thankful as the Lord continues to open more and more opportunities for CCTI to reach the world with curriculum that provides healing for hurting children and equips their caregivers with information they so desperately need.

What an awesome God we serve!!

In His Glorious Name,
Rosemary Sabatino, Director/Editor

Up-Coming Training

Butuan, Philippines: June 2-6 and June 9-12, 2014
Module One: Trauma and Crisis Care and Module two:
Street Children

Denver, Colorado, USA

Save the Date! – September 17-20, 2014
Module One: Trauma and crisis care-with an emphasis on
children at risk in the USA

For information contact: tsnowden@ccti-wec.org



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For Information On:

• **CCTI Curriculum—
Offering Healing and Hope for
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