

GENERATIONS

December, 2005

Volume 4, Issue 3

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Special points of interest:

- ◆ For our children, one gift is most important.
- ◆ The hope of Christmas is that, while real sufferings do intersect with every life, still, "All is Well, Emmanuel!"
- ◆ The family grew in September with the birth of Jacob Michael Brian Shultz.

In the midst of a busy and sometimes painful holiday season, it is good to pause and reflect that God is good, all the time. Pastor Dave reminds us, that whatever the future holds, we have a God who is both in control and full of love for his children.

Ruth encourages us, at Christmas and throughout the year, to give to our children the most important gift of all – the gift of faith. And Brian updates us on the goodness and faithfulness of God's blessings on Covenant

Family Ministries this past year. Finally, it's not too soon to think about a family vacation in Colorado. Our first retreat of the year comes in the spring.

CFM Family Retreat -- May 19-21, 2006

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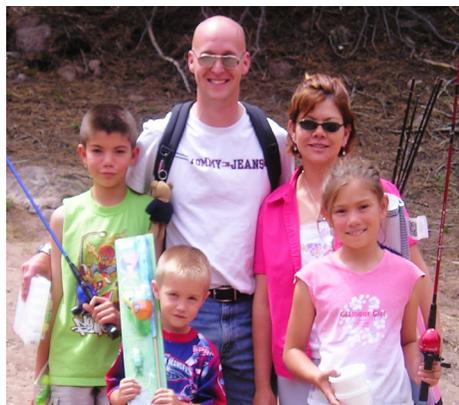
Mark your calendars for your next vacation, and bring your family to beautiful, sunny Colorado for a time of refreshment and renewal! CFM's next Heritage of Faith Retreat will be held on the Horn Creek Conference Grounds. Horn Creek is nestled on 480 acres in the forest and is approximately 9000 feet in elevation on the side of Horn Peak. The camp overlooks the beautiful Wet Mountain Valley and the quaint western

town of Westcliffe, Colorado. Families will gather together on Friday, May 19, in this rustic environment in the Rocky Mountains to enjoy the beauty of God's creation while developing their family relationships.

Check into the Lodge

at 4 p.m. and receive your room assignments before dinner at 6 p.m. Afterwards, enjoy the fellowship of other families as we meet together for a family gathering. Go to bed early, or enjoy the hot tub. There's also a recreation room at the Lodge, or go for a walk underneath the star-filled sky.

On Saturday, May 20, we'll meet for breakfast, and the day is yours! There will be some formal recreation, like hiking or a tour of the facilities. But you (continued on page 2)



One of the most precious gifts you can give a child is the gift of faith. Although it is by the Holy Spirit one is regenerated, the Bible gives us a pattern of how the Holy Spirit works in our lives to share the most precious gift we have received, the Lord Jesus Christ. Many evangelical churches equip their members on how to share the gospel with others, praying that the Holy Spirit will draw them to Christ. How much more should we be sharing Christ with our children, praying that the Holy Spirit will draw them to Christ?

Consider some of the ways we can unpack faith for our children. First, we can unwrap the gift of God's faithfulness through

the generations. After the fall, the Bible teaches us about our spiritual forefather, Abraham, whom God called to go to a new land. On his way to the new land, God revealed his covenant of grace to him, a revelation that not only was for the children of God in Abraham's time but was extended to all God's children for all time. Telling your child about their spiritual father, Abraham, and all the other ways God was faithful to the generations that follow is part of their generational history, their spiritual heritage. The writer of Hebrews in chapter 6, verses 13-15, refers to the promise of God to Abraham and tells us that because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his

purposes very clear to the heirs of what was promised, to the generations, he confirmed it with an oath. He did this so that we have hope and can be greatly encouraged. The Bible further tells us that this hope is found in Jesus, who has become our high priest forever. God made the promise and fulfilled it by his son, Jesus Christ. Here is our faithful God who keeps his promises and gives us a Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

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“...this hope is found in Jesus, who has become our high priest forever.”

CFM Family Retreat -- May 19-21, 2006 — Continued from page 1

the gym and activities at the Recreation Center. Try your hand at bowling or racquet ball. Whatever you choose to do, there will be plenty of options for fun and relaxation.

On Sunday morning, May 21, we'll meet for breakfast and enjoy Worship together. Lunch will be served at noon and check-out is 2 p.m. You will leave refreshed and renewed by God's grace as you head home.

and your family will make your own choices. You can play horseshoes, or Frisbee golf, or play tennis! If weather permits, there's an Alpine Swing; for those who want a little more action, there's a ropes course. Join the group for lunch at noon, and then enjoy the rest of the day.

We'll meet again at dinner. Afterwards, we'll have another Family Gathering. The night is still young – check out

The best news is that the cost for this delightful and fun-packed weekend did NOT increase and includes room & board/meals and most recreation: \$119 per person, ages 12 & up, \$52 per person, ages 3-11, and children under 3 are free.

As this issue goes to press, the movie *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* is in theatres. It is the joint product of Walt Disney Pictures and Walden Media, a small family- and education-oriented film production company. Prior to its general release, I previewed the movie as part of the only faith-based group to view a pre-release of the movie.

I am happy to report that the movie is a straightforward retelling of C. S. Lewis' book and, true to his vision for the story, an excellent choice for families with children. My one disappointment as the movie neared its close was that the conversation between the children and Mr. and Mrs. Beaver regarding Aslan was apparently cut from the film. In the book, Lucy questions, "Then he isn't safe?"

"Safe?" replies Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you." (By the way, when the movie ended, I was not at all disappointed in the omission of this conversation! In a way that seemed perfectly acceptable and appropriate to me, the omission is incorporated as part of the conclusion of the film).

Is God safe? No! He is not a chained, tame lion! But he is good. Followers of the Lion of Judah in every generation have held on to this truth down through the ages. Job, Jacob and

Joseph are just a few good examples of this truth. Our God is the King and he is in control. Sometimes, he does things the way we would do them. But, oftentimes, he does not. Sometimes, the paths our lives take seem straight and sensible to us – but, at other times, the road twists and bends, winding in ways beyond our understanding.

Thankfully, balancing the truth that God is in control is the assurance that God is good and loving. This can easily be seen in Paul's passage to the Roman Christians, who were undergoing persecution. As he unfolds truth regarding *present sufferings*, Paul encourages believers that hardships and sufferings are not worth comparing to the future glory that God's children will enjoy. Hope patiently waits with the Spirit's help. Then, Paul opens out this overarching umbrella, "...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28, NIV). His magnificent chapter closes with this confident assurance: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8: 35-38, NIV).

As I write today, we have just discovered that our house that has been on the market for the last six months has flooded from the inside out. Though the heat was on, a pipe burst on the second floor and cascaded thousands of gallons of water down through two ceilings and into the finished basement. The damage is extensive – however, it can be repaired and, praise God, the house is insured!

But, earlier in the day, news came that my brother Matthew, twenty years my junior, had suffered a serious car accident that severed his spinal cord leaving him paralyzed from the chest down. (He is in the trauma unit of a hospital half way across the country).

How comforting it is, that when real sufferings intersect with our lives, we know the Savior who is both in control and full of love for his children! Nothing less gives the proper perspective to suffering. This is the real hope of the gospel and the true meaning of Christ's coming to this world. Christ Jesus came into the world that we might know him and live in hope. In the words of a Michael W. Smith Christmas song, "All is well, all is well, lift up your voices and sing: Born is now, Emmanuel!"

This Christmas, may you be strengthened by this hope – and, as God leads you, would you lift up a young man named Matt in your prayers?

CFM Ministry Update — Brian Shultz, Director of Development

Covenant Family Ministries has seen God's blessings this year through the generous gifts of staff, churches, individuals, and private foundations. Eastern Hills Community Church, our home church in Centennial, CO, took a love offering in the first quarter for the ministry, totaling nearly \$2,000.

Other individuals and families throughout the United States also contributed to our mission of strengthening Christian families. This support goes directly to the operating expenses for all ministry activities, which includes staffing, retreats, office expenses, publication of ministry literature, and curriculum development.

One of the neatest stories came after the ministry's first family retreat in May. The "Heritage of Faith" retreat saw 60+ individuals go to the mountains for several days of worship, teaching, relationship building, and full blown family fun, but the ministry had a loss of about \$2200 for the weekend. Nevertheless, God's provision was evident as the ministry received a private donation a couple of weeks later, for



Generations of the ladies at a recent ministry opportunity at Cherry Hills Community Church in Highlands Ranch, CO. Back row, from the left: Nana, JoAnna, Ruth, Becky. Front row, from the left: Abby, Hannah and Laura. Jacob, in Ruth's arms, is the only male in the picture – but he doesn't mind!

“please continue to pray for the ministry’s impact on marriages, parenting, and relationships...”

nearly the exact amount of the loss!

Our largest gift to date came this fall from God's Gift Charitable Foundation. The grant has allowed us to expand our work and face the year-end in the black. Please join us in praising Jehovah-Jirah, our great "God of Provision" for his affirming answer to our prayers.

As we finish up the year, please continue to pray for the ministry's impact on marriages, parenting, and relationships, and also pray for the upcoming seminars and retreats

for 2006. You may also support us by praying for the willingness of individuals, churches, and foundations to contribute toward the ministry! We are in need of regular monthly supporters or even one time gifts. If you would like to help us reach more families for the kingdom, you may contribute to CFM at the address on this newsletter or contact Brian Shultz @303.919.6993. (All gifts are TAX DEDUCTIBLE)

Giving the Gift of Faith to the Next Generation

— Continued from page 2

Now, fast forward to your own experience with our faithful God. How has he been faithful to you? Tell your children stories of how faithful God has shown himself to you through the years. My grandchildren are always asking me to tell them a childhood story. They love to hear about our lives; be sure to share with them how Jesus has always been there for you. Be genuine—this is so important if we want our children to embrace faith.

Another way to unpack faith for your children is to unwrap the gift of God's call on their lives. How do you view the call on your life? Our Heavenly Father has called us into a love relationship with him through his Son Jesus Christ. He has given us his Word to help us understand his call on our lives. He has commanded in Deuteronomy 6:7 that we teach our children when sitting at home, when walking along the road, when lying down and getting up. In every opportunity you have, teach them about the Lord and his call on their lives. Again, be genuine. We don't always understand our circumstances. It's okay to be honest about that to your God and to those he loves (your children). Help them to see that no matter

what happens, he has called them by name and they are his. God's call on you the parent, both Scripturally and practically, is passed on to the next generation, and it becomes their calling. It's a vision of what God wants to do in and through you – that, in time, flourishes into generations of believers.

Finally, unpack faith for your children by unwrapping the gift of our response to God, the gift of a heart of gratitude, of thankfulness for all God has done for us. How is your heart? Is it grateful for the abundant provision of your God? Scripture reminds us to give thanks



continually, and it is important to proclaim God's goodness to others.

When we focus on God's goodness and his character, we are not only grateful, but we are motivated to believe him for more. Reflect often on how God has provided for you. Our faith grows as we remember his past intervention in our lives.

I know that many events in each of our lives cause us to grumble

– the opposite of being thankful. Sometimes we do nothing to deserve some of the circumstances that come our way. But consider this: Where does dwelling upon difficult circumstances get us? If we do not embrace the grace of God for these events, giving him our grumbling and ungratefulness, the cycle of sin continues and will not be broken. Our response of gratitude for God's grace and faithfulness to us through these events enables us to break the cycle. It enables the heritage of faith, of love, of mercy and of grace to be passed on to thousands of generations, by God's grace – to our children, to their children and their children's children.

We have a rich spiritual heritage passed down from and through the generations of those with faith. How many of us really understand this rich spiritual heritage? How many of your children, either physical or spiritual – the ones you minister to in your church – understand this rich spiritual heritage? What are you doing specifically to pass on the benefits of faith to your children? This Christmas, give them the most precious gift of all – the gift of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.



Covenant Family Ministries
from generation to generation

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**His mercy extends to
those who fear him, from
generation to genera-
tion.**

Covenant Family Ministries refreshes, renews and restores families through literature and teaching that provide a Biblical view of family relationships. At present we are looking for property to establish a conference center and campground that will focus on the needs of Christian families.

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Family News for the Holidays

Last summer the Baer and Shultz families relocated to a larger home in the same area of Centennial, CO. The reason for the change? Becky and Brian were expecting their sixth child

and Ruth's mom was ready to leave Illinois for a new address further West – and there was no room to shoehorn either in the old homestead! So we packed our bags and moved a little further West

ourselves, (about a mile and a half). The remodeling is almost finished and next issue, we'll show you the new and expanded offices of CFM. May you have a Merry Christmas and blessed New Year!



Candid shots of the King and Shultz families. Left – Jo and Josh and the gang, Ella, Emma, Abby and Noah. Right – Brian and Becky and their crew, Aaron, Laura, Drew, Ben and Hannah with September's newcomer, Jacob, in Becky's arms.