



The mission of Marble Retreat is to help bring healing, hope and restoration to those in vocational Christian ministry and the Church at large through Christ-centered brief intensive counseling.

Summer Edition 2009 • Providing Care since 1974 • Marble, Colorado

A TALE OF TRANSFORMATION, VICTORY, STRUGGLE AND STRIFE

By Steve Cappa



*“The thrill of victory...
the agony of defeat...
the human drama of
athletic competition...”*

Most all of you are familiar with this iconic quote from the late Jim MacKay, the famed sportscaster for ABC’s Wide World of Sports (1961-1998). I was a devoted follower and rarely missed the weekly weekend broad-

casts. His words, along through the 100 miles!) and I even found myself repeating MacKay’s aforementioned lines along with, much more importantly, those of the Apostle Paul: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run (ride!) with perseverance the race marked out for us (Hebrews 12, NIV).”

God has been very patient, generous and gracious with me over the years as I myopically watched my aging body gain excess weight in very slow, almost imperceptible, ways. He fired a number of health warning shots across my bow and I still ignored the need to change my life. Well, for a number of reasons, I finally got the message and took the necessary steps to change and I am now there. In the past, I even had the audacity to write a number of articles right within this newsletter medium regarding healthier living. . . for others but not for me! Well, this is all now a part of my history, as I’ve reached a very healthy goal weight, have dramatically reduced my personal pharmacy and feel the best I’ve felt in years.

Unfortunately, I’m also writing this article in the midst of a serious and excruciatingly painful lower back injury! I had been very physically active with many projects around the house and the next day woke up with great pain. I couldn’t find a comfortable spot to rest and was, quite frankly, gravely concerned that I’d herniated a disk. I knew this pain from the past and I was not at all happy about it visiting me anew, especially right on the heels of a very victorious event of fitness. To be honest, I was rather angry with God for allowing such a thing to

with that clip of the ski jumper crashing badly, will forever be in my mind.

I recently lived out some of this introductory line to ABC’s Wide World of Sports. A couple of Sundays ago, I rode my first Century bicycle event (100 miles), the culminating point of an 18-week personal transformation of losing over 60 pounds from my carcass and becoming physically fit in ways I never dreamed possible. Take a look at the accompanying photo! Yup, that’s me, big smile on my face, in an official photograph about 25 miles from the finish. I enrolled in this event the same week that I enrolled in the medically managed weight loss program (Health Management Resources: <http://www.hmrprogram.com>) with the full intention of this bike ride being the celebration of my life and lifestyle transformation. I trained like mad for many weeks on my bike, riding daily over 20 miles right in my basement. It all went very well, I had good legs (that’s bicycling speak for enough energy to get

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A TALE OF TRANSFORMATION, (CONTINUED)

occur right after He'd blessed me with such health and victory. Will I be able to ride my beloved bike again? Am I going to be disabled for a long time to come, maybe forever? Am I going to forfeit all of this wonderful momentum of overall health and fitness? These have been some of the dark thoughts and questions that have come to me in these few days since the injury. These kinds of injuries tend to take on a "wait and see" quality as I rest the back, take the meds and hopefully bid farewell to the pain and the injury. If not, we'll explore the possibility of corrective surgery, which would definitely result in an extended period of disability and rehabilitation.

Can you relate to these kinds of challenges? You know, three steps forward and two back? Even in a life committed to Christ? Not only am I in the middle of this challenge but many, if not all who come or have come to Marble Retreat, are in the throes of powerful setbacks in life, some accidental, some self-imposed. It is a common accompanying set of issues in those who arrive up here seeking transformation and hope for their lives, their marriages (when married) and their ministries. Well, there's no simple or easy answer to these life dilemmas. I can only say that the One who allowed me to arrive at a place of excellent restored health and fitness is also the One who is walking with me through this injury. Of this, I am very confident! I also know with great confidence that the very same One does not wish for us to enter into and stumble through these seasons of challenge alone! It is crucial for me, for all of us, to not alienate ourselves in our sufferings or celebrations for that matter. This is why I'm quite comfortable sharing with all of you some of my own victories and struggles. Secrecy in these kinds of things is never healthy! Oh, I'm not a completely "open book," but I do believe that we are designed to be in community. We make ourselves reasonably known to one another to aid in our odyssey through life with Him. Another facet of these kinds of challenges is that they are, in fact, "episodic." That is, they have both a beginning and they have an END! In the interim, it is crucial for us to maintain hope and to wait. Listen to the reflections of the Psalmist (it's a very popular book up here!): "I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. (Psalm 130:5)." And still more: "Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall (Psalm 55:22)." If you're with me in this or have been, take heart, we're not alone. Lean on Him as he has very strong legs and a very compassionate and loving heart!



GRILLED CHICKEN SALAD

Serves 8

8 chicken breasts, boneless, skinless
Lawry's Seasoning
red leaf lettuce
poppyseed dressing

mayonnaise
lemon pepper
red and green grapes, mandarin oranges, chopped nuts

Wash chicken breasts with cold water, pat dry with towel. Spread mayonnaise (1 tsp. per piece) on chicken and sprinkle with seasonings. Do this to both sides of chicken. Let marinate in refrigerator for 1-2 hours before grilling. Grill the chicken and be sure it is well done, test with knife.

Cut chicken in pieces in thin strips keeping one corner in tact so that it looks like a fan.

Serve on a bed of red leaf lettuce. Insert grapes, alternating in color, into each slit. Sprinkle grapes around, adding mandarin oranges and nuts (walnuts, pecans or cashews). Makes an attractive presentation. Drizzle with poppyseed dressing.

Serve this dish with warm fresh bread.



Henry & Eva

BLESSINGS

Brent McBurney contacted Patti in the spring asking if we would be interested in the article his Dad, Louis, wrote in the 90's in *The Christian Legal Society Quarterly*. It is a wonderful article we are sure you will enjoy.

Brent writes in *The Christian Lawyer*, "As my way of honoring my Dad, I would like to share this reprint from the Fall 1990 *Quarterly* entitled "Bestowing a Blessing," about trying to be a good father who bestows his blessings on his children. Now that I have been an attorney for almost 10 years, I have a much better appreciation for the disillusionment he mentions. However, as I reflect on his passing, I know full well that I received blessings from my Dad beyond measure, and I look forward to bestowing those blessings on my own two children. I will miss my Dad...., but knowing he is in the presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, provides our family with grace and peace. Thanks for your blessing, Dad."

Louis wrote his "From the Doctor" articles from 1988-1991. Louis and Melissa's son Brent is now the editor in chief of *The Christian Lawyer*, as well as the director of Legal Aid Ministries and Attorney Ministries for the Christian Legal Aid Society. Louis' article was reprinted in *The Christian Lawyer* Spring 2009.

BESTOWING A BLESSING

By Louis McBurney

What on earth are you working for? When I ask myself that question I find it increasingly difficult to answer.

When I first began to study medicine, I had high and lofty motives: to bring healing to suffering humankind, advance scientific knowledge, overturn the injustices of health-care delivery and lose myself in medical missions. I suppose that sort of idealism is typical of 20-year-olds. (Was I really my son's age when I got that degree?)

I've held on to some of the idealism, reality has beaten parts of it and I've allowed other noble causes to displace the rest. One aspect of life that gave my idealism a whole new agenda was gaining a son, his sister and her baby brother. Parenthood—what a relentless role! From diapers to diplomas, it keeps demanding. Yet, I wouldn't trade my family for the unfettered single life. All three of the kids are in school, so we're feeling some responsibility to see them through—safely launched into vocation, marriage and onto their own disillusionment.

Honorable Purposes

One of the reasons I'm working has to do with those three young McBurneys. I work to provide for their physical needs and wants. I work to make their journey into the next phase of life as smooth as possible. I work to help them cope with the tough spots. I work to endow them with a spiritual sense of the Eternal. I find as I near retirement that I'm working to avoid becoming dependent upon them. I think these purposes are honorable and worth my energy.

One aspect of parenting has caught my attention as I counsel people in crises—bestowing your blessing on your children. It's an emotional gift that may have little or nothing to do with all the other goals I've embraced. In fact, it may stand alone above them all. It can effectively happen in the absence of material provision, vocational preparation, development of relational skills, even of spiritual training. If it's neglected, all these goals may lose their power and value. It's something hard to acquire, and if lacking experientially, hard to give. Your "blessing" is a verbal and kinesthetic passing of acceptance and grace to the next generation. Symbolically, it is represented by the laying of your hands on the head of your sons and daughters. The power of that touch and the significance of the words, "I give you my blessing as my beloved child," are without equal. Without receiving a blessing an individual can easily become locked into frustration and despair. The compulsive search for that missing key to inner peace is tyrannical. You may know that from your own experience. Some may have even entered law, driven toward success to achieve a blessing that never seems to come.

Sadly, I've seen many clergy for whom grace and the reality of a loving heavenly Father have been obscured by yearning for a parent's blessing. A man recently wept bitterly in my arms as he recognized the deep pain of having never been blessed by his parents. He had worked devotedly, endlessly, to win their approval. It had never come. Finally, his ceaseless efforts had become overwhelmingly tiring. His fatigue drove him to understanding, and, at that moment, he found freedom. He realized that he had withheld his blessing from his own children. The most joyful part of the encounter for him was realizing that it wasn't too late. He could reverse a pattern that had been in his family for at least three generations.

That is good news. Your blessing empowers your children to bequeath grace to generations to come. In a way, all my purpose for working is enriched and expanded as I extend my blessing first in word, then through loving acceptance to my children. What a gift? What a joy!



Brent, with his wife, Elizabeth and parents, Louis & Melissa McBurney, at his swearing-in ceremony in Albany, N.Y., January, 2000.

EVEN A LEADER NEEDS A FRIEND DO YOU HAVE A BFF?

By Patti Cappa

What is a “BFF”? Truthfully, I have known what the BF was for quite awhile. I was befuddled by that second “F”. Those of you who are big in the texting world know that the whole BFF thing means Best Friend Forever. “Of course” you say, “who doesn’t know that”? That would be me.

Do you have a BFF? Very successful people, driven people, devoted people, people who are parents, people in leadership of all kinds, and people in ministry leadership sometimes don’t have a BFF. In fact, our experience at Marble Retreat is that our participants don’t have BFF’s. They say, “It isn’t safe to have them. I don’t have time for them. I am simply too busy with work and ministry to make such an investment. I really don’t need a BFF, that’s for children. I have God and/or my spouse and I don’t need anyone else.” Through my years of working with suffering people, I have learned that evil loves me/us to be all alone with our hurts and disappointments. This aloneness causes us to fold in on ourselves and make bad choices. It also breeds bitterness and resentment which are two attributes that do NOT describe our Savior. We need one or two same sex BFF’s. When our participants do say, “Yes, I have a best friend, or I have a cadre of friends that travel the highs and lows of life with me,” I just want to stand up and cheer. Jesus had disciples. We have friends.

I recently had the privilege of enjoying a few of my very own BFF’s. One friend I have known since we were in 4th grade. We recently visited and shared our stories. She tweaked my perspective regarding one of my family members which freed up my angst as my vision cleared. And again, I had the good fortune to attend the wedding of the daughter of a dear friend since we were 15. We did a lot of laughing together and shared a treasured memory of her only child’s wedding. With her, I am home. Another friend from my teen years is coming soon to visit. We spent over an hour last night talking on the phone about life, faith, our families and I came away from that conversation (she doesn’t even know this) with a conviction to make an apology to, yet again, someone else in my family. These friendships are old and sacred ones. They bring meaning and community to my life. They knew me when I and my world were small. They know many of my bad decisions, witnessed them and they still love me. They also spur me on to be more honest with myself and see my blind spots. They don’t do it because they have a mission to change me. It happens because we know each other. It is a simple yet profound truth that “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise.” Prov. 13:20. There are also some new and newer BFF’s in my life. They are dear women friends made along the journey of life. I am grateful for them all and their willingness to walk and share their wisdom with me.

There are examples of BFF’s in our Bible characters. One of my favorite examples is Mary, the mother of Jesus. When she was told by the angel that God had gotten her pregnant pre-nuptials, he also told her to visit her BFF. That would be her cousin Elizabeth who had recently discovered her own miraculous pregnancy. They spent the next several months together. I am confident they shared their fears, their hopes and their nausea. They may even have shared a struggle or two regarding a silent husband or fiancé. Mary needed a wise friend to walk with her at such a tenuous time. The Lord provided one and Mary obeyed. I have never been visited by an angel, but I do get inspirations to make a connection. I don’t always listen to these inspirations, much to my disappointment in my disobedience. Of course, life gets busy and derails these inspirations. I have no excuse.

Is the Lord inspiring you to make a connection with a wise person you hardly know or reconnect with an old friend you have known well? I urge you to give it a try. Remember, “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise.” Go ahead, take a risk, find a BFF or two and grow in wisdom.



Patti and her BFF’s

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*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

ALUMNI NOTES

I know that I am one tiny part of what Marble is all about and yet am very aware of the huge difference that my visit there has made to my life. I pray that God would continue to envision, anoint and equip you all to continue to grow and develop the loving care and compassion that you pour into the lives of those who come your way as He leads you into the next chapter and that you would know His comfort and strength for the journey. 2007 Alum

Thank you both for the hard but life changing work that you do! It makes a huge difference! We are still together serving the Lord with a beautiful daughter and another on the way in part because of the time spent at Marble Retreat. It's been a long, painful journey, but you gave us a good needed starting point and foundation. 2006 Alum

We leave this mountain top changed people. Thank you for seeking the Lord with your competency, then so gracefully and peacefully leading and guiding us together and separately. We will cherish this experience and I pray we are able to recreate it at our home and share it with others.

As I leave, I am reminded about God's word in Isaiah 63:1.....to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. 2009 Alum

What an incredible gift this program is to those of us who are broken in the Kingdom. Only eternity will be able to measure the impact. 2009 Alum

Steve and Patti-

It has been a year and three months since we were at Marble Retreat. I was thanking God tonight for the beautiful healthy marriage that we have and the Holy Spirit lead me to thank you for all that you do to help troubled marriages. Marble was like an incubator for our desperately hurting marriage. We often look at our pictures of our time at the retreat. Marble is a holy alter for us because that is where God brought forgiveness (when I truly did not think it was possible) for an offense that broke our world. God also brought healing and brought the process of wholeness to our souls. It was God's gift to us. The lodge, the staff, the food, and the fireplace brought heaven to our "hell" and gave us hope and tools on how to mend our marriage. From the bottom of my heart--thank you. Without Marble we would have been a statistic of divorce, but now we stand as a trophy of grace. Thanks too, for the scholarship that you gave to my husband and me. I love you and we are two lives that have been changed forever. 2008 Alum

FUNDS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED!

We are grateful for all who regularly and sacrificially give to this ministry. Funds are always needed to simply provide for the ministry needs of our retreat. Marble Retreat continues to provide special and needed care to people, most of them in ministry, that lead to a positive transformation in their lives. In order to continue to provide that care, resources of funds are very necessary. These are tough economic times, yet the needs are still here and, therefore, so are the needed funds. In Gary Hoag's article in ECFA's Focus on Accountability he states, "To raise funds in a time of crisis, we must ask people who run foundations to open the storehouses, implore those who have assets to sell some of them, and exhort everyone to give to God sacrificially." We, therefore, exhort you, please give to the ministry of Marble Retreat and help someone get the help they sorely need.

GROUP SCHEDULE FOR 2009

8-day sessions

(Participants arrive Tuesday late afternoon and depart Thursday morning, 8 days later)

July 21-30*	Sept 1-10 *	Oct. 27-Nov. 5*
August 4 - August 13	Sept. 15-24	Nov. 10 - 19
August 18-27	Oct. 13-22	Dec. 1 - 10*

*Indicates group is open to all believers. All other listed groups are for clergy only.

Sessions are limited to eight people total. If married, your spouse is required to attend with you. Session dates are subject to change on occasion. Please call to confirm a reservation prior to booking flights.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY OUR NEWSLETTER

We have a variety of articles in this newsletter that we hope will give you some encouragement to live healthier, bless your child or call a friend. These are all important things. Melissa's son Brent sent us an article his Dad, Louis wrote in the 90's that is as important today as it was then, especially with so many rites of passage happening with graduations, weddings and mission travels that happen in the summer. Steve has undergone a major life transformation which he will tell you all about inside.



Steve & Patti Cappa

DON'T FORGET! We continue to orchestrate the Alumni Forum accessed through our website. Click into a supportive and interesting discussion lead by Marble Retreat staff.

If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically, please notify us at ministrycare@marbleretreat.org.

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list,
please let us know electronically or simply call us toll free at 888-216-2725.

Do you want to be on our prayer team? Email Patti at pcappa@marbleretreat.org
and she'll put you on her email distribution list.

Summer 2009

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