



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 2007 • Providing Care since 1974 • Marble, Colorado

WOUNDS AND SCARS

By Steve Cappa

“...by his wounds you have been healed.”

(Note: As a rich illustration of “Wounds and Scars”, I had intended to begin this article with a personal story relating to my recent surgery on my long-injured left Achilles tendon. This surgery took place last December, left me disabled for a couple of months, yet is now well on the way toward total healing and a vastly improved lifestyle. However, as many of you now know, this last May my dear bride, Patti, was shockingly and suddenly discovered with a grapefruit-sized tumor encasing her left kidney! We rushed to the Mayo Clinics in Rochester, MN, where within a few days she was diagnosed with Renal Cell Carcinoma followed by a very successful radical nephrectomy! It was both a horrific month and also a rich and wonderful one as we found anew God’s love through His people, surrounded by thousands of prayer warriors. Patti is recovering nicely, though, to be sure, we now live with the ominous specter of her being a cancer survivor).

As is well known, folks seek out the services of Marble Retreat because they are wounded, hurting and in deep need of God’s love, transformation and healing. Even our mission statement underscores this fact: *Helping to bring healing, hope and restoration to those in vocational Christian ministry and the Church at large through Christ-centered brief intensive counseling.* These wounds, more often than not, are of a psychological and/or spiritual nature, though some come with the addition of a physical wound or injury. Either way, wounds in life are common to us all, the sad result of the fall of humankind as stated in Genesis 3. Wounds are an inevitable fact of life, and even our dear children, despite our best efforts as parents to protect them from harm, incur wounds- sometimes even by our own words or hands! Some excellent and biblically sound writings have been provided on the topic of human suffering, which will not be covered in this article. Suffice it to say that we are not designed to tolerate pain, either physical or psychological. We will even reflexively recoil away from physical pain! Moreover, it is common and expected for all of us to protest our wounds, stating such things as, “I need to stop hurting now!” or “I’d do anything to be rid of

this pain!” Yet, in an odd way, we here at Marble Retreat actually help folks to suffer more fully, particularly in the realm of emotional and spiritual pain. Please, at the risk of sounding sadistic, allow me to explain! I am not speaking of allowing folks to suffer physical pain but rather, because of our ability to hide emotional and spiritual pain (resulting in an impaired life), we encourage people to fully express themselves, all in the interest of healing and personal growth in Christ. This explanation, frequently shared in our groups, takes the literary form of allegory which is a kind of short story telling, biblically-based but originating from a medical model as follows.

The notion of a wound is largely understood in physical terms. For example, a person suffers a laceration on his or her forearm. That laceration is not only painful but is an insult to the body. We quickly begin to lose precious bodily fluid (blood) and that wound, immediately becomes the focus of the injured person. It demands medical attention and becomes the focus of one’s life. In the presence of a wound, the scope of that life narrows, at least for a season. Failure to do so can result in serious loss of bodily fluid and infection, which can spread to other areas of the body. If that laceration is severe enough, one needs to seek the aid of a physician, which may be in a local hospital emergency room. The physician will quickly ascertain the severity of the wound, administer both oral and topical anesthesia to reduce the pain, then begin the process of cleansing the wound, which itself can be painful (sometimes even more so than the original injury!) as she washes and even scrubs the wounded area to rid it of any infecting foreign material. Suturing of the wound may also be required. If the process goes well, the blood performs one of its intended functions- it coagulates and a scab forms. Of course, the physician will also administer antibiotics to

“Our scars are intended to tell a story.”

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boost the body's natural tendency to fight off infection. The wound is bandaged and must be kept clean as it heals, as that scab solidifies beneath the protective covering, itself a kind of protective covering for the body. Over time, the bandage is removed, the scab falls off and often a scar will be a reminder of the wound. If there was no infection and if the suturing has gone well, there may be little sign of a scar. Nonetheless, we do not get by with these kinds of injuries devoid of some form of blemish.

Beyond the initial pain and suffering of the original injury, one might ask, "Why a scar?" or "What is the purpose of that scar?" These are most appropriate questions and have, in my opinion, great relevancy, both personally and biblically, to our discussion. Moving beyond the medical illustration above, it is worthy to repeat that we all incur physical, emotional and spiritual wounds. Unlike physical wounds, however, we seem to think that we have the ability to hide our emotional and spiritual wounds! This, I firmly believe, is an illusion and one that can leave long-term "infections", especially in our relationships with one another. Furthermore, we have found that pretending or hiding our emotional/spiritual wounds requires a great deal of energy that could otherwise be utilized in much healthier and productive ways. When people are wounded emotionally and/or spiritually, they "leak" precious "emotional fluids" and tend to live more narrow and less productive lives, hopefully, for just a season of time. However, many of our dear guests arrive stuck in their wounds and even more suffering from various relational infections. The task of Marble Retreat is to "*help bring healing, hope and restoration*" to those who come. This most often takes the form of creating a safe setting in which they can fully and freely express their hurts, to "cleanse their wounds," if you will. The result is that they forge ahead in life with a good healthy "scab," one that eventually falls off, leaving a "scar." People often express their wounds in terms of hoping to forget that which has occurred. Unfortunately, God grants us the capacity for memories and so forgetting is not a reasonable expectation. Rather, like a scar, the painful events of our lives remain a part of who we are, though they do not exclusively define who we are. The scar remains as a vestige of one's life and, in fact, tells a story or a chapter of a story of one's life. This happens when someone else notices the "scar" and inquires of what they observe. We can then freely share that story, perhaps in hopes of benefiting the one who asked. In my opinion and experience, scarred people are "safer" people, easier to share one's life with, and deeper people, both emotionally and spiritually.

How does all this relate to the Bible? Consider the following passage: "*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed (1 Peter 2:24, NIV).*" This crucial resurrection passage underscores the wonderful fact that Jesus bore our sins to reconcile us to the Father, that we who believe can have eternal life. Of particular emphasis in this passage is the concept of "wounds." Christ suffered, in fact, fatal wounds, that He miraculously overcame. While the passage clearly states wounds, it is best understood in terms of scars. Artistry depicting the resurrected Christ shows him healed and scarred- no bleeding! Moreover, in artistry, he is depicted in his resurrected state, standing strongly with his arms and hands open in a welcoming gesture to all who come. For me, in my understanding of our Savior, in terms of wounds and scars, this is most crucial. Our scars, just like His, are intended to tell a story. Furthermore, scarring can make us very welcoming people as well! A welcoming person is a safe and kind person, one who is able to see and hear the perspectives of others. A wounded person generally struggles with this. Let me be clear, we all suffer wounds, so we all go through seasons when we are, in fact, not very safe nor kind to others. However, our goal with these wounds is a scar- a welcoming and kind spirit that has, unfortunately, suffered.

The Cappas have suffered some serious physical, emotional and spiritual wounds lately! How 'bout you? We are deeper people of God for them and, while we did not deliberately seek out these events, we are grateful for them and they have (and continue to!) enhanced our lives, especially in our interactions with our guests and with their wounds. May God help you through your seasons of wounds so that a strong and rich scar remains!



GROUP SCHEDULE FOR 2007

8-day sessions

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

July 24 – August 2

Sept. 4 - 13

Oct. 23 – Nov. 1

August 7 – 16 *

Sept. 18 - 27

Nov. 6 - 15

August 21 - 30

Oct. 9 – 18 *

Dec. 4 – 13 *

* 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. When making travel plans, plan to arrive Tuesday late afternoon and depart Thursday morning.



Melissa & Louis

WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

By Louis and Melissa McBurney

The Lord has really been working overtime lately for Marble Retreat. The exciting news, of course, is Patti's remarkable recovery. We're all so grateful for your prayers for her (and for us all) as she faced that challenge. Meanwhile, the groups "worldwide" continue to go well. The Lord is bringing missionaries from throughout Asia and Africa and providing the funding for that ministry. Thanks to each of you for your prayers and support that are making those groups effective. Our God is indeed a "healer" and "provider" – Jehova, Jairah. We are overwhelmed by the faithful response to the nudging of His Spirit.

THIS COMING FALL OF 2007, MARBLE RETREAT WORLDWIDE WILL BE OFFERING THE FOLLOWING SESSIONS:

THAILAND

First Group: September 2, 2007 – September 12, 2007

Second Group: September 13, 2007 – September 23, 2007

The Thailand groups will take place at Suan Thip Vana, a beautiful resort situated peacefully in the valley of nature between Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai.

KENYA

First Group: October 14, 2007 – October 24, 2007

Second Group: October 25, 2007 – November 4, 2007

Marble Retreat Worldwide is returning to the Aberdare Country Club, which is closed to the public during this time, and has graciously offered to open its doors exclusively to Marble Retreat Worldwide for our two sessions. Located near Nyere north of Nairobi, the club nestles on the slopes of Mweiga Hill and is a haven of unhurried charm.

Group size is limited to four English speaking couples/singles per session with no more than one couple/single from any particular mission agency. Complete information on cost and registration is available by emailing us at marbleretreatworldwide@marbleretreat.org, or by mail at Marble Retreat World Wide, P.O. Box 176, Carbondale, CO 81623, USA.

THINK ABOUT IT

Our newsletter is one of the avenues we take to inform you of the needs of the ministry. The needs continue to be great as food and shelter costs continue to increase. As of this writing we have served over 90 people stateside. We will certainly serve more people this year than last. This doesn't even count the people that are served by Louis and Melissa McBurney overseas.

We appreciate your willingness to think about becoming a part of our financial support and are blessed by those of you who already sacrificially give. It is a humble blessing. Our services are unique in that we don't make the participant form to our agenda. Rather, the participant is the agenda, making this a special experience where they and God have an opportunity to straighten things out in community. The specialty of the service is the reason we only have 8 people in the lodge per session.

There continue to be several opportunities to give. We have available the enclosed envelope for a check, the credit card option by calling our office, and you may now support us via the internet. Just go to our website and click on "Donate."

Thank you for your prayerful consideration in using some of the resources the Lord has provided you to support this ministry in the new millennium.

COMFORT FOOD

By Patti Cappa

In May, while in the hospital, I was unable to eat for about a week. Those who know me won't be surprised that I was starving, whether or not my insides could handle food or not! My dear friend, Loly, who was with me throughout the entire surgery, asked what kind of food I would like to eat if I could. I picked something I had only had twice in my life, Marcia Pope's Cheese Grits. Our last two board meetings have seen Marcia at the helm of the kitchen prep and this Southern California girl loves her southern cheese grits! So here they are for your own dining comfort:



Marcia Pope

Cheese Grits

- 1 cup grits
- 4-5 cups water
- ½ lb. Old English cheese (Marcia uses 2 jars)
- 1 grated/mashed pod of garlic (Marcia uses 2)
- 1 TB Worcestershire sauce
- Dash Tabasco
- 2 beaten eggs
- ½ stick butter

Cook grits in water but not until dry. Add remaining ingredients until cheese melts. Put into a greased 2 quart casserole dish. Bake 30 minutes until brown. Let cool and set before serving. Can be frozen. Serves 10.

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FEAR AND FAITH

A Personal Reflection

By Patti Cappa

I have often thought about the relationship between fear and faith. What is a healthy balance? It is healthy to have a good dose of fear. It can keep us from doing some pretty dangerous things. However, if we let fear rule our lives, it can disable us. I have often thought that if I let fear overwhelm me, it would push my faith right out of my life. It is difficult to live with both simultaneously. Yet, isn't that just what we do? I want my faith to be strong and vibrant but not let it be overcome by my fear. But do I want that to happen all the time? Let me explain. . .

I had a recent life experience that illustrates how these two aspects of my humanity have interacted. In mid April, as I was trying to fall asleep, I had this weird thought that there was something inside my abdomen on the right side. I just didn't feel quite right. Following that thought, I had a wave of anxiety and great fear come over me and I prayed, "Oh God, I just better go to the doctor." I made that doctor's appointment. I continued to live normally, running 3 miles a few times a week, working, sleeping well and eating well. In fact, all seemed well.

Though I felt well, I listened to my fear and kept my doctor's appointment. I am so glad I did! I ended up having a grapefruit size cancerous tumor in and around my kidney (renal cell carcinoma). The month of May was devoted to surgery and recovery. The cancer was contained in the kidney which is a very good result and prognosis for me. I don't have to have any further treatment though, as a cancer survivor, I face the regular check-ups and evaluations to assure that my body remains cancer free.

Where does the faith come in? I can't explain the "why" of my experience, but I can attempt to describe it. The day before we saw the doctor, I told Steve that I thought it was cancer and that I thought the doctors would be able to cut it all out of my body. I don't know why I thought this, I just did. When they gave me the diagnosis, my reaction was quite casual: "Yeah, I figured that's what it was." Poor Steve was in shock! I had a few scriptures as well as old hymns and worship songs that have held me up for several years that came

to mind often during that week before surgery. I kept telling Steve, "God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord, even Jehovah, is my strength and my song." (Isaiah 12:2) And I can tell you with great confidence that I was not afraid. I have been more afraid of driving my car than I was being rolled into that operating room! I am still confounded and blessed by this sense of peace and contentment I experienced. In pre-op I said, "Wow, Lord, I have been afraid of some pretty stupid stuff in my life and I am not scared now when I should be." I can only say that though I had faced the possibility of my own death (renal cell carcinoma is very lethal if metastasized), I am less afraid of death than I was before May, (well, a little bit anyway). I believe there will be a great big welcome for me in heaven and that gives me comfort.

I had another very interesting experience during that month of May. Many, many people around the country and even out of the country were praying for me. I literally felt like I was going to battle and was flanked on all sides by prayer warriors all praying on my behalf. I know people were praying for me when I just could not pray for myself. It is a very humbling experience. I did not ask God to make the cancer be encased in the kidney, though I listened to others pray that on my behalf. I simply believed that was the case. I did consider the possibility that it wasn't, but I wasn't crossing that bridge yet. For the time being, I had a job to do and that was to be the most rested, calm and well nourished I could be for my operation.

One of the best things we can do with fear is let it inform us, listen to it, ask why we have it and decide if it is real or imagined and act accordingly. I used to think my fears were pretty useless and to be honest, most of them were/are, but this most recent waltz with fear was very helpful to me. In fact, it saved my life. Somehow, along the way, faith took over for me when I needed it most. The prayers of His faithful sons and daughters will always make me cry and God's faithful walk with me will always give me comfort.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF MARRIAGE

This summer Steve and I celebrate 25 years of marriage. It was a big milestone that we had been planning to celebrate on Maui for the last 6 months. We were blessed by the generosity of friends and family who made it possible for us. What a delight to be able to spend 11 days with the ease and comfort of a life partner. It was made especially sweet by the 9 inch scar on Patti's abdomen that reminded us both of the tenuousness of life and the depth of the gift God gives when He breathes life into us. We spent those days on the island riding warm ocean waves, snorkeling, biking down Mt. Haleakala for Steve and just resting. It was better than our honeymoon 25 years previous! This time we only had 2 quarrels in 11 days! On our honeymoon we had 2 quarrels every few hours! Years of marriage don't come easy and there are many wounds that come with the partnership. But there is healing to be had as well. We pray for you reading this newsletter and for the wounds that are received whether partnerships survive or fail, that He brings healing to each of you in its proper time. Hang on to the heavenly Father because He won't let go of you.



-Patti and Steve

Steve and Patti

Summer 2007

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