



The Ancient Quest for Peace

By Catherine Clark Kroeger

During the 1930s, a glass box in our sun parlor contained a family treasure: the peace treaty of King Entemena of Lagash. Some 4,500 years ago, Entemena issued the contract and commanded his scribes to produce more than forty identical inscribed documents, declaring the peace that had been negotiated with the king of Erech (Gen. 10:10). The identical records were implanted in the temple of the goddess Inana in her temple at Tel-loh, not far from modern Bagdad.

But how did our family come upon this prize? Here the story turns to an early archaeologist named Edgar J. Banks. He had been assigned to the American embassy in Baghdad and spent his spare time examining relics of the ancient cultures that had lain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Archaeology became his passion, and in 1902 he was appointed director of the University of Chicago's Babylonian Expedition, funded by John Rockefeller. It took two years to obtain permission from the Ottoman government, but at last the archaeological work commenced.

There were rich finds, and local inhabitants offered him countless artifacts.

Banks was to accumulate an enormous hoard of clay tablets, pottery, cylinder seals and numerous other artifacts from sites throughout the Middle East. These would later be acquired by a multitude of museums, universities and seminaries throughout America. He understood that these objects represented a precious historical heritage that was not being conserved by the Ottomans. Although at first Banks was primarily concerned with educational and research values, old age, declining health and the Great Depression caused him to turn to private collectors to sell the remainder of his collections. Still mindful of professional integrity, he sold well below the rates of regular dealers of antiquities—indeed, at fire-sale prices. Each piece came with a careful description identifying the find-site, dating and translation—though the letters are now yellowed with age and fragile to handle. Banks's other ventures took him further afield, including an association with Cecil B. DeMille that appears to have generated the prototype of Indiana Jones. Like Banks, our family came to the conclusion that the peace treaty, after nearly a century in our possession, would be better placed in an institution where it

could bring an understanding of how the ancients wrote, thought and created enduring records, what values they prized, and how they viewed the society in which they lived. Made of mud clay, our particular piece is shaped like a giant nail with crisp wedge-shaped writing, known as cuneiform, on its lower portion. Unlike the copy on display at the Louvre, ours is still in perfect condition, as good as the day it was minted.

The first institution to which I offered the gift simply was not interested. Even though that ceremonial nail contained the earliest known record of a peace treaty, the existence of forty other copies greatly reduced the value and made it of no interest. A second curator, a graduate of the University of Chicago aware of Banks's contribution to the knowledge of the Ancient Near East, was delighted to display the object alongside a Greek peace treaty more than a millennium younger.

But the initial rejection caused me to think about peace, whether ancient or contemporary, in a different way. Records of military conquests abound in the Near East, but here was a document that celebrated the arts of diplomacy rather than war. There is much we do not know about Entemena, but it is clear that he cared deeply about the creation of

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How Can We End the Cycle?

By Barbara Fisher-Townsend

Let's consider the implications of "one family's story," a composite of family stories I have heard and read over a number of years. As I reread this story, it occurred to me that those of us committed to ending domestic violence in families of faith have yet to find a coordinated response to abuse that ends the cycle for so many families. Stories of success are few and far between. But it may be useful, after you have read the story, for me to point out some resources that I believe do assist community interventions to increase the possibility of change, to provide the hope so necessary when working toward ending cycles of abuse.

One Family's Story

It is Friday evening in Ourtown. Bill, a local furniture store delivery truck driver, arrives home from work after having a few drinks with the boys to recover from a tension-filled week on the road. His wife Mary arrived home earlier and is in the kitchen preparing dinner for Bill and their three young children. The children sit in the family room watching television as they wait for supper. As Bill and Mary talk, she mentions that for the next few weeks she will be spending several evenings per week making costumes for the church play. Bill is disturbed by this news. That means he will have full responsibility for caring for the children three nights a week for several weeks while Mary is busy. As he ponders the implications of this situation, his anger begins to simmer. "How can she do this to me?" he

wonders. "She knows I'm under pressure at work. This isn't fair."

The family gathers around the kitchen table. Thanks for the food are offered and Mary serves the family. The children are fidgety and tired and complain that they do not like the food. Mary tries to calm them as she senses the tension in the air. Finally, supper is finished and the children return to watching television. Bill's anger has continued to simmer throughout the meal. "This is not how a proper, submissive wife would behave," he thinks. "She should have asked my permission first. She's more concerned with her own needs than mine."

As Mary leaves the table to begin the clean-up, Bill shouts at her, "You can't do this to me! You only think about yourself!" Mary is used to such outbursts and has heard them many times before. She knows she must remain calm and decides to say nothing in return, but her silence angers Bill even more. He lashes out, pushing Mary into the door of the fridge. The children, now aware of what's happening, tearfully plead with their father not to hurt their mother. Bill's anger escalates. He slaps his oldest child Jack, and when Mary tries to intervene he pushes her to the floor. As she lies on the floor, Bill begins to kick her while yelling that no one cares about him and his needs. "This is not the way a Christian wife is supposed to behave!"

Jack runs to the phone and calls 911 to report that his father has injured his mother. Several months ago, his mother had taught him what to do in case his father became violent again. The three children then run to Jack's room and huddle together in fear, crying quietly. In the kitchen,

Mary sobs in fear and pain while Bill stands over her threateningly, saying what a terrible wife she is and how she makes him treat her this way.

The police arrive and Bill meets them at the door. They inquire about the situation, but he states that there is no problem and that they must be mistaken. They insist on speaking with his wife. When they enter, they find Mary in the kitchen—bruised, bloodied and sobbing. Immediately, they place Bill under arrest, read him his rights and lock him in the police car. As they begin to question Mary, she says this was all her fault. "He didn't mean any harm. I upset him." After ensuring she is not in immediate need of medical assistance, the police officers advise Mary that they have arrested Bill, that he will spend the weekend in jail, and that on Monday morning his case will come to docket court. They ask her cooperation in attending the court. They explain that this behavior is a crime, and they offer Mary the contact information for a victim assistance representative.

On Saturday morning, Mary contacts her pastor, Robert Jones, for his counsel and assistance. He comes to her home to speak with her and the children. After offering prayer to comfort the family, the pastor asks to speak with Mary alone. He questions her about what has happened. Mary begins by acknowledging that Bill has been under increasing pressure at work over the past year or so. Bill has had frequent outbursts of yelling and name-calling at home, and on a few occasions raised his hand to hit her and pushed her down. Reverend Jones listens intently to Mary and offers to help her in any way he can. Since he doesn't consider himself equipped to do so, he advises that she and Bill

consult a Christian therapist for counseling and offers the names of a few counselors in the area. He mentions that she should consider buying Bill a parenting book, perhaps one written by Dr. James Dobson, a respected Christian expert on family issues. He suggests that this behavior is probably the result of communication difficulties between the couple. He also suggests that Mary turn to the Bible for guidance and support.

Although he encounters many situations of family violence within his congregation, the pastor received no specific training while in seminary or since, nor has he been able to find helpful information from a Christian perspective about the issue. He does his best with the knowledge that he has, always focusing on the sanctity of the family and the commitment of marriage vows.

On Monday morning, Mary appears at the court and is greeted by a victim assistance representative who asks to speak with her prior to Bill's court appearance. As they speak, Mary begins to realize that she is indeed the innocent party here and that Bill must take responsibility for his abusive behavior. Mary's report that her pastor has suggested couples counseling is met with resistance from the court worker, who explains that this type of counseling is not helpful and indeed dangerous in cases of wife abuse. She advises that Mary consider separating from Bill, at least temporarily, until he has completed a batterer treatment program and demonstrates his willingness to change his behavior.

Bill's case is brought before a judge. Mary sits in the courtroom watching the scene unfold with a heavy heart as Bill glares at her from the witness stand. On the advice of his lawyer, Bill pleads guilty to the charges of assault, and the judge orders a sentence of probation, to include the completion of a batterer treatment program at a licensed facility and attendance at an alcohol

treatment program. He then releases Bill from custody with the stipulation that he contact the treatment programs within ten days.

After spending the weekend in jail, Bill has conflicting emotions. On one hand, he is terribly embarrassed and furious at Mary for causing this to happen to him. On the other hand, he is remorseful that he has treated her so badly. He approaches Mary and suggests they go out for lunch and spend some time talking about how they can handle the problems in their marriage. Although Mary is reluctant to raise issues that might anger Bill, she agrees to do this because she loves him and wants to keep their marriage together. Their discussions over lunch go well. They decide that life will go back to normal and that Bill will enroll in the counseling programs.

Several days later, Bill arrives at the treatment facility for his intake into the batterer's intervention program. When questioned about his violence he states, "I am not violent." The intake worker looks at his records and notes the contrary. He provides Bill with information about treatment costs, attendance requirements and programs elements. Bill is required to attend twice weekly for ten weeks and then once weekly for ten additional weeks. The worker then suggests an appropriate alcohol treatment plan available through another agency, and Bill proceeds to enroll in that program as well. When he next attends church services, he informs the pastor that everything is fine, that he and Mary have reconciled and that he is seeking help. The pastor is greatly relieved that this difficult situation is now being resolved.

While attending his first group session at the treatment facility, Bill concludes that he is different from all the other guys. He is not a violent man. He loves his family and he only occasionally hits Mary and only when she makes him do it. He does realize, however, that he must attend because of the court order. He is once again

angered at being burdened with this time-consuming responsibility and this additional cost. "I am a good husband and a good father," he thinks. "It's Mary's selfish behavior that makes me so angry." His reaction in the alcohol treatment group is similar: after all, these guys have serious drinking problems and, although he drinks to excess when he does drink, he only drinks once or twice a week.

Bill attends five more batterers' intervention sessions and a similar number of alcohol treatment sessions before he decides that he is "cured" and that he no longer needs to pay out all this money for counseling. He convinces Mary that he will never do this again and that he truly loves her and the children. He says he will do anything to keep their marriage together.

The programs notify the court that Bill has dropped out of treatment in violation of his probation. Court staff add this information to his file and place it at the bottom of a long list of cases that require follow-up as time permits.

Three months later, Bill and Mary's son again has to call the police. This time Mary is severely injured and requires medical care, and Bill has left the home. His file is resurrected from the follow-up pile, and his probation officer refers the file to the court for adjudication; Bill is rearrested and, because this is a second domestic violence report, he is charged with a felony offense rather than a misdemeanor. Mary once more seeks the counsel of Pastor Jones about how to cope with this and indeed whether to continue with the marriage. The children are again traumatized by witnessing their father's violence and their mother's injuries.

Bill will appear in the courts, charged with a second domestic violence offense. The judge will decide what conditions he will have to meet and whether, due to his breach of probation, he should serve time in jail. His probation officer will once again develop a plan based on the case dis-

position. When appropriate, Bill will recommence treatment for both domestic violence and alcohol abuse. Since he did not complete the programs, he must start both again at the beginning. For all of the parties involved, the cycle continues.

Supportive Elements toward Ending the Cycle of Violence

Support and assistance from faith communities can have an enormous impact on changing the thinking and behavior of violent religious men. The pastors and members of the faith communities of abusive men can offer them ongoing support and encouragement, provide numerous services, make themselves available, model appropriate behavior, and generally be there where and when they are needed. Opportunities for men to interact with other people of faith, as they make their way through the intervention agenda delineated for them, can reinforce the power of the prophetic

voice. Additionally, people of faith may serve as models of the process of hope-in-action and the characteristic of hopefulness. Their arms are wide and their hearts are big, and both serve as a shelter for troubled men. This type of supportive network can be of enormous benefit to men who are struggling to stay on the right path.

From the perspective of men enrolled in a faith-based intervention program, whom Nancy Nason-Clark and I interviewed, these networks often first appear within the jail or prison where other inmates of faith reach out, offering spiritual and practical support through prayer, sharing Bible studies, and friendship in a hostile environment. Once they move into a therapeutic environment, other men offer understanding and support as they make their journey together toward change. They feel for each other—the joys, the successes, the pain and the frustrations. It is quite amazing to see this disparate group of

men consoling or congratulating each other.

Having access to resources sufficient to overcome the many roadblocks in the difficult lives of these men can serve to encourage that crucial sense of hope—which they do appreciate, “one day at a time.” According to Nuland (2002), hope is a powerful element in the therapeutic arsenal: “The great metaphors from all spiritual traditions—grace, liberation, being born again, awakening from illusion—testify that it is possible to transcend the conditions of my past and do a new thing” (Brussat and Brussat 1996:434 in Braswell, Fuller and Lozoff 2001).

Hope, sometimes so elusive when considering violence in families of faith, can be a powerful force in ending cycles of violence. ❧

For resources and information, visit the RAVE Project at www.theraveproject.org.



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Thank you!



August Training Event

Working With Christian Batterers and Victims Eastern Nazarene University, August 7, 2009

On August 7, 2009, PASCH will offer a training event at Eastern Nazarene University in Quincy, Massachusetts. The theme is “Working with Christian Batterers and Victims.” Leaders will include our own board member Julie Owens, a member of the National Training Team, FaithTrust Institute in Seattle, Washington, and director of HOPE Violence and Trauma Consultants. She is a site coordinator for the RAVE Project, as well as a nationally respected domestic violence expert and certified trainer. Julie’s assignment is to describe the particular needs and attitudes of a religious victim and how best to address them.

Our special guests will be Ty Schroyer and Barb Jones-Schroyer, certified trainers in both the secular and Christian version of the widely recognized Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP). As part of a coordinated community response to violence, the program works directly with offenders, confronting batterers’ behavior and questioning their beliefs as compassionately as possible. Nevertheless, it holds offenders accountable and places the onus of intervention on the community, not on the individual woman being beaten. The program has become a model for other jurisdictions seeking to deal more effectively with domestic violence.

After working on the DAIP staff for several years, Ty and Barb recognized the need for a modification when dealing with Christian perpetrators, and in 2003 they made a proposal to begin an independent but collaborative faith-based intervention class called “Changing Men, Changing Lives” (CMCL). Two CMCL classes now meet weekly, and the Christian model developed by the Schroyers is offered periodically in the Duluth training schedule. This training takes the Duluth Model Curriculum and grounds it within a Christian cultural focus. The training focuses primarily on how to facilitate men’s nonviolence educational classes, but also includes guidance on how clergy can partner with domestic violence agencies and support services for women. The Schroyers have also developed a training manual “Creating a Process of Change for Men who Batter—Christian Focus,” which is available from DAIP (www.theduluthmodel.org).

Schedule

- 8:30 Registration
- 9:00 *The Duluth Model Adapted for Abusers Who Profess a Christian Faith (Ty and Barb Schroyer)*
- 10:00 Break
- 10:15 *Understanding the Christian Victim and Her Worldview: Why She Will Never Be the Same Again (Julie Owens)*
- 11:15 Break
- 11:30 *Strategic Use of Scripture as Support Rather Than Roadblock (Catherine Kroeger)*
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 *Panel discussion: Addressing Issues of Hierarchy, Male Dominance and Scripturally Based Equality (Ty and Barb Schroyer and Catherine Kroeger)*
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 *Paths toward Healing for the Victim and Her Faith Community (Julie Owens)*
- 3:15 Wrap-up
- 3:30 Dismissal

Cost for the August 7 event is \$45.00, which includes a light breakfast and lunch (there is a student rate of \$30.00 and limited scholarships are available). Registration is available online at www.peaceandsafety.com.

Additionally, on August 8 there will be an opportunity for interaction and discussion of the issues that have been raised the previous day. It will be held at the PASCH home site in Brewster on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. There is no charge to attend this event.

The Homegoing of Bonnie Shullenberger

On February 20, we received the following note from Bill Shullenberger:

Dear Catherine and other PASCH friends,

I am sorry to tell you that your friend, my beloved Bonnie, died on February 9, in Kindred Hospital of New Orleans, of complications of liver disease. She had been hospitalized for three weeks, and just as it appeared she was mending, she had some setbacks, and left this mortal life behind. Her involvement with PASCH, and everything she did with and learned from all of you, was one of the great passions for justice and charity in these last years. It took her, and me with her, from a lowly anger about our daughter and her children into a deepened solidarity with all women, and all victims of violence.

So, thank you all. I offer this modest contribution of memory of her and in gratitude for your witness and your work.

*In Christ,
Bill Shullenberger*

We extend our love and sympathy to Bill and pray that we may be faithful as we continue to minister to all who are afflicted with the scourge of domestic abuse.



A Franciscan Blessing

*May God bless you with discomfort
at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may live deep within your heart.*

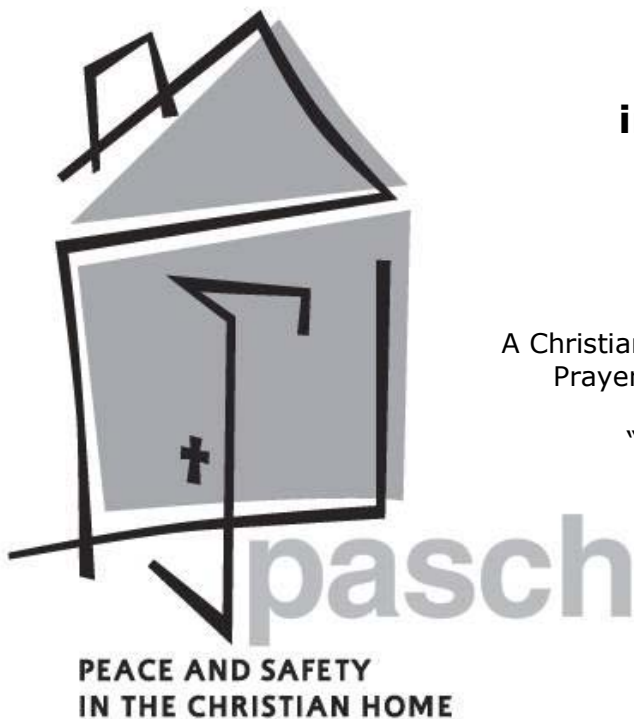
*May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression, and the exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.*

*May God bless you with tears to shed for those
who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war,
so that you may reach out your hand to
comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.*

*And may God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference in the world,
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done
to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.*



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