

hope for families everywhere

News and information from FamilyLife partners around the world

May 2016



jamaica—the familylife launch that almost didn't happen

by chuck eckerson

"There has been a medical emergency. One of our passengers is in critical condition. The ship has turned around and is headed at top speed to Key West, Florida, so the passenger can receive proper medical treatment. It will be impossible for the ship to stop in Jamaica on Thursday."

This all-ship announcement from the ship's captain Tuesday night hit us hard. We were on a mission: to launch FamilyLife's small group ministry in Jamaica. Now, it looked like that would not happen.

Each year, for the last five years, FamilyLife has chartered an entire cruise ship for a five-day Caribbean cruise designed



to strengthen marriages and families in a relaxed cruise environment. Each year, the cruise has sold out. Each year, over 2,000 passengers have had the opportunity to hear from some of the best Christian marriage

experts, musicians, and entertainers. And plenty of marriage counselors are on board, just in case some of the teaching sessions hit some "raw nerves."

This year, FamilyLife booked an even larger ship (over 2,500 passengers) and it sold out in record time. And FamilyLife planned to have its first-ever ministry outreach at a port of call. My wife, Kathy, and I went on the cruise specifically to lead that ministry outreach: to help launch a FamilyLife small group ministry on the island of Jamaica.

We had carefully planned a very strategic four-hour small group leader training of 120 Jamaican pastors, seminary students, and lay couples. And fifteen couples from the cruise ship were going too, just to get a first-hand look at how FamilyLife launches ministry in other countries. Months of planning and preparation had gone into this. And now, the hopes of doing the training—scheduled to start in just 36 hours—seemed dashed to pieces.

What happened next can only be described as an incredible outpouring of teamwork and God's favor. Everyone on the ship paused to pray for two miracles: the passenger's health and the training in Jamaica. Cruise line staff, FamilyLife staff, and travel agents worked into the wee hours of Tuesday night with a singular purpose: to get us to Jamaica the next day so the small-

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nepal—building new foundations by jayna richardson

When Al MacKinnon received an invitation from Military Christian Fellowship (MCF) to come to earthquake-torn Nepal on a mission trip, he quickly agreed. Knowing that life there has been challenging since the 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit there a year ago, he was looking forward to the opportunity to serve other believers and do trauma coaching. He wasn't expecting God to use him in another way—to minister to Nepali marriages with truths that they had never heard before.

Al works with couples frequently through his role with Cru's Military Life ministry in New Zealand and has been through FamilyLife's speaker training. His training served him well on this trip. After he and his friend, Mark, taught on trauma during an MCF meeting, their next stop was Dhading, a village that was badly affected by the quake in April 2015. One of the MCF hosts asked Al if he would be willing to speak on marriage. With no marriage materials on hand other than his Bible on his iPad, Al quickly put together a talk, drawing largely from his years as a FamilyLife speaker at marriage conferences in Fiji and New Zealand.

Al taught mostly from Ephesians 5 and made a particular call to the men to step up in their roles as husbands. He was very surprised by the depth of emotion and hunger the Nepali displayed for biblical marriage principles. "We often forget in the West that our marriage traditions even outside the church are based on the Bible," he explains. "So there is a basic expectation that we will care for each other when we get married. Nepali culture does not



have that Christian base, and so their marriages generally do not model the level of mutual care that God expects of us to make our marriages work as they were designed to."

Some of the audience, including men who are typically very stoic, were in tears as they began to hear and understand God's plan for their



marriages. The MCF hosts asked Al and Mark if they could continue speaking on marriage at their next three stops. As Al continued to share biblical truths on love and marriage, he was struck by the fact that although Nepali culture is very different from Western culture, the biblical model for marriage resonated

the same in Nepal as in any other culture he has taught in.

Recognizing the need for strong marriage and family training throughout Nepal, MCF has decided to continue training their staff in ministering to marriages and families, which means Al hopes to continue to make trips to Nepal to help train Nepali military and police personnel. "We will hold on to our plans loosely so that God can shift them around as He pleases, but our current hope is that after five years MCF will be full of stronger families able to strengthen the families around them and help people to grow closer to God," says Al.

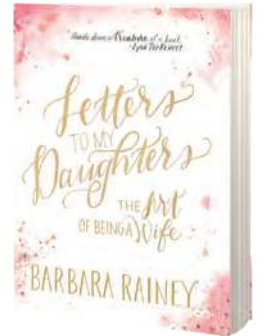
Nepal is a difficult environment in which to serve God and strengthen marriages, particularly as the country continues to attempt to rebuild amidst unrest and supply limitations. Even so, as the Nepali work to rebuild their buildings and cities, God is at work building their faith and families.



hope for families everywhere

new product: *letters to my daughters: the art of being a wife*

Through more than four decades of marriage, Barbara and Dennis have seen it all—triumphs, tragedies, mistakes, and enduring love and joy. As Barbara's daughters began their own married lives, she wanted to share with them lessons she'd learned through her own marriage as well as those gleaned from years of ministry to couples. In these thoughtful letters she answers tough questions compiled from a multitude of young wives, addressing the realities of marriage with honesty and warmth.



Marriage is a complex work of art, and the callings of husband and wife are important individually but must work in harmony to create a beautiful whole greater than the sum of its parts. Throughout this lovely, gift-worthy book, Barbara uses the arts—painting, dancing, gardening, etc.—to reveal this truth in a wise, insightful, and visually captivating way.

May Letters to My Daughters inspire you to embrace the masterpiece of marriage God wants for you.

Visit <http://everthinehome.com/portfolio/letters-to-my-daughters-the-art-of-being-a-wife/> to learn more or purchase.

jamaica: the familylife launch that almost didn't happen *continued from page 1*

group ministry launch could happen. After just three and a half hours of sleep, we got off the ship Wednesday morning in Key West and boarded a plane. It was the only plane that day from Key West to Jamaica that had two seats available.

The local Jamaican organizers met us early Thursday morning and we reviewed (and adjusted) plans for the day. Then the participants started arriving: pastors, ministry leaders, seminary students, lay couples—all representing a broad cross-section of churches, denominations, and ministry organizations. The training room was packed with 118 Jamaicans, making this probably the largest single international training of ministry leaders in FamilyLife's history.

There was such a buzz of excitement at the event. It is incredible to think about launching a FamilyLife small group ministry across an island with a single training at a cruise ship port of call. Only time will tell whether or not this really grows, but one huge factor is in our favor. This launch focused primarily on current and future church leaders. FamilyLife



cannot grow without the involvement of local churches. And by introducing pastors and future church leaders to FamilyLife's small group studies and sharing how these can be used as a foundation for a church's marriage ministry, the potential is huge.

Robert Linton, the Jamaican organizer, was absolutely overjoyed and praised the Lord for what happened in Jamaica. He particularly highlighted the passionate and enthusiastic training that was delivered; it was over the top and awesome in every way. He acknowledged

the Holy Spirit was at work and that many, many, HomeBuilders groups would be starting in the weeks and months ahead!

The ill passenger—a wife and mother of five—received the medical care she needed and survived. And dozens of churches from all over the island of Jamaica are trained, resourced, and poised to minister to marriages in their congregations and communities. We serve a God who hears the cries of His people and meets us in our times of need. We give God all the praise!

Africa

May 14, 2016	Anger to Intimacy	Centurion	South Africa
June 18, 2016.	Understanding One Another	Centurion	South Africa
July 22-24, 2016	Art of Marriage	Moolmanshoek	South Africa
Sept 17-18, 2016.	Art of Marriage	Centurion	South Africa

Europe (Eastern)

Oct 28-30, 2016.	Weekend to Remember.	Njivice.	Croatia (Slovenia team)
May 1, 2016.	Parenting conference.	Lanckorona.	Poland
May 27-29	Weekend to Remember.		Romania

Europe (Western)

Jun 11-12, 2016.	Marriage conference	Zurich.	Switzerland
May 7, 2016	A Day Together	Cambridge	UK
May 14, 2016	A Day Together	Gerrard's Cross	UK
May 28, 2016	A Day Together	Eindhoven.	UK
Oct 1, 2016	A Day Together	Selly Oak	UK
Oct 15, 2016	A Day Together	Newcastle.	UK
Nov 5, 2016	A Day Together	Liverpool.	UK

Middle East and North Africa

Due to sensitive nature of these countries, please contact global@familylife.com for further information.

North America

United States—Phone 1-800-358-6329 or www.familylife.com for a complete listing of conferences.

Canada—Phone 1-800-247-3180 or www.familylifecanada.com for a complete listing of conferences.

May 6-8, 2016	Weekend Getaway	Halifax, NS	Canada
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Asia

May 6-7, 2016	Weekend to Remember.	Wuxi	China
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Oceania

August 2016.	A Day Together	Lakewood, NSW	Australia
Fall 2016.	A Day Together	Heathmont, VIC	Australia
May 21, 2016	A Day Together	Hamilton	New Zealand
July 1-3, 2016.	Weekend to Remember.	Taupo	New Zealand
Sept 23-25, 2016.	Weekend to Remember.	Auckland.	New Zealand
Nov 6, 2016	Understanding One Another	Auckland.	New Zealand

Quotes from a recent Spanish Art of Marriage event near Chicago:

Every marriage needs this information.

This could save a marriage

I learned how to communicate with my spouse and handle problems together.

It was a very good experience to know that not only my marriage has conflicts.

I would invite others because this information changes opinions and lives.

familylife staff conference 2016

Save the date! FamilyLife partners are invited to attend the FamilyLife Staff Conference in Little Rock celebrating 40 years of FamilyLife ministry. The conference dates are July 27-29, and Global Outreach will be conducting

meetings and training specifically for global partners July 25-26. Additional details will be forthcoming, but for those who are attending, we ask you to plan to arrive Sunday, July 24th and depart Saturday, July 30th. This will be

an exciting time of sharing strategies, receiving encouragement, and celebrating what God has done and what is yet to come. We hope to see you here!



belize—planting seeds for cultural change

The cultural conditions of marriages and families in Belize have declined with every generation. Eighty percent of all children born in Belize today are born to unwed parents. Fifty percent of those children will never even know who their father is. Sadly, as the culture has declined spiritually, morally, socially, and economically, even the church in Belize has suffered. Many professing believers are choosing to reject marriage altogether.

The Glendora Community Church in Glendora, California, has seen some of these problems firsthand. Their mission team has been active in Belize for nine years through annual building projects. This time, instead of building houses and other structures, they invited FamilyLife staff, Randy and Nedra Sharp, to join them in building marriages and families through a training event featuring The Art of Marriage®. The Sharps agreed

to act as the hosts and trainers for the event held in Chetumal, Mexico, for Belize pastors and their wives.

The seminar was an incredible success with all the couples rating the event very highly. A gala was held on Saturday night with a special banquet and time of sharing. The open forum sharing time began with Pastor Keith Joseph, District Superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene in Belize, confessing that he has not prayed regularly with his wife, Judy, and committing to pray with her moving forward. His sharing opened the gates for others to publicly confess and share how God has moved in their lives. This time of sharing continued for two and a half hours. The Holy Spirit clearly was moving among these couples as they shared from their hearts what God had done through the weekend.

On Sunday morning following The Art of Marriage event/training, Randy went over the instructions of how to use the follow-up studies, The Art of Marriage Connect couples series. This also was well received and encouraged all who were present to engage fully in marriage and family ministry in their churches and their sphere of influence.

By the end of the weekend, several of the pastors or leaders committed to hosting The Art of Marriage in their churches or starting a small group using The Art of Marriage Connect. “We are praying about how FamilyLife can best serve this initiative in Belize long term,” says Randy. “There are no easy roads to changing a culture which is so deprived of biblical or spiritual conviction. Only a prayerful, collaborative, concerted effort will make a difference in changing lives and legacies for generations to come!”





china—the first chinese familylife speaker retreat

by judy burrows

The narrow valley floor between two steep mountain rock faces north of Beijing was the location for the first ever Chinese speaker couples' retreat March 4-6. All five of our committed Chinese speaker couples were able to attend, squeezing the weekend in between their equally tight schedules. All of the couples attending live in the city of 20 million, and we came away to this remote, sparsely populated retreat lodge to rest and refresh. Three of the couples have been speaking with FamilyLife China for five years, but two couples were new additions to our speaker team in the last year. All have hectic schedules of international business travel and were already leaders serving in their churches and various ministries before they joined us. They have already blessed thousands

who have heard them share their lives and marriage stories these past several years.

We longed to be able to give something back to these volunteers for their own spiritual, marital, and emotional growth, plus promote their bonding as a team. We were blessed to have a biblical counselor who speaks Mandarin fly in for the weekend. He taught us, led us in group discussions, and met with each couple personally for two hours. We also ate a lot, laughed hard playing silly games, enjoyed the fireplace, and let ourselves be ministered to for a change.

Some comments from the weekend:

"I am tired. I need this retreat this weekend."

"Great weekend."

"This weekend was just for us personally."

"We bonded with each other so much more as a small group."

"This was so helpful to us. This was a very smart decision to do this for our ministry here."

"Good starting point for my husband and me to work on some of our own issues to which we were blind. It will help our talks too."

"We had a breakthrough in our communication as a couple this weekend."

The speaker retreat was an incredible success and provided much-needed rest, refreshment, and growth for our dedicated Chinese speaker team.

