

ONCE MORE INTO THE FRAY

BY TROY MEEDER

FINAL FLIGHT.

It was the last leg of a long series of flights. I was heading home from a speaking event held thousands of miles from the ranch.

As with most of my trips, the journey had been rich with the privilege of sharing the gospel of Christ with new friends. I'm always in awe of the justice and mercy of our King. The message of salvation in Jesus Christ is powerful and unchanging. To be allowed the honor of speaking on behalf of my Savior is a charge I'm always humbled to accept.

After folding my 6'3" frame into the assigned window seat, certainly created for much smaller folks, I resigned myself to the "sardine can" for the next several hours. Ten minutes into the flight, I powered up my iPad in anticipation of watching my most recently downloaded movie, "The Grey," with Liam Neeson. I was looking forward to relaxing into what was reported to be a very good movie.

Sadly, the production was not what I expected. Riddled with foul language, poor acting by the supporting cast, and an implausible plot, the majority of the movie left me disappointed.

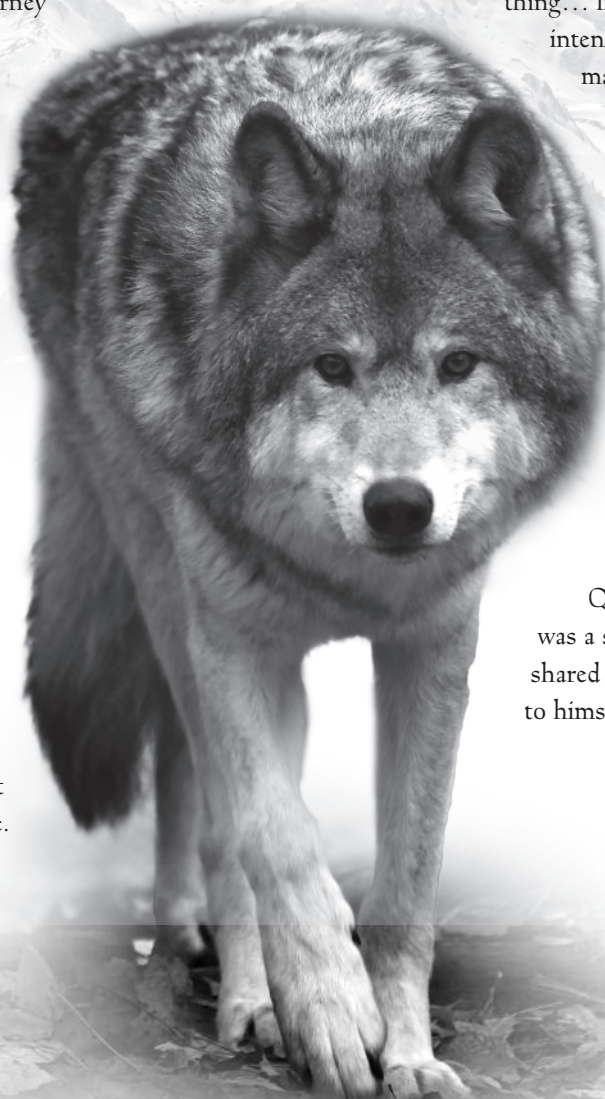
That is... until I reached the last four minutes of the film.

The movie begins with a plane crash, leaving seven men to die in the Alaskan wilderness. The survivors set out to reach safety, battling severe elements while being hunted by a large pack of wolves. The wolves (the enemy) were focused on one thing... literally devouring the men. Graphic and intense, the movie chronicled the journey each man took as he grappled with life questions and the attacking foe. In the end, six men were gone, all taken by the enemy. One man was left standing. All seemed lost, until those last few moments.

Neeson's character had reached the end. On his knees in the snow, he reconciles that his life is over. With the slow, menacing approach of the alpha wolf, the actor's eyes reflect the pain and sorrow of giving up. There was no reason to fight. No reason to press on. The battle was lost. Or was it?

Quoted several times throughout the film was a simple, four-lined poem. Powerful words shared by his father, the actor quietly recounts to himself:

*"Once more into the fray.
Into the last good fight
I will ever know.
Live and die on this day.
Live and die on this day."*



Our King is looking for you, for me.

He searches for those who will not cower to the onslaught of the enemy.

He searches for those who will stand in the fight.

As certain death approached, Neeson, with the resolve of a warrior, chose to go “once more into the fray.” With the camera closing in on only his eyes, Liam’s expression transforms from fear and loss, into ferocious courage. Eyes wet with tears, slowly fill with righteous rage.

As I watched, transfixed on the scene playing before me, I could see vivid emotion growl through the actor’s eyes. They shouted at the enemy, *“With all that’s within me, I will fight you. I will NOT cower. I will NOT shrink back. I will—until my dying breath—engage you... into the last good fight I will ever know.”*

Surprised by my own sudden rise of emotion—what I felt was almost palpable—within my heart, I could hear the Lord calling ME. A righteous defiance rose up. It cried *“No more!”* as it crashed through old emotional barriers deeply rooted by the enemy. A lifetime of compromise, of allowing the enemy to take “bites” of what Jesus died to redeem, all began to crumble beneath the powerful calling of my Savior. *“Fight back! Fight! FIGHT!”* I could feel my hands closing into fists as the King of Kings was calling me to do the same, to engage the enemy until my final breath.

Men, we’re *IN* the fight of our lives!

“Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour” (1 Peter 5:8, NLT). Note: he is *like* a roaring lion. We, my friends, serve the *LION OF JUDAH!*

And yet, instead of focusing on the power of our Savior, we’re often riveted by our enemy, believing all is lost. We travel the roads of this life nearly apologizing for the faith we embrace. We accommodate the “politically correct” lifestyle, while our grip loosens on the very *truth* that can save us. The enemy of our soul approaches, his fangs bared, and the stench of death around him. He stalks each of us, seeking to devour our honor, integrity, resolve and courage.

No more.

Men, we’re the gatekeepers for our families. We’re the business leaders, pastors, farmers, employees and employers that must, with holy aggression and fury, attack the enemy with all the passion of our Savior. With one hand locked in the grip of our King, we must *run* to the battle. Satan and his minions are stealing our children, our friends, our spouses, even our very lives. Just like the wolves, the enemy is picking off those we love... one by one.

No more.

“The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him”

(2 Chronicles 16:9, NLT). Our King is looking for you, for me.

He searches for those who will not cower to the onslaught of the enemy.

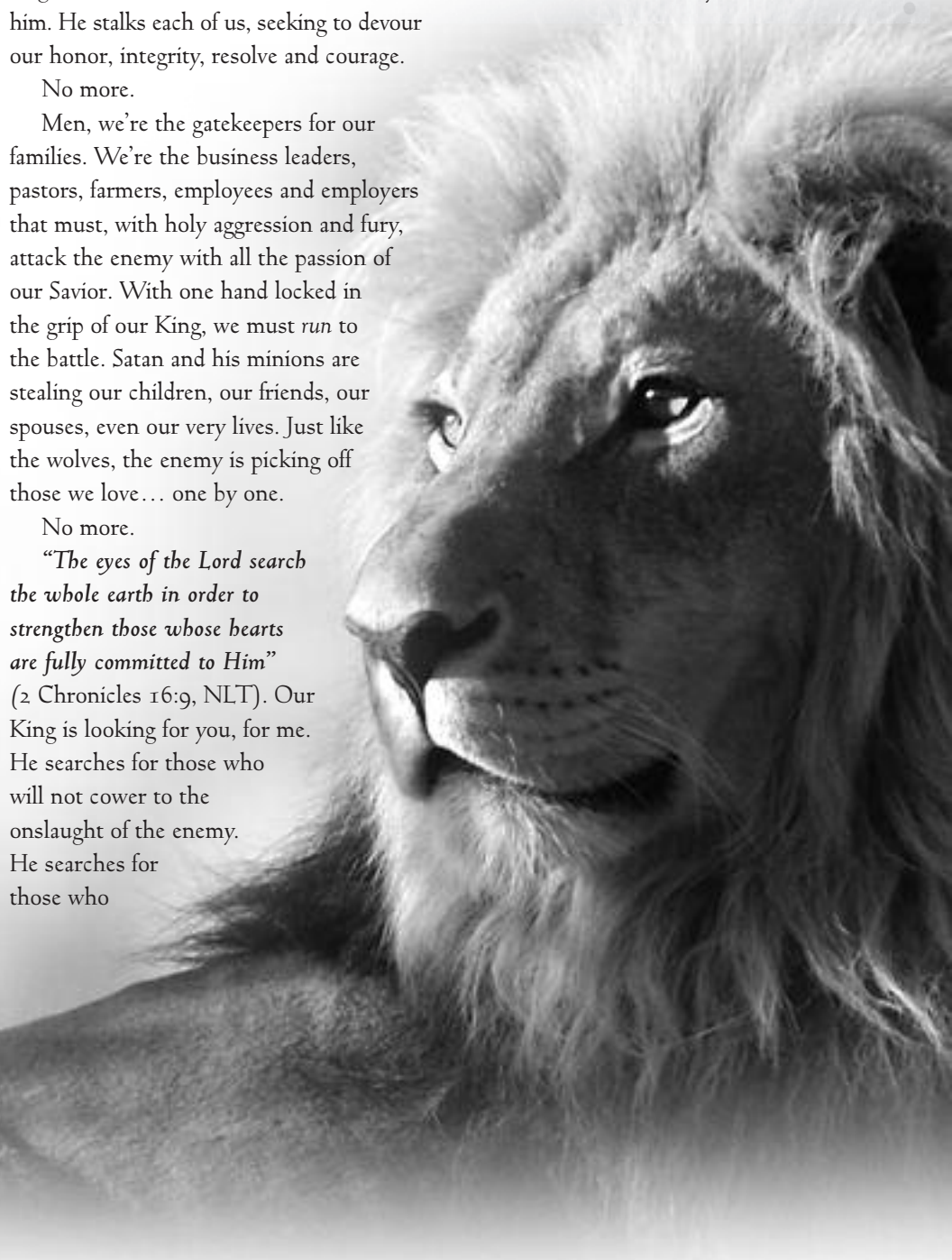
He searches for those who

will stand in the fight.

Through tears of passion, I hear the voice of Jesus calling, “My son... will you stand and fight... with Me?”

Friend, the Lord is calling us. Will we choose to run to the battle? Will we, together, get into “the last good fight we will ever know”?

Once more into the fray.



THE POWER OF PRAYER

EACH YEAR, our staff commits to pray for each Information Clinic attendee by name. During the Clinic, we make a point to connect with those we've had the honor of specifically praying for. It's amazing to see how the Lord uses this time—prayer is powerful. It's an incredible way to support a ministry and those God puts in one's path in ministry. The following is a message from a Clinic participant after her time at the ranch in May. It describes a mother's unexpected bond with one of our horses, the encouragement from the Lord she received and the new prayer she now has for her son.

Crystal Peaks is so blessed by the many who've committed to pray for the Lord's work through this ranch. We're equally blessed in hearing of the Lord's work in the lives of those we're privileged to pray for. We hope this unique story will bless you and challenge you to continue to press in, covering one another in prayer.

Hi Amy,

It's Keri. I met you at the information clinic at CPYR... you prayed for me. I just wanted to say, "Thank You!" I live and breathe prayers and depend on them so deeply. It always humbles me beyond words that our Great, Big God wants to hear from little, old us! Prayer is a mystery that I'm not sure I will ever understand...and yet it contains power beyond what I will ever comprehend. So, thank you for your prayers. They are such a gift to me and are appreciated so very much!

When I was in Oregon, we talked about my family... and my son waiting in Ghana. His 5th birthday was this past Thursday (May 31). I am praying that this will be the last birthday he spends without a mommy and daddy making a huge fuss over him. While I was at the ranch, I developed a very intense connection to one of your horses... Little Bear. Whenever I saw him, he would walk over to the fence and put his head on my shoulder. I would kiss him and cry. It took me until the last day to understand what in the world was going on in my heart. I read Little Bear's story on the plane ride out, but still didn't make the connection until later. Little Bear suffered an attack that should have killed him. He was separated from his mother before he should have been. To this day he carries the scars from his past. Yet, he was given a second chance... and he overcame. He is a leader. He is huge but gentle. My little boy in Ghana has been separated from his first mother before any child should be. He will carry those scars for his entire life. My

prayer—my pleading request to God—is that he will overcome. That he will stand big and strong. He will know where he came from. He will lead others with a kind and gentle spirit. Whenever the Lord might bring us to your mind, will you pray for that too?

Thank you again for your prayers and your hugs! I pray you will continue to be blessed immensely in your life and work at CPYR.

Love,

Keri



Within Every Storm—

BY
KIM MEEDER

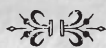
Freedom

God's word is clear, we *are* going to suffer. We should expect it, and we should prepare our hearts and minds for it.

In this life we will not only struggle against the nature of a fallen world, sin, disease and death; but also against the powers of our great unseen enemy. The sole focus of Satan and his vast army is to destroy all men, especially the children of God.

Yet, instead of being ready to battle hardships with the sword of Truth—God's Word—we are often surprised by the difficulties we face. It is within our surprise, our own "spiritual unpreparedness," that we are knocked to the ground by our *own* emotional response.

As Troy and I traveled the United States, leaping between Similar Ministries, this truth rose as a central theme, not only in the lives of those we were called to serve... but in our own lives as well.



Troy had just called me. His voice was heavy with concern. "I'm in a meeting with two of our staff, I think you'd better come down and hear this for yourself." It was August, the month of my birth, and my first thought was that my beloved husband was not a very good actor. I was probably on the verge of a birthday ambushing and might be on my way toward going into the horse trough, headfirst!

With my senses on high alert, I walked down the hill onto the ranch main yard. Everyone was busy with

their daily tasks and didn't seem to notice my passage toward Troy's office. After a quiet knock, I pushed past the door and into a room heavy with oppression. One look at my husband's ashen face told me this was no joke, birthday or any other surprise.

Troy's first words to me were, "You'd better sit down." The report that poured from our staff was a retelling of many conversations from a beloved soul that had been coming to the ranch for years. The tale recounted wounding that had been collected over the years. Hurts that had grown into an army of soldiers called mistrust, anger, sorrow, record of wrongs and betrayal. Either willfully or unknowingly, others had also been swept up into the struggle.

Like an angry monster, the allegations leveled against the ranch rotated and stared down directly at me. The crosshairs of accusation were aimed solely at my integrity, my purpose, my ministry and my relationship with my King. A small mob made up of those I had tried to serve with the work of my life had been rallied against me. According to these, I alone was the cause of bitter frustration, mistrust and unforgiveness.

After bearing over an hour of verbal beating, I walked back up the hill. My legs would hardly move. I felt so heavy, so intensely sad. I loved this individual and I loved those in their midst. Mistakes *had* been made, and so had new resolutions

and growth. Grappling with what felt like multiple bullet holes in my chest, I examined my heart. "Jesus, show me my part of this and how to make it right. Burn away the emotion and speak **YOUR** truth in this situation. Show me what You desire."

Barely making it into my office, I slumped into my chair. The tears could wait no longer. With my head in my hands, droplets of grief, loss, remorse and exhaustion dotted the old barn wood of my desk. I cried until my head ached more than my heart, until there were no more tears ... just empty sorrow.

In my mind, I could see something all around me. It looked similar to an old Persian rug, dark and heavy. It was deep red, the color of dried blood, filthy and covered in creamy damp smears. These wet places looked exactly like ... flowing pus.

With my head still in my hands, I breathed, "Jesus, what do You want me to do?" The answer was instant and simple.



God's word is clear, we are going to suffer. We should expect it, and we should prepare our hearts and minds for it. By making the choice to praise Him within the storm—there is freedom.



"I want you to worship Me now."

Inhaling deeply, I slowly moved my upturned palms away from my face and began to speak whispered praises to my Savior. Words, cracked with emotion, strung together to form a simple song of worship. Around me, I could see the deathly, stinking carpet begin to curl up from its edges toward

its center. The more I spoke, the higher my hands lifted, the stronger my heart felt. In a flourish of praise, I watched the carpet of oppression loosen as if blown by a mighty wind and then fly off my back! Soon, walls could not contain the outpouring of love and gratitude pouring skyward from a broken girl to her Beloved King.

Focus, purpose, peace and balance were restored ... genuine praise does that.

I'm learning that when my focus is shifted toward my great big problems—and lingers there—my God

gets smaller and smaller, shrinking in direct proportion to the duration of my wayward attention. But, when my focus rests on my Great Big God, my troubles are crushed in comparison by His Almighty presence.

I think that Joni Erikson-Tada said it best when she stated, "Glance at your trials, but GAZE at your Savior!" Our focus can only be in one place at one time. When our gaze is placed firmly on our Lord, the hardships we face—and they will be many—are balanced by a proper perspective of *who* our GOD IS.

When our focus is on Him—no matter what we face—we *can* have peace, we *can* have freedom.

1 Peter states, "Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—because these trials will make you partners with Christ in His suffering ... Be happy if you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God will come upon you. If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs. But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by His wonderful name!" (4:12-17, NLT). Ephesians 6:10-20 warns us to "Stand Firm" three times and to be on guard and ready to battle against the attacks of the enemy. 1 Corinthians 16:13 confirms,

"Be on guard. Stand true to what you believe. Be courageous. Be strong. And everything you do must be done with love." And lastly, we are constantly reminded to, "Rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS, again I say rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4, NLT). "Always be joyful" (1 Thess. 5:16, NLT). And, "This is the day that the Lord has made, I WILL be glad and rejoice in it" (Ps. 118:24, NLT).

God calls us to praise Him not only when it's easy, but even—and perhaps especially—when it's hard.

Friends, we *know* that we will suffer. We *know* that the Lord calls us to be ready for the fight. And we *know* that when hardship tosses a rotten layer of heartache over us ... we have a choice to make. We can focus on the pain and languish under a filthy covering of oppression. Or we can rise in battle and fight back! We can *choose* to focus on our Savior and worship Him through our pain.

Worshipping God won't make our pain go away, it is a road each of us must walk. But it will give us joy in the journey. As Paul and Silas give witness (Acts 16), there is no prison that can contain the genuine praise and worship of a heart yielding to the Lord.

God's word is clear, we *are* going to suffer. We should expect it, and we should prepare our hearts and minds for it. By making the choice to praise Him within the storm—there is *freedom*.

Interview with **MARSHALL**



*Crystal Peaks' Equine Manager,
Marshall Teague,
talks about our herd's role
in Empowering the Ministry
and how grace is a
common theme.*

This year Crystal Peaks chose to participate in the Northwest Horse Expo in Albany, OR. What type of presence did the ranch have there?

We were one of many organizations featured at the Expo grounds. We had a spectacular booth designed by Jeff Woodford and Rachel Shultz (two of our staff members). Within our booth, we had a DVD presentation set up, lots of colorful pictures of what we do and rustic western decorations. Right next to our display were stalls where we showcased three of our rescued horses—Hero, Halo and Little Bear, so people could come by and meet them. Also displayed were books written by Kim and Troy, picture books explaining our horses' stories and brochures about the ranch. At the end of each day we did one demonstration in the arena where spectators could watch us work with our horses, listen to their stories, as well as hear more about what we do at the ranch.

What was your purpose in participating in the Expo?

The reason for going to the Expo was twofold—partly for fundraising and partly for ministry. Now the fundraising was not so much for our organization, though we knew this would be a by-product. But our main goal was to create awareness for similar ministries located all across the country. What we do is not only happening in Bend and the Northwest; it's happening all over the United States and other countries too. We wanted to help connect people to other similar ministries that have grown up through us. The second part of our reason for going, and perhaps a more subtle reason, was for ministry. The Expo is a horse-loving environment with people coming from various equine and social backgrounds. Through our booth we were able to talk with all sorts of people and share not only what we do at the ranch—but why we do it—with many who may not believe what we do. So people not only were able to hear some of our

horses' stories, but they got to hear our motivation behind what we do—which is Jesus. Let me put that in context. A lot of people were really drawn to our display, the horses and their stories. Many of the people there were not believers and wouldn't necessarily be interested in engaging us in a conversation about Christianity. But because they were so mesmerized by Hero's empty eye socket, Little Bear's scars and Halo's story, they were drawn into conversation with us. Within that conversation we were able to present Jesus in a way they weren't necessarily looking for in the first place. We even gave away Kim's books to many, which is just one more vehicle where the gospel of Jesus is presented. Although the Expo was somewhat under the guise of fundraising, it seemed way more about ministry to me.

You also visited a correctional facility in Oregon this year. Tell us about your time there.

Long story short, there's a group of young men who are doing a good bit of time in this facility. But because of their good behavior, they're able to take part in this class where they're given a large portion of money from a specific foundation to give away to non-profits as grants. This year Jeff Woodford, Jeff Gorham and I went as representatives of the ranch to be interviewed as a possible recipient of the grant. We had a great time connecting and talking with the guys of this community class. One of the most striking things that I remember them saying to us, when explaining the purpose of the grant, was that they felt that although in the past their actions had done damage in the communities from which they came, this was a chance for them to now do good in communities—even if they did not come from them. We ended up receiving a grant from them and were invited back to the facility for the award ceremony in May. What was really cool was that we surprised the boys by taking Hero and Little Bear over to see them. We attained special permission to

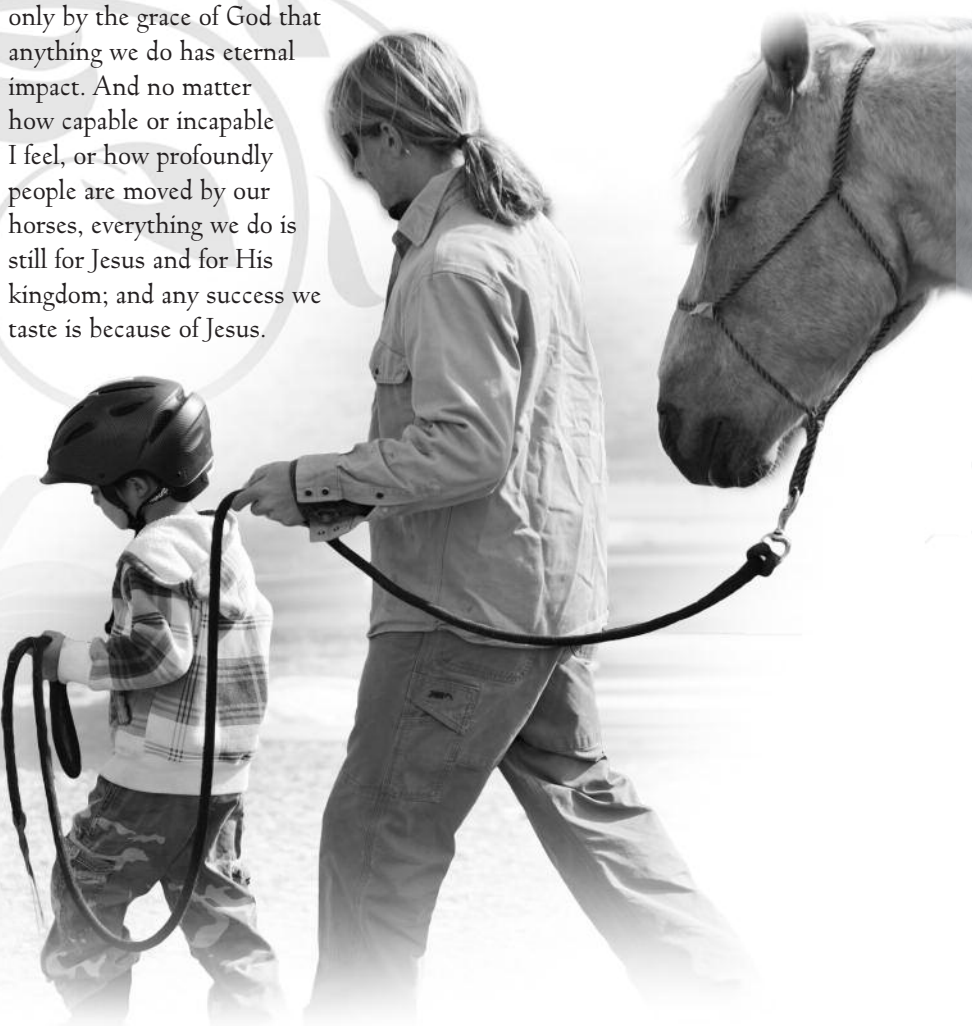
take our truck and trailer inside their facility so that these guys could see and touch the horses they've chosen to support. They were pretty blown away to feed them carrots and apples.

What were the men's reactions to the horses?

I think that they felt really special that we would spend all of the time and money to bring these horses over the pass for just a thirty minute window for the boys to visit with them—and they should feel special because they are. You know, my guess is that they feel shame for what they've done in the past and shunned by many people because they're in a correctional facility. I think that by us bringing these horses to them, it was a small, imperfect gesture to extend love in their direction. And it seemed really well received. The guys were full of curiosity, kindness and enthusiasm. Most of them were nervous just about touching either horse. Some of them had never even seen a horse before. So you can imagine watching this group of guys all gathering together to touch Little Bear and feed Hero apples was a wonderful thing.

As equine manager you get to be a part of ministry via horses often, is there an overarching theme or experience?

Grace. The overarching theme and experience is grace. From training our horses to taking them to a correctional facility—everything rides on the grace of God. As much as I get to work with our herd, and through the myriad of different opportunities we have for ministry because of our horses, in the end, it is only by the grace of God that anything we do has eternal impact. And no matter how capable or incapable I feel, or how profoundly people are moved by our horses, everything we do is still for Jesus and for His kingdom; and any success we taste is because of Jesus.



Yes! I would like to shoulder with Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch to support children, horses and families in need.

Please use my donation for:

- ☐ Where it is needed most
- ☐ Rescue the Equine
- ☐ Mentor the Child
- ☐ Hope for the Family
- ☐ Empower the Ministry
- ☐ Potential Property Expansion
- ☐ Endowment Fund

Payment Method:

A check payable to Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch or CPYR for \$_____

Send donations to: Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch,
19344 Innes Market Road, Bend OR 97701.

You can also make your donation at
www.crystalpeaksyouthranch.org
with your credit card or PayPal account.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____

Please make my donation a gift

☐ In honor of:

☐ In memory of:

☐ Please send gift acknowledgement to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____



NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BEND, OR
PERMIT # 3

Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch Co.
(541) 330-0123
19344 Innes Market Road
Bend, OR 97701
www.crystalpeaksyouthranch.org

2012 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE UPDATE

BY JULIE MILLER

Last June, 81 Similar Ministry directors and core team members from 37 different ministries joined Crystal Peaks for our first annual Leadership Conference. This event was an incredible time for these leaders to come together for challenge, encouragement and additional instruction. Some of the topics addressed included: leadership training, resistance free horsemanship, program horse selection, creative/in-depth training regarding volunteers, funding principles, encouragement through trials and continued consistency in keeping the focus on Christ. It was wonderful to observe the ministries we've watched grow—how many pushed through feelings of isolation and chose instead to link arms with one another. Each had the opportunity to connect, share ideas and support, and most importantly, strengthen

their focus on the *Lord* as their provider and sustainer. *We look forward to how God will continue to use these conferences in the years to come!*



Photo: Benjamin Edwards Photography