

Easter season is here. It is a time of not only remembering and reflecting on the sacrificial love and suffering of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on behalf of each one of us. It is also a time of rejoicing, because there was a resurrection! Because of this we live in hope.

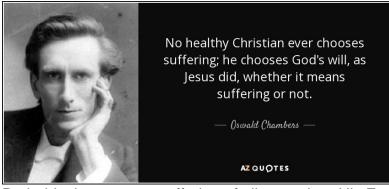
We are working through a pandemic like the world has never before seen. We have been challenged to isolate ourselves so we do not spread the disease or catch it from others. There is much uncertainty and suffering in all areas of people's lives.





Suffering is a part of life. It is a part of War. In our January issue of the CONNECTOR we honored our Veterans, both of our country and of our denomination.

As we come to Easter, we are reminded of suffering, of God's great love toward mankind in sending His Son into this world, taking upon Himself human flesh and being "tempted in all points as we are yet without sin". He did no wrong and yet he suffered greatly in doing the "work" of the Father.



Jesus suffered physically and emotionally – the pain of rejection from those He was trying to help; the pain of rejection by the spiritual leaders; the pain of rejection by his chosen disciples, all leaving Him and Peter denying that he even knew Him. Physically He suffered horrible abuse and then the unimaginable agony of crucifixion.

Probably the greatest suffering of all was when His Father, whose eyes are so pure He cannot look on sin, turned His back on Him. We hear it in the agonizing cry, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"

POWER Team member Edwin Drewlo just posted on Facebook "What a blessing that Easter falls in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic! In Easter there is hope for healing and eternal life. In a miraculous way, may the world experience God's healing touch this Holy Week!"

-if you go https://www.edwindrewlo.com/blog/ you can read Edwin's latest, Looking up at the Cross this Easter

As Betty and I were reading the Scriptures together, the passages for the day were from Mark 15 and Psalm 54. Jesus had done so much for the people in healings, teachings, feeding of the hungry, yet the religious leaders turned on

Him and turned some of the regular people he had touched against Him so they were in unison they cried out "Crucify Him".



We get reports today of Christians suffering for their beliefs. In China they cannot even have a Christian funeral. Christians are being targeted in Niger. In our own country leaders are passing bills that will prevent Christians from preaching what the Bible says about sin or counselling people to walk in obedience to God's Word.

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW CHRISTIANS
TO STIFF ERP

We acknowledge that many of our **POWER**

Team members (Veterans of the Alliance) have suffered in various ways during their time of service with the Lord. Even though they knew this when they bowed the knee to follow the Lord, and they didn't feel that it was too great a sacrifice. Jesus said: "As the Father has sent me, so send I you". He said, that we would be treated just as He was treated. Jesus suffered rejection, even from those He had handpicked to walk with Him. He was misunderstood. He had to stand alone as He took our sins as His own on the cross. He experienced bodily scars to show for his love and service to mankind.

Suffering: I have discovered in my own ministry and service for over 50 years that there were times of suffering. But God...who is so faithful, uses these experiences to refine and shape us more

into His image. You may know that the office of President of the C&MA in Canada is up for election this year. David Hearn is completing his 2nd 4- year term and has agreed to let his name stand for the 3rd 4 year term. It was interesting to hear what candidates are required to submit to the nomination committee. One statement they are to respond to is, **How your experience of suffering has influenced your ministry.** It is just an assumption that all followers of Christ in ministry will face some opposition or challenges that could be called "suffering".



.Some of us may still be experiencing pain -the pain of unforgiveness, questioning God's sovereignty and goodness. The Bible if full of people who suffered rejection but were never failures-Moses, David, the prophets, the twelve apostles, the apostle Paul (the church of Corinth was no piece of cake to pastors), and the list goes on.

The **CONNECTOR** has included a few articles that may help us address this. They come from churchleaders.com which was shared on the internet.

The Pastoral Heart and Inevitability of Suffering

Jesus told us that if we were going to follow him, there would be challenges, even suffering.

John Piper in one of the emails of leadership presented this.....The Pastoral Heart And Inevitability Of Suffering Sep 8, 2017

If the aim of preaching is the glory of God through Jesus Christ, and if God is most glorified in our people when they are most satisfied in Him, and if the universal human experience of suffering threatens to undermine their faith in the goodness of God, and thus their satisfaction in His glory, then our preaching must aim, week in and week



out, to help our people be satisfied in God while suffering. Indeed, we must help them count suffering as part of why they should be satisfied in God. We must build into their minds and hearts a vision of God and His ways that helps them see suffering not merely as a **threat** to their satisfaction in God (which it is), but also as a **means** to their satisfaction in God (which it is). We must preach so as to make suffering seem normal and purposeful, and not surprising in this fallen age.

The forces of American culture are almost all designed to build the opposite worldview into our people's minds. Maximize comfort, ease, and security. Avoid all choices that might bring discomfort,

trouble, difficulty, pain, or suffering. Add this cultural force to our natural desire for immediate gratification and fleeting pleasures, and the combined power to undermine the superior satisfaction of the soul in the glory of God through suffering is huge.

If we would see God honored in the lives of our people as the supreme value, highest treasure, and deepest satisfaction of their lives, then we must strive with all our might to show the meaning of suffering, and help them see the wisdom and power and goodness of God behind it ordaining; above it governing; beneath it sustaining; and before it preparing. This is the hardest work in the world—to change the minds and hearts of fallen human beings, and make God so precious to them that they count it all joy when trials come, and exult in their afflictions, and rejoice in the plundering of their property, and say in the end, "To die is gain."

This is why preaching is not mere communication, and why "communication theory" and getting scholarly degrees in "communication" are so far from the essence of what preaching is about. Preaching is about doing the impossible: making the rich young ruler fall out of love with his comfortable lifestyle and into love with the King of kings so that he joyfully sells all that he has to gain that treasure (Matt. 13:44). Jesus said very simply, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). The aim of preaching is impossible; no human techniques will make it succeed. But God can work through it.

In no place does this become clearer than when preaching confronts suffering. How shall we accomplish the great end of preaching in the face of suffering?

Coming to Christ means more suffering, not less, in this world. For starters, I am persuaded that suffering is normal and not exceptional. We all will suffer; we all must suffer; and most American Christians are not prepared in mind or heart to believe or experience this. Therefore, the glory of God, the honor of Christ, the stability of the church, and the strength of commitment to world missions are at stake. If preaching does not help our people be satisfied in God through suffering, then God will not be glorified, Christ will not be honored, the church will be a weakling in an escapist world of ease, and the completion of the Great Commission with its demand for martyrdom will fail.

There is a certainty of suffering that will come to people if they embrace the Savior. "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." Really? "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matt. 8:19–20). "Many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Ps. 34:19a); "A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20); "If they have called the head of the house 'Beelzebul,' how much more



will they malign the members of his household!" (Matt. 10:25); "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21); "Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you" (1 Peter 4:12); "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22); "Let no one be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this" (1 Thess. 3:3); We are "fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are

not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:17–18); "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12); "I protest, brethren, by my pride in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!" (1 Cor. 15:31, RSV); and "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied" (1 Cor. 15:19, RSV). People are going to suffer—that is certain.

And when this life of necessary suffering is at an end, there remains the last enemy, death. "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Heb. 9:27). For God's loved ones, dying will be the final suffering. For most of us it will be a terrible thing. In more than twenty-eight years in the pastorate, I have walked with many saints through the last months and days and hours of dying. And very few have been easy. Everyone I preach to is going to die if Christ delays His coming. All must suffer and all must die.

"You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass In the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers. The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away so teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:5–12, ESV).

What does a pastoral heart of wisdom do when it discovers that death is sure, that life is short, and that suffering is inevitable and necessary? The answer is given two verses later in Psalm 90. It is a prayer: "Have pity on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days" (vv. 13b–14, ESV). In the face of toil, trouble, suffering, and death, the wise preacher cries out with the psalmist, "Satisfy us in the morning with Your steadfast love." He prays this both for himself and for his people: "O God, grant that we would be satisfied with Your steadfast love always, and need nothing else"—and then he preaches to that end.

Why? Because if a preacher leaves his people where they are, seeking satisfaction in family and job and leisure and toys and sex and money and food and power and esteem, when suffering and death strip it all away they will be embittered and angry and depressed. And the worth and beauty and goodness and power and wisdom of God, the glory of God, will vanish in the cloud of murmuring, complaining, and cursing.

But if the preacher has **prayed** well (that God would satisfy them with Himself); if the preacher has **preached** well (showing them that they must suffer, but that God is more to be desired than comfort and the steadfast love of the Lord is better than life (Ps. 63:3); if the preacher has **lived** well (rejoicing to suffer for their sakes); and if the preacher has **lingered long enough** in one place of ministry, then many of the people will suffer well and die well, counting it gain because they are satisfied in God alone. God will therefore be mightily glorified, and the great end of preaching will be achieved.

Abundant Life, Abundant Suffering

By <u>James Faris</u> September 12, 2019

What kind of life has Jesus promised his people? Abundant life. That's his promise in <u>John 10:10</u>, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

With what does the abundant life abound?

The Scripture assures us that the <u>Christian life</u> abounds with joy, with love, with grace, with power, with peace, with pardon, with salvation, with wisdom, with knowledge, and even material blessings as

the Lord pleases. Further, we enjoy the abundant mercy, steadfast love, righteousness, goodness, power, of the Author of Life himself. Indeed, the context of John 10 contrasts the life Jesus gives to the murder and destruction worked by the thief, Satan himself.

Life in Jesus Christ is really full. The Christian life is full of knowing God and knowing his people. It is full of service and meaning. It is full of grace and truth. It is full of untold riches in Christ. The Christian life abounds with attractive and pleasant things.



But, do we recognize that the abundant life Jesus promises is also a life that abounds with suffering in the present age? In <u>John 10:11</u>, Jesus immediately pivoted to say that he would lay down his life for the sheep. He gave life by giving up his life. He reminded his disciples constantly that their way would be his way: the way of the cross.

Paul fills out the idea of abundant life in Christ a bit more in <u>2 Corinthians 1:5</u>, "For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort

too."

Let's be honest with ourselves and others. The Christian life abounds with <u>suffering</u>. That's what we sign up for when we committed ourselves to Jesus, because he has promised it. We should not be surprised when suffering comes because it is

The Christian life abounds with **suffering**

part of abundant life in Christ here on earth. The good news? Our suffering is nothing compared to what Jesus has suffered. Our suffering, though it abounds, serves ultimately so that we share in the comfort of Christ even now.

So, as you share abundantly in Christ's suffering today, rejoice that the promises of your Savior are true. He has promised abundant life, not the easy life. As we find fellowship in his suffering, we find fellowship in his abundant comfort. By faith, we look forward to the day sorrow and sighing flee away, the day when God wipes away every tear from our eyes, when death will be no more, and neither will there be any mourning, crying, or pain.

Here is further info from R.C. Sproul on "Surprise by Suffering" you may find helpful. https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/surprised_by_suffering/

CONNECTOR

We trust that this info on suffering will help you process where you have been on your journey in your ministry, that you leverage it for your own "being formed into the image of Christ" so that you can continue to **put Christ on Display**



Building Bridges are challenging and can be times of "suffering"

At the Celebration of life service for Dr. Arnold Cook, Dr. Melvin Sylvester included in his tribute the following poem—The Bridge Builder. This could be of encouragement to many of our **POWER Team**

members as we are "the next generation's greatest cheerleaders" and also the "excellent resources" for those who have followed us in ministry.

We may have felt we did not accomplish much or we might feel that what we did, in ploughing the ground in new fields or facing hard challenges in the valley's (chasms) of ministry have gone unrecognized. Maybe, just maybe we built some bridges for which those who followed us and they are using them for advancing the Kingdom.



Read this and thank God for some of the sufferings you may have gone through that opened up ministry that might not have happened.

The Bridge Builder

BY WILL ALLEN DROMGOOLE

An old man going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening cold and gray,
To a chasm vast and deep and wide.
Through which was flowing a sullen tide
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
The sullen stream had no fear for him;
But he turned when safe on the other side
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting your strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day,
You never again will pass this way;
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide,
Why build this bridge at evening tide?"





The builder lifted his old gray head; "Good friend, in the path I have come," he said, "There followed after me to-day
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been as naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him.

Roarke –two "jobs" in "retirement (Can there be "suffering" in Retirement?)

Mike & Maureen Roarke began ministry in Indonesia in the fall of 1981 and left for the last time from Jakarta on 10 April 1995 because of visa problems. Following an extended furlough, they arrived in Cambodia September 1996 and served until 2008 returning home due to Maureen's health issues. 25 years in Southeast Asia went by in a flash but adjusting back to North America was not easy.

Recently Mike wrote to Ron & June MacKinnon (**POWER Team** Volunteer Coordinators for EC District Toronto area) and shared some of the "suffering" journey he and Maureen have been on since "retiring" from IW ministry.

"Thanks so much for sending me the CONNECTOR. Man, when I read all these CONNECTORS and the spare time

and traveling that these folks do, I think of my situation. If I had 25 min. a day for myself without work inside and outside the house, I would be doing great. It's hard not to compare myself with this whole gang. I am happy for all of them...don't get me wrong. I don't mind being busy but boy, it would be nice to have a break every once in awhile.

When I look back, to when we first came home we lived in a 1 bedroom (660² feet) apartment for 7 years before securing a 110 year old Farm house.

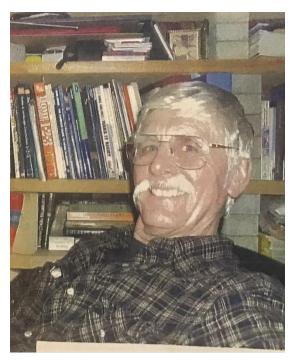


Presently, my outside work/job, "Higher Ground" is very physically demanding, but it keeps me healthy and active and it gets me out in the world. I was adding up all the trash/rock/sod/dirt and tree limbs I carried out of my 5 customers properties last season (May-Nov 2019). I listed a total of 53,856 lbs. You need two things to do the work I do "#1 a strong back and #2 a weak mind".

Besides ministering in my small business Higher Ground Gardening, I am now full-time caregiver for Maureen. She can no longer: read, write, speak more than 10 words a day. She cannot feed herself, drink by herself, dress or undress herself, go to the bathroom herself or many times get out of a chair by herself. I do all these things for her now

Thank the Lord for sending me help to take care of Maureen in the afternoons 5 days a week while I work at landscaping. I am thankful for PSWs (Personal Support Workers) and some government assistance.

I am so thankful for a couple who assist me in our home lawn mowing and providing cooked meals.



Another helping hand has been a small country church is South Dakota. The congregation of Proven SD sends us a check every month to cover some of our care expenses.

Without these people and this one congregation, my life would be very stress filled. Because of their help, I can still work at my gardening and landscaping business...all be it part time. I am so thankful for the Lord's provision in this season of our lives."

CONNECTOR: We are aware that the Roark's story is not totally unique among our **POWER Team** members. We need to keep connected so that we know some of the "suffering" fellow members are going through at this season of life...some of it may come with the aging process, some may be totally unrelated. We need to pray for one another as we trust in our Sovereign God who knows our name. Remind ourselves of that song we use to sing in church....**IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL**

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, Let this blest assurance control, That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought My sin, not in part but the whole, Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll; The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend, Even so, it is well with my soul.

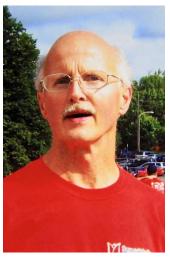
"Suffering in Death"

In our first article, John Piper wrote: "For God's loved ones, dying will be the final suffering. For most of us it will be a terrible thing.... All must suffer and all must die".

None of us really want to think about this reality, but it stares each one of us in the face when our **POWER Team** peers graduate to glory. The most recent one (March 2020) is Reid Cook. Betty and I got to know Reid & Renee when Reid was studying at Canadian Theological Seminary in Regina and they attended our church.

We enjoyed following their ministry but where saddened when Reid had to resign the pastorate due to Parkinson's disease. Now Renee continues life's journey alone but is rejoicing in the legacy that they lived before their 3 children. Their three children and families are in ministry as pastors and theological educators. May their tribe increase.

Reid Stanley Cook -1943- 2020



Reid Stanley Cook was born in Quebec - Died March 10, 2020 in Norwood, Ontario. He grew up in the small community of Cowansville in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. Growing up, Reid was outgoing and always had a great sense of humour. He loved athletics. He specifically excelled in pole-vaulting.

As a young adult, Reid surrendered his life to Jesus Christ. This decision would change the course of the rest of his life. He loved God deeply. In 1965, Reid married Renée Maurice. Reid and Renee had three children: Lucille, Sean, and Jeremy. Reid worked as a pastor for his whole career. He pastored several Anglican churches in Quebec before transitioning to an Alliance Church in Peterborough, Ontario, where he would serve for 10 years. During his final pastorate in Lindsay, Ontario, Reid would be forced to retire because of Parkinson's disease. Reid battled Parkinson's for

approximately 30 years. He was determined to do everything he could to fight well.



"SUFFERING" Through Isolation?

This time of isolation is putting the strain on all of our lives in various ways. The media is predicting that the divorce rate is going up. We are hearing of strong Christian couples really being challenged as they are occupying space together.

Here is a very relevant poem that appeared on Face Book today

We've All Been Exposed

a poem by Sarah Bourns

We've all been exposed.

Not necessarily to the virus
(maybe...who even knows).

We've all been exposed BY the virus.

Corona is exposing us.
Exposing our weak sides.
Exposing our dark sides.
Exposing what normally lays far beneath the surface of our souls, hidden by the invisible masks we wear.
Now exposed by the paper masks we can't hide far enough behind.

Corona is exposing our addiction to comfort.

Our obsession with control.

Our compulsion to hoard.

Our protection of self.

Corona is peeling back our layers. Tearing down our walls. Revealing our illusions. Leveling our best-laid plans.

Corona is exposing the gods we worship:
Our health
Our hurry
Our sense of security.
Our favorite lies
Our secret lusts
Our misplaced trust.

Corona is calling everything into question:
What is the church without a building?
What is my worth without an income?

How do we plan without certainty? How do we love despite risk?

Corona is exposing me. My mindless numbing My endless scrolling My careless words My fragile nerves.

We've all been exposed. Our junk laid bare. Our fears made known. The band-aid torn.
The masquerade done.

So what now? What's left? Clean hands Clear eyes Tender hearts.

What Corona reveals, God can heal.

Come Lord Jesus. Have mercy on us

Is the Lord available for we **POWER Team** members at this time? Maybe the question should be, are we **POWER Team** members allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest His life through us that we are Putting Christ on Display in all His fulness?

What are some of our POWER Team members up to?



The ROLLER COASTER Adventure Continues...

Written Saturday, March 7th

Please pray for us as we face these extenuating circumstances. The Covid-19 situation here in Italy and especially in the north continues to worsen. While writing this we were informed by a friend that the entire region of Northern Italy was going to be put on red alert the next day with no one entering or leaving the area. So here we are - quarantined in Milan, Italy. Who would have ever thought? Lord, what do you have in mind for us now? Is this what you brought us here for? It reminds me of Paul and what he must have felt being locked down in prison in Rome. *Written Sunday, March 8th*

Just a quick update. We went to bed last night at peace being in Milan during the lock-down while wondering how God would use us under such restrictions. Miriam woke up early to discover the government had been delayed in pushing their plan through because of push-back by many government officials. And we thought we had been taken off guard? There appeared to be a brief opening for us to get out. We found a British airways flight and with the blessing and assistance of the elders we went to the empty airport and boarded a near empty plane for London. We are now at Heathrow waiting to board our flight to Vancouver. What a roller coaster adventure! We have return tickets to resume our Milan 20/20 ministry when the Lord opens the door.

Written since arriving home

Unlike the flight from Milan to London, our flight to Vancouver was totally packed – not one empty seat! And there were a lot of people coughing! We rented a car at YVR to avoid contact with family and drove to Abbotsford arriving after midnight. We are experiencing no symptoms and happy to be home although we are quarantining ourselves for the next 2 weeks.

Since arriving home, we have heard that the entire country of Italy has now been placed under severe restrictions. Meanwhile, we continue to serve a church in Milan, Italy that is unable to gather even in small groups. There are lots of ways we can do this even from a distance. How interesting.



Songs with Floyd for Seniors

Floyd Grunau ministers regularly in Senior homes but is not able to do that at present so he has gone on line and reaching a greater audience. Check out the link

https://youtu.be/iWlxIAn1eO8

Mel B Plays Stuff

FaceBook has been carrying a number of gatherings of Mel Bowker Playing Stuff. Many requests are coming in. Weekly, Mel is leveraging his family to play and sing the old and new songs. Look it up.



How do POWER Team members Celebrate grandchildren's birthdays?

The first seven days of April, Betty and I would have had the "privilege" of celebrating 3 grandchildren and a daughter's birthdays. They are living in Cincinnati 6 hours away. We cannot cross the border and the Canadian \$ today (as of this writing) is \$1.4775000 for every \$1US. So.....we used FaceTime and then a whole family on Zoom with 14 participating

Al & Judy Hack were more creative..



Well it is a time to be creative. Al & Judy Hack, our POWER Team Volunteer Coordinators for the St. Lawrence District came up with their plan.

"Last week was our grandson Elliot's 6th birthday but because of restrictions due to Covid-19 the birthday party was cancelled.

Judy & I

decided to travel up to Gatineau (300km round trip) and surprise him and the family. (at a safe distance). Judy made chocolate cupcakes & we tied balloons to rolls of toilet



paper. We drove quietly into their driveway, spread out the party things and Elliot's birthday gifts on the hood of their van and then I called Matthieu (Dad) on his cell and told him to bring out the family. It was a short but fun party!"

"Sufferings?" of Demolition



Here are some updates of the campus which was Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary. For some of us, this landmark holds many memories - theological training, God's calling, meeting of a spouse, losing teeth in a hockey game, graduation etc.

Tower and Auditorium erected 1981 & demolished 2020



Only remaining structure standing is the CTS Building.

"Kerr's Eternal Enterprises" erected the steel -1978

Auditorium & dorms gone

Hot off the Press

Christianity Today just released this written by our **POWER Team** member Joy Tira. Joy just wrote and said "For your encouragement...Please promote widely"

Online Tools to Maximize the Good News During the COVID-19 Crisis https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2020/april/online-tools-to-maximize-good-news-during-covid-19-crisis.html

We trust that this issue on "SUFFERING" has been inspirational and challenging.

Wayne & Belly Kerr -Compilers and editors of the CONNECTOR waynebettyk@rogers.com
-National POWER Team Volunteer Coordinators

Remember: You are a carrier! Is what you are carrying worth catching? We carry - Faith, love and hope."

-C. Groeschel