

April 2009



CLEAR VISION

A Monthly Publication of the Center for
CHRISTIAN LIFE ENRICHMENT



Soul Food:

A Tribute to C.L. Blue

By Rich Blue

On Thursday, March 26, 2009 my father, Charles Leroy Blue, died at the age of 93. My wife, Sue, and I had gotten word he had had a stroke and somehow knew we needed to get out to California as soon as possible. In the space of 4 hours, we had dropped everything, purchased tickets, packed and headed for the airport to be with him. Yet, Dad had his own way of doing things and he was ready to move on--it was his time and his choice and there was no waiting around. We received the news Dad had died just before boarding our flight at Midway Airport.

I learned how to set goals and strive toward accomplishing them.

Dad loved airplanes and loved to travel. How fitting that we would be in an airport when we learned of his death. When I was a kid, he and I would spend hours at the local airport listening to scanners monitoring the communication of the air traffic controllers. He spent a lot of his working life on airplanes and in and out of airports. After retirement, one of his greatest joys was planning and going on vacations. I remember him telling me he and mom had taken over 60 trips following his retirement.

Dad loved to work hard and treasured his tools. I often thought he

had a relationship with his tools, especially when I made the mistake of not properly taking care of one of his "friends." I learned from Dad to love hard work and to respect the tools I worked with. I learned how to set goals and strive toward accomplishing them.

Dad loved numbers. There was a time when he could remember every place he had ever lived, including their addresses and phone numbers. Any time Dad was a passenger in a car with you he would lean over and try and read the odometer. He was always curious about how many miles I had on the car and how many miles I would be driving to my next destination.

Dad loved routines. He had a system for everything. One of his mottos was, "A place for everything and everything in its place." I remember his morning routine: getting up at the same time, showering, making coffee, getting the newspaper, having the same breakfast every morning while reading his paper. He liked the same handful of restaurants and always requested the same table.

Dad loved discipline and determination. Once he set his mind

to something, there was no stopping him. Whatever he did, he did it with willpower and resolve. He smoked for 30 years and quit the day he believed smoking led to lung cancer. He drank alcohol until he was 86 and stopped cold-turkey when the neurologist told him he had no brain cells left to lose.

Dad loved the fire department. When my brother, Bob, was 10 he was hit by a car and the quick thinking of the fireman who responded to the accident saved his life. As an expression of his gratitude, Dad served on the Board of Directors of the fire department for over 25 years, most of those years serving as the chairman. They named the board room in his honor. How fitting that fireman from the Orinda Fire Department responded to my mom's 911 call, cared for my father, and transported him on his final trip to the hospital.

Most of all, Dad loved my mom—it was not a perfect example of healthy dependence but it was a testament to his dedication and commitment to loving her to the best of his ability. The last conversation I had with my father, he reaffirmed that Mollie (my mom) was the best thing

[Continued on page 2]



Soul Food (continued): A Tribute to C.L. Blue



that ever happened to him. He had a hard time living with her but there was no doubt he would not have wanted to live without her.

My Dad was a sensible man who lived faithful to his values. He was true to his vision and did what he set out to do. He could be rigid, stubborn, impatient and childish, often losing his temper when he did not get his way. At the same time, he cared deeply

for all of us, dedicating his life to demonstrating his love by doing everything he could to provide for and protect us.

The last 20 years of my Dad's life, he and I forged a respectful, mutual and loving relationship. I am so thankful for the work we do at CLE to get clear and current with our parents. I am a testament to the value of expressing my hurts and resent-

ments to my father and building a transformed adult relationship with him. I am so grateful that I am able to grieve his death and celebrate our love for each other.

The movie, *Legends of the Fall*, ends with Tristan as an old man fighting the grizzly bear which has a missing claw. As One Stab says, 'It was a good death.'

Christian Life Enrichment's Spring Retreat 2009

Fighting Fear with Faith



Wouldn't you love to have more confidence and a greater sense of security in these challenging times? Many of us are experiencing fear and anxiety more often and in greater concentration than ever before. We need hope and help.

This weekend will be a time of strengthening our core and growing our sense of hope in the face of fear. We will learn new skills to more effectively fight our fear and depend on our faith to carry us through the storms of life.

Join us for a faith-filled weekend of learning and growing together with a community of people dedicated to living the biggest and most meaningful lives possible.

When? Friday, May 15th at 6:30pm through Sunday May 17th at 1:00pm

Where? The DeKoven Retreat Center, Racine, Wisconsin

Registration fee: \$695 (\$595 if a non-refundable deposit of \$295 is paid by April 22)

We are going to:

- Identify the underlying beliefs driving fear, panic and despair
- Make friends with fear
- Learn new skills to harness the power of fear and anxiety

To register or get more information call 827.272.3684 ext. 10 or email info@cle.us.com

Reflections on the Death of My Dad

By Rich Blue

Denial

I never thought my Dad would die. He had always been a strong mountain of a man and nothing got the best of him. He was 93 years old and survived so many threats including smoking cigarettes, alcoholism, heart disease, cancer and diabetes. When I heard of his stroke and that he was in the hospital, I assumed he would beat this contender as well. I was in shock when I got the news that his stroke had caused catastrophic damage.

Grief

Once I knew he was dying, I desperately felt the need to be by his side. I wanted to hold his hand and be with him as he died. I assumed he would be scared and I wanted to block for him on this last run of his life. I had spent years working through my childhood resentments and was now enjoying the adult freedom of loving him and wanting the best for him.

My last time talking to him while my brother held the phone to his ear, I took such joy in hearing him acknowledge me with loud enthusiastic groans reminiscent of Chewbacca on Star Wars. Little did I know this would be the last time I would hear his voice. I assured him of my love and told him I was coming to be with him. I was so upset that I didn't get to say more to him but he was in the fight of his life.

My next call from my family was the news of his death. Dad had passed—I hated that word. You “pass” the

mashed potatoes—he hadn't passed; he had just died! I deeply resented the euphemism. What I realized I really hated was death. I couldn't believe it. I didn't make it. He didn't wait for me. How could he not hold out until I could

I realized I would never hear his voice again. I was panicking. I had never known a day of my life without Dad.

get there? I should have known that once he decided it was time to go, nothing was getting in his way. How

could he die without me assuring him that everything would be ok?

Fear

A week ago, I woke up suddenly in the middle of the night as if from a nightmare. I realized I would never hear his voice again. I was panicking. I had never known a day of my life without Dad. Never is a huge word—I have used it so many times before but it has new meaning for me now.

When will I die? How will I die? What will happen to me? My wife? My family? Existentialists call it the problem of *nonbeing* or *nothingness*. When I was younger and my Dad appeared to be living forever, I was very nonchalant about death. I had it all figured out. I had so much more faith than I feel like I have now. I am sobered. I am humbled.

I did not realize how much confidence I drew from knowing my father was always there. Dad was reliable and predictable—available when I needed him. Given how much I am like him, I rarely needed to draw on his support—but

then I could and now I can't. I am looking at life through new lenses and it is going to take some time to adjust.

Questions

It is over. He is gone. Where did he go? My dad considered himself an atheist most of his life. I spent many years attempting to persuade him to believe in Jesus, to no avail. His interest in God and spirituality were inversely correlated to my efforts to convert him to my way of believing. When I decided to love him instead of change him his heart softened. Now, I hope he and the God who loved him are working things out.

I am not struggling with questions like, “Why?” or “Why now?” I seem to have accepted that for C. L. Blue, it is finished. The concern now is me.

Present Challenges

I am very aware of my responsibility to live consciously in the here and now, choosing to be awake to my feelings and thoughts, engaging fully with those around me. I am often returning to the parable of the talents (Mt. 25:14-30), challenging myself regarding the extent to which I am using my talents to fulfill my life purpose. How often am I letting my fear kill my aliveness, seeking comfort instead of choosing to live each moment by faith—courageously embracing my doubts and facing the unknown, as I faithfully fulfill my mission with God's grace.

Christian Life Enrichment Staff Directory



**Richard Blue, M.A., LCPC,
NCC**
Clinical Director
rich.blue@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 14



Gabriela Caballero Cantú, M.A., LPC
gabriela.cantu@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 15



**Nancy Rollins, M.S., LCPC,
NCC**
nancy.rollins@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 13



Lyndi Wood, M.A., Therapy Intern
lyndi.wood@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 12

This newsletter is intended to offer general information only and recognizes that individual issues may differ from these broad guidelines. Personal issues should be addressed within a therapeutic context with a professional familiar with the details of the problems.

© 2008 Christian Life Enrichment.



CHRISTIAN LIFE ENRICHMENT

666 Dundee Rd. Ste 503
Northbrook, IL 60062
Phone: (847) 272-3684
www.cle.us.com

CLEAR VISION

You can now sign up to receive the CLEar Vision monthly newsletter when you visit our website www.cle.us.com. You can also read and download back issues of the newsletter or find out other information about the Center for Christian Life Enrichment from our site.