

## **Faith on the Edge—April 2007**

*“I take great comfort in knowing that this horse wants to live as much as I do,”* my son Cliff declared with conviction. We were on horseback in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Area. My friend Everett, an authentic Montana cowboy and our trail boss, was leading us through some stunning territory where the mountain peaks define the Montana/Idaho border.

I had been on the trail before, but it was a first for the rest of the family. Terri maintained the composure that comes from familiarity with the high country, mothering four adventuresome kids, and ultimately a strong faith in the Lord.

Cliff and Clint, pre-teens at the time, were comfortable in the mountains, yet being on horseback—riding a trail less than four feet wide with a drop-off on the left and a near vertical wall on the right—was a bit intimidating (no kidding); some might even call it exhilarating!

The drop-off on one particular stretch was so abrupt that if the horse lost its footing, you would “crash down” off rocks, trees, and ledges for about 300 feet before you stopped in a busted heap. To make matters even more thrilling, a good trail horse—dual-trained for pack or rider—will stay to the *outside* so the pack (in this case—my family) does not rub against the wall. Each time the left front hoof hit the path; it was only an inch or two from the edge! Believe me, it was better to enjoy the surrounding beauty rather than question or fret over each step.

When Everett heard Cliff’s comment, he turned in the saddle, as you might picture a seasoned cowboy, and replied, “You got it ‘xactly right, young fella. These horses don’t want to fall any more than you do and they know what they’re doin’; trust ‘em.” He then explained how unproven riders would rein the horse away from the ledge toward the “safety” of the wall. The horse, knowing what was best, would determinedly resist the rider. *Unknowingly, through his lack of trust, the rider was making the journey more dangerous than it needed to be!*

Have you had some adventures like that in your ministry? Have you felt the same confident reliance and scary excitement of having to trust in the One who knows the trail? My analogy of having a drop-off on one side and a sheer rock wall on the other may not be too far off!

We have firsthand experience: the uncertainty of a meeting place, the disappointment of people leaving, the expense of property, and the frustrating stance of those with a “you can’t” paradigm. Our confidence to keep ministering focuses on the guarantee that God knows the way, we do not, and that’s okay! *“For we walk by faith, not by sight”* (2 Cor 5:7).

Dear Missionaries, be confident that He knows, He cares, and He can minister in ways you never expected. Understand too, that while He could change the scary circumstances in the

snap of a divine finger, He often chooses not to. Determine by faith that you won't "chafe at the bit" and try to force the "safest" route. There is no Godly adventure in that! As the trail gets tough, trust the Savior and enjoy the beauty of the trip.

*Bill*