

man of wealth and status asked me. "Thank you...just need a drink for now" I replied. "Let me show you what we have" he answered. "And if you need anything else, let me or my wife know." The man nonchalantly gestured. "Drinks are on the deck...over here....in the coolers."

Perhaps God wants to give back honor to a long-held belief, tradition or behavior of yours, and then restore the related part of you that feels "less than." Brent Atkinson states in Emotional Intelligence for Couples Therapy that couples who give equal regard to their partner's beliefs, opinions and behaviors, *though different than their own*, are much more likely to succeed. However, when one partner assumes a superior position in their beliefs, opinions or traditions, the relationship is destined to fail. Whether shame has wounded an ongoing relationship such as marriage, or tainted a one-time personal experience, God wants to heal this wounded part and reclaim it's voice and honor.

* Keynote Address by Dr. Kenneth V. Hardy, Ph.D.; "Children, families and Trauma: A Relational Approach," Monday, April 28, 2008.

SIDEBAR

FIVE PRACTICAL WAYS TO HONOR THOSE "OUTSIDE YOUR OWN"

1. Watch for masked loneliness or discomfort. Someone looking at brochures at a conference display table for example, might be relieved to talk with you.
2. Are judgmental attitudes present in how you think about and talk with others? Guard against showing silence, surprise or disgust around someone's different viewpoint. .
3. A group setting of one primary age, economic, gender, or religious focus will, on some level, feel foreign to someone outside of these parameters. Can you talk with, eat with, and *stay with* this "stranger?"
4. Having some type of structure (i.e. a planned introductory time) at a gathering reduces "mingling anxiety." When leaving, simply walking a person to the door gives emotional safety and respect.
5. Watch for signs of a stranger feeling "trapped" in a group conversation. Someone who is encircled by others, but is quiet and throwing sideway glances may need "an out".

"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Hebrews 13:2).

DIFFERENT CULTURE, EQUAL HONOR

Viewpoints on Shame

By Mary Lambrecht, M.S. M.S. LMFT

A number of years ago I was asked to lead a meeting with Christian businesswomen that were, in a sense “outside of my own” in terms of economic and social upbringing. For purposes of introduction, I asked the women to share a recent experience that had personally touched them. One lady was quick to comment. She had recently been at a party where people had “literally brought coolers!” “Not only that,” she said with emotion “but they inverted the lids and put their soda in them...and some of them...they even *sat* on the coolers!” I was taken aback. This very kind, hospitable, intelligent woman did not mean to offend me or anyone else with this story. What was it then, about her words that riled me? What confused and upset me was simply that a tradition that was once “free of shame” for me was now “shamed.”* In my childhood and in my current adult rituals around summer parties, coolers are acceptable and commonplace. I made a “memo-to-self.” If I’m ever invited to a party with this group, better keep my little red cooler—the one with the white top that inverts to hold cans of soda—at home!

Economic and social shame was one focus at our recent annual Wisconsin Association of Marriage and Family Therapy spring conference. The main speaker, Dr. Ken Hardy, made the point that for the person in poverty or the poor working class, oftentimes ways of thinking or behaving that are naturally accepted and free of shame “when you’re around your own” can suddenly be deemed as unacceptable “when you wander outside your community. What was free of shame is now shamed.” Hardy went on to say that emotional scarring can be a result of these experiences and that, when “you’re outside your own, a part of you will feel like an imposter.” Hardy also believes that these are precipitating factors in inner-city violence.

Jesus was intimately acquainted with shame. He, who once knew honor and respect as God’s only Son, was often met with ridicule, suspicion, and eventually a horrendous physical death. Once seated at God’s right hand in the heavens, he “wandered outside His own” and was born, not among the glories of stars and galaxies, but in a rough-hewn stable. Rather than being treated as the Messiah, he was presumed to be an imposter. His rightful title as King of the Jews, a position that was once free of shame, was shamed. “What then do you want me to do with him whom you call the King of the Jews?” So they cried out again, “Crucify him!”

A good friend once said to me: “God never forgets a thing, especially our pain.” Recently, I was at a graduation picnic at a beautiful old home. Well-dressed men and women were mingling, talking and eating. I was thirsty. I wandered over to a table, and found food...but no drinks. “Are you finding everything you need?” a