

# Who is Barb??

So here is a brief overview of Barb's story. BTW Greetings from Canada!

In the early 90's our family moved near a Christian University which had a seminary. Barb drove her kids to a Chrns school and headed off for classes at the seminary, which was a unique and stimulating opportunity to learn and grow in Christ and in God's Word. Later our kids entered and graduated from the Univ. Barb got two degrees while at the seminary.

In 2003 Barb had an opportunity to be in the first group to begin the new Doctor of Ministry degree program being offered. My pals had their dissertation topics already picked. I didn't have a research topic for a long while. I just kept plodding.

Last year our church, where we were actively involved for 16 years, came to a difficult point. This is where we, as a family, experienced our own muddy tunnel negative church experience, along with a number of dedicated church pals. In my grief and disillusionment with my local church I began to search for answers in order to better understand what factors had arisen to create such a circumstance. I began to read books, websites and blogs. One of the topics which kept coming up was spiritual abuse and authoritarian leadership practices. My dissertation research topic then began to rapidly take shape.

I have read and heard a sampling of the pain that is out there in the Body of Christ. There are various factors. My interest is in "how" people have processed their grief and have come to a reasonable point of spiritual harmony in their walk with Christ after a devastating church experience.

My main focus group will be people from my area--that I know, or who have been referred to me. My interest is also in hearing the stories of others from various locations. This will reinforce the fact that the need is out there as well as confirm how many others have processed their debilitating and negative church experiences. Anything directly used by me for my dissertation will require a consent form to be signed by participants and myself.

People have been kind enough to help get things started out in the blogosphere. I am excited to have a wider group of people to learn from.

My dissertation topic is part of the degree requirement of the institution. Nevertheless, this topic has become more than just a degree getting process. I have come to see that that Christ, the Head of the Church, has a desire here as well. He continues to regard the concerns from his people. I am interested in participating in hearing God's heart through the voice of His people.

The goal of this research is not to open old wounds, but to approach healing together as a concerned and compassionate group of care'ers in the Body of Christ. Elizabeth

O'Connor has stated that: "The pain that cripples is the pain that is borne alone--never put into words. This is the pain that becomes a pool of tears hidden away inside, keeping us from connecting in any important way with others."

She goes on to note that: "healing is not going to happen in any important way as long as the pain in us and around us goes unacknowledged and unexplored.

A wailing wall is never the end of it. It is always the beginning. . . . We discover around these wailing walls that our pain is related to what we are to do in life. Pain gives us a vision of God's new world. Wrapped up in our anguish is a work that will heal us and heal the society."

I agree and believe that we need community to recognize that these situations exist, and then we need to grieve together and to heal together. The understanding gained through grief and healing ought to help many in the Family to minister effectively to others in their difficult season--because so many have 'been there' too.

To date I don't know of a benefactor to support my research. No one gets paid in this. ☺ It is just me stepping out and risking with Christ. It is a labor of love and a service before Christ for all who desire to participate. So far, for me, it has been a rich and growing experience in Him!

If you have questions or want to express your interest in this topic email me at: [churchexitersq@telus.net](mailto:churchexitersq@telus.net)

Learning to serve, through Christ, your pal Barb.