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What we're all about

Reach Out, Columbia is committed to presenting the heart and works of Jesus Christ in clarity and purity. We strive to encourage a deeper, more steadfast love toward others as well as provide a vehicle for the body of Christ to come together as one voice in corporate agreement and expression of faith.



Letter from the Editor

I remember meeting author/speaker Carol Kent several years ago. She was in town for a major women's event and was kind enough to grant me an interview. Her story blew me away. At the peak of her ministry, she traveled all over the world encouraging women with her down-to-earth writing and teaching style.

Then came the midnight call. "Your son has been arrested for murder." In an instant, her world went black. She tells the story in her book, *When I Lay My Isaac Down: Unshakable Faith in Unthinkable Circumstances*.

Her upstanding Naval Academy graduate son, J.P., was jailed, tried, convicted, and sent to prison for life with no hope of parole. In the aftermath, Kent picked up the pieces of her life and ministry. Today, 14 years later, part of that ministry is called *Speak Up for Hope*, a non-profit organization dedicated to positively impacting inmates and their families. "God can take a situation like ours," Kent says, "and redeem it for his purposes."

Few have such a devastating story as Kent's, but tragedies, small or great, have touched us all. In the midst of a trial, it's difficult, if not impossible, to see how anything good could ever come of it. Yet often, the rearview mirror grants us a glimpse of the holy in the horrible. One day we'll understand it all. Until then, we walk by faith, not by sight.

This month's issue of *Reach Out, Columbia* demonstrates the truth of her statement. Our profile story, "Lisa Gillam and A Force of Hope," spotlights another beauty-from-ashes testimony that's come out of Columbia's 2015 Thousand Year Flood. And Lisa Hetzel tells her first-hand account of the devastating effects of kidney disease and her part in a life-saving rescue in "Who Me? Donate a Kidney?"

Both women's stories demonstrate how the rescued *and* the rescuer can be transformed when God is in their midst. And Rob Buck's poignant reflection piece, "Can Joy Be a Choice?" reminds us that no sorrow is ever wasted when we surrender it to God in faith and trust. I hope you'll find this issue of ROC profoundly encouraging.

On another note, congratulations are in order. One of our contributing writers, Aida Rogers, took ROC by the hand and ushered us into the publishing spotlight recently. Her article, "Chef Richard Rouse – Second Chances, New Beginnings," published in the November 2016 issue, took first place in the South Carolina Press Association Faith Reporting category. Coming in second and third were the Methodist Advocate and The Baptist Courier. Congratulations, Aida, and thank you for representing us well.

And finally, this is our second month of making the contents of *Reach Out, Columbia* available to patrons of the Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled. If you know anyone who could benefit from this service, please encourage them to contact the library at (803)734-4611 and ask to have Reach Out, Columbia sent each time it's released. ROC won't be distributed automatically; patrons must request it. If you know someone who's not a member, but qualifies as a legally blind individual or has a physical disability that prevents them from turning pages, they may call the same number for an application.

Happy Spring!

Lori