

## Holding Death in My Arms

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Thursday, 23 June 2016 22:37

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Dr. Harold & Myrna  
Carpenter

### Christ Raised Baby Daughter from the Dead

By Dr. Harold Carpenter

My wife Myrna rushed out of the house. She joined me in sobbing and groaning. There we were, missionaries living in the jungles of French Guiana, serving God to the best of our ability and now our baby had drowned.

The hurt was too deep for words.

Our home was on the edge of a swamp just north of the equator. The climate there is extremely hot and humid. In fact, in the months between March and the end of July, that area usually receives about 200 inches of rain.

The spring of 1971 was no exception. It had rained for days, one torrential downpour after another. Our children had been penned up in the house. Myrna was home-schooling the boys, 12-year-old Michael and 10-year-old Kevin. That day they had been especially fidgety and restless.

Finally a break came in the rain, and the boys begged to go outside. Sheryl, not yet 2 years old, wanted to follow them. Myrna decided the break would do them good and give her time to prepare lunch. She warned them about staying away from the swamp, which had risen to the

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edge of the yard. The boys were told to watch Sheryl and for a while, they did.

Then a neighbor came in from the jungle with a jaguar he had just captured. His two sons and ours went to look at the catch. In the excitement, the boys forgot Baby Sheryl.

She must have toddled into the swamp about that time. Later the neighbor boys, bored with the jaguar, came over to our yard to throw rocks in the water. Michael and Kevin were still admiring the big cat.

The neighbor boys saw something red floating in the water and thought it was a ball. They tossed stones at it until they tired of the game, then went back to find my boys. All four returned to the edge of the water and tossed stones until one of them suggested getting a long bamboo pole and retrieving the "ball" for a game of soccer.

When they touched the "ball" with the pole, they discovered it was the crown of Sheryl's head.

Using the pole, the boys drew her out of the water. Hearing their cries, I left the sermon I was preparing and stepped out on the porch. The boys brought Sheryl's lifeless body and put it in my arms.

Myrna rushed out to where I was. We wanted to pray, but we couldn't. We just stood there looking at our little girl's body, weeping and groaning in our spirits.

But God saw our anguish and understood our pain. He touched a woman back in our home district, Arkansas. We had held a missionary service in the church she attended. That morning the Spirit of God spoke to Mrs. Todd Odem and said, "The Carpenters are hurting in French Guiana. Pray for them."

The burden was so strong and the sense of urgency so great that Sister Odem called the Women's Ministries group. "I know this is not our regular day for prayer, but I feel a heavy

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burden for the Carpenters. We must gather and pray for them."

So a group of ladies met at the little church in Pumpkin Bend, near Kensett, Arkansas, more than 3,000 miles from us. They didn't know what we were experiencing, but they "prayed through" until they felt an assurance that their prayers had been heard in heaven's throne room.

While they were praying, the Spirit reached across the continents to French Guiana, where Myrna and I were weeping over Sheryl's body.

Suddenly Sheryl coughed and water gushed from her mouth. She began to breathe spasmodically: she would breathe, stop, then breathe again. We rushed her into nearby Cayenne.

When we arrived at the office of the city's only doctor, he was not in. He was away treating patients on an island and would not be back for 2 weeks!

When the doctor returned we took Sheryl to see him because we could still hear water gurgling in her lungs. The doctor was amazed that she was alive. He told us that the contaminated swamp water would cause terrible infections from which she might die. And since she had been facedown in the water for more than 30 minutes, he was sure she would have extensive brain damage from lack of oxygen. In essence, if Sheryl lived, he expected her to be a basket case.

But the doctor didn't know the power of intercessory prayer. Those ladies in Pumpkin Bend had indeed prayed through. None of the doctor's predictions came true. Sheryl recovered completely; she suffered no brain damage. In fact, she did so well in school that she completed her senior year of high school and her first year of college at the same time!

In May 1990 Sheryl married a young ministerial student from Central Bible College, Bruce Coats. As they prepare for a life of ministry, I rejoice. And when anyone tells me that miracles have ceased, I say, "Nonsense! I have lived with one for years."

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Editor's Note: Reverend Bruce Coats, an ordained minister and his wife Sheryl (Carpenter) Coats, a certified minister, were pastoring a church in the United States the last I heard. I met Sheryl and can vouch that this sweet Christian lady is very much alive!

Dr. Carpenter was our pastor when we lived in Fair Grove MO.

Dr. Carpenter and his wife served as missionaries for twenty years. Dr. Carpenter also taught missions for twenty years at Central Bible College. He also served as Pastor of Fair Grove Assembly of God, Fair Grove MO.

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