

May 7

Hi conferees –

First, if you have emailed me and not received a reply chances are your email is in my “Must do before CCWC” Outlook folder that no longer exists. ☹

Friday night, just after I finished the faculty/staff lodging and sent it to the YMCA, Outlook crashed. I couldn't get back into the program. When the Microsoft Tech finally got it working again, the last two months of my emails that were sorted into folders had all disappeared. Because of the volume of emails I receive, I keep them in Outlook rather than printing them.

I was on with a MS tech for 2.5 hours Friday night and then again Saturday morning for 4.5 hours with the next level of support. Still no fix. In addition, other MS Office 365 programs started doing strange things. No, not started. Every day for the past several weeks I've been encountering more and more problems.

Later on Saturday my nephew, Peter, from Texas started looking for a solution. And he found lots more problems that we believe all started when Laplink transferred files from my old laptop to my new laptop on April 21. I had installed a lot of the software myself on the new laptop and was gradually moving files into Dropbox to transfer them over since I didn't want to move over stuff I no longer needed. But the fonts that I use in the conference brochures would NOT transfer, and I could not find them online. Every conference I simply (well nothing is simple) update the conference brochure. Without the same fonts it was going to mean a lot of reformatting, so I reluctantly decided to use Laplink.

I followed all the instructions to connect the two laptops, but they wouldn't talk to each other. LapLink offered free tech support (the word “free” should have been a red flag) so I finally called them. Next thing I knew they said I needed Advanced support that would cost \$99 for 14 days or only \$199 for a year. I opted for the \$99 support with the assurance that files would not be duplicated and that I could choose what programs I wanted to transfer.

Well, ALL the files transferred over giving me tons of duplicates and a huge hard drive 2/3s full. We suspect things got corrupted in the registry. Peter said he's worked on a lot of bad computer problems, but mine was one of the worst he has seen. And it's only one month old! As you can imagine I'm heartsick and stressed over all the time I've lost.

Throughout the weekend I could feel the stress taking a toll on me physically. This morning it became more than I could ignore. I ended up in the ER and have now been admitted. Thank the Lord, I'm not having a heart attack, but they recommended staying overnight for observation and more tests. It seemed the wisest thing to do. So . . .

1. I covet your prayers for me and for Barbie who already had plenty to do without taking on some of my workload.
2. Pray for my friend, Peggy. She was planning to come with me to CCWC but has a serious wound in her leg that is not healing. She is facing 40 treatments (two hours each) in the hospital. Oh Father, please don't let the work she did today for the conference make things worse. She and Donna Brennan have been at my house all day packing ten boxes of books to ship to Colorado. In addition to your prayers, Peggy and Donna would really appreciate you buying books (LOTS of

them; they are all discounted) to make their work worthwhile. Book sales are a big part of helping to cover conference expenses.

3. Pray for a LOT of last-minute registrations. We're not where we need to be financially which is even more critical this year since I MUST be able to pay for more help.
4. If you have not signed up for any of the Wednesday afternoon early bird workshops, please take another look at them. Coming early is so helpful for getting acclimated to the conference (and the altitude). And the workshops we're offering are worth every penny and more. For instance, Beth Patch, Senior Producer and Internet Acquisitions Editor at CBN.com is teaching "Devoted to You" from 3:30 – 4:30. Beth will teach you the four basic elements needed for writing an inspirational devotion and tips on self-editing, story development, focus, and following guidelines. My first published manuscript was a devotional. The rest (over 1,000 sales and 9 books) is, as they say, "history."
5. I can't urge you strongly enough to arrive in time for the FREE session, "Making the Most of Your First CCWC," that Eric Sprinkle is offering Wednesday afternoon from 2:15 – 3:15. He says:

First time at the CCWC? Congratulations, and if you feel a little overwhelmed, please know that you're going to feel much more comfortable and knowledgeable over the next few days. But why wait to be a Writer's Conference expert until the day before you go home?

Why not be confident and fully prepared for this amazing event from Day 1?

How about sitting down with Eric Sprinkle, a 4-year "veteran," who can give you a detailed overview and share all the tips and tricks to help you navigate the three big areas you'll encounter while here – Networking, Craft-Sharpening, and Potentially Selling your Work,

6. Plan to take advantage of getting your photograph professionally taken by Shirley Taylor. Her price is very reasonable, and you will own the copyright.
7. Come well rested so you don't miss the night owl workshops Jason Owens, a new faculty member, is offering Wednesday and Thursday night. "Email Marketing for Authors" on Wednesday which teach you several low-cost and no-cost methods of building your email list along with software tools and hands-on examples. Thursday night he will focus on "Book Launches for Authors." Jason is also available for appointments in addition to the ones you've already requested.

I'm going to try and get some sleep. Thankfully I have a private room.

Keeping my eyes on Jesus – Marlene