

## Thrown Overboard!

Dr. Craig Newborn tells how, on a visit to China with his family, they were traveling by boat one day through the water passages that area is known for. People and merchants alike dwell on the water in houseboats.



As they slowly moved along with the assistance of a boatman, they were shocked to take in a sight that stunned them beyond belief! A man was standing on the edge of a houseboat with a small child in his arms. The baby was about 1 year old. The man smiled and kissed the baby as he hugged him and talked quietly to him. Without any warning, the father threw the baby in the water! Dr. Newborn and his family screamed with horror. Their boatman quickly held up his hand to silence them and said, "Just watch."

As the baby surfaced and bobbed in the water, the father pulled the baby back to him with a rope that was attached to his clothing. He laughed as he hugged and kissed the baby, then threw him overboard again! Over and over the father repeated the exercise, much to the astonishment of Dr. Newborn and his family.

The boatman turned to them and said, "Look where they live...they cannot afford to have a child who does not know how to swim! Children learn to swim before they learn to walk when they live on a boat."

When we are pressed with trials and seemingly overwhelming, frightening experiences, it is good to know that our Father, Protector, Friend and Savior are at the end of our lifeline. God sees the beginning from the end. God knows the reason why we get "thrown overboard".

Psalm 103 reminds us God is in control. The father in the story was in absolute, awesome control! Out of love and concern for his child, he put the baby in an unusual, unfamiliar situation to teach him something that could someday save his life! But all the time, the father demonstrated his love and protection so that the child learned to have complete confidence and trust in his parent.

Psalm 91 is often used by many Christians who expect God to deliver them from all trouble. In His wisdom and sovereignty – and love – God can allow something

perceivably contrary to our good to occur. We cannot always know the reason why. We cannot translate "being good" into "being safe". But God often teaches us through hardship and distress, lessons that have a purpose – and may even save our lives. What we may think is the best next step could be disastrous. Psalm 91 testifies to what God has chosen to do on occasion in the past, assures us of what He is able to do *today*, and reminds us of His awesome omnipotent power to keep us in the *future*.