

# **D**reamSeeker Magazine

Voices from the Soul



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Kara Hartzler

## **The Responsibility of Anabaptist Scholars**

Ted Grimsrud

## **Anabaptist Academic Freedom**

Joseph L. Lapp

*and much more*

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**Autumn 2001**

Volume 1, Number 2

# Editorial: Amazing Grace and 09-11-01

This issue of DSM was moving toward proofreading as 09-11-01 created before and after. Thank God before and after are similar enough it is possible for writings from before to still speak after. Surely the underlying faith in grace which threads its way implicitly through these pages is now even more needed. If there is anything with power to cut the cycle of violence, it *is* amazing grace, that love which stuns by appearing precisely when least expected or deserved.

But if those pre-attack ponderings of grace still resonate in the quieter sides of our lives, we are also needing to ponder how grace applies post-attack. My first ruminations involved what to say as pastor at a prayer service the day after. I was grateful to be held accountable by awareness of diverse participants. Many had been shaped by a lifetime of historic peace church influences. Others had joined the congregation with appreciation for its peace position but from families whose members had a history of honorable military service.

As I stood before this rich mix, it seemed it would make a mockery of the love of enemies I was about to preach to value only some perspectives. My instinct was (and still is) to call for waging peace, not the promised retaliation. But I risked launching pacifism so righteously as to become one more zealot. Thus though I worried that the risk for those with military ties might

be knee-jerk support for retaliation, I sensed I needed what they could see even as I hoped they might benefit from what I could see.

So—though aware of complexities of applying them—I suggested we might learn from each of these texts:

- In Romans 13:1-4 the apostle Paul says God ordains government, and “if you do wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain!” Might a biblical response to terror include U.S. “police” action to bring to justice those most responsible?

- In 12:19 Paul forbids revenge. “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord,” he quotes. Surely Christians dare support no action motivated purely by vengeance and claiming the right therefore to do unto others what has been done to us.

- In Matthew 5:43, Jesus teaches, “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye,’ but I say. . . .” What a huge “but” that is now, after 09-11. Yet how deeply it resonates as a different way of proceeding.

Exactly what actions these texts might lead our congregation to support, I don’t know. But I hope linking them invites us to offer each other the amazing grace of inviting all views to contribute to discernment—rather than turning even each other into enemies battling over what sword God lets authority wield and how enemies are loved.

—Michael A. King

**I risked launching pacifism so righteously as to become one more zealot.**

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## Response

James Lapp's *DSM* Summer 2001 comments on "Being a Missional Church" struck common chords and activated long-standing needs to be heard, to belong. Recently I returned to the Iowa site of the 1859 beginning of the General Conference Mennonite Church where Pauline Krehbiel and Howard Raid, my parents, were born and raised. In doing so, I revisited that part of my heritage.

Now, as my GC branch merges with another Mennonite branch to become Mennonite Church USA, I have heard little mention of how GC founders emphasized gathering all Mennonites to support education and spread the gospel. Unity in diversity was their touchstone.

Current efforts bring us back to where the GCs began. Our task remains to provide a banquet table, to prepare food that nourishes, to invite others not only to the table but also to bring other dishes that will taste and smell different from our ethnic fare. Only then can we feast together on God's rich blessings.

I happened to be born into a GC family; thus my Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs are mine partly by chance. I have also chosen them. I'm not willing to throw out my beliefs to be generically boring. But I do want to extend the table so I can grow and learn from others and so together we can share in the richness of God's banquet table for all. I don't want to give up four-part singing, for

example. But that doesn't mean I can't also learn to appreciate other types of worship music.

To grow in faith, I must let go of two things: my fears—fears of the other, the unknown, that within me which I dislike; and my need to be right. My journey of divorcing, leaving employment, and going to seminary has helped me begin to face my fears and realize I do not have all the answers, that my ways are not necessarily best for others.

That journey has included pondering my place in the church's ongoing mission. I believe everyone dialogues with the same questions at various times: Who am I? Why am I on this earth at this particular time? As we address such questions at both personal and institutional levels, we realize answers are always in flux. We change and grow, letting go of old ways and embracing new experiences and understandings.

The apostle Paul calls us beyond being babes in Christ. So too the church must move beyond an excluding sense of being a particular type of family, a "like precious faith" heritage, and demanding sameness to control outcomes.

With Jim, I'm ready to count the cost and move on. I'm willing to make mistakes, ask questions, learn, and grow. To do less spells despair and death for the church. Christ has gone before us. God is with us.

—Elizabeth Raid

### *Thumbelina*

Beneath the rosy shade  
of a dogwood in fall bloom  
I awake, curled in your palm.  
Light filters through the single leaf  
you hold above me. Together we  
examine its mottled surface: you see  
the downy, opaque, underside.  
I see ribs drawn dark  
like spokes of an umbrella  
against luminescent flesh,  
shielding me from the revelation of your face,  
creased valleys on either side  
of your mouth, shaded hollows  
beneath your lashes,  
the liquid glassy surface  
of your eyes reflecting a tiny girl-shaped  
speck of light.

—Ann Hostetler, *Goshen, Indiana, is*  
*Associate Professor of English, Goshen College*

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### *Midnight Sun*

A baby sat alone in the nursery  
beside a shrinking patch of sunlight.  
Turning, she saw the bright floor  
and bent down to lick the shining wood,  
taking the light on her tongue,  
the way a perfect salmon  
is placed in a shallow hole along the Yukon River  
and covered with leaves, then canvas.  
It lies in the long summer days,  
rotting, baking, its tissues softening,  
one eye turned up, waiting for the light,  
the other looking deep into permafrost.

After three weeks the fisherman digs up  
the decayed salmon, saving the best parts.  
*Tepuuq*, the head, is shared at fish camp,  
a delicacy to eat remembering dryfish months.  
The eyes of the reeking fish,  
given to the youngest children, stare  
at the late high sun before they are eaten.

The baby looked out the window a moment after  
the last edge of sun set under the horizon.  
She crawled from the nursery, looking for something else.

—*Angela Lehman-Rios is a writer  
living in Richmond, Virginia.*

## Kneeling with Turtles

Brian D. McLaren

**E**ventually I want to address enlightenment—  
but turtles come first. I have always loved turtles  
and their drier cousins, tortoises. I don't know what  
it is about them, or about me, that makes them  
seem so fascinating and affable.

The other day I was walking along the Potomac  
River near a little old railstop/canal-stop/Indian  
crossroads called Old Town. I was fishing for small-  
mouth bass, but I always keep my eyes open for tur-  
tles. Sure enough, in the shallows near a steep mud  
bank, a large snapping turtle, smaller than a trash  
can lid but bigger than a Frisbee, was ambling  
along, half-bounding, half-drifting, like an astro-  
naut on the moon.

I slid down the bank, waded out, and carefully  
grabbed him by the rear edge of his upper shell  
(known as the carapace)—the only really safe place,  
since he could have savaged a few fingers with one  
chomp of his powerful and sharp jaws.

He struck at me several times, his jaws making a  
kind of “whump” at each closure—understandable

behavior for a turtle not blessed with good shell coverage (lots of his fleshy parts are exposed on his underside) but who was compensated with a big head and a monstrous mouth.

Kneeling on the mud bank, I realized what was different about this snapper: his rear right leg was missing, probably bitten off by another snapper in early season mating combat. Where the leg should have been, a tibia and fibula jutted out clean and white from scarred flesh, looking for all the world like a scene from a Thanksgiving dinner. How did this animal survive a rough amputation like that? I wondered.

It's amazing what creatures survive.

Last summer about this time, also near the Potomac, I came across a wood turtle who had been hit by a car. Of all turtles, wood turtles are my favorites—semiterrestrial, intelligent (for a reptile), inquisitive, with real personality (again, for a reptile). As I drove along a country road, its shape caught my eye, and I pulled over and walked back, expecting it to be dead.

The closer I got, the more certain I was that it couldn't have survived the impact. On the hot black macadam, with little bubbles of tar forming on the surface, a dark red, almost purplish, pool of blood now the consistency of pudding was drying in the sun. There was this beautiful animal: sculptured brown shell

with yellow flecks, bright orange limbs, coal-black head, and a golden circle around each pupil, its carapace literally in pieces just up the grade from the pool of blood-sludge.

But she was alive. (I knew she was female by the more slender shape of her head, and the flatter contour of her carapace.) Her shell must have been broken in seven pieces. I could see the pouch of her body cavity stretched between the shards. She was alert and watched me approach, seeming neither afraid ("Oh no, what next?") nor relieved ("Help coming?").

My first thought was to rescue her, to take her home and try to glue her shell together and give her some antibiotics and tender treatment to rehabilitate her. But she was gasping for breath. I realized that her lungs had been punctured and that she could not survive.

My next thought was to finish the job, to put her out of her misery, to euthanize her. But I couldn't, not because I lacked the nerve, but because of the way she looked at me with her gold-rimmed eye. I cherish no illusions about the mental capacities of reptiles, but I imagined if she could think, she would be saying something like this:

*So, here you find me in my final predicament. Those cars come so fast and I had no idea that I was in danger until . . . Crack! Then I felt my blood draining out of me.*

*Please don't disturb me. Don't try to tip me over to see the condition of my underside. It's no use. It's too bad for that. I have just a few minutes left. Are you thinking about putting me out of my misery? Please don't—I'm not in too much pain, really. In fact, before you walked up, I was thinking I have never felt the pleasure of life as fully as now. Neither have I noticed how green my world is, how utterly alive, and how bright and strong is our sun, and how warm is the ground heated by it, and how privileged each creature is to be able to move even an inch, which I have tried to do once more, just to savor the feeling and freedom of movement one more time, but cannot.*

*So please, stay here with me if you'd like, and think these thoughts with me, but please do not touch me, and please do not try to help me by putting me out of what you might suppose to be my misery. Because despite my horrible wounds, I am not miserable. In fact, no breath of air ever felt so sweet or precious or fresh as the breath I won during that last gasp.*

*I want to enjoy each moment of this sweet life, each breath, each view of those green bushes there across the road, the movement of that butterfly there. If the only life I had ever experi-*

*enced were the life I now feel, then I would have reason enough to celebrate. True, I am dying, but at this moment, I am living. That is very good.*

So I let her live and just kneeled there with her for a few minutes, living myself in a new way somehow, just for having joined her in her last moments in that bright sunlight blazing from above and that macadam heat rising from beneath.

What has any of this, you may ask, to do with God, the soul, and the spiritual life, the topics I want to address next?

These recollections have me thinking about survival, about being

alive against the odds, about something even better than just being alive: being aware that I am alive and grateful for life. I suppose I'm thinking about enlightenment, and about those moments that spark into flame like Moses' desert scrub bush, waking you up from quotidian numbness, nudging you from being alive to knowing you're alive.

It seems to me we go through five stages in the enlightenment process.

1. In the first stage, we do not honor life and the world around us at all. We live, we want, we complain, we fight, all without much awareness or reflection. We speed

**So I let her live and just kneeled there with her for a few minutes, living myself in a new way somehow, just for having joined her in her last moments in that bright sunlight blazing from above and that macadam heat rising from beneath.**

down the highway never noticing the beautiful trees or lakes or fields along the roadside, absorbed in our own little annoyances and schemes.

2. In the second stage, we honor life and the world around us for the pleasure they bring us. This stage is not completely self-absorbed, but it is still self-centered: things are of value as they relate to me. A tree is worth noticing if I can cut it down for my fire; a lake is noteworthy if I can ride my powerboat on it; the field has flowers which I enjoy.

3. In the third stage, we honor life and the world around us for their own sake. We begin to notice the trees and to think of their existence as independent of our own; we notice the lake as a thing of value itself, not just because of its utility for us. The field and its flowers are important not just for the aesthetic pleasure they bring me, but for the pollen they provide for the bees, the home for the fox, the food for the swallows.

4. In the fourth stage, we telescope out from the individual things around us, and we begin to see a whole which includes us. We begin to honor the whole, and we become more aware of the interconnectedness of everything within that whole, including ourselves. We begin to feel honored ourselves for being privileged to be part of the whole: we feel honored by association with the other “players” on the stage.

5. In the fifth stage, we honor God. We honor God as the creator who conceived of and crafted the reality of which we are a part, as the Spirit that ennobles it and sustains it and permeates it, and as the purpose toward which all things move through time.

The precise definitions of these five stages are probably less important than the idea that we must move toward increasing levels of enlightenment, decreasing levels of self-absorption, and deepening levels of God-consciousness. Those “wake-up” moments that surprise us in life signal that we are taking a step ahead and breaking into new territory, breaking through to a new level in our spiritual ascent.

Such moments of awakening can occur almost anytime, anywhere—during a sermon or a song of worship, in solitude along a woodland trail, deep in thought while reading a book, amid a tender conversation . . . even crouched on the bank of a stream marveling at an old snapper’s resilience, or kneeling on a hot country road watching a wood turtle take its tragic final breath in the blazing sun of summer.

—*Brian D. McLaren, Laurel, Maryland, is pastor, Cedar Ridger Community Church and author, The Church on the Other Side: Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix (Zondervan, 2000).*

## Mrs. Bragg

Elaine V. Yoder

**M**any of us know how much it hurts to be marginalized in the game of life. I also know how healing it is to be helped back into the game by those who offer breath-catching moments of unmerited favor. I want to tell about someone who brought me one such moment which is among the earliest I remember yet still shapes my life today.

Of course so many people have had similar experiences that in telling this one I risk sharing clichés. Yet in the same way as we all savor each breath of vital oxygen, no matter how often we have breathed it in before, I hope it may be life-giving to tell again my version of the tale of grace.

It was recess time for my fourth-grade class. The classroom door flung open and kids spilled down the large wooden stairs. It seemed everyone wanted to eke every drop from our 15 minutes of free time—everyone except me.

Slowly I followed the crowd down the steps, uneasiness a sticky ball in my stomach. Recess wasn’t my favorite part of school. In fact, I dreaded it.

As I stepped through the big double front doors of the school onto the hard concrete slab that

spanned the doorway, Kathy Hillman was already delegating positions. Kathy was the biggest girl in our class, the bossy, self-assigned leader of the girls. I didn't like her.

Hesitantly I approached the girls forming our game of group jump rope, the kind where two girls twirl the rope while the others take turns jumping. One had to be able to jump high and fast. I felt clumsy and like I couldn't keep up. It seemed I spent most of my time twirling the rope.

Sure enough, "You have to twirl the rope," Kathy instructed as I approached the group this time. I guessed it was my reward for coming last. I felt angry as I picked up the rope. Angry and trapped.

Dutifully I twirled the rope with the other unlucky twirler. One by one the girls jumped. Finally one girl tripped and took my twirling partner's place. Recess was half over. As the game continued, another girl tripped. Finally it was my turn to jump rope.

"You jerked the rope and made her trip," Kathy accused me. "She can jump again."

Furiously I threw down the rope down and stomped off. It wasn't fair. She was mean. I knew she was a sinner, and sinners were bad and deserved punishment.

I ran around the corner of the big brick school house and back to a corner where our building met another brick building. I couldn't sit

because the gravel under my feet would hurt, so I cowered in the corner. Tears burned. It was cool and quiet.

It wasn't long until I heard the crunching of gravel under heavy footfalls. *Oh no, it's my teacher, Mrs. Bragg. Now I'll really be in trouble.* I pulled a little more tightly against the hard bricks.

"Elaine, what are you doing here?" asked a kind voice. I turned and was immediately wrapped in her bosom. "You are a most sensitive child."

*Did she say sensitive?* I couldn't believe my ears. I melted into the shelter of a big, warm embrace, uncontrollably sobbing. There I stood under her wing. Mrs. Bragg cared about me.

Deep down I felt I didn't deserve it. My anger had been quick and intense. I knew I should try harder to play well with the girls, but I felt they didn't like me. Now, in these arms, my Sunday school lessons haunted my petty refusal to negotiate.

Yet here stood Mrs. Bragg, my protector. Gazing beyond my anger, she saw something more true of me than my rage. Mrs. Bragg had eyes to see my tender heart shrinking behind my self-contempt and the callouses hiding wounds. The cool ointment of grace trickled through my veneer of toughness, probing crevices in my heart I hardly believed existed.

The bell marking the end of recess rang. "You need to play, and the others need to let you be a part of the game." Those were scary words, but they couldn't take away the warm secure pleasure I felt inside.

Some months ago, as I returned to the community in which I grew up, I met a classmate from those early school years. I asked him who his favorite grade-school teacher was. Unhesitatingly he answered, "Mrs. Bragg."

As I've spent time revisiting meaningful encounters with others in my life, Mrs. Bragg and this incident have come to mind. It has always been there, this memory of a woman who offered comfort and security in a hostile world, but the passing of the years had shrouded it. Now the memory radiates anew.

Mrs. Bragg's gift shines on the horizon of my memory, not alone but in constellation with others who have joined her message of affirmation and hope. I remember the dean of women at Bible school who spent extra hours exploring my heart's

struggle. And the professor in university who offered double office time to walk with me through a tough moment.

**Yet here stood Mrs. Bragg, my protector. Looking beyond my anger, she saw something more true of me than my rage. She had eyes to see my tender heart shrinking behind my self-contempt and the callouses hiding wounds.**

These memories glimmer, like stars, in the skies of my life. They offer small glimpses of a greater reality. The storm of a current relationship may hide the light of such moments of grace. Yet as the clouds ebb, there the stars are, ministers of mercy

lining memory, offering testimony to the greater truth a heart longs to know.

I am loved; even when I don't deserve it, grace is extended. I can cower against the brick wall of my efforts to make the game work. Or I can yield to Mrs. Bragg's embrace, resting under the wings of forgiveness, finding new freedom to join the game.

— Elaine V. Yoder, *Willow Street, Pennsylvania, is a full-time counselor at LIFE Ministries, a counseling ministry serving the conservative Anabaptist community.*



# Thankful for Gratitude, Wind, and Cold Fronts

Michael A. King

**W**hat I'm thankful for is the gift of gratitude, and that's what I want to talk about. But first I stress that it's not, like some types of mashed potatoes, an instant gift, a powder we can mix at will with a splash of water and wolf down. For most of us, I think, it takes a lot of living, and often a lot of breaking, to sense the gift beginning to spread its treasure through our days.

As we start out, gratitude tends not to be our first reaction to life. Any parent knows being taken for granted by children is at a minimum in competition with getting their thanks. My own boyhood self thought about how much smarter I was than my parents far more often than about how grateful for them I was. We tend to yearn toward what we hope is coming more than to be happy for what is.

On a related note, I wonder if it isn't particularly a tendency for men, especially younger men, to glory in achievement, to flinch from failure, to

evaluate our worth according to how heroic a role we're playing in our life stories. Women friends tell me they too, however, though sometimes in different forms, find themselves now and again pursuing that rising arc. So, one way or another, I'd guess most humans experience a need to shine somehow in the world's tale and preferably to glow even brighter and higher up than we do now.

That's why, when gratitude begins to grow, we may at first not grasp what a gift is entering our days. Like an orchard grower who has always sold oranges but never heard of apples, we may have little idea at first how to value the apple of thankfulness. But as each bite grows sweeter, we realize what we hold is the magic fruit Digory (in C. S. Lewis' *The Magician's Nephew*) finds growing in Narnia and takes back to England to heal his dying mother.

This at least has been my experience. There is really nothing new in what I'm saying here. I've heard it all my life. Pick up any human interest magazine, and you'll find yet one more story like mine.

Yet as basic as it is, I've taken only tiny bites of gratitude throughout my life. Only at midlife am I more fully appreciating its value, and even now I'd guess I've only begun

**I first really woke up to the power of gratitude when one day I focused, truly focused, on the feel of the wind blowing and the look of it as it was made visible in the dance of tree leaves.**

I first really woke up to the power of gratitude when one day I focused, truly focused, on the feel of the wind blowing and the look of it as it was made visible in the dance of tree leaves. I've always loved wind; that wasn't so new. But this time I experienced what a gift that wind was. I realized what a dream come true it can be just to feel the wind. I understood that right then, not just that special day long gone, not just that longed-for day still to come, I was living a dream, a good dream, that dream in which the air itself seems alight with joy.

What drew me into the dream was gratitude. As I felt grateful for the wind, I felt myself, in a sense, enter a relationship with it, to be happy that there we were together, not only the two of us but everything the wind was touching.

Having been reading the journals of Edward Abbey, novelist and environmentalist prophet, who gloried much as I do in wind but felt that to see God in it is to flee the beauty of this world for never-never land, I respect those for whom what there is to be grateful for is wind. Period. Abbey's own focus on wind as wind teaches me much.

Yet that day when the wind became gift I also couldn't help feeling



this: in relating to one another, I and wind were experiencing not just each other but the one who on creating the earth gratefully saw, says Genesis, “that it was good.”

I do confess I’m grateful in different ways for different winds. My ancestors came from Switzerland, from up in the Alps surrounded by sighing pines, I like to think. Maybe that’s why I love especially the winds that blow in from the north and the west, down from Canada and even the North Pole, bringing skies so blue and sweet it seems almost as if a divine brush is right then still joyously painting them into existence. When that wind touches your skin, cool and soft just as sun offers its contrasting warmth, what is left to say but “Thank you”?

Other times heat and humidity rise or gales lash. Then my gratitude shifts. A challenge raised by being grateful even for wind is how to get any work done. So thank God also for winds that drive me, guilt-free, indoors to meetings or my computer.

I could go on. I could talk of how once you learn to be grateful

for wind, ever more beauty dances into view. Each cloud. Each leaf. Each little flower that opens. Daughters filling the house with life the increasingly rare times, now that their college years are arriving, they’re all home. That tender look their mother gives me just then. The gently wise support my conference minister offers when I’m not sure how to get through *that* thicket of congregational issues.

I could go on, but maybe that’s enough, for now, to make the point: when you learn to be grateful, you still want somehow to make your mark and matter in the world. You still want to dream dreams and seek visions. But oftener now you realize you’re already dwelling in them, that you don’t need to work as hard as you once thought to be at the center of them, that just being you can be a gift to others, much as wind blesses just by blowing. And then you breathe a prayer of thanks.

—*Michael A. King, Telford, Pennsylvania, is pastor, Spring Mount Mennonite Church; and editor, DreamSeeker Magazine.*



## Healing Lover

Karen Jantzi

I am on retreat, at Wernersville, my spiritual home. The place where God and I wrestle, where I demand a blessing. And I am frightened. For most of my life, I have believed that perfection must be attained in every action, thought, intention. For most of my life, I have felt the weight of my failure to achieve that goal. For most of my life I have been motivated by guilt, shame, fear. Part of me knows this is ridiculous. But a more demanding part assures me it is the only path to salvation.

Now I face a decision that can be considered not only a failure but also sin. *Divorce*. The death of a relationship but in some ways more painful than a death. It is murder or at least mercy killing. How can I speak of my faith, my relationship with God, when I am sinning?

Many people have responded with love and mercy, wrapped me in their arms as I sob, placed hands of blessing and absolution on my head. Just as I have spoken to others of God’s love and mercy. Laid hands on other’s heads.

Why can’t I extend that hand to myself? Another failure to add to the list.

Is it possible that anyone can love me as I am—ridiculous expectations, conflicting theology, wounds, dysfunctions, and all? Is it possible for *me* to celebrate the me God created . . . Karen . . . exactly as I am, here, now? Is it possible for me to believe in God's love?

I kneel in the balcony, looking at the mosaic of the crucifixion as I sob, "Lord, I believe, help me in my unbelief." The cross, symbol of pain and glory . . . the rainbow flames surrounding it, promising the life-sustaining Spirit to come . . . the halo, crown of the King of heaven and earth . . . the blood pouring from his body, symbol of eternal love—all speak to me of a love I cannot comprehend. All add to my load of shame and guilt.

My lips form the words "Fear not," and I speak God's assurance through tears:

*FEAR NOT,  
for I have redeemed you:  
I have called you by your name;  
you are mine.  
When you pass through the  
waters,  
I will be with you;  
And through the rivers,  
they shall not overwhelm you;  
When you walk through fire  
you shall not be burned  
and the flame shall not consume  
you.  
For I am THE Lord, your God,  
The Holy One of Israel,*

*Your Savior.  
You are precious in my eyes,  
and honored,  
and I love you.  
Can a woman forget the child  
at her breast  
so that she would have no  
compassion on the  
son of her womb?  
Even these may forget,  
yet I will never forget you.  
LOOK!  
Your name is written  
on the palms of my hands.  
(Scripture from  
Isaiah 43 and 49, NRSV)*

"Look, your name is written on the palms of my hands."

Look. Look. My eyes are drawn to Christ's hands. My name is there. The nails printed my name . . . *my* name. I find it hard to articulate. But my name is there, on his hands. By accepting the nails he put my name there.

Not as punishment. No. This is not about shame. It's about a love too extravagant to describe. I struggle with half-formed thoughts, images, memories. Anything I say sounds masochistic, pietistic, stupid. My heart knows this truth but there are no words that make sense. Lord, give me the words.

"Look. Look at my hands. The scars on my hands spell out your name."

I look at Christ's hands and see my name. He loved me: Karen. Not

just the whole world, all humans, but me. Those scars are there because of his love for me, Karen. Those scars are my name on his hands, Karen. When he looks at the scars, he does not see my failures. No. He is filled with desire to hold and protect me.

They are not the scars of a victim. They are the scars of a parent, of a lover who joyfully risked all for his beloved daughter. Who made a decision not out of compulsion or guilt but so he could hold out his hand and say, "Look, Karen, look at my hands. There is your name."

What can I do in the presence of this love but fall on my knees and cry, "I am not worthy to receive you, but only speak the word, and I shall be healed."

"Karen, I have spoken the word. It is Jesus. You are healed."

Amazing love, how can it be that Christ my God should die for me?

My name is on your hands. The scars are my name. You don't show them to punish me. You don't push them in my face asking, "How could you do this to me?" You show them to comfort me. They are a symbol of hope, of healing, of protection, of extravagant, abandoned, passionate love beyond any I have

ever or will ever experience on this earth.

And when they ask you, "Why did you do this?" Your answer is a look of amazement. "Why? Because she is mine. Because I love her."

**My name is on your hands. The scars are my name. You don't show them to punish me. You don't push them in my face asking, "How could you do this to me?" You show them to comfort me.**

My tears continue but now they accompany an anthem of praise for the vision planted in my soul many years ago, nurtured by men and women who saw what Christ sees: Karen. Karen, precious, honored, beloved child of God. The vision I am

beginning to see as well.

I stand, reluctant to leave. Knowing the struggle is not over. Realizing old habits die hard. But also assured that holding me are the hands of God, hands imprinted with my name.

—Karen Jantzi, Harleysville, Pennsylvania, is a life-long teacher and learner. After completing her Ph.D., she hopes to write and teach in international settings. An-  
abaptist by birth and choice, her spiritual journey has also been enriched by writers, poets, composers, musicians, ministers, priests, and ordinary people from many different faith traditions.

# Graffito

Julie Gochenour

**M**y dictionary defines *graffito* as “an inscription, slogan, drawing, etc. crudely scratched, scribbled, or drawn on a public surface.” A surface like a church wall. As good Christians, however, none of us would spray-paint graffiti on a church wall. Instead, we spray-paint God.

I learned this the hard way. My father committed suicide on August 27, 1999, less than a week before I started classes at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. By early spring, I was furious. Not only was my father dead, but God wasn't keeping God's promises.

Specifically, I needed a job and didn't have one. Most of the work that seminary students do to help make ends meet simply wasn't an option. A slight handicap leaves me unable to stand for more than about ten minutes. That hadn't been a problem when I was editor of *Virginia Farmer* and *Southern Dairy*, but it certainly precluded bagging groceries at Red Front Supermarket.

I railed my way through the semester. Instead of meeting my needs, God had abandoned me. The Bible does not describe a God that abandons. I had

been duped. All this time I had apparently loved and followed a very different God from the one I'd bargained for.

And look where it had gotten me. God's promises were obviously worthless—another reason God was not to be trusted. Sitting in Tom Finger's philosophy class, listening to a lecture on nominalism, I decided that the words we use to describe God are no more related to reality than the names of computer components.

See the pattern? Well, I didn't. Not at first. Sometime in June, however, I finally realized that while I might be looking in God's direction, I was really seeing my father. Without realizing it, I had spray-painted my feelings of anger, hurt, and betrayal all over God. I found I wasn't looking at God at all; I was fleeing my own dark response to my dad's suicide.

Worse, the more I scrubbed away at this graffiti, the more I found. The stuff was everywhere, all over the walls of my religion. Some of it went back for years.

Instead of being honest and dealing with the darkness inside of me, instead of emptying out the ugly pigments in my heart, I had held onto them and spray-painted my worst thoughts, feelings, and opinions across the surface of Jesus'

Abba-Father. Images of my fear, anger, and rigidity were everywhere, marks of insecurity, arrogance, and the secret violence of my heart—some whitewashed yet showing through, some in plain view.

It took me months to accept this. But it's true. Unless we honestly address the darkness inside us, our world looks like that darkness. And our view of God is just as colored and distorted

by that darkness as everything else.

My dad's suicide uncovered my dishonesty. Believing he had abandoned me, I decided God did the same.

Instead of telling God I was angry, I pretended I wasn't. Finding myself in an

arbitrary world, I made God as unreliable as my dad. Afraid that my dad's death was somehow my fault, and needing to believe it was, I fled both possibilities.

To cover my fear, I scrawled graffiti and falsehoods all over God and my life. What I didn't realize at the time was just how much it cost me.

I'm not alone. In hindsight, I've come to see that the church does the same. Picking my way through the whole mess one Sunday morning, I realized that not only I but also the church store within us pools of graffiti paint. Far too often we come to-

**Without realizing it, I had spray-painted my feelings of anger, hurt, and betrayal all over God. I found I wasn't looking at God at all; I was fleeing my own dark response to my dad's suicide.**

gether insisting on our lies and dishonesty. When we do, we spray our graffiti over the gospel.

Instead of telling God we're afraid, we turn Jesus into a conqueror. Rather than naming our destructiveness, we justify it with Scripture. Rather than admitting we're wrong, we insist we're right and demand others agree. Instead of genuinely confessing our faults, we pretend we're perfect. Then we lie to ourselves and God to preserve these expectations.

Two years later I finally understand that my response to my dad's suicide was not about God. It was about me. I had created a god who matched my version of reality. I also see just how quickly the gospel we preach and model can become more about our anger, fear, and manipulation than about God.

But instead of letting God be God, instead of practicing openness in the form of examination, confession, and repentance—all necessary for healing—we, you and I who are the church, self-police and limit our brokenness. We deny these things remain in our heart. Yet if we refuse to discern and acknowledge their presence, refuse to do the hard work of repentance and correction, their darkness persists.

Pretending to be light, we paint our ugliness across our praxis, missions, and corporate life together. Then we point to the graffiti and convince ourselves that it's a picture

of God. So much for witness and evangelism. No wonder people outside the church often refuse to believe us. Our graffiti isn't good news. It's a picture of ourselves.

This sounds harsh, but we need to admit it. We need to turn to God and to each other and, together, bring our darkness to the One who is Light. Then we need to kneel before our brothers and sisters not in Christ and confess that we have not been honest with them or ourselves.

Both are crucial. Our graffiti costs us. The stuff we scrawl across God is costing us the salvation of those not in Christ; the persons we see every day who don't go to church with us. They see our darkness, the darkness we call God, and they flee. They flee the God of Love because the God we name doesn't look like love but the worst of ourselves, the stuff even we won't claim.

What we refuse to deal with in ourselves and spray across the face of God hides God from our brothers and sisters not in Christ. Oddly enough, it also does the same to us.

*—Julie Gochenour, member of the Religious Society of Friends, is completing her M.Div. at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. As part of her thesis research, she conducted extensive interviews with people who do not attend church. She and her husband Gary live on the family farm in Maurertown, Virginia.*

## Genealogy as Window into Who We Were and Are

Kara Hartzler

*Betty Hartzler began tracing her family's genealogy nearly thirty years ago and has since produced several books, two cemetery listings, and a database of over 48,000 names. She and her daughter Kara Hartzler (author of last issue's "Artist Myths and Beyond") recently sat down on the back deck to talk about genealogy, faith, and historical trends in the Mennonite church.*

### What initially sparked your interest in genealogy?

When we went from Kansas to Belleville for that year—what would it have been, 1974?—we bought the Hertzler/Hartzler book and I started reading through it. On page twenty-something I found the names of our Kansas neighbors and that started the wheels spinning. Why are these people—Kansas farmers who are not Mennonite—in the same book that my husband's Mennonite-Amish family is in?

So I started tracing them back and found it's because they came with the Whitestone church group

and then it piqued my interest even more: Why are some people no longer in the church? How did the church function, and what keeps it hanging together?

I started tracing Ken's family with index cards. I put down his grandfather and all his children, then the great-grandfather and all his children—each family on one index card. I started with the Hertzler/Hartzler book, then branched out to other genealogy books. At first I only picked out our family relations; later I widened it to groups of people with a common history.

#### **What did you do next?**

I started talking to Grandpa Kauffman and had him write down his memories of growing up. Then I talked to my aunts and uncles on Dad's side and asked each to write stories of when they were growing up. Some of the uncles just said, "Come over and I'll talk to you, and you can write it down."

So I started this notebook that had oral histories in it. Now I have maybe thirty different notebooks of different family lines with stories, pictures—anything I come across, I put in that family's notebook.

#### **What does most of your day-to-day genealogical work consist of?**

What I originally did with the Swiss-Russian Mennonites was to take all the pertinent genealogy books from the Bethel College his-

torical library—maybe thirty or forty—and enter the families into the database up to a certain generation, maybe third or fourth. So I did all that, and now I'm starting to go back in the same genealogy books and become more inclusive of different surnames through more generations. New books are being written all the time, so I add the information in those as well as what people send me through the Internet.

I'm also on the third update of my father's family—the Peter O. Graber book—and that comes out about every five years. And I've done a booklet on the Locust Grove (Belleville, Pa.) cemetery as well as the Eastlawn (Hesston, Kan.) cemetery.

#### **What would be the historical purpose of these cemetery books? Who would use them?**

For Locust Grove, when I tried to find gravestones of Ken's relatives, I learned there were no written burial records. So I began with a 1950s county listing, added what information I could from the gravestones, then filled in details from genealogy books.

So now there's a written record of the gravesites, which means somebody can go to the cemetery knowing an ancestor's name and walk directly to that site. One of my goals has been to turn genealogy from a stuffy old kind of thing that people aren't interested in to a user-

friendly system that answers the questions people have.

#### **When you enter all this information in the database, are there trends you can see in the Mennonite church?**

Yes, and you can see it in terms of families. An example is when the Daniel Kauffman-inspired Fundamentalism movement of the 1920s began emphasizing cape dresses and straight-cut coats. The first generation really stuck to it. The next generation followed it outwardly but may have done so because of church requirements. By the third generation, the children were leaving the church because they only saw the outward shell of rules and regulations. You can just see it happen in family after family.

It's exactly the same in institutions. The question of whether a church will grow or slide into decline depends on how well each generation can help the following generation establish their own beliefs—even if those beliefs manifest themselves differently. If it becomes a secondhand belief, it usually gets lost.

#### **Based on your genealogical research and historical patterns you've seen in your data, could you make a prediction about where the church is going?**

This is just my own perception, but as the line between church and society fades, the church often loses its core beliefs. Yet I do think God always preserves a remnant. It seems churches that can draw a sharp line between themselves and society at large without heavy-handed rules do a better job of retaining their young people.

#### **When you say remnant, what do you mean?**

The Amish are a good example. They've had all these splits, and at one point, many Amish became Amish-Mennonite or Mennonite. These splits are often over very petty things, like the Amishman who bought a house and refused to cut off the eaves, then

a fellow church member supported him by building a doghouse with eaves on it and the church split because of it.

The General Conference break with the "Old" Mennonite Church was among other things about whether to keep written notes at conference. And now although those two main church groups are reuniting in a merged denomination, some congregations are splitting off over the homosexuality issue. I don't think that's the key issue, people are just hanging a lot

**By the third generation, the children were leaving the church because they only saw the outward shell of rules and regulations. You can just see it in family after family.**

onto it. More than likely, the key issue is going back to how the church is structured and where the church authority comes from.

**I've heard you talk about the fact that your interest in genealogy is very rooted in your faith. Where do you think the intersection is between those two?**

For me, genealogy is a way of understanding God by viewing the way he interacts with people. I think it's been a very healthy thing, giving me roots, not only just in terms of family systems, but in terms of trying to figure out how people operate, how churches grow and decline, and basically how God leads through a group of people.

I think we need to understand who we are in light of our past. For example, God says your sins will follow you to the seventh generation—why or how does that happen?

And I don't think this works just in the case of sins. For instance, in our family you can ask, Why does

the Graber family have such a love of cheese? Well, you go back to Switzerland and because of persecution, they moved further and further up in the mountains. This meant they couldn't sell their milk daily in town, so they made cheese and transported it that way. I mean, how many generations down are we now, ten generations, and we still love cheese!

So it helps me understand why God says in the Bible that something will follow you generation after generation. And it's important for people to realize they are who they are because of their background, even if they're not aware of it or want to change it. Whether it's good or bad, it's part of who you are.

(You can access Betty's genealogy database at <http://www.freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~bettysgenealogies/index.html>).

—*Kara Hartzler lives in Iowa City, Iowa, and is completing her Masters of Fine Arts in Playwriting.*



## The Responsibility of Anabaptist Scholars

Ted Grimsrud

**T**eachers and scholars who work for Anabaptist-Mennonite (and other faith-oriented colleges) do so, I am convinced, due to a sense of calling to serve God and the churches with their gifts and abilities. At Eastern Mennonite University, our mission is explicitly stated to be seeking to answer Christ's call to lives of nonviolence, service, witness, and peacebuilding. Such a mission provides an enormously challenging and exciting program for scholarship and teaching.

However, following this program in the context of the institutional concerns characteristic of churches and colleges in our contemporary culture poses challenges. Is our responsibility as Anabaptist-Mennonite scholars primarily to fulfill such a mission as stated above by seeking to understand and follow the truth of the gospel of peace wherever it may lead? Or is it primarily to make sure our work serves the viability of our institutions—rec-

ognizing that for the sake of what may be perceived as the institutions' best interests, we may at times avoid speaking to certain issues or sharing the fruit of our scholarship?

Partly because I teach in theology and partly because this question seems especially pointed in relation to theology (broadly defined to include biblical studies, ethics, and other related disciplines), I will focus on theology in this article. I believe my reflections, however, could be pertinent to all disciplines in Anabaptist colleges and seminaries and hopefully beyond.

As a Christian, I find it most helpful to place the issue of appropriate expression for theologians in the context of spiritual gifts. I believe that because of the gifts theologians have been given, have nurtured, and are hired to exercise, open expression is something our schools should encourage.

This is my central proposal: Anabaptist churches, colleges, and seminaries must respect the giftedness of their theologians. They should expect those theologians to be honest and open in the responsible expression of their gifts in teaching and scholarship.

In other words, the priority for theologians should be serving Jesus and his church by seeking the truth at all times and by speaking directly

to the issues of our day. Our responsibilities to our institutions are genuine and important, but the institutions (including the churches) lose their reason for existence if institutional viability becomes the ultimate value.

I do believe Anabaptist churches and colleges should expect their theologians to be active members in their larger denomination. I believe theologians should understand their vocation as being to serve their denomination (as well as the broader Christian church and the world itself).

This membership and vocation should not, however, be constraining. Rather, they are precisely the factors that give theologians the responsibility to speak freely and forcefully, to articulate openly the fruits of our research. Like all members of the church, we are to boldly speak the truth as we discern it.

I joined the Mennonite Church in 1981. I was first licensed as a minister in 1982 and ordained in 1991. On each occasion, I vowed to be part of the process within the church of giving and receiving counsel.

I have always understood this to be a commitment to exercise my gifts as a trained theologian for the sake of the church's discerning work. In seeing theologians as gifted

**I believe that because of the gifts theologians have been given, have nurtured, and are hired to exercise, open expression is something our schools should encourage.**

members of the church, I understand our called-out work not to be in tension with the church's mission but an essential part of it. We are not more important than other members with other gifts, but we do have an authentic role to play.

I well remember a conversation nearly twenty years ago with my teacher and friend Willard Swartley that has continued to inspire me. Willard spoke of being moved to tears, as he researched Mennonite writing on war and peace, by the unflagging efforts of one of my heroes, Guy Hershberger, longtime professor at Goshen College, to minister to the church by his writing—especially through popular-level articles in such denominational periodicals as the *Gospel Herald*.

I vowed then that I would try to follow that model. So I am proud of the twenty-plus articles I have had published in the *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite* since then. Theologians are called to be ministers *in* the church.

I resist moves that on the one hand seek to protect the church from the academy or, on the other hand, seek to protect the academy from the church. The church needs the work of academic theologians as it seeks to be faithful to Christ. For theologians to raise new questions, to challenge superficial understandings, to foster care in our use of language, should not be seen as a threat to the church's mission. Rather,

these tasks of the theologian play a central role in the church's mission.

Our ecclesiology asserts that we *all* are to share in the church's work of discernment. *All* voices within the fellowship must be heard. The church must not censor or squelch those within the fellowship (including theologians) who raise questions and suggest new directions.

At the same time, all within the fellowship (including theologians) are called to do their work in service of the work God is doing through a relationship of mutual accountability with the community of faith, not as autonomous individuals.

The work of articulating a living faith, using language that is meaningful and authentic in the present while also faithful to the message of the Bible, is the responsibility of Anabaptist theologians. We are being irresponsible if we shrink from this task. Even when our work is not welcomed, as members of the church we have made a commitment to offer our counsel to our brothers and sisters. We theologians must not be ruled by fear or timidity. We have an authentic role to play in the church—for the church's own good.

—*Ted Grimsrud, Harrisonburg, Virginia, is author, God's Healing Strategy (Pandora Press U.S., 2000), and Assistant Professor of Theology and Peace Studies, Eastern Mennonite University.*

# Anabaptist Academic Freedom

*An Administrator Reflects*

Joseph L. Lapp

One of the most “sacred” characteristics of university culture is the notion of *academic freedom*. The concept is frequently defined in elaborate, wordy terms. One common primary emphasis of academic freedom advocates is that there should be no undue influence from any source on the work of academic scholarship and research. This generally means the scholar is supposed to be able to work and think independently as she engages in the search for truth.

Recently I heard of an Old Order Mennonite farmer who was asked by a neighbor why he could not have balloon (air) tires on the rear wheels of his tractor but could have them on the front steering wheels. His reply would likely be atypical of his community, many of whose members are quite aware of the source of their values, but as the story goes, he answered that “I don’t know why, but the church said I can’t.”

As an administrator, I have observed within university culture a consistent tension between individual independence and community wellbeing. The twenty-first-century world places much higher value on individual independence than on communal aspects of life. How do we address this tension?

As Professor Ted Grimsrud observes in the previous article, persons accepting baptism or ordination in the Mennonite church agree to “giving and receiving of counsel” as part of what it means to belong to that faith community known as Mennonite. For the Old Order farmer, this meant accepting his community’s decision that only front instead of rear tires could have air.

Those of us who are more “modern” Anabaptist-Mennonites smile at such distinctions. But how do we, shaped by the individualistic twenty-first century, give and receive counsel? Even after lengthy processing and with our participation, can we accept the decisions of our faith community?

In his recent book, *Academic Freedom and Christian Scholarship* (Eerdmans, 2000), former Calvin College president Anthony J. Diekema builds the case for the appropriateness of academic freedom in the life of a

Christian university. His argument is that there can be academic freedom in a Christian university where Christian faith, the Christian Scriptures, and Christian tradition are held in high esteem.

Diekema recognizes that there is no university without “presuppositions” creating a worldview, whether a political, economic, social, scientific, or religious ideology. The issue then becomes whether any one individual or university will admit that his or its own presuppositional biases create a framework for any claim of academic freedom.

For an administrator of a Christian university, academic freedom is then an essential characteristic of the university academic culture—in the context of the mission and worldview of that particular university. Most Christian university administrators would hope that in recruiting academic scholars they have adequately identified the university mission and worldview, so the incoming scholar understands how academic freedom is seen in that setting.

In most situations, differences will revolve around how an academic community balances the individual scholar’s independence and the university’s corporate interest. In addition to protecting the free-

**In addition to protecting the freedom of its scholars, a university wishes to experience its own corporate academic freedom from the interference of political, religious, or other special interest groups.**



dom of its scholars, a university wishes to experience its own corporate academic freedom from the interference of political, religious, or other special interest groups. I suggest that for a university, managing relations with constituencies is similar to the balancing that needs to occur between an individual and her university.

For a religiously affiliated university, this requires maintaining an appropriate balance between priorities of the university and the religious body with which the university is affiliated. One key dynamic moderates this tension. That is for the originating or affiliated religious group and the university to adequately define their relationship and the mission of the university as an educational institution.

The underlying presupposition for a university's affiliation with, for example, a denomination, is that affiliation provides mutual benefits. A denomination maintains a relationship with its universities to nurture its progeny, preserve its theology and tradition through teaching and scholarship, educate denominational leaders, and generally enlarge its sphere of influence in the world.

The denominational affiliation then also provides benefits to the university. These include a specific mission; an immediate cultural, religious, social, and tradition identity; and hopefully, a captive constituency for student recruitment,

fundraising, and promotion of the university.

Grimsrud correctly argues that Anabaptist ecclesiology "asserts that we all are responsible to share in the church's discernment." Grimsrud also helpfully underscores the theologian's commitment to work within accountability to the community of faith.

At other points Grimsrud emphasizes the important role of "theologians" in the university and in the life of the church. The question becomes what position theologians should hold in the process of giving and receiving counsel. Should they have such a special place in the discernment of the church as seems to have occurred in the Catholic tradition? Or should the emphasis be placed on the "all," with theologians using their special gifts as one more voice within the larger faith community's discernment of truth?

**W**hile on a study leave at a Catholic institution, I made a comment about not being a theologian. I was rebuked by the rector, Father Stransky, when he said that "all who believe in the divine have a theology and are theologians with a voice to be heard." This comment emphasizes to me the importance of the "all" in discernment while not minimizing what trained theologians offer to the discernment by all.

With Grimsrud, I strongly affirm the valuable contributions for-

mally trained theologians have had and should continue to have in the life of the faith community. My caution would be that we not define "theologian" too narrowly. There are times the community ought to be able to hold theologians accountable for their scholarship and research. Might it be possible that theologians can also learn from the discerning community?

Diekema continues his argument by quoting Arthur Holmes: "Intellectual honesty consists in admitting that neutrality is not possible. It consists in confessing and scrutinizing one's point of view and the difference it makes. . . ." (Diekema, pp. 54-55).

Neither university professors nor universities themselves are intellectually neutral. University administrators want to provide a safe place for scholarship where the university and individual professors are honest about their intellectual biases. The university must appropriately disclose its biases rooted in a mission and philosophy and will expect professors in the process of recruitment to be in basic agreement with the university mission and philosophy. Once such conditions are met, the university should be able to grant academic freedom to scholars to pursue truth in the framework of the university mission and philosophy.

Grimsrud says that "The work of articulating a living faith, using

language that is meaningful and authentic in the present while also faithful to the message of the Bible, is the responsibility of Anabaptist theologians." This strikes me as a useful perspective but slightly overstated. I would prefer to end the statement with "... the responsibility of the whole community of faith."

I believe that the faith community must study the work of Anabaptist theologians, subjecting their scholarship to its scrutiny. During such study, however, the community should not threaten or intimidate scholars but provide scholars with the right to ask difficult questions and explore unpopular subjects.

At all times the community of faith and individual scholars must recognize the challenging terrain they face when issues seeming antithetical to the mission of both the Christian university and the affiliated denomination arise in the educational process. Thorny issues can be successfully dealt with only when there is a high degree of mutual trust and respect between individual scholars, the university, and the denomination, so all individuals or entities can function within their respective context.

**U**niversity administrators frequently rub against the grain of academic freedom in their eagerness to make timely and efficient decisions.

A tool of the trade for scholars is “reflection.” University administrators need to be reminded to provide for reflective processing as they feel the pressure to get things done.

This educational style, in which each entity offers its major and interrelated contributions to discernment, is different from most other organizational systems. Yet it fits well with the Anabaptist desire to be a hermeneutical community.

Ideal? Absolutely! Possible? Only with a great degree of grace. It is my experience and belief that the tensions will always exist because as much as we want to achieve the ideal, we all live with our presuppositions and certain human limitations in adequately communicating our biased worldview.

The issues the Christian scholar wants to—and should—explore will continue to grow in number. The Christian university must allow the Christian scholar to explore difficult issues within the context of the agreed-upon university mission.

The affiliated denomination must respect and value the work of Christian scholars seeking truth in the context of the Christian university mission. A key move here is for the denomination to recognize the need for Christians to understand the implications of their faith in light of the difficult issues of the current age.

If Christian scholars, the Christian university, and their respective

denominational communities do not work in partnership to discern truth, there will be more persons saying, “I don’t know why I can have balloon tires on the front of my tractor but not the rear. The church just said I can’t.”

But when all members of the community of faith together discern the will of God for our time and place using all the intellectual resources available, then everyone has appropriately participated in receiving and giving counsel. Then all can join in articulating the expression of faith for the community.

—Joseph L. Lapp, *Harrisonburg, Virginia*, is President, *Eastern Mennonite University*.

### Grimsrud Replies

I appreciate President Joe Lapp’s thoughtful and insightful reflections. I find his perspective quite attractive. I draw from his reflections several items for ongoing work.

(1) These are challenging times for those who would be faithful to the call of Jesus. All faith-centered colleges, including our Mennonite schools, face the difficult but crucial task of sustaining a viable and vital Christian identity in the face of various cultural trends that flow away such sustenance. Such work requires mutually respectful, trusting “giving and receiving of counsel” among our colleges and congregations. We must resist cultural pres-

ures to push toward greater separation between colleges and congregations while we also maintain the integrity of our colleges as genuine institutions of higher education.

(2) As with all faith-centered colleges, the key to sustaining Mennonite colleges as Mennonite lies at least partly in colleges being clear about their “biases” (this is Lapp’s term; I would prefer a term such as *core convictions*). This clarity is crucial for all elements of college identity, but certainly in the process of recruiting and retaining faculty.

(3) The encouragement of scholarship at faith-centered colleges is key in empowering the colleges to help sustain their identity in our modern and postmodern contexts. We face a major challenge in fostering mutually respectful relation-

ships between scholars and the broader church. Scholars should be encouraged to understand their work as an expression of their spiritual gifts and as an offering of service to the church. The church should be encouraged to understand scholarly work as one important component in the church’s work to be faithful. Our goal should be integration of faith and learning, of faithful living and clarity of belief, of research and application.

In sum, our challenge in church and college is to make the term *Mennonite college* (or whatever term fits our given faith tradition) express a unique style of relating the particulars of our faith tradition with the demands of thinking and living in a big, ever-changing, and ever-challenging world.



# Recovering from the Shaking-Head Syndrome

Valerie Weaver-Zercher

*“Where would the gardener be if there were no more weeds?”*  
—from “The Active Life” by Chuang Tzu

I’m ashamed to admit that, while on vacation when Representative Gary Condit admitted to a relationship with intern Chandra Levy (before 9-11-01 replaced such trivia), I lay on the bed in our hotel room surfing by remote control between about fifteen different talking heads discussing the most recent developments. In so doing, I joined people across the United States in shaking our heads over the misfortune of Levy and her family and the illicit behavior of one more public servant.

It’s true this fascination coexists with my more cerebral disgust at the way the media makes hay out of such scandals. When war and terrorism grip our globe, the fact that one privileged woman’s disappearance and one politician’s sexual life could overtake the headlines is repulsive. Still, I can’t ignore the fact that I’m a sucker for such stories, that I read

every story about this and similar scandals.

It’s not just the antics of celebrities, either, that capture my interest. I can’t count the conversations I’ve participated in, both as speaker and listener, in which those present detailed (with a not-well-disguised glee) the scandal of someone else’s life. What is it within me—and apparently I’m not the only one—that is so fascinated with the misfortunes of others, with the lurid details that punctuate stories of sex scandals, murder trials, and financial ruin? Why am I drawn to those stories that make me shake my head in pity, or disgust, or simple disbelief?

This delight in troubles of others, this “shaking-head syndrome,” as it might be called, is deeper than gossip—a term that conjures up images of old women sitting around a coffee table with nothing better to do. This is deeper than simple self-righteousness, which has plagued religious folk and others for centuries. This goes way down, below the strata of our conscious thoughts, to a deep, subliminal vein where we find some perverse pleasure in accounts of human failure or tragedy.

I’m beginning to wonder if we “need” such stories, in some paradoxical way, to help our lives make sense. Tales of others’ troubles throw into starker relief the normalcy, the rightness of our own lives. Indeed, by narrating the stories of others’ lives, especially those replete with

scandal or shame, we mold the contours of our own into more attractive shapes. Every sentence I utter about someone else’s life cloaks a subtext about my own: Condit is an unfaithful spouse (I am a faithful one). X spends way too much money on clothes (I’m a good steward). Y is a workaholic and doesn’t spend enough time with her family (I have my priorities straight). Z is such a racist (I am not).

Who would the faithful be without the unfaithful? How could I define “good” if I had never seen “bad”? Who would I be without the Other?

A variation of this shaking-head syndrome, even more pernicious than the scandal-loving form, is the “helping” kind. This is the head-shaking that defines the Other as needy, dirty, destitute, lazy, disorganized, promiscuous, fill-in-the-blank-with-the-adjectives-you’ve-heard, then defines oneself as not only “opposite” but as “helper.”

This type of head-shaking plagues especially the helping professions, such as social work and education. It breeds in teachers’ lounges where teachers click their tongues and say, “Well, what can you expect, coming from *that* family,” and among social workers who share stories of clients’ derelict lives and bad decisions.

I also wonder whether this form of head-shaking dwells among An-

abaptist-Mennonites, the Christian tradition to which I belong, more than other religious groups. Within this tradition we have placed strong emphasis on “discipleship,” on faithfully following the teachings of Jesus. This has often led us to underscore the importance of serving others.

Then sometimes, in the middle of our helping (which is at times actually helpful and at times not at all), we circulate negative and dignity-stripping definitions of the people with whom we work. I’ve often sat among Anabaptists acquaintances who were swapping war stories and shaking their heads about the people they’d been helping.

Don’t get me wrong; these “helpers” are well intentioned and good people. I know because I’m one of them. While trying to be helpful to my neighbors or friends in crisis, I’ve sometimes portrayed them to others in that shaking-head way, as in, “Can you believe the situation this person is in,” and then dropped subtle (or perhaps not-so-subtle) references to what I’m doing to help them. Even when I’ve consciously mentioned the admirable parts of people’s lives, I’ve often done it in ways that position people as deserving pity and help.

In his book *The Active Life*, Parker Palmer writes about this

shadow side of helpers, that side of us that *needs* to help others and so, first, must define others as “needy.” He calls it the “inner do-gooder,” which, he writes, “needs to act benevolently not so much for the sake of others as for the sake of self-promotion.”

Palmer asks whether the “good” that is done out of this need can ever be truly good for anyone, as it most often results in patronizing, dependence-building actions. “The world does not need more saviors who impose their version of salvation on others,” he writes, pointing his finger straight at people like me.

Indeed, when we represent others as primarily needy, we perpetuate the lie that we ourselves are somehow *not* in need, even as *they* are completely helpless. We ignore the many needs within ourselves, not least of which is the need to position ourselves as helpers. Who is truly needy—the person helped or the one who *needs* to help?

This is not to say “helping” is always hurtful, that we should never speak truthfully about others’ lives or hope they find more wholeness. It *is* to say that we must hold the lives and emotions of others carefully, as the precious gifts they are, rather than turn them into titillating spectacles to share with friends.

**When we represent others as primarily needy, we perpetuate the lie that we ourselves are somehow *not* in need, even as *they* are completely helpless.**

There is much more that could be said about shaking-head syndrome: how it displaces attention from systems onto individuals, how it uses codewords for class and race and actually augments structured economic and racial inequality, how it fortifies the fundraising strategies of entire nonprofit organizations. Representing others in head-shaking ways is rarely as benign as it seems; what may seem insignificant conversations are actually bricks in the walls of stereotype and prejudice that zigzag across our society.

At its root, however, this head-shaking is no different than the kind that thrives on scandal. Both turn people into objects, agonizing pain into dinner conversation. Both position the “I” as clean and the “Other” as unclean. Both operate out of need, negativity, and prejudice, rather than abundance, optimism, and grace.

**W**ere I to confess all the times I’ve given in to the shaking-head syndrome, of both the scandal-loving and helping varieties, I’d have to sit

in front of this computer screen longer than I care to. And I have a feeling that ‘fessing up wouldn’t keep me from shaking my head and clicking my tongue again, probably in the same day or week I finished my list. Breaking the head-shaking habit is probably even harder than stopping the nail-biting one (which also seems to elude me).

Admitting I’m as guilty a head-shaker as anyone, however, may keep me from distancing myself from those gossipy old women of the stereotype. Realizing my complicity with the ranks of head-shakers may help me pay a little less attention to the Condit of the world and spend a little less energy talking about my “helping” exploits. Slowly but surely, I may begin responding to and representing others not out of my own needs but out of a deep assurance of God’s abundance.

—Valerie Weaver-Zercher, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, is the mother of an infant son and assistant editor and columnist for Dream-Seeker Magazine.



## Review: “O Brother, Where Art Thou?”

David Greiser

I am sometimes asked if I have unfulfilled dreams, having now lived at least half of my earthly life. I respond by saying that my unfulfilled dreams are three: to play first base for the Philadelphia Phillies, to become a stand-up comedian, and to write a regular film review column for a magazine. Thanks to *DreamSeeker Magazine*, the third of my unfulfilled dreams is about to be realized!

Film is a medium which reveals, better than any other, the world view(s) and longings of the emergent postmodern culture. Postmodernism has been characterized as an emerging view of reality colored by at least six perspectives: 1. an appropriate humility about what we can know; 2. a healthy skepticism about truth claims; 3. a thirst for spirituality; 4. an openness to faith; 5. a congenial tolerance for differences; 6. a limited relativism.

In the coming months, as I write this column, I hope to reflect on some postmodern themes portrayed in recent movies. I don't want to do technical film criticism so much as cultural analysis

through the “lens” of film. How do contemporary films envision a larger worldview? What is the shape of that worldview? How do movies reveal our longing for meaning, for purpose, and for God?

A postmodern worldview (if such there be) is said to be characterized as narratives in search of a metanarrative. Many films of recent vintage illustrate this perspective, perhaps none better than the madcap travelogue, “O Brother, Where Art Thou?”

Based loosely indeed on *The Odyssey* of Homer (and sporting a character with the same name as that story's hero), “Brother” spins the tall tale of three cons escaping from a chain gang in the Depression-era South. Two of the cons are lovable numbskulls. The third, Ulysses Everett McGill (played by George Clooney) fancies himself “a man of reason” with a gift of gab, and the brains of the outfit.

Buoyed by Ulysses' false promise of a buried treasure, the trio steal cars, record a bluegrass record that becomes a surprise hit, are seduced by Sirens at a river (remember *The Odyssey*?), find religion at a baptism service in a creek, get beaten up by a Bible salesman (!), and are banned from Woolworth's Five and Dime

(“The whole chain, or just the local branch?” one asks.)

The film's soundtrack is a joyful tour through American bluegrass music history. There are wonderful renditions of the Carter Family's “I'll Fly Away”; the Stanley Brothers' “Angel Band” and “O Death”; as the movie's theme, “Man of Constant Sorrow.” So well matched are the stories to the songs that one might well conclude the movie's plot was developed *around* the songs.

If the structure of the film has a postmodern spirit—random stories in search of a larger narrative—the tone is more postmodern yet. Racism, religion, Southern small-town politics, and serious moral issues are treated with an ironic and irreverent wit that simultaneously skirts the edge of offensiveness while suggesting a social commentary.

In the film's most effective scene, a Ku Klux Klan rally makes its participants and their attitudes look frightening and ridiculous at the same time. The cross burning, hateful rhetoric, and threatened sacrifice of a black man are carried out by a regiment of Klansmen marching in formation and chanting a tune obviously reminiscent of a parallel

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scene from “The Wizard of Oz.”

But while stereotypical Southern characters and attitudes come in for a ribbing, it is the self-proclaimed “man of reason” Ulysses who is ridiculed most. He chides his cohorts as “dumber’n a bag o’ hammers” for getting saved at an outdoor baptism, only later to seek redemption himself when it appears he is about to be lynched.

The treatment of Christianity and spirituality in the film is interesting. There are the usual Hollywood share of hucksters and evangelical salesmen, but the creek-side baptism is filmed with an ethereal beauty, suggesting a pure faith beneath its flawed institutions and practitioners. The entire film is bookended by the appearance of a blind “seer” on a railroad handcar who predicts the events of the story and then sings its outcome.

“O Brother” was written and produced by Joel and Ethan Coen,

who were responsible for several other significant serio-comic films. These include “*Fargo*,” “*The Big Lebowski*,” and “*Raising Arizona*.”

They once claimed that “*Fargo*” was based on a true story—but later denied it. In a similar spirit, they initially stated that “*O Brother*” was based on *The Odyssey*, then admitted they had never actually read Homer’s epic.

No matter. They have imbibed the spirit of that great work, as well as key aspects of postmodern thought. “*O Brother*” does what good films should do: it entertains, comments on life and culture, and reveals its creators’ vision of the world all at the same time.

—*David Greiser, Souderton, Pennsylvania is a pastor, Souderton Mennonite Church; a some-time preaching teacher, and a lover of films, baseball, philosophy, the city of Philadelphia, good spare ribs, and silence.*



## Bread and Milk for Children in Spain

Daniel Hertzler

Six Mennonites went into Spain during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939. All came out alive, but one was wounded. Lester Hershey took a bullet in the elbow at a military checkpoint, and his right arm has never been the same.

The Spanish Civil War was a nasty conflict in which 1 million people died. (All wars are nasty, but some are not as large as others.) The Spanish war was precipitated by differences over what sort of society Spain should become. Once a mighty empire with worldwide connections, Spain had declined century by century until the 1898 Spanish-American war took away its last major imperial real estate. The politics within Spain remained confused and contentious. Finally in 1931 a republic was declared and a socialistic government prevailed.

Three traditional groups objected to the new order: the army, the Catholic clergy, and the owners of large landholdings. In July 1936 the army revolted and began a war that lasted until March 1939. The government side became known as the

Loyalists and the rebels as Nationalists. Both sides indulged in murders and assassinations. One report says that in the first month 100,000 people were liquidated.

The war drew international attention. Hitler and Mussolini supported the Nationalists, Stalin the Loyalists. Some internationals even came to Spain to fight for the Loyalists. The English Friends and American Friends sought to provide relief to war victims. Mennonites and members of the Church of the Brethren were invited to help.

Two Mennonites went to investigate. They were D. Parke Lantz, a missionary on furlough from Argentina and Levi C. Hartzler, who had recently served as “superintendent” of the Mennonite mission in Chicago.

In 1992 Hartzler wrote an account of this experience titled *Spanish Child Feeding Mission, 1937 to '39: A Service Pilgrimage*. There is a copy in the Mennonite Archives in Goshen, Indiana, which I examined recently. I found it more on the level of “a day in the life” than a comprehensive report. But it illustrates some of the adventures and frustrations involved with such an effort.

For example, “For some reason our milk order had been held up. It

was difficult to be the representative of a relief organization with no supplies to give while I was depending on local authorities for my food and shelter.” Or again, “This morning it was really cold outside with a raw wind blowing, but some of the children came for their breakfast barefooted.”

**The Spanish Civil War attracted international attention. . . . English Friends and American Friends looked for ways to provide relief to persons victimized by the war. Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren were invited to help.**

The journal refers occasionally to the effects of “Mussolini’s bombers” and in one wry remark Hartzler writes, “I would like to put Mussolini in this office for one week and let him face these poor people who are without homes, food, and even relatives because of this war.”

Hartzler and Lantz had gone to Spain at the request of Mennonite Relief Committee, an arm of Mennonite Board of Missions. Some on the committee were wary of beginning a social service program without any evangelistic emphasis. But at this confused time in a Catholic country, opportunities for evangelism were clearly limited. One committee member even said it “might be better for the refugee children to die in infancy rather than becoming unbelieving adults and dying in their sins.”

But more compassionate judgment prevailed, and the relief effort was approved. However in approv-

ing the program the Mission Board Executive Committee warned “that our relief workers . . . will be wholly non-partisan in their touch with the people among whom they labor and, while correlating their efforts with those of other relief agencies in Spain, they will hold themselves aloof from all entangling alliances, whether political or religious.”

Lantz soon returned to the U.S. and Hartzler was left as program director with Clarence Fretz and Lester Hershey on the way. They were detained in France waiting for two vans which were to be used in the relief program. Hartzler’s journal includes the plaintive entry, “What does one do in a foreign land when it seems all you can do is wait?”

Eventually Fretz and Hershey arrived and a program was developed. What could be done efficiently to aid starving children in an unstable environment? It was perceived that “milk stations provided an opportunity for us to accomplish significant relief work. They proved to be easy to establish wherever we could find local personnel to staff them and proper facilities to conduct them.”

Powdered milk became the food of choice and in some instances was distributed on a grand scale. The Mennonites offered to supply bread and milk for 4,000 schoolchildren in the town of Murcia. “At 7:30 a.m. on May 23rd [1938?] we mixed the

first milk,” the report reads, “1000 liters of mixed milk. It took until 1:00 p.m. to feed them. The next day we got done by 11:00 a.m. It took one kilo of milk powder for 10 liters of milk which served 40 children. Thus one feeding used 100 kilos of milk powder and 20 kilos of sugar. Each child also received a bun—50 grams of bread.”

In July 1938, Ori Miller asked Hartzler to continue in Spain for another winter. The Friends agreed to allow the Mennonites to run their own program. Also two more Mennonites were sent in, but they had scarcely arrived when the war ended in March 1939. The two were Ernest Bennett and Wilbert Nafziger.

Hartzler’s references to Mussolini’s bombers include one ironic anecdote. He recalled that Canada send a shipload of dried codfish [*bacalao*] which the Italian bombers sank in the harbor at Valencia. “The Spanish liked bacalao so much that they raised the ship and dried out the bacalao.”

Because the Mennonites had worked on the side which lost the war, it took some delicate negotiations to wind up their efforts and leave the country. They had provided emergency food without bias to all who needed it. But they perceived that in rebuilding the business infrastructure, non-Catholics were discriminated against. So they gave the leftover funds they were

not permitted to take out of the country to a Lutheran pastor who used them for loans to evangelicals.

Lester Hershey had his own rendezvous with the new system. He approached a military checkpoint driving one of their vans with its child-feeding mission clearly identified. He has reported that their experience with such checkpoints had been that the soldier would stand in the middle of the road. This one waved his gun from the side of the road, and Hershey assumed he was waving them on.

It was a case of miscommunication. As Hershey accelerated past with the van in second gear and his hand on the gearshift, the soldier shot into the back of the van. The bullet hit Lester's elbow. The *Goshen College Record* (Feb. 1, 1940) carried an account of the accident and reported that "After first-aid had been administered on the spot, Hershey was taken to a hospital in Valencia where his wound was dressed. A blood transfusion was necessary because of the loss of blood sustained enroute to the hospital."

Hartzler reports that the director of Auxilio Social Valencia "was very apologetic regarding the incident and did everything possible to provide Lester with the best medical care." He also identified him as an employee of their organization, so his medical bills were covered by the new government. But to this day, although Lester's right elbow is as

strong as the left, he cannot stretch it straight or bend it more than at a right angle.

The war in Spain was a warmup to World War II. It was scarcely over when Germany invaded Poland in 1939. For Mennonites too it was a warmup, an occasion to organize on behalf of people in need.

I did not find any comprehensive financial statistics in Hartzler's manuscript. But there is an account of a report from MRC to MBMC in July 1938 that the Spanish relief program for 1937-1938 included \$18,151.46 plus 13,449 pounds of clothing including soap and shoes. These figures do not impress us after seventy-five years of inflation, but in mid-Great-Depression it was no doubt a serious effort.

In the *Youth's Christian Companion* for November 21, 1937, Hartzler had written, from "somewhere in Spain," the following admonition: "Remember the suffering women and children in Spain. They will not gather around great boards spread with all the fruits of the earth. . . . Besides, many do not know that God loves them." Some Mennonites heard him.

**F**or the five twenty-somethings sent to Spain in the late 1930s, it was also a life-molding experience. All five were to devote their careers to church-related activities. Hartzler became a deacon at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, In-

diana, and a church-relations director for Mennonite Board of Missions. Fretz became a college teacher and later a missionary with Eastern Mennonite Missions. Hershey had a lengthy career in Puerto Rico as pastor and radio broadcaster. He continued in various pastoral services after his retirement. Nafziger returned to Oregon, where he became a pastor and administrator of a Mission Board related hospital.

The experience was probably most life-altering for Bennett. Reflecting on it more than 60 years later, he recalled, "This was the beginning of my involvement with church ministry. It opened a whole direction for my life which I had not thought about before."

Bennett was last to leave the program. He followed some refugees into France, where he worked with a Mennonite Central Committee-administered orphanage. He returned to the U.S. in 1941. He served as office manager and assistant treasurer at MCC headquarters in Akron, Pennsylvania, from 1941 to 1946. Then he transferred to Mennonite Board of Missions. There he was eventually to become chief administrator.

What effect did this small effort have in the ongoing life of the communities where these men worked? Lester Hershey spent four days in Spain in 1974. As the son of missionaries, he had grown up in Argentina and later worked in Puerto

Rico, so he was able to talk to the Spanish residents. He could not resist doing a little research about their program.

He reports that in one place he found a man drawing water from a well and engaged him in conversation about the Spanish Civil War. He asked him if he remembered the "Americanos" who brought relief to people in need. After the man spoke well of them, Hershey acknowledged that he himself had been one. So the man wished him the blessing of God.

**W**hile I was at work on this article, I came upon the book *And No Birds Sang* (Atlantic Little Brown, 1979), by Farley Mowat. It is a personal memoir of his experience as an officer in the Canadian army during the Sicilian and Italian campaigns of World War II. His account illustrates how war is a combination of confusion, terror, destruction of property, and butchery of soldiers, both friend and foe.

In "An Anti-Epilogue," Mowat reveals that in January 1944 he was transferred to a headquarters job, and we may imagine that this transfer saved his life. In an effort to explain why he wrote the book after a lapse of thirty-five years, he writes, "Let it be said that I wrote this book in the absolute conviction that there never has been, nor ever can be a 'good' or worthwhile war" (p. 218).

There are those who accuse Mennonites of hiding behind the



bloody efforts of persons such as Mowat. We need not accept this charge, but if we did, we could take satisfaction from the contrasting and positive feelings these five peaceful warriors had toward their experience in the Spanish Civil War, and we might also ask what their example may teach us about how we might comparably live today.

—*Daniel Hertzler, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, is author of a memoir, A Little Left of Center (Dream-Seeker Books, 2000) and instructor for Pastoral Studies Distance Education. Also he walks the dog, cuts wood in season, works in the garden, and keeps a few bees. He and wife Mary have four sons and nine grandchildren.*

*The Origin of Milk*

When Emily nurses, her eyes drift shut and her hand strays to my other breast, urgent, pulling or twisting my nipple as if adjusting a television set; I imagine she's trying for the best flow of milk. Downstairs, our tv reaches into the airwaves to bring us unintelligible broadcasts. This morning I clicked the silver knob through the secret codes of the "U" channels and Big Bird appeared in sickly yellow-gray from a far-off Sesame Street, not the usual station. I crouched in front of the tv, my hand paused on the switch, waiting for the static to clear, but it didn't.

Emily draws milk from my body, dreaming of things I've forgotten. The clustered sacs deep in my breasts produce her supply as I fold shirts and read headlines, even as I nurse her, brushing hair from her eyes, wondering where the milk comes from.

—*Angela Lehman-Rios*

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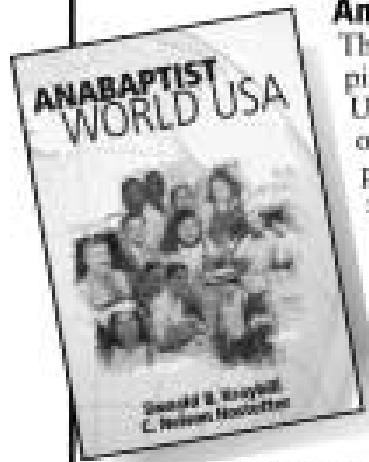
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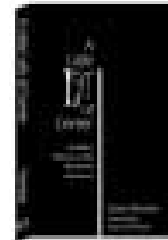
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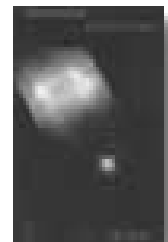


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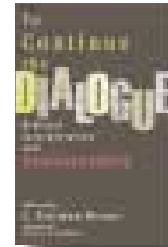
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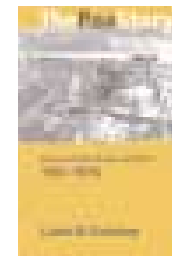
**To Continue the Dialogue: Biblical Interpretation and Homosexuality**, Living Issues Discussion Series 1, ed. C. Norman Kraus. "This kind of resource is the necessary beginning point for true discernment," says George R. Brunk III of these reasoned yet passionate calls for all who care about this issue to deliberate under the Spirit's guidance. *Authors:* Kraus, Richard Kauffman, Marcus Smucker, David Schroeder, Paul Lederach, Melanie Zuercher, Ed Stoltzfus, Lin Garber, Michael King, Don Blosser, Carl

Keener, Douglas Swartzentruber, Ted Grimsrud, James Reimer, Reta H. Finger, Mark T. Nation, Carolyn Schrock-Shenk. *Respondents:* Brunk, John Lapp, Mary Schertz, Willard Swartley, Richard Showalter, Elsie and Don Steelberg, Elaine Swartzentruber. 6 x 9 tr. pap.; 332 p; \$23.95US/35.95 Can



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### *Apparition*

It's early morning before work  
and I'm chasing my toddler  
across the unraked yard when all of a sudden  
my father's canvas-covered shoulders appear to rise  
from amidst the scattered leaves.  
He looms statuesque in the midst of the lawn  
like Hamlet's ghost, brown wool hat  
shading his eyes and beak-like nose.  
I didn't see him coming and now  
for a few inscrutable moments  
the river of years between us carves  
a ravine so deep I fear  
he has already moved on over to the other side.  
I forget he was born to this season  
*when yellow leaves or few or none do hang  
upon those boughs . . .* that every year since  
I saw him blow out forty shining candles on a chocolate cake  
I have breathed an autumn prayer against his loss.  
Yet he has watched over me  
for forty years since.  
His shoulder is warm beneath my palm  
and a slow grin cracks his face as  
his youthful miniature tugs his pant leg,  
pulling him towards the house they are building  
next door, telling *Opa* all about men hammering  
and pouring concrete.

—*Ann Hostetler*

In honor of John A. Hostetler, 1918-2001. Forthcoming in  
*Empty Room with Light*, DreamSeeker Books, 2002. Published  
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