

DreamSeeker Magazine

Voices from the Soul



Your Life in a Four-Hour Road Trip

Brenda Hartman-Souder

The Turquoise Pen

Dreams

Noël R. King

Learning My Mother's Language

Lee Snyder

Beneath the Skyline

The Ennobling of "Busy"

Deborah Good

Three Parables

John Janzen

Ink Aria

Small Moment Stories

Renee Gehman

Kingsview

Home After the Nest

Michael A. King

and much more

Summer 2010

Volume 10, Number 3; ISSN 1546-4172

Editorial: Life as True Dream

In their various ways, the authors in this issue of *DreamSeeker Magazine* seem to me to be pondering how life may—or may not—be experienced as a true dream. Having grown up in multiple countries as a missionary kid, I remember experiencing the crossing of borders as creating such a sense: the prosaic reality of one country would come to seem dreamlike as the reality of another country shook up what had seemed the “but this is the way things are” settledness of the prior country.

Brenda Hartman-Souder’s report on the experience and lessons of driving in Nigeria does something like that to me and perhaps us. Plunging us into a horn-honking road trip on what is actually an ordinary road for its setting while insightfully jarring us with the signs she sees along the way, she destabilizes our sense of what seems real and what seems dream depending on one’s country and angle of vision.

In her story on “Dreams,” Noel King makes explicit this matter of dreams “that flow forth regardless of one’s state of waking or of sleep.” Next Lee Snyder helps us see that her mother’s discussion of the down-to-earth vagaries of weather is actually a kind of dialect for discussing something much more: “permission to address the soul while acknowledging chaos and predictability, mystery and

surprise, expectations of the moment—and hopes for tomorrow.”

Deborah Good helps us ponder the dangers of *chronos* time and invites us into *kairos* living, which might also be seen as seeking to live in God’s time, God’s dreams, while awake. John Janzen plays a variation on this theme with his three contemporary parables, which seek, as parables do, to make our ordinary understandings seem dreams and what seem dreams become thinkable. In related ways, Renee Gehman helps us seek larger meanings in small moments.

In my column on seeking home after the birds have left the nest I’m ruminating, really, on how what once seemed to stretch endlessly to the horizon, life with children, is now a dream, and what once seemed a dream—empty nest—is now real.

David Brattston might be seen as flipping the angle of vision: The New Testament dream is of Christians who don’t slander, but Brattston shows us how hard it is to live this as true dream. Dave Greiser’s review of the “The Informant” exposes us to a main character torn between dreams—one rooted in money, the other soul. Dan Hertzler reviews books focused on how Anabaptist-Mennonite dreams can be actually lived out. Finally, the poets can be viewed as negotiating dreaming expressed through living.

—Michael A. King

In their various ways, the authors in this issue . . . seem to me to be pondering how life may—or may not—be experienced as a true dream.

Editor

Michael A. King

Assistant Editor

Renee Gehman

Editorial Council

David Graybill, Daniel Hertzler, Kristina M. King, Richard A. Kauffman, Paul M. Schrock

Columnists or Regular Contributors

Renee Gehman, Deborah Good, David B. Greiser, Daniel Hertzler, Michael A. King, Noël R. King, Mark R. Wenger

Publication, Printing, and Design

Cascadia Publishing House

Advertising

Michael A. King

Contact

126 Klingerman Road
Telford, PA 18969
1-215-723-9125

DSM@cascadiapublishinghouse.com

Submissions

Occasional unsolicited submissions accepted, 750-1500 words, returned only with SASE. Letters invited.

Subscriptions

Standard rates in U.S.
\$14.95/yr. in US, automatic Jan. renewals, cancel any time.
Single copy: \$3.75

Free online:

www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com/dsm

DreamSeeker Magazine is published quarterly in spring, summer, fall, and winter.

Copyright © 2010
ISSN: 1546-4172 (paper)
ISSN: 1548-1719 (online)

IN THIS ISSUE

Summer 2010, Volume 10, Number 3

Editorial: Life as True Dream

Poetry

David Myers, *Flu Dot Gov* • 2; *Mirror* • 25; *After Happy Hour in Our Nation’s Capital* • 38; Julie Cadwallader-Staub, *Frontier* • back cover

Your Life in a Four-Hour Road Trip

Brenda Hartman-Souder

The Turquoise Pen

Dreams

Noël R. King

Learning My Mother’s Language

Lee Snyder

Beneath the Skyline

The Ennobling of “Busy”

Deborah Good

Three Parables

John Janzen

Ink Aria

Small Moment Stories

Renee Gehman

Kingsview

Home After the Nest

Michael A. King

Slander Between Siblings, Biological and Spiritual

David W. T. Brattston

Reel Reflections

“The Informant”: The Case of the Crazy Whistleblower

Dave Greiser

Books, Faith, World & More

Three Problems, Three Books: Reviews of John D. Roth’s Beliefs, of Stories, and of Practices

Daniel Hertzler

3

8

10

13

17

20

23

26

30

33



Flu Dot Gov

Hmmm . . . my head nodding, "Yes I agree." I say—"must have the State and locals. . . ." She wonks policy to the Other one leaning toward her, and I cannot look at either, both earnest
In their worlds and for good reason, for people will surely Die, one has already even this week. I am Myself near expiration, floating as I am above the conversation In the courtyard of the plaza, and wondering how long we Will be apart in the service of the country, remembering when you Slipped in beside me and I awoke just enough, and Then fell back to sleep. . . . "Let's tier the calls with the White House" and death draws closer. This ploy of Quietude as Wisdom with well-placed, timely agreeable words Inserted in the conversation with a thread of comprehension, but Delivered with just enough conviction, a dilettante in full Bloom, to get me by—or so I believe, or do not believe. Put your palm On my cheek and understand me with your eyes, as you do when I Cannot speak of this. I will call you tomorrow.

09-09

—*David L. Myers lives in Arlington, Virginia. In May 2009, President Obama appointed him director of the Center for Faith Based and Community Initiatives at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. His home and his fiance are in Evanston, Illinois.*

Letters to DreamSeeker Magazine are encouraged. We also welcome and when possible publish extended responses (max. 400 words).

Your Life in a Four-Hour Road Trip

Brenda Hartman-Souder

"Drive as Though Your Family Were in the Other Car"

You wish drivers would heed this sign, but you know they won't. You think Nigeria's and all world's problems might start to resolve if all of you honored this advice.

You head out of Abuja after the x-rays are taken; Nigeria's capital has the consulates, the embassies, the businessmen, the rich politicians, and the orthodontists. Your son needs a jaw expander.

You'd like to believe your fervent silent prayers: *Please, please, please let us stay safe* will go answered but you also think, *This road is one giant crap shoot*. You think of this road trip as jumping unknown but certain-to-be-there hurdles. Your husband deftly manages rush-hour traffic, swerving around cars that abruptly brake or turn with no signal, ignoring cars that pass at crazy speeds or honk impatiently if you slow down. You look like a normal, sane, and safe family of four in your little royal-blue Toyota mini-van capsule.

“Shine Your Eyes” Joint

The plastic-duck-yellow container hanging on a roadside stick signals a palm-leaf shack selling the potent homemade stuff. You’ve never tasted it but you wonder if a swallow might make the trip more tolerable.

You have to admit, though, the scenery is terrific. You pass mud-brick and thatched-roofed huts nestled among the lush, rolling savannah. Okra, corn, and cabbages await harvest, crops growing inside neat, rectangular fences of impenetrable cacti. Funky, “how did they get there?” rock formations and silent volcanic mountains dot the countryside. Smoky-green layers of hills rise to touch wispy white clouds.

You remember how your eyes were shining when you first arrived more than 12 years ago—ah the exotic wonder of being in Africa. How even now when you are scared there is a pulse, a pull, even a love that brought you back and keeps you here.

“Dangerous Bend: Slow Down”

You tense at every curve because you know that many disregard or haven’t been taught (no lessons or test required before buying a license to drive) the common sense rule: NO PASSING ON BENDS! You have to admit the journey takes more time if you never took a risk, but you also remember when a car, impatiently slinking behind a tired, trembling truck, tried to dart out and almost hit you head-on.

You remember how your eyes were shining when you first arrived more than 12 years ago—ah the exotic wonder of being in Africa.

Your children seem oblivious to the danger—they’re singing lyrics from “High School Musical” and conversing in Nigerian English which they slip into with no effort whatsoever. They love their international school and have friends of various nationalities. You try to remember that bringing them overseas—the sharp curve-decision from cozy North American existence—was a deliberate choice made partly on their behalf.

Still, their lack of worry on the road amazes you; your 11-year-old daughter checks the house every night for someone lurking in a corner or cabinet and you’d like to tell her that Honey, what you should be doing is watching every bend in the road like a hawk.

“Many Have Gone on These Roads: SLOW DOWN”

You count at least eight carcasses of crushed cars along the way, and you only have to glance at them to know that it’s mighty unlikely anyone escaped unharmed. You know ambulance service and paramedic care do not exist, that old ambulances are used to take coffins to burial sites.

You have to stop for “nail boys,” who bring your car to a halt by laying down a board full of spikes, while they rifle through your registration papers and, even though you keep everything up to date, still try to fine you. You have to slow down for the military checkpoints you watch how the

soldiers will wave anyone through with a smile—never mind if you have guns in your trunk—if you slip them money, and at one stop a thin, smartly uniformed policeman begs you for twenty naira, about 15 cents. But you never pay bribes because once you start, there is no stopping.

Along the side of the road, grains and vegetables have been spread out to dry. Children, even toddlers, in school uniforms walk and yell “white person” if they see you. Fat Fulani cows amble along the side of the road and their herder leans on his staff. All are oblivious, it seems, to the danger just beside them. You are amazed at the patient and mostly quiet persistence of your Nigerian friends, who detest the corruption, the demise, the lack of progress, but who day in and out get up to work, farm, laugh, and love.

“You Have Been Warned: SLOW DOWN”

You notice that the road is pocked with more potholes than the last time you took it, but this is the only artery connecting Jos with Abuja. Cars now have to swerve to avoid this evidence of corruption—laying a thin layer of macadam down and pocketing the money meant to construct the road properly. The sixth largest producer of crude oil does not maintain its roads. But this is a road, not a muddy track, and you should be grateful.

You stop at a roadside market to buy vegetables. A row of rickety wooden shelves displays dazzling red tomatoes and peppers, fat potatoes, purple onions, green beans, carrots,

and shiny hot peppers. You are a seasoned bargainer but the list in your head disappears as women immediately surround you in their worn skirts and shout at you, beg you to buy.

Finally you’ve had it—you yell that they are losing your business by being so loud and aggressive and they back off a little. One smart woman picks up the cabbage and avocados and other things you haggled over and helps you put them in the trunk and you give her a tip of gratitude and then you leave—the flashes of color in a muddy parking lot etched in your mind.

“Remember Only the Living Celebrate. Have a Safe Journey”

Your car ascends the winding hills onto the plateau where Jos is situated. Your kids munch sandwiches and spill peanuts.

Tall cell phone network towers stand like sentinels. They look out of place in this rural countryside, but now you can phone pretty much anywhere in the world. You’re also grateful for men hand-digging the four-foot-deep trenches for fiber optic cables which allow you a connection to friends, family, and world news and provide opportunity to conduct market research for your writing and shop for your next pair of sandals.

Women and children cluster around a well near the road and you think of your small work—funding water projects, health care, literacy, education, and income generation. A lot of these projects directly benefit a handful of Nigerian’s women who

work from predawn to dark cooking, farming, hawking, gathering firewood and water, and serving their men in silent obedience.

“Do Not Kill Yourself, Drive Slowly”

You think, *Ah, this too could also be a motto for life.* Drive slowly. One of the things still true about Nigeria is that overall—despite madly rushing vehicles, the constant ring and beep of cell phones, and a work schedule that never relents—life moves slower here. People still take time to stop by and greet. Normal life stops for weddings and funerals. Babies are picked up and played with. You are truly befuddled by the pace of life as you read about it in online papers or experience it when visiting the United States and you wonder how you will readjust to chock-full schedules, the endless quest for productivity, and the technological revolution that had you just recently learning how to master a cell phone.

You have spent some but not nearly enough time trying to learn Hausa, the local trade language. You have not gotten very far, but you can greet, bargain at the market, and work your way out of a pinch if absolutely necessary. You still think and dream in English.

However, you think in Hausa when you are scared. *“A hankali”* you say when Mark looks to rev just a little too close for your comfort to the car in front, or when the kids go careening down your lane on their bikes. CAREFUL or SLOW DOWN. The kids even know what this word means

even though they know little Hausa.

You pass through Bukuru and view, once again, the burnt buildings and vehicles from the latest crisis, the one where before-peaceful Bukuru lost significant sections of its neighborhoods to violence sparked by an event in Jos. You know that each crisis ruins more lives and livelihoods. Few buildings are repaired and little hope is being constructed from these charred remains.

Your organization, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) works at peace building, especially interfaith dialogue, trauma healing, and viewing all development work through a peace lens. You like the sound of this very much but you know this is long-term (endless really) hard, brave work and that the odds right now are against peace.

You see now how killing is quick but healing is slow. You think of Sani, one of the peace workers you have recently interviewed, and how he spoke quietly, tears welling up in his eyes as he told of his desire to be known by his pre-school-aged daughter for his persistence in working for peace even amid signs of impending and greater violence. How despite his awareness that he may not survive this arduous journey, he carries on because wants those he loves to live.

“Slow Your Driver Down Before He Kills You: Accidents Claim More Passengers”

You smugly smile at this one because the driver is a “he” and you know that more men are responsible for these deadly car accidents than

women. You are grateful that “your driver” is usually your spouse on this road, that he and you share the front seat and that you trust his driving instincts, steady hand, and ability to take the wheel for long hours.

You think your eagle eye is important. But you have to admit that you usually doze for part of the trip and that really, your finest contribution is remembering the snack bag full of water, peanuts, crackers, and fruit.

Still, you think of friends who must rely on public transportation. You think of how they are ridiculed when they ask the driver to be more cautious, how they are at the mercy of others who do not necessarily believe in car maintenance and driving congruently with the conditions of the road, which, in this case, are terrible.

Skull and Crossbones Sign

You think of how you were taught at an early age that the skull and crossbones means danger, death, poison—and you know all of these things are true about this road.

You also know that with careful, defensive driving, your odds of dying are still pretty low. You wonder if this quote from Helen Keller is applicable not just to this road but to your life in Nigeria: “Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature nor do the children of men as a whole ex-

perience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.”

You drive into Jos and turn into your compound. The guard at the gate welcomes you and asks, “How was the road?”

“The road was fine,” you reply without hesitation.

You head down the red dirt and deeply rutted lane to home. Your home. Where somehow you belong. Your dog hears your car and runs behind the car, tail wagging in furious greeting. Your neighbors wave as you pass.

Your kids spill out of the car, rush to pet the cat, rub the dog’s belly.

There is only one route home, and so you take it. You need to be on this road. You can’t understand it but you know it to be true. Your life here is quite a ride and there’s a pulsing energy, a life-giving rhythm, a thrill that goes with it. And so far you’re safe. And well. Neither you nor God can guarantee that for the future but safety is relative, and what better place to be than a road with your name on it.

—*Brenda Hartman-Souder, Jos, Nigeria, serves as co-representative of Mennonite Central Committee Nigeria and, along with spouse Mark, as parent of Valerie and Greg.*



Dreams

Noël R. King

One night at the river's edge, I paused and looked at the sky. It was blank, just like my mind. I was lost in a dream, and I couldn't find my way back out. My dreams often ended this way, my soul a scarce, dim shadow barely lived inside of them.

I tired of this; last night I changed it all.

Last night I filled my dreams with graciousness and space, the brilliant scent of clarity a richness in the air, the Truth of life green-weaving through the seashine sands and palms.

I dashed my skies in pinks and storm-thick grays and every regretful hue that I could find. I made mousselike mud and frenetic tadpoles, and I ate French toast that made me weep with joy.

I invited all who appeared in my dreams to live the rainbow arcs of sunshine in their eyes and to sing the songs of words they longed to hear. I sang them, too, because I knew exactly what they were.

I met some curiously familiar strangers (I had brought them here for just this purpose) and they shone at me, their eyes lit up, their hair on fire. They were thrilled to see me here and wished me well. We sparkled as we passed on crunching stones along the way.

I walked along a stream that led to water falling far

below—cliffs and then the distant echoing of every lovely life, once lived, now passed. I smelled the honeysuckle. So did bees, all buzzy with their smiley businesses: “We have our work, you know!”

I breathed the air; it reached my heart and then my head. I felt the light rise up in all my cells. They laughed with sheer good will. “Let's go live some more!” they cried, and danced in sing-song circles there beside the tree that I had made.

A tree with all the wisdom of the age, and all the power, therefore, too.

**So far you're safe.
... Neither you
nor God can guar-
antee that for the
future but safety is
relative, and what
better place to be**

A tree that I had made before in dreams but had never got this close to yet. I felt it reaching out to me, and then, with all the air between us, was embraced by it forevermore.

When I awoke to face my day today, I found that dreams flow forth regardless of one's state of waking or of sleep.

—As circumstances warrant, through her Turquoise Pen column Noël R. King, Scottsville, Virginia, reports on strange things, including dreams that flow continuously forth.



Learning My Mother's Language

Lee Snyder

It is said that remembering is an act of the imagination, and I have no reason to doubt it. I have come to understand that memory's intuition offers a truth of its own, enlarging and extending life in some inexplicable way. At least that is the case in my relationship with my mother and our complicated patterns of communication.

On one level, we shared an easy camaraderie, an unprovoked and respectful form of exchange based on the ordinary interests of Mennonite farm women. We kept track of things, exchanged gossip, commented on church and family news, and noted the passage of time through deaths, births, and community tragedies.

Even as an adult, I found it difficult to shuck the daughter role. I did not need to, nor did I want to. After my dad died, when my mother would travel from Oregon to visit us in Ohio or Virginia, I would wonder fleetingly if there was the possibility of a new conversation, more intimate, outside the worn grooves of familiar roles. In our community the women kept their inner lives private. None of this modern day mother-daughter psychologizing where disappoint-

ments are aired or long buried hurts are hurled at one another.

There was another level of communication, however, that was so pervasively obvious that for years I was not attuned to its significance. I remember it only as my mother's preoccupation with the weather. This was not simply a matter of passing interest or the topic of casual conversation. For her, the weather was more like a beloved reassuring presence.

Not having TV, our family did not have the ubiquitous weather channel to signal the week's forecast. The radio announcer kept us periodically informed of the temperature and the measure of rainfall, but it was the barometer that was given a favored place in our house. There the mysterious black box with its three instrument panels sat on the fireplace mantel beside the dark wood-encased chime clock which called out the hours and the half hours.

Sometimes during the day, when my mother would sense a subtle atmospheric shift, she would check the barometer and announce, "The barometer's up." Or, "The barometer's down." My father would tap the device just before bedtime, preparing for whatever weather change would order the next day's work. I never did understand the barometer's pressure gauges or how the floating hands of the meters conveyed weather information, but they made perfect sense to my mom and dad.

My mother seemed to possess an expanded sense of weather, as something beyond the ordinary, an expression of both an inner and outer state

of being. I have learned from my mother to see and feel, to hear and fear the weather. To hope and marvel, to taste and touch the wind or the sharp edge of a March morning. I can still see Mom bracing herself against the gusts, hanging out the bath towels and the overalls on the backyard clothesline next to the grape arbor.

When each Saturday I call my mother, now in her nineties, in the retirement village, she asks, "What's the weather like there?" We exchange reports on an infinite variety of weather manifestations and shifts—interminable rain, a heavy freeze, the warm fog, the first snowfall. Or it might be the Shenandoah's fall blaze and Oregon's extended Indian summer. "It was forty degrees this morning," she says, or fifty or maybe sixty-three.

Some days she takes a walk, depending on the weather. I imagine her bundled in a favorite ratty brown sweater, hunched against the wind as she follows the sidewalk around Quail Run. (I know she has gotten rid of that sweater by this time, but I indulge the memory of her hanging on to worn dresses, old jackets and sagging coats, because that is my own tendency.)

My mother's letters over the years, when she still found pleasure in writing and before Parkinson's frustrated her worn and nimble hands, have always revealed two things: her faith and her love for the rhythms of the year. "Greetings in Jesus' name," her letters would begin. Then she would move into an account of the week's activities: the boys fertilizing the field, planting the garden, spraying, windrowing, harvesting.

After heavy spring rains, she would report that the creek was up—or down. Sometimes she would register a strong north wind or “skiff” of snow. There was something comforting about her litany of duties: raking, cutting out quilt blocks for the women’s sewing circle, going to Wednesday night prayer meeting, mowing the yard and orchard. But always there was the weather. “It’s dry,” she would write. “The farmers really need rain.” Or, just as often, “The fields are so wet the boys can’t get in to cut the fescue.”

While still on the farm, she used to write about February daffodils, which bloomed in their wildness along the fence rows or in the ditches along the road and about the early camellias outside the dining room window. This was the prize *Floribunda*, I would remember, an astonishingly large pink specimen which served as a harbinger of spring. “I picked a bouquet of daffodils where the old shed used to be,” Mom would write, and I pictured exactly where she had gathered them.

Even with experience and a keen eye for reading the skies, my mother acknowledged—perhaps longed for—the unpredictable and disruptive chaos of weather which served as a manifestation of life itself. Omni-present, the weather was a force to be reckoned with.

She knew this without ever having heard of weather modeling, chaos theory, and Edward Lorenz’s question, “Does the flap of a butterfly’s wing in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?” She

would have opted to observe cloud patterns and sunsets firsthand rather than consider theories of whether the Butterfly Effect magnifies small uncertainties into large-scale weather phenomena.

Weather was more than just a daily companion, however. It took me a long time to understand that weather

It took me a long time to understand that weather is code language for my mother.

is code language for my mother. I am still learning the language, but I know when she asks me, “How’s the weather?” that she is really asking, “How are you doing?” “Are you okay?” As a farm woman inextricably linked to the land, Mom’s sense of order and change, of possibility and wonder, is expressed through the language of weather.

Some Saturdays I press her, “And how are you, Mom?” “Oh, about the same,” she replies, adding more only if I insist. And so we talk about the weather, which gives us permission to address the soul while acknowledging chaos and predictability, mystery and surprise, expectations of the moment—and hopes for tomorrow.

—*Lee Snyder was dean at Eastern Mennonite University and president of Bluffton University. She continues to work with educational organizations, boards, and the church. She and her husband divide their time between Virginia and Oregon. This article is excerpted from At Powerline and Diamond Hill: Unexpected Intersections of Life and Work (DreamSeeker Books/Cascadia, 2010).*

The Ennobling of “Busy”

Deborah Good

“Michael,” I began my email to this magazine’s editor, “Somehow, writing a column for this issue of *Dreamseeker* has continually fallen off my radar for the past several weeks. I guess I am trying to fit too much into this one little life of mine.”

I have a dual personality. The first values slowness. It values being. Under its guise, I dream up unlikely scenarios that involve moving to a falling-down house in a quiet, small town, where I will spend my days reading, writing, learning carpentry, and taking long breaks to share tea or beer on the porch with friends.

Meanwhile, the second personality wants to do everything and connect with everyone. For most of my life, with only a few exceptions, this personality has reigned supreme. It has me juggling jobs, creating and taking on additional out-of-work projects, squeezing in coffee with a friend before a meeting and a soccer game, *and then* going to a party afterward, all the while jotting to-do lists in the margins of my notebook and letting the laundry pile up until I have run out of clean underwear.

I live a full life. The variety of activities and people that make up my days keep me interested in this great

project called living, like a curious child, skipping from one play corner to the next, constantly active, learning, and changing. I rarely feel bored or stagnant, and I sometimes feel quite bubbled-over and happy. But much of the time, I feel overextended, a little chaotic, and, well, pretty tired.

I am coming to terms with a difficult reality: By doing the many things I like, I have created a life that I don't. Not as much as I want to, anyway. Not enough.

In college, two friends and I decided to take a semester off and drive East-Coast-to-West-Coast. We spent three months following our maps and rather-elastic plans, visiting friends, hiking and camping, and—as long as we were eating and sleeping in relative safety—generally unconcerned with time and productivity. I took my watch off before we left the East Coast. I have not put it on since.

Time and I have a rather contentious relationship. I try to be present in the moment, but even in my watch-less state, I regularly pull out my cell phone to check when I need to be where. Because I am so often trying to use every last minute of every 60-minute hour, my friends now know to expect my phone call or text: *Running a little late. On my way now.*

And amid all my running around, I have a tendency to leave things behind. This has, apparently, been a life-long habit. When I was in elementary school, I forgot this or that piece of clothing so often, Mom decided to

buy my clothes mostly from thrift stores so she didn't have to dig through the lost and found for something more valuable.

I am coming to terms with a difficult reality: By doing the many things I like, I have created a life that I don't.

Life-long habits are hard to break. I, however, am going to try—an endeavor that sends me down yet another path with no clear answers and an undetermined destination. How will I compose a life that feels more sane and balanced? Here I share some of the experiments I am trying, and lessons I'm (maybe) learning along the way.

Daily and yearly, I live aware of the tension between my two personalities. The first one, which longs for simplicity and wide-open, unoccupied time, battles it out with the second, the *do-do-doer*, which wants exactly the opposite.

The second one is winning not because she is right but because she gets far more approval from the big world of approval-givers. We ennoble being busy. I get affirmation from a variety of people in my life for doing a lot. It is not uncommon that I ask the how-are-you question and get "I'm busy" in response, to which I respond, "Me, too. Me, too."

Suddenly, it feels like we are kneeling down with sarcastic bows to one another. "Wow, busy, huh? That must be rough, but boy are we honorable for being so busy." I catch myself thinking that a busy life is somehow worth more, but I am pretty sure this is not true.

Today, in between things, I stopped by to see Dee Dee, a poet friend who juggles at least as much as I do and two kids in addition. I do not see her often enough and this time had only 45 minutes before I would have to leave. In her kitchen, we loaded an empty milk crate with tea, mugs, honey, and snacks, and then went out into her yard. Together we hoisted the crate and two plastic chairs up into a tree house, and clambered up ourselves, creating a little retreat space beneath the leaf canopy, while her kids played below.

This brief time together had a different quality than the 45 minutes of my life that passed before and immediately after our tree-house convening. While the time with Dee Dee was in many ways too short, it was also expansive. It could not be valued in terms of our productivity (indeed we consumed tea and chocolate-covered almonds more than we produced anything tangible), yet the moments were immeasurably valuable.

Perhaps this is what some people call *kairos*, a concept of time very different from the sequential, minute-counting *chronos* time we know best. From what I understand, *kairos* refers to openings in time, opportune moments that have a timeless quality to them, moments when we are present, pay good attention, and recognize that this whole *time thing* is a human creation and obsession after all.

Chances are, I will never fully escape *chronos* time. Part of the answer, then, is learning to manage it more

thoughtfully. This, I admit, is not my strong suit. I sometimes feel like a choir director whose singers have decided to disregard my lead, while I try to rein them back into singing the right notes and tempo. (In this metaphor, my anarchic singers are my time, my to do list, my scheduled and unscheduled activities.)

A friend returned from a seminar on time management saying that we should sort the many things we want and need to do in our lives into categories A, B, and C. Category A, he tells me, are the most important things in life, those things we want to say we have done when we are on our death beds.

Ironically, these are usually the things that no one is really counting on us to do, so we always put them off for later while we tend to category B tasks, which have consequences because they are tracked carefully by others (e.g. paying the mortgage), and category C tasks, which we must do even if no one is really paying attention (e.g. taking out the trash). To create a meaningful life, according to the seminar, our goal should be to structure our lives in a way that allows us to take care of B and C tasks expeditiously, leaving time and energy for category A.

This reminds me of a story that was being forwarded around and landed in my inbox several years ago. In it, a professor stands before his class with an empty mayonnaise jar. He fills it with golf balls and asks the class if the jar looks full. After they have said yes, he pours in a collection of pebbles, which fill the spaces between

the golf balls. They agree again that the jar is full. Next he repeats the drill with sand. By this point, the students are laughing.

“Now,” said the professor, “I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life.” He explains that the golf balls are the important things (the category A things)—your health, your family and friends, your passions. The pebbles are other things that matter. And the sand, he said, “is everything else—the small stuff.”

“If you put the sand into the jar first,” he continued, “there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls.”

Two weeks ago, I wrote a letter to my supervisor and last week sat down with the executive director of the small nonprofit where I work. To my surprise and what actually feels like great relief, she approved my request

for four-fifths time. The new schedule will come with some consequences—cutting my salary and benefits by 20-percent, for two—but I stand solidly by my decision.

This is my newest experiment in making my life more sane and balanced. By working at this now-full-time job only four days a week, I hope to have more time left in my mayonnaise jar for the golf balls.

—*Deborah Good, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is a research assistant at Research for Action (www.researchforaction.org) and author, with Nelson Good, of Long After I’m Gone: A Father Daughter Memoir (DreamSeeker Books/Cascadia, 2009). Send your strategies for composing a sane and balanced life to deborahagood@gmail.com.*



Three Parables

John Janzen

Constantine’s Conversion

The Emperor Constantine, facing the biggest battle of his reign, looked into the setting sun at the Lillian Bridge and saw a vision of the cross of Christ. As he gazed at the cross he heard a voice say “By this sign, conquer.”

The next day he gave up his reign as Emperor, surrendered all his many possessions, and went to live and work among the poor.

And forever after he was known as one of the greatest heroes of the faith for his obedience to the voice of God.

The Wall

The teacher came to a village of affluent people living on the other side of an ancient wall from the very poor, people who they desired to help. They felt terrible that they couldn't help the people on the other side because they could hear their cries for help, but nothing could be done to get over the huge wall.

So the teacher left with them a considerable sum of money saying, "I give you this because I know how you wanted to help those on the other side, but didn't quite have the means. Use it to relieve the suffering that poverty has brought here."

The people built a huge system of ladders and tunnels so that they could get food and medicine to those living on the other side of the wall. Though there were still problems, they were happy that their efforts resulted in a considerable raising of the standard of living of the people on the other side.

This being the case, they were shocked at how disappointed the teacher was with them upon returning to see what they had done with the money.

"Why?" they asked, "Look at all the suffering we have helped alleviate!"

The teacher responded, "I gave you that money so you could tear down the wall. In doing it this way, you have only alleviated suffering on one side of the wall."

The Final Judgment

When I opened my eyes I realized that I was there, at the Final Judgment. What struck me first is that it played out exactly as I had always imagined—a dazzling, all-encompassing light that was irresistible in its attraction. It was kindness, and goodness, and love, but in a perfected way—a pure experience that I had only tasted hints of in my lifetime.

But as I moved toward it I noticed a commotion. A man was on his knees sobbing, his body heaving with sadness. To my shock, I could see plainly that the man before me was Adolf Hitler himself, crumpled on the floor, refusing to move any nearer to the light. Between his sobs he could be heard begging for a return to his earthly existence, for a second chance to live his life over. "What have I done, what have I done," came the mournful repetition.

I assumed that he was facing the terror of his coming punishment in hell, so I asked one of the others there when he would be taken away from this perfect place. The answer that came revealed my lack of understanding. "He won't *be* taken from this place—that is just the reason for his sorrow. All come from the Light, and all go back to it. He has been told that all is forgiven, and that he is welcome to go forward into the banquet. It is by his own will that he stays where he is."

—John Janzen, Nagoya, Japan, lives with his family in Japan where he works at a university. In completing his graduate degree on C. S. Lewis, he got hooked on myth and story as perhaps the most powerfully effective vehicles for thinking morally. This led to trying his own hand at writing parables and allegories. He hails from Winnipeg, Manitoba, but left because the sushi didn't meet his standards.

Small-Moment Stories

Renee Gehman

My sneakers smacked the pavement loudly on a steep decline in the road, but even louder was the sound of the large truck coming slowly to a stop alongside me. Feigning obliviousness, I stared ahead, readying cell phone in my hand for any emergency phone-calling that might become necessary. Thank goodness, I thought, I had remembered to put on my “Road ID” bracelet that identifies my name, address, and emergency contact information.

“Excuse me!” a friendly voice from the truck called down, and I relinquished the oblivion to stop and acknowledge the man in the truck. He was the picture of harmlessness.

“Ending Creek Road?” he asked. “Did I pass it, do you know?” Smiling, he reached out the window to show me a notepad that clearly said, “Ending Creek Rd.”

I studied the words for a couple seconds, then, “Oh! INDIAN Creek Road!” I called up to him, laying hard on the first syllable. “Yes, it was just back there on the right!”

He thanked me and we proceeded on in our opposite directions on our own right paths. Had he been in

a hurry when he first wrote down that road name, neglecting at that time to clarify the spelling? Did I recognize the lost-in-translationism so quickly because of being an English as a second language teacher attuned to the intricacies of language production? (Oh, don’t flatter yourself; any local could have figured it out!) Ironic though, to have had to emphasize INDIAN as the correct word here, amid the ongoing quest in schools and beyond to blot out this misnomer for Native Americans in all its many occurrences.

Turning into my driveway some time later, I remembered the reason I’d even gone for a run outside that day: that morning a man had shared in church on the topic of an oil container he’d seen while driving. He’d stopped and pulled over, wanting to do his part to ameliorate litter, except what he found turned out to be a brand new \$3.50 bottle of Penzoil.

A small, odd-to-tell-in-church story, but I’d been intrigued by his message of paying attention to, appreciating, finding meaning in the details of one small moment. Tony Campolo once referred in a sermon to the top three regrets in a survey of senior citizens, and the third, after wishing to risked more and to have left more of a legacy, was to have reflected more.

In first grade students write what we call “small moment stories,” with the goal of expressing details about a narrow topic. This is a strategic remedy

Tony Campolo once referred in a sermon to the top three regrets in a survey of senior citizens, and the third . . . was to have reflected more.

for the “I’m Finished” virus that many first-grade children are stricken with once they’ve written one sentence. The first symptom to look for is a prematurely raised hand, which you must address immediately, because

once other children have been exposed to one such hand, suddenly hands will start popping up all over the room. Many pencils stop moving at this point, and if it gets too bad you may need to suggest that some of the afflicted will need to stay in for recess if they don’t show signs of improvement, and I mean soon, class!

But hopefully it will not come to this, because you will go to the first child, read that one sentence, and say, “Well, the good news is you are not really finished. There are lines to fill, minutes to spare, and details of your story to add!”

In this way, stories of playing in the creek (Indian Creek, maybe, but certainly not Ending Creek) are spared from ending at “I love to go in the creek because it is fun,” but are brought to life in a recounting of the time you and buddy Ryan found a piece of an old pot that you excitedly cleaned up and took in to show Grandma, who expressed equal excitement (“Wow! That is so cool!”) and saved it in on a shelf so that if (WHEN) you find more pieces of that pot, you can put them together.

The small-moment story is not as easy a concept for some to grasp as it is for others. Jennifer, for example, will

not write if she does not know how to spell the word. (The practice is to encourage students to “stretch the word out” and not always just spell it out for them). Prem, on the other hand, is determined to write as many stories as possible, and he does write well, but such a large part of making a small moment great is spending enough time in a small moment to realize its meaning.

I have a checklist in my Bible, on which I mark off chapters as I read them, and I like to see the accumulation of marks grow on the page. But then from time to time I read another book and come across some commentary on a verse I had read and find that, due to a lost-in-translationism from Hebrew to English, I did not fully realize the meaning of what I had read. Such a thing can be disheartening in a world where we are trying to

finish as much as possible, read as many verses as possible, get to Ending Creek Road as quickly as possible.

But what is the point of reaching such a destination if we fail to stop along the way to pick up the oil can, study a verse in depth, check directions, or write one detailed story about one small moment? That we can take our small moments and make them grow, simply by choosing to live them more fully or reflect on them more deeply seems almost magical to me, because you are taking something that already happened and adding value to it rather than letting it slip away into prematurely finished oblivion.

Hands down, please, pencils moving.

—*Renee Gehman, Souderton, Pennsylvania, is assistant editor, Dream-Seeker Magazine; and ESL teacher.*



Home after the Nest

Michael A. King

Four years ago we left Youngest Bird at college. At that time I wrote about how empty it was in that nest. Amid concluding Mother Bird Joan and I would be okay, I reported on tears in a silent house. Then by the next column I was confessing that, um, actually we were enjoying loving Departed Birds instead of In-Nest Birds.

I also forecast that birds would be in and out of the nest and that this would be fine, this is the way our culture now is, let's flex and grow in a world in which they come and go. I didn't know how true this would be. We had nine months of empty nest. Then some bird has lived with us ever since. *We were* mostly fine, but Parent Birds would sometimes say with glances at each other, *Remember, oh remember, that so sweet and so evanescent empty nest?*

Now things are yet more complicated: Last week Youngest Bird finished college. And now, except for Oldest Bird, settled in Olympia, every bird is moving to a new nest:

Middle Bird moved last night. At bedtime a ringing phone shattered the quiet of our first hours of new empty nest. *What now!* our looks said. It was Middle Bird. “I love my new life!” Okay, we could manage that interruption. And we scratched our heads. How did

this come to be? This was the bird who by her final years in the big city was so traumatized in our increasingly dangerous neighborhood (it seemed to become better after someone torched two of the nearby crack houses) she was one reason we decided to try a different type of nest for a while. Now this, of all birds, was the one who had moved right smack into the big city's downtown.

Today came another pile of wedding invitation acknowledgments. I don't open these; even as I celebrate that in Christ there is no male nor female, for some reason Youngest and Mother Birds seem more invested in them. But I know what they mean: Youngest Bird will be married soon. And she and our son-to-be will move into their own nest in Virginia.

I am aware of this because for a time we competed for nests. Joan and I also needed a nest in Virginia, because I'll be living there much of the earlier part of many weeks due to my new job, and she'll sometimes join me there, even as I'll often live with her in our old nest much of the latter part of many weeks. So for months Youngest and Parent Birds were trying to get an apartment in the exact same area. When one day we found ourselves exploring the very same apartments, Youngest Bird was unhappy with my thinking that if we wanted the same one, whoever got to it first got it.

There was also the wedded couple's hope to build a new life away from parents. My taking a job in the

same town caused consternation. No problem, I stressed, I'd not eat *every* meal with them. Youngest Bird assured me I could live in their doghouse.

So here we are. Our primal nest emptied as never before, birds scattered to the winds. Once more there is sorrow. There are the memories, precious memories, come home come it's supper-time longing-filled memories, of those few fleeting decades we were all in one place. There is the stretching of our love across old nest and apartment nest Joan and I will need to work at.

There are also the signs that home is more than being together in a nest. This matters, because if home is only about the nest, then not only we but countless ones of us are doomed to homesickness.

But a few weeks ago, mostly credit to Mother Bird who moved heaven, earth, and airline schedules to make it happen, all of us achieved a miracle: twenty-four straight hours together. We went to the shore, checked into our hotel, and so soon were apart once more. Yet for those few hours we lived in *kairos*—the fullness of time, God's time, time richer and deeper than the ticking minutes—and Home.

We don't really know yet how to live in Home, spiritual togetherness, when nest as home is more memory than actuality. But we look forward to learning. And we also, poised at the edge of what was and what is to come, can see just how vital to the building

We don't really know yet how to live in Home, spiritual togetherness, when nest as home is more memory than actuality.

of Home—for us, for all humans who long to be more than alone, for a culture so often better at scattering than gathering, for a church seeking ways to help us glimpse the meaning of being in God's nest—those earlier years of home are.

—Michael A. King, Telford, Pennsylvania, and Harrisonburg, Virginia, is Dean, Eastern Mennonite Seminary; and publisher, Cascadia Publishing House LLC. This reflection was first published in *The Mennonite* (June 2, 2010), as a “Real Families” column.

Mirror

I wonder what Linda Ronstadt looks like these days. I haven't seen a picture of her in years. I did see a picture of Yusuf, the Artist known as Cat Stevens, on a Starbucks Pick of the Week Card. He's aged, less the Yusuf more the old man looking Out a window wondering what happened the last thirty years. Or so it seems, with his gray beard and Caesar haircut of also Graying hair. Welcome home is the name of his new album. I Haven't listened to it and maybe it's better that way. Welcome Home should mean exactly what it says, so I'll just pretend it Doesn't mean anything more than his longing look, in the same Way I look out my Kansas City hotel room, making your Voice say welcome home, welcome home. Linda, what do you Look like these days? You were so so fine and you went Away for awhile and came back singing standards and Mexican Songs. Has your hair grayed? Have you rounded? Do your eyes Still say I love you? Is your voice still the deep and comforting Murmur of a mourning dove? Do you look out the window too?

08-09

—David L. Myers

Slander Between Siblings, Biological and Spiritual

David W. T. Brattston

A Pattern Between Slanderers and Their Victims

A country lawyer frequently writes letters on behalf of clients who feel they have been slandered by someone. Such letters are all the same: They accuse the recipient of making defamatory comments about the client, deny the truth of the allegations, and threaten court action if the recipient repeats them to anyone, ever. The letters never ask for an apology; the lawyer knows human pride is such that no one will ever offer one. Not even a court will order an apology.

Once I even had another lawyer write such letters on my behalf when I believed myself libeled by the Law Society. It was lawyer against lawyer, of which more below.

From writing many such letters I have noticed a pattern in contexts in which people are accused of slandering another, a pattern in the type of relationships between slanderers and their victims. I believed this pattern to be peculiar to my own practice until I

compared notes with a lawyer two counties away. The patterns were identical: The largest numbers of slanders are between brothers and sisters; the second largest category is between members of the same church congregation.

Psychologists might explain the first pattern as sibling rivalry, but what about church members? The other lawyer and I dealt with members of traditional mainline denominations, not those groups where all enthusiastically regard each other as brothers and sisters. However, a common element may underlie both types of relationships, more on this after reviewing slander in Christian history.

Traditional Christian Teaching

One would think that Christians would never engage in defamation. Our holy book takes a dim view of it, beginning with “You shall not go up and down as a slanderer among your people” (Lev. 19:16 RSV). Psalm 27:2 and 140:11 classify slanderers as evildoers. Psalm 50:20 says God will punish anybody who slanders his natural brother; in 101:5 it is the psalmist himself who will destroy whomever defames his/her neighbor. Proverbs 10:18 opines that “he who slanders is a fool.”

Jesus in Matthew 15:19-20 and Mark 7:20-23 denounces slander as evil and defiling to the slanderer. Romans 1:29-30, 1 Timothy 6:4 and 2

Timothy 3:3 discountenance it, while Ephesians 4:31, Colossians 3:8, and 1 Peter 2:1 exhort believers to put away slander along with other sins. Christian women in particular must not be slanderers (1 Tim. 3:11; Titus 2.3).

The largest numbers of slanders are between brothers and sisters; the second largest category is between members of the same church congregation.

The thrust of the last paragraph above is not merely one possible interpretation of the Bible among many, concocted by me two millennia after the Scriptures were written, but was shared by post-biblical Christian authors before the third century. There is much value in consulting these early authors:

(1) They demonstrate how biblical teachings were understood by their first audiences, within the same culture and worldview as theirs, and hence give the best idea of how the biblical authors intended themselves to be understood.

(2) They, or Christians not long earlier, still had the oral teachings of Christ and the apostles fresh in memory, before the body of Christian ethics could stray far from its roots.

(3) They indicate how the earliest recipients of grace through Christ responded to it under the supervision and unwritten examples of the apostles and other early disciples who were inspired by God.

Included in some early editions of the New Testament, the first-century *First Letter of Clement* 35:8, like Psalm 50:20, discountenances defaming one's neighbor.

Another work so useful and influential that, like *First Clement*, it was included in some early editions of the New Testament, is the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Mand. 8.3 and Sim. 9.26.7 give slander similar treatment in the first half or middle of the second century.

The same is true of the *Epistle of the Apostles* 35 and 49, written between A.D. 140 and 160, about the same time as *Letter to the Philippians* 5.2 by Polycarp (not the apostle Paul), pastor-bishop of Smyrna and a disciple of the apostle John. Polycarp wrote that deacons in particular should not slander. (Polycarp may have been “the angel of the church in Smyrna” addressed in Revelation 2:8).

Already we are surrounded with a great cloud of witnesses without examining the ancient restatements of “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (Exod. 20.16; Deut. 5.20) or biblical and early post-biblical Christian strictures against evil-speaking in general.

Another Pattern: Slander and Envy

Another pattern: “envy” often appears in lists of sins where “slander” is also condemned, such as in Mark 7:22, Romans 1:19-20, 1 Timothy 6:4, and 1 Peter 2:1.

In the mid-second-century, exhortations against envy and against slander are also close to each other in *Second Clement* 4:3, the oldest surviving Christian sermon outside the

New Testament. In the A.D. 190s they appear together in the *Eclogae Propheticae* 30 of Clement of Alexandria, a great Christian thinker and educator of his day.

Perhaps the ancients linked the two because people often utter derogatory remarks about others out of resentment. . . .

Perhaps the ancients linked the two because people often utter derogatory remarks about others out of resentment and hence to lessen the importance of their victims’ achievements in the estimation of other people. These may be achievements that the slanderers wish they themselves had accomplished but lack the talent or willingness to do so.

A Modern-Day Case

This brings us to the time I had another lawyer threaten libel proceedings against the Law Society. I was sitting on a court that adjudicated disputes over lawyers’ fees. One lawyer questioned whether such court should continue to exist and had himself appointed to a Bar Society committee to look into the matter. (Either he was the most prominent member or it was a committee of one.)

I admit that as then constituted there were deficiencies in the court’s procedures and internal communications. However, his report not so much questioned these but attacked the characters and competence of its judges, including me.

The Society reproduced and circulated his report. I considered that it libeled me. As is the law, I believed that my remaining silent in the face of

such allegations would be deemed an admission of the truth of them, and hence grounds for my dismissal or being passed over for promotion to a higher court.

I contacted the top libel lawyer in the jurisdiction, who then sent letters similar to those described in the first paragraph of this article to the committee member and the Law Society. My demands were modest: I did not request money but only a retraction and correction of the report’s negative comments about me and that it circulate this rectification to the same persons as the original report.

The Society did so; my objections were satisfied; my reputation was restored. Rather than vainly strive to overcome the mountain of human pride, I had not asked for an apology.

Points to Ponder

The above raises a number of questions. Did the slandering lawyer prove the link many early Christian authors made between envy and

defamation? In churches and families, why are people defamed by those who should love them most? Why are Christian congregations such fertile grounds for statements that prompt their victims to seek legal counsel?

Could the equality between brothers and sisters and the ethos that all church members and all lawyers are equal be a motive to lessen others’ achievements? Are slanderers cutting down what they would have liked to have accomplished but lacked the talent, divine favor, or work ethic to attain? In a twisted and misleading way, slander restores the appearance of equality by alleging that the victim is not such a great achiever after all.

—David W. T. Brattston is a freelance writer in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada, whose articles on early and contemporary Christianity have been published in Canada, England, Australia, South Africa, the Philippines, and the United States.



“The Informant”

The Case of the Crazy Whistleblower

Dave Greiser

Most good filmmakers become adept at making one or two clearly identifiable types of film. Clint Eastwood is the master of the flawed hero genre. Quentin Tarantino creates films which brilliantly reference other films; his movies may be described as film-as-a-world-of-its-own.

Steven Soderbergh’s body of work is eclectic. Soderbergh’s career began with *sex, lies, and videotape*, a small indie film about a man who films women talking about their sexuality, and the resulting effect on the relationship of a married couple. It continued with *Erin Brockovich* and *Traffic*, two films that explored government complicity in white collar crime, and whistle-blowing. Next he veered into the world of the action-caper comedy with “Oceans” 11, 12, and 13.

Soderbergh’s latest experiment is “The Informant.” This film returns to the theme of white collar crime, but approaches it with the breezy, ironic tone of the “Oceans” films. “The Informant” is closely based on Kurt Eichenwald’s book *The Informant: A True Story*. It recounts the real-life story of Mark Whitacre, a biochemist and vice-president of Archer Daniels Midland (“supermarket to the world,” for you public radio listeners). ADM is one of those compa-

nies that put corn sugar into almost everything we consume, from breakfast cereal to Pepsi to prescription medicines.

In the early 1990s, Whitacre brought down ADM when he exposed to the FBI a global price-fixing scheme involving the nutritional additive lysine—one of ADM’s leading products. Several top executives—including Whitacre himself—went to jail. Whitacre, ironically, served the longest sentence, while his supervisors were given shorter terms.

Whitacre is played here by Matt Damon, who packed on 30 pounds and donned a huge pair of glasses, a mustache, and a ridiculous toupee for the role. Damon plays Whitacre as a science geek-turned corporate executive, a brilliant, fumbling guy who does some really stupid things.

At the beginning of the story we wonder at Whitacre’s motives for blowing the whistle on the company that has made him rich. He initially appears to be a bumbling good-heart, confessing to the FBI because it’s the right thing to do—and because his wife (Melanie Lynskey) insists he come forward. But as events unfold, his motives blur, his actions become more duplicitous, and even his psychological state teeters toward imbalance.

Eventually we learn that, at the same time that he has been wearing a wire to record the dealings of top level meetings, Whitacre has been squirreling away millions of dollars in kick-

backs from deals he is [has] been making for the company. What was he thinking?

Throughout the film Whitacre voices his own inner monologue. While at first his observations seem simply inane and humorous, we eventually allow them to become the film’s omniscient, if unreliable narrator.

For me, the strongest part of “The Informant” is not the story itself. At the level of plot, this is just a tale of corporate greed being brought down. The plot is complicated, and the viewer feels appropriately lost in its first half as the story takes several unexpected turns. But finally it reaches a satisfying conclusion.

It’s at the level of human nature and motivations that I found this film involving and fun. Who was (is) Mark Whitacre? A scientist? An executive? Someone who genuinely wants to do the right thing? An opportunist? A pathological liar? A mentally disturbed genius who is marginally in touch with reality? Or some combination of all of the above? It’s a tribute to Damon’s acting that he is able to unveil much of this mixed palette of characteristics simply by how Whitacre walks from his office to the car (you’ll have to watch the movie to see what I mean).

What about Mark’s wife, Ginger? Is this the strong woman urging her man to do the right thing? At first she seems to be. But when the feds swoop down on her husband, she becomes protective of his reputation and the lavish lifestyle his success has afforded

It’s at the level of human nature and motivations that I found this film involving and fun.

her. In the end she comes across in part as an opportunistic, privileged mafia wife—willfully ignorant of her husband's world and ways. Melanie Lynskey plays Ginger with just the right mix of ditz and duplicity.

The FBI agents are interesting, too. Soderbergh has fun portraying them as well-meaning dim bulbs who never can manage to place the listening device or camera in the right place, and always seem a step behind the thoughts and actions of their targets.

"The Informant" has its flaws. Some will find the technique of the unreliable narrator confusing—I, on the other hand, found it a deft touch. By making a comedy about corporate crime, Soderbergh gets laughs but sacrifices moral punch in the process.

At times the film seems unsure which tone to adopt—ironic or serious. Half a dozen smaller parts in the film are played by stand-up comedians, rather than actors. Viewers aged 50 and above should look for a couple of cameos by Tom and Dick Smothers. It's fun to see these people, but a little distracting. Also distracting is the jazzy, late '60's game show soundtrack. (Hint to directors: if we keep noticing the soundtrack of the movie, it's probably too intrusive!)

I watched "The Informant" on DVD because it had only a short run in the theater. Rent it or blu-ray it when you can.

—*Dave Greiser, Baltimore, Maryland, is pastor of North Baltimore Mennonite Church.*



Three Problems, Three Books

*Reviews of John D. Roth's Beliefs,
of Stories, and of Practices*

Daniel Hertzler

Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice, by John D. Roth. Herald Press, 2005.

Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be, by John D. Roth. Herald Press, 2006.

Practices: Mennonite Worship and Witness, by John D. Roth. Herald Press, 2009.

John D. Roth is professor of history at Goshen College and editor of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, a scholarly journal established by H. S. Bender in 1927. It is described as "A Journal Devoted to Anabaptist-Mennonite History, Thought, Life, and Affairs."

The January 2010 issue includes five articles on Balthasar Hubmaier, an Anabaptist leader who is under a cloud for Mennonites because he did not affirm pacifism. The editorial notes that "This issue of *MQ*. R. will not resolve the hotly debated question of Hubmaier's credentials as a normative Anabaptist theologian. But it does confirm that interest in Hubmaier's

thought continues to flourish.”

A regular feature of this journal is also book reviews. Eleven reviews in this issue cover a variety of historical and related topics, closing with a review of a book of poems. The journal is mainly concerned with high-level historical scholarship.

Now Editor Roth, who is a member of the Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship near Goshen, Indiana, has written three “popular” books on subjects of concern to all Mennonites, scholars or not. Each of the three books is introduced by a problem which the author has encountered in his own life or in professional contacts. It does not appear that the three books are intended to be a series. Rather, the premise for each book seems to be a problem identified that has pressed him to look for a solution.

However, if the books are not a series, the solutions are cumulative. What is discovered and included in the first and second books has relevance for the problems dealt with in the third.

The first of the three begins with a discussion between Roth and a Japanese man he met on an airplane. The man was working for a Japanese agency and wanted to better understand how Americans think. “Who was this person, Jesus? He asked. . . .’ Can you explain to me, ‘he finally said, ‘just what it is that Christians believe?’” (9).

Roth admits that he was caught off guard and has attempted in this book to respond at some length to the

question. After a brief look at the variegated history of Christian thought, much of which he finds unsatisfactory, he proposes “to give a simple account of the Christian convictions that have sustained the Mennonite church for nearly 500 years” (13). He writes as a historian and, it would seem, a lay rather than professional theologian with the *1995 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as a background for his work.

The first two chapters cover subjects which Mennonites have in common with other Christians and then he follows in chapters 3 to 11 with four distinctive Mennonite understandings: biblical interpretation, baptism, discipleship, and a visible church. With each of the four he describes the Mennonite position, acknowledges problems the position entails and aspects on which Mennonites do not agree with each other and then summarizes at the end.

At the end of chapter 11, Roth acknowledges that Mennonites do not always “have it together” but he concludes, “At their best, Mennonite congregations are settings for Christian practice, that bear consistent and joyful witness to God’s love for the world and God’s desire that all people live in respect and trust for each other” (143).

Stories begins by telling of how one of Roth’s daughters came home from school unhappy and quarreled with all in the household. Later she retired to her room and when her father went in to seek reconciliation, he found her looking at family pictures. They re-

viewed pictures together and the conflict was forgotten.

From this anecdote he proposes that stories can help us clarify our identity. “When we tell the collective stories of our congregations, our denomination, or the larger faith tradition, we are looking for points of continuity to join us to the past” (10-11). So the historian proposes to review the stories of the Christian church and particularly the Mennonite church.

He begins with the development of the Christian church from a movement to a structure. Then on to Constantine and the medieval Christian empire. The picture is painted with a broad brush since he wants to hasten to the Reformation and Anabaptists. But I wonder if he might have included a little more documentation of the rise and development of the church from which the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition emerged.

He gets to the Reformation in chapter 3, with Martin Luther and early Anabaptist history. After one chapter on the Reformers and two on early Anabaptism, he moves to the development of Mennonite churches in various geopolitical sectors: Europe, South Russia, North America, and around the world.

Roth makes an effort to be frank about the ambiguities involved in seeking to develop and maintain a church without the political support expected by the Catholic and Protes-

tant churches. At the end of chapter 5 he writes, “The struggle for identity amid the pressures of compromise and forces of renewal has structured the contours of Anabaptist history ever since” (113).

“When we tell the collective stories of our congregations, our denomination, or the larger faith tradition, we are looking for points of continuity to join us to the past.”

One chapter is devoted to South Russia and two to North America, where he ends with a discussion of the multi-ethnic character of current Mennonitism. He states that “the very future of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition depends on a capacity to embrace those beyond

ourselves, knowing that the Spirit of God hovers at the borders of that cross-cultural encounter” (187). The last two chapters deal with Mennonite mission efforts, Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite relations with other Christians, and finally the question of how to preserve and nurture a Mennonite identity.

There is a historical warning near the end featuring Leonhard Weydmann, a seminary trained Mennonite leader in the Palatinate of Germany who composed a new catechism for Mennonites. “The traditional Mennonite emphasis on moral regeneration had virtually disappeared, and teaching regarding the nature of the church had become generically Protestant” (230).

In 1967 I visited the meeting-house of the Weierhof Mennonite congregation in the Palatinate. I found memorial plaques on both side walls, one for soldiers killed in World

War I and the other for World War II. I seem to remember that the name Hertzler appeared on both lists.

“In the end,” writes Roth, “the most powerful stories are not about us, but about encounters with God in which we must take off our shoes because we are standing on holy ground” (241).

Now there is a third book. Another problem, another book. This problem represents more personal and denominational angst than the first two. Roth found himself spiritually rundown and reasoned that a hike on the Appalachian Trail would be an opportunity for spiritual renewal. The problem was not his alone. He discovered spiritual uncertainty in various Mennonite congregations which he had visited. The hike “was to be a vision quest—my chance to wrestle with God alone in the wilderness, to discipline the body, and to commune directly with the divine through nature” (15).

The hike did not go well. Weather and blisters conspired against him and the 19-day hike ended after four days. One might make several observations: He began the hike in late October and he evidently had not practiced well ahead of time, thus the blisters.

But of course the failed hike serves as an introduction for what he wants to present: his studied proposal for ongoing renewal through spiritual disciplines (practices) available if we

The failed hike serves as an introduction for what he wants to present: his studied proposal for ongoing renewal through spiritual disciplines

will undertake them. “The Christian faith,” he writes, “is an invitation, not a threat, it is a witness to be borne, not a demand to be imposed. Its authority is ultimately anchored in nothing more than the testimony and practices of the living body of Christ” (25). Well, of course.

The work, then, is organized in three parts, one section on worship, a second on witness, and a final one, “Looking Forward.” The message is that the source of spiritual renewal is to be found in our traditional practices if we will follow them.

Some of us have read that near the end of the nineteenth century when Mennonite churches seemed weighed down by traditionalism, John S. Coffman introduced revivalism and John F. Funk published Sunday school literature. These practices provided stimuli for the twentieth century. Some of us remember revivalism with mixed feelings and Sunday school for adults is not today what it once was.

Roth proposes that the answer to our present malaise is to be found in worship. If the first of the three books is concerned with defining what we believe and the second with clarifying Mennonite identity, the third is a response to the question, “Why go to church?”

Indeed, Roth introduces a second problem in chapter 5, the case of a Mennonite student who admitted he no longer attended church. “I feel much closer to God taking a walk

along the millrace than I ever did in church on Sunday morning” (62).

Roth’s answer to this is that no matter what we do, something is shaping us. “Even if my student may not acknowledge the fact, his ethical choices are always being shaped by a community—if not the church then some other community” (98).

The rest of the book seeks to show how the worship of God influences our lives. “By practicing the presence of God in worship we can experience true reconciliation with God, with each other, and with creation. And this is good news” (99).

Nothing presented here is radical except to the extent that the Mennonite tradition itself is radical. Included are several references to the Amish experience at Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, when ten of their children were shot by a demented neighbor. “What stunned the watching world in the days following the shooting was less the reality of the horrific violence than the response of the Amish community” (80).

Roth observes that the Amish have devotional practices such as regular recitation of the Lord’s Prayer with its emphasis on forgiveness. So when the time came to forgive, the Amish were ready. Perhaps it can be mentioned that the Amish have persisted without revivalism, Sunday schools, or a worship band to lead the Sunday morning assembly.

From worship Roth moves to witness, which he develops broadly from our bodies to our families, our communities, and our worship spaces. Like the Amish who pray the Lord’s

Prayer regularly, he calls upon us to practice our faith and our traditions advisedly. Keep our eyes open and our heads above water.

The chapter on “Bearing Witness in Our Committees” includes two sorts of anecdotal evidence, one historical and one current. It opens with the determined and futile efforts of Swiss authorities to stamp out Anabaptism: “the Anabaptists . . . were widely known for their moral integrity and their readiness to follow Christ in daily life” (149). As for present witness, he illustrates the dilemma with two experiences from his travels.

On one airplane he met two Germans who were pleased to know that he was a pacifist but had no interest in his Christian faith. On the next plane his seatmate saw him reading his New Testament and was pleased to meet a fellow Christian. But he when he learned that Roth was a Mennonite he became incensed. “My son is a Marine. And you guys are a bunch of parasites. It just makes me sick.’ Then he got up, went to the bathroom and returned to another seat” (152).

Roth observes that “peace and justice” on one hand and “evangelical” witness on the other “face a powerful temptation to be relevant to the world according to the world’s criteria. . . . A witness to the gospel of Christ, by contrast, is vulnerable and cruciform” (166).

So we have three books. Not a series, but the subjects tend to interact. All three themes are important to Mennonites, but the third represents the

most personal angst on the author's part and speaks more directly to our own: How may we do church today in a manner which is relevant to our context? How can a two-thousand-year-old tradition provide life for us and others?

The editor of *The Mennonite*

Quarterly Review has bared his soul. We are invited to do likewise.

—*Daniel Hertzler, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, is an editor, writer, and chair of the elders, Scottsdale Mennonite Church.*

After Happy Hour in Our Nation's Capitol

Leave the bar. Walk toward the car. Lean against the unlit Pole in the late Friday afternoon with
Nowhere to go. Still, stand there. Wait for the Evening rush to thin. Let the intersection
Move. Stop. Remove yourself. A woman walks a dog. A Car turns full circle. A pigeon flies above a roof line. A Man combs his pony tail. A mother takes her children's Hands. A beggar calls for change. You are
Six hundred miles west. The corner store Closes. Is the traffic still jammed? A convertible passes. My meter is running out. There's a bench in the Park. Walk to it. No. Wait a little longer. A woman walks a Puppy. A pigeon flies between the buildings. A Man with a pony tail yells at his son.
An old man shuffles across the street. You pass in Front of me a day's travel away. I feel My keys against my leg. There is a vibration against my Waist. All stops as I move toward my car.

—*David L. Myers*



Read *DreamSeeker Magazine*

linking readers and authors interested in attending to "voices from the soul."

Subscriptions billed for issues left in calendar year (we publish quarterly) at \$3.75/issue. Suppose you subscribe midyear: we'll bill \$7.50 for two issues. Subscriptions renew each January at \$14.95 (\$15.85 PA residents) for coming year, but you may cancel any time. (Can. pay in US funds \$5.00/issue, \$20/year, or contact us to pay by VISA/MC. Other countries ask.) Contact options: • send form to 126 Klingerman Road, Telford, PA 18969 • 1-215-723-9125 • DSM@cascadiapublishinghouse.com

Or explore DSM free at www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com/dsm/

Yes, I want to subscribe to DSM for (check one) myself ___ as described above or to give ___ to the person(s) named on separate sheet and will pay when billed.

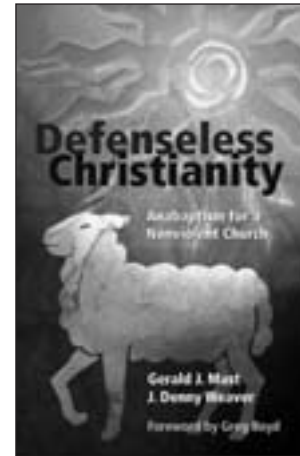
Name _____
Address _____
E-mail _____ Phone _____

Submissions to *DreamSeeker Magazine*

Or perhaps you already subscribe to *DreamSeeker Magazine* and are an author interested in being published in *DSM*, as a growing number of writers are. Then what? Indeed a key part of the *DSM* vision is to support the work of gifted writers—without whose inspired contributions the magazine, of course, could not exist. However, the limited space available in a quarterly magazine does not allow us to accept numerous unsolicited articles, particularly once we make space for articles by regular columnists and those we solicit. However, we do want to publish some unsolicited writing, aim to treat all unsolicited submissions respectfully, and accept as many of them as we can. To submit, send queries or articles by e-mail to DSM@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com or to the Telford address above. (Note that articles submitted by mail without SASE are unlikely to be returned.)

Even as we can only publish a modest number of unsolicited articles, we do very much encourage feedback, including short letters for publication and occasional longer response articles (350-400 words).

New from Cascadia Publishing House



Defenseless Christianity: Anabaptism for a Nonviolent Church

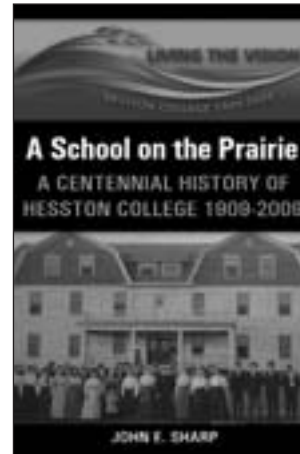
Gerald J. Mast and J. Denny Weaver

"My hope is that God uses this book to call Anabaptists along with other Jesus-followers back to the beautifully foolish, enemy-loving, cross-bearing center of our faith."

—Greg Boyd, in the Foreword

"I enthusiastically await the release of *Defenseless Christianity*." —Brian D. McLaren

5.5 x 8.5" trade paper
136 p, \$12.95 US/Can.
Copublished with Herald Press.



A School on the Prairie: A Centennial History of Hesston College, 1909-2009

John L. Sharp

"Brimming with personalities, landscape, dreams, and issues, this account of what for a decade was the largest 'Old' Mennonite college vividly connects the dots in a century-spanning picture." —John. L. Ruth

6 x 9" trade paper
504 p, \$29.95 US/Can.
Copublished with Herald Press.

ORDER . . . From Amazon.com, BN.com, your local bookstore or

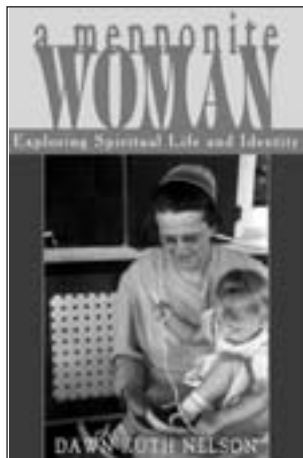
• contact@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com • 1-215-723-9125 • 126 Klingerman Rd.; Telford, PA 18969
Shipping: best method \$3.95 1st book, \$1.00 each add. book (Can. \$6.95/\$3.00); PA res. 6% state tax



Seeking to value soul as much as sales

For more information and order options visit www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com

New from Cascadia Publishing House

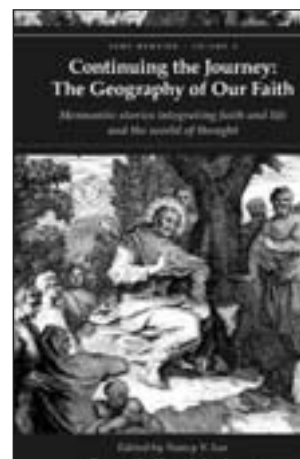


A Mennonite Woman: Exploring Spiritual Life and Identity
Dawn Ruth Nelson

“Rooting Mennonite spirituality within the earthy settledness of her grandmother’s story, Nelson lovingly shows the way toward a spirituality of pilgrimage, in the company of Jesus.” —*Sara Wenger Shenk, President-Elect, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

5.5 x 8.5” trade paper
184 p; \$18.95

New from Cascadia Publishing House



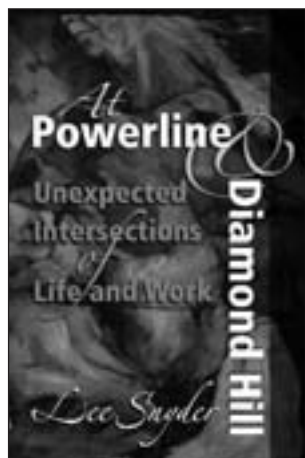
***Continuing the Journey:
The Geography of Our Faith***
(ACRS Memoirs 2)
Ed. Nancy V. Lee

“Turn names often seen in news articles into friends,” invites *Katie Funk Wiebe*.

“This collection of memoirs represents an enormous gift to the families, colleagues, students, friends, posterity in general. In a profound manner this group of people, in Pauline language, demonstrate what it means to be ‘of one another.’”
—*John A. Lapp, in the Introduction*

6 x 9” trade paper
404 p; \$23.95
Copublished with Herald Press.

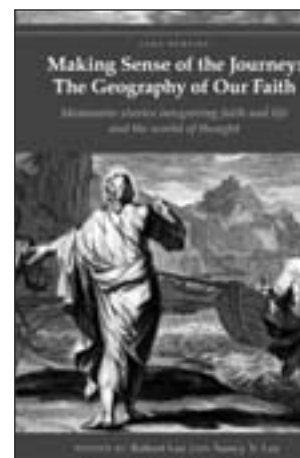
New from DreamSeeker Books



At Powerline and Diamond Hill: Unexpected Intersections of Life and Work
Lee Snyder

“As profoundly spiritual as Thomas Merton and Kathleen Norris, as wise about leadership as Margaret Wheatley and Max DePree, Snyder has created an alabaster-box memoir out of which she pours a lifetime of reading, revery, and relationship.” —*Shirley H. Showalter, Vice-President-Programs, Fetzer Institute*

5.5 x 8.5” trade paper
204 p; \$14.95



***Making Sense of the Journey:
The Geography of Our Faith***
(Cascadia edition, ACRS Memoirs 1)
Ed. Robert Lee and Nancy V. Lee

Here Mennonite writers connected to Eastern Mennonite University offer moving memoirs. “Life is a mystery, and the best memoirs reflect that mystery. Good lives are those which bring hope and courage in the midst of that mystery. This book reflects that struggle.”
—*Albert N. Keim, in the Introduction*

6 x 9” trade paper
352 p, \$21.95 US/Can.
Copublished with Herald Press.

ORDER . . . From Amazon.com, BN.com, your local bookstore or

• contact@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com • 1-215-723-9125 • 126 Klingerman Rd.; Telford, PA 18969
Shipping: best method \$3.95 1st book, \$1.00 each add. book (Can. \$6.95/\$3.00); PA res. 6% state tax

ORDER . . . From Amazon.com, BN.com, your local bookstore or

• contact@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com • 1-215-723-9125 • 126 Klingerman Rd.; Telford, PA 18969
Shipping: best method \$3.95 1st book, \$1.00 each add. book (Can. \$6.95/\$3.00); PA res. 6% state tax



Seeking to value soul as much as sales

For more information and order options visit www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com



Seeking to value soul as much as sales

For more information and order options visit www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com

New from Cascadia Publishing House

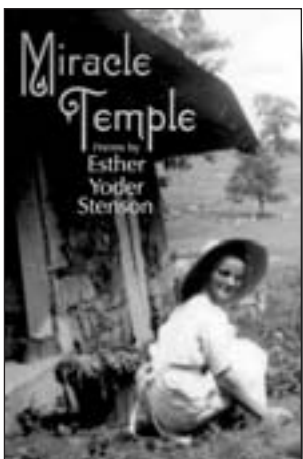


Roots and Branches: A Narrative History of the Amish and Mennonites in Southeast United States, 1892-1992, vol. 1, Roots
Martin W. Lehman

“With the art of a storyteller, the heart of a pastor, and the acumen of a leader, Lehman narrates the Amish and Mennonite presence in the Southeast in this first of two volumes” —*John E. Sharp, Author, A School on the Prairie: A Centennial History of Hesston College, 1909-2009*

6 x 9" trade paper
300 p; \$23.95
Copublished with Herald Press.

New from DreamSeeker Books



Miracle Temple
poems by Esther Yoder Stenson
“I am so thankful for this rich and reckless honesty!” —*Julia Spicher Kasdorf*

“From the smoldering ash of an Amish house fire in Pennsylvania to mountain snow reflected in Black Dragon pool in Lijianng, China, these poems are infused with wanderlust, curiosity, and resilient spirit.”
—*Laurie Kutchins*

5.5 x 8.5" trade paper
120 p; \$12.95
Copublished with Herald Press.

ORDER . . . From Amazon.com, BN.com, your local bookstore or

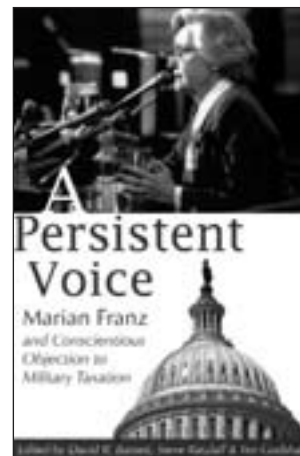
• contact@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com • 1-215-723-9125 • 126 Klingerman Rd.; Telford, PA 18969
Shipping: best method \$3.95 1st book, \$1.00 each add. book (Can. \$6.95/\$3.00); PA res. 6% state tax



Seeking to value soul as much as sales

For more information and order options visit www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com

New from Cascadia Publishing House



A Persistent Voice: Marian Franz and Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation
Marian Franz and more

These essays by Franz span her years of lobbying the U.S. Congress to enact the Peace Tax Fund Bill, which would allow conscientious objectors to pay taxes into a fund for nonmilitary purposes. Franz is joined by colleagues who contribute chapters unique to their perspectives and expertises. “These splendid essays vividly offer the daring vision of a bold visionary.” —*Ron Sider*

6 x 9" trade paper
212 p, \$19.95 US/Can.
Copublished with Herald Press.

New from DreamSeeker Books



A Hundred Camels: A Mission Doctor's Sojourn and Murder Trial in Somalia
Gerald L. Miller with Shari Miller Wagner

“Underneath the excitement of the courtroom drama, murder trial, and many escapades in a new culture, lies the story of how one man's spirit grew.”
Shirley H. Showalter, in the Foreword

5.5 x 8.5" trade paper
228 p, \$13.95 US/Can.
Copublished with Herald Press.

ORDER . . . From Amazon.com, BN.com, your local bookstore or

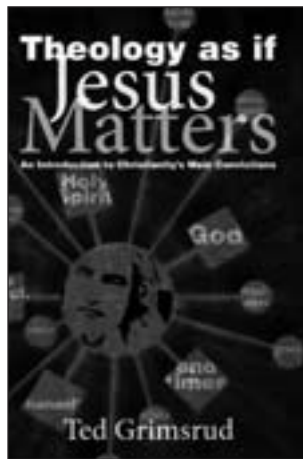
• contact@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com • 1-215-723-9125 • 126 Klingerman Rd.; Telford, PA 18969
Shipping: best method \$3.95 1st book, \$1.00 each add. book (Can. \$6.95/\$3.00); PA res. 6% state tax



Seeking to value soul as much as sales

For more information and order options visit www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com

New from Cascadia Publishing House



Theology As If Jesus Matters: An Introduction to Christianity's Main Convictions
Ted Grimsrud

Keith Graber Miller thinks the book provides “an expansive, accessible, provocative, practical, and practice-able theology.”

“This deeply compelling, engaging book brings theology back to the rough ground of our lived experience, where it can have traction again.” —*Christian Early*

5.5 x 8.5" trade paper

232 p; \$19.95

Copublished with Herald Press.

New from Cascadia Publishing House



Mutual Treasure: Seeking Better Ways for Christians and Culture to Converse
Ed. Harold Heie and Michael A. King.

“Representing a variety of theological streams within the larger evangelical family, the authors provide practical suggestions for engaging our culture in dialogue about some of the most challenging issues we face.”

—*Loren Swartzendruber*

5.5 x 8.5" trade paper

208 p, \$19.95 US/Can.

Copublished with Herald Press.



Like Those Who Dream: Sermons for Salford Mennonite Church and Beyond
James C. Longacre, with
foreword by Walter Brueggemann

“Longacre’s incisive mind, global perspective, dry wit, and keen theological insight make these biblical reflections wonderfully relevant for anyone on the road following Jesus.” —*J. Nelson Kraybill, President, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

5.5 x 8.5" trade paper

200 p, \$18.95 US/Can.

New from DreamSeeker Books



You Never Gave Me a Name: One Mennonite Woman's Story
Katie Funk Wiebe

“I loved this book. This is Katie’s life, her name, her harvest of work and discovery. But something wonderful happened as I read what she shares so honestly and well: I saw my own story—and felt it good, and safer again, to be a writer, pilgrim, woman in the MB church.” —*Dora Dueck*

5.5 x 8.5" trade paper

280 p, \$15.95 US/Can.

Copublished with Herald Press.

ORDER . . . From Amazon.com, BN.com, your local bookstore or

• contact@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com • 1-215-723-9125 • 126 Klingerman Rd.; Telford, PA 18969
Shipping: best method \$3.95 1st book, \$1.00 each add. book (Can. \$6.95/\$3.00); PA res. 6% state tax



Seeking to value soul as much as sales

For more information and order options visit www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com

ORDER . . . From Amazon.com, BN.com, your local bookstore or

• contact@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com • 1-215-723-9125 • 126 Klingerman Rd.; Telford, PA 18969
Shipping: best method \$3.95 1st book, \$1.00 each add. book (Can. \$6.95/\$3.00); PA res. 6% state tax



Seeking to value soul as much as sales

For more information and order options visit www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com

 **New from DreamSeeker Books**



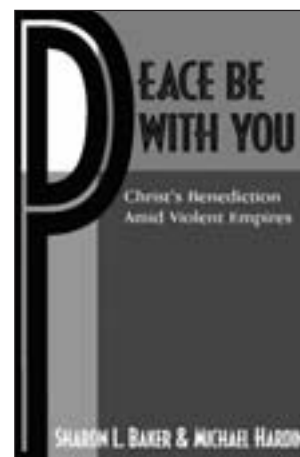
***Diary of a Kidnapped Colombian Governor:
A Journey Toward Nonviolent Transformation***

Guillermo Gaviria Correa

“Governor Gaviria’s writings reveal a brave and deeply spiritual man, whose compassionate heart and fine mind were not corrupted by suffering but deepened to an all-encompassing unconditional love of everyone, including his captors.” —*Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire*

6 x 9” trade paper
280 p, \$17.95 US/Can.

New from Cascadia Publishing House



***Peace Be with You: Christ's Benediction
Amid Violent Empires***

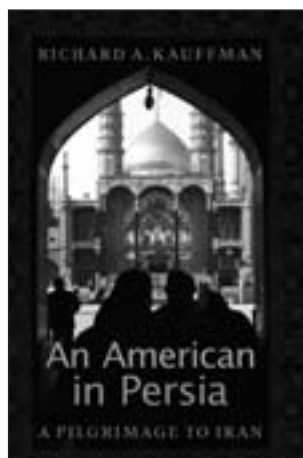
Ed. Sharon L. Baker and Michael Hardin

“From a concrete story of a real congregation trying to be faithful among its neighbors to discussions of just policing, white superiority, and excommunication for refusal to forgive, this collection offers a worthwhile read for those who care deeply about how Christian commitment to peace is lived out in our complex world.”

—*Nancy Heisey*

6 x 9” trade paper
300 p, \$23.95 US/Can.

New from Cascadia Publishing House



An American in Persia: A Pilgrimage to Iran

Richard A. Kauffman

“Americans aren’t supposed to talk to Iranians. Thank God Richard Kauffman is a Mennonite, and thus open to God turning enemies into friends. This book had me transfixed—and deepened the mystery of the meaning of words like American, Iranian, and ultimately, Christian.”

—*Jason Byassee*

5.5 x 8.5” trade paper
128 p, \$12.95 US/Can.

 New from DreamSeeker Books



Storage Issues: Collected Poems, 1988-2008

Suzanne Kay Williams

“Might be Annie Dillard by way of Gerard Manley Hopkins . . . but in fact it’s Suzanne Kay Miller, whose poem-document on life lived both in and away from a Mennonite community proves to us over and over how ‘You might imagine eternity / in local terms,’ the mandate of so much moving poetry, and the lovely presiding spirit of her own.” —*Albert Goldbarth, National Book Critics Circle award*

5.5 x 8.5” trade paper
108 p, \$15.95 US/Can.

ORDER . . . From Amazon.com, BN.com, your local bookstore or

• contact@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com • 1-215-723-9125 • 126 Klingerman Rd.; Telford, PA 18969
Shipping: best method \$3.95 1st book, \$1.00 each add. book (Can. \$6.95/\$3.00); PA res. 6% state tax

ORDER . . . From Amazon.com, BN.com, your local bookstore or

• contact@CascadiaPublishingHouse.com • 1-215-723-9125 • 126 Klingerman Rd.; Telford, PA 18969
Shipping: best method \$3.95 1st book, \$1.00 each add. book (Can. \$6.95/\$3.00); PA res. 6% state tax



Seeking to value soul as much as sales

For more information and order options visit www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com



Seeking to value soul as much as sales

For more information and order options visit www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com

Frontier

Pity has no place in love
or so I thought,
till Pity came
and staked a claim
on our land.

Pity had no place in love
till you convulsed
from the effort of lying down,
and our land fell
stunned, mute, empty
a sudden desert
where our homestead once stood.

and Pity's claim?
a humble spring
a quiet watering
at home
in this wasteland.

—*Julie Cadwallader-Staub lives near Burlington, Vermont, and currently serves as the Grants Director for the Burlington School District. Her poems have been published in several journals, featured on Garrison Keillor's "The Writer's Almanac," and included in anthologies. She was awarded a Vermont Council on the Arts grant for poetry in 2001. She and her husband, Warren, were married for 23 years until his death from multiple myeloma at age 49. This poem is excerpted from her first collection of poems, Face to Face (Cascadia/DreamSeeker Books, 2010).*