



Dealing with Other People's Pregnancies

When someone announced their pregnancy, I celebrated right along with them. That was before my baby Jonathan was stillborn in 1995. The idea that my sister, cousin, or friend may have an unhappy ending after such an announcement never entered my mind. And certainly it was not a thought I entertained when I announced my first two pregnancies.

Each of the three times I've been pregnant, my big news either closely followed or preceded the same announcement from a good friend or family member. How exciting it was to compare pregnancy notes and make plans for our little ones to be so close in age. We were sure our kids would become the best of friends. A couple of times pre-arranged marriages were jokingly made!

My first pregnancy was with my now fifteen-year-old son, Byron, Jr. Despite several weeks of bed rest and a few complications, he was born full-term and healthy, as were the babies of my friends who were due around the same time. And as planned, our babies played in the church nursery together, went on play dates to McDonalds, and are now enjoying each other's company as teenagers.

Planning the future for my second child Jonathan was similar to the plans I made for his big brother. Some of his friends had already been hand-picked, even though like him, they were still growing inside their mommies' tummies. My fellow expectant friends and I compared expanding waist lines, morning sickness, and nursery ideas. Even when complications arose, the plans were still in the make. However, 29 ½ weeks into the planning, mine came to an abrupt stop – forever!

Of course I didn't wish the same heartache and pain upon my friends, but as I'm sure you know from your own experience, it was incredibly difficult to stand on the sidelines and watch *their* dreams come to fruition. I was suddenly the outsider. I didn't belong in their "club." Overnight I found that I no longer had anything in common with these women, who just days before were my comrades in baby planning. As much as I wanted to keep in touch with these ladies and be a part of their dream-come-true, it was too painful and difficult. I had nothing against these precious little babies. It was just that being around them and keeping up with their development was a constant reminder of my little Jonathan.

Holding another baby after the loss of Jonathan was out of the question for me. If it wasn't *my* baby, I was not interested. The first time I held another baby in my arms was seven or eight months after I handed Jonathan to the hospital chaplain so she could deliver him to the mortician. Some friends of ours who lived in another state had struggled with infertility for many years. Finally they became pregnant, and with the assistance of medical technology, conceived trip-

lets. My husband Byron and I were traveling and happened to have a layover near their home so they insisted on meeting us at the airport so we could meet their three newborns. I was very apprehensive about how I would react and prayed I could keep my emotions in tact in front of them. I was overjoyed for these miracle babies, but I was still very much grieving the loss of my own baby. That meeting at the airport was the first time our friends had ventured outside the house with their trio. At first the babies were asleep, but as soon as one woke up wanting to eat, the other two decided they were hungry as well. I had no choice but to take one of these crying boys out of his carrier and help my frustrated friend. Thankfully, she never caught on that helping her with her little ones was extremely emotional for me. She definitely never figured out why Byron did not offer a helping hand. To my surprise, holding and taking care of that little boy actually ended up being somewhat healing. I felt as though I had cleared another hurdle of mourning and had survived.

Several months later, my twin sister Rachael became pregnant. At the time, we lived next door to each other. I knew I either had to come to terms with her pregnancy or have a very strained relationship with my twin. Thankfully we were very open about how each of us felt throughout her whole pregnancy. She would not give me doctor reports unless I asked, and she never bombarded me with a show-and-tell of her baby gifts. This system worked beautifully, because I could deal with this new baby coming into the family on my own terms. When it came time to deliver her baby girl, I was able to be in the delivery room with her. I found myself truly happy, excited, and in love with my new little niece, Mia who is now nine years old.

Six years after losing Jonathan, I became pregnant for the third time. I knew better than to get too excited and I would not allow myself to get too attached to this tiny baby growing within me. I tried not to make plans for this baby, "just in case," but I couldn't resist. My close friend Stephanie was pregnant with a baby girl who was to be my namesake. After so many years of waiting, I found myself pregnant right along with Stephanie, and little Rebekah and my baby would be just months apart. It was too good to be true! However, when Baby Rebekah was five weeks old, I miscarried her little friend.

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M.E.N.D. is a Christian nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to reach out to those who have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death and offer a way to share experiences and information through monthly meetings, this newsletter, and our Web site.

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*M.E.N.D. is a member of
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Other Babies

by Miriam Lein

I lost my daughter Emma Anne when she was seven months old. I heard a lot of other bereaved moms say that it was hard for them to be around other women who were pregnant or who had young babies. I found that it wasn't hard for me. Was I so abnormal to not deal with these issues other women were talking about?

I realized that I had several reasons for finding it easy to be around other babies. For one thing I had not lost my only child. Two and a half years before Emma was born we were blessed with her older sister. Secondly, Emma had many health issues, so she was very different from the healthy children I saw around me. She was skinny where they were chubby, she wore oxygen where their faces were free of gadgets, and she could not support even her head, where as they held their heads up and bounced on their tiny legs. Perhaps if I had been surrounded by children who shared more of the same health issues I would have been reminded of her more. Also, because my arms felt so empty, I found it comforting to hold another child. Sometimes I almost sought babies out to find that little bit of comfort I needed.

As for being around women who were expecting children, I really didn't find that very hard, until I was ready to face that step in my own life. Then, as my friends began to announce new pregnancies, I found I felt left behind as I waited for that blessing to come to me. But I never found it hard to be around them, or to be happy for the blessings that they had been given.

Because of all these feelings and thoughts, it came as a bit of a surprise one morning when I received a call from a very good friend. She was calling from the hospital to let me know that she had just given birth to her first daughter. I was happy to receive the news, but when I hung up the phone I found myself overwhelmed with sadness. Was it because this was the first girl to be born among my closest friends since Emma's death? I didn't know, but I did know it brought back many feelings of loss. I soon went to buy fabric to sew her daughter a little dress. As I worked at measuring and cutting the fabric, I found myself trying to remember when the last time I had worked on something so small. And then it hit me. The last tiny little dress I had made had been for Emma. I had sewn it before she was born, but because she was so tiny it had taken her almost all of her seven months to get big enough to wear it. She had worn it once while living, and only for a short time, as she threw up on it and I had to change her clothes. But it was that dress, Emma's dress, that I had sent for her to be dressed in for her funeral. I'll never see that dress again, just as I'll never again see my daughter as she was those last few days. And so, as these memories flooded my mind, the tears began to fall, gently hitting the fabric I was working with. Instead of trying to swallow my grief, I allowed myself to continue to cry as I poured out my heart in prayers for this new little child. I prayed for her life, no matter how many days it would be, and for her family to experience the many blessings each child brings to a home.

I was unable to meet this child who had managed to bring so many tears to my eyes right away, as I soon came down with a cold and was hesitant to bring my germs to their household. When I did meet her for the first time and eventually held her, the overwhelming emotions had passed and I was able to enjoy her as I did any of the other babies I knew.

Now I find myself in the position of the pregnant lady, the one who may bring discomfort to other grieving moms. Will I or my new child bring tears to others? I don't know. But I do know that having experienced those tears, I found them cleansing, rather than harmful. ♥

*In memory of Emma Anne Lein
July 15, 2005—February 22, 2006
Influenza/respiratory distress/brain damage
Parents: John and Miriam Lein
Sister: Elise*



How Much Farther Will I Walk?

by Tennille Gore

How much farther will I walk?
 To forget this path has become a burdensome journey.
 The load is not light.
 All the same, I carry nothing.
 I am empty.
 Questioning my faith,
 I am swollen with envy.
 Keeping up the fight,
 I labor on with only my uncertainty.
 Somewhere along the journey,
 I conceive peace,
 Knowing that on this path, He is walking with me.

Reprinted with permission from Stepping Stones, a newsletter for infertile couples published by Bethany Christian Service. For more information go to www.ssministry.net.



*M.E.N.D. members at NW Arkansas's first Christmas Candlelight Ceremony.
 From left to right: Rebekah Mitchell, Pam Morren, April Moreton,
 Aly Kirkpatrick, and Rae Scrivner*

March/April Topic

When Those in Ministry

Lose a Baby

Deadline: January 31, 2007

May/June Topic

Mother's Day and Father's Day

Deadline: March 31, 2007

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcomed. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the newsletter. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please see page two of the newsletter for the appropriate address to send your submissions. Any submission printed in our newsletter will also be posted to our website indefinitely unless we receive notice in writing that you are only granting permission for your submission to appear in the printed version of the newsletter.

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Birthday Tributes

For Our Sweet Angels

Kayin Beaty and Ethan Merrick Beaty

Happy 2nd and 1st Birthday to You!

We miss both of you so much. You both are very much a part of our lives, and we wish we could have seen you grow. We know that you are spending your birthdays with very special family members. You get to celebrate together and with Jesus! We are so blessed to know you are well taken care of in Heaven. We only dream of the day that we can all be there together. Thank you both for your little sister you sent us. We know that when she's born she will bear your resemblances! You both, and Austin and Jordan, have showed us the importance of life. We love you and are always thinking of you.

Love you forever,
Daddy, Mommy, Austin and Jordan

Ethan Merrick Beaty
Stillborn January 31, 2006
Unknown Cause
Kayin Beaty
Miscarried January 15, 2005
Parents: Melissa and Nate Beaty
Siblings: Austin and Jordan and Davlyn (due 3/9/07)



To our precious baby Kyler Paul,

Happy First Birthday, sweet baby Kyler! We miss you very much. I thought it would get easier but, it hasn't. Your dad and I are just learning how to accept that you are in Heaven and not with us. But, regardless of how much our hearts hurt, we feel so blessed and grateful for the gift of you. You are such a sweet presence in our hearts and minds all of the time. We talk about you to everyone, and your brothers ask about you a lot. We read books about you being in Heaven, and we include you in every prayer we say. We know you are having fun in Heaven and thank God for keeping you safe in His arms. I wish we could hold you in our arms but, until, we can, our precious baby, we will keep you alive in our hearts every day. We miss you, baby Kyler, and love you even more. Thank you for watching over us.

We love you!!
Mommy and Daddy
Brothers Justin, Kinser, Kelson,
and Kayden Paul

Kyler Paul English
Stillborn January 20, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Bob and Laurie English
Siblings: Justin, Kinser, Kelson, and Kayden Paul



Remembering Maya Denise Ates on Her Birthday

We love you!
Mom, Dad, Brandon, and Erin

Maya Denise Ates
January 6, 1998
Clot in umbilical cord
Parents: Tammie and Horace Ates
Siblings: Brandon and Erin



Happy Birthday Savannah Kate!

Three years have passed since you left for your eternal home, but not a day goes by that we don't think of you and wonder what our family would have been like with you here. You are greatly loved and missed. Until we meet again, you light our way Home.

Love,
Mommy, Daddy,
Colton and Danika

Savannah Kate Stanley
January 3, 2004

Prematurity due to incompetent cervix
Also remembering Baby Stanley
Miscarried November 10, 2004
Parents: Joel and Calli Stanley
Siblings: Colton and Danika



Happy 3rd Birthday Hannah Rose!

We can't believe it has been three years since we last held you, our little angel. We think about what you would be like and all the different things you would be doing now, like having play dates and getting ready to start preschool next year. Your daddy and I will never forget your precious little face. We miss you very much. We will never know why God needed you to be with Him rather than here with us, but we know in our hearts we will hold you again one day. There is not a day that goes by that we don't think of you and look at your pictures we have in our room every morning and night and talk to you. We will be having Mass for you on your birthday. We love you very much and wish you a happy birthday.

Love always,
Mommy and Daddy

Hannah Rose Flott
Stillborn January 28, 2004
Placental Insufficiency
Parents: Brian and Kristin Flott



Dearest Emma,

Mommy and Daddy miss you so much. We long to see you again. You are our baby girl, our angel, and always will be. We miss your hiccups and kicks and dreaming of your future. We have left your room the way it would have been for you. Now when you and Jesus send your brother or sister to us, they can share their big sister's things. They will know about you, Emma.

We love you and miss you all the days of our lives.

Love,
Mommy and Daddy

Emma Gayle Wright
Stillborn February 5, 2006
Sudden onset and non-detectable pre-eclampsia
Parents: Leroy and Christine Wright



My darling Gabriela,

Time has flown by!! Five years to be exact, and I still think of you often. I long to see you, hold you, snuggle with you and kiss you and tell you how much I love you. Your brother and sisters would love to play with you and be with you on your fifth birthday. Happy Birthday baby. Have a fun fifth birthday in heaven!!

Love,
Daddy

Dear Gabby,

I love you so much!!!! I miss you every day of my life and you are my sweet baby girl!! I know you are a big girl now, but in my heart you are still my little bundle of joy. I know that time has really moved forward since your siblings have arrived; we cannot believe that you are five years old!! I still believe with all my heart that Jesus has a special purpose for you in heaven. I am rejoicing for your life because you made a difference in this world to me and our family. Have a great big piece of the greatest chocolate cake and look down to us and send us a kiss, for we will be sending our love and kisses up to you!!

Love always,
Mommy

Gabriela Faith Gregory

January 24, 2002

Anomaly of umbilical cord

Parents: Monica and Chris Gregory

Siblings: Daniel, Amarise, and Eliana Joy

**Sweet Angel James!**

We were so happy to welcome you into the world last December! We treasured every moment of our 50 short days with you! Although our hearts were broken when you departed, we are blessed to have had the wonderful, albeit short, time with you. We miss holding you, singing to you, and praying with you. Mommy, Daddy, Jessica, Christina and your grandparents are healing. Angel, the special place in our hearts that you hold and keep is the most wonderful gift from God, ever. Until we meet again, all our love!

Mommy and Daddy

James Anthony Junginger

December 28, 2005 – February 15, 2006

Pulmonary hypertension and other

complications from Down's Syndrome

Parents: Mark and Elizabeth Junginger

Siblings: Jessica and Christina

**Dear Morgan,**

February 13 is one year since we found out you were growing inside of Mommy. We spent fourteen years learning to accept that a sweet little miracle like you would not happen. We will always think of you as our little miracle!

Love,
Mommy, Daddy
and big brother Isaac

Morgan Schear,

Miscarried March 28, 2006

Cause Unknown

Parents: Noel and Paula Schear

Big brother: Isaac

**Happy 3rd Birthday, Andrew!****Our Little Angel**

You were our little angel we loved to hold so close,
The softness of your baby skin like petals of a rose.
We loved it when we cuddled you and held you in our arms.
You were our little angel with sweet angelic charms.
We think back to memories so precious and so few.
For one day God had chosen you to be His little angel too.

Anne Peterson

Baby Andrew,

Happy Birthday, my baby! I can hardly believe that my "little man" is three years old! What a beautiful place this world would be if you were still in it. I know that I tell you every day, but I'd like to say again how very much we love and miss you! Life isn't complete without you. I just want you to know that you are in my heart every second of every day. Now that your little sister is a bit older, she can help me make cupcakes in memory of your birthday. I think that both of you might like that. We will be loving you and celebrating your life from here on earth, so have a special birthday in heaven, my baby!

We Love You So!
Mommy, Daddy, and Aubrey

Andrew Phillip Parent

February 3 – May 2, 2004

Cancer

Parents: Phillip and Gretchen Parent

Little sister: Aubrey

**For Lawson Thomas Dody**

Dear Baby Boy,

My Angel

My angel watches over me and guides me on my way
He brings me from the darkness and brightens up my day
My angel is so precious; he is my son you see
I had him for a little while; the Lord lent him to me
I thank the Lord each day for what little time we had
And though I know he's with the Lord, I still am very sad
My angel was just a babe, barely from the womb
I long so bad to hold him again, but he was gone too soon
I'll never see him take a step or say sweet words to me
But my Lord has promised me together we will be
And so for now I'll reminisce and think about my son
And look forward to the day when we will be as one.

We love you and miss you. Happy first birthday in heaven!
Love, Daddy & Mommy

Lawson Thomas Dody

January 8, 2006

Cord Accident

Parents: Aron and Blythe Dody



13 Diamonds

by Nancy C Anderson

My new neighbor touched my hand and said, "What a lovely ring, it looks like an antique. It's so unusual, where did you get it?"

I replied slowly, carefully choosing my words, "It's custom made."

She said, "I have a friend who's a jeweler. Would you mind if I copied it?"

I smiled, "First, let me tell you the story behind the design."

It was just after New Years Day in 1990 when I found out I was pregnant with our second child. My husband, Ron, was thrilled, but I was apprehensive. Our five-year-old, Nick, had several learning disabilities, and he was quite a "hand-full." I told Ron, "I'm afraid I won't have enough energy to take care of Nick and a newborn baby."

I went for all the required check-ups, and the doctor assured me that everything was fine. However, since I would be thirty-five when the baby was born, and that meant I had a higher chance of a baby with birth defects, the doctor wanted to do an ultrasound.

I tried to find a comfortable spot on the hard examination table as the nurse's aid squirted the cold sonogram gel on my expanding belly. One technician slid the scope over my stomach as the other one watched the monitor. I looked at the woman who was watching my baby on the screen. Her face didn't have much expression. Then it did.

Her eyes widened and her hands flew involuntarily to her mouth as she made a sad squeaking sound. "What's wrong?" I asked. I sat up and repeated my question. She tried to compose herself as she scurried toward the door and whispered, "I'm sorry." The other technician left too, so I tumbled off the table and went to look at the picture that was still on the screen. I didn't see anything unusual. It just looked like a blurry negative of a skinny baby. I looked down at my stomach and rubbed it as I whispered a prayer, "Oh Lord, I think we're in trouble. Please help us."

After the amniocentesis, my husband and I went back to the hospital for the test results. The doctor said, as if he were reading from a textbook, "Trisomy eighteen is a genetic disorder that always involves profound mental retardation and severe disfigurements." Then, he said the words that still live inside a tiny zipped pocket of my heart, "Your baby's condition is usually incompatible with life. Most women in your position—in order to spare themselves unnecessary anguish—just get an abortion. We can schedule yours for tomorrow morning."

I wasn't able to speak. I stopped breathing. I felt like I was drowning. I wanted to drift down into the cool dark water and disappear. A silent tear slid down my face, and we left the office without a word.

That afternoon, I prayed, "Lord, I believe abortion is wrong, but I don't want to go through 'unnecessary anguish.' On my own, I don't have the strength to fall in love with a baby who is going to die. Please show me how."

As I prayed, I remembered that the Lord could have chosen to avoid the horrific anguish of the cross. *What if He had taken the easy way out?* I saw that the value of His gift was measured by the greatness of his suffering. I told the Lord, with renewed strength, "I offer my pain to you as a gift. I will not abort this child."

I kept saying it, even before I meant it. "I choose to love this baby with all my heart." I willed my words into actions. In faith, I moved my hands as I timidly caressed my stomach. In faith, I moved my lips as I mouthed the words, "I love

you." No sound came out. I kept repeating the phrase until my brain found the secret passageway to my heart, and I was free to taste the bittersweet tears of loving a child who would never love me.

My mother said, "Try not to think about the future. Your baby is alive today—be alive with him. Treasure every moment."

I talked to him, sang lullabies to him, and gave him gentle massages through my skin. I knew that I might have to do my best mothering before he was born. Each day I prayed, "Lord, please let him live long enough to know that he is loved. Let us have time to kiss him hello and kiss him goodbye. Let his life be free of pain and full of love. Please Lord; give us the strength to bear this unbearable burden."

Four months later, we met little Timmy, face-to-face. The nurse covered his fragile, twenty-ounce body in a soft blue blanket and matching cap. His heart monitor beeped an unsteady greeting as she handed him to me.

His beautiful little rosebud-mouth surprised me. It was an oasis of perfection. We held our emotions in check, knowing we had to pour a lifetime of love into a minuscule cup. Ron and I took turns rocking him as we kissed his soft cheek. Repeatedly, we told him, "We love you, Timmy." He never opened his eyes. He felt no pain. His heartbeat got slower and slower and then, reluctantly, stopped.

We kissed him goodbye and introduced him, through prayer, to his Heavenly Father, "Lord, here is our son. Thank you for the gift of his precious life and for the privilege of being his parents. We release him into your healing arms. Thank you for answering our prayers. Amen"

Then we cried.

I looked at my neighbor's tear-stained face and said, "I had this ring made within a few days of his birth. I drew a picture of what I wanted, told the jeweler why I wanted it, and he worked late into the night to have it for me the next day." She looked closer as I explained the design. "The ring has two curved bands of gold. The longer one symbolizes my husband's arm and the smaller band represents mine. Our 'arms' are holding a small, lavender alexandrite (Timmy's birthstone)."

She was silent for a long time, and finally said, "You should be the only person in the world to wear that ring. I won't copy it. Tell me about the diamonds"

"There are 13 tiny diamonds: one precious jewel for each minute that he was alive. I wear it on my "baby" finger. He's always with me."

"For you formed my inward parts, you covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

(Psalm 139:13) ♥

Nancy Anderson is an author and speaker who encourages women to replace their fears with faith and discover the freedom of an abundant life. She is the author of [Avoiding the Greener Grass Syndrome: How to Grow Affair Proof Hedges Around Your Marriage](#). (Kregel Publications 2004).

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A Lesson for Teacher

by Melissa Stephens

I've been teaching third and fourth graders in Sunday School this semester. Our lessons have revolved around the Ten Commandments. As our semester is drawing to a close, we recently discussed the Tenth Commandment, as recorded in Exodus 20:17: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." After explaining to the students that to "covet" means to long for or crave something that isn't yours, I asked them for examples of times when they have broken the Tenth Commandment. As they gave examples of wishing they had a dog like their neighbor's dog, or long blonde hair like one of their friends, I thought to myself that this would be a good time to show them that adults struggle with sin just as much as (okay – *more than*) children do.

"You know," I explained, "these kinds of thoughts and feelings don't go away as you get older. If anything, they become even harder to fight." I went on to tell them that my husband and I had wanted a baby very badly. It wasn't easy for us to have one, and when we finally did, that baby went to heaven instead of staying here with us. After that, it was even more difficult for us to have another baby. In all, it took a few years before we were able to bring home a healthy baby boy. To this day, I told them, I am often filled with jealousy every time I see a newborn baby or a pregnant woman.

I wasn't sure how their little minds would process all of this information, but they sat and nodded their heads, and I was pleasantly surprised that they seemed to understand what I was telling them. Then came the most difficult part of the lesson. I explained to the students that God not only wants us to be content with the gifts He has given us, not coveting the possessions of others, but He has even called us to be joyful for others for the gifts they have received from God. I went back to my own personal example and told the students that God didn't want me to be jealous of those pregnant women; but even more than that, He wanted me to be *happy* for them! What a tall order! We discussed for a while how difficult it is to feel joy when others have things that you desire for yourself. Then I asked the students, "What can we do to help us have the right attitude in these situations?" After throwing out numerous ideas, we finally came to only one conclusion: we must pray. We are powerless in and of ourselves to throw off our sinful natures. Only God can do this for us. So we must pray and ask Him to use His Holy Spirit in us to change our hearts and minds so that we may be more like Christ.

One of the most special things about M.E.N.D. is the bond we all feel as grieving parents and families. When no one else can understand our thoughts and feelings, our friends at M.E.N.D. have been there. The topic of other people's pregnancies comes up often in our monthly support group meetings. When these discussions happen, we encourage one another by letting others know that their feelings of jealousy, anger, resentment, bitterness, etc., are all normal reactions when seeing those swollen bellies around Target, the mall, the grocery store, and everywhere else you look. Many of us remember that feeling of relief when we realized we were not alone. There were others out there who often found themselves (gasp!) scowling at newborn babies. I remember thinking, "Okay. I like her. She's a nice person. And she had these same thoughts. So maybe there is hope for me after all."

But as important as it is for us to be forgiving of ourselves and our negative reactions after such a tragic personal loss, we also must not forget God's command to us. "You shall not covet..." God knows our pain. He knows our grief. He weeps with us and his heart breaks with ours. And yet, as His children, we have been called to a higher standard. We are to always strive to be like Christ.

So, what do we do? How should we react when our hearts are gripped with envy? Well, if you ask my Sunday School students, they will tell you there is only one thing you can do. You must pray. Sure, time will ease some of your pain. If you are blessed with another baby, that may even soften some of your jealousy. But only God can truly change your heart. Only his Holy Spirit working in us can make us more and more like Him. Confess your feelings of envy. Ask God to replace them with joy. It might take time and many prayers, but 1 John 5:14 tells us, "Now this is the confidence which we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Perhaps I will add another New Year's resolution to my list. In 2007, I will stop giving pregnant women dirty looks. I will pray that God will change my heart so that I can feel joy for them. And perhaps, just perhaps, I'll even smile and ask them, "Boy or girl?" ♥

Resource Review

Suffering and the Sovereignty of God

Edited by John Piper/Justin Taylor

Crossway Books

ISBN: 1581348096



After the death of a child, it can be difficult to reconcile the pain with a loving, sovereign God. However, in this book God's ultimate sovereignty over all things, including pain and suffering, is confirmed through the use of scripture, guiding readers to hope and comfort. *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God* is a collection of writings by several theologians, all of whom have suffered in their own lives and have pondered the purpose in pain. Compiled by noted theologian John Piper and Justin Taylor, the book is thought-provoking and attempts to explain how God is in control as we question His reasons for suffering. Readers are urged to look to Christ during painful times in life to find the comfort and peace only He can give.

M.E.N.D. has a complete list of books, Web sites, organizations, and music resources available online at www.mend.org.

In Loving Memory



Macey Spencer Avis
September 15, 2004
Mommy: Tania Avis Greer
Given by The Girls at FECC

Duncan Bray
November 29 - November 30, 1997
Massive Cerebral Hemorrhage Due to Delivery by a Vacuum Extractor
Given by parents
Don Bray and Denise Fischer
and siblings Devin and Dixen Bray

Kaylyn Rial Busker
Cole Michael Busker
Hannah Elizabeth Busker
December 10, 2004
E-Coli Infection
Given by parents
Mike and Kim Busker
and big sister Allison

Abigail Grace Crump
July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Given by parents
Gerald and Jaimie Crump
and little sister Cami

Abigail Grace Crump
July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Parents: Gerald and Jaimie Crump
Little sister: Cami
Given by great aunt Robin Smith

Lawson Thomas Dody
Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Aron and Blythe Dody
Given by friends and family

M.E.N.D.

gratefully acknowledges these gifts of love given in memory of a baby, relative, friend, or given by someone just wanting to help. These donations help us to continue M.E.N.D.'s mission by providing this newsletter and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. Please refer to page 2 of this newsletter for more information regarding where to send your donations and what information to include.

Thank you so much!

Faith Elizabeth Durham
Stillborn September 25, 1999
Triploidy
Given by parents Leighton and Lisa Durham
and siblings Leighton IV, Olivia, & Suzanna

Kyler Paul English
Stillborn January 20, 2006
Cord Accident
Given by parents Bob and Laurie English
and siblings Justin, Kinser, Kelson,
and Kayden

Amanda Morgan Galleger
January 7, 1997
Trisomy 18
Given by parents Steve and Diane Galleger
and siblings Sydney and Jack

Aaron Philip Gradel
Stillborn June 16, 1990
Infarction of the placenta
Angel
Miscarried May 14, 1993
Given by mommy Denise Gradel-Wozniak

Alan John Huelsebusch
March 9, 2006
Unknown Cause
Given by parents
Don and Sandy Huelsebusch
and sisters Ashlie and Courtnie

Jordan Claire James
September 29 - October 15, 2003
HLHS
Parents: Julie and John James
Siblings: Bailie and Lauren
Given by Verizon Matching Gifts

James Anthony Junginger
December 28, 2005 - February 15, 2006
Pulmonary Hypertension /
Down's Syndrome
Parents: Mark and Elizabeth Junginger
Siblings: Jessica and Christina
Given by grandparents
Margaret and Paul Knopp

William Joseph Kowalski
August 12, 1997
Placental Abruption / Preterm Labor
Given by parents Robert and Sheri Kowalski
and siblings Robert and Ashley

Joseph Charles Libby
May 26, 1999
Cord Accident
Given by parents Wim and Sharlene Libby
and siblings Will, John, and Mary Grace

Bay Miltenberger, Jr.
December 9, 1998
Preterm Labor
Given by parents
Bay and Paula Miltenberger
and little brothers Bryce, Bo, and Brady

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Given by parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
and big brother, Byron, Jr.

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Big brother: Byron, Jr.
Given by grandparents Dennis and Sue Brewer

Jonathan Daniel Mitchell
Stillborn June 24, 1995
Cord Accident
Baby Mitchell
Miscarried December 2001
Parents: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell
Big brother: Byron, Jr.
Given by friends Kerry and Valerie Jones

Timothy "Schuyler" Morren
September 28 - December 23, 1997
SIDS
Parents: Tim and Pam Morren
Little siblings: Ashton, Alexa, and Benjamin
Given by Hank and Kristie Shreve

Kobe Brent Owens
December 25 - August 15, 2006
Parents: Lisa Kinney and Brent Owens
Given by Tommy and Rebecca Owens

Lillian Clare Pennartz
September 16, 2004
Hypoplastic Lungs
Given by parents Nikki and Bryan Pennartz

Lillian Clare Pennartz
September 16, 2004
Hypoplastic Lungs
Parents: Nikki and Bryan Pennartz
Given by grandmother Suzanne Short

Alexis Leigh and Nicole Leigh Rudeen
Stillborn March 11, 2002
Unknown Cause
Given by parents Sherri and Randy Rudeen
and sisters Julie, Sara, Jordyn Leigh
and Sydney Leigh

Christian Allen Scott
June 1, 2005
Bilateral Renal Agenesis
Given by parents Scotty and Mary Scott
and siblings Lenny, Will, and Ariel

Brandon James Smith
February 28 - December 23, 1998
Killed by Drunk Driver
Given by mom Robin Smith

Subsequent Births

Angie and James Graves
of Fayetteville, Arkansas,
joyfully welcome
Charles Jackson,
born November 8, 2006.
He weighed 6 lb., 2 oz.,
and was 18 ¼ inches long at birth.
The Graves lovingly remember
Jackson Lee,
February 19, 2005,
complications due to omphalocele,
and Baby Graves,
miscarried November 2005.

Tim and Cindy Dedear,
along with big sister Laura,
of Irving, Texas,
joyfully announce the birth of
Katherine Emelia,
November 15, 2006.
She weighed 8 lb., 4 oz.
The Dedears lovingly remember
Ashley Renee,
October 29 – November 1, 1999,
placenta abruption.

Sandra and Matthew Walton
along with big sister Lea,
of Fort Worth, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Ella Sophia,
born November 30, 2006.
The Waltons lovingly remember
Andrew Luis Walton
March 4 - April 24, 2005
congenital heart defect
(Shone Syndrome).

Bob and Laurie English ,
along with big brothers Justin, Kinser,
and Kelson
of Southlake, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Kayden Paul,
born December 7, 2006.
He weighed 9 lb., 2 oz.
The English family lovingly remembers
Kyler Paul,
stillborn January 20, 2006,
due to a cord accident.

Theodore and Anna Chan
of Cedar Hill, Texas,
joyfully announce the birth of
Nathan Yong,
November 14, 2006.
He weighed 6 lbs., 14 oz.
and measured 19 ¾ inches long.
The Chans lovingly remember
Kate,
stillborn January 2005,
Little One ,
miscarried June 2005,
and Baby Chan ,
miscarried January 2006.

In Loving Memory ... continued

Mindy and Maggie Smith
Stillborn November 4, 1997
Twin Transfusion Syndrome
and Polyhydramnios
Given by parents Scott and Karla Smith
and little siblings Travis and Julia

Austin Townes Swenson
July 8, 2004
Parents: Bryan and Corrie Swenson
Given by Cingular /
The Matching Gift Center

Jayden Noah Testerman
Stillborn October 10, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Magen Testerman and JD Kaye
Given by Kerry and Valerie Jones

Shauna Elisabeth Winebrenner
April 12, 2003
Trisomy 18
Given by parents
Tim and Sarah Winebrenner
and little brother Saul



M.E.N.D. would like to thank the following sponsors for their help
in making our Christmas Candlelight Ceremonies possible.

M.E.N.D. – Main Chapter

Ruth Williams Photography
Little Beads and Macaroney & Cheese
Inspired Creations by CEO
Christine Oxendine of Avon
Portofino Ristorante
Michael and Kim Busker
Dentistry of Las Colinas / Byron L. Mitchell, DDS
Calvary Church
Presbyterian Women / Highland Park Presbyterian Church
C.J. and Jennifer Vergara

M.E.N.D. – Houston

Don and Sandy Hueslebusch
Metropolitan Baptist Church Women's Ministry

M.E.N.D. – NW Arkansas

Arvest Bank of Siloam Springs
Dawn Stanford of Mary Kay
John Wilson of Presidential Conversions
Penquin Ed's BBQ
Chick-Fil-A
Siloam Flowers and Gifts
The Kirkpatrick Family
The Moreton Family
The Morren Family



M.E.N.D. Chapter Corner

Chapter Meeting Information

M.E.N.D. - NW Arkansas

Meets the 1st Tuesday from 7:00—8:30 p.m.
Jones Center for Families, Room 114,
922 East Emma Avenue,
Springdale, AR 72765
Director: April Moreton
April@mend.org, (479) 524-3500

Subsequent pregnancy group meets in the same place the 4th Tuesday, 7:00—8:30 p.m., led by Pam Morren (pam@mend.org).

M.E.N.D. - Kansas

Meets the 2nd Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
at Cora Miller Hall/Newman
Division of Nursing, Room 1007
1127 Chestnut, Emporia, KS 66801
Director: Stephanie Metzger
Stephanie@mend.org., (620) 343-6357

M.E.N.D. - Houston

Meets the 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
HEALTHSOUTH Houston
Rehabilitation Institute
17506 Red Oak Drive, Houston, TX 77090
Director: Jaimie Crump
Jaimie@mend.org, (281) 374-8528

Subsequent pregnancy group meets in the same place the 1st Thursday, 7:30 p.m., led by Sarah Winebrenner (swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com).

M.E.N.D. - Georgia

Meets 2nd Monday at 7:00 p.m.
Southern Regional Hospital
Education Center Rm A
11 Upper Riverdale Rd., Riverdale, GA 30274
Director: Marie Stockdale
Marie@mend.org, (770) 954-1115

M.E.N.D. - Texarkana

Meets 3rd Thursday 7:00 p.m.
CHRISTUS St. Michael Rehab Hospital
2400 St. Michael Drive
Texarkana, TX 75503
Director: Monica Davis
Monica@mend.org, (903) 490-1210

To find other organizations that offer support groups in your area, visit www.mend.org or call Rebekah at (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. Chapter Updates

NW Arkansas

Our first annual Christmas Candlelight Ceremony turned out to be a blessed occasion with over 50 people in attendance. I'd like to thank Pastor Jay Foley, James and Dana Graves, Aly Kirkpatrick, Stephanie Miles, my Fellowship Bible Church Community group, the Jones Center, and Pam Morren for their help in making this event such a memorable one. It was a beautiful ceremony that brought a spark of hope to many hurting families. You are all a blessing to me, and I'm thankful that God has brought our lives together.

April Moreton

Kansas

We have such a caring, supportive group of parents in our Kansas chapter. Our group grows closer with each meeting as we seek God's healing and comfort. We continue to welcome new members and look ahead with anticipation to new ministry opportunities as the Lord leads us into 2007.

Stephanie Metzger

Houston

On December 7, we had our first Christmas Candlelight Ceremony. We recognized fifteen babies in a beautiful ceremony and enjoyed a dinner fellowship afterwards. Our chapter has been blessed to have eleven subsequent pregnancies this year. We will hold our second subsequent pregnancy group on January 4, at 7:30, and continue this meeting on the first Thursday of each month at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital. Sarah Winebrenner will be leading this group. For more information about our subsequent group, please contact Sarah, swinebrenner2004@yahoo.com, or Jaimie at jaimie@mend.org.

Jaimie Crump

Georgia

The Atlanta area is growing in awareness of M.E.N.D. We were recently featured at a nurses conference at Southern Regional Hospital, where our group meets. The nurses and staff there are very supportive and seem pleased that we are meeting at their hospital and providing support to their patients, as well as patients from other Atlanta hospitals. Our group is growing in number, and we pray God continues to make others in the Atlanta area aware of our ministry. Many volunteer opportunities are available in our group. If interested in helping, please e-mail marie@mend.org.

Marie Stockdale

Texarkana

I assumed the awesome privilege to begin leading M.E.N.D.—Texarkana in August, when Kari Westbrook received a wonderful job opportunity in the Dallas area. I really believe that this is God's will and He is using the testimonies and experiences of our group to minister to hurting families. I look forward to the upcoming year to see how God will use M.E.N.D.—Texarkana to reconcile broken hearts.

Monica Davis

Opening in February: M.E.N.D.—Nacogdoches



Medical Moment

According to a study published in the November 1, 2006, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, a biological cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) may have been identified. The study, led by Dr. Hannah Kinney of Children's Hospital in Boston, provides conclusive evidence that abnormalities in brain development in utero and after birth could contribute to SIDS. The abnormalities identified as part of the study appear to affect the brainstem's ability to use and recycle serotonin, a chemical in the brain which works in communications between brain cells. Though most well-known as a mood regulator, serotonin also plays a role in regulating breathing, heart rate, blood pressure, and other vital functions.

Researchers hope to use the findings of this study to develop diagnostic testing so that at-risk newborns can be evaluated and treated during the first six months of life, when they are most vulnerable to SIDS.

Chapter Spotlight: Houston

Director: *Jaimie Crump*

Gerald and I had been married for four years when we decided to try to get pregnant. We didn't think it would happen so fast, but it did! We were pregnant and so excited. We gave our parents "I love my grandpa" and "I love my grandma" bibs for Christmas to tell them of the great news. Everyone was thrilled! Then my world started closing in on me when my best friend/grandmother died on December 23, 2002. She had been in the hospital for four weeks before that, slowly deteriorating. She was the first one I told that I was pregnant. Even in her ICU bed, breathing tube and all, her eyes welled up with tears. I would never have guessed that the first one to know of my baby would also be the first one to meet her.

I was at work when a nurse called and asked if I was sitting down. She then proceeded to tell me that my triple screen test had shown a high probability of Trisomy 18. I drove home in tears, and Gerald came home from work early to console me. The amniocentesis I was advised to get was more scary than painful, but it was over pretty fast. The stoic doctor was very cold and nonverbal. After he had performed the procedure and ultrasound, they shuffled us to his office right away so the doctor could explain the results. I only remember him saying right off the bat that our baby did in fact have Trisomy 18. Somewhere in his "debriefing of our daughter," the doctor offered us an immediate abortion. Gerald was very firm and told him, that with the help from my doctor, we would carry this baby to term.

That is what we did. I went in every two weeks for an ultrasound to measure the level of amniotic fluid. The head nurse would sneak me in the back door, and the sweet tech took a lot of pictures. During this time was when I found M.E.N.D. I spent countless hours e-mailing people who understood what I was going through. They gave me a lot of helpful information so I was very prepared (materially) at the hospital.

At 34 weeks, my amniotic level was measuring 40 weeks pregnant, so my doctor decided to induce me. We went to the hospital and had Abigail Grace on July 1 at 2:43 in the morning. Our parents and siblings were there, and we all held her for hours. I was the only one in the room who was not crying (nurses included). To this day, I believe that the Holy Spirit gave me such a peace for those few hours with her. I was able to fully take her in without my emotions getting in the way. I had already deeply mourned her for 17 weeks, and I was the only one who felt her alive and knew her intimately. It was time for the rest of my family to grieve and time for me to meet this little person who had changed my life forever.

Almost two years later, I accepted God's calling to start a M.E.N.D. group in Houston. M.E.N.D. had meant so much to me; I knew I wanted to share that with others who were hurting. I have two wonderful assistants, Brandy and Sarah, whom God also led to this ministry. Our group has grown so much over the past year and a half, which enabled us to have a Walk to Remember and Christmas Ceremony. I can only pray that we are bringing the light of Christ to the darkest times in these Houston families' lives. ♥

Because of my apprehension about being around other babies following the loss of Jonathan, I assumed I would feel the same after I miscarried. So, I worried that I would not be able to bond with little Rebekah and be as close to her as I had wanted. I wondered how I would react the first time I saw her after my loss. The night of my D&C, Stephanie came to visit me but left Rebekah in the car. I almost asked her to have her husband bring the baby in the house, but I was still unsure of my emotions so I chose not to. A few days later I did see Rebekah again. I surprised myself with the overwhelming urge I had to hold, cuddle, and love this baby girl. Little Rebekah is now five and has been such a blessing and source of comfort for me, as have her two little sisters, Rachel and Ruth.

Maybe you have a friend, sister, or someone in your family who is expecting a baby that is due around the same time yours was. Or perhaps you are still in a state of deep sorrow and someone close to you has recently announced her pregnancy. I know your pain! You want to be happy for her and certainly you would never wish harm to her unborn baby but you wish at least someone could understand what you are going through. This is a very scary place to be, but I assure you it does not last forever. Eventually we truly do become happy for those who are expecting, but I think we always remain cautious and anxious for them. If you are dealing with someone else's pregnancy, as hard as it may be, sit down and share your feelings with the mother-to-be. If the two of you are truly close, she will understand and, like my sister Rachael, will be very sensitive to your feelings. Do everything you can to keep a relationship from becoming strained or destroyed. And I pray that just as the Lord brought four little girls into my life following my two losses, He'll do the same for you. Certainly no other child will replace yours, but He can use the innocent lives of others to mend your broken heart.

Rebekah Mitchell

M.E.N.D. *Support Group Meetings*

Join us for a time of sharing experiences.

M.E.N.D. main chapter meetings
are held the 2nd Thursday of every month
from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Daddies group

meets the 2nd Thursday of

March, June, Sept. and Dec., 7:30—9:00 p.m.
A time for daddies to get together and discuss concerns unique to them as fathers. Our moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups for discussion.

Food and Fellowship

A time to relax and meet with other M.E.N.D. parents in a social setting
Contact Brittney Fish: brwniefish@aol.com

Subsequent pregnancy group
meets the 4th Tuesday from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Led by Melissa Stephens:
rob.melissa@verizon.net

For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss.

Playgroup

For families with children born prior to or subsequent to a loss.

Contact Mary Steen or Brandee Dill for more info: Mary_Steen@hotmail.com
or dillsforchrist@yahoo.com

(Playgroups meet at various locations around the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.)

Mommies AND daddies are both welcome at all M.E.N.D. meetings.

All main chapter support group meetings are held at:

Suggs Law Firm
1522 W. Airport Freeway, Suite 200
Irving, TX 75062

(Located on the south side of the highway, Between MacArthur Boulevard and Story Road)

For more information, call (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. Fundraisers

As a non-profit organization, M.E.N.D. is funded solely by private donations and fundraisers. Any assistance you can give us by participating in any or all of these fundraisers is greatly appreciated.

- **Kroger grocery stores** donate a percentage of all purchases of those shoppers who have and use a Kroger Share Card in Texas and Louisiana back to M.E.N.D. To obtain your Share Card, contact Rebekah (Rebekah@mend.org) and let her know how many you need.
- **Tom Thumb** also has a program in Texas that can benefit M.E.N.D. If you have a Tom Thumb Reward Card, please ask your Tom Thumb cashier to link your card with M.E.N.D. Our number is **6265**. Reward cards can also be used at Randalls and Simon David stores.
- Shannon Outen, a M.E.N.D. member, operates **Oh! For Keepsakes**, which offers photographic keepsakes and quilts. For every order that is placed in which the purchaser mentions M.E.N.D., Shannon will donate \$2 to M.E.N.D. Visit her business at www.ohforkeepsakes.com.
- **Glenn Martin** is looking for M.E.N.D. families willing to grant space for small gumball machines in order to raise funds for M.E.N.D. If you have a retail business or connections to a high traffic location in the Grapevine, Southlake, or metroplex area, Glenn will place, stock, and service the equipment and give M.E.N.D. 35 percent of the proceeds. Glenn can be contacted at (817) 874-5366 or glmartin@attg.net.
- M.E.N.D. can now earn funds through **i.think inc.**, an online marketing research firm. You can help by signing up as a survey panel member and designating us as the recipient of your fee. Go to the website at <http://www.ithinkinc.com> and choose "Sign up to become an i.think inc. panel member." Fill out the sign-up survey. Under the "Funds for Charity" section, select M.E.N.D. from the list of names. Once you have completed the sign-up survey, including a valid email address, you'll be contacted with an Internet address and password for specific surveys in which you can participate. At the end of the survey, press the "Submit" button. M.E.N.D. will be automatically receive the money you earn.
- **Little Beads & Macaroni & Cheese**, owned by M.E.N.D. member Marilyn Brown, offers custom jewelry. Her keepsake angel bracelets are \$20 each, and ten percent of each angel bracelet sale will be donated to M.E.N.D. Marilyn can be reached at 817/996-1920 or msbrown16@hotmail.com.
- M.E.N.D. member Michelle McHone is a consultant with **Arbonne International**, offering pure Swiss skin care, color, nutrition, and aromatherapy. E-mail her at michellemchone@msn.com to place any order and 35% of the sale will go back to M.E.N.D.
- **IBM** employees may now make charitable donations to M.E.N.D. through automatic payroll deductions. Choose Charity Code 0M562 from the *IBM Employee/Retiree Approved Charity List*.
- **GoBaby Maternity** makes maternity tops that answer most questions regarding your baby. Owner Lori DeLaTorre will donate \$1 per shirt to M.E.N.D. Find out more at www.akaexpressions.com or call 972-259-5697.
- **Mary Kay** independent beauty consultant Michele Walton will donate twenty percent of all sales made online at www.marykay.com/MicheleTWalton to M.E.N.D. Simply mention M.E.N.D. in the correspondence section of the online order form. To find out more, call Michele at 804-752-4905 or e-mail her at micheletwalton@marykay.com.
- **GoodSearch.com** is a search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Powered by Yahoo!, it is used like any other search engine. To earn money for M.E.N.D. using Goodsearch.com, go to www.goodsearch.com and designate M.E.N.D. as your charity of choice.

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"... that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4)