



M. E. N. D.

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

When Those in Ministry Lose a Baby

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up...” 1 Thessalonians 5:11

The apostle Paul wrote these instructions to the church he began in Thessalonica. These words were not meant to pertain only to the ancient churches; they are for us to abide by as well. In today’s society, oftentimes showing kindness and compassion does not come naturally. Our fast, busy, self-serving lives make it easy to ignore or not recognize the hurts of others. However, we expect and even demand compassion from those whom we deem as spiritual leaders. But what if *they* are hurting? What if *they* need encouragement? Are we willing to lend a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on, or do we unfairly expect them to buck up with faith and not feel pain and sorrow?

Let me first clarify that a “minister” does not necessarily mean one who is in full-time ministry. A minister can be any of us who are Sunday school teachers, head of the women’s or men’s ministries, leaders of small groups, an elder, a deacon, a church board member, etc. Whether we want to be or not, anyone in church leadership can be put on a spiritual pedestal and watched very closely by fellow congregants.

In my ten years of directing M.E.N.D., I have seen and listened to an indescribable amount of pain and heartache. The emotional common denominator of everyone’s journey of grief is loneliness. It deeply saddens me to hear of spouses, parents, and friends who do not support the empty-armed parents, but it disturbs me greatly when the wives of pastors or the women of church leadership express their inability to share their burdens with the church.

I have counseled countless women who say they do not feel free to request prayer from the members of their church body because of the gossip, scowls, and lectures they would receive as a result. One pastor’s wife who attended a M.E.N.D. support group said, “It would not be good if anyone from my church knew I was here.” The wife of a worship leader once told me the senior pastor ordered her husband to stop talking about their loss and “just sing!” Yet another associate pastor was reprimanded by his superior for referring to his

baby’s death in his sermons. How very, very sad. Shame on us Christians!

Somewhere, somehow, an unscriptural theology developed in which only those who lack faith or are spiritually weak experience suffering. Have these pious Christians who adhere to this teaching not read the books of Romans or James?? When believers get into the mindset that suffering is always from the devil and is a result of a less than godly lifestyle or a punishment of some sort, dangerous consequences can occur. Spiritual, emotional, and even physical damage can happen to those who feel they have no one to turn to for guidance and comfort. Church attendance dwindles, relationships fade, and various health issues arise, leaving the wounded to grieve in solitude and secret. In fact, I have to wonder how many Christian leaders who subscribe to this publication really wanted to submit an article for this issue, but feared it would be read by someone in their congregation.



If you are one of these lonely leaders, I am so sorry! Forgive us for the times when we have not been sensitive to your needs as a person and only took from you instead of giving. I pray the Lord will lead someone to you who will be a balm of healing and comfort to your hurt. Please know we at M.E.N.D. are always here and will never judge your questions, your doubt, or your confusion.

May we all, regardless of our role in the church, check our hearts and actions toward those who are our spiritual authority. Whether it is the loss of a baby or any sort of sorrow, let us be the first to comfort them with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.



Rebekah Mitchell

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Pastors' Wives Hurt, Too

by Stephanie Lee

Steven and I have been married for almost 14 years. We surrendered to full-time ministry in June 1999. Steven has served as pastor of three churches and is currently serving as interim pastor while waiting to be called to a full-time position. God has blessed us with four beautiful children to raise here on earth and two children who live in Heaven.

In October 2002, Steven and I went on a cruise. I was newly pregnant with our third child. On the last day of the cruise I had severe pain and a lot of bleeding. I was about six and a half weeks along. I never really had a chance to bond with this pregnancy, though I had been very excited at the thought of having another child. I was hurt, but I tried to move ahead and focus on the blessings I already had.

In September 2005, I was pregnant again. We had already been through a sonogram three weeks earlier and had seen a healthy baby and a strong, beautiful little heartbeat. However, at 11 1/2 weeks, I began spotting. I went to the doctor's office on September 26 (Steven's birthday), and I had a sonogram. It was the most gut-wrenching experience I can recall. The image of my little baby, lying lifeless with no heartbeat on the bottom of my womb, will forever be embedded in my mind and heart.

The doctor scheduled a D&C on September 27. I remember waking up just crying as the finality of it all hit me like a ton of bricks. The nurse tried to tell Steven it was just the medicine, but it wasn't. It was the thought that my baby was gone, and all signs of pregnancy with it.

News began going through the church on September 25 that there was something wrong with the pregnancy, and a couple of people brought over meals. After the D&C, we received a couple more meals. There were a few people from the church who opened up and shared with me their own personal losses. I can remember being totally shocked, as I had never known anyone who had lost a child or experienced pregnancy loss. It was nice to know that I was not alone. However, after about two weeks, no one really asked much more about the baby or how I was really doing.

I felt the need to stay strong and not show my pain to the congregation. I felt that I had to enter the church all the time with a smile on my face and pretend that all was well with the pastor's family. Sometimes I don't think people want to know that ministers and their families struggle, because we are the ones they come to when they hurt - not the other way around.

I continued on with everything I had already been doing at church. The hardest ministry that I had was planning and organizing all the baby showers for those involved with our church (a ministry I started when we were first called to that church). At that time, there was a lady in the church who was due one month before I was. I can remember how hard it was to put together her shower. I also did all of the shopping for the gifts given from the hostesses. There was such pain shopping for this one, because I kept thinking that I should be buying things for my own baby. I never considered giving up anything after the miscarriage, because I had never been the type to miss much church. I rarely even stayed home when I was sick.

It was extremely difficult for me to hear updates every Sunday about how this woman's pregnancy was progressing. The Sunday she shared that she was having a girl was hard as well, because I knew I would have been close to finding out the sex of my own child (this is something I still wish I knew). I think she was as sensitive as she knew how to be. For the most part, she didn't say much about the pregnancy unless I asked her.

For Steven, recovering from our loss was not as difficult. He admitted that the baby was not "real" to him yet, since he had not had a chance to see or hold the baby; that is when he feels he bonds with a child. After the loss, I came to understand the differences in how men and women grieve pregnancy loss. That was a hard one at first for me to handle. I thought he should be hurting as much as I was. To be fair, Steven is just not an emotional kind of guy. He didn't know how to reach out to me; this was all new to him as well. I think that, possibly, because he is a pastor, it was difficult for him to respond emotionally. He has always had to be strong for all of the other members in their times of losses.

Though this was a horrible, painful time, I know that the Lord was there and had a plan for me. My life verse has always been 2 Corinthians 1:4 (even before I had the miscar-

Continued on page 11



On This Journey— Psalms Comfort

by Sherokee Ilse

*Hear my prayer, O Lord,
And let my cry come unto thee.*

Psalms 102:1

Dear God this just can't be.
My baby has left. Why me?
*The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.*

All strength is gone,
My soul transformed.
How do I breathe and then go on?
*He maketh me to lie down
In green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.*

I believed in love, in hope,
In tomorrow. Often I wonder
Why such sorrow?
*He restoreth my soul;
He leadeth me in the paths of
Righteousness for his name's sake.*

A death march. A premature end.
The darkness overwhelms me.
To the depths must I descend?
*Yea, though I walk through
The valley of the shadow of death*

*Sherokee Ilse is the author of Empty Arms, an encouraging book for parents grieving the loss of a baby.
Empty Arms and other resources from Sherokee are available at www.wintergreenpress.com.*

With fear and anger I am overcome.
And eternal loneliness.
Where does comfort come from?
*I will fear no evil;
For thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

I seek solace, mercy,
Guidance, friendship and love.
On this journey —
When does peace come?
*Surely goodness and mercy shall
Follow me all the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house
Of the Lord Forever. Psalms 23*

May/June Topic

Mother's Day and Father's Day
Deadline: March 31, 2007

July/August Topic

Keeping Your Marriage Strong
after a Loss
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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M.E.N.D. welcomes submissions from all readers. Please be aware that all printed submissions will also appear online at our Web site, which means that your name or your baby's name may appear in association with M.E.N.D. through Internet search engines. If you would like to submit an article, poem, or birthday tribute and don't want your submission to appear online, you must notify M.E.N.D. at the time of submission.

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www.mend.org



Birthday Tributes

For Chandler

Happy birthday, Chandler! It is hard to believe that you would be eight years old! We think about you all the time and love you very much. Are you catching all the balloons that Christopher and Kyleigh are sending you?

We know that you are also looking down at your new little brother. We look forward to telling him about you! Enjoy your birthday in heaven, Little Love Bug! Until we meet again, catch our kisses we are sending to heaven for you!

Chandler,

Happy 8th Birthday, big boy! We hope you have a great birthday celebration in heaven! Watch for the balloons that we will send you (they will be full of love and kisses!). We love you and miss you....and think of you every day!

Hugs,
Nana and Papaw

Chandler Allred
Stillborn March 4, 1999

Fetal Acrania

Parents: Mark and Amy Allred

Little Siblings: Christopher, Kyleigh, and Caleb



Happy 8th Birthday to Our Precious Lauren!

Wow! It is so hard to believe that you would be eight years old! There's not a day that goes by that we do not think of you after all these years. You are so fresh in our minds, and your spirit is very much alive in all of us! I think back to that horrible day in March 1999, when you died. In some ways it seems so long ago, and in my very next thought, it seems like it just happened. We have come a very long way since then. Your sister on earth knows all about you and is finally starting to understand in her own way what happened to you, and her twin in heaven. We hope you are keeping a close watch on Angel Baby for us. We also know that Jesus is planning a big birthday party for you! We love and miss you everyday of our lives!

Love always,
Mommy, Daddy, and Rileigh

Lauren Paige Grimes
March 6, 1999
Unknown Cause
Angel Baby Grimes (Rileigh's twin)
January 25, 2001
Parents: John and Paula Grimes
Sister: Rileigh



Happy Birthday, Connor!

Just a whisper in our ears,
Like the wind through the trees.

You had come and gone,
So quickly.

Despite being in our lives,
For only moments.

Your impact and presence,
Will be with us forever.

Happy Birthday, baby boy!
We will always love and miss you.

Love,
Mommy & Daddy

Connor Boston Reid
Born to heaven April 27, 2006

Trisomy 13

Also remembering Celeste Kimberly Reid

December 7 – 8, 2004

Parents: Skip Reid & Andie Boston



Happy 6th Birthday, Jacob!

It is hard to believe that it has been six years since you blessed our family with your sweet life.

Jacob, we love you and miss you so much, but we find comfort knowing that we will be together again in heaven.

We wish you a wonderful sixth birthday. Celebrate with the angels and hold tight in the arms of the Lord.

You are always in our hearts and our prayers.

Much love,
Mommy, Daddy, Emily and Eric

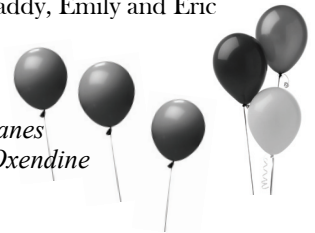
Jacob Theodore Oxendine
April 29, 2001

Premature Rupture of Membranes

Parents: Christine and Chip Oxendine

Little Sister: Emily

Little Brother: Eric



My Precious Molly,

I cannot believe you are three years old!! Not a single day goes by that you are not thought of. Morgan always talks about you and included you in her Student of the Week profile on the number of brothers and sisters she has. I know that you are so happy playing with Jesus, but I miss you so much and I am just so selfish to want you with me! We love you and miss you terribly pretty girl!

Love, Mommy

Molly René Schramm
March 10, 2004

Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia

Parents: Jerry and Suzanne Schramm

Siblings: Morgan and Garrett



Happy 2nd Birthday to Our Precious Matthew!!

My Dearest Matthew,

You would be two years old!! What a big boy!!! I can't believe two years have passed so quickly, but Mommy has never forgotten you. You are in my thoughts each and every day. I see little boys your age and think, WOW - this should be you! When I see your pictures...I smile, I cry and I remember. I do thank God for all the precious memories and the time I had with you. Many tears I've shed wishing you were here; it's deep within my heart that I know you are in a better place. Until I hold you in my arms again, I love you and miss you with all of my heart! I pray to God to do for you on this, your second birthday, all the things I yearn to do.

All of my love,
Mommy

My "Little Man":

Never a day goes by that I do not fondly think of you and miss you. I look at your pictures and wonder not only who you would be today but what kind of daddy I would be to you. I picture us riding the tractor, cruising on the Harley, and all the other "guy stuff" daddies and their sons do. I watched you fight your little heart out to stay with us two years ago, and I thank God that we had you for as long as we did. People say that "it gets easier with time." It does not. What does happen is that God has given us the strength and grace to deal with your loss knowing that we have His promise that we will see you again. God bless you, and happy birthday, Little Man!

Your Daddy

In Loving Memory of Matthew William Neeley
April 5, 2005 – June 5, 2005
Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia
Parents: Brenda Munguia and Lester W. Neeley



Happy 10th Birthday, Rianne!

We love you and miss you. . .



Rianne "Ryan" Ellisa
March 4- 7, 1997
Severe Hydrocephaly more consistent with Anencephaly
Parents: Bill and Rae Scrivner
Siblings: Chanie, Casidy, Canlie

Resource Review

Get Out of That Pit: Straight Talk about God's Deliverance from a Former Pit-Dweller

By Beth Moore
Thomas Nelson Publishers
ISBN: 1591455529



Life is filled with pits. So is the Bible. From the pit that Joseph found himself facing in the Old Testament, to the one the Psalmist wrote about, scripture is filled with examples of people who were thrown, slid, or jumped into difficult situations that seemed inescapable. Today there are just as many pits as there were then, and fewer are more scary than the one we're thrown into when we are faced with the pain of losing a baby.

In her latest book, Beth Moore tackles all these pits with honesty and insight. She describes three main ways that people can end up in a pit, ways to know that you are indeed in a pit, and steps to take to get out of the dark and into the light again. In typical Beth Moore fashion, stories of heartbreak and humor are interspersed with Biblical principals to offer practical, heartfelt advice.

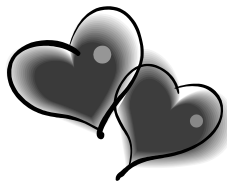
Get Out of That Pit includes references to Mrs. Moore's own struggles in the pit. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence to suggest that the author understands the pain and struggle of facing life's challenges. Her husband Keith wrote the book's foreword, offering heartfelt recollections of how life with his wife has been changed through the redeeming power of Christ.

Though this book isn't aimed specifically at bereaved parents, the author lists the death of a child as one of the most tragic ways that people can be thrown into a pit, giving parents who are suffering the death of a "beloved, irreplaceable child" "extra reverence." She expresses deep compassion for parents who must face this type of grief and offers gentle kindness to families who are hurting because of the loss of a child.

Beth Moore speaks honest, understandable hope to the hurting masses in her latest work. She offers the love of Christ as the only solution for life's problems. It's a message we all need.

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

M.E.N.D.'s Web site has made some changes:
Same address—whole new look.
Check it out at www.mend.org.



Lessons Learned from Our Tiny Heartbeat

By Paula Schear

When people feel called to the ministry they think about the sacrifices they may have to make. They think about the possibility of being separated from friends and family. They think about what it could cost financially. They consider the fact that there is no "in" and "out" on the time clock where you can leave work at work. But when we consider all Christ has done for us, what can we call sacrifice?

Yet there are times in ministry when things can get difficult, more than we feel able to handle. My husband Nobel and I often felt that way after we lost our Morgan to miscarriage. As a couple, we were not expecting the feelings of isolation that came after Morgan's death. We also weren't ready for the pressure from our church to keep being "pastor and pastor's wife."

In the beginning, it seemed that our congregation was going to be an encouragement and reliable source of support for us. The day after the loss, Nobel attended Wednesday night activities and told our church about Morgan's death. Many people offered kind words to him, and a few people even cried. Some hugged me and cried with me on Sunday when I went back to church.

However, as the weeks passed I found myself feeling uncomfortable with the tears that came with the music during services. I began to receive comments from people in the congregation.

"Oh, you're okay."

"You need to move on and get over it."

"You have so much to be thankful for."

"At least you have your son."

"At least you did not carry it to full term."

I have learned from friends at M.E.N.D. that these are common phrases that parents of pregnancy loss often hear from others. At times these comments leave us feeling crazy, hurting so much, isolated and alone in our pain. At times the tone in which these phrases are spoken seem cold, but I try to remember that people can be careless with words and that some simply can not understand our pain. Then there are those people who I thought cared about us, yet they never said anything. - not even, "I'm sorry." This was our baby, our little miracle heartbeat. As the months have passed I closed my heart and often hibernated from those who said hurtful things to me or didn't respond to my pain in the way I had hoped.

Nobel shared a few times with his youth group that this was a painful time for us. One of the parents told him not to talk about it anymore. It was "personal." I wondered how we could equip our students to face the pain in life if we do not let them know that everyone will see pain in life.

Nobel has shared with me that people used to ask him how I was doing. He used to share from his heart, but it seems he does that less now. He says that he feels pressure from others that he should somehow be able to "fix" the pain I am feeling. He is, after all, a pastor. People really just do not take into account that he lost a family member, too. "She'll get over it," they say, or, "Isn't she ever going to get over THAT?"

As we approach the time I was pregnant last year I feel a new wave of grief. The "off switch" of my emotions that I had learned to click as

I approach the church has somehow defaulted. I sat and cried through most of the service a few weeks ago. Now we live with failed fertility treatments behind us, and the hope that we will conceive again is turning to doubt.

A friend of mine told me what got her through her loss was the support from her church. I feel a strange envy that I do not get to say something similar. M.E.N.D. has been such a comfort to us yet, there is a part of us that wishes we could have this testimony about our church. Now that we have been attending M.E.N.D. meetings, Nobel and I have heard that families in ministry often have similar stories, stories of little support and high expectations from their congregations in time of loss.

I recently took a risk and shared with one of our members, who has also lost a child, how I am having a hard time right now. She told me that it is difficult around certain times each year. I realized that she knew that we were facing a special anniversary date for Morgan. It felt so good that she remembered the time our little miracle was here.

I do realize that God had a different plan for Morgan's little heartbeat than we expected. I think His plan includes our learning to forgive and love others who do not understand how much their words, or lack of words, hurt us. That one is still a struggle for me, but I know God is not finished with me. There is a part of me that wants to know where the comfort is, the comfort that is supposed to come from God's people, who have been comforted by God in their pain (2 Corinthians 1:4).

My husband reminded recently me in his lesson to the high school group about when Jesus told Peter how he would die. Peter responded by asking, "What about John?" Jesus did not reveal what would happen to John but told Peter just to concentrate on what he was to do (John 21:18-23). Like Peter, I need to focus on God's plan for my life. And I must remember that we are to "love each other deeply as love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).

Looking over this past year, I feel one of the most valuable lessons I have learned is the power of just a few words. When someone says just a few meaningful, kind words to someone who is hurting, it can be such a healing balm. I find myself drawn just to hear the voices of those who have said kind words about our baby. I pray that our churches can be places where people are drawn in because of the healing words that are spoken there. We have no idea how others may be hurting when they walk through the church doors. We pray the voices they hear once they enter can be used by the Lord to bring healing to broken hearts. ♥

In memory of Morgan Schear, miscarried March 28, 2006

Parents: Noel and Paula Schear

Big brother: Isaac

Stillbirth: Causes and Prevention

Medical Moment



According to the March of Dimes, when fetal death occurs after 20 weeks of pregnancy, it is called stillbirth. About one in 200 pregnancies ends in stillbirth. 85 percent of these deaths occur before labor begins.

Many times bereaved parents may never know a medical reason for their baby's stillbirth, but there are a number of known causes. Some of these conditions or situations are undetectable until after a baby is stillborn, while others can be discovered before birth. Knowing the causes of stillbirth and the chances of recurrent stillbirths can help grieving parents decide whether or not to try to conceive more children.

Birth defects cause 15 to 20 percent of stillbirths. Nearly half of these are chromosomal abnormalities, like Down's Syndrome, Trisomy 13, and Trisomy 18. Other birth defects can stem from environmental factors, genetics, or unknown causes.

Placental problems cause 10 to 20 percent of stillbirths. Placental abruption is one of the most common placental problems leading to stillbirth. During placental abruption, the placenta peels away from the uterine wall during delivery. This causes severe bleeding that can threaten the life of both mother and baby.

Another cause of stillbirth is poor fetal growth. This condition can occur due to a number of factors. Preeclampsia, a condition in which a pregnant woman experiences high blood pressure, can lead to poor fetal growth, as can a mother's smoking during pregnancy. Ultrasounds during pregnancy can show poor fetal growth and allow medical professionals to monitor the pregnancy carefully.

Infections are an important cause of stillbirth before 28 weeks of pregnancy. Infection can involve the mother, baby, or placenta and may go undiagnosed until serious problems arise for the baby. Common infections that may lead to fetal death are genital and urinary infections and certain viruses, such as parvovirus infection, commonly called fifth disease.

Chronic health conditions in pregnant women are responsible for many stillbirths. Women with high blood pressure, diabetes, and kidney disease are at risk for dangerous conditions such as poor fetal growth or placental abruption. Careful monitoring and good medical care during pregnancy are necessary for women with these maternal health conditions.

Umbilical cord accidents contribute to about 15 percent of stillbirths. These cord conditions can include a knot in the cord or abnormal placement of the cord in the placenta. Cord accidents deprive the baby of oxygen and can lead to fetal death.

Other common causes of stillbirth include trauma, postdate pregnancy (when pregnancy lasts longer than 42 weeks), Rh disease (when the blood of the mother and baby are incompatible), and lack of oxygen during a difficult delivery.

Though not all stillbirths can be prevented, stillbirths have declined over the last 30 years by about 50 percent. This is due largely to medical advances leading to improved medical care. For example, women with well-controlled diabetes and high blood pressure now have much less risk of stillbirth than they did several years ago. Women with high-risk pregnancies are carefully monitored, and sometimes early delivery can save babies' lives. Though premature babies face increased health problems, advances in medical care have greatly improved the outlook for babies born prematurely.

Health care professionals recommend that high-risk pregnant women begin doing "kick counts" at about 28 weeks. One way to do this is to take note of how long it takes the baby to make ten movements. A positive kick count would be ten movements within two hours. If a pregnant woman detects fewer movements than ten in a two-hour time period, or if she feels that her baby is moving less than usual, she should contact her health care provider. Her provider may recommend fetal heart rate monitoring or an ultrasound.

To help prevent stillbirth, women should avoid smoking and drinking during pregnancy. Prescriptions and over-the-counter medications should be discussed with health care professionals before being taken. Obese women appear to be at increased risk for stillborn delivery and should consider losing weight before trying to conceive, though weight loss should never be attempted during pregnancy. Any pregnant woman who experiences vaginal bleeding should call her health care provider immediately. Vaginal bleeding during the second half of pregnancy can be a sign of placental abruption, and an emergency cesarean delivery could save the baby.

Parents who have experienced the tragedy of stillbirth are often concerned about losing subsequent children to fetal death. Fortunately, the risk of subsequent stillbirth is low for most couples. Chromosomal birth defects and cord accidents are unlikely to occur in future pregnancies. However, certain maternal health conditions such as diabetes should be discussed with health care professionals when considering trying to conceive again. Parents of babies who were stillborn due to genetic disorders may benefit from genetic counseling when considering future pregnancies.

All information for this article was obtained from the March of Dimes. For more information, visit www.marchofdimes.com.

Did you know that M.E.N.D. has an extensive list of pregnancy and infant loss support groups all over the world? If you are looking for a support group near you, contact Rebekah at Rebekah@mend.org. Or, if you are active in a support group, let Rebekah know so she can make sure it is on our list. Note: This list is different than the one on our Web site.

In Loving Memory



Chandler Allred

March 4, 1999
Fetal Acrania
Given by parents
Mark and Amy Allred
and siblings Christopher, Kyleigh,
and Caleb

Abigail Joy Boyd

Miscarried June 22, 1999

Hannah Elisabeth Boyd

Miscarried October 21, 1999

Michael Aaron Boyd

Stillborn April 23, 2000

Baby Christian Boyd

Miscarried December 17, 2000

Baby Hope Boyd

Miscarried February 26, 2004
Parents: Craig and Melanie Boyd
Siblings: Samuel and Emma
Given by grandparents
Tom and Paula Todd

Jaden Allen Brown

Stillborn December 26, 2006
Unknown Cause
Given by parents
Shama and Craig Brown

Julia Eileen Brown

Stillborn May 1, 2006
Cord Accident
Given by parents
Rachel and Spencer Brown

Abigail Grace Crump

July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Given by parents
Gerald and Jaimie Crump
and little sisters Cami and Karli

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!

Lawson Thomas Dody

Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Aron and Blythe Dody
Given by Ginger Dody

Lawson Thomas Dody

Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Aron and Blythe Dody
Given by Laura Eddy

Lawson Thomas Dody

Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Aron and Blythe Dody
Given by Emporia State University
Greek Life

Lawson Thomas Dody

Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Aron and Blythe Dody
Given by Emporia State University
Memorial Union

Lawson Thomas Dody

Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Aron and Blythe Dody
Given by Elaine Fulton

Lawson Thomas Dody

Stillborn January 8, 2006
Cord Accident
Parents: Aron and Blythe Dody
Given by Elizabeth Nelson

Faith Elizabeth Durham

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

Kyler Paul English

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

Janelle Marie Gibson

Stillborn November 17, 2006
Possible Placental Blood Clot
Given by parents Scott and Jodie Gibson
and big brothers Will and Andrew

Gifts of Support

IBM Charities

Marissa Joy Jordan

November 26, 2003
Thanataphoric Dysplasia
Given by parents Sean and Sarah Jordan
and siblings Stephen, Season, Ethan,
Marshall, and Clay

Joseph Charles Libby

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

Catherine Mary Martin

Stillborn December 15, 2001

Baby Martin I

Miscarried June 14, 2002

Baby Martin II

Miscarried September, 2002
Blighted Ovum
Given by parents Nancy and Glenn Martin
and siblings Alexander and Allison

Gift of Support

Metropolitan Baptist Church of Houston

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

Baby M

Miscarried October 15, 1999

Baby Boy Moreton

Miscarried March 17, 2000

Angel #3

Miscarried August 1, 2000
Given by parents Sam and April Moreton
and siblings Asher, Ava, and Brock

Ashley Nicole Muirhead

Stillborn January 15, 2007
Parents: Craig and Daphne Muirhead
Given by Bob and Nancy Larcade

Ethan Brian Read

June 3, 2005
Parents: Chantell and Brian Read
Brother: Noah
Given by Becky Cline

Alexis Leigh and Nicole Leigh Rudeen

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

Molly René Schramm

March 10, 2004
Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia
Give by parents Jerry and Suzanne Schramm
and siblings Morgan and Garrett

Christian Allen Scott

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

Subsequent Births

Angie and Eric Brown

of Royce City, Texas,
joyfully welcome
Connor Matthew,
born January 30, 2007.
He weighed 6 lb., 13 oz.,
and measured 19.75 inches long.
The Browns lovingly remember
Payton Riley,
March 16, 2006,
short umbilical cord.

Karin and Brent Peak, along with siblings Karianne and Angela,

of Tulsa, Oklahoma,
announce with sorrow
the birth into heaven of
Richard Thomas Peak,
January 19, 2007.
He weighed 6.75 oz.,
and measured 7 inches long.
The Peaks lovingly remember
Richard's siblings
who met him in heaven:
Jason,
born to heaven June 1, 2003,
due to infection,
and Twin Babies,
miscarried March 17, 2001.

Gerald and Jaimie Crump, along with big sister Cameron,

of Cypress, Texas,
joyfully welcome
Karli Nicole,
born December 28, 2006.
She weighed 6 lb., 14 oz.,
and measured 20.5 inches long.
The Crumps lovingly remember
Abigail Grace,
stillborn July 1, 2003,
Trisomy 18.

Aron and Blythe Dody

of Emporia, Kansas,
rejoice in the arrival of
Landon Thomas,
born January 19, 2007.
He weighed 7 lb., 10 oz.,
and measured 20 inches long.
The Dodys lovingly remember
Lawson Thomas,
January 8, 2006,
cord accident.

Jana and Grant Spigener, along with big brothers Wyatt, Ford, and Porter,

of Arlington, Texas,
celebrate the safe arrival of
Calvin Russell,
born January 11, 2007.
He weighed 7 lb., 1 oz.,
and was 19 inches long.
The Spigener family lovingly remembers
Mercedes Ruth,
stillborn September 21, 1995,
intramembranous insertion
of the umbilical cord;
Twin Blossoms,
miscarried July and August 1996;
and Baby Spigener,
miscarried February, 2004.

Amy and Mark Allred along with siblings

Christopher and Kyleigh,
of Mesquite, Texas,
rejoice in the arrival of
Caleb Michael,
born January 13, 2007.
He weighed 5 lb., 9 oz.,
and measured 18.25 inches long.
The Allreds lovingly remember
Chandler,
March 4, 1999,
Fetal Acrania.

Aaron and Melissa Cunningham along with big sister Sophie

of Red Oak, Texas,
are proud to announce the arrival of
Libby Claire Noelle,
born December 27, 2006.
She weighed 7 lb., 11 oz.,
and measured 21 inches long.
The Cunninghams lovingly remember
Chloe Marie,
January 10, 2004,
Anencephaly,
and Baby Cunningham,
miscarried December 2005.

Sean and Sarah Jordan, along with siblings Stephen, Ethan, Marshall, and Season,

of Gomer, Ohio,
are delighted to announce the birth of
Clay Patrick,
born safely at home
October 14, 2006.
He weighed 8 lb., 13 oz.,
and measured 20.75 inches long.
The Jordans lovingly remember
Marissa Joy,
November 26, 2003,
Thanataphoric Dysplasia,
and Baby Jordan,
miscarried October 8, 1999.

Mike and Jenni Trent, along with big sisters Tyler and Carolyn,

of Tomball, Texas,
joyfully announce the arrival of
Jonathan Michael,
born December 27, 2006.
He weighed 7 lb., 6 oz.,
and was 18.5 inches long.
The Trents lovingly remember
Clara,
miscarried February 2006.

Sam and April Moreton, along with siblings Asher and Ava,

of Siloam Springs, Arkansas,
announce the birth of
Brock Alexander,
born February 2, 2007.
He weighed 8 lb., 1 oz.,
and measured 21.5 inches long.
The Moretons lovingly remember
Baby M,
miscarried October 15, 1999,
Baby Boy Moreton,
miscarried March 17, 2000,
and Angel #3,
miscarried August 1, 2000.

In Loving Memory ... continued

Rianne Ellisa Scrivner

March 4 - 7, 1997
Severe Hydrocephaly
Parents: Rae and Bill Scrivner
Little Sisters: Chanie, Casidy, and Canlie
Given by Pinnacle Mergers
& Acquisitions II, LTD

Theo Fleurima Shannon

Stillborn August 10, 2006
Stroke
Given by parents Ted and Geri Shannon

Hazel Anne Noelle Sibley

Stillborn August 16, 2006
Cord Accident

Baby Twins Sibley

Miscarried June 11, 2002
Given by parents Joe and Emily Sibley

In Honor of a Hurting Family

at Ustick Road Church of the Nazarene
in Caldwell, Idaho
Given by Brian and Nancy Ann Dyer

Gift of Support

Wal-Mart Foundation



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 206,
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

Offers peer support through phone and e-mail contact.
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

M.E.N.D. - Nacogdoches

Meets the 2nd Thursday at 7:30 p.m.
The Badders Law Firm
4002 North St., Nacogdoches, TX 75961
Direction: Lori DeLaTorre
Lori@mend.org, (936) 569-1739

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

M.E.N.D. – NW Arkansas has been busy the last few weeks. We are awaiting word from a Northwest Arkansas Community Foundation grant proposal that was submitted in December to help with fundraising for our chapter. We've also been preparing for the upcoming M.E.N.D. leadership conference, with hopeful plans for five of our chapter members to attend. Throughout this time we've continued to grow, with new members joining last fall and three subsequent babies born in the past four months. We thank the Lord for His provision for this ministry and the good work He is accomplishing in our area.

April Moreton

Kansas

We have just celebrated with the Dodys, who experienced our first subsequent birth in the M.E.N.D. – Kansas chapter. We are looking forward to two other additions this spring. I am so proud of our group! It seems when one falls, the others are there to offer support. The Kansas group is the sweetest group of ladies and men that I have had the honor to be around. I count it a privilege to be a part of this group and am blessed to be in this ministry.

Stephanie Metzger

Houston

M.E.N.D. – Houston has been asked to be a part of “A Life to Remember.” This is an event in which major hospitals of the Houston Medical Center come together to give Houstonians who have lost babies a remembrance ceremony. Any families who have lost children to miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death in the Houston and surrounding areas are welcome to attend. The ceremony will take place at Miller Outdoor Theater, Sunday, March 18, at 3 p.m.

We are also gearing up for our second annual Texas Hold'em fundraiser on May 12. Anyone who has a little poker knowledge in the Houston area is welcome to attend to help raise funds for M.E.N.D. while having some fun and winning great prizes. Please contact Jaimie for more information on the fundraiser or the remembrance ceremony: jaimie@mend.org.

Jaimie Crump

Georgia

We've reached a new place of opportunity in Georgia as we reach out to hurting families. We hope to minister to grieving parents on a more personal level as we move away from monthly meetings. I continue to receive many e-mails, communicate with parents through phone calls, and have one-on-one contact with families who have lost babies. I'm optimistic about my role as peer contact for the Atlanta area and about M.E.N.D.'s ministry here. If the time comes that the Lord leads us back to monthly meetings we'll be ready, but in the meantime we're blessed to serve Him and the families of Atlanta in this new way.

Marie Stockdale

Texarkana

I am settling into my position as leader of M.E.N.D.—Texarkana and am blessed to work with families in this area. We recently had daddies join our group, which has been a blessing. I can already see the Lord is using our testimonies to minister to other families. It is amazing to see how God can bring healing to such broken hearts. I am looking forward to seeing more lives changed and am hopeful about the future of M.E.N.D. in Texarkana as we continue working hard to spread the word about our organization in this area.

Monica Davis

Nacogdoches

M.E.N.D. – Nacogdoches will open our doors in just a few short weeks. I am thrilled to be able to share my experience with others and help them through their grief. My assistant, Chris Rodriguez, is such a God-sent friend. Between the two of us, and with the Lord's help, I feel we will have a successful group in east Texas.

Lori DeLaTorre

Chapter Spotlight: Georgia

Director: Marie Stockdale

*"Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning."
Psalm 30:5*

This verse was hard for me to believe after we lost our firstborn child, Michelle Grace, in 2002. Yet, I knew that since it came from God's Holy Word, it had to be true.

In 2002, like many young couples, Joe and I were eagerly awaiting the birth of our first child. However, twenty weeks into the pregnancy, we entered what would become the most difficult days of our lives. Our baby girl was diagnosed with a rare and often fatal heart defect, Ebstein's Anomaly. After much prayer and research, we decided we would travel out of state to deliver Michelle. She would be in the care of a pediatric surgeon who had a high surgical success rate with infants born with Ebstein's Anomaly. We had high hopes that this was our answer to prayer and that joy would certainly come in the morning.

From her moment of birth, Michelle was off to a rough start. She suffered brain hemorrhages, liver failure, kidney failure, and infections. When she was finally well enough to go to surgery, the doctor successfully repaired her heart. Yet, in spite of a successful operation, Michelle died three days after surgery. We couldn't understand how God could have possibly ordained everything we had gone through, and were still enduring. He had led us to all the right doctors, given us such hope, then at the very end we felt He had let us down. Where was the joy that came in the morning?

It took several years for Joe and me to work through our grief and for us to finally see the joy that God did indeed bring back to our lives. Three years after Michelle passed away, I had the desire to minister to other families who had suffered the loss of a baby. M.E.N.D. – Georgia opened in October 2005. I have been incredibly blessed to be able to reach out to others and share with them the comfort that God gave us. I never thought that I would feel joy again the way I do now, but ministering to others has truly brought me joy.

Due to the small nature of our group, we have decided to postpone holding our monthly meetings for the time being. We will continue to minister to members through email, phone, books through mail, and one-on-one meetings. As more people express a desire to meet, we will schedule periodic meetings. I have great hope that the Lord will use this time to offer hurting families in our area a more intimate, personal ministry, and I look forward to seeing how God grows our ministry through new avenues. ♥

"Pastors' Wives" ... continued from page 2

riages): "Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble, with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." I know that I can now try to help someone else that who is going through the same experience I did. I understand their pain. Though I can reach out to people who are going through other problems, I can't truly understand them. But, I know the pain of pregnancy loss. I have found myself so much more sensitive to women now who have miscarried or lost a child to stillbirth.

If you are in ministry and have lost a baby, I encourage you to find someone you can talk to openly about how you are really feeling. Don't let anyone try to rush the grieving process; there is no time limit on grief. I think I did myself a great disservice by not being real with the congregation. In hindsight, I believe it was Satan who convinced me that the congregation didn't care about how I was really doing. A great deal of my healing came from being able to honestly share my emotions with the women at a Christian e-mail list for bereaved mothers.

If you are a part of a congregation whose pastor has experienced the loss of a baby, ask him and his family how they are doing. Don't ask just in passing, and really mean it when you say, "How are you doing?". Let them talk as much as they need to without feeling guilty about their pain. PRAY FOR THEM!!! And let them know you are praying. The meals do mean a lot, as well as the cards and phone calls. They let your pastor and his family know that you love them and hurt with them, just as the pastor and his family always share the hurts of the rest of the congregation. If your pastor and his wife have other children, maybe you could offer to take the children for a couple of hours to give the pastor and his wife time alone.

I believe that I have learned a lot through my experience with our congregation. I now understand that we are all human. Losing a baby was new to me, and having a pastor's family who lost a child was new to our congregation. Through it all, the Lord held us and carried us through the pain. ♥

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.

M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

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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)