

# Mustard Seed

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## How Are You Feeling?

Recently there was a guy who introduced his seventy-year-old mother to the magic of the Internet. He decided to show her [www.ask.com](http://www.ask.com) (a website where you type in a question and an answer is quickly given). The son asked his seventy-year-old mother what question she would like answered? His mother thought for moment and then said, “Type in the question, *How is Aunt Helen feeling?*”

Interesting that many people want to know more than anything else how their friends and family members are feeling about life. As we face a new year with new challenges, fears, joys, and struggles, it makes me question how we are feeling inside about these life changes and new life events. Some of these life events are exciting and joyful, and some cause much worry and great sadness. In light of this, we need to be reminded that God takes our feelings seriously. He is interested in how Aunt Helen is feeling. He takes great interest in our feelings and helps us process them so that we are able to find joy, peace, comfort, hope, and love.

How are you feeling right now? What state of mind are you in? Paul said that there are three things that remain – faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love. God desires that we feel and experience faith, hope, and love in all the seasons of life. In this winter season, may we feel God’s love more than anything else. May we feel His love so strongly that we are able to rise above the worries and fears of life. As Paul said, we are never separated from the love of God even in “trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword.” (Romans 8: 35)

Rejoice knowing that you have a heavenly Father who knows and cares how you feel. May you feel His loving embrace and wisdom as you journey through this New Year.

*Scott Swartzendruber*



## BEYOND OURSELVES

*Notes about those who are serving, or have served in missions.*

The annual visit to the Kalona area by the MCC meat canner was on January 6th and 7th. Helmuth Repair again offered their work area to host the canner. Workers from KMC included Joel, Ty, and Cody Schillerstrom, Sandy Gingerich, Larry VerSteeg, Doug Slaubaugh, Cal Yoder, Jon Koerner, Ed D. Miller, Ed V. Miller, and Larry Pickard. They canned about 9000 cans of turkey in the 2 days they were in Kalona! Thank you, Calvin Yoder, for helping organize this. If you are interested in learning more about MCC meat canning, you may go to this address <http://canning.mcc.org/canning/history/>

*The following are memories from Emil Ropp's Civilian Public Service days during World War II  
Emil's home congregation was Fairview Conservative Mennonite Church and the length of his CPS term  
was February 29<sup>th</sup>, 1944 to September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1946.*

MY CPS EXPERIENCE as told by Emil Ropp

Leroy, one of my older brothers was granted a farm deferment to keep the family farm going during the war. Later Leroy did go into CPS. Two of my other brothers, Herman and John, were drafted earlier in the war, and also went into CPS.

Little did I know that 2 years after they were drafted, I would have to appear before the Washington County Iowa draft board. Elmer Swartzendruber, the bishop of the Conservative Mennonite Church, went with me and I was grateful for his support. This was on September 18th 1943 and I was granted a 4-E status which meant I was classified as a Conscientious Objector.

Later on, I reported to Fort Des Moines with about 200 other men from the Kalona area to have physical examinations. That day we had the back of our hands marked with "CO". The other inductees, that were going into the armed forces, had "M" placed on the back of their hands.

About 3 months after I was drafted I left home for the CPS camp at Terry, Montana. This camp was ran by MCC and was under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Soil Conservation Department. Two other men from this area, Mahlon Miller, and Laverne Graber, were also assigned to Terry at this time.

When we got to the train station nearest to the Terry camp, Alvin Weaver was waiting for us to take us back to the camp in the back of a pick-up truck. Since it was 40 below zero, we told him it was too cold to ride in the back of the pick-up and he would have to let all 3 of us ride with him in the cab. It was not any too warm in the cab with the 4 of us. There were already about 15 men from the Kalona area assigned to this camp. We talked until midnight the first night. Then, one of the other campers reminded us that there was work to be done early the next morning. I do remember having to get a Rocky Mountain fever vaccination soon after my arrival at the camp.

Much of the food to feed the CPS men in the camp was grown during the summer on the camp grounds. So we had many vegetables and potatoes. Many times we would have meatloaf. Pancakes were often prepared. Once in a while we would have bacon from a freshly butchered hog that we had raised. Some food was supplied by local congregations and distributed to the camp by MCC.

The work at this camp was to create drainage lines and reinforce the lines for irrigating the surrounding land. This land could then be developed into 80 acre parcels of land that persons could

homestead for 10 year periods to gain ownership. At this project, pouring concrete for the irrigation system continued the in sub zero temperatures. This was done by having 50 gallon drums with wood fires in them under canvas tents.

After about 3 weeks working on this project I was asked if I would be interested in working in the kitchen as a kitchen helper. This involved, among other things, peeling potatoes for the 200 campers and preparing 150 lunches, usually of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. This work started at 3 a.m. I do remember learning how to dress chickens also. Eventually I became one of the cooks. We were given approximately 46 cents per meal to buy needed supplies to feed the 200 campers. This came from MCC.

The first 6 months of my term I received no stipend. Then we were given 5 silver dollars per month to buy personal items. This came from MCC and local congregations and church members sent money to MCC for this. I remember one time I left my 5 silver dollars on my bed shelf and left the barracks to play ball. When I returned they were gone.

After working at this camp for about 6 months in the kitchen I was sent to cooking school for 6 weeks. This school was set up for CPS by the National Board of Religious Objectors and MCC. I received a certificate after completing this course. I then returned to Terry for just a few months before being sent to another camp to be a cook.

This second assignment was at Three Rivers, California where I cooked for 18-20 National Park Service firefighters that were in CPS. This camp was in the Sequoia National forest. Here the government supplied me with about 80 cents a meal to prepare food for these CPS'ers. I was assigned 1 kitchen helper. We worked 7 days a week but I managed to find the time and energy to fill in as the Sequoia National Park telephone operator. I also found time to help in the kitchen of a private resort nearby. While working off hours at this private resort I remember seeing Bob Hope and also Bing Crosby when they performed there.

I left home when I was 18 years old and was away for 32 months. I missed a lot of my youthful years away from home. Before leaving for CPS I never traveled away from home other than to Iowa City or Cedar Rapids and those trips were very few. During my CPS years I feel I did a lot of growing up and learned to make decisions on my own. It was difficult to be away from home but the experiences I had and the people I met helped make it a positive experience overall.

Even though 4 boys in our family had to do CPS terms, CPS was seen as positive. Solomon Ropp, our father, had to spend time at Fort Riley, Kansas during WWI for refusing to participate in military service and he was not treated well.

*(After his 32 month term Emil was asked to stay on at Sequoia National Park but felt he wanted to come back to Kalona. However, at the end of his CPS term Emil did sign up for a horse transport project. He helped ship 720 horses to Poland. It was a project of Heifer International and was to help with rebuilding Europe after the war. Emil remembers working with non Mennonite men, some army veterans, and having a good exchange with them. Many times these other men had no idea that the Civilian Public Service existed.)*

*Dave Koerner*

## WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

We took a 3 month leave of absence and a lot has happened since then. Now for the news:

Al & Kathy Yoder, who live on the west edge of Kalona are going through some changes. Al found a job in Sunflower, Mississippi (population 696), which is catfish farming country. He manages a fishmeal processing plant, which is an “offal” job (look it up)! Hey, it may be a stinky job and a long commute, but it pays well, which meets the 2 basic requirements of why we work in the first place: a home mortgage and hunger!

Congratulations to Catrina Schrock and Joel Miiller who tied the knot at East Union Mennonite Church on New Year's Day (1-1-11)! There will be no excuses forgetting this Wedding Anniversary!

Congratulations to Amanda Beachy, who is looking forward to a ministerial position at Washington Mennonite Church in Washington, Iowa next summer. Amanda is completing her final semester at AMBS (Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary) in Elkhart, Indiana.

A small group of KMCer's are leaving for Haiti where they will be helping Troy Miller drill for water. Included in the group are Ronnie Miller, Merle Beachy (father of Amanda) and Lincoln Schrock. Lincoln will be staying on to help for several months.

Drew & Heidi Willems, made Lloyd & Joyce Bender 1<sup>st</sup> time grandparents with the birth of Simon Dakota Willems in San Antonio, Texas.

Tyson & Rachel Swartzendruber Miller made Mel & Luann Miller 1<sup>st</sup> time grandparents with the birth of Oliver Swartzendruber Miller in Phoenix, Arizona.

Congratulations to Justin & Shalee Slaubaugh on the birth of their 2<sup>nd</sup> child – Ella Lora Slaubaugh.

Congratulations to Rodney & Jodi Gehman on the birth of their 4<sup>th</sup> child – Scarlett Lauren Gehman.

Congratulations to Aaron & Jolene Gingerich on the birth of their 3<sup>rd</sup> child – Brooklyn Kathleen Gingerich.

Flutes & Singlets, what? I will explain. I went to Mid Prairie High School to see a triangular wrestling meet. However the M-P wrestlers were waiting their turn, so I walked over to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade band concert and watched that instead. It was their 1<sup>st</sup> performance ever! It was very delightful, complete with several unusual sounds but overall I was very impressed with their performance. I got to see Emma Beachy play the flute. Then I went back to the gym to watch 4 KMCer's wrestle. What an action to see each one in their respective weight class. So I got to see Josh Yoder, Kendall Bontrager, Ben Fiordelise & Chase Murray. Also got to see & hear their parents, that was pretty interesting as well.

Where are they now? Remember back when Wilbur & Elsie Mast would bring the Spielbauer family to church with them. We had lost track of the family when we read in the Cedar Rapids Gazette about a local country blues band that would be playing in Iowa City. Turns out 3 of the 4 band members were Spielbauers, Tom, George and Mike. Their dad, Jim tried to teach them how to play basketball, but all they really liked to do was play electric guitars. They call themselves the “Porch Builders” and play mostly originals, but some country and blues as well. I still have to “chuckle” when remembering back how Jim & Dorcas would say how loud it would get in their home and their Riverside neighborhood! Ha!

Men, get your thimbles out. It's that time of the year again when “we get to go to sewing.” Mark your calendars for February 2<sup>nd</sup>, that's coming VERY SOON, when we as a Church Family will quilt, make college care packages, knot comforters, roll bandages and have a fun time together. Don't miss it!!

Well, that's it for now. Do something special for someone on Valentine's Day!

*Blessings to all, Ed & Carol Miller*



## God's Own Heart

February is the month that often brings to mind hearts, flowers, expressions of love, boxes of candy, secret valentines and other such things. It is amazing to observe the number of things that are heart shaped. You can find heart shaped cinnamon sugar hearts, cookies, chocolate, jewelry boxes, cards, necklaces, wooden boxes, gummy candy, diamonds, gelatin molds, cakes and the list goes on and on. This year has brought the question to my mind whether or not we know what the heart is.

The prophet Jeremiah tells us “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9) This makes me question the number of times I have made a decision based on my heart or the times I have told someone that they should follow their heart. Was this bad advice?

Then I look at Exodus 35:5 where it says “whoever is of a willing and generous heart, let him bring the Lord's offering”. This leads me to think that we should allow some of our actions to be lead by our heart. So when do we follow our heart and when do we need to reject its leading?

David is often held up in the Church as a man after God's heart, and rightly so because that is what the Bible tells us of David. (I Samuel 13:14) This is an exciting idea for me. We can actually seek the heart of God and God wants us to do it. God testified concerning David, say ‘I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after My Own Heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’ (Acts 13:22) This is what I want in my life and in each of yours. I want God to testify in our behalf and say that we at Kalona Mennonite Church are people who are actively after God's Own Heart and we will do EVERYTHING He wants us to do. Wouldn't that be the most incredible moment?

So how to we get there? How do we get rid of our deceitful hearts and seek God's Own Heart? Ezekiel 11:19 tells us that it is God who replaces our heart. “And I will give them one heart [a new heart] and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony [unnaturally hardened] heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh [sensitive and responsive to the touch of their God]“ We just need to allow God to swap our defective heart for His perfect one. How about that? If I want a heart I can follow I just need to allow God to give me one. So if I do this what happens?

I really don't know the answer to that question, but I think II Corinthians 3:2-3 gives us a clue. “You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” Our hearts can become the ultimate valentine.

That's what I want my heart to become. How about you?

*As always, in pursuit,*

*Dawn Wyse*



## Keeping Up with the MYFers

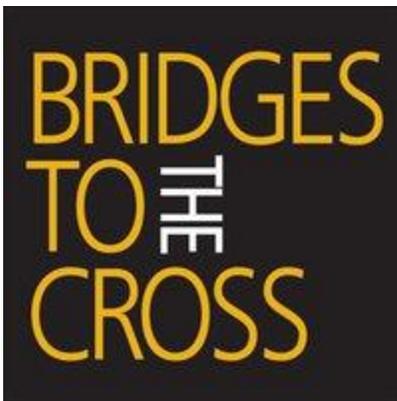
Our time during MYF on Sunday nights has continued to be a huge blessing in my life, and in the lives of many teenagers and their families in the community. It's been so exciting to see God moving and working in the lives of young people, both during MYF and throughout the week. Not only have I seen personal growth, but our group as a whole has really begun coming together. We've managed to get over the initial awkwardness of a new group—especially one with a lot of incoming freshman—and feel comfortable sharing our personal joys and struggles.

Now that The GOSPEL Journey is over and the plan of salvation has been laid out, we have begun looking at spiritual growth. Through discussion and reading the Bible, we are seeing that being a Christian isn't a one-time event—it's a whole new way of life.

Because of the fundraiser meal and Super Bowl Sunday, we won't be having MYF the next few weeks, but hopefully that will give us the chance to practice some of the ways we're learning to make our faith our own!

We are all beginning to look forward to Convention and the Denver DOOR trip this summer as we start turning in forms and money. We are, once again, so grateful for our supportive church family! We pray that even now, God will begin preparing the hearts and minds of the leaders and participants in these up-coming events.

*Nicole Murray*



**Pittsburgh 2011**

