

RIVERVIEW MESSENGER

MIRACLES OF LIFE

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 do they have in common?

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A Word in Edgewise

Ruby Bontrager

SOMETIMES IT TAKES AN EARTHQUAKE

In the wee hours of Saturday, December 23, 1972, a devastating earthquake struck Managua, Nicaragua. Seventy kilometers away, two young men slept through it, not feeling the tremors at all. One of those young men was Jerry Bontrager, a voluntary service worker living in Ranchos. When he and his buddy, Glendon Bender, heard about the quake, they got on their motorcycles and drove to the VS center in Managua to see what shape the unit house was in. The city was in shambles—thousands of people had lost their lives in the quake. Although the unit house had suffered some damage, it was still standing.



Jerry became a messenger for the team, running errands on his motorcycle, doing whatever he was asked to do. His new schedule gave him some time to think about the girl he’d left behind. He’d been almost too busy before. Two weeks later he grabbed his pen and paper, found a quiet place in the house and began a long letter. It took him a couple of shifts over several days, as privacy was rare, but he finally found the courage he needed. In closing, he wrote these words: “And I’m asking that you go with me through the path of life...I’ll be waiting for an answer shortly, okay?”

The letter was postmarked January 13 and landed in my mailbox at Grace College a few days later. Walking to a cleaning job in Winona Lake, I stopped in the student center to check my mailbox. There was a note requiring 17 cents postage due—the amount needed for an airmail letter! So back to my dorm room I went for the cash. On the way to my house cleaning, I read the letter. Shock, disbelief, and joy filled my heart—I could have almost shouted all over Winona Lake!

Long story short, I said “Yes!” Jerry came home via motorcycle in October, and we were married the following January, a year after he’d popped the question. It seems that a couple of miracles were involved in this story, but as a reader, you may draw your own conclusions. Together, Jerry and I just celebrated fifty years of marriage on January 12, 2024. God is good.

Good Things To Eat



No Bake Cheesecake Pie

Miriam Nichols

(makes 2 pies)

- 2 sticks butter melted
- 4 cups graham crackers crushed
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 large cans of fruit (of choice)
- 2 (8oz) packages cream cheese softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- ½ cup milk
- 1 ½ cup whipped cream

Mix together crackers, butter, and sugar. (Using a food processor works best). Press mixture into pie plates and refrigerate. In a large bowl whip, cream cheese, powdered sugar, milk, and whipped cream, on low speed. Pour on the crust (half in each). Cover with fruit (drain if needed). Chill and enjoy

Learning Through The Pain

Mitch Miller

First, some background. I've had a rough road of faith and Christianity. Hypocrisy in the church and especially, the leadership. People I've respected and wanted to emulate (most of these people were my own family) would disappoint by living double lives. Living a holy Sunday and a near hellish rest of the week. Also, losing my father at the age of 15, I struggled deeply for several years all throughout high school. It was rough. I felt like a tool to be used or a work horse with little to no value if I didn't perform. I didn't feel unconditional love ever. I only felt some appreciation when I was exceptionally useful or when somebody wanted something from me.

That being said, not everyone I dealt with was horrible. There were good times, but it seems bad things become seared in the memory and are hard to forget.

Needless to say, I was skeptical. All these issues started to be challenged once I joined Riverview. I met people who cared about the Bible and desired to live it out. By no means perfect, but their hearts were in the right orientation towards God and His Word. I didn't think there were communities left like that. I thought it was only a handful of people I knew lived that way. At this point, I accepted that I missed some good people growing up. Yet I still was skeptical. What if God



called me to the mission field? Would the church have my back or when it came time for the rubber to meet the road, would I be left high and dry without this community that I loved? Would they support me in hard times or was it all just sounding good, playing the part? I also mentally understood that the Bible talked about a global body, community, family, or church, but I didn't really see it. I saw western believers supporting missions around the world, but not too much else. I understood the practical parts and difficulties that come with missions and letting the people receiving help have a direct connection with those who supply help, but it was difficult to see the church as global. At this time, I got injured, and again my skepticism reared its ugly head. I assumed I would be seen as less: less valuable, less appreciated, less respected. Sometimes I like being proved wrong. This is one of those times. People understood that this was a difficult time so they made sure I felt valued and appreciated.

Next stop India!

During this time, I was a volunteer for Serve India Ministries and there were talks of bringing me on as a part time staff member. I was asked if I would join them for a state-side trip visiting churches and friends of the ministry. Naturally, I went because it's traveling for

Everyday Miracles

Lynn Hershberger

How have I seen God working in every day life? There have been many experiences over the last 40 years. Everything from directing the decisions that I've made, to helping me find wrenches, clips and springs that I've dropped in feed, to guarding my steps while working on silos or grain bins. Back in 1998 I discovered that our 80 foot silo was leaning. Left alone the silo would eventually have fallen over. In August we hired a crew to tear down the silo and rebuild it. They started at the top by loosening the bands that encircled the concrete silo blocks that held it together. Suddenly, the silo cracked from the top over halfway down. The crew made up of young 18 to 20 year olds scrambled to the bottom and refused to go back up. The foreman of the crew said it was my decision. He would force his crew to go up if I said they needed to. I still remember the battle in my mind. The bad portion of the silo was the foundation and the bottom 10 feet. Everything above that we had planned to reuse. Is the reusable part worth risking life? I remember calling my dad and four or five close friends to pray and I spent time in my office with Doreen praying and trying to discern. After two hours we had decided to just pull it over and build new. As I left the house, I



noticed two men at the top of the silo dropping blocks down. Come to find out, my dad and the owner of the silo company had crawled up and started throwing blocks down. As the day went on one by one the crew climbed up and started helping. By six the next evening, the silo was successfully dismantled with no further cracking. Since then there have been several years where we've had droughts and I wasn't sure how I would have enough feed for the winter. But in each situation, God provided. This past summer in 2023 we saw our heavenly Father pour out blessings of rain at just the right time. For those of you who are not farmers, when harvesting alfalfa the best regrowth comes if you have rain 2 to 3 days after cutting. We made five cuttings this year and within 12 hours of putting the hay away we had a half inch or better of rain- all five cuttings. We harvested hay once a month May through September, and each time it was plentiful. I could talk for hours about God's wonderful miracles and the many blessings that I have seen.

Our God is an Awesome God

Les Yoder

Greetings to all who read the Messenger. I guess I will start this account in the fall of 2018. I'm amazed how we can live through circumstances not very comfortable when we experience God's blessings.

We were living in the Nottawa, MI area at the time, in a house that was hard to heat and cool. Marvin road was friendly for walking, riding bicycle, and we had good neighbors. In the fall, we were told we needed to relocate. So we prayed and asked God to show us a place. A friend of mine told me about someone in the Constantine area, that wanted to sell their property. The blessing was, we had 6 months to relocate and didn't have to make a hasty decision. So God answered and provided us with a nice house; we moved in May 2019.

October of 2020, I got covid and landed in the hospital for lack of oxygen. I was transferred to Parkview in Ft. Wayne, and spent a week there. They did scans and found a tumor on my thymus gland. Surgery performed January of 2021, was positive for cancer. Later that fall I discovered I had prostate issues, also very severe pain in my hip bone and legs. We saw a cancer specialist at Mayo clinic in Rochester, MN. so I went on medication. This is where the miracle comes in: March of 2022 it was a blustery cold kind of day, and I was driving semi down I-69 on my way to Auburn, IN to a Walmart DC. I was 20 minutes from my delivery when I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in my truck. He said I was going to be healed of my cancer!! That was a very emotional time, during which the clouds parted for about 10 seconds and the sun shone down on me. I knew that was a promise from God. I was getting close to my delivery so I needed to regain my composure. So my cancer is gone, December of 2022, the scans showed no cancer in my bones and it has not come back!! Praise God!

My PSA is the lowest it has been since August of 2022. Just to be clear, PSA does not stand for Psalms; it is a medical term for the activity in the prostate. I want to give God all the glory and praise that has happened through this experience. It has made us more aware how great our God is and there is nothing impossible with Him. I trust you can be encouraged by reading this.

Our Miracles

Tim and Rebecca Eicher

"I will praise you, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works." -Psalm 9:1

God miraculously brought two precious daughters into our life creating our family as we know it. We knew when Hope came into our life that God had a wonderful plan. Her name held such power and meant so much to us. The day Hope came into our family, her half sister, Viola, was released from rehab and went from our care into her adoptive home. This was unplanned. God's perfect timing and an answer to our prayers.

About 1 1/2 years later, we excitedly yet anxiously prepared to bring a newborn, Raya, into our home. The night before we picked her up from the hospital, Tim asked me "Do you know what tomorrow is?" Overwhelmed, I realized it was Mother's Day. Once again God had a wonderful plan, fulfilled in His perfect timing.

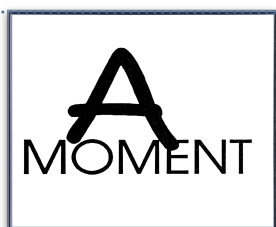
MIRACLE

Joy Gerber

One morning as I was driving on St. Rd. 120 to my job, I saw something about 1/3 mile ahead in the path of my car. I thought it was a dog so I began slowing. But, it was NOT a dog. It was a precious little boy pulling his little red wagon. I pulled off, jumped out of my car and began waving down traffic. Everybody stopped. I told the boy it was very dangerous for him to be on the road. I told him I wanted to take him to his mama. I went to the house I thought he came from. A lady came running out of the house who in PA Dutch began scolding her two year old son. I understood every word she said to her son. I kindly said to her, "No, this is not your son's problem. As his Mama, you have full responsibility to be watchful over your son." She took her son and went into the house.

As I walked to my car, my heart was thumping wildly, when I realized how nearly I had killed a precious, precious child, the age of my DARLING granddaughter. My body felt totally weak and all I could say was, "THANK YOU, JESUS!!! I knew it was a miracle from my Heavenly Father!!!

Thinklers 1



ALTA'S HEALING

Alta Hochstetler

Some fifty years ago when the church had revival meetings, the minister asked if anyone needed prayer. I asked for prayer as I was having UTI, bladder and kidney infections. Mel Shetler was sitting beside me and heard what I had requested. The next morning Mel called me, asking how I was doing. He told me that he prayed for me that very evening. After I was laying in bed, it felt as if some warm hand was rubbing my lower back. Then I praised Jesus for healing and the pain was gone in the morning. To me, this was a miracle of Jesus healing me that evening.



Special Music for Christmas By
The Hershberger Family,
"Mary had a Little Lamb"

Miracles come in all shapes and sizes.

Jessica Nichols

Looking back over our lives I find God's hand of guidance gently showing us the paths He wanted us to take. That is miraculous in light of so many who wander aimlessly through this world. At times, though, we are led down paths we'd rather not go. In Jeremiah 10:19 he said "Woe is me for my hurt! My wound is grievous: but I said, truly this is a grief, and I must bear it." Matthew Henry says "Under our afflictions, say, not only, God can and will do what He pleases, but *let Him do what He pleases.*" There are plenty of scriptures that make it clear that God allows and uses trials, afflictions, and persecutions to teach His children. I count it amazing that He not only chose to show me His kindness by teaching me through suffering, but that He chose to heal me too. Like a light switch He turned off my suffering; in an instant. Yet the suffering taught me more about trust than anything in my life. Both are miracles.

Thinklers Riddle me this:

*You throw away the outside and cook the inside.
Then you eat the outside and throw away the inside. What am I?*

Learning Through The Pain Continued from page 2

ministry. On this trip I was formally invited to become a staff member. Also, brother Eby asked me if I'd consider going to India for surgery. I considered this and prayed about it and the reality set in that if I don't do surgery in India, I wouldn't be able to afford it. During the course of our trip, I told our group that I have decided that surgery seems like the wise thing to do and going to India seems best, by the peace I felt the Lord giving me. All the required paperwork was done and now it was time to leave for India. Now, hindsight being 20/20, I would have done research in what all the surgery entails; recovery time, pain, and just being mentally prepared in general. I made the foolish mistake of thinking if this is God's leading then it'll be all right, no need to prepare myself.

I landed in Kochi Saturday evening. Bro. Andrew and Bro. Sam picked me up and took me to a hotel. In the morning we headed home for Coimbatore. They gave me a room and showed me all the things that have changed since the last time I had been there, and we enjoyed great fellowship together.

Monday they took me to the hospital. The doctor told me that surgery is only a partial solution and I must lose weight. The pressure I've been putting on my joints from running, jumping and the like is equivalent to the weight of a truck, several tons.

Tuesday I checked in to the hospital. Bro. Eby spent the day with me. We had multiple very of good discussions where I got the opportunity to learn from a great man who is sold out for Christ. Around 1pm, I went to surgery. They shot me in the back with an epidural. I was still jet lagged so they asked if I wanted to be put under and I consented. I woke up a few times throughout the operation but four hours later, I was done. That evening, I returned to my hospital room after I could move my toes and legs. Unfortunately, the doctors didn't allow the nurses to give me pain killers that night. That was the most consistent pain I have ever felt from about 6pm to 7am. It was slightly less painful than the moment I blew out my knee. During those hours, I thought about Job and Christ. I felt like I was closer to Job's suffering than Jesus', but it gave me a greater appreciation for suffering. When my legs were numb, I also learned to have more sympathy for those who can't walk. For the first time in my life, I realized how tall I am, quite a strange feeling. Bro. Sam spent the night with me tending to my needs.

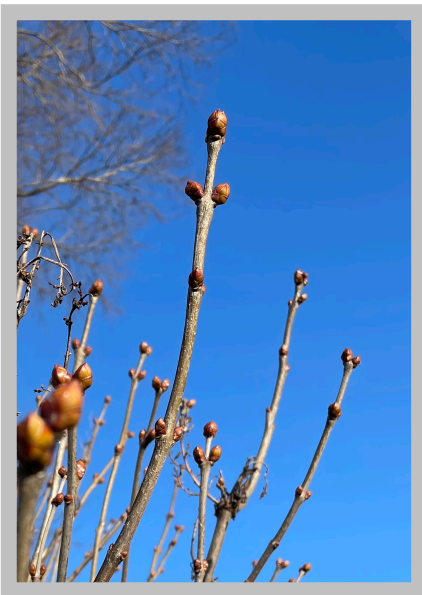
Wednesday morning, the doctors allowed pain medication and brother Eby came to spend time with me. I realized that either Sam, Andrew or Eby would be with me in this whole experience. Andrew spent the night with me and we had some really good discussions.

What I observed and or learned from this: these three men are very high-ranking men in the ministry, and they cleared time from their busy ministry schedule and family life to tend to me. This is the kind of thing that they do for their own family and the brothers and sisters who work at SIM headquarters. I hope the gravity of this isn't missed. These guys had a leader's seminar coming up within days where all the Bible trainers for the ministry country wide would be at the headquarters. There was much to do to prepare and they were hanging out with their American dork with a bum leg because they don't abandon their family. I was greatly humbled when this hit me. I learned what leadership looks like. I think more

Who Am I?



ANSWER ON PAGE 7



By February 1st, the lilacs were showing new growth. Don't despair in the dark times, when you can't see any change, improvement, or growth. Hold fast, Spring is coming!

Continued on page 6

Learning Through The Pain

Continued from page 5

importantly, I learned what the global body of Christ looks like. I was completely vulnerable stuck in a hospital bed. My brothers had my back. Also, state-side my brothers and sisters helped me. They found out I was in need; they prayed and covered some of my cost for this trip. I didn't seek anyone's money, but still received help. I'm extremely grateful and humbled to be prayed for and supported by brothers and sisters on both sides of the planet. There is another lesson I learned. I always thought in terms of what I deserve and what I don't deserve. I struggled to accept Christ's atonement on my behalf. Why would He die for my benefit? Through all of this I finally learned that it's about what God says your worth is. I think it is healthy for a Christian to remember who they were before submitting to Christ to protect from self-righteousness. I had taken it too far though. I struggled to accept what good Jesus wanted me to have and what He wants me to be. I was always looking for God's sledge hammer because that is what I deserved. I always struggled to accept love for the same reason because I recognize the wretch that I am. It's not about my view of me; it's about God's view of me. I hope this can be encouraging to the Body and perhaps someone can learn through my experiences.

Let us practice 1 Corinthians 13. Love one another that the world may know that we are Jesus' disciples!



Dedication for Jane, Elise, and Benaiah, children of Anthony and Nicole Davis.

Missions trip to Laos

Isabella Reckers

It was my first day on the battle field, for spreading God's word throughout the unreached villages in the country of Laos. I was excited and thrilled to be used by God in furthering His kingdom.

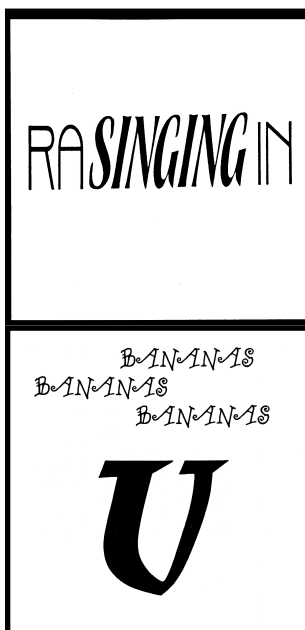
My team of 3 were coming up to the end of day after driving scooters close to 100 miles to reach 8 different villages prior to this one. By this time we had gotten a routine of passing out suckers and balloon animals to the kids to get the natives attention, and gain a small portion of their trust before giving them gospel tracts, seeing how there was little we could say to them with the language barrier hindering us.

As we rode up to this village scouting out our surroundings, the role of passing out the suckers naturally fell on me. By this time, I knew I was coming close to the end of my stash of suckers and was getting concerned about not having enough. So, I looked around assessing how many kids to suckers I had. I gathered that I had just enough. So,

I started passing them out while thoroughly enjoying the smiles on their faces after receiving something so small and simple. Meanwhile, I saw a group of six kids coming towards me from my left all wanting a sucker.

Seeing them and knowing I didn't have enough, I prayed to God under my breath and asked him to please multiply these suckers so I could give them to these kids. I passed out my last one, slightly scared to look in my bag and have my eyes see what I knew was true. I slowly looked down, and to my surprise there was one sucker. So I reached down, pulled it out and gave it to the child, delighting in the small but genuine smile. I dug in my bag a little more just to see if there was any hiding, and surprised I found another sucker so I gave it to the next child, once again enjoying another smile. I continued with a glimmer of hope, carefully digging around in my bag, hoping to find another but still doubting that I'd find one. Then again, I found another sucker. Now excited, I gave it to the next child, and this continued. To my surprise, God provided just enough suckers for each child to get one. Thank you, God, for caring so much about the small things in life. And allowing me to witness a miracle in the midst of my doubting. Praise be to God!

Thinklers 2 & 3



Riverview Breezes

Elsie Gingerich

- Congratulations to Seth and Ulrika Miller with the birth of a daughter, Yuna Katrine born November 25, 2023.
- Grace Lambright and Alaina Miller were baptized Sunday morning, January 28.
- Our condolences to Brenda Yoder whose father, Clair Strite, died January 24.
- Mitch Miller traveled to India for knee surgery and is back home recovering.
- Joe and Rhoda Byler and Briana went on an exploratory trip to Guinea Bissau, West Africa for possible outreaches for Rosedale International.
- The Youth served a Chipotle meal as a fundraiser for a mission trip to Nicaragua next December.
- Glen and Elsie Gingerich, Jerry and Ruby Bontrager, and Kermit and Mary Weaver attended the funeral of Ella June Miller, aunt of Glen and Ruby in eastern Kentucky.
- Al Jones had emergency open heart surgery with quadruple by-pass and is recovering well.
- Marzella Zook is spending the winter in Sarasota with her family. Both of our Deacons were also in Sarasota when she was hospitalized for a kidney stone. That's a God thing.
- Floyd Miller had a successful surgery on his shoulder.

Thinkler TWOgethers

1. Arm and ...
2. Bed and ...
3. Cookies and ...
4. Cheese and ...
5. Jacob and ...
6. Samson and ...

Heavenly Intervention

Ed Miller

In the year 2006, Marilyn and I wanted to raise our garage roof. The garage is a separate building, not attached to the house. The garage door was so low that there was not enough room to put a power door opener. The permit was approved. My brother-in-law and I had cut the roof loose and jacked it up to about the right height. Something moved and the roof fell back down to the place it was. We looked at it to see what had happened. Then we went outside to decide what to do. The wall shifted and the whole building came down hard! Why it stopped and waited until we were out, to come down only God knows. If it had come down while we were inside, we would not have survived. It came down hard. It was a miracle of God.

Note from the Publication Team

Stephanie H. Rachel B. Elsie G. Ruby B.

We received so many wonderful testimonies on the topic of miracles that they didn't all fit in this publication. The rest will be published next quarter. If you ever have a testimony you would like to share with the church we welcome your submissions. Send an email to lddairy@gmail.com or drop a note in any of our mailboxes.

Florida Activities



Dan & Deb Murphy met up with Lynn & Doreen Hershberger one early morning in February for shelling and shark tooth hunting.

Answers & Permissions

Position Puzzle - P. 4, 6. 1. A touching moment. 2. Singing in the rain. 3. Bananas over you.

Riddle me this - P. 4. Corn on the cob.

TWOgethers - P. 7 1. Hammer. 2. Breakfast. 3. Cream. 4. Crackers. 5. Essau. 6. Delilah.

Who Am I? P. 5 - Joshua Holman.

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Photo credit for Baby Dedication & Special Music - Rachel Burkholder

All scenic, and floral photos were taken by Stephanie Hershberger unless otherwise noted.

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The Children's Page
by
Deb Murphy

"Let the children come to me." Matthew 19:14

At seven years of age my granddaughter's first eye teeth had not come in. The dentist said there was no sign of them and they probably never would. Hadassah started praying and asking for prayer that her teeth would come...and they did! She was able to go to church and testify to the goodness of Yahweh in her life.

This month, I thought we could all color a picture. When you are done, put them in my mailbox. When I come back in March I will tape them all together on the wall as a sign of us all working together to make something beautiful! It is like when we all pray together, beautiful things happen.

