Stories MADE NEW

Fall 2026 Volume 10

Vision

To bring young women who are struggling into fulfillment and purpose in **Jesus Christ.**

Mission

To help young women work through life-dominating challenges.

To provide loving nurture, discipleship, and care.

To assist in learning the value of self- discipline and intentional living in a structured family-like setting.

To inspire a vision for and an understanding of the joy of serving others.

FAITH

Leroy Smucker, Board Chairman

Faith stands uniquely apart from all of the other Christian graces. It is foundational. Everything else in the Christian life is built upon faith—faith in a God who knows absolutely everything and loves unconditionally. Faith is trusting God fully, and completely believing His promises; relying on His character as being all that He says He is, and living in obedience to Him, based on that kind of trust.

Remember Noah? He set an amazing example for us. God told him to build an ark, with no rain in sight. God recognized his obedience as faith and he *"became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith"* (Heb. 11:7).

It goes on to say, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of grace" (Heb. 12:1-2).

A significant part of the life of faith is learning to overcome doubt. Doubt is something we all face, and it can be a challenging barrier in our faith journey. But honest doubt is not bad because it provides new opportunities for God to reveal Himself to us. Doubt becomes destructive when it is rooted in rebellion toward God, like the serpent Satan in the garden of Eden when he questioned, "Yeah, hath God said?"

The Bible encourages us to overcome our doubt through prayer, Scripture reading, and meditating on God's promises, recognizing that doubt is a normal part of our human experience. We can help each other by *"exhorting one another: and so much the more, as [we] see the day [of Christ's return] approaching"* Heb 10:25) This kind of support helps us to rely on God's strength to bring clarity and hope in times of uncertainty.

"And the Lord is faithful who shall establish you and keep you from evil" (2 Thes. 3:3).

"Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more."



Stories Made New exists especially for young women who support the 1963 Mennonite Confession of Faith.

We desire to see these young women brought into spiritual freedom and life in Christ Jesus.

Please pray for this ministry within our Anabaptist community!

Stories Made New operates under a Board of Directors and an advisory committee. Names and affiliations are listed on the back page.

Healthy Family Systems

Ernest & Yvonne Witmer, Administrators



We mentioned last time that no family system is perfect. “I’m not okay—you’re not okay, but that’s okay.” My family system has some glitches in it, yours does too, and so we’re all in this predicament together. Furthermore, an honest acknowledgement of this condition is the only way forward. However, this kind of healthy acknowledgement is neither self-condemning nor self-condoning. In fact, it’s not self-conscious at all. Yet such self-forgetfulness can only come about as the children’s song puts it, *“Jesus first, ourselves last, and others in between.”*

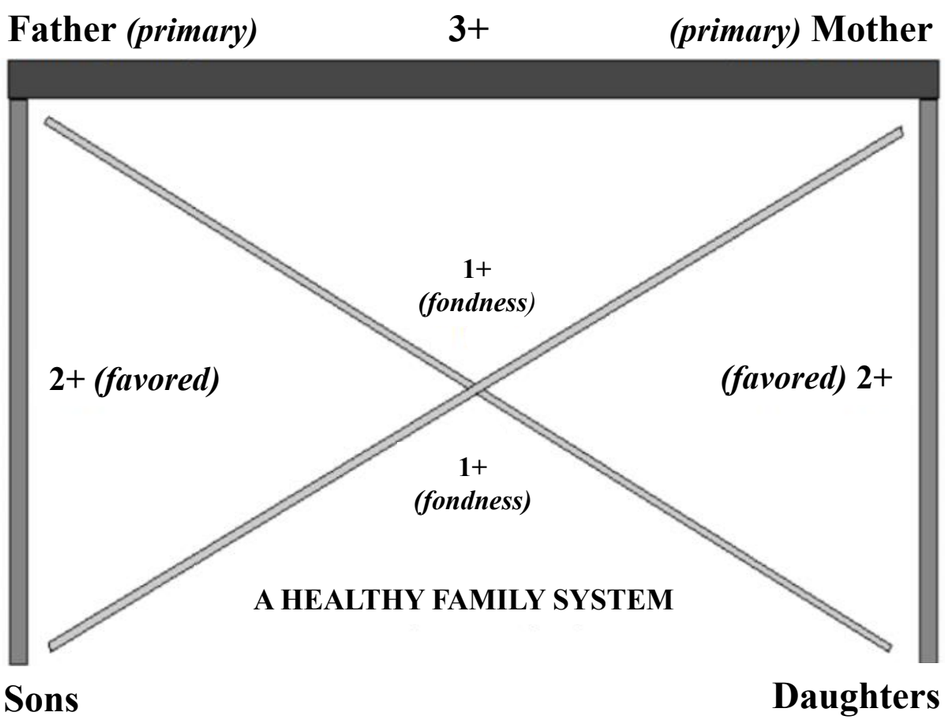
We also talked about how healthy family systems are fascinating to observe—better yet, to actually experience! I remember years ago when a young husband/father was staying in our home for a bit, and how fascinated he was when my wife and I would talk about difficult things with our children. One day he said, *“Others have tried to tell me how to do this, but I have learned more just watching you all live it.”*

Last time we also recognized how tragedy can strike unexpectedly. In our family it involved the sudden death of my wife—the mother of our five children. In other families it may involve betrayal and unfaithfulness, or the confusion of emotional and spiritual abuse, or the calamity of divorce between spouses or between children and their parents. These trials not only test our families but shape them as well. We are never the same again! But whether we are better or worse depends on if our family systems are built upon the solid rock of Jesus Christ, or on the shaky sands of our current culture.

Whatever the case, there is always a way forward through the maze of our circumstances—not just for us, but for everyone! And no matter what else may be involved, fully TRUSTING God is the key, and truly LOVING each other will surely follow—in that order. Faith in God is the most sensible thing if we are trusting the true God and not some caricature of Him. Our faith will fail us if we are trusting our own manmade image of God, or some figment of such that has been handed to us from others. Real love for others always follows those who trust God for WHO He truly is. There is no such thing as an actual atheist, but only those who are atheistic towards a god who doesn’t exist anyway—a caricature of God. If these “atheists” could know Him as He truly is, they would worship Him forever!

Last time we also discussed the multiplied influences of different family systems coming together in a marriage or remarriage. Each of these impact who we are and how we function within them. Part of the honor we have in working with the brave young women who come to live with us here at Stories Made New is that we also get to know their families! As parents we all know the vulnerability of encouraging our children to pursue life on their own, to never hesitate to seek input from other life-giving people, and for them not to feel compelled to protect us as their parents in any way. You see, every one of us are personally responsible before God, not only to pursue life, but to eschew death. So, if there are death-producing dynamics within our family systems, we want them rooted out!

In this graphic, we see illustrated how the strongest relationship in the family system is the father-mother/husband-wife relationship. It’s what Dr. Marlin Howe, in his Hope for the Family series, calls a 3+ relationship. It’s the strongest/most intimate of all relationships! Everything else in the family system hinges on the strength and intimacy of this most significant of all the family relationships. If the marriage is strong and healthy, the children will grow up into that same sense of emotional health and spiritual wellbeing. This relationship is *primary*.



The 2nd strongest relationship in the healthy family is the father-son/mother-daughter relationship. These are **2+** relationships. They are *favored*—not favorite—but favored in the sense of natural favorability. Little boys want to grow up to be like their dads, and little girls like their mamas. Little girls tend to play “mom” and boys tend to be “dad” in their playing.

The 3rd strongest relationship in the family system is the father-daughter/ mother-son relationship. These are relationships of *fondness*. They are **1+** relationships. This fondness is born out of watching mom and dad relate. Boys notice the fondness dad has for mom, and girls notice how fond mom is of dad. Furthermore, when they grow bigger, boys look forward to having a lady like their mom in their lives, and girls look forward to marrying a dude like their dad—that is, if the family system is healthy.

But if things are not healthy, then all bets are off and family outcomes are about as predictable as a bouncing football. The systemic health of the family gets out of whack, and a bunch of dysfunctional possibilities can occur. These can include a confusion of sexual orientations, personality disorders, emotional, sexual, physical, and substance abuse, parental divorce, mental illness, or criminality.

Please! Let’s all move towards health in our families! Let’s not be too proud to recognize our own unhealth when we need to. Our world cries out for healthy families modeling peace and harmony within our Creator’s design; strong & intimate marriages, producing strong and healthy children, bringing glory to God, and being a blessing to our communities and churches!

My Beautiful Father's Face – Melanie

One evening, amidst my anorexic journey, while resting my weary body against the backboard of my bed, thoughts and fears were swarming in my head. I took a deep breath and slowly exhaled. A smile began to creep across my face. This was the moment I was looking forward to… the very moment I could spend time with Jesus. I slowly closed my eyes. I let the image of Jesus' face drift into my mind. I saw a face looking down at me. It wasn't a face you'd normally see. No, this face was so bright it was hard to see it clearly. I could feel the brightness and love radiate towards me. The eyes were kind and gentle. The smile from this face engulfed the room with light. Yes, this was the image I was longing to see. I slowly lifted my eyes upward to meet the gaze of my beautiful Father.

At that very moment, some shame crept in. How could I look into those pure eyes when I am so unworthy and unclean? My eyes drift downward and I slowly hang my head. But some verses that tell me of his love and his forgiveness pop into my mind. At that moment I hear something. A soft gentle voice speaks, *"I love you."* Me? I ask in a quivering voice. *"Yes, you!"* The voice is so kind that tears began to well up in my eyes. Thoughts began to race in my mind. Me, Lord? How? How can you love this broken mess? But I can feel his warm gaze upon me beckoning me to believe him. I take a deep breath. *Yes, I will believe you.* I slowly lift my eyes upward again. I meet his eyes and feel the warmness on my face. Ah, yes, this is the Father I was getting to know. The one who totally loves me, despite my sin and shame. I relax, letting his love shine into my wounded soul. Tears are pouring down my face, but inside I feel at peace and at rest.

Then I hear a soft whisper, *"Come and Dine."* My heart stops. I immediately lower my head and look downward. Thoughts begin to swirl around in my head again. Oh no! I can't. What if I eat too many calories, and what if I get fat? Torn by this request I long to feel that peace and rest I had just moments before. I hear his beckoning call again, *"Come and dine with me."* I slowly lift my head and look into those pleading eyes. In a shaky voice I say, "What if I get fat? What if I gain weight?" Quietly I can hear him say in a kind and humble voice, *"One thing thou lackest, [give up your size and weight] and you will have treasures in heaven and come, take up your cross and follow me. Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord."*

The Amplified version says, *"His master said to Him, 'Well done, you upright* (honorable and admirable*) and faithful servant. You have been faithful and trustworthy over a little. I will put you in charge of much. Enter into and share the joy* (delight, the blessedness) *which your Master enjoys.'"* Matthew 25:23, Luke 19:11

"And Jesus rebuking him, loved him, and said unto him, 'You lack one thing, go and sell all you have and give (the money) *to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven; and come and accompany me* (walking the same road that I walk). Mark 10:21, Luke 18:18.



Christmas Open House and Silent Auction

Saturday, December 5, 2026 3:00—7:00

theme baskets, candies & breads, inspirational plaques, etc

Stories MADE NEW

154 E. Farmersville Road
Ephrata, PA 17522



We thank God for

- Resident ladies with a beautiful hunger for Jesus and the Holy Spirit's power in their lives.
- Vibrant, humble staff loving each other and leaning hard on Jesus.
- Monica graduating in November.
- The Summitview youth group helping with our flowerbeds.
- Donated pork, and lots of sweet corn, green beans, limas, and potatoes put up from our garden.

Please ask God for

- Spiritual guidance for the mentors, counselors, and administrators as they care for the young ladies.
- Christmas travel as ladies spend time with their families.
- Issuing of permits for phase 2 of the remodeling project.
- Funding of phase 2 remodeling for three more bedrooms on the third floor, changes required for re-zoning, and upgrading old equipment.

Learn more at: www.storiesmadenew.org

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Make checks payable to

STORIES MADE NEW

154 E. Farmersville Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522

Also to give, go to: www.storiesmadenew.org/give

Tax-deductible receipts will be sent upon request.

Monthly Operating Budget

$30,000

$10,000 tuition income
$2500 crafts & counseling services

The deficit is covered by your generous donations.

Funds still needed to cover updates and remodeling costs

$77,000

In-kind donations of labor and materials also accepted