



“... God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .”

Galatians 6:14

AUGUST 2006

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AUGUST 2006

Purpose of CALVARY MESSENGER is
 To propagate sound Biblical doctrine;
 To stimulate a deeper study of God's Word;
 To anchor and fortify the faith of Christians;
 To point lost and dying souls to Christ the Saviour;
 To welcome prodigals back to the fold and family of God;
 And to help defeated Christians find victory in Christ Jesus.

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The Roses are Fading

Craig Eicher · Butler, IN

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15)

The Unbeliever’s Perspective

The roses are fading on the rose bush
of life,
Slowly losing their fragrance and cheer.
They age as they page thro’ life’s book
of strife,
A Divine Artist paints a picture quite
dear.

Roses are fading; their colors leach off,
They wilt as they wither away.
Their petals, once lovely and silky and
soft,
Are now tattered at the end of the day.

Roses are fading and people fade too,
Their lives as a tale that is told.
Their spirits seem lovely in color and hue,
But their bodies grow brittle and old.

Roses are fading, so what is the use?
Our time here at best is but brief.
Our steps here get shaky; our footing
grows loose,
When death comes it seems a relief!

The Christian’s Perspective

Yes, roses are fading, but it’s part of
God’s plan,
A loving Father looks over us all.
His goal for us isn’t earth, but a much
better land,
Know this when you face death’s dark
maw.

Roses are fading, but they’ll bloom again,
For the winter of life is soon o’er.
With colors most vibrant and petals
like gems,
Transplanted on a heavenly shore.

Roses are fading, but the soul never dies,
It sings as it slips from this world.
The body no longer in weariness sighs,
As the glories of heaven unfurl.

Roses are fading on the rose bush of life,
Slowly losing their fragrance of cheer.
They age as they page through life’s book
of strife.
A Divine Artist paints a picture so dear!

[Editor’s note: This poem brought comfort to Edward and Doris (Miller) Hochstetler when Craig presented it to them during Doris’s terminal illness.

Doris’s obituary appeared in Calvary Messenger, February, 2006.] 

A Concern from April, 2004

Cause for Concern

At the 2004 annual ministers' meetings held at Cold Spring Mennonite Church at Abbeville, SC, our Bishop Committee issued a statement identifying several areas of need. Here is #5 on that list:

"From the founding of this constituency there has been a solid emphasis on the principle and practice of the Christian woman's headship veiling. We believe there is still solidarity among us on the principle. The practice, however, seems to find itself under constant challenge.

"One of the challenges is the way the veiling is worn outside of worship services. We are troubled by the growing number of variations in the practice for everyday usage that are not consistent with the way we expect its practice at worship services. We are deeply concerned that if we allow this inconsistency to continue unchecked, it will seriously erode both the principle and practice. We believe that proper Biblical teaching and effective enforcement by us undershepherds are called for here and now to stem the tide and safeguard this practice.

"Therefore, we strongly urge that we all take our pastoral responsibility in teaching and admonishing on this important principle and where necessary, prescribing the type and size of the veiling that is consistent with what we understand the Scriptures to teach."

A Good Understanding

I appreciate the committee's statement. This statement, however, raises practical questions: Have we in our congregations done things differently in the two years since it was given? It is rather easy to think that if we simply do whatever we've been doing—that will suffice.

Some people think they are committed to biblical Christianity but pay little heed to the practical aspects of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, not to mention 1 Timothy 2:9-12 and 1 Peter 3:3-6. These Scriptures, I believe, indicate that some well-meaning persons tend to disregard scriptural practice in matters of headship, of dress and of personal ornamentation. Because of this tendency the Holy Spirit prompted Paul and Peter to write what they did.

The woman who loves the Lord

and conscientiously obeys these teachings is given protection. (1 Cor. 11:10) If she doesn't do so, she exposes herself to spiritual hazards one of which is the lustful gaze of some men. By being modest in spirit and in dress, her part of the potential for offense is gone.

I am grateful for those good sisters who mean to obey the Lord by wearing the woman's headship veiling. Some sisters, however, seem to make interpretation mostly by what they see as important. They seem less willing to critically evaluate their practice by their brothers' and sisters' consciences—and the Scriptures. They seem to say, "This is how I've decided to do it, and it is good enough!" I'm too distrustful of human nature to settle for that convenient formula. I believe something that is linked to brotherhood conscience is needed. It is necessary to express this principle as a group or we will almost certainly do it poorly.

I can not recall of any group who has borne consistent testimony to these principles, without some commitment to group standards. It seems to work for a while in some situations, but not for the longer term. Why not? I think it's related to the fact that women and men see things differently, and that women tend to pay closer attention to their personal

attractiveness than men do.

A Misunderstanding

A reader of *Keepers at Home* (Summer, 2006) tells about several experiences she had. She and her husband became convinced that she should wear a head covering. At her husband's suggestion, she inquired about it from one who wore one. The lady was delighted at the seeker's interest until she asked her for a pattern. "Oh, you couldn't wear *ours!*" she exclaimed. She explained that her covering identified her with her church and suggested that the seeker wear some sort of scarf. That presented a problem because the inquirer's husband said a scarf looked like his wife was getting ready to do some serious cleaning. Some time later she found a covering that she could buy and wore it for a while. But she was told by a different lady that it identified her with yet another church group and that she should not wear it.

Thus it happened that that brave sister came up with her own pattern. She is blessed by wearing it and has been sharing her pattern with others ever since. It is sad that rigid emphasis on uniformity apparently resulted in the veiling/covering becoming chiefly part of a church uniform, at least in the minds of some of its members.

Standing on the Scriptures

While God intends individual Christians to display Gospel holiness, the Good Shepherd yearns for the whole flock of God. Christians are generally addressed with plural terms in the Scriptures.

While I grant that the details in these matters can become too minute and too many, it seems to me that it must have been undertaken with too few specific guidelines and lack of uniformity when the principle disappears from the practice. For example, notice how the covering can shrink and shrink—and is still called “a veiling” or “a covering.”

I believe men and women can come to a balanced interpretation of this issue if both are committed to the principles at stake. When fathers teach it in their homes, when ministers teach it in church, and when individuals embrace the principle and the practice in their daily lives, God’s name is honored.

The Holy Spirit who gave His Word guides His people in the path of clear testimony.

Are you finding ways in your family and in your congregation of expressing these principles joyfully and consistently, or are your veilings difficult to identify as coverings?

Does the concern the Bishop Committee expressed in 2004 resonate with you? If so, what can we ministers do about it? Let us seek the Lord’s direction for this need. Surely many of our members will support us, their servant/leaders, as we seek to lead in faithfulness to God’s Word in these matters.

Faithlessness destroys hope and brings despair. God in His grace gives us courage. Let us take heart and take action!

Let us hear from you readers. I welcome Reader Response with practical counsel about these concerns. To God be the glory! —PLM 



Slang seems to be language stripped down to get more speed with less horsepower.

Remember Lot's Wife

Aaron Lapp · Kinzers, PA

Jesus once said, “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32). As one of the shorter verses of the Bible it is indeed a “terse verse.” It is free of superfluous words, yet it expresses truth in a polished way.

Since the husband is to be the savior of the body, as Paul states it in Ephesians 5: 23, we shall also consider Lot’s wife’s husband! In other words—Lot himself. We shall first consider Lot’s life, then Lot’s strife, and then Lot’s wife.

1. Lot’s life.

Lot lived in the shadow of his uncle Abraham. Lot was a coat-tails opportunist, not a man of good principles. His uncle Abraham was purpose-driven. Lot was privileged to go with him and grow wealthy. Yet, he yearned for significance of his own.

Lot’s life was consumer-driven. He may well have profited even more in the shadow of his rich uncle had he emulated his uncle’s faith in God. But Lot’s eyes were on things temporal. And from there it was but a short step to the worldly and power-driven life.

Lot’s choices were earthly, worldly, and selfish. Lot chose the best land, the well-watered plains. And perhaps the ulterior motive of seeking his fortune in Sodom was also present—perhaps because of the convenience of marketing his cattle in the metropolis of Sodom and its suburbs.

Eventually Lot chose to move into Sodom itself. He seems to have succeeded in being an urban man of reputation, as he rose in city politics, inasmuch as he occupied a position of “sitting in the gate” (Genesis 19:1).

2. Lot’s strife

Lot’s move toward Sodom was precipitated by strife between Lot’s herdsmen and Uncle Abraham’s herdsmen. Abraham had rightly said there should be no strife between them “for we be brethren.” Abraham invited Lot to choose land first. Lot chose the well-watered plain, “And Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, and journeyed eastward.”

God’s earliest call for Abraham to move came when he lived in far-away, eastern lands. Abraham was always blessed of God whenever he

went westward. It was the beginning of a long journey of faith for God's people to the land of promise, to Asia Minor, to Europe, and on to America and the New World. Eventually missionaries went westward again to Japan, to China, and elsewhere in the Far East. God's faith movement has often been westward ever since faith was established as the means of pleasing God.

Lot went *east*, but Abraham, by God's providence, went *west*. For Abraham, avoiding strife became a guiding principle in pursuit of God's larger purposes. But Lot's strife, indirect as it was, became the catalyst for eastward movement that dead-ended in Sodom.

3. Lot's Wife

In the Bible, Jesus' words call us to "Remember Lot's wife." But this poor woman was a victim of circumstances. She wouldn't have been in Sodom if husband Lot hadn't taken her there. Despite the unfavorable circumstances, God still held her accountable for her simple failure to heed His command not to look back. One "little" disobedience caused her immediate death.

Remember Lot's wife. Don't look back on the sins you lived in nor the places at which you corrupted your

pre-saved life.

Remember Lot's wife. Don't give in to curiosity even if the destruction of sinful places beckons you toward sinful off-limits.

Remember Lot's wife. Don't look back to the old sinful paths of the past. The larger temptation in looking back is that then one might be lured back. Mankind always tends to go in the direction they look.

Remember Lot's wife. Don't look back for direction. Our focus is looking unto Jesus. Our view finder for the picture of our lives is God's Word.

Jesus also said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Looking back into the old life, wishing for "the cucumbers and leeks of Egypt," is such a serious distraction that Jesus judges it as a disqualification for the kingdom of God.

The Bottom Line is that remembering Lot's wife is a warning how not to escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (1 Peter 1:4). Even though we may find ourselves to be in unfortunate circumstances by someone else's wrong choices, we are still responsible for our own choices.



And What of Mary?

José Hernandez · Dominican Republic

The following are thoughts taken from a sermon given at the Latin American ministers' meeting, May 24, 2005, at Chimaltenango, Guatemala. Translated by Charles Mast.

But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

This title was a surprise to me. I have never heard a message "What of Mary?" The Bible has very few verses that tell about Mary's place, but I believe there are enough that we can understand who she is.

Mary was human like all of us. But she was called of God to be the mother of the Lord, being a virgin, because she found favor with God (Luke 1:26-35, 38). Mary believed in the Word of God. When God spoke to her, she answered, "Be it unto me according thy word." Mary was humble. Her decision was to believe the message of the angel.

Once when the Pharisees interrogated Jesus and claimed to be children of Abraham, Jesus answered, "Abraham desired to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad."

The Pharisees told Him that He was not even fifty years old, how

could He say that Abraham saw His day? Jesus answered them, "Before Abraham was, I am." Brethren, here is a mystery. Was Christ older than Mary, His mother?

Mary was the instrument used to incarnate the one who would redeem His brethren. She was the mother of the Lord Jesus, to fulfill what the Scriptures said: that He would be like unto His brethren (Hebrews 2:14-17). Christ, the second person of the holy Trinity, became a man.

Once there was an expert scientist who investigated many things. One day he was walking along a road when he saw a group of ants that had found a lump of sugar. They were trying to move it toward their house, but it was very large and the ants could not move it. Out of curiosity, the scientist tried to help the ants move the lump to their house, but the ants all fled, leaving the lump of sugar behind. He concluded that the only way he could help the ants would be to become one of them.

Brethren, had God not become flesh (in the man Christ Jesus), absolutely no one could draw near to

Him. Moses was the closest to God of all men, but when he asked God to show him His face, God said, "There shall no man see me and live" (Exodus 33:20). Jesus became like unto His brethren through Mary, who became mother to the second person of the Trinity. She had a relationship of consanguinity with her Son. She gave Him what all mothers give their children. There was a likeness between Christ and Mary, since she gave Him his biological heredity, and since that was the source of His human flesh.

What role does Mary serve? What are the privileges and honor given to her by God, the angel Gabriel, and Elizabeth? We have no desire to deny her that which the Scripture assigns to her. But she is not co-redeemer with Christ for our salvation. She never thought she was more than a servant. She said to the angel, "Be it unto me according to thy word." She was humble and willing to carry out the assignment God had given to her.

When the shepherds reported the message of the angel and heavenly host, Mary pondered them in her heart. At the marriage feast, Mary told Jesus that they had no more wine. When He answered her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" ["Dear woman, why do you involve me?"

NIV], she told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do. There is no evidence that she thought she was equal to Christ. Whatever Jesus had to say was valuable to her.

What then does the Bible teach about Mary's virginity? I know the Catholic church well and their teaching that Mary remained always a virgin.

The Bible says that Joseph knew her not until she brought forth her firstborn son, but Mary and Joseph had children after that. We know the names of four brothers (Mark 6:3) and that Jesus also had sisters. Once when Jesus was teaching, His mother and brethren came to see Him. He then told His disciples that His mother and siblings are those who hear the Word of God and do it. But there was a time when Jesus' brothers did not believe on Him (John 7:3-5).

The doctrine of the virginity of Mary is important to Catholics, because it includes the idea that Mary serves as co-redeemer with Christ. They teach that we should pray to her as a goddess, since she is divine. They also teach that we should love her with more fervor and devotion, and that we should have more confidence in her than in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. But the Bible says: "*Neither is there*

salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)—which is Jesus.

Catholics also teach that when Christ was crucified, He went through the "bitter street," and that there He met His mother, who told Him, "My son, where are you going, my soul?"

They say He answered, "I am going to Calvary, my mother, my soul."

And she said, "Turn back, my son; go back to the holy house."

He answered, "I cannot do it, my mother, my soul, because I have to carry out what the eternal Father commands."

Then she halted and said, "Come out, widows and wives that know about pain and sorrow; help us cry for my redeemer son who will die on the cross to give us life and light."

If it is true that Mary was crying, it is also true that others were crying, because when Jesus was on the way to Calvary, He said, "*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children*" (Luke 23:28).

Catholics also teach that Mary can save, and that Catholics should say the Lord's Prayer fifty times and repeat the "Ave Maria" fifty times, so she serves them as godparent in the final judgment.

They believe that Mary has the

powers of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. Since 1891, Catholics teach that Mary visits purgatory every Saturday to free certain privileged souls. But the Bible says that between the place where Abraham and Lazarus were in bliss and the place where the rich man was in torments, a great gulf was fixed, and that no one can pass between them (Luke 16:25,26).

The glorification of Mary was unknown in the apostolic church. They knew Mary as blessed, but only Christ was known as Savior (John 17:3). Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Jesus' brothers were present in the upper room with those who waited for the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. They are named last (Acts 1:13, 14), which indicates that she held no special honor among them.

We ought to honor Mary for her place in bringing Jesus into the world. She was humble in doing what He said. She would be offended for the abominable and idolatrous insult that Mary-worship has produced. God commanded that we have no other gods before Him (Exodus 20:1-6). And Jesus said that no one can come to the Father but by Him (John 14:6).

[From *The Harvest Call, April and May, 2006. Used by permission.*]



Winsome Christians

Marvin Eicher · Freeport, OH

Hebrews 7:26 describes Jesus as “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” In His time on earth, Jesus lived such a holy life that He never committed one wrong. Yet notice what we read about Him in the Gospels, “Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him” (Luke 15:1).

How could this be? Does not a “holy man” usually repel sinners rather than attracting them? An even greater question that begs an answer is this: How could Jesus associate with these people and still maintain His perfect sinlessness?

The answer is found in the love of God, a love so profound that it is incomprehensible to the natural mind. Though Jesus associated with sinful men, He had no interest in partaking of their sin. Rather, He abhorred sin and its terrible effects on people, and He labored to help them as a physician ministers among the sick and dying—a great Physician with an intense love. That love drew people to Jesus as bees are drawn to flowers.

Christians may have the same

winsomeness. It is easy to forget that God’s children should be so kind and gracious that other people love to be around them. For good reason we want to avoid defilement, so we tend to shun both the sin and the sinner. Of course, we do not want to expose ourselves to needless temptation. But we must beware of another extreme. We are not so “holy” that we must constantly keep our distance from sinners to avoid contamination. The Pharisees had that attitude, and other people could feel it. [As disease germs “bounce off” when they contact a healthy body, so a sinful suggestion is repelled by a healthy Christian. When that happens, a healthy body builds immunity. —PLM]

Peter and John seem to have learned and radiated something of Jesus’ attitude, for the Jewish leaders “took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.” We need to spend much time with Jesus, learning from Him and becoming more and more like Him. Then as we let Him love others through us, we can draw our fellow men to Jesus Christ and eternal life. 

marriages

May the homes established by these marriages be little substations of heaven, where God reigns and His blessings flow.

Byler-Eichorn

Bro. Timothy, son of Louis and Darlene Byler, Milverton, ON, and Sis. Eleanor, daughter of Enoch and Leanna Eichorn, Plain City, OH, at United Bethel Church for Canaan Fellowship Church on June 10, 2006, by Nelson Beachy.

Gingerich-Miller

Bro. Kendall, son of Phil and Ruth Ann Gingerich, Plain City, OH, and Sis. Diane, daughter of Vernon and Alice Miller, London, OH, at United Bethel Church for Canaan Fellowship Church on April 15, 2006, by Nelson Beachy.

Miller-Miller

Bro. Loren, son of Jerry and Neoma Miller, Eden Valley, MN, and Sis. Mandy, daughter of Marvin and Neva Miller, Grove City, MN, at Evangelical Free Church for Believers Fellowship on June 10, 2006, by Melvin Beiler.

Nissley-Yoder

Bro. D. Philip, son of Mary and the late David Nissley, Paradise, PA, and Sis. Shelly, daughter of Gerald and Marian Yoder, Kenora, Ontario, at Knox United Church for Believers Fellowship, Kenora, on June 16, 2006, by Darrell Nisly.

Stoltzfus-Yutz

Bro. Lamar, son of Steve and Mary Etta Stoltzfus, Kennedyville, MD, and Sis. Marcia, daughter of Phil and Lois Yutz, Hutchinson, KS, at Yoder Mennonite Church for Cedar Crest A.M. Church, on June 10, 2006, by Steve Stoltzfus.

Strubhar-Miller

Bro. Carl, son of Ernest and Ruth Strubhar, Perkins, OK, and Sis. Lillian, daughter of Perry and Linda Miller, Weatherford, OK, at Zion A.M. Church, on June 10, 2006, by Ernest Strubhar.

Wagler-Schmidt

Bro. Philip, son of Murray and Miriam Wagler, Millbank, ON, and Sis. Sheila, daughter of Ronald and Elizabeth Schmidt, Brunner, ON, at Cedar Grove A.M. Church, on June 3, 2006, by Arthur Gerber.

Happy laughter and family voices in the home
will keep more children off the streets at night
than will the **STRICTEST CURFEW.**

cradle roll

The children which the Lord hath graciously given . . . Genesis 33:5

Beiler, Marcus John and Joanna (Kurtz), Christiana, PA, first child and son, Josiah Shane, June 6, 2006.

Byler, Steve and Dianne (Yoder), Catlett, VA, second child and son, Sheldon LeRoy, March 26, 2006.

Fisher, Sam and Christina (Miller), Russellville, KY, third child, second son, Carson Derek, June 4, 2006.

Gingerich, Wilbur and LeAnn (Schrock), Arthur, IL, fourth child, third son, Jordan Wayne, June 7, 2006.

Hostetler, Levi and Elizabeth (Yoder), Shreve, OH, fifth child, third dau., Abigail Nancy, May 6, 2006.

Hostetler, Marvin and Karen (Miller), McVeytown, PA, first child and son, Derek Benjamin, June 15, 2006.

Keim, Matthew and Ruth (Stutzman), Yoder, KS, second child, first son, Logan Matthew, June 24, 2006.

Kensinger, Aaron and Melody (Hochstetler), Minerva, OH, third child, second dau., Cassandra Leigh, May 9, 2006.

Mast, Aaron and Kathy (Gaines), Caneyville, KY, fourth child (one deceased), second son, Josiah Lee, May 25, 2006.

Mast, Brian and Mary Jane (King), Crossville, TN, second child, first son, Gerrell Lavon, May 28, 2006.

Miller, Anthony and Amy (Overholt), Minerva, OH, third child, first dau., Lydia Elise, April 25, 2006.

Miller, Gerald and Kathy (Burkholder) fourth and fifth children, twins, third and fourth sons, André Lane and Alex Trenton, May 26, 2006.

Miller, Merle and Monica (Miller), Eden Valley, MN, fourth child, third son, Ervin Ray, May 2, 2006.

Miller, Virgil and Matilda (Nissley), Freeport, OH, second child, first son, Washington Charles, May 30, 2006.

Peachy, Raymond and Michelle (Miller), Lewisburg, PA, third child, second son, Ryan David, June 2, 2006.

Schlabach, Ervin and Rosalyn (Hershberger), Plain City, OH, third child and dau., Jalayna Chantel, March 29, 2006.

Sensenig, Scott and Wanda (Schrock), Shipshewana, IN, fifth child, third son (one son deceased), Denver Scott, June 10, 2006.

Stoltzfus, Wilmer and Thelma (King), Clarkson, KY, eighth child, fourth son, Sheldon Lamar, June 16, 2006.

Yoder, Gary and Linda (Swartzentru-ber), Montezuma, GA, second child and son, Brandon Lee, April 23, 2006.

Yoder, Jonathan and Brenda (Stauffer), Centreville, MI, third child, second dau., Megan Elise, May 19, 2006.

Yoder, Joshua and Mary Ann (Yoder), Clarkson, KY, second child, first son, Judson Paul, June 25, 2006.

ordinations

Bro. David Beiler, 41, was ordained to the office of minister at Shekinah Christian Fellowship, Middleburg, PA, on Jan. 8, 2006. Preordination messages were brought by Jonathan Stoltzfus.

The charge was given by Ray Byers, assisted by Jonathan Stoltzfus. Also in the lot were Edwin Beiler and Nathan Stoltzfus.

obituaries

King, Lydia L., 91, from Ronks, PA, died at Fairmont Home, June 2, 2006. She was born March 23, 1915, daughter of the late David L. and Katie (Lapp) King in Leacock Twp.

She was a member of Weavertown A.M. Church.

She is survived by 31 nephews and nieces. Also surviving is one brother, Abram L. King and four sisters: Barbara Ebersole, with whom she resided; Fannie King, Honeybrook; Savilla Zook, Paradise; and Susie Kauffman, Loysville, PA..

She was preceded in death by two

Bro. Marlin Miller, 39, was ordained to the office of deacon at Living Word Fellowship, Fredericksburg, OH, Feb. 19, 2006. Preordination messages were given by Ivan Lapp.

The charge was given by Alvin Mast, assisted by Willis Yoder and David Fisher. Sharing the lot was Randy Kandel.

May the grace of God be upon our brothers as they minister faithfully. Let us pray for them.

brothers: Isaac and Christian King and one sister, Annie King.

Funeral services were held at Weaver-town Church June 5, with John U. Lapp, Norman Kauffman and Raymond King serving. Burial was in the Weavertown Cemetery.

• • • • •

Nisly, Mary, 86, died June 26, 2006, at Mennonite Manor, Hutchinson, KS. She was born July 10, 1919, daughter of the late Samuel A. and Delila (Beiler) Nisly in rural Hutchinson, KS.

She was a devoted member of Center A.M. Church. She was a lifetime

Hutchinson resident and worked in Grace Hospital as a nurse's aide for 24 years and at Mennonite Manor 18 years.

Survivors include three brothers: Melvin, Menno and John, all of Hutchinson; three sisters: Amanda Yoder, Emma Stutzman, and Katie Helmuth, all of Hutchinson; and a sister-in-law, Ellen Nisly, Hutchinson, and many nieces,

nephews and friends.

She was preceded in death by a brother, Jonas Nisly and a sister, Rebecca Bontrager.

Funeral services were held at Center Church on June 29, with David Yoder, John Otto, PA, and David L. Miller serving. LaVerne Miller conducted the committal at the burial in the West Center Cemetery.

observations

It is apparent that cultural norms have usurped biblical standards of marital integrity and related moral practices in our land. The following notes are gleaned from David Waters, a columnist from Memphis, TN. (*The Hutchinson News, June 6, 2006*)

—More than half of all African-American children are living in single-parent homes. Fifty years ago that figure stood at 22%.

—One of three children in America is born to unwed mothers.

—In Memphis, three out of five children are born out of wedlock.

Waters cites these numbers to show that marriage and related problems are much larger than homosexual issues.

To be part of a church that takes a scriptural stand on divorce and related issues is a blessing. For our

homes to be thoroughly Christian is a constant challenge.

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In 2004, sixty-six percent of traffic fatality victims in Kansas were not wearing seat belts.

Kansas law (with some new restrictions for children) requires drivers and front seat passengers to be strapped in, and all children and infants. Violators are subject to fines.

The following statistics are reported by the KS Department of Transportation for 2004:

—There were 456 traffic fatalities.

—Two thousand people suffered disabling injuries.

—Twenty-three thousand suffered less serious injuries.

—An organization called The Driving Force says that the cost of these accidents comes to \$1015 for every man, woman, and child in the state. (*The Hutchinson News, June 12, 2006*).

Inattentiveness is reportedly the leading cause of accidents. *The Hutchinson News, June 30, 2006*, reports a local accident where a 90-year-old man drove past a stop sign into the path of an oncoming car. This caused a three-vehicle crash in which two adults were killed. An infant was critically injured.

It is well-documented that, statistically, the young and the old are more accident-prone than other age groups. To look to the Lord for protection and to drive safely is consistent with our Christian faith and witness.

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Readers are urged to take careful note of the editorial in this issue. The need is obvious and urgent. May God deliver us from the paralysis of indifference and fatalism.

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Warren Buffet, 75, is reported to be the second most wealthy person in the country. He recently gave \$30.7 billion to the Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation. This boosts the Gates' foundation to a total of \$59.5 billion. By comparison, Ford Foundation is reported at \$11.6 billion, Lilly Endowment at \$8.6 billion. Two other entities have figures in between.

Daniel Borochoff says, "They are playing God with that kind of wealth. They are going to be responsible for

whether a lot of people live or die." Borochoff and other philanthropy watchers welcomed this gift, saying it could inspire other wealthy individuals to give money to charities rather than to children or other heirs.

The Gates Foundation is committed to battling childhood diseases, HIV/AIDS abroad, and improving education in the U. S. The Gates Foundation has 260 employees. (*USA Today, June 27, 2006*)

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In the latter 1800's, Sunday School became part of a revival movement that seemed to inject new life into worship patterns which, as I perceive it, had commonly stagnated. Many Mennonites welcomed the new feature. But there were significant numbers who did not feel this way. This created certain divisions that remain to the present time.

Several, although relatively few, Amish leaders became enthusiastic promoters. Some Amish Sunday Schools were started that have continued more than 100 years.

I find it interesting that Sunday School does not seem to be a part of some current Anabaptist church movements. I do not claim to understand well the reasons for this and feel that for us to do away with Sunday School would be a serious loss to the church.

Sunday School allows for teachers to develop teaching skills. It provides an informal study setting in which all may participate. It is an intentional effort to provide nurture for children appropriate to their stage of development.

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I received a letter from Bishop Allan Miller, who is presently living in Phoenix, Arizona, with his wife, Barbara. They are still dealing with the effects of major injuries sustained in a traffic accident in Nicaragua in

November, 2004.

Mennonite Christian Fellowship churches from Missouri have purchased 177 acres located near Greenfield, MO. They have plans to develop a Boys' Ranch that reaches out to troubled boys, ages, 10-18. Additional information is available from:

Allan Miller, 417-850-2871 or
Timothy Graber, 417-246-5668 or
Amos Yutzzy, (*secretary-treasurer*)
9533 Lawrence Co. Ave.,

LaRussell, MO 64848 —DLM 

Not Yours but You

Rosie Bontrager · Chilton, TX

Some time ago, I wrote my mother-in-law and made the statement, "I know God is able to do far above our ideas, if we do our part." But I wondered if that was accurate.

Her reply was, "Probably a more accurate phrasing would be, 'God is able to do far above our ideas, whether or not we do our part.'" God's blessings are not the sum of an equation or formula. For example, I might think: *My day is just not going good because I didn't have my devotions this morning.*

We are so formula oriented. All day long we follow recipes, direc-

tions, and instructions of every kind with predictable results. We want to translate this behavior over into the spiritual realm. Actually obeying God out of a heart of love and adoration is to experience a sweet freedom that, I think, very few experience.

I wonder, Am I guilty of obeying God just for what I "get out" of Him? Do I seek His face just because I need Him or also because I want Him? Do I find joy in meeting the Giver without even asking for a gift?

May we seek, O Lord, not Yours but You; not the blessing but the Blesser, not the reward of things but the reward of the Divine One Himself. 

Breaking Our Alabaster Box

Isaac Kurtz · Guys Mills, PA

And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many are forgiven; for she hath loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:37,38, 47).

Forgiveness is a gift of God. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Forgiveness is an integral part of salvation.

This woman likely had experienced forgiveness before she came into the house. Her deep sorrow for sin is evident by her weeping. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (2 Corinthians 7:10). The emotional makeup of a person will affect how many tears are shed at the time of repentance. But there must be evidence of godly sorrow in repentance that is genuine.

Forsaking of sin is another aspect

of genuine repentance. Jesus told the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). These are fitting words for the repentant sinner today. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

The woman's willingness to wash the feet of Jesus with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head reveals her readiness to serve Him even in the most humble things. A *love-servant* is someone who serves his master because of his love to his master. It seems the woman was responding in love and loyalty to Jesus because of her sense of indebtedness to Him.

In our service to the Lord we should not be concerned about the recognition that we receive from other people. True service to God comes from the heart, to please God, and not to please men. "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Ephesians 6:6,7).

One of the ways we show our love to Jesus is by loving the church. "A new commandment I give unto you,

That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34,35).

The Christian salutation is a practical way that our love for the church is expressed. Our brotherhood assistance is another way that our love is expressed as we bear one another’s burdens. Praying for each other is also a very important part of loving the church.

The alabaster box contained an ointment which was very costly. Using that ointment to anoint Jesus’ feet required sacrifice. Was it wise to use the ointment in this way? Jesus did not condemn her for this.

Is there anything of earthly value that we should not be willing to sacrifice for Jesus? “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. So likewise, whosoever he be of you

that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26, 27, 33). These verses make it clear that there should be nothing on this earth that is so dear that we cannot give it up for the sake of the Lord.

The work of the Lord requires sacrifice of our time, energy, and finances. Sacrifice is required for the Christian home to function according to God’s plan and purpose. The Christian school takes the sacrifice of dedicated teachers and board members. Patrons also must be willing to sacrifice for the school in a financial way so that the school can operate effectively. The church needs members and leaders who are willing to sacrifice in varying ways for the sake of the Lord and the church.

This woman’s gratitude is seen in that she was not ashamed to show her love to Jesus before everyone that was in the house. We should be so grateful to the Lord for salvation that we are not ashamed to show our love to Him by the way we live and by sharing the Gospel with all men.

[From *The Eastern Mennonite Testimony*. Used by permission.] 

mission awareness

AMA in Kenya

It was August, 1991, when the first missionaries under Amish Mennonite Aid arrived in Kenya. Through the

years, there has been steady growth in church membership. I quote from the book, Bringing in the Sheaves.

Raymond Fisher, a former missionary writes: "The voices of more than 200 people swell in beautiful harmony. With glowing faces and exuberant melody they sing, their voices echoing through the meeting house. Never mind the many problems of hunger and housing needs that beset them behind and before. This was the day for singing, praying, and hearing God's Word. As I gazed across this assembly of African believers, my heart thrilled once again. Before me sat former drunkards, thieves, wife beaters, and those whose lives had once been bound by satanic superstitions, whose lives had been ruled by fear and dread. These 'who were dead in sins...being aliens...far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.'"

But in Kenya there are still pockets of people who live deep in the forest, unclothed and unlearned, who also must be told of the saving grace of Christ. Pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth laborers, even national believers, into His harvest.

Mission life brings with it a variety of rich and fulfilling, and even humorous experiences. Then there are those ungodly threats that can produce fear in the hearts of national Christians and missionaries. Jesus taught us how to handle persecution and life-threatening situations: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil

against you falsely, for my name's sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11,12). He also said, "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master,...If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not..." (Matt. 10:25,26a).

The following stories give a window into the lives of missionaries and national believers. May we endeavor to pray regularly and fervently for them. -FS

Stories from Kenya

—Hosea and Bernice Troyer

We remember how we felt the first time we witnessed a Christian Believer's Fellowship dinner for widows. We were overwhelmed by the sight of more than 60 widows together, many of them still so young. It is an annual event, held here on the compound under a tent. Each year the number increases. This year, 74 were present. (Culture here does not allow widows to remarry, since they have been purchased with cows by a man, and therefore are property of the husband's clan.)

Widows' dinner consisted of some encouragement by the pastors, special singing by widows and our school children, and a big meal. Af-

ter the meal, the widows were given small hand bags holding a loaf of banana bread, a jar of sugar, and a laying hen. Upon receiving them, they erupted into songs of thanksgiving, some waving their hens, and some swaying as they sang. One song is written, “My heart is full of joy!” Mama Penina was heard singing, “My heart is full of chicken!”

When it was time to go home, some of the widows had to wait for the second ride, because the first load was full. We invited the waiting ones inside our house for a visit. They couldn’t leave their hens outside, because of the dogs, who love chickens—with or without feathers. I looked around our living room with seven widows and seven hens.

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Some years ago, the Christian Believers’ Fellowship Churches (This is the official name of AMA missions in Kenya) were troubled by unreasonable rumors. In some areas it was worse than in other communities. It was said that CBF Christians are devil worshippers who sacrifice children. There were other ridiculous accusations. One day I saw that someone had scratched a misspelled phrase into the paint of our vehicle that was supposed to say “devil worshipper.” After a while, the rumors seemed to simmer down and little

was heard.

Recently rumors have come back to full boil. Our church (Rabour) enjoyed a day of fellowship on the first day of June, which is a Kenyan holiday. After a few songs and devotional by Bishop Melvin Bontrager, adults and children took part in games and relay races. There was a lot of noise as they laughed and cheered each other on. That evening after dark, Pastor John Awounda heard wailing in his village. Upon investigating, he heard a child was missing.

When John’s wife, Millicent, showed up a little later, she asked what was going on. To her dismay someone began accusing her of knowing all about it. The villagers claimed that CBF church members were stealing children and had likely stolen this one. Someone else spoke up and said that he had passed our church house that day and saw that we were really celebrating. He concluded that we had been cooking a child, because he saw a white woman at the cooking fires.

There was talk that night of burning the homes of Pastor John and the other CBF national members that lived close by. A few hours later the missing child was found in safety, sound asleep in one of the other houses in the compound.



Announcement

ANABAPTIST HERITAGE WEEKEND

*To be held at Penn Valley Christian Retreat,
McVeytown, PA, October 27-29, 2006*

WEEKEND THEME:

Rediscovering the Anabaptist Vision in 2006

FRIDAY EVENING AND SATURDAY MORNING:

“The Original Anabaptist Vision” *by Edsel Burdge*

SATURDAY MORNING: Workshop over first two presentations

SATURDAY EVENING: Workshop: “Being Honest about Failures
to Attain the Vision in the Past” *by Chester Weaver*

SUNDAY MORNING: “The Anabaptist Vision Today” *by Chester Weaver*

Also, Bro. Weaver reports having an idea about a possible retreat held high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. He adds: That’s where the mountains touch the clouds.

He further describes his dream: Wouldn’t a week of reflection, discussion, teaching and exploring ideas on how to make the Anabaptist Vision a living reality in today’s world be worthwhile? At this point, I do not have actual plans for such an event. But I would like to see something of this nature come to pass if there is sufficient interest. I would envision something like this to be held in June or July of 2007.

I have asked this question in preliminary form and have found substantial interest, at least in word. I think if there were 25 or more attendees, such a retreat would be viable.

We seek God’s will in this matter. Direct your interest and support for this to:
Chester Weaver, 227 HCR 4403, Grandview, TX 76050

Phone: 817-866-3692, e-mail: chesterweaver@characterlink.net 

Ministers' Meeting Messages—2006

This is a condensation of a message given at the annual Ministers' Meetings, April 4-6, 2006, at Sugarcreek, Ohio. The set of eight cassette tapes with 11 messages is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA, 20136, for \$40 or a set of 11 CD's for \$45, postpaid.

3. Healthful Ways of Coping

With the Pressures of the Office

—Delmar Bontrager, Wellman, IA

Pressures are inevitable. Coping means to struggle, to face, and to deal with responsibilities calmly and adequately. It does not mean that we find ways of eliminating or evading these pressures. We do seek ways of alleviating or minimizing them, for none of us in ministry are immune to pressures.

In 2 Corinthians 4:1-10, Paul speaks of pressures in the life of a minister. Paul shares his personal testimony. Here he refers to himself as being a messenger of God, a servant of the people for Jesus' sake. He acknowledges the frailty of these earthen vessels that are intended to bring glory to His name. In spite of the distresses that we face, whether we are bishops, ministers, deacons or commissioned men, we have

sometimes not done very well with the pressures.

We have heard it said that a manageable level of stress is healthy for a person. I believe it can be a motivational factor. It might also cause us to be more forgetful. A man with no stress may be a man who accomplishes very little. I doubt that we ought to say, "Let's avoid stress; let's get around it somehow."

How do we draw the line between ambition, zeal, or vision and an unhealthy level of stress? Maybe our wives can give us a better idea of what our capacity for stress is than we can. It frustrates me when something gets complicated and some people seem to want to take a detour or to say, "Give it to somebody else." It seems that they want to hang onto their comfort zone. Sometimes I want my comfort zone, too. But I don't believe that's what our calling always allows.

I believe God has called us to have a vision that sometimes involves some stress and pressures that our flesh would like to avoid. I don't claim to understand how the human body responds to stress. An unhealthy level of stress, more commonly known as over-commitment and overload,

can cause us to try to do about half a dozen too many things and end up doing them about three-quarters right.

I am convinced that a large overload over a long period of time, will eventually take its toll on the weakest point of the human body. Having had several back surgeries gives me reason to believe this. In fact, I believe that the large majority of the sicknesses and physical breakdowns that we face during what should be the prime effectiveness of our lives are brought on by a level of pressure and stress that these bodies were never intended to carry.

While I don't know your situation, I know my own somewhat. Even then, I probably don't know my own limitations. Stress can come from a job, a business, a debt load, difficulties in the brotherhood, relational difficulties with co-ministers, family pressures, disappointments in your family, pressures with your spouse, or pressure to live up to the performance of the former bishop, minister or deacon. These things put us under pressure to perform and I don't think God is interested in performances. I think He wants servants who are willing to obey Him. If it were only one pressure, it would be easier to resolve. But because it's often a combination of stresses, it gets complicated.

I'm thankful for a wife that reminds me sometimes that, "Maybe this is one area you need to say 'No' in." We may load ourselves like an old truck that isn't used very much. We think we're only going a short distance, so we overload it. It might work until we hit a bump in the road. We may reason that we're expected to do it. And so we just pile on a little bit more and eventually something happens that we didn't think would happen. It's called a breakdown or depression.

Sometimes we come to these annual meetings having just worked extra hard to make it possible to attend. We sigh with relief and think, *Let's enjoy ourselves for a few days.* Here we renew friendships, we encourage each other, we meet bosom friends, brethren that have shared with us in the past, we shake hands and say, "God bless you, brother. How are you doing?" We often offer this prepared statement, "Just fine!" After all, this is where we put up a good face, isn't it? We mean to leave our problems at home. But I'm asking, "Should we answer those questions with greater honesty?"

These meetings are a time of recharging, as it were. A brother recently said it this way to me, "Sometimes we just need to get away from it all." We may even pity ourselves a little. Are we allowed a little self-pity? I'm not sure that we are.

When the schedule gets very busy, we may wonder how we will ever get through everything needing our attention. With phone calls, contacts (business or church-related),

orders to be filled, customers and clients with deadlines, we run from early to late to meet these demands. It's like we're running around and putting out the hottest fires. I believe many of the pressures we face we bring on ourselves.

One of the worst pressures we face is caused by putting off our preparation for preaching.

[Here Brother Delmar took us through a detailed struggle for sermon preparation, with delays and phone calls and all kinds of other distractions, but offered us a better solution: Prayerful advance planning.—PLM]

A friend and bishop, who is presently carrying heavy burdens, recently said to me, "There is no substitute for relying on the grace and power of God." I echo this. We can go through the mechanics of trusting in God or we can fight our way through life's challenges so hard that sometimes God just wants us to stop in our tracks and give Him our attention and devotion.

Here are several antidotes to excessive pressures that we face. I realize that the grace and power of God are indispensable. Yet I believe that He

expects you and me to make some wise choices.

God wants us to die daily to our own ambitions. Sometimes that's not easy. It seems that we are denied enjoyments that others have. It's almost as if there are two sets of rules. Every day that I'm not willing to die to myself, becomes a very frustrating day to me. I become frustrated when I blame God for the calling He has given me.

Teamwork is a united effort to achieve a common goal. I believe teamwork in the ministerial team is without question one of the greatest antidotes to relieving pressure and stress. I say by the grace of God, by His grace alone, I can share from the perspective of a positive experience and I certainly don't want to take that for granted. Being able to stand together and lifting that load together, instead of with a competition factor, is the way to work.

We may be in charge, but the idea we use doesn't need to be the leader's idea. It doesn't matter whose idea it is or to put it in the terms of a ball game, "It doesn't matter who puts up the winning shot." We bishops aren't always the ones with the best idea. We are to be in charge, to make sure that action follows a decision. Teamwork is the grace to be recipients of each other's gifts and talents.

None of us possesses all the gifts and that's the beauty of a plural ministerial team. I do not seem naturally to possess the gift of being cautious or patient, or of giving things sufficient time to develop. That has sometimes gotten me into trouble, but I do have access to that gift, because I'm part of a team. I don't feel that I have a natural gift of relating to children, even though I love children, but I have trouble in getting down to children and speaking to them on their level. I've always struggled with teaching a children's class. But I have access to that gift because I'm part of a team.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 and 10 says, "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." I praise God for the times when I have made a "bad call," and my fellow servants have pointed it out to me. They know I sometimes make bad calls, but they respect where God has put me. I praise God for that. In a ministry team, someone needs to be in charge. That sometimes rests pretty hard on our shoulders. Oh, for the privilege to place that on some other shoulders for a while!

It's a choice we face whether to view our fellow minister's gifts as an

invaluable resource or as a threat. Our office doesn't need any fleshly defense. I would say it this way, "If your office is YOUR OFFICE, then you may as well defend it. That's all you have." But if our office is the office of Jesus Christ working through us and recognizing the accountability He has placed upon us, it doesn't need any fleshly defense. One of the greatest enemies to teamwork is when a leader becomes so driven to position and authority that he forgets servanthood. When that happens, God help us!

We are servants, and once we start enjoying the feel of power, may we consider the awesome accountability before an almighty God that you and I will face some day. When you and I consider that prospect, the drive for power starts to shrivel pretty fast.

We need a planned system of communication. It involves much more than exchanging a few words on Sunday morning before it's time to go preach. Communication is a mandate for team spirit. Keep your team informed about what's going on. We can't afford not to.

It works in the other direction, too: Ministers, deacons: Keep your leaders informed of your plans and expectations. Don't assume. If you do, this becomes a seedbed for doubt and suspicion. We ask, "Why didn't

I hear about this?” So because one of us can’t do it all, we owe it to each other to make sure everyone on the team knows what’s being done. For instance, don’t assume your co-minister knows it’s his turn to preach on Sunday.

Let me take this one step further: Be friends with your team members. When Bro. Jake Yoder and I were new to the ministry, Bro. Elmer Miller, our overseeing bishop counseled us thus: “Have *regular* ministers’ meetings. Take care of congregational issues. If there’s nothing more important, eat pizza together.” We have made it a practice to celebrate ours and our spouses’ birthdays each year. At those times, we attend to congregational business and we cultivate friendship. Both are important.

Good teamwork involves delegating responsibilities. My co-ministers aren’t usually looking for extra work. But they’re willing to do what I ask them to do. Our people have certain expectations from us. We have personal contacts to make. There are shut-ins and the elderly to visit. There are hospital visits before, during and after surgery. Then there’s instruction class and pre-marital counseling. There may even be a family in conflict.

Proper delegation doesn’t require a perfectly even distribution of

these tasks. When a team member is under special stress, the other team members can lighten his load. I raise this question: Do we expect too much from our deacons? Sometimes the bishop is the busiest man, but sometimes I think the deacon is busier. Should deacons have a lighter preaching load? They are usually the ones to see after the finances and the medical plan.

As I see it, we should prioritize without compartmentalizing. Are we different persons in business than we are in church? If so, I say, God help us! I heard it said of someone, “He will be remembered more as a business man than as a church leader.” That kind of compartmentalizing is not good. There are times when we must decline extra responsibility. We do have families. But let’s also remember to put Kingdom interests first. Then let’s be realistic about whether or not we can do what’s being asked.

We must also find time to rest on occasion. We may forget to rest. Let me unveil a myth: *If a minister, bishop or deacon spends any leisure time outside of his ministry or his job, he deserves to feel guilty about it.* Our calling is noble, high, and except for the grace of God, it’s unattainable. It has eternal effects. But we’re still in those earthen vessels that grow weary.

Sometimes we need refueling. Maybe it's nothing more than an evening (or a night, or better yet, a weekend) out with your companion. These things take advance planning. And as surely as you plan something like this, something will come up to challenge the plans. Either work around it or reschedule or do something. One way or another, it needs to happen. Likely our wives, with their natural, God-given intuition, will be able to see when it's time for such a break. They can see it better than we can.

Here's my suggestion: Take your companion to Penn Valley Christian Retreat for a weekend, but don't wait until you're one of the speakers. Do it when you have no assignment. It's called a refreshing getaway.

I think it's alright for us ministers to have a hobby. I'm talking about something that you enjoy doing, that is kept in proper perspective, that is unrelated to your job, and you give some time and energy to it. I'm not advocating that we go out a lot to have fun and neglect our responsibilities. It can, for example, be hunting, fishing, or trapping.

While I'm not very excited about hunting, because there's too much waiting, I have gone hunting for deer. In fact, I found out some 15 years ago that a tree stand is an excellent place

to memorize the marriage vows. It worked! Even with a squirrel chattering, there's not much to disturb the peace and quiet. It has a way of clearing our minds and emotions.

I'm not much for fishing either, but trapping is different. I've been doing that for 37 years and I must try harder to keep it in proper perspective. While it is fairly hard work, it is a mental and emotional relaxant. Please understand me. I'm not advocating that we postpone communion because one of the ministers is on a big game hunting trip. That's making too much allowance for the need for recreation.

I believe we need to set an example for our people that our getaways are not extravagant. It doesn't need to be a Caribbean Cruise or a European trip. The therapy of a getaway is not contingent on the money it costs to do it. Even if we just take a good book beyond the reach of the phone, that itself can provide a meaningful break. It doesn't need to cost a lot.

The ordination charge to feed the flock of God that I was given in 1988 and again in 1990, was accompanied by divine intervention and enablement. It was placed in an earthen vessel "that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).



The God of Truth

Ernest Strubhar · Perkins, OK

[Here's another letter to the editor of The Perkins Journal that didn't make it into print that, nevertheless, deserves careful consideration. —PLM]

God gave us the Ten Commandments. Not ten suggestions, not ten ideals, but ten commandments. They are the greatest moral code the world has ever known. Much of our western civilization is based on them.

Jehovah, the Creator God, gave them to us. And deep within our being, God has placed a witness that confirms the truth He spoke. We know we ought to worship Him, and Him alone. We know that we ought to honor our parents. We know we should not kill, we should not steal, we should not lie, we should not commit adultery, we should not covet. We know all these things without being taught them. God has written this code on our hearts.

I believe that when the Lord Jesus came and established His Kingdom He taught us a law that goes beyond the Ten Commandments. But that is not my subject here. Think with me about the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20 begins with these words: "And God spake all these words, say-

ing, I am the LORD, thy God, . . . Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Notice, God is speaking. In commandment 3, He states, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God. . . For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day" (Exodus 20:9-11).

Jehovah God spoke these words! What did He say? That He made the heaven and the earth "in six days."

Do you believe what God has said? If not, let me ask a logical question: How can you put any stock in the Ten Commandments when one of them is based on a deception?

That's right. If God told us that He made the world in six days, and it's not true, He has deceived us! Then how can we trust Him at all? Why pay any attention to the Ten Commandments? How can we be sure that John 3:16, which assures us that God loves us, is true? If God didn't tell us the truth about history, how can we be sure that He is telling us the truth about heaven?

I believe what He says about the past, and I trust Him for the future!



The Discomfort of Modesty

Daniel R. Horst · Altamont, TN

Apparently weather conditions in the Garden of Eden did not make clothing necessary. Adam and Eve were not hiding among the trees and sewing aprons for warmth, but because they knew they were naked. Obviously, the need for clothing was primarily for modesty, rather than for comfort. God considered the fig leaf aprons inadequate, though they may have been more suited to the climate.

Could we assume that the coats of skins with which God clothed Adam and Eve were uncomfortably warm sometimes? Perhaps like other aspects of the curse that followed the fall, they were not always pleasant. While modest clothing can be reasonably comfortable, it seems there is no convenient stopping place when one begins to sacrifice modesty for comfort. Bare arms, bare legs, skimpy and sheer clothing, and finally, little or almost no clothing seem to become acceptable because folks are “too hot.”

Often the complaint of discomfort is an excuse. Underlying most indecent exposure are other reasons, like

fashion—the pressure to be in step with society; and vain display—seeking to draw attention. Satan is busy, and immodesty serves his ends well. One of his deceptions is that being modest is too uncomfortable.

Sometimes the complaint of discomfort is a result of a mindset rather than a genuine need. The man who “cannot stand a shirt” during strenuous work should consider that many people do so regularly and get along just fine. Those who wear skimpy or sheer clothing for the same reason must face the fact that many wear heavier clothing without any real hardship. Often those most agitated about a warm situation “cannot stand it,” while those who accept it in a matter-of-fact way grow quite accustomed to it.

Nevertheless, modest clothing will not always be the *most* comfortable. But for the Christian, the principle of modesty takes priority over the need for comfort.

[From *The Timely Truth*, April, 2006. Adapted and used by permission.]



Problems

Lina Z. Ressler

The following article about child nurture was prepared by a writer who was later an editor for many years. It was published in Gospel Herald, January 8, 1914.

A happy girl comes from the mail box and shows Mama only a part of the mail that she has brought. Her manner indicates that she means to play a joke. This is another evidence of development in child nature. Little minds are active, and often naturally imaginative. How this tendency shall be treated is a disputed problem.

There are those who say that there must be a distinct line drawn and that nothing but truth or fact should be presented to the child. This might work out all right if we always had the care of the little ones ourselves and could always select the influences and reading matter that shall come to them. We are living in a [larger] world, however, and these little ones will, in different ways, come in contact with the same world. The very first of their reading lessons usually draw on the imagination and early in their reading, lessons come to them from stories which, while perhaps strictly true yet develop something

of the imagination.

How shall we distinguish and how shall we help the children to realize the difference between that which is known to be a fact and that which may possibly be supposed or even be imagined? I like the distinction of one little girl I know who draws a sharp line of difference between a real story and play story. I believe it is possible to teach children this difference very early. How sweet are their little games of "Sunday School" or "housekeeping" or mothering their dollies! How real their setting of the table, often with imaginary dishes. It is play to them, but it is part of their life, and we know that every child needs it. Happy is the mother who can enter into these games appropriately and enjoy them, while at the same time she realizes and helps the children to realize the difference between the imaginative and the real.

The girl referred to above meant to "play" that there was no letter. Perhaps at some time she had heard someone else tease in a similar way. She was only learning and did not know that this would be deception. If we could always know the thoughts of the little hearts, some of these

problems would be much easier to solve. Patiently, however, in any case, they must be taught to love the truth and the sooner they distinguish between truth and “play,” the better for them. Razors, shears, etc., are dangerous and the little fingers must learn to leave them alone. The mail box is an important feature in the household affairs and needs to be regarded with great respect. They should be early taught that its contents are not to be considered a matter to make “play” with.

And so the lessons go on. Serious, perplexing, yet joyously sweet; for how many an aged mother, whose babes have been scattered far from home has told us that the sweetest time in all her life were the days when her little brood was clustered around her and her hands and heart and feet were so busy that she felt that she could never get her work done. Let's enjoy them and thank God for them and do the best we can for them while we may.



helpers at home

Joyful Submission

Mary June Glick

Submission is a positive role. It qualifies a woman to come under the protection and care of man. It is a role that is largely being lost in today's society. Perhaps woman is responsible for taking away the best response in men. For instance, I have noticed even among young men on the street, that when I give them opportunity to open a door or to assist me in other ways, usually they respond very willingly and gladly. No, woman is not a helpless creature. God intends for man to

assume the role as natural protector for woman, even as Christ protects and cares for the Church.

Submission means “to come under.” We usually interpret that to mean “come under authority.” There is another meaning that I really like which gives the idea of “coming under another by lifting up.” Women are to lift up their husbands. God didn't give you a husband primarily to fulfill your need or to make you happy. God alone can fill the deepest need in your life, so whether you

are single or married, fulfillment and happiness comes from Him. God gave Eve to Adam to be a “help” fitted for him. I believe a woman’s greatest joy comes in serving. For many of us that includes a husband. We are to lift him up, so to speak, and encourage him. Some of you may be thinking, *If my husband would love me as he should, that would be easy.* Regardless of circumstances, you are still called to lift up your husband. Submission takes courage; it takes God’s grace, but it brings rich reward.

Why submit?

1. The Bible requires it, so I make a conscious commitment to do so.
2. Submission produces a meek and quiet spirit within me.
3. Joy comes in serving others.

How do I submit?

1. Begin with prayer. Rather than nagging at your husband, pray about those areas that bother you. Prayer will also change you.
2. Work on pleasing him. You know what is important to your husband, whether it’s having meals on time, keeping a clean house, turning unused lights off or whatever.

3. Set the atmosphere in your home with a happy, grateful spirit. Keep your sense of humor. Don’t take yourself or your husband too seriously. Allow him to make mistakes.

How do I express disagreement or disappointment?

1. Keep my voice calm and in control.
2. Try not to talk about it when I am tired!
3. Know when it’s time to quit; after I’ve had my say, STOP.
4. Don’t bring up past grievances.
5. Don’t say, “You never do this” or “You always do that.”
6. Listen to what he has to say.
7. Let him make the final decision and follow through cheerfully.

If you are reading this and you have sincerely tried to submit and honor your husband, yet you are having serious struggles in your marriage, please get help. You may want to go to your pastor or a trusted friend. God designed marriage for joy. He wants your marriage to be strong.

A happy marriage is a foretaste of what God has planned for the Church throughout eternity.



Beatitudes for Homemakers

Selected

Blessed is she whose daily tasks are of love, for her willing hands and happy heart transform duty into joyous service to her family and to God.

Blessed is she who opens the door to welcome both strangers and well-loved friends, for gracious hospitality is a test of brotherly love.

Blessed is she who mends socks and toys and broken hearts, for her understanding is a balm to her husband and her children.

Blessed is she who scours and scrubs, for well she knows that cleanliness is an expression of godliness.

Blessed is she when her children love her, for the love of a child is a greater value than fortune and fame.

Blessed is she who sings at her work, for music lightens the heaviest load and brightens the dullest chore.

Blessed is she who dusts away doubt and fear and sweeps out the cobwebs of confusion, for her faith will triumph over all adversity.

Blessed is she who serves laughter and smiles with every meal, for cheerfulness is an aid to mental and physical digestion.

Blessed is she who introduces Jesus Christ to her children, for godly sons and daughters shall be her reward.

Blessed is she who preserves the sacredness of the Christian home, for hers is a divine trust that crowns her with virtue and dignity.

[Submitted for publication by Mrs. Ada Beachy, Huntland, TN]



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No one is too old to learn, but some put it off anyway.

A Lesson Learned the Hard Way

April Friesen, age 11 · Shishewana, IN

The morning dawned bright and clear. The India sun was warm, but the cool morning breezes made it feel perfect. Sea gulls dived into the sea to catch their breakfast. Up the road in a little house lived Clarrina, Kara, Chancy and Mando with their missionary parents.

All the sleepy eyed children tumbled into the kitchen where Mom's delicious breakfast waited. As they lingered around the table, Mom and Dad assigned the tasks for the day.

"Chancy," said Dad, "I want you to help me with my fishing gear this morning. Mando, you stay here and do whatever Mom says."

Mom said, "Girls, I want you to clean the house and bake some cookies. Mando, you and I will wash the dishes, and after dinner," she added, "if your work is done, you may go down to the sea."

"Yippeeee!" shouted the children and ran to do their work. Everyone worked diligently and finished before dinner.

"Mando, you don't know how to

swim, so stay in the shallow water. Always wear your life jacket and don't go in the water alone," cautioned Mom.

The children ran off. Kara floated about. After a while, she got out and gathered shells. Chancy and Mando played tag in the water. As they played Tag, one of Chancy's friends came and they ran off together.

"Now is my chance to take my life jacket off," Mando said to himself. He jumped on an air boat. "I'll float to that island out there."

The waves going out took Mando farther and farther away from the shore.

"The island is farther away than I thought," Mando said aloud. He began to get scared. He looked at the faraway shore as he noted that the wind had picked up.

The sky got dark, the wind rose and thunder rumbled. Everyone ran to the house and seemed to have forgotten Mando.

"Where's Mando?" Mom asked, after everyone else had gathered inside. The question seemed to hang

in the air.

“I left him playing in the shallow water,” volunteered Chancy. “After that, I don’t know what happened.”

Quickly they searched the beach in the terrible storm.

“It’s not a good time to be out,” commented Dad worriedly.

Mando rocked and rolled in the air boat. He suddenly thought, *How will I be found? My family has no idea I’m out here. But it seems I’m quite a lot closer to the island. Maybe I can make it there and then wait out the storm.*

A search party on a boat went

looking for Mando. As they neared the island they saw a floating object. It was Mando! They took him back and they all arrived back safely in spite of the storm.

“I was so scared,” said Mando. “Mom and Dad, now I know why you cautioned me not to be in the water alone and made those other rules. I disobeyed and I’m sorry.”

After that, whenever Mando was in the water he remembered how he could have drowned in the storm because of his disobedience. He was grateful to be alive! 

youth messages

Dear Youth,

Do you have a relative or friend who does not care much about his or her relationship with God? Do you know someone personally who is careless, indifferent, or cold about his or her spiritual life?

It can sometimes be difficult to discern how God would have us relate to those whose lives reveal that the life of God is dying within them. It is difficult because we, who see only the outside, cannot always be sure of what is happening on the “inside.” We see through a “dark glass.” Often times, there are a number of factors

that contribute to a person’s unresponsiveness.

The youth writers for this month suggest a number of factors as to why a person might walk away from God.

Next month’s question is more directly aimed at helping us become the kind of people who can help the “weak,” rather than those who give the “weak” additional reasons for walking away from God.

I would like your replies to this question by the 20th of August.

Thank you for your interest and your prayers. —EE

This Month's
QUESTION

Why do you think a young person who grew up in a Christian home would drift away from God and from following the principles in His Word?

r e s p o n s e f r o m o u r r e a d e r s ...

One of the reasons why a person may turn his back on what he has been taught about God and the Bible is because he sees it as something that he doesn't really need. Most of us are taught to be "good" from little up and so by the time we reach the age of accountability we consider ourselves good people. So, in a sense, we don't need God to change those outward things that we have been taught from little up. The commitment to God is then made not so much because I feel so sinful, but because it's "the thing to do." If our relationship with Christ is only like this, it probably won't last very long. I cannot live off my parents' Christianity. It has to be something that I personally feel the need for. If I am only living by what my parents have always taught me and have not discovered those truths for myself and developed my own convictions, then my Christianity probably will not stand the test of life.

Jevon Beachy, Free Union, VA

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I wonder if a key problem is that while these youth know who God is, they do not truly know Him, nor do

they have a vibrant, personal relationship with Him. Many of these youths may, unconsciously, see Christianity as a set of rules, instead of a real relationship with God that changes who we are and the way we live. Too many youth see "bondage" in God's principles instead of freedom offered in Christ. If we see what Christ has set us free from, living for Him may be hard sometimes, but the journey will be filled with joy...because of HIM!

Nancy Yoder, Hutchinson, KS

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I think youth turn their back on God for all kinds of reasons.

In some cases, the parents might be at fault. There are some parents who, for some reason, leave the responsibility of most of the Christian teaching up to their children's school teachers or hope their children will get enough teaching in church to help them get to the right place in life: not necessarily a scriptural way of handling matters.

In other cases, maybe the youth got mixed up with the wrong crowd. We're all susceptible to deception—

even the best of us. Too much compromise and wrong choices led them to a place where they would've *never dreamed* they were capable of going.

Other times, I wonder if some youth simply become discouraged with the Christian life altogether, and give up. Maybe they never experienced the freedom and joy of a totally surrendered life. Maybe they were trying to be a Christian all by themselves. Who knows?

Another source of discouragement to a youth could be the church family. I know a person who grew

up in a Christian environment, but the church he was from didn't seem to operate out of the Christian love that God calls us to have. He finally became so discouraged that he left.

But in all these cases, if people do struggle with living the Christian life, they don't need to feel like they have to work it all out by themselves. I think if we as youth are willing to share and discuss our struggles with Christians who are more mature than we are, there won't be as many people just dropping everything they've been taught.

A Reader from VA

Next Month's
QUESTION

What are some Bible principles that we can follow that will guide us in relating to those who are indifferent spiritually? How can we relate to our straying friends to encourage them to turn to God? What should we avoid, so we don't discourage them from repenting and turning to God?

Please send your response by August 20.



The wise carry their *knowledge*

LIKE THEY DO THEIR WATCHES —

not for *display*, but for needed information.

THOUGHT GEMS

Kindness sometimes goes a long way
when it ought to stay at home.

• • • • •

The kindness we resolve to show tomorrow
cures no headaches today.

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If you don't know where you're going,
you may walk right on by when you get there.

• • • • •

The highest knowledge is the knowledge of God.

• • • • •

Fortune smiles on the man who can laugh at himself.

• • • • •

There are two kinds of bores—those who speak too much
and those who listen too little.

• • • • •

The Golden Rule of friendship is to listen to others
as we would have them listen to us.

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A poor listener seldom hears a good sermon.

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Straight living cannot come out of crooked thinking.

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