



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

Galatians 6:14

FEBRUARY 2016

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February 2016

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 Savior;
 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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Prayer

Hannah Nisly, Altamont, KS

“Lord of the heavens, Thou Consuming Fire,

Dwell in my heart; let Thy unfettered flame

Envelop selfish passion and desire.

Thou art not dimmed by e'en the foulest touch;

The strength of the unclean is weak with Thee--

It withers 'neath Thy perfect purity.

Come then, O Sacred Fire, and burn away

All of my self; be Thou not quenched, I pray,

'Til naught remains that will not honor thee.”

*From a teen's music folder after participating for three weeks at
CBS, Term 1, 2015, chorus:*

If God is glorified in our hearts or the hearts of those who hear us, the purpose of our music has been accomplished. There is beauty in good music correctly sung. There is greater beauty in hearts and lives that worship God, whether or not the expression of worship is polished. **“Though I [sing] with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal”** (1 Cor. 13:1).



A Good Foundation

Soon-to-be neighbors Marcus and Becki Wagler are moving the house that was formerly owned and occupied by my brother-in-law, Raymond Wagler, (1913-1980). This house was in recent years occupied by the Philip and Rose Ella Wagler family. Their son, Marcus, grew up here at 8803 South Herren Road, Partridge.

Now Marcus is having this house moved a few feet west. But why move it at all and why for such a short distance?

The story goes back farther than when his grandfather, Raymond Wagler, bought the property about 80 years ago. This well-built house was probably several decades old when Raymond bought it. I doubt that Marcus would be moving it now if the original builder had placed it just two feet differently. It's not the short distance *horizontally* it's being moved (onto new basement walls) that matters, it's the very short distance *vertically* that's important. Placing it two feet higher then would have eliminated the work that Marcus now had to do.

I'm giving the information the

house mover gave me about the situation he's been hired to help fix. He believes that if the house had been placed higher with the ground surrounding it sloped away from the house, water would not have pooled behind the basement walls and so they would likely not have caved in. As it was, some walls have buckled and the basement has become dank and marginally useful.

Lest this essay becomes a second-rate attempt at designing basements, let us consider a more important foundation—Jesus Christ, the foundation of saving faith.

Foundations of Faith

When Jesus was coming to the end of the Sermon on the Mount, He called attention to the need for a firm foundation of faith. A storm destroys a house on a poor foundation, but a similar structure on a good foundation stands strong.

A primary foundation of the Christian faith is the absolute trustworthiness of the Holy Scriptures. Daniel Kauffman tells of an agnostic standing at the grave of his brother. The agnostic was giving a touching oration, but when he came to the

question: “If a man die, shall he live again?” He offered this answer, “**Hope says ‘Yes,’ Reason says, ‘Perhaps.’**” (*Doctrines of the Bible*, page 126)

God, who cannot lie, has not left Himself without witnesses. He has made a way so that no one need to come to the end of life saying, “Perhaps.” He offers a buckle-proof foundation for faith. Here are several that Kauffman noted, with my comments added.

The Written Word makes frequent mention of “Thus saith the LORD,” “Saith God,” “The Lord said,” and, “God said.” This precious book explains many mysteries, but we must believe them. Doubt weakens saving faith. Half belief added to half doubt does not total a living hope for life after death.

The Book of Nature gives us evidence of a Being so vastly beyond us that we can best describe it as indescribable. Think of the mysteries of earth, of the wonders of the heavens—and marvel. Think of the record found in archeology, or the predictability of scientific experiments—and make logical conclusions. Think of the succession of the generations—and stop thinking man can improve on God’s design. The book of nature gives us many faith prompters. “Doth not even nature itself teach you?” Paul asks in the context of God’s design for man and woman. (1 Cor. 11:14a)

The Holy Spirit reveals things that the natural man finds hard to grasp. The Holy Spirit indwells the heart of the believer and gives him/her insight into the Word of God in matters that make very little sense to the unconverted mind (1 Cor. 2:14-16).

The Angels are active in the lives of those who faithfully serve God. Children have angels that watch over them (Matt. 19:10). Angels also minister to us as adults who “shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 2:14).

Visions and Dreams are used by God to reveal His will for man (Acts 2:17, 18). Clear instances in Scripture abound. While dreams are not predictable or authoritative, they are useful to those who earnestly seek God’s will. We can safely take clues from vivid impressions that God is giving us direction. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 7:7)

Through faith we experience what God is asking us to do and believe. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God though our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1,2). The Psalmist, who invites taking a step of faith, said, “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him” (Psalm 34:8 NKJV).

The foundation of The Faith is

built on the Apostles and Prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself the Chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20, 21). A Gospel song describes it well when we build on the right foundation:

• “How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord

Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!

What more can He say than to you He hath said To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?” (Author Unknown)

The Bible is God’s Word to us. It is reliable for facts. Let us not read it simply for objective fact to fill our heads, but let us respond with our hearts to “the love that drew salvation’s

plan.” The following song proclaims the truth about the only firm faith foundation. :

• “My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ the Solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.”

(Edward Mote)

It is abundantly clear! We wisely and safely build our lives on the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Prophets and Apostles declare to be the central Character of the Holy Scriptures!

-PLM



reader response

Re: The Elephant Called Sports, (Dec., page 25)

I confess to my shame that though I have been thinking of writing this for some time, I’ve been nearly three months in getting around to it. However, here I am at last and this is what I want to say: Thank You, Mr. Yutzy, for your thought-provoking (and sometimes toe-bruising) Youth Messages. As I read the December issue, I was struck especially by the importance of using time wisely and of living in reality, not fantasy. Though my personal Escape Mode is not sports, but reading, I think

we do well to be wary of any activity that pulls us away from real life and real relationships with real people—and with our Real God. Thank you again for the excellent food for thought.

Hannah Nisly,
Altamont, KS

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Re: Joy—Confidence in God, (Dec., page 2)

I would like to see someone respond about how they maintain joy and victory in spite of severe, unrelenting, 24/7 pain.

—Anonymous



Homework—How Important Is It?

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

To get a grip on this article, you really need to read the letter to the editor in the September, 2015, of *Calvary Messenger*. An anonymous mom, a precious soul who deserves having us listen with our hearts, is addressing us men—dads in particular. She is representative of other moms, perhaps not a few.

The family landscape has changed quite dramatically in the last 60 years, two full generations. Economic forces have been one of the forces propelling change. Church life has changed, bringing on new programs that require much time and energy—and some money. Vocations have gradually changed from farming to business and manufacturing. Some moms have businesses of their own that has brought its share of tensions and problems.

Education has changed. The expectations for life improvement are supposed to call for change.

The agenda for change has been minutely incremental. It is another one of those situations where we can control the sowing, but we cannot control the reaping.

Part of the harvest is what many parents seem to prefer. This past generation has relinquished the home as number one in favor of surrender to the interests of our school's overall program. These changes have come slowly and have produced a current network of the school's demands for the student's energy, time and aspiration. But it puts the school ahead of the home and the church. I fear that this is where most of our homes now find themselves.

Some readers will experience big-time resistance at this point. We do not seem to be in position to discuss how we got to where we are. No one is eager to hear of failure. We may be too set in our ways to do anything about possible corrections and needed changes. The past is seen as

old-fashioned.

Church life, as we have known it, has been good. We like to think that in the present circumstances everyone is doing his best and surely our best needs little or no improvement.

There are sons who do not have a strong relationship with Dad. There are disappointed people who leave our churches. The relationship lack in some of our homes cannot be adequately addressed much beyond what we are doing now.

The sister suggests more information. I doubt that more information will achieve the results desired: that we have our sons and daughters walking in the footsteps of Dad and Mom, and church leaders. Books and seminars and DVD's and computer programs have brought an information explosion, and in some cases, a mind-boggling overload. Information is certainly helpful when it is needed. Change is helpful when it deepens practical piety.

At times the mind appears to be overdeveloped and the heart under-achieved. For nine months of the year, the child has an unseen master. It is there when he goes to sleep and too often on his mind when he wakes up.

Here is my proposition to our

readership in response to the unnamed sister whose letter was printed in the September, 2015, issue of *Calvary Messenger*.

My dear brothers and sisters, our schools give students too much homework.

This is not an untested idea, or one freshly produced this year. It filters down from educational institutions who prepare our principals and teachers, who hand out nearly daily homework. It is how we have always done it, they say. Hold it right there. It is not how we have always done it. Our seven children were born in a span of 21 years. They were in school from 1965 to 2000. Homework was ramped up unbelievably in those 35 years.

Parent-teacher meetings are a time to share interest and concerns. Speaking about our growing concern about the increase of homework was not well received. In exchange, we were lightly ridiculed and asked to accept that this is the way it is now done.

If we wished to have some family activity as parents and adolescents, it was "homework due tomorrow morning" that came first. If it was a visit to Grandpas, or some family excursion, it needed to be fitted around homework. Bible study, revival meetings, church's

instruction class, youth ball games, some family member's birthday party, Sunday School class activity or an evening at the teacher's house, or whatever, "If you can't do the homework after school, you can always do some before going to bed and some in the morning before going to school."

Homework—the Silent Master in the home!

Homework is work, to be sure. Therefore, in our past, student's school homework was not allowed to be done on Sunday. But since the end justifies the means, if homework needs to be done on Sunday, so be it. It must be done, however it can be worked in. School work is the Lord's work so get with it. Unfinished homework has consequences. In one school, Dad must come in at the day's close of school to be with his child until it is done. Imagine what that would do to our work day.

Dad can't understand why the teacher doesn't teach this in school. The teacher doesn't understand why Dad doesn't just make his son do it at home. The son grows up feeling some disconnect to Christian authority. The teacher unloads homework on the student. *If the student would just apply himself like I did in school*, the teacher thinks, *he surely would find homework a*

breeze. Maybe that's why several teachers I know stopped teaching and went into full-time work with computers.

Teachers are typically high in academics. We tend to relate our expectations of others to our own achievements. I plead guilty here. My tests at Calvary Bible School were hard. I graded on the curve to give students respectable scores. Our Bible school teachers were encouraged to increase homework with this, "Too much free time is not good." A student needs a healthy percentage of free time.

Going back to the authority issue—the very critical years of childhood and adolescence are spoiled beyond repair at times. Instead of Dad and son being courageous and bonded partners, they become adversaries. Sons and daughters may assume there is no need to walk in Dad's footsteps, which were to be in stride with the school and the church, in that order.

We have had a front seat in this transition in the last 35 years of the 1900's. I served for many years on the boards of our elementary school, our high school, and Calvary Bible School. I have been and continue to be a strong proponent of education and acquiring practical knowledge. I was one of the founders of our high

school 40 years ago, and we had all seven of our children attending. I have seen the bent toward more professionalism, forwarded in part by higher up institutions that prepare teachers and administrators to lead and to teach. There is also the peer pressure coming from other Christian schools.

The schools do not necessarily intend to be number one in the life of the child and adolescent, but it still seems to come out that way. We still say, the home was intended by God to be number one. We propose that school work may at times spill over into Saturday and even Sunday, to be sure that schoolwork is ready for Monday morning. We are not proposing that we drop all homework. There is a lot of space between none and too much. We cannot whet a person's appetite for him.

No human institution is perfect. Having options seemed to be just what we were looking for when the Christian school movement was begun. When the home schooling movement began, I was grieved over it as being second best. Now, I am more and more favorable to it when parents choose it. Having a Christian school where all the congregation's children attend, however, is still this writer's ideal.

A recent article in a Lancaster newspaper indicates that public schools are finding that their homework demands are excessive and not bringing desired results. One parent requested complete freedom from homework. "I felt that my daughter was doing quite fine in school and that 10 to 20 minutes of homework was not accomplishing anything." The teacher approved and she believes it "represents one small step for a movement slowly gaining momentum in schools across the country: questioning, scaling back, or in a handful of schools, even eliminating the nightly homework ritual once thought of as all-American...."

The Bottom Line is that the sister who wrote to *Calvary Messenger* has asked for pertinent input. Our freedom in journalism is limited to share problems, but more limited in discussing possible remedies. This writing is but one aspect of today's father-son disconnect. Information is helpful only if it helps in taking steps to needed change. Academic overloads can sour personal inquiry. There is also a place to pursue a general learning experience wherein more of our students could apply themselves to learning after graduation. 

Announcement

Letter from the Board to the Ministers of the Beachy Constituency

December 28, 2015

Brethren, as you may recall, the 2015 annual Ministers Meeting, the request from Ivan Beachy to be replaced as the AMA secretary was shared with the ministerial body. AMA by-laws state that the board is to appoint someone to this position.

Secretary/Treasurer: A successor shall be appointed by the remaining board members, giving opportunity for approval by the home church. Once approved there, this shall be presented at the next annual meeting of the Amish Mennonite Aid and will need to a 75% affirmation vote to become effective.

Ronald Miller, Oswego, Kansas, has been asked to serve in this capacity. With the support of his family and home church, he has consented to take on this work. The board is expecting Ronald to assume this role full-time beginning January 1, 2016.

This information was shared with the bishops who attended the recent bishops meeting at Penn Valley in November, They unanimously supported this action.

We as an AMA board will be seeking full ratification from you all of this appointment at the April, 2016, Ministers Meeting.

We invite your response/concerns regarding this appointment. If you wish to affirm this appointment via email, you would be welcome to do that as well.

Because of Him,

Philip Beachy, Chairman

Jonas Beiler, Vice-chairman

Ivan Beachy, Secretary-treasurer

Paul Beachy, Member

Mark Wagler, Member



A Story of Eternal Perspective

Aggie Hurst

Back in 1921, a missionary couple named David and Svea Flood went with their two-year-old son, from Sweden to Africa—to what was then called the Belgian Congo. They met up with another young Scandinavian couple, the Ericksons, and the four of them sought God for direction. In those days of much tenderness and devotion and sacrifice, they felt led of the Lord to go out from the main mission station and take the Gospel to a remote area.

This was a huge step of faith. At the village of N'dolera they were rebuffed by the chief, who would not let them enter his town for fear of alienating the local gods. The two couples opted to go half a mile up the slope and build their own mud huts.

They prayed for a spiritual breakthrough, but there was none. The only contact with the villagers was a young boy, who was allowed to sell them chickens and eggs twice a week. Svea Flood, a tiny woman of only four feet, eight inches tall, decided that if this was the only African she could talk to, she would try to lead the boy to Jesus. And in fact, she succeeded.

But there were no other encouragements. Meanwhile, malaria continued to strike one member of the little band after another. In time, the Ericksons decided they had had enough

suffering and left to return to the central mission station. David and Svea Flood remained near N'dolera to go on alone.

Then, of all things, Svea found herself pregnant in the middle of the primitive wilderness. When the time came for her to give birth, the village chief softened enough to allow a midwife to help her. A little girl was born, whom they named Aina.

The delivery, however, was exhausting, and Svea Flood was already weak from bouts of malaria. The birth process was a heavy blow to her stamina. She lasted only another seventeen days.

Inside David Flood in that moment, something snapped. He dug a crude grave, buried his twenty-seven-year-old wife, and then took his children back down the mountain to the mission station. Giving his newborn daughter to the Ericksons, he snarled, "I'm going back to Sweden. I've lost my wife, and I obviously can't take care of this baby. God has ruined my life" With that, he headed for the port, rejecting not only his calling, but God Himself.

Within eight months both the Ericksons were stricken with a mysterious malady and died within days of each other. The baby was then turned over to some American missionaries, who adjusted her Swedish name to "Aggie" and eventually brought her back to the United States at age three.

This family loved the little girl and was afraid that if they tried to return to Africa, some legal obstacle might separate her from them. So they decided to stay in their home country and switch from missionary work to pastoral ministry. And that is how Aggie grew up in South Dakota. As a young woman, she attended North Central Bible College in Minneapolis. There she met and married a young man named Dewey Hurst.

Years passed. The Hursts enjoyed a fruitful ministry. Aggie gave birth first to a daughter, then a son; In time her husband became president of a Christian college in the Seattle area, and Aggie was intrigued to find so much Scandinavian heritage there.

One day a Swedish religious magazine appeared in her mailbox. She had no idea who had sent it, and of course, she couldn't read the words. But as she turned the pages, all of a sudden a photo stopped her cold. There in a primitive setting was a grave with a white cross and on the cross was the name, SVEA FLOOD.

Aggie jumped in her car and went straight to a college faculty member who, she knew, could translate the article. "What does this say?" she demanded.

The instructor summarized the story: It was about missionaries who came to N'dolera long ago...the birth of a white baby...the death of the young mother... the one little African boy who had been led to Christ...and how, after the whites had all left, the boy had grown

up and finally persuaded the chief to let him build a school in the village. The article said that gradually he won all his students to Christ...the children led their parents to Christ...even the chief had become a Christian. Today there were six hundred believers in that one village—all because of the sacrifice of David and Svea Flood.

For the Hurst's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, the college presented them with the gift of a vacation to Sweden. There Aggie sought to find her birth father. An old man now, David Flood had remarried, fathered four more children, and generally dissipated his life with alcohol. He had recently suffered a stroke. Still bitter, he had one rule in his family: "Never mention the name of God—because God took everything from me."

After an emotional reunion with her half-brothers and half sister, Aggie brought up the subject of seeing her father. The others hesitated, "You can talk to him," they replied, "even though he's very ill now. But you need to know that whenever he hears the name of God, he flies into a rage."

Aggie was not to be deterred. She walked into the squalid apartment, with liquor bottles everywhere, and approached the seventy-three-year-old man lying in a rumpled bed.

"Papa?" she said tentatively.

He turned and began to cry. "Aina," he said, "I never meant to give you away."

"It's all right, Papa," she replied, taking him gently in her arms. "God took care of me."

The man instantly stiffened. His ears stopped. “God forgot all of us. Our lives have been like this because of Him.” He turned his face back to the wall.

Aggie stroked his face and then continued, undaunted. “Papa, I’ve got a little story to tell you, and it’s a true one. You didn’t go to Africa in vain. Mama didn’t die in vain. The little boy you won to the Lord grew up to win that whole village to Jesus Christ. The one seed you planted just kept growing and growing. Today there are six hundred African people serving the Lord because you were faithful to the call of God in your life. Papa, Jesus loves you. He has never hated you.”

The old man turned back to look into his daughter’s eyes. His body relaxed. He began to talk. And by the end of the afternoon, he had come back to the God he had resented for so many decades.

Over the next few days, father and daughter enjoyed warm moments together. Aggie and her husband soon had to return to America—and within a few weeks, David Flood went into eternity.

A few years later, the Hursts were attending a high-level evangelism conference in London, England, where a report was given from the nation of Zaire (the former Belgian Congo). The superintendent of the national church, representing some 110,000 baptized believers, spoke eloquently of the Gospel’s spread in his region. Aggie could not help going to ask him afterward if he had ever heard of David and Svea Flood.

“Yes, madam,” the man replied in French, his words then being translated into English. “It was Svea Flood who led me to Jesus Christ. I was the boy who brought food to your parents before you were born. In fact, to this day, your mother’s grave and her memory are honored by all of us.”

He embraced her in a long, sobbing hug. Then he continued, “You must come to Africa to see, because your mother is the most famous person in our history.”

In time that is exactly what Aggie Hurst and her husband did. They were welcomed by cheering throngs of villagers. She even met the man who had been hired by her father many years before to carry her back down the mountain in a hammock-cradle.

The most dramatic moment, of course, was when the pastor escorted Aggie to see her mother’s white cross for herself. She knelt in the soil to pray and give thanks.

Later that day, in the church, the pastor read from John 12:24, **“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”** He then followed with Psalm 126:5, **“Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.”**

(An excerpt from Aggie Hurst, Aggie: The Inspiring Story of a Girl Without a Country [Springfield, MO. Gospel Publishing House, 1986.] Submitted to Calvary Messenger by Rachel Yoder, Partridge, KS. Used by permission.)



The Sin of Sodom

Pete Lewis, Halsey, OR

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness...neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy” (Ezekiel 16:49).

The destruction of Sodom is usually considered the result of gross moral decadence through a perversion that has gained widespread acceptance today. However, the verse above indicates that this moral depravity was simply a natural outcome of other sins that are often considered less despicable.

Pride is essentially the exaltation of self. It caused the downfall of Lucifer, King Saul, Nebuchadnezzar, and a host of other Bible characters. How does pride affect us? Are we *thankful* for our material blessings, our families, or knowledge of Scripture, our position in the church? Or are we *proud* of these? There is a big difference, depending on where our focus is.

Fulness of bread is something that nearly all Americans can identify with, since most suffer no lack of food. How is it with us personally in

a nation where obesity is rampant? Do we *eat to live* or *live to eat*? Temperance in appetite is a virtue, but overindulgence easily leads to the sin of gluttony.

Abundance of idleness is common among those who view food, shelter, clothing as inalienable rights, whether or not they work. This entitlement mentality is a national disgrace. Leisure and recreation are right in their proper place, but too often they become a substitute for a work ethic of honest productivity.

Are luxuries justifiable simply because we can afford them, or would a more frugal lifestyle allow us to be more generous with our natural blessings? While the surface sin of Sodom is certainly repulsive, let us beware lest the foundation of that sin is established in our own hearts through these more insidious sins.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves...” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

[From *Beside the Still Waters*, Dec. 26, 2015. Used by permission of the writer.]



marriages

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

Albrecht-Byler

Bro. Adrian Mark, son of Lloyd and Kathryn [Irene deceased] Albrecht, Brunner, ON, and Sis. Regina Darlene, daughter of Louis and Darlene Byler, Milverton, ON, on Dec. 12, 2015, at Faith Mennonite Church for Fairhaven A.M. Church by Arnold Jantzi.

Miller-Miller

Bro. John Austin, son of Paul and Irma Miller, Newcomerstown, OH, and Sis. Marita Faye, daughter of Marion and Marlene Miller, Quaker City, OH, on Aug. 1, 2015, at First Baptist Church for Heritage Mennonite Church, by Roman Mullet.

Stoltzfus-Kreider

Bro. Brendon, son of Tim and Sara Stoltzfus, Harrison, AR, and Sis. Jenna, daughter of Curvin and Mary Lee Kreider, Squaw Valley, CA, at Tabernacle of Praise Church for Sequoia Bible Fellowship, Squaw Valley, CA, on Nov. 21, 2015, by Roland Ulrich. 

cradle roll

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

Auker, Mark and Barbie (Zimmerman), Harrison, AR, seventh child, fourth son, Karlis Joel, Nov. 12, 2015.

Correction: **Bender**, Javan and Melody (Petersheim), Abbeville, SC, third child, second son, Hudson Lee, August 14, 2015.

Bowser, Justin and Clarissa (Musser), Harrison, AR, fifth child, second son, Titus Grant, Nov. 11, 2015.

Chupp, Andrew and Michelle (Landis), Eden Valley, MN, second child and son, Timothy Stanford, Dec. 18, 2015.

Gerber, Daniel and Renita (Wagler), Millbank, ON, second child and son, Eric Timothy, Oct. 8, 2015.

Goff, Keyron and Janelle (Yoder), Double Head Cabbage, Belize, first child and daughter, Jazlynn Reanne, Dec. 4, 2015.

Hostetler, Leon and Melody (Beachy), Auburn, KY, second child, first daughter, Jasmine Leigh, Dec. 8, 2015.

Kauffman, Vincent and Rachel (Petersheim), Mill Hall, PA, fourth child, second daughter, Kaitlyn Cherise, Sept. 3, 2015.

Kleiner, George and Malinda (Yoder), Aroda, VA, second child and son, Carson George, Sept. 29, 2015.

Knepp, Randall and Emily (Graber), Odon, IN, first child and daughter, McKenna Lynn, Sept. 30, 2015.

Lapp, Curtis and Ella Mae (Wagler), Kinzers, PA, fourth child, third daughter, Marian Elise, Oct. 23, 2015.

Martin, Kendan and Meredith (Troyer), Aroda, VA, first child and son, David Bryce, Nov. 10, 2015.

Miller, Dennis and Betty (Miller), Dundee, OH, fourth child, second son, Jerrel, Nov. 1, 2015.

Miller, Jason and Heidi (Beachy), Shreve, OH, first child and daughter, Myla Kadence, Dec. 22, 2015.

Miller, Joshua and Olya (Bernyk), Millersburg, OH, first child and son, Jackson Joshua, Dec. 10, 2015.

Miller, Leander and Emma Marie (Overholt), Kalona, IA, sixth child, second daughter, Tonya Dawn, Sept. 11, 2015.

Overholt, John II and Heidi (Kuepfer), Amanda, OH, second child and son, John Martin III, Nov. 18, 2015.

Schapansky, Jacob and Rosanna (Sensenig), Bastrop, TX, first child and son, Kyle Trace, Dec. 11, 2015.

Stoll, Eric and Frieda (Smoker), Pulaski, TN, second child, first daughter, Heather Abigail, Oct. 23, 2015.

Stoll, Jeff and Hannah (Graber), Montgomery, IN, fourth child, second daughter, Serena Marie, Nov. 13, 2015.

Stoltzfus, Arlen and Angie (Stoltzfus), Morgantown, PA, second child, first son, Logan Myles, Dec. 12, 2015.

Troyer, Jerry and Jana (Miller), Titanyen, Haiti, fifth child, second son, Alex Bradley, Dec. 13, 2015.

Wagler, Bryan and Maria (Yoder), Cedar Creek, TX, (serving in Nakuru, Kenya), third child and son, Jethro Elliot, Dec. 5, 2015.

Wagler, Dave and Hannah (Yoder), Lyndon, KS, fourth child, third daughter, Amanda Sue, Nov. 27, 2015.

Weirich, Joel and Stephanie (Yoder), Aroda, VA, second child, first son, Lincoln Chad, Oct. 13, 2015.

Yoder, Joshua and Mary Ann (Yoder), Owenton, KY, seventh child, fourth daughter, Harmony Elaine, Nov. 29, 2015.

Yoder, Marlin and Anna (Raber), Cedar Creek, TX (serving in Nakuru, Kenya), seventh child, sixth daughter, Annastacia Rayanne, Dec. 4, 2015.

Yoder, Wendal and LaRhea (Stutzman), Leon, IA, second child, first son, ~~Michael~~ William, Nov. 24, 2015.



ordinations

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

Correction: **Bro. Javan Bender**, 34, (wife: Melody Petersheim), Abbeville, SC, was ordained as deacon at Cold Spring Mennonite Church on June 14, 2015.

Bro. Scott Burkholder, 34 (wife: Suzanne Troyer), was ordained as minister at Clay Street Mennonite Church, Bourbon, IN, on Dec. 6, 2015. Preordination messages were given by Tom Wagler, Hartville, OH. The charge was given by his father, Wade Burkholder, assisted by Tom Wagler and Virgil Hershberger. Sharing the lot were Tony Burkholder and Leon Troyer.

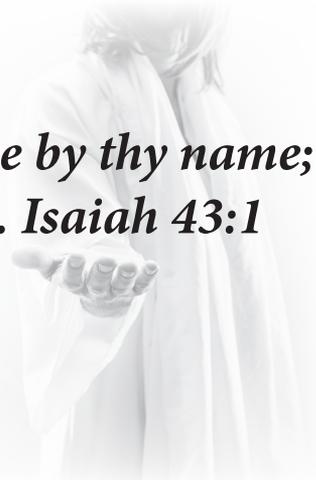
Bro. Kevin Miller, 44, (wife: Christina Yoder) was ordained as deacon for Lyndon Amish Mennonite Church, Lyndon, KS, on November 15, 2015. Preordination messages were brought by Jimmy Williams, Goodspring, TN. The charge was given by Rudy Overholt. Lester Wagler was also in the lot.

Bro. Jonathan Raber, 46, (wife, Susan Kauffman), Quaker City, OH, was ordained as bishop at Heritage Mennonite Church on Nov. 22, 2015. Preordination messages were given by Phil Miller, Dundee, OH. The charge was given by Roman Mullet, assisted by Bobby Miller and Paul L. Miller.

Bro. Luke Troyer, 34, (wife: Mary Ellen Swarey) was ordained as bishop on Nov. 22, 2015, at Plainview Mennonite Church, Auburn, KY. Michael Mast and Steve Miller were also in the lot. The charge was given by Raymond Fisher, assisted by John Mast and Rudy Overholt.



*I have called thee by thy name;
thou art mine. Isaiah 43:1*



Erb, Katherine (Zehr), 85, died Nov. 25, 2015. She was born in Wellesley Twp., April 26, 1930, daughter of the late Amos and Nancy (Steckly) Zehr.

She was baptized in 1946, and was a faithful member of the Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite congregation.

On July 25, 1981, she was married to Cornelius Erb. He died May 31, 2000. Survivors include a step-son, Wayne (Shirley) Erb, Milverton; a step-daughter, Nina (Marvin) Jantzi, Wellesley; one step son-in-law, Joe (Sharon) Gerber, Wellesley; 19 step-grandchildren, and 23 step great grandchildren. Other survivors include her brother, Joe (Deborah) Zehr, Millbank; her sister-in-law, Erma Zehr, Brunner; her brother-in-law, Allen Erb, Wellesley; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her step daughter, Shirley Gerber in 1994 and her brother, Mervin Zehr in 1987.

The funeral was held on Nov. 29, with Paul Zehr and John Gerber serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Miller, Edwin L, 94, died Dec. 4, 2015, at Mennonite Friendship Communities, South Hutchinson, KS. He was born in rural Hutchinson August 25, 1921, son of the late Levi

D. and Clara (Nisly) Miller. Cause of death was a prolonged struggle with Parkinson's Disease.

He was a member of Center A.M. Church, Hutchinson.

On April 25, 1946, he was married to Nellie Miller at Middlebury, IN. She died Sept. 27, 2009. Surviving are children and spouses: Marlin (Trudy), Hutchinson; Valetta (Vernon) Yoder, Plain City, OH; Omar (Elsie), Harrison, AR; Orville (Mary Jane), Hutchinson; Leanna (Rod) Chrystie, Hutchinson; and Howard (Diana), Wichita, KS; siblings: Willis (Susie), Hutchinson; Elizabeth Wagler, Partridge; Perry (Judy), Hutchinson; David L., Partridge; Mary (Joseph) Beachy, Kalona, IA; Mahlon (Fannie), Hutchinson; Paul (Martha), Partridge; Fred, South Hutchinson; and Emma (Oliver) Troyer, Partridge; sisters-in-law, Orpha Miller, Arlington and Anne Miller, Harrisonburg, VA; 19 grandchildren; 32 great grandchildren; and three great great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by three infant children, Loretta, Raymond and Wilbur; and brothers, Daniel and Harry.

The funeral was held on Dec. 7, with David Yoder, and LaVerne Miller serving. Paul Miller conducted the committal at West Center Cemetery. 

Another Look at the Anabaptist Vision” is an article written by an Amish minister, Robert Schlabach. Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario, took notice that the booklet that comprised an address, “The Anabaptist Vision” which Harold S. Bender (1897-1962) gave in 1942 and is since available as a 44-page booklet from Herald Press. Bender is remembered as a very intelligent person. He was scholarly, but also had a gift of communication that ordinary people could understand.

Paul Emerson, editor of *The Sword and Trumpet*, makes this statement in a recent editorial: “Great care must be taken in the handling of God’s Word. It cannot be left to the intellectuals. The common Christian must be encouraged to read and understand the Scriptures with the aid of the Holy Spirit.” I take this to mean that scholarship need not be despised, but that it should not get in the way of the obvious and simple meaning of Scripture.

Back to Bro. Schlabach’s article: “Another Look at the Anabaptist Vision” takes a closer look at Harold

Bender and his, wife, Elizabeth (Horsch). An honest look need not be unkind and is sometimes in order. Bender married a daughter of John Horsch, who is the author of a book about the history of European Mennonites. I remember hearing Bishop Elmer Swartzentruber refer to Horsch as the outstanding Mennonite historian of his generation.

One major thrust of Horsch’s book is quite simply that when Mennonites in Europe abandoned a practical nonconformity, the loss of Christian nonresistance followed. The result was that they were eventually absorbed into their cultural surroundings.

Rob Schlabach does not find fault with Bender’s work in “The Anabaptist Vision,” but he does not see him or his wife as role models that we can always safely follow. Bender’s legacy is not in the area of practical, visual nonconformity. It is doubtful that John Horsch would have approved of his daughter not wearing a Christian woman’s head covering.

Trying to sum up the concern of the foregoing comments: The insights and expressions of persons with outstanding intellectual

and communication gifting may sometimes be helpful. But such expressions are reliable only as they support and encourage a response of humble obedience from us ordinary people.



The Christian’s response to the authority of the Word may seem like “a cracked record” to readers of this column. But that idea isolated from the bigger picture can be misleading. What about a church member who considers any requirement not specifically mentioned in Scripture as an imposition and not acceptable? Such reasoning quite simply does not seem to be take into account that Christian principles are sometimes general, but require specific expression and application. Tobacco use is not specifically mentioned in the Bible, but we would surely agree that Christians have good reasons to consider it objectionable.

Is it not true that a vocal insistence for specific mention of practices may be but a poorly disguised push for cultural integration? It may at the same time violate some very obvious Christian virtues, such as humility and brotherly love.



Has it ever occurred to you that we may unwittingly be a bit selective in our application of nonconformity? It

is true that in one sense the matter of finances and stewardship is a personal matter. It has been observed that the nerve connected to our wallets and finances is very sensitive. The right use of money is right and necessary. Undue attachment to that which is called “unrighteous mammon” and “filthy lucre” is a fatal mistake.

Two recent incidents influenced me to touch this subject in this column. One was when the young bishop of our local Arlington church, Arlen Mast, recently preached for us at Center church. His kind and candid treatment of this subject was refreshing. Our Lord and the Apostles offer an abundance of practical guidance on this important subject.

The other factor that urged me toward touching this subject was part of a newsletter from a long-time acquaintance, a Christian businessman, named Jim Petty, Pryor, OK. The newsletter regularly includes a meditation not related to products which his organization markets. He says that at this time they have no aspirations toward MORE. In fact, he says, “We do our best to refrain from the desire for MORE. For too many years our lives were spent with MORE being our focus. As a young man, it was more cattle, more ranching empire—more of everything...Why does one need to get this old before

realizing the dangers of MORE?"

To me the moral of Jim Petty's story is that the unbridled MORE philosophy is actually covetousness. It can be countered by having the wisdom sometime to say, "This is enough."

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Our local congregation operates almost entirely by free-will offerings. 2 Corinthians 8 also appeals to people's free will, but does acknowledge that if there are those who are able, they should share so that there may be equality

I don't know if this teaching influenced the plans of a certain congregation anticipating improvements to the church building. They came up the idea that if every male member were to disclose his financial worth and contribute accordingly, that would be a fair way of funding the project.

This plan became a non-issue when a certain brother agreed to fund the entire project. Whether this was pure generosity or partly protecting his well-guarded secret, God only knows.

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Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute (SMBI) has been offering a short-term missionary training program WATER for a number of years. It offers first-hand experience on the mission field. A current mailing presents 82

openings at 25 foreign locations and 32 openings at domestic locations. SMBI's phone: 717-485-4341.

-DLM

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Last fall the FDA overturned a 30-year ban on gay men donating blood with some stipulations, which include no behavior that would put them at elevated risk for acquiring the HIV virus that causes AIDS.

In 1989, my wife received several pints of blood to jump start her recovery after malaria and its effects had left her too weak to bounce back. The effect of the new blood in her system was evident within an hour of beginning the transfusion and her recovery proceeded normally after that. I was amazed!

I donated blood a number of times, and wish I still could, but since I was diagnosed with hepatitis some 25-30 years ago, I am disqualified. Many of you donate regularly. Once in a while donors have the opportunity to give to the need of a specific person. Usually our donations go to the blood bank to be used wherever needed. I'm not aware of any moral dilemma that blood donation brings.

If you are already giving blood, keep it up. If not, and your blood qualifies, please consider sharing. It could save someone's life, and your body will simply generate more blood to

replace what you give away. Wouldn't it be wonderful if Christians would be known as blood donors?

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In 2002, the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church merged to form Mennonite Church USA, often referred to as MC USA. At MC USA's biennial conference in Kansas City last summer, the delegates passed two resolutions related to same-sex marriage. One of them affirmed the denomination's membership guidelines that affirm traditional marriage as being between a man and a woman. The other resolution urged forbearance toward those who differ with the official position. Several conferences within MC USA have voted to withdraw from MC USA largely as a result of this issue, including the largest conference, Lancaster Conference. Some concerned congregations have organized themselves, using a combination of the words "evangelical" and "Anabaptist." Their name: "Evana Network."

A mere thirteen or fourteen years have passed since the birth of MC USA with all its optimism and willingness to lay aside differences to work together. Now it is splintering under the weight of its own disagreements.

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Do you see something as being valuable because of its function or its form? Is it usefulness or beauty that determines its worth? Generally speaking, we conservative Anabaptists see a high correlation between value and function. However, there is considerable variety among us in how justified we feel in cultivating various types of beauty—like home décor, clothing, music and singing, vehicles, landscaping, architecture—the list goes on.

The Scriptures warn us about the dangers of ostentation. On the one hand, God is the author of genuine beauty. Is it okay to cooperate with God in His presentation of beauty? Am I uncomfortable with the arts because I'm so materialistic that I can't understand the value of something that I can't measure in dollars and cents? Is our need to wrestle with these questions simply a result of the intersection of our opportunity to cultivate beauty and the means to do so?

How should those of us who are looking "for a city whose builder and maker is God" understand and cultivate beauty? I hope these questions have the ring of one who wishes to know, rather than one who has found all the answers. I am the former—not the latter.

-RJM



What Your Teachers Wish Parents Knew, but Probably Never Told You—Part Two

Gerald Miller, *Guys Mills, PA*

Over the years, I have found that teachers who stay in the classroom over the long haul feel called to do so and enjoy their work. As with any vocation, though, there are “elephants in the room” that are difficult to talk about. This month, I have chosen to talk some more (A first installment was in November and I failed to get this second part in sooner. I’m sorry! -Editor) about elephants in a particular room—the classroom. Some of the comments are more lighthearted than others. In all of them, I want to be clear that this does not come from a critical spirit or heart. In fact, as a teacher, I do what I do because I have embraced all parts of the work even when it is not as I wish. I am certainly not mapping the following ideas in reference to any particular community or school. I intend this as “food for thought” and “if the shoe fits, wear it.” My goal is to sensitize us as parents (we have children in school, too!) to the challenges of teaching in hopes that we can hear each other better in working together.]

Don’t. Take. Vacations. During. The. School. Year.

While it may feel like it isn’t such a big deal to have only one, or several of your children missing from school, your children are actually very important in the life of the school. Students who are missing from school affect classroom and school culture. Think about how it affects other students when glowing reports from the Bahamas filter back into school. As you might guess, no matter how scintillating mathematics is taught, it is hard for math to compete with snorkeling when a teenager. Absences are unavoidable, and teachers know that. We want to be workable in this area. However, it is also true that schools schedule vacation time during holidays, spring breaks, and three months of summer. Using those breaks for vacation time is a real gift. Something parents often don’t think about: there is significantly extra work for teachers when a student is absent. At the least, slip them some cash for the extra work longer absences create (even

for legitimate absences).

Oh, and one other thing, Your children watch your priorities.

Create schedules that allow for adequate sleep and rest over weekends.

Unlike the popular culture of today, I don't think that Scripture supports the view that Mondays are the worst day of the week, especially given the fact that human beings were created to work (Yes, even in the Garden of Eden!). And unlike the cartoon character, Garfield, who bemoans the onset of the work week, I think it is something to celebrate. However, Mondays can be challenging at school when children don't get adequate sleep. Students who nod off in class disadvantage themselves. The joy of learning is diminished when the weekend had little sleep as a part of it. Children do best when a semblance of schedule is maintained through the weekend.

Nutrition matters.

When it is snack time for younger children, consider packing carrot or celery sticks or something with protein. Your children would rather have Twinkies. But it makes them really hungry an hour later. And, feeding them sugar doesn't seem to have the same effect in the classroom (think energy) as offering something with nutrition. Oh, and it doesn't hurt if they eat breakfast before they

come as well. When they are starving at 9:00, we've got a long morning ahead of us.

Monitor your child's homework.

Believe it or not, homework is not given to terrorize families, nor to make it difficult to have a family life. A suggestion here: hold your children accountable for their use of time at school. Consider this exchange:

Parent: "Why do you have homework tonight?"

Child: "I don't know. I just got a lot of homework. The teachers are making us work too hard."

Parent: "Did you make good use of your time today?"

Child: "Oh, yeah. Well, a few times I wasn't doing as much as I could have, but..."

[Parent calls teacher.]

Parent: "Mr. Teacher, we're wondering if our son actually has a lot of homework, or if he is not making good use of his time." You might be surprised by what you learn from a teacher if you make that phone call!

It is best to not just give the answers to homework your child brings home. It really doesn't benefit the child when you do his homework for him/her. Rather, create space for it. As teachers, we want our students to learn and get the full benefit from their school experience. Of course, teachers need to carefully moderate the homework load.

Talk with your children about school.

Tune in to what is really happening at school. It is easy to ask general questions such as “How was your day?” And your children to respond with, “Fine.” But that is not really communicating with your children. Rather, ask specific questions such as: “Who are your friends? What books are you reading? What did you play today? What did you learn in Bible class or science class?”

Communicating with your children about school life demonstrates interest to your family that learning is an important part of growing up. It also makes it easy for children to talk about things they are struggling with. When regular communication is established at an early age, it is far easier to continue communicating as children move through adolescence.

The attitude of the parents really affects children in our classroom.

It is easy to miss how the attitude of the parent shapes a child’s view of the world and learning. This is both wonderful and disconcerting at the same time. Are you aware of the incredible influence you have on your children? For instance, if parents think school is a necessary evil, have you thought about how that impacts your children when they walk through the school doors each morning? Have you thought about how much that will impact your

child’s learning not only this year, but for life?

For a child to engage in 8, 10, or 12 years of schooling while seeing it as a necessary evil is very damaging to the soul of a child. Spending a large number of hours doing something that is “worthless” affects a child deeply, and not for the good.

Teachers wonder, “How do you motivate a student when Dad says, “Oh, my. My teacher never made me do that stuff. You won’t use it anyway. At least not that much or that kind of English.” Or this one, “Algebra? My grandpa died of that.” This turns into a losing battle with your child in the classroom. And far too often, we see the effects in church life. After all, part of loving God is learning more about Him and studying His Word. When our perspective is that learning, study, and education is a necessary evil, we undermine a significant part of what it means to live as believers in brotherhood.

Teaching is an unspeakable joy for those called to it!

I have done other things in life that were easier. But I wouldn’t trade my work as a teacher for anything. Teachers who teach long term (may their tribe increase) don’t do it for the pay. Teachers who teach long term do it for the joy of learning, the joy of seeing students develop into maturity in order to bless their church and community,

and the sense of calling on their life. Teaching is a breathtakingly wonderful opportunity to give back to the churches. And we are (or certainly should be) full of joy to have this opportunity.

Having been in education for twenty years, I have been privileged to watch firsthand the education landscape in our circles. While I desire increased vision for education in our churches, I am blessed by the increased attention being paid

to the education of our children. I am inspired when I consider the potential of the home, church, and school coming together for the sake of training the rising generation for a lifetime of humble service. Parents, you play a foremost role in the shaping of this generation. Your teachers want to partner with you in the growing up of young people to serve God, and to serve others. Let's work together for the sake of Christ and His church!



BOOK REVIEW

James Hershberger, Stuarts Draft, VA

T*he Great and Holy War: How World War I became a Religious Crusade*, by Philip Jenkins, 2014, Harper Collins Publishers. This book documents how religion motivates warfare. For an engaging experience read how each of the major combatant countries instilled in their conscripts their Christian duty to kill fellow Christians in other countries. Pastor Harold Bell Wright said, "A man may give his life for humanity in a bloody trench as truly as upon a bloody cross. The world may be saved somewhere in France as truly as in Palestine." That expression was typical of things being said in Russian, French, German, as well as English.

During World War I, what might be

called "A Christmas Truce" occurred. German and English soldiers first said to each other, "You don't shoot; we don't shoot." Then they came out from their respective death-harboring trenches into a no-man's land. There they exchanged gifts and played games together for days on end. The governments on both sides were alarmed to see their "boys" acting like fellow humans and Christians. Their officials declared, "No more of this! You need to get back to killing each other with bayonets and guns. After all, there is a war to be fought which is your Christian duty."

I was enthralled with Jenkins' book. It brings history to robust life. This distinguished Professor of History and member of the Institute for Studies of

Religion at Baylor University writes, (Martin) “Luther himself denounced the Jews of his day in language so ugly that the Nazis had no need to distort his writing in order to recycle them for their own ends.”

In 500 years of recent history almost all major denominations had their people kill their fellow man. But there were a people as the book, *The Naked Anabaptist*, points out, one denomination that basically stands alone in nearly 500 years of history who do not kill their fellow men—the Mennonites [Anabaptists].” It is sweet to have Jenkins comment, “From the earliest day, some religious leaders spoke resoundingly against the war’s horrors and in some cases against the institution of war itself.

In the Anglo-American world, we hear anti-war sentiments from most of the traditional peace churches, from Quakers and Mennonites... Reluctantly and grudgingly some nations granted conscientious objector status to such believers.”

Many Mennonite and Amish people were tortured by the U.S. military and suffered in World War I when they were drafted into United States army camps, and yet they remained true to Jesus’ teaching of love and nonviolence. This book is one of those lively classics you don’t want to miss reading. It should be available through your local public library. Even if you need to request it through an inter-library loan, it is well worth the effort. 

And What About YOUR Donkey?

Darlene Miller, Linn, MO

Once a man in ancient village,
Where the Mount of Olives lay
Was entreated by two strangers
In a quite presumptuous way.

“Sir,” they said, “give us your donkey,
For our Lord has need of her!”
Graciously, he gave, though surely,
Common sense would not concur.

Did he know the Lord of Glory
On his donkey soon would ride?
Ride in triumph through the city
As the crowds “Hosanna!” cried?

Did he know that with his giving
Prophecies would be fulfilled?
He may not have had an inkling,
Still he gave—as Jesus willed.

What of you—what is YOUR “donkey”?
What has God desired of you?
Time or talents? Love or money?
Service from a heart that’s true?

Have you “donkeys” you still cherish--
Hoarding, keeping selfishly?
God will use them if you give them,
He desires them, you see! 

Victory in Liberia—Part One

Kendra Good

We are fighting a battle. There is a line between God and the devil and there is constant war there. As Christians we need to be aware of this and arm ourselves to take part. Satan doesn't mind at all if we don't know about the battle. It works for his advantage that it is there. The Bible says:

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:12).

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world” (Ephesians 6:12).

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath called him to be a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:4).

We who are born again Christians should never be afraid of the dark world. We are covered by the blood and the devils tremble at the sight of us.

*When we are on God's side, there is **nothing** to fear. The battle is already won!*

In Liberia tucked away in the deep bush of Nimba County lies a village called Schweh. Nimba County is noted for its deep involvement in witchcraft and Schweh was no exception. It was home to some of the highest ranking people in the devil society. If a man wanted to win the position he was running for in an election, he could go to Schweh and pay an exorbitant amount of money to have the chief put his vote in the dark world. It worked every time. If a woman had a

relative she wanted to kill, she could go to Schweh and pay someone to have the person killed. There was power in Schweh.

Dark secrets shadowed the town. Four different pastors had gone to try to witness in Schweh. Each one died shortly afterward. One pastor's wife died. Those who were interested in going to Schweh or had been there, were told to shake the dust from their feet because people could not be saved.

The town was steeped in witchcraft.

From babyhood on, children were introduced to the dark world and its powers. The people lived in fear.

Come with me to Dohn, another remote village in Nimba County, where only a few years ago the devil had free reign. Here men living in Liberia from Christian Aid Ministries (CAM): Steve, Marvin, and James, were preaching the Word of God to the people who had gathered in the village. They preached on Christian living and Christian marriage. After the preaching was over a man by the name of Saye Johnson came forward. He had been living with a woman for years but after hearing the Word of God he was convicted. He wanted to get married. The men told Saye that was good and that he should go ahead. But the woman was from a different village and Saye wanted the evangelists to come and conduct the dowry payment ceremony for him. James agreed to come to the woman's village and attend the dowry payment. The name of that village was Schweh.

“The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12).

James went on the designated day and attended the dowry payment ceremony. After the ceremony, he began preaching the Word of God to the people and praying for them.

Afterward, three men came up to James and said, “The words you spoke touched us. We never heard words like this before. We want a church in this town. Please pray for us that a church could be here one day.”

James left, but the Word of God did not. It took root and sprouted. People were convicted and started confessing their sins. Two girls aged 11 and 13 confessed that they, through witchcraft, had killed the four previous pastors* that came to preach in the village.

**God's power is always stronger than the powers of darkness. The reason the children were able to kill these so-called pastors was because these pastors were living with sin in their lives. They were not covered by the blood of JESUS. You cannot be in darkness and cast out darkness.*

The men who first showed interest after the service in Schweh went to Dohn to tell the pastor there that some children had started confessing things. They begged the evangelists to come back and give them more teaching and guidance.

“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).

So James and some men from the Deeper Life church made

arrangements to conduct a crusade in Schweh. The preaching began on Friday and the pure Word of God was brought forth. The village people watched skeptically. It sounded good but they would see what happens that night. The Evangelists were planning to sleep in the village. No man trying to share the Gospel had ever survived a night in Schweh. If they would be alive in the morning, then the village people would know that these men were working for the true God.

That night the Christians in the town stayed up all night praying and calling on the name of Jesus. Several times during the night those praying saw the demons trying to attack and fear entered their hearts. But each time they called on the name of Jesus and their courage returned.

Those who were involved in the demonic world were up, too. But they were not praying. They were trying their demonic powers to overthrow the believers. The evangelists were up with the rising sun, healthy and strong. A woman admitted, "We thought you pastors that came were just like all those who came before you. But you were different. Last night we saw angels around the whole town. We were not able to do anything."

The attention of the village was captured. Many gave their lives to Christ. Here is the testimony of

12-year-old Blessing Saye, one of the first in Schweh to begin confessing sins.

"When I was just a small girl a man initiated me into witchcraft. First he told me to bring him all my ma's money; so I did. Then he told me to kill my ma. I told him I cannot do that. So he told me to bring some of my ma's clothes. So I brought them back in the witchcraft form and he tied them so that my ma would never have a child again.

"I killed three people. I killed one pastor's wife who came here, and also her ma. Then I killed my cousin. The man ordering me to do all these things told me to do these things so I would get rich."

The pastors told Blessing to kneel down. They laid their hands on her, prayed for the blood of Jesus to save her. While they were praying three people came to Blessing in the witchcraft form, trying to distract her from her prayer. Blessing resisted them in the name of Jesus and the three evil spirits that were living inside her left and entered the people tempting her instead. She was delivered.

"Since that time the evil spirits never came to me at night," Blessing will tell you. *"When I am ready to lie down and sleep I always pray. Those that tempted me before are afraid of me*

now because I am in the church and following Christ.”

Another young man who gave his life to Christ was 16-year-old Penso. When Penso heard the preaching he was convicted and made a commitment to serve God. His parents were angry and afraid at the decision he had made. They were afraid because they had seen what had happened to so many people before who claimed to be Christians. They always died.

Penso’s parents tried to force him to give up his Christianity but he refused, crying, “I want to serve God!”

A few days later Penso was working out in the field with eight other men. The men had a plan. They would poison Penso’s food so he would die. Then they could say that it was the God-business that killed him. So when everyone sat down to eat their meal later that afternoon, the poisoned bowl of rice was handed to Penso. Penso innocently ate the food. Soon he started feeling sick. When the other Christians in the town heard that Penso was sick they alerted the pastors who had been evangelizing the village. The pastors arranged to have Penso sent to a hospital. The Christians in Schweh gathered together and spent the whole night praying. Five Deeper

Life pastors arranged a conference call and prayed for Penso long into the night.

Penso lay sick for a few days then began regaining his strength. In a week’s time he was back to normal. When those who had poisoned Penso saw that he would not die, they were frightened. Truly this God is powerful! Never before had a human been given this poison and lived. They confessed their sins to the village.

For Penso to be healed was a great miracle in the eyes of Schweh. They cannot seem to stop talking about it. His parents turned the boy over to the church leaders and said, “Let him be here. He is the son of the church.”

[To be continued. Used by permission.]



***“The Lord is...
not willing that any
SHOULD PERISH,
but that all should
come to repentance”***

2 Peter 3:9



Open Heart, Open Home

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

One of my favorite books as a young mom was *Open Heart, Open Home*, by Karen Mains. The author is a young pastor's wife who grew up in a home where hospitality was practiced daily. The first chapter begins with the words, "Company's comin'!" Those children responded with happiness and anticipation when their doorbell rang because they knew Mother was excited to welcome guests into her home.

Is that our attitude when guests come to our house? Do we welcome them with joy or do we secretly wish they had stayed at home? Did you know hospitality is not an option for the Christian woman, but a command? The word hospitality is used numerous times and examples of hospitality are given throughout the Bible. It enriches the soul and blesses the

recipients.

•*Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

(Hebrews 13:2)

•*Use hospitality one to another without grudging.* (1 Peter 4:9)

•*Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*

(Romans 12:13)

Our personalities, spiritual gifts, talents, natural abilities and even our physical strengths and weaknesses will vary. Hospitality may naturally be easier for some women than for others. I have a sister who is energized by people. She loves to entertain. That does not mean it is simply easy or convenient for her but she believes it is a ministry.

Personally, I am not as outgoing as my sister and need more quiet and alone time. However, I have had much opportunity through

the years to practice hospitality, not always because I felt like it, but because of God's call upon my life as wife of a missionary and a pastor.

Many times unexpected guests arrived at inconvenient moments. I often cried to God for physical and emotional strength, and God brought joy and new friends into our lives through those experiences. There are times when we cannot invite guests, such as during sickness, deep grief, or our older years. Financial difficulties may hinder us but should not be used as excuses.

Hospitality defined: *The friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.* Hospitality simply means welcoming people into our homes. To welcome them is to make them feel comfortable, relaxed and at ease in our home.

Here's the big question: HOW can I welcome guests into my home?

Be comfortable with yourself.

We cannot make others comfortable in our homes unless we ourselves are comfortable. Live without apologies. As a couple, you will choose a lifestyle that fits

your budget and your convictions and live with those even when entertaining guests. If you try to impress your guests your family will sense the inconsistency. Do not compete with others; be yourself.

Find your style of hosting.

Does setting a beautiful table fit you because you enjoy being creative and want your friends to feel special? Perhaps your gift is home style cooking, or trying new recipes may bring you pleasure. Maybe your style is paper plates and picnic meals. I just encourage you to serve what is comfortable and do it without apologies. I have served soup and sandwiches to many guests.

Create a welcoming atmosphere.

Our homes tell much about us. Can people tell as soon as they step into our homes that we belong to God? Do we have it written on our "doorposts" and our walls? Is the atmosphere one of peace and tranquility? It does not take money to create a warm welcome, first and foremost for our family, then also for our guests. It is okay to have toys on the floor, however, your house

should be clean and cozy. I know I have said it before, but if you keep your house basically cleaned up every day, you won't feel as frustrated when unexpected guests arrive.

Include your family in your hospitality.

Husband and wife are in this together. Many husbands are comfortable helping in the kitchen, preparing food on the grill, and welcoming guests at the door. Your children must be involved. Teach them to interact with the guests and teach them

manners when you are alone as a family. Do not discipline in front of guests. If you enjoy having people in your home, your family probably will, too.

Use hospitality as a tool for ministry.

Go out to the highways and hedges and invite them in. Share with your neighbors, the lonely, and those who don't have family close by. As you listen for the Spirit's direction, He will guide you to those who need your gift of hospitality.

Open heart, Open home! 

junior messages

Look for Rainbows

Mary Ellen Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya

Wherever we live we can notice many blessings our Father sends. And we can give thanks. Or we can grumble and complain because there are so many hard and annoying things. What will we look for today?

On a warm afternoon I was walking down the dirt road toward our house. I heard someone calling me and turned to see my neighbor, **Angeline**. She sweetly handed me a bag of freshly shelled peanuts she had raised. Angeline is a diligent, hard-working widow.

Most mornings she mixes up a large bowlful of dough and sells many plump, crisp mandazies. Outside her house is a small tin shelter with a three-stone fire hearth where she fries the mandazies in hot oil in a sufaria (a rounded kettle). The neighbors crowd around as though it is their coffee house. We go to purchase mandazies, too. Her fresh, hot ones are the best.

I am amazed every time she puts such good measure in my bag. It is usually at least two more mandazies than we paid for.

Recently I was shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables. I paid for four red tomatoes. **The vendor** put five in my bag. I am treated generously with good measure when I buy onions and other produce in the outdoor African markets.

Benter does some sewing to help out orphans. One day she told me the sewing teacher paid her too much. She wanted me to tell her teacher and correct the mistake. I was encouraged with her honesty.

The lady who runs the fabric and sewing shop is my friend. When I told **Josephine** I am flying to America to help my daughter, she pulled a nice piece of fabric off her stand for me to take to her.

Dishon is a tall, black man who is in medical school. What I appreciate so much about him is his gratefulness. When he eats at our house he is always saying, “Erokamano,” (Thank you) When we gave him a birthday gift, he was ever so grateful. If someone gives him a few shirts, he is so pleased and expresses his thanks.

Recently I gave some of my neighbor children some biscuits and soda. **Small Barbara** is three years old. She speaks Swahili. But that day she clearly told me in English, “Thank you very much!”

Maria is a friendly widow from church. One day as we were visiting her, she brought a chicken into her small hut and tied it by the leg to her table. It pecked at yellow corn that Maria threw to her. When we left she gave us the fowl as a gift. Chickens are not cheap. Maria was giving her best.

God gives me bright blessings each day. He is pleased when I give thanks rather than having me darken my day with grumbling and complaining.

I want to keep my eyes open for all of the rainbows and gifts God gives each day.

Give Thanks! Give Thanks!

In the New Year my goal is to give thanks.



Notes from a Seminar on Music

Gideon Yutzy, Hutchinson, KS

Around the time this arrives in your mail, the president of the United States is scheduled to deliver a State of the Union address. Call me a lousy patriot but I'm saving my passion for an eternal Kingdom. And the state of that Kingdom, at least one particular aspect of it, has me feeling a sense of urgency.

Unless you attended a recent seminar held here in Kansas you won't know what that is, so I'll just tell you: it's the state of our music.

The speaker at the seminar was Wendell Nisly, director of Oasis Chorale. In my mind he's qualified to speak on music for this reason alone: he directed the recent Oasis Chorale recording, *Hymns of the Church, Volume I*, one of the few music projects I've gone out of my way to promote.

But all such peripheral things aside, Mr. Nisly was speaking about a terribly important subject because he was speaking about a microcosm, a miniature world. How, you ask, is music a microcosm?

If we'd tell a sage what kind of music we love, he'd be able to predict the defining parts of our world. He'd be able to venture reasonably accurate guesses on the food we eat, the kind of names we'd give our babies, the books we read (if any), and what our conversations revolve around. When we delight in shallow music, people will judge us to be shallow people. And people will not be jumping to conclusions; our music is a microcosm of our life.

Another point from the seminar: many things in life address soul hunger, some by satiating it and others by numbing it. Therefore we are to use great care with anything that will affect our souls in any way.

Some of life's activities are neutral; we don't need to use discernment in how we tie our shoes, for instance. But music is different. Whether we're aware of it or not, our main objective in interacting with music is to nourish soul hunger. Whatever the music we choose, it will either provide us with real soul food or

effectively inoculate our souls against it.

That is not to say we should never turn to music to satiate soul hunger. We should. We must fill the hunger somehow. In the words of C.S. Lewis, who was quoted at the seminar: “Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists.” Is God a sadist? Did He create this hunger without creating anything that would nourish it?

No, real soul food exists, but we shouldn’t expect to find it by browsing Spotify. Feeding and saving our souls is an all-consuming business, the solemn “charge to keep” referred to in Charles Wesley’s hymn. People who try to feed their soul hunger through music aren’t inherently condemned; they’re just doubly responsible to become diligent evaluators of music.

We also looked at the connection between music listening habits and engaging culture. With the advent of the smart phone, as well as those benign-looking earbuds, we can take in the broader culture more easily than ever without speaking Life back into it. Familiarizing ourselves with the world’s music can be profitable and, like Saint Paul who was familiar with the Cretans’ poetry, we stand to benefit by having a pulse on the broader culture. The world remains broken, however, if we are only beguiled by its music without ever

sharing our precious Salt of the Earth.

What then, is the state of our music? First the good news: our people can sing the beautiful music of the church admirably well. As a subculture we’re unusual in that we can break forth into harmonious, rather sophisticated musical performances at a moment’s notice. I mention this not as a matter of pride but as a plea to uphold, without apology, such an exquisite tradition.

On the other hand, indulging in sub-standard music is more widespread among us than we care to admit. I know—I’m a recovering addict. And while it is possible to do music detoxes, dishonoring music’s original splendor in any way is still wrong. We cannot just wring our hands and view it as part of our young people’s obligatory *rumspringa* when they indulge in sensual music. (Of course, sensual music isn’t the only bad music. So is banal music and overly-sentimental music and anti-intellectual music and—pause to catch breath—any other music that goes against God’s intentions.)

We must help each other define great music—music free of triteness, free of sensuality, and free of any soul-numbing effects whatsoever. Then, having set the bar high, we must help each other keep it high. In fact one evening at the seminar

we practiced doing just that.

We listened to pop music in church. In all likelihood, it was the first time that pop music was ever played over the sound system of a Beachy Amish church. We critiqued the music of Adele and Taylor Swift as well as other pop artists. As you might expect, it was jolting.

First, some people had to face up to an inconvenient truth: pop music's dominant themes are incompatible with Christianity. Somehow that becomes clearer in a church house. Others were jolted at the brokenness of the outside world, at how church people seclude themselves from the unchurched. Thus we had all offended—some by indulging in the world's brokenness and others by skirting around it like the Levite in the Good Samaritan parable.

What can we conclude? What is the solution to all this? I shall resist giving a one-size-fits-all, didactic answer. Instead I'll return, once again, to my Union theme.

Actually the Union was just being born. It was 1787. This nation's founding fathers were gathered at Liberty Hall in Philadelphia to hammer out the document that would become the United States Constitution.

One of the first things they did at the convention was—how shall we say it—quite unconventional;

they covered the noisy cobblestone streets with dirt. As the convention progressed, they would get well and truly bogged down. Short on ideas for compromising between all the different factions, they would reach many impasses.

Wisely though, they didn't leave the most basic thing undone which was to eliminate the clatter of the cobblestone. Partly as a result of this, they were able to draw up one of history's most timeless governing documents.

The hullabaloo in which we find ourselves more than two centuries later should be approached no differently. Up until now we have been rather backward and obtuse in the matter of music. As soon as the briefest period of silence threatens us, even the twenty minute ride home from work, we rush to fill it with music. When we feel soul hunger rising, we compulsively drown it out with more vacuous music or other entertainment.

But it's not too late to approach the issue sanely. It's not too late to let our souls find healing through feasting on the greatest soul food yet—silence. As for music, the best we can hope for is to stumble upon the best music of all, music that expresses and reflects the deep things God shows us through silence.



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Sometimes adult education begins with teen-age marriage.

• • • • •

Watch your temper! The emptier the pot, the quicker the boil.

• • • • •

Temptation sometimes looks like opportunity, then shows its true colors later on.

• • • • •

To get introduced to a big temptation, give in to a little one.

• • • • •

Think right—act right; what you think and do is what you are.

• • • • •

Too many think that thrift is a good trait, especially in ancestors.

• • • • •

Tolerance gets some credit that should go to apathy.

• • • • •

Never judge a summer resort by its post cards.

• • • • •

Two half-truths do not equal a whole truth.

• • • • •

Vacation is a time that can make a tired person exhausted.

• • • • •

A Bible stored in the mind is worth a dozen stored in the bottom of a trunk.

• • • • •

Repetition gives a person using limited vocabulary unlimited mileage.

• • • • •

Faith is daring to go farther than you can see.

• • • • •

Contentment: Not letting increased *earnings* bring on increased *yearnings*.