



# Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2018

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## Calvary Messenger

July 2018

**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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**Editor:** Paul L. Miller  
 7809 S. Herren Rd., Partridge, KS 67566  
 Ph/Fax 620-567-2286  
 plmiller1934@gmail.com

**Assistant Editor**

**Contributing Editors:**  
 Simon Schrock, Enos D. Stutzman,  
 Aaron Lapp, Ronald J. Miller

**Missions Editor:** Floyd Stoltzfus  
 186 Skyline Dr., New Holland, PA 17557

**Youth Messages Editor:** Gideon Yutzzy  
 Leperstown, Dunmore East,  
 Co. Waterford, Ireland X91-R228  
 gideonyutzzy@gmail.com  
 phone: 353894220572

**Junior Messages Editor:**

Mrs. Mary Ellen Beachy  
 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd.  
 Dundee, OH 44624  
 maryellenbeachy@icloud.com

**Women's Editor:**

Mrs. Susan Schlabach  
 7184 W. Henry Rd.  
 Ripley, OH 45167  
 sksclabach@gmail.com

**Circulation Manager/Treasurer:**

Enos D. Stutzman  
 7498 Woods West Ave.,  
 London, OH 43140  
 614-460-9222  
 enosnmary@gmail.com

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## Strangest Gifts

*Karen Yoder, Fincastle, VA*

Have you ever met a person  
Who's as bored as bored can be?  
Finds no reason to be living,  
Finds no reason to be giving,  
What he's got?

What a sorry state that fellow  
Who has yet to feel the fire  
Of a heart that's fueled with passion,  
Of a life that's lit with vision,  
Spirit-filled.

One wouldn't ask for rugged pathways  
Thus to purify the soul.  
Thorns and splinters leave you bleeding,  
Rocks and mountains keep you needing  
Help from God.

Worthy vessels must be broken,  
Thus their beauty to redeem.  
Then the fire of God consumes them,  
And the love of God endues them.  
Strangest gifts. 



## Going by God's GPS

An invention now several decades old, gave us the GPS (Global Positioning System). Now when folks from out-of-state plan to travel to our homes, they may ask us for our physical address so they can turn on the GPS instead of consulting a road atlas.

Walking with Christ involves another GPS: God's Personal Schoolmaster—the Holy Spirit. Sometimes conscience heeds this GPS and sometimes not. When we don't trust God's GPS and choose our own path, God's GPS must sadly say, "Recalculating," and a detour lies ahead.

We might compare this path that God has for us as one that goes up a mountain. We realize that having to struggle is good for us. Granted, self-imposed hardship certainly has effects, but not benefits. No, it is not better to nail the bottom half of a two-part barn door shut and get through by hoisting ourselves over. Thus we wouldn't have the convenience of simply swinging back the door and walking through the opening. But we know that when God plans difficult

spots in life He has our good in mind. His Word tells us that the easy paths we tend to choose do not take us to greater spiritual heights. God designs our paths with both joys and also difficulties that draw us closer to Him. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

The good life is a struggle, but that struggle is not like the struggle caused by such enemies as poverty and the hard manual labor that our parents and grandparents walked through in the Great Depression. Life is sometimes a struggle because we don't push at the right place to make it up the hills of difficulty. For example, we may push against each other. We may push according to our perceptions of what we deserve. We may mistakenly think that we are always right and when others see things differently, they are wrong. We may also freely give advice thinking that our financial "muscle" or our superior intelligence upgrades our advice. These, as well as other wrong responses, hinder this uphill climb.

### **How did we get *here*?**

I think there are a number of factors. Today's wages (and, of course, costs, too) keep climbing. Today's transportation and communication are so swift that in many instances we seldom need to exercise the kind of patience our forefathers needed. An air-conditioned tractor cab is certainly a far cry from farming in the heat and dust behind horses. Today's factory jobs also usually include controlled-temperature working conditions. Hydraulic-powered equipment greatly reduces human muscle demand. Electricity makes many tasks much easier. This list could go on and on.

Old Testament piety typically had its ups and downs. We note also that present-day revivals don't seem to last from generation to generation. Each generation must get serious and honest with God. We tend to drift along and try to find ultimate meaning in Me, Myself and I. Making ourselves too much at home here is a great hindrance to us. I think we underestimate the downward pull of living for ourselves instead of living with an eye to needs of our neighbors (nearby and far away) and ourselves as stewards of and partners with God. Regardless of any legal documents we may hold, God is always owner, We are stewards (renters, if you

please), even while holding title to real estate. In the final sense, we are only servants.

Our non-resistant stand has not been much of a sore spot for our neighbors in recent times. This can weaken our sense of living as the people that God would use as lights in the world and salt in the earth.

Unlike many other parts of the world, we have had quite a stretch of good years, economically speaking. The struggle for us in America seems to have shifted significantly from struggling against hunger and poverty to hearing clearly God's call upon our lives. Our missions and service opportunities seem to need more workers than readily make themselves available. Ask Ray Stutzman. Ask Mark Webb. Ask any of our service unit leaders.

Each generation must embrace goals programmed to God's GPS. Unless we are diligent about not snuggling down into opulence and ease, our love of the soft life will take us into the wilderness of living by popular acceptance and what feels good instead of what points to heaven and benefits others. A secularized GPS says that if we follow our desires, we will arrive at our destination. It seems to say, "If you see something you'd like to do or have, just go for it."

### How can we change direction?

We must ask Jesus to help us set our GPS. We must listen to Bible-informed, Spirit-guided travel plans that embrace Gospel goals. This world, after all, is not our final home, we're just passing through. The Lord will help us set our GPS for heaven.

The good life by today's definition tends to emphasize the present and ignore long-term implications. When "creature comforts" inform our goals, the Kingdom of Heaven takes second place and we are poorer than our bank statements might indicate.

Let us live with eternity's values in view. Let us lay aside this deadening desire for wealth and "the American dream." Let us ask to let God to make

us cheerful givers, not just eager takers. And always, "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6: 10).

Jesus spoke words that have life-changing potential; may His words inform our goals. It is absolutely amazing what happens when we ask Him to help us set our GPS. We can learn to be satisfied with enough. He said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things [our physical needs] will be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). It works! It greatly improves our outlook and our prospects! Praise the Lord!

-PLM 

## reader response

### Re: The recent emphasis in *Calvary Messenger* to avoid social drinking:

"I appreciate very much many of the articles and all your hard (behind the scenes) work. I found the enclosed flyer on a table at a local Baptist church, along with other tracts. I'm not telling you to print it, but if you do, please do not print my name."

[The flyer this sister enclosed,

started out with a list of 55 "Bible References on the Evils of Drinking" and closed with the following position statement in support of total abstinence: -Editor]

*Although there are many instances of drinking in the Bible, it must be remembered that these are never held up as examples for us to follow. The whole weight of the Bible's authority is against the manifold evils of beverage alcohol. Today Christian love makes*

*a tremendous appeal for believers everywhere to join hearts and hands in an effective program of total abstinence from beverage alcohol, "our fiercest foe." This terrible scourge*

*can be driven from our homes and communities when God's people set themselves to the task, in His power.*

*Milldale Baptist Church*

*Zachary, LA 70791*



## the bottom line

# Raising Children Free Range

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

**M**odern living in the western world has gone full circle. When the United States was first explored, free range had prevailed for centuries, perhaps millennia. Everything seemed to be free range, including the native Americans and all the animals.

The early settlers who gathered their households together in little towns needed a way to keep the goats out of the neighbors' flower beds and the cows out of the family gardens. They made split rail fences, or where stones were plentiful, stone walls to restrict the animals. When the pioneers pushed westward, railroads followed. Fences were needed to keep free-range branded cattle and free-range buffalo off the rails.

We went through a cycle of factory farms where very large buildings

were erected to mass produce caged layers for chickens to lay eggs, and crated pigs for reproduction. Now environmentalists have been making a lot of persuasive words to revive free range conditions for chickens, hogs, dogs, and everything else, except for notorious criminals and law breakers. Free range has been the practice for consenting adults with drinking alcohol, and now they want to make marijuana free range.

Our newspaper carried a story to glamorize "free range kids." (The actual goats are still out back in a pen!) Children, they mean to say, should be allowed to run free. A law was passed in the free-wheeling state of Utah, referred to as "free-range parenting." They say this "free-range parenting has groups from New York to Texas pushing for similar steps to

bolster the idea that supporters say is an antidote for anxiety-plagued parents and over-scheduled kids.”

They say the sports programs, music lessons, and tutoring for special interests, coops up the children too often for too long, which hinders their actual, native, and needed development. So laws are needed to loosen up the permission for “kids” to roam free-range without requiring hovering and harried “goats,” I mean, parents, on the watch. Parents need the legal freedom from being taken into court for an unattended child outside in a vacant lot, a seldom used street, or the neighborhood park. Or to go to the store to shop by themselves, or go over to the neighbors. Bobbi Wegner, a clinical psychologist who is a proponent for free-ranging, said a police officer threatened to call child services because she allowed her three and one-half year old son to stand at the end of their driveway and talk with a neighbor’s child.

The article states that “Utah’s new law specifies that it isn’t neglectful to let well-cared-for children travel to school, explore a playground or stay in the car alone, if they are mature enough to handle it.” It’s a law in Utah, and could soon catch on elsewhere. They make it a law, making room for more lawyers.

We country people always had

free-range parenting. Larger families make parenting easier – after a while! The “anxiety-plagued parents” are a product of their own making. Moms who work outside the home are making, or rather deserting, their own nest. Pushing the children to excel in some extra curriculums often is pursued as a thing to do more for the parent’s sake than for the child’s good.

Some Conservative Anabaptist moms have regular part-time jobs, operate market stands at distant cities, or conduct a local business. The dual idea to be both biblical and conservative, makes the scene of stepping back and forth over a certain line, as in stepping back and forth depending on the activity and belief. But then, church groups who call themselves Anabaptist have been doing that for a whole generation, some churches longer than that. This seems like using the name Anabaptist more and more, and being like them less and less.

The free-range spirit goes to church every Sunday. Brotherhood agreements are freely promised and freely overstepped (violated). The over-stepping, back and forth, is more than a teenage thing. Exceptions made are free-range style, ready-set free-range precedents, that turn up as free-range practices. Not to be unduly alarmed, because the

church pastors can always revise the brotherhood agreements, since it is said that they are servants *of* the church. It will make a difference in their administration if they are required to be servants *of* the church, or allowed to be servants of God *to* the church. If they are servants of the church, they become beholden to the majority wishes of the congregation. Thus the saying comes to pass which says, “There go my people, and I must follow them, for I am their leader.”

Free-ranging is a very primal (first in time, original) instinct. The closest that humankind ever approached it was when God made the earth perfect and pain free, and created Adam and Eve and put them in it. There was perpetual food without tilling the soil, preparing a seed bed, planting, cultivating, and harvesting. There were no competitors, and the mark-up on profits was 100%. Markets were limited, however.

This lovely, perfect pair could free-range to their personal delights in every way, for God had said to Adam, “Of every tree in the garden thou mayest *freely* eat” (Genesis 2:16 emphasis added). Great! “Freely eat, and roam, and explore, and do as I please,” Adam may have thought. But God knew that man cannot be God, and needs a check upon his free-range nature, so God said, “But

of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Prohibition always makes an attraction all its own.

Free-ranging has required some restrictions ever since. Every generation wants more free-range. One church member who overstepped his covenant with the church said to the deacon who came to talk to him about it, “I forgive you for coming,” and then repeated it. So he made it the deacon’s problem. Another man exclaimed, “Give me some space!” The examples of free-ranging in our churches are abounding in a harvest mode.

**The Bottom Line**—“Free-range kids” is a backlash against too many unreasonable laws by our government to over-regulate people’s lives in an autocratic control. Free-ranging church members is also a backlash against the congregational attempt to find a reasonable, biblical approach by which Bible principles can maintain support and give adequate expression in faith and practice. Free-ranging can cause a valuable heritage to be lost and a shift in culture to take its place. Exchange on the board of trade in regard to free-ranging, we fear, is being done too much in our day, which will bring regrets to some in a later harvest. 

# Leading vs. Controlling

Lyle Hostetler, Shelbyville, MO

**E**phesians 5:23 says, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body.”

Christ is the essence of love. His method of leadership was of showing the way. He was a leader that exemplified the new and living way. He lowered Himself to the level of the children. He was compassionate to the vilest of sinners, and was understanding toward the needs of those weak in the faith. He truly lived for the good of others.

The headship/leadership issues are important in young families. In fact, that is the time when the foundations for success as a leader/head are laid. However, when the family matures and the young children become teenagers, then the leader/head is tried by the fires of reality.

**Christian headship is driven by love.**

**Control is driven by fear.**

*What are some of the fears?*

- Fear of being controlled by the wife
- Fear of being controlled by the family
- Fear of not being a “normal” family

- Fear of being exposed
- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of not being accepted

**Results of control:**

- Respect/love from his wife is damaged or lost
- Respect from the family is lost
- The family is forced into an unstable life

What then is the difference between *leading* the family as a father, and *controlling* the family?

A leader leads in love, but is respectful and considerate of the family’s ideas and wishes. When they think of something first, he respectfully considers the idea and is willing to discuss it with them.

A controller manipulates the family to try to force them to accept his wants, wishes, and ideas.

A leader is willing to submit to the family when their way is not wrong, and actually a better way.

A controller will manipulate to make their good ideas feel like it was his idea.

A leader will show the family what it is to submit, by being submissive

to all authority over him. Humbly obeying God, highway laws, and hunting laws will go a long way toward showing the family the way of truth and righteousness.

A controller tries to show, “Don’t push me; I am the head!”

A leader is humble. Humility is sensitive to the needs and ideas of others. In spite of being the leader, he will respect their suggestions. In spite of knowing he is supposed to make the final decision because of his headship position, he accepts the fact that sometimes his family may actually know better than he does. True humility accepts this, knowing he also has a Head over him, allowing things to happen that may appear to infringe on his headship. His primary concern is, “Is this right in God’s eyes, and is it for the eternal good of the family?” It really doesn’t matter who had the idea.

A controller is proud and is very sensitive to anyone or anything that seems to undermine his position.

Years ago I was accused of being controlling. I considered that to be a false accusation. In later years, I needed to come to grips with how true it was. Maybe you are more perceptive of such things than I was, but I consider the controlling nature to be very sly, subtle, and dangerous. It is of the devil!

How do we escape the controlling nature? We must see it for what it is. No amount of sugar-coating or excuses will make it any better. Probably the Number One method of sugar-coating is, “But I am the head, and therefore, the boss. I am the one who says what goes, what we buy, what the children wear, where we go...!” There is truth in that, but also falsehood. The challenge is to rightly divide.

Here are some guidelines to find truth in our attitudes and motives. When something presents itself that was not my idea, or that feels like a challenge to my God-given leadership:

- Is my response motivated by fear? Read the above list and be brutally honest with yourself.

- Is my response motivated by love? Perfect love does cast out fear. Perfect love denotes a hearty love for God and our family which can have an astounding effect that is very much opposite of a controlling spirit. Perfect love doesn’t promote an attitude of, “Anything goes; do whatever you want to.” Not at all! Leading the family in love is God’s design—His idea.

Does my response include maneuvering and manipulating to influence the result, or to make it appear more like my idea? This can

be done in subtle and sly ways—perhaps hardly realizing what we are doing. The family will likely realize it, and it will not feel good. This is an unholy attempt to save our face or our position. In the end, it fails.

Does my response motivate love and respect from my wife and family? There are times when it is right and good for the head of the family to be firm. When that time comes, we need to seek a private place and consult with the wife. When she is firmly at our side in the matter, then the decision can be declared with firmness, yet with cheer. If you have been leading the family in godly love up to now, even the teenagers will respectfully accept your leadership in this. If you have been displaying a controlling spirit, it will be manifested in times like this.

There are also times when there is no actual right or wrong involved. In those times we can allow the wishes of the family to prevail. It is healthy for the family to hear Pop say, “Alright, that is a good idea; we will do it that way.”

To be controlling is not respectful—

to be loving is. Respect motivates respect. Exerting control causes disrespect. Do we want to be obeyed because we demand it, even if it causes an unstable and less than contented home? Or do we want to lead in love and have the family follow respectfully?

We must set our priorities where God wants them. Is my position or my reputation more important than my family? No—never! Our marriage and our family also need to stay more important than our livelihood.

Does instructing our family seem important? Yes, but not as important as being a good listener. It is a great family builder to sit down with our boys as they grow older to calmly and peacefully talk through major purchase needs. These joyous times are the result of a “head” that is in the habit of listening and respecting, yet leading in love.

End result: Leading draws family closer—controlling pushes the family apart.

*[From The Lighthouse, May/June, 2018. Used by permission.]*



***Don't spend time plotting against  
your enemies—pray for them.***

# A Widower's Prayer

*Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX*

As I kneel before you this morning, O Lord,  
I find it extremely difficult to express in words  
the mixture of emotions my soul feels within  
and the confusing thoughts that cause me pain.

Please take the sentiments I cannot articulate  
and let the groaning of my spirit communicate  
to your Spirit the turbulence I am facing inside,  
since there's nothing a man can possibly hide.

You know how much I really miss my spouse;  
her presence provided much security to our house.  
But now that You providentially took her away,  
sometimes I find it very difficult to face the day.

It seems a person does not entirely comprehend  
how a marriage partner becomes a trusted friend.  
I did not realize after years of loving one another  
the deep confidence binding two people together.

Although my heart aches for her to be with me,  
yet I will surrender to your divine sovereignty.  
I am just thankful that You let her be my wife,  
for these seemingly short years of my life.

In pondering on the duration of our marriage,  
at times I tend to feel somewhat discouraged.  
I think that if I could do it over again, maybe  
I would deal with situations quite differently.

I trust, as the Son of Man, You can sympathize  
with me whenever tears of grief sting my eyes.  
I do not know why, but often a certain memory  
of her will produce a sudden flow involuntarily.

In these times, remind me that while on earth  
man is destined to pleasure and pain from birth.  
Thus, I ask You to teach me to enjoy the good,  
and in the hard times to not excessively brood.

Also, help me to avoid wallowing in self-pity,  
lest I employ it to manipulate others around me.  
For if I concentrate every thought toward myself,  
then I would neglect to minister to anybody else.

So even though I may not fully understand now,  
surely You can use me to aid another somehow?  
I can take the comfort I have received from You,  
and, in turn, richly encourage a needy person too.

Besides, I dare not forget my children need me  
to assist them in grieving their loss effectively.  
Grant me the necessary wisdom as their father,  
in seeking to fill the place left by their mother.

I long for your merciful grace to see me through,  
so I can continue doing that which is mine to do.  
And although I wish to reflect a joyful expression,  
yet I must be candid about seasons of depression.

In all of this, I desire to bear my load with dignity,  
lest I burden others and they become weary of me.  
At the same time, I should not be too proud to ask  
for help when I am facing an insurmountable task.

Finally, I pray for the fortitude of soul to carry on,  
along with the reassurance that I am never alone.  
I want to revel in the sweetness of your holy love.  
Until I see her face in the ransomed throng above!

*[Editor's note: Some time ago, Alfredo Mullet sent these verses to  
a newly widowed brother, who told Alfredo how much it touched him  
and suggested that he send it for publication to Calvary Messenger.  
To God be the glory!]*



# An Aching Heart

Norman Schmucker, New Haven, IN

**T***he troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.* (Psalm 25:17)

Young Jayden stood patiently in line, waiting his turn to speak to the doctor. As he waited, he overheard other people talking about their maladies. Whether it was a headache, a sinus infection, a sore throat, or back pain, the doctor always had a remedy for it.

Then came Jayden's turn. Not knowing quite how to describe his pain, he began slowly, "A little while ago we had a tragedy in my family. Ever since then I have had a terrible pain in my chest, almost like my heart is aching. Do you have anything to soothe it?"

Compassion filled the gray-haired doctor's eyes. He ushered the young lad into his office and gently explained, "Doctors can do wonders for hurting bodies today. Chiropractors can adjust aching bones, dentists can fix pain-filled teeth, optometrists can help people see clearly and surgeons can fix many internal problems. But, son, there is

only one Physician who can help you with your pain and His name is Jesus. He understands loneliness, for He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He understands sorrow, for He suffered the loss of two close friends—John the Baptist and Lazarus. The only way to contact Jesus is on your knees in prayer."

Jesus can also ease the pain in our aching hearts. He gave the promise, "I will not leave you comfortless" (John 14:18). We must simply trust Him and believe that He sees the greater picture. Singing or just listening to songs of praise is soothing medicine for an aching heart. Jesus also said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

**Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.**

*[From Beside the Still Waters, April 26, 2018. Used by permission. Editor's note: While this story is not like our consultation experiences, it brings a deep dimension to wholeness.]*



## marriages

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

### **Burkholder-Miller**

Bro. Justin, son of Eugene and Erla Burkholder, Ewing, IL, and Sis. Crystal, daughter of Earl and Patricia Miller, Crtoss Hill, SC, at Chestnut Ridge Baptist Church for Crosshill Mennonite Church on April 21, 2018, by Virgil Kanagy.

### **Hostetler-Weaver**

Bro. Stephen, son of Edwin and Esther Hostetler, Auburn, KY, and Sis. Megan, daughter of Eli Ray and Lilly Weaver, Safford, AL, at Crosspoint Christian Church for Orville Amish Mennonite Church on April 7, 2018, by Noah Yoder.

### **Miller-Miller**

Bro. Christopher Lee, Son of Elva and Katie Miller, Arthur, IL, and Sis. Hannah Janell, daughter of Harold and Mary Fern Miller, Arthur, IL, at Trinity Christian Fellowship on May17, 2018, by Wilbur Gingerich.

### **Miller-Yoder**

Bro. Marcus, son of Roger and Debra Miller, Greentop, MO, and Sis. Natalie, daughter of Stanley and Pauline Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church, on Oct. 21, 2017, by Donny Swartzentruber.

### **Nunez-Yoder**

Bro. Jorge, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Amelia, daughter of Floyd and Prudence Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on Sept. 15, 2017, by Donny Swartzentruber.

### **Schlabach-Miller**

Marcus, son of Allen and Rebecca Schlabach, Millersburg, OH, and Sis. Alyssa, daughter of Philip and Ruth Ann Miller, Dundee, OH, at Light in the Valley Chapel for Messiah A. M. Church on March 3, 2018, by Philip Miller.

### **Stolzfus-Miller**

Bro. Daniel Lee, son of John and Linda Stoltzfus, Lewisburg, PA, and Sis. Mary Jean, daughter of Lester and Lenore Miller, Arcola, IL, at Otto Center for Trinity Christian Fellowship on March 31, 2018, by Wilbur Gingerich.

### **Yoder-Byler**

Bro. Brent, son of Leslie and Verda Yoder, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Rachele, daughter of Dan and Mary Byler, Huntsville, AR, at Living Waters Baptist for Lighthouse of Faith on April 21, 2018, by Dan Byler. 



## cradle roll

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

**Burkholder**, Marcus and Wanda (Eash), Vanleer, TN, sixth child, third daughter, Audra Renee, April 22, 2018.

**Byler**, Joseph and Melissa (Mast), Whiteville, TN, second child and son, Keshawn David, May 6, 2018.

**Graber**, Kevin and Mary Anna (Swarey), Odon, IN, fourth child, third son, Aaron Hugh, April 16, 2018.

**Gerber**, Bradley and Margaret (Gerber), Brunner, ON, fourth child, first son, Benjamin Joseph, Jan. 19, 2018.

**Kimberlin**, Ryan and Joyce (Ulrich), Cleburne, TX, fourth child, first daughter, Sheila Dawn, April 1, 2018.

**Kropf**, David and Konni (Hostetler), Covington, TX, fifth child, third son, Asher Jacob, Nov. 8, 2017.

**Kropf**, Cephas and Ruth (Yoder), Itasca, TX, seventh child, fourth daughter, Sophia Peace, April 12, 2018.

**Kropf**, Mark and Kenya (Blosser), Itasca, TX, fifth child, third daughter, Morgan Brielle, Feb. 15, 2018.

**Kurtz**, Milt and Ina (Troyer), Greensburg, KY, second child and daughter, Morgan Jade, March 23, 2018.

**Miller**, Joseph and Elfrieda (Shank), Stuarts Draft, VA, first child and son, Shadrach Bryant, April 15, 2018.

**Miller**, Justin and Heidi (Beachy), Paris, TN, first child and son, Kody Cinch, May 8, 2018.

**Miller**, Matt and Gina (Troyer), Conneautville, PA, second child and daughter, Ariana Grace, May 31, 2018.

**Miller**, Robert and Martha (Yoder), Cumberland Furnace, TN, first child and daughter, Nicole Rose, April 26, 2018.

**Peachey**, Sam and Loretta (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, second child and daughter, Desiree Noelle, Nov. 2, 2017.

**Perdomo**, Jairo and Renita (Cal), Isabella Bank, Belize, first child and daughter, Vanessa Mariela, May 11, 2018.

**Showalter**, Seth and Julia (Ulrich), Cleburne, TX, eighth child, third daughter, Janine Lucille, Jan. 1, 2018.

**Wagler**, LaWayne and Dorcas (King), Cottage Grove, TN, fifth child, second son, Landon Jones, April 5, 2018.

**Weaver**, Justin and Joanne (Ulrich), Cleburne, TX, sixth child, fourth son, Tyler Justin, May 24, 2018.

**Wengerd**, Chris and Sharla (Peachey), Greensburg, KY, first child and daughter, Kaylee Grace, May 20, 2018.

**Wingard**, Lavern and Carmen (Eash), Montezuma, GA, first child and son, Russell Zane, March 13, 2018.

**Yoder**, Ray and Rosa (Stoltzfus), Advance, MO, second child, first daughter, Ellie Rose, March 6, 2018.

**Yoder**, Timothy and Laura Mae (Schlabach), Mogadore, OH, third child, second daughter, Odessa Yaell, April 20, 2018.

**Yoder**, Timothy and Margretta (Beachy), Hutchinson, KS, second child, first daughter, Rosalyn Joy, April 27, 2018.

**Yoder**, Tristan and Lois (Hershberger), Ozawkie, KS, first child and son, Felix John, Feb. 12, 2018.



## ordinations

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

**Bro. Daniel Chupp**, 29, (wife Jana Miller), of Atwater, MN, was ordained as minister at Believers Fellowship Church, of Grove City, MN, on May 6, 2018. Preordination messages were given by Nathan Yoder of Free Union, VA. The charge was given by Melvin Beiler, assisted by Nathan Yoder and Ted Miller. Sharing the lot were Andrew Chupp and Mike Chupp.

**Bro. Jonas Weaver**, 30, (wife Bernice Yoder), of Oskaloosa, KS, was ordained as deacon on May 27, 2018, at Ebenezer A.M. Church. Preordination messages were given by David Lynn Yoder, Auburn, KY. The charge was given by Mervin Graber, assisted by Rudy Overholt and Lawrence Overholt. Also in the lot were Tristan Yoder and Philip Miller.

**Bro. Timothy Yoder**, 44, (wife Wilma Yoder) of Uniontown, OH, was ordained as deacon at Pleasant View A.M. Church. Preordination messages were given by Paul Overholt, Charlotte, TN. The charge was given by Thomas Wagler, assisted by Elmer Yoder and Nathan Yoder. Sharing the lot was Tommy Wagler.

**Bro. Michael Yoder**, 51, (wife Virginia Miller) of Cottage Grove, TN, was ordained at Calvary Christian Fellowship on May 13, 2018. Preordination messages were given by Luke Troyer of Auburn, KY. The charge was given by Paul L. Miller, assisted by John U. Lapp and Henry Nissley. Also in the lot were Elmer Yoder, James Yoder and Ralph Yoder. 



## obituaries

**Beachy**, Anna (Miller), 89, of Plain City, OH, died May 18, 2018, at her home. She was born in Plain City, OH, to the late Levi and Fannie (Yutzy) Miller on Oct. 29, 1928.

She was a member of Bethesda Fellowship, Plain City.

On Nov. 8, 1951, she was married to Lawrence Beachy, who served as a deacon. He died Sept. 26, 2007. Four surviving children are Freda (Jonnie) Eash, Plain City; Fannie Mae (Mark) Zook, Burgettstown, PA; Dale (Linda Troyer) Beachy, Plain City; and David Lee (Angela McVay) Beachy, Plain City. Also surviving are 19 grandchildren, 26 great grandchildren, one sister, Mary Ellen (Miller) Kramer, and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by an infant son, Elmer Ray, on Sept. 4, 1954; by brothers Raymond and Harley Miller, a sister-in-law, Mary Miller, and a brother-in-law, Joe Kramer.

The funeral was held at United Bethel Mennonite church on May 21, with

Elmer Stoltzfus officiating. Burial was in Bethesda Fellowship cemetery.

**Hostetler**, Leona Mae (Beachy), 93, of Montezuma, GA, died Jan. 10, 2018. She was born Oct. 10, 1924, daughter of the late Eli and Mary Ann (Kauffman) Beachy.

She was a member of Montezuma Mennonite Church.

On Dec. 2, 1948, she was married to Eli F. Hostetler and shared a happy, fulfilled life of 47 years. Eli died on Dec. 5, 1990. Survivors include six sons and six daughters.: Lester Hostetler, Norcross, GA; David (Mary Esther) Hostetler, Plain City, OH; Ferman (Mary Ellen) Hostetler, Plain City, OH; Perry (Karen) Hostetler, Plain City, OH; Daniel Hostetler, Montezuma, GA; Eli, Jr. (Lori) Hostetler, Montezuma, GA; Esther (Elmer) Yoder, Montezuma, GA; Frieda (Jerry) Cummins, Ashville, OH; Miriam (Benny) Graber, Kokomo, IN; Marlene (Dennis) Swartzentruber, Montezuma, GA; Loretta (Mark Edward)

Brenneman, Montezuma, GA; Kathy (Michael ) Yoder, Montezuma, GA; 34 grandchildren; 56 great grandchildren; one brother, Henry Beachy, Plain City, OH; and one sister, Katie Rutt, Florida.

She was preceded in death by three sisters and two brothers.

**Peachey**, Leon A., 68, of Reedsville, PA, died at home, on April 16, 2018. He was born, April 9, 1950, son of the late Alvin J. and Effie (Kauffman) Peachey.

He was a member of Valley View A.M. Church.

On Nov. 26, 1970, he was married to Elsie R. Hostetler, who survives. Also surviving are five children: Ruth (David) Kurtz, Belleville; Nathaniel (Pauline Zook) Peachey, Mattawana; Marlene (James) Whitt, Reedsville; Rosanna (Ronald) Zook, Millmont; and Marlin

(Sondra Yoder) Peachey, Reedsville; and 10 grandchildren. Also surviving are seven siblings: Linda (Raymond) Yoder, Belleville, NY; Katie (David) Peight, Belleville, PA; Vera (Martin) Yoder, Huntingdon; Lavina (Sam) Swarey, Allensville; David J. (Ruth) Peachey, Reedsville; Steve A. (Minnie) Peachey, Reedsville; and Saloma (John) Byler, Allensville; and a brother-in-law, Alvin Zook, Hartville, OH.

Preceding him in death was a sister, Anna Mary Zook, and step mother, Mary (Yoder) Peachey.

The funeral was held on April 20 at Valley View Church with Loren Yoder, Jesse Zook, and Earl Peachey serving. Burial was in Locust Grove Cemetery, with the committal by Eli B. King, Jr. 

## observations

**T**he medical journal *Circulation*, as reported by the New York Times, cites five lifestyle practices that when combined can add ten years or more to your life. They are: eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, limiting alcohol consumption, abstaining from smoking, maintaining normal weight. This study indicated that fewer than 2% of those studied experienced all five of these lifestyle factors, and a third of them had two

or fewer. Combining these five factors lengthened the life expectancy of men by 12 years and women 14 years without further intervention or medication. That's pretty impressive!

Most of us find some of these to be quite attainable. But, someone has observed that we do better with the concept of avoiding problematic practices than we do at practicing moderation. Do some of you identify with me in that it is easier to avoid tobacco and alcohol than it is to

be moderate in these other areas? Thanks to editor Paul Miller for sharing this nugget.



My maternal grandparents were Ananias J. and Ella Beachy. It was 100 years ago, on May 18 of 1918, that Ananias, an Amish resident of rural Kalona, Iowa, was arrested and jailed. He pled not-guilty to the three charges he faced: attempting to cause disloyalty to the US government, interfering with enlistment in the US army and threatening the life of president Woodrow Wilson.

It isn't very difficult to understand why Grandpa's position on non-involvement in the military could feel threatening to those who practiced otherwise, particularly those who had sons, fathers and husbands who had left home to serve in the military during World War I. However, the charge of threatening the life of the president certainly seems incompatible with the quiet, conscientious mannerisms that those who knew Ananias observed in his life. Local speculation gleaned from press clippings about the arrest, raised the question if Ananias' middle initial J. represented "Judas". It's unclear to us why Grandpa was singled out for this type of treatment, but it's possible that part of the reason was his unpopular

decision to not purchase war bonds, a position that wasn't shared by all his conservative Anabaptist friends and neighbors.

My late father David L. Miller, in his recounting of these events, related that some days prior to his arrest, Grandpa was warned by a Kalona banker that he would likely be visited that night by some agitators. So the family, consisting of Grandpa, Grandma and their two young children slept in a haystack that night. Those who came to call didn't find anybody at home, so they painted his buggy yellow. After the visitors left, Grandpas removed the fresh paint with turpentine.

On May 25, one week after Grandpa was arrested, he was released on bail. His father-in-law John J. Shetler and another local brother in the Amish church made the necessary arrangements for his release. Five days later on May 30, Ananias and Ella welcomed their third child, a baby boy named Glen, to the family.

Grandpa Ananias died when I was a young lad and I don't remember any conversation with him. Neither do my numerous memories of Grandma include her speaking of these events. I suppose that "camping out" in a haystack in Iowa in May was not a glamorous idea for this

expectant family. Furthermore, I'm guessing Grandma was very pleased that her husband was released from jail before the baby was born. The war ended several months later, in November of 1918, and Grandpa was never tried in court on those charges.



A kind reader pointed me to a blog post in *The Mennonite* posted on February 21 of this year. The piece was written by Andrew Suderman and was entitled, "Wrestling with Mennonite Identity: Seeing Anabaptism as more than just 'hindsight.'" I find much of what he says quite helpful and insightful. With regard to church and community here are a few quotes from his writing:

"Peace is not simply activism; it is the way a community of Jesus lives its life."

"Baptism is not simply a public witness of our individual decision to accept Christ; it is a commitment to offer our gifts to the life of the Body of Christ, and to be nurtured and disciplined by that community."

"Simplicity is not simply a matter of economic stewardship; it is demonstrating that as a Body it is possible to trust in God's provisions for our lives."

"Non-conformity is not simply difference from the directions

of the societies around us; it is a demonstration that there is another empire present in the same territory and this community marches to the beat of that empire, and has granted it supreme authority over who we are and want to become."

The space in this column does not allow a thorough examination of Mr. Suderman's writing. But I found it inspirational to be reminded that even while we acknowledge that our past has profoundly shaped who we are, let's remember that the choices we make now help determine who we will become in the future. I love history. But I admit that a clear vision of where we are going tends to inspire and motivate in ways that noting events in history doesn't always provide. A proper understanding of history grounds us, but a Christ-centered vision for the future fuels us and gives us direction as we move into the future. Both are important.



IUPUI (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis) recently did a study with lab rats attempting to shed some light on the long term effects of the relationship of offspring with their mothers. In the study baby rats were removed from their mothers for 24 hours at 9 days of age, which for rats is a particularly crucial time period

in brain development. As adults the rats who were removed from their mothers displayed significant behavioral difficulties that set them apart from their peers. Furthermore, brain scans confirmed both biological and physical differences in brain structure, from those who didn't experience this separation.

It is premature to assume that these effects are all paralleled in humans or even what age this would translate to in human children. However, let's affirm several things:

Where this deprivation has occurred, God is in the business of restoring to wholesome function what sin has marred. Hence, an adult with those childhood experiences chooses wisely when he focuses on his or her riches in Christ rather than perceived disadvantages.

Let's not underestimate the importance of a loving mother's influence and *presence* in the home.

Parents, especially mothers, should look for ways to be present with their children. Day care, in its various forms, should be a last resort rather than the expected norm.

•••••

The summer's family reunion season is upon us. I have pleasant memories of many family reunions the past 50 years, particularly those that include persons who have

attended these reunions who aren't part of the family. I'm grateful that the planners of these events felt free to invite those to join us who don't have all the family connections we have. This is one small way we can share the wealth of rich family relationships, that many don't enjoy. One result of joining the family of God is that we adjust our definition of "family."

*Reader's Digest* recently carried out a social experiment in which it "lost" 12 wallets in 16 different cities on 4 continents, a total of 192. Those who planted the wallets withdrew to observe from an inconspicuous distance. Each wallet contained the equivalent of approximately \$50 in local currency along with a name and valid contact phone number, plus a variety of papers, including a family photo. In Helsinki, Finland, 11 of the 12 were returned! In Lisbon, Portugal only one of the 12 was returned. The experiment didn't include enough information to draw many conclusions. The age and visible economic status indicators of the finders didn't seem to reliably predict how someone would respond. However, 47% of the 192 "lost" wallets were returned! I find this partly disheartening, and partly encouraging.

—RJM 

# Learning to Listen

*Gerald Miller, Guys Mills, PA*

A significant effort in a good education is communication skills. In a global economy, communication is a valuable commodity, but more importantly, communication skills are critical to the future of the church. The ability to articulate an Anabaptist position of faith is a gift to the kingdom. Churches and church leaders see communicating with unbelievers essential to the future of our churches. Working in biblical brotherhood requires good communication. I am convinced that many of our church issues could be solved with better communication skills.

Communication can be categorized into several broad categories of verbal (listening to a person to understand their meaning), written (reading meaning), and nonverbal (observing a person and inferring meaning from those cues) communication. We should become proficient in all of these types and become lifelong students of improving our

communication skills.

In schools, we attempt to build communication skills throughout the day. English class is a prime target for the all-important skill of communicating. Grammar creates the building blocks for communicating both verbally and with the written word. The ability to read gives students unbelievable access to the world, but most importantly, the Scriptures. Literature exposes us to the way the world works and teaches us through story. Vocabulary gives us the words to say precisely what we intend to communicate. Speech class is direct instruction and practice in verbal communication. Writing (composition) gives us the tools to communicate through the powerful medium of the written word.

Ideally, schools integrate communication skills into most of the subjects in school as training and preparation for life in the kingdom of God. However, one place of great need that schools can struggle to give adequate attention to is the art

of listening, a very significant piece of communication. Communication is not one-sided. Might it be that as important as articulation is hearing and truly understanding? In the Scriptures, Jesus says numerous times to the people he was communicating with, "He that ears to hear, let him hear." This statement is much more than simply about hearing words. Jesus is looking for understanding and engagement with what He is saying.

How is your school teaching listening? For our purpose here, how is your home teaching listening?

If your family is like ours, there can be a cacophony around the supper table. Children bubbling with stories and tidbits from the day is really a beautiful sound. However, I realize at times that many are talking but few are listening. In other words, there is little communication really happening. As a teacher, I realize with increasing consternation that students truly listening is becoming more difficult to find and to teach. More and more I feel the pressure to create sound bites that are manageable for students as attention spans continue to decrease dramatically.

I offer two concepts of listening to teach our children, and end with a wonderful way for our children to

practice listening.

**Look others in the eye.** When listening, teach children to look others in the eye. It is very tempting for children to avoid eye contact, but don't let them get by with sloppy listening habits. Looking others in the eye communicates interest in what is being said and helps focus attention on both the person and what is being said. This is best taught and maintained from a very young age.

**Active Listening.** Listening is an active word that is best understood as a selfless act. When we listen to another person speaking, we tend to be thinking about a response to what is being said while the other person is talking, rather than listening to what is actually said. Active listening is hard work. Active listening is putting another's idea above our own and engaging directly with another. Active listening places high value on what another person thinks and feels. Active listening is hearing both through our hearts and our heads to understand what is being communicated. This means we need to teach our children to tune in to another, to pay attention, and to be able to summarize back to another person what was just said.

**Where? Church!** A good place to continue training listening is church.

I observe that less and less is expected of children in our church services and it is affecting other areas of life. Think of ways to motivate listening in church. If your school does not ask its students to take notes during the sermon, ask your children to take notes, then discuss what was learned at a meal time.

Teaching children to sit still in church serves a child well in many contexts. It is not cruelty to children to ask them to sit still and pay attention. Yes, they really are able to do this, and from a young age. Resist the urge to entertain your children during church. It is one thing to have a book along for a child, but quite another to have a bevy of books, toys, and paraphernalia that children can move between during

church. I will admit to finding it distressing when I hear about or see children as old as 11 and 12 years of age reading a story book during a sermon (or even the singing and worship time!). What are we communicating to our children? Church and church services are wonderful opportunities to teach listening skills, lengthen attention spans, and experience engaging with (at times) difficult material.

Listening is a crucial element of doing well in all of life. Listening well comes through a disciplined approach to hearing others and does not come naturally but needs to be taught. Parents, give your children the gift of listening skills. Your school, your church, and your children will thank you. 

## mission awareness

### The Walk

*Submitted by their Board of Directors\**

*The Walk is an evangelistic ministry to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to encourage Christians in their journey to heaven. It is located in Zanesville, Ohio, and is supported and directed by a number of Amish Mennonite churches mostly from Ohio. -FS*

“**H**ow can we reach our fellow Americans, our neighbors, with the love of Christ?” In the fall of 2013, several men sat

together and discussed this question that burns in many of our hearts. “Is there a way we as a brotherhood can do more?” From this discussion a

vision for “The Walk” was born.

The discussion was opened to others, and quite a few men from surrounding churches showed interest. A five-member board was formed and met for the first time on July 14, 2015. Ideas and dreams abounded including a café, after-school activities such as children’s clubs, a bookstore, a small market, and a petting zoo to name a few. In reality, the ideas narrowed to start with a café/coffee shop with a bakery on the side and perhaps a small book corner.

The Lord led us to the city of Zanesville. The door opened further when we found a small family restaurant for sale in South Zanesville. The owner was excited about the plans for the property and was flexible with financing. Talking with him confirmed that God had a plan for us here. On June 28, 2016, The Walk Café and Bakery opened for business!

Our vision is to provide a place where we as conservative Christians can connect with and minister to individuals through personal contact and our everyday lives. When the name, “The Walk” was chosen it was with the idea of walking alongside people—right where they are and drawing them closer to God. To share Christ in the local community

by showing love to people in need, building relationships, encouraging, and disciplining through personal contact is our mission. In this dark time in our nation, we strive to be a ray of hope, a peaceful refuge. Our goal is to use the net proceeds to support local outreach and missions.

The café’s hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Tuesdays—Saturdays. This allows Mondays and evenings to be open for ministry activities. Once a month, various churches sponsor community suppers and events which are greatly enjoyed. People often reserve for these activities weeks ahead and sometimes even before the event is announced.

Board Chairman, Marion Miller said, “I will never forget that first supper. People walked out the door with tears streaming down their cheeks saying, ‘This is just what our town and churches need.’ The opportunities are endless, but like any other mission, we have limited staff and limited funds for the needs.”

We dream of broadening the evening activities and are excited to now have a young staff family on an adjacent property to cultivate relationships within the neighborhood. There is a basement apartment where two or three girls can live and volunteer their time. In addition, the manager and several

girls live nearby and hold paid positions. With staff living directly in the community, opportunities are greatly expanded.

Customers tell us, “We sense the presence of the Holy Spirit when we walk through these doors. The food is delicious, it’s nice and clean, but it’s the atmosphere here that keeps bringing us back.” The peace and love we take for granted in our homes and businesses are foreign to so many. It is not something we can manufacture, but it becomes obvious to others as we allow God’s love to flow through us.

In one corner is a bookshelf with donated books. Customers are free to pick up these books and take them home. Each day there are a few people who pick one up. Pastors have asked, “Where can we find resources like these?” A pastor and director of nursing at the local college was blessed by the magazine “The Anabaptist Voice” and was interested in subscribing.

Sherry can only afford a cup of coffee and a slice of toast, but comes as often as she can to study her Bible and journal her prayers. Multiple times she’s asked our staff to pray with her. “You are my church. I have none. I know I can count on you.” Recently she left this note to the staff, “I so enjoy your sunny smiles and Yahweh’s

love that is reflected in all you do and all you say. I am praying that I can get my van back soon and can visit this place more often that is filled with the presence of Yahweh’s Spirit.”

It’s almost two years since Charles’ wife died, and a day would no longer be complete without him staying and talking for several hours. The staff members are his trusted friends, and it is here, he feels safe to grieve and talk about his wife. Change is inevitable, but he is now convinced that all new staff should sign a four-year contract promising they will not quit or get married! Anytime someone terminates, he threatens to bring in a chain on their last day to keep them!

*Forever Dads* is a community-based organization committed to helping men become loving, responsible fathers. Burl Lemon, the director, wanted to start a new mentoring program when he came to us. “I know full well why I am coming to you. I know the world is dying to know the answers to the questions in their lives that you know and have. I know your men, and I need what they have.” Through this open door, a small group of men have begun mentoring struggling fathers.

In looking back over the past five years, there have been many bumps and valleys, yet each day we see reminders of God’s blessing. We

think of the older lady who adopted us and now calls herself Grammy and other countless friends we have made. We remember the lesbian couple who came to test how the Mennonites would respond to them. We see a dad playing checkers with his son or the now commonplace scene of an older couple leaning across the table, holding hands, and bowing their heads in prayer. We remember the local artist who begged for missionaries in this town and now thanks us for praying as the drug dealers and prostitutes leave the neighborhood. In his words, the way to drive out the darkness is to bring light into the midst of it.

It is not the little remodeled building called “The Walk” or

the people working in it that are impacting the community. It is God working through willing instruments to accomplish His will and purpose. Eternity alone will tell the results from a smile, an encouraging word, and the light of Christ being lived out in our everyday walk.

*For more information or to receive The Walk’s newsletter, please send an email to [thewalkconnection@gmail.com](mailto:thewalkconnection@gmail.com) or contact Marion Miller at 740-541-0484.*

*\*[Those comprising The Walk Board, are: Marion Miller, New Concord, OH, chairman; Aaron Garber, Berlin, OH, vice-chairman; Lamar Lapp, Quaker City, OH, secretary-treasurer; Thomas Miller, McConnelsville, OH; and Javan Miller, Sugarcreek, OH.]*



**Let Christ first work *in* you,  
then He’ll work *through* you.**



**Walk carefully; people tend  
to follow footsteps more  
readily than advice.**

## Motherhood Joys?

*Lois Troyer, Free Union, VA*

*Mothering a child must indisputably be one of life's richest experiences. Yet how many of us have at times felt like we were in over our heads and quickly losing ground? Hear this wisdom from the trenches...*

**M**otherhood caught me off guard in so many ways. I had observed many mothers over the years, moms of my students, my sister, and my best friend. All of them seemed to be sane and even thriving in their world of little people. I always wanted to be a mother. I wanted twelve energetic boys. Boys who were intelligent, gentlemanly, and had their preferably red hair slicked to the side. Boys who played in the mud yet held the door for Grandma. Boys who sang like larks yet carried frogs in their pockets. I would run the house with a firm, yet loving hand and everything would be just honky dory.

On a hot day in June I married a man who had the genes needed to produce many of the traits I wanted in my boys, including the red hair. We had a long and tangled love story and were so delighted to be married.

He whisked me away to a new community six hundred miles north and there I set up housekeeping and thought we would pass some time in the idyllic days of newlywed life and then the boys would start to come. And come they did. I was alarmed at the intensity of the morning sickness. How does a baby survive the endless heaving? I passed many days staring at the ceiling of our cozy home and wondering what I had gotten myself into. During my morning sickness, my mom was diagnosed with a brain tumor and passed away, leaving me reeling and wondering how to survive pregnancy and mothering without a mom to call with all the questions that you wouldn't ask anyone else?

Then he arrived—our very own package of scrawny boy with huge eyes, a huge mouth, and huger lungs. I was forever changed at that moment. Gone were my days of

independence and sleeping in peace with one foot out of the covers for climate control. I was now a mother, and no one ever told me that being a mom can be so hard. There were days when tears trickled down my cheeks from sun up to sun down. I was so tired, dead tired of caring for my baby. I nearly wore trails in the front yard while walking my screaming child. Every morning I rolled out of bed, exhausted and discouraged. I knew what the day held. They were all the same. I would bounce, rock, and soothe. And in between make dashes to the washer or the stove in a futile attempt to get my work done. I felt smothered and trapped by my dear baby. I was tired of being solely responsible for him. I didn't have an ever-springing well of maternal adoration issuing from my heart that I thought you feel the minute your baby is born. Of course, I loved him, with the tiger-like love only a mother can have for her children. But he was very nearly driving me around the bend. I had no liberties at all. I was alone most days with my screaming son while grieving my mother and battling post-partum depression. Those were very dark days, indeed.

Nearly six years have passed since this story began. An angel baby followed my firstborn, shaking my mothering world again. Then

a daughter, round and cheery and amazingly soft in body and spirit delighted us all. As I write, yet another child is engaging in acrobatics beneath my heart. We are house-parents at Faith Mission Home and I mother four men-children as well. God has faithfully kept me from losing my entire grip on sanity these years that have turned out so differently from what I expected. I still feel incompetent, I struggle with anxiety, and I grieve my mother with surprising intensity with each pregnancy and birth. Yet I've come so far. I'm learning to simplify my life, lay down control, and have faith in God. I've learned to lay down the ideals that don't really matter and that strangle the life right out of parents with high-need babies and intense toddlers. If a pacifier soothes your baby and gives you a break; buy a hundred, even if you've always detested seeing pacifiers dangling from a child's mouth, and declared your child would never have one.

Granted, motherhood doesn't hit everyone like it hit me, and God bless your flexibility if you breezed through the adjustments. But if you find yourself feeling lost in the transition, I have a few suggestions for you.

**1. Communicate with your husband, and don't neglect him.** My

husband got showered with many of my tears and has been a tremendous pillar for me. Allow him to advise and direct you. He is your leader for a reason. I tend to be stubborn and head-strong and learning to trust my husband's judgment has been a huge learning curve. But the children are his too and he has fatherly instincts as well. Your relationship as a couple will obviously change after the babies start coming. Time together will look different and need to be more intentional. Instead of a relaxed chat on the front porch while sipping tea, you may find yourself walking the porch with an unsettled baby while your tea wilts and your husband wipes spit-up off your back. But enjoy being together anyway.

**2. Find your support group.** I have found the people who hold my hands up most faithfully in the times when I struggle through hard spots are the ones with silver hair who've been there, felt the heat, and come through shining. I have reaped huge benefits by following the biblical example of being taught by older ladies. Don't assume either that the trendy ladies whose lives are beautiful and put together have more to offer than the toddler-chasing mom whose tired eyes are framed by lines drawn by time and tears. She may just possess the most delightfully wise and gentle

heart you could hope to encounter. We aren't complete in ourselves and God never intended that we do our mothering alone.

**3. Resist the guilt.** It's too easy to find yourself feeling guilty about so many things. There's guilt in taking your baby to bed with you to get some sleep because the books all say you shouldn't. Guilt in giving your baby formula when nursing just isn't working. Guilt in feeding bought versus homemade baby food or allowing your child to have sugar. The only thing more important than giving your baby what he needs is your love and obedience to God and reverencing your husband. Anything else can wait or go away. You don't need to have a blog or a product line to sell to be successful. Keeping children fed and alive to adult-hood isn't for the faint of heart. Raising dedicated warriors for God's kingdom is a high and beautiful calling. And if you bring light and salt to this world through the character and Godliness of the children you raise, you have been wildly successful.

Mothering is by no means just a vale of tears and sacrifice. It's no secret that babies are the sweetest form of humanity. There are so many joys. The darling feeling of

your toddler's hand slipping into yours when the world is a little scary or the morning snuggles when the calm, warm bodies are as still they'll be all day are yours to freely enjoy. There's the anticipation of a new baby and wondering if your genes have produced a delightful or confounding personality. Seeing

life through a preschooler's eyes is a wonderful view. The love, unbiased acceptance and thirst for God found in the heart of a child must surely be the reason we need to be like them to see the Kingdom of God. And could we say that motherhood may be one powerful tool God uses to shape us for that Kingdom as well? 

## junior messages

# His Sheep, Not a Goat

*Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH*

Where is God best worshipped? In an elaborate temple or church house built by man? Or outdoors where the hearts of men and women also worship if they truly love Him?

When we go to church in our plush church houses we sit quietly in our pews. Everyone is dressed in their Sunday best. Everyone is so neat, combed, proper and tidy. The church house is quiet. There is not much noise except for an occasional baby crying or young children squirming.

In Kenya at one time we had

church services in a yard, under trees. It was so different from Ohio. I enjoyed being aware of my surroundings and observing all that was unique for Americans in the African culture.

### AFRICAN SUNDAY

Church one day was held under the trees at Carlos' yard. I had been there long enough to know the names of most of the people and not feel like a stranger. Yet, church is so different from our homeland. When we arrived I walked around shaking hands and greeting the ladies

and children. Interesting people I observed: Walter walked in with his trousers neatly tucked into his blue and white striped socks. Tall Jacob ambled into the church yard on this sunny morning in his familiar brown winter coat. His pant legs were rolled up three-fourths to his knees. It's rainy season, and they do what they can to keep clean. Micah hadn't mastered the art of biking to church and keeping clean at the same time, he came on some sticky muddy roads. He actually had to carry his bike over some of the worst mud; he biked in with smears of red dirt on his black pants.

Other things I observed:

A chicken up front had its wings hanging over some chicks; did she think they were cold or what?

Paul Obare is tall and thin. He interpreted devotions for Markus. The one side of his glasses had some thread wrapped around it. A loose thread waved in the breeze as he spoke.

Who knows why Carlos has some plastic tied on both sides of his glasses, maybe so he can easily find them? His glasses have been that way ever since we came...should I try it?

Old Sophia caught a few winks of sleep in church; her head hung low over her stained yellow dress.

Three children got up to sing. The

children's voices were sweet and clear. The little boy had blue pants and a shirt with an ugly dragon; the girls wore blue too, and the oldest had red flip-flops along with a black cloth tied around each ankle. A cloth works as a bandage.

Since we were outdoors, animals ambled into our meeting. The funniest thing that day was a billy goat with his beard flying in the breeze; it came running into the yard, followed by two nannies. The billy stood there, sniffing the air. Carlos got up and chased the herd away. What if the billy had charged someone?

Earlier a pig was snuffling through, and as usual many little chicks and clucking hens. Near the end of the service two hens starting fighting; I don't know what their distracting problem was.

Benter asked me to help her sing "Down at the Cross" (a duet) in Luo. Earlier we had practiced at her house. I held her little boy, Earl, through most of the service. Anyone who wants to sing a special part is given opportunity after Sunday school. I enjoy these African gospel songs.

Though at times it was difficult to live in Kenya, I needed to count my blessings. I was grateful for three sons in church. Only one African youth fellow attended regularly. It

was a challenge for me to converse and relate.

That morning Mark preached on hell. A number of weeks ago he'd talked about heaven. His text was Matthew 25:31-46. To the sheep Jesus says, "Come to my kingdom," to the goats: "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire." Life is serious; eternity is real; it does each of us good

to carefully consider our ways and be ready when He comes. Paul Obare in a testimony afterwards said he does not want to be a goat; he wants to be a sheep.

Whether you are worshipping the Lord in Africa, in America or in some other country, follow the Good Shepherd and be ready to go home when He calls your name. 

## thinking generation

# Beauty as a Spiritually Formative Experience

*Obi Martin, Gordonville, Pennsylvania*

Last night I attended the *Before Jehovah God* concert performed by Lyrica Sacra, a conservative Anabaptist choir and orchestra. I left changed by the beauty—the beauty of life and salvation, the beauty of creation and recreation—that I experienced there.

Beauty, unity, and creation are some of the most powerful ways to communicate the life that God possesses and intends for each one of His children. These three media are, of course, intended by God to

speak of Him. Beauty—"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Psalms 19:1). Unity—"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). Creation—"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead..." (Romans 1:19a). As children of God,

we have the opportunity to respond to the things He has ordained to reflect His nature, and to follow His lead by using beauty, unity, and creation to call our own hearts and the hearts of others towards Him. One way in which we do so is music.

Music is a compelling medium because of its nature as a creation. When a child lilts out her first tune, when a congregation joins together in a hymn, when a cellist sets his bow to his strings and plays, music is created and something that was not before in existence now is. This creation that happens is a large part of why making music is such a pleasure. In it, we are doing something like our Father. In our little childlike way, we are mimicking God and His ability of creation. He has given us the delight of “playing” at something which He Himself really does enjoy. I know that music is usually most meaningful for the ones making it since they are partaking in its creation most fully, but when music is created “live” it is special for the audience as well. They are able to witness the process of its creation. Live music is different from listening to canned music in the same way that witnessing a marriage ceremony is different from hearing about the ceremony from a friend.

Music is powerful as a medium because of the number of different

things which it is able to bring together and make one. Not only is music composed of its three fundamental elements of melody, harmony, and rhythm, it can also weave in and include in its unity the medium of language. Sort of like the three-fold cord that is not quickly broken, music is so powerful because it is many things wrung together into one. It is especially wonderful because its unity out of diversity can be continually expanded. It can be as simple as three notes coming together to create a chord, or as complex as a full orchestra or a thousand voices joining in four part harmony at a Roxbury Hymn Sing.

Music is a captivating medium because of its ability to communicate beauty. The beauty of music is perceived by the senses, but it goes beyond the senses and communes with the heart. Beauty is a characteristic of God and, along with truth and goodness, the exact nature of Christ. Since leaving the beauty of Eden, the human soul has never been at rest. But in moments of beauty, our souls are allowed to enter into a “little rest”. We are attracted to beauty because in it, in its truth and goodness, we find completeness and in that completeness rest. Beauty is the milk which feeds the soul, preventing it from warping and

withering. Not only though do moments of beauty captivate us with rest, they also can catapult us out of rest and towards it. In a sense, beauty is a prophecy because it points out to us the current absences of itself and further speaks of the completed beauty of the new heaven and new earth which is to come. Beauty is both the bivouac that shelters our tired soul for a night on its journey and also the spur of ache in our heart which begs us onward.

Beauty has sometimes been mistrusted, but any fault lies not with it but in ourselves. A valid controversy is sometimes raised over a pursuit of beauty especially in contexts like the performing arts. It is possible for us to become enraptured with beauty and the little rest it gives us and forget that the beauties we perceive are not the pinnacle, but only handholds and footholds on the climb. In the same way though, it's possible for us to try to camp on only truth, starving ourselves of beauty and the ones around us of goodness. Truth, beauty and goodness are three inseparable sisters; we can't ignore one without insulting them all. We tend to place our confidence in only truth, or only beauty, or only goodness, but it does not work. It's not safe for us to have what we like, we've got to somehow

learn what it is we ought to like. Of course beauty can't get on by herself, but without her we can neither have perfect truth nor goodness. When we find ourselves gorged on truth, and gorged on goodness, we should still be hungry. We've got to allow beauty to shape us into the humans that we ought to be as well. Where are you starving? I'm starving for a lot of things, and one of them is beauty.

In Lyrica Sacra's concert on Sunday night, I experienced beauty—and in it witnessed union and creation. A brother who is on the board with Lyrica Sacra opened the evening with a prayer calling our hearts toward a celebration of our Lord and His gifts to us. For some reason in his prayer I understood for the first time the value prayer has to instruct and admonish. Rather than either letting my mind wander or closely following the wording of his prayer to try to understand why he said what he did (and if I agreed or not), I simply trusted the direction his prayer was taking us: into worship. Rather than analyzing his words and then either repeating them or my own revisions to God, I allowed myself to simply contemplate on them at a much deeper level than analyzation and be moved from my own thoughts and distractions to an awareness of the presence of God.

The opening notes of the orchestra fell like raindrops on the driest sand. Though huge, the first moments lapped up immediately, falling and almost disappearing in the very hunger of the dust. I'm not a musician, nor am I able to describe to you the music in terms of cellos, oboes, triads and movements. But my soul was flooded, and the dust was no longer itself, but a spring of water leaping upward from it. The instruments rose and rolled back on themselves, tumbling like baby daffodils; lifting holy hands, standing up and bowing down.

And in came the voices of the choir, like dawn but way too fast, like the earth spinning forward toward redemption. My soul lunged forward to the voice of beauty, receiving it, responding to it. My heart longed to burst into tears and my eyes began streaming. But the involuntary reflex that keeps me from crying except when I'm very angry kicked in like an unnecessary safety harness when you're only six feet off the ground leaving me yanked back short, with both feet firmly on the ground. I've often noticed my inability to cry, and I know that inability is not unusual, but I was never before brought so abruptly to the place of almost-tears that my inability had to kick

in drastically enough and with such force so near the surface that I was able to recognize it for what it was. I knew it was a subconscious defense mechanism, a circuit that shorts from a natural emotion to a survival mode. It felt so ridiculous, like a hand jerking you back from the edge of beautiful oblivion asking you if you had remembered to brush your teeth. In hurt and joy and wonder I recognized it, and placed it in the context of redemption. *Oh Jesus, it's yours, take it away, I don't want it, I don't need it, no wait, keep it, use it, change it, do whatever you want with it, I'll wait for your time. Thank you. Thank you.*

It's been at least a year now that I've been almost continually fascinated by redemption, but last night it tugged on me in a new way. I don't know at what point throughout the concert, but likely as a result of a progression rather than a moment, I came to care so much about beauty and realized internally that it along with all else is weak and dying unless ultimately completed in redemption. In that way beauty inspired me, not as a dog inspires a rabbit, but as a rabbit inspires a dog, to live after redemption, to reorganize my energies towards it.

As the concert progressed, it carried me many places. It was

beauty calling, and I was sitting in its presence, running after it, worshipping the One it pointed to; from ecstasy to ache, from prayer to contemplation, enjoying myself thoroughly along the way. *Before Jehovah God* was and is and will be, I believe, exactly that: little children before Jehovah God, doing their best within and without themselves to mimic our Father in His unending creation of beauty in union; pointing at Him, proclaiming His goodness, speaking His truth, celebrating His beauty, prophesying His redemption that is coming. They were washing the spiritual and natural world in the formative beauty played out by a knowledge of that redemption; bringing the texts of poets and of scripture to one with the sound and soul-scapes of music; spreading out the voice of celebration and proclamation from the human voice to the voices of inanimate matter, making the very fiber of wood and brass and steel cry out and praise Him; bringing the glory of God to the earth in reciprocation of what is

in the heavens.

Beauty is a tremendous call into God. It is the first apologetic. The redeemed should not fear it any more than they should fear truth or goodness. Beauty is the milk that feeds the soul, and we wither up without it. Allow beauty to shape you and do not mistrust it; mistrust only yourself. But in this mistrusting of yourself, don't shun truth, goodness, or beauty as a consequence. Instead give yourself over to each, asking God to give you over to all of His Truth, His Beauty, His Goodness, rather than only that which you perceive. Your sight is flawed, but don't allow that to make you retreat and keep from seeing. Keep on looking, eyesight can get better.

*Writers for Thinking Generation wish to generate, above all else, greater involvement in God's Kingdom—especially among today's thoughtful young Anabaptists. Send correspondence about this article to [gckidobim@gmail.com](mailto:gckidobim@gmail.com).*



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Watch out for scams; they have what it takes to take what you have.

• • • • •

Strong drink does not build strong character.

• • • • •

The school house is a building with tomorrow inside.

• • • • •

Blaming our faults on our nature, does  
not change the nature of our faults.

• • • • •

We can profit from our mistakes when we stop blaming others for them.

• • • • •

We are not saved by *faith and works*, but *faith that works*.

• • • • •

Use the gifting you have. The woods would be quite silent if no other  
birds sang but that sweetest of singers—the nightingale.

• • • • •

True, humble fear of God sets us free from the crippling fear of men.

• • • • •

We must not think that *forgetting* can replace *repenting*.

• • • • •

If we would be servant to others, we must let Christ be our master.