



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JANUARY 2019

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Calvary Messenger

January 2019

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

3750 E. Newport Rd.

Gordonville, PA 17529

Youth Messages Editor: Gideon Yutzky

Leperstown, Dunmore East,

Co. Waterford, Ireland X91-R228

gideonyutzky@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

skschlabach@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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An Unchanging God

Wendell Schlabach, Deer Lodge, TN

Malachi 3:6 **“For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”**

A changing God?

No,

rather an unstable people.

These children of dust who run for a dribble when feeding with manna that is more than ample, They change, God does not.

We mortals so slowly will see, with a struggle, the plan provided for His chosen people.

God tarries,
till we strain to glimpse a form
through our muddle of a marvelous
God; this life is not futile.

And then

God can “change” to help our little
grasp of His life in a concept so subtle.
He’s taking us deeper
in truths far from meager
(yet meager the children He calls His
own people), When finally, in death
(the flesh at its best) we wear our own
mantle
to find Him unchanging.

As we compare the Old and New Testaments, we realize how different God’s plan for His chosen children is today from what it was hundreds of years ago. Did God change? I finally realized that it was an unchanging God behind the scenes, mercifully portraying Himself down through time, tirelessly giving us still more glimpses of His magnitude and His tender love for us. His will was always for man to have a relationship with Him. It always was His longing to walk closely with His own creation; that’s why in the changing scenes of time, He gently leads us onward, always closer to His glorious person, till we stand in the incomparable, surrounding greatness of an eternal God.

-WS 

He Must Increase!

God's Word states it clearly: God's children have enemies! An important question stands out: **How shall we stand up to these enemies?**

Wanting to be well thought of can make us think we have God's approval when, in reality, we are mostly just feeling good about ourselves. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, he offered this admonition: "If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (6:3). When he addressed the Corinthians, he warned them of self-deception that presumptuously assumes it's above stumbling, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). To the Romans he addresses our tendency to vanity, "For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (12:3).

Our best protection is in God's fortress, the Word of God. Jesus said, "Though heaven and earth pass

away, my word will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). God cannot lie, but we can. He cannot be fooled, but we can. We can credit God for things that sadden His heart. He would have us face the facts about our enemies—even when it's us. God gives His Holy Spirit in the struggle against our foes.

Satan apparently studies our weaknesses. He contrives tricks and schemes to confuse us. It seems that if he doesn't trip us one way, he approaches from a different direction. Satan's persistence is illustrated by the experiences of unregistered Christian believers in the former Soviet Union. These devout Christians suffered for many years. Many were imprisoned and/or exiled. Not a few died. Praise God, some who stood firmly upon the promises and provisions of God, actually survived. Yes, finally relief came! The Communist regime collapsed in the early 1990s, after more than 70 years of oppressive rule. Then the intense persecution pressure eased. Soon thereafter, a significant number of these brave Russian citizens emigrated to what they saw as free America.

After a time of living here in what they may have thought was a Christian nation, these immigrant parents noticed a new satanic strategy. They found that what Communism could not tear from their families by force—materialism, indulgent living, and ease weakening them. Some of their children were stumbling into worldliness. Obviously, these young people needed to learn the English language, so their parents had sent them to public schools. Later, when the parents saw what was happening in this new time of reduced pressure, they approached some conservative Anabaptist English-speaking friends with this plea, “Please provide Christian schools for us!” It is to meet that need that several schools were established in California and Alaska (and possibly other places). Some of our faith brothers stepped out to help these families learn English and to get a basic education in a Christian setting. So these spiritually-sensitive parents did not turn a blind eye to the world-ward pressures that prosperity and ease were bringing.

How are we doing?

How should we, who have lived in the context of political freedoms, view the hazards to true faith? What dangers are here? How can we **attain** or **retain** (or perhaps even **regain**) effective resistance to Satan’s

strategies? How might we meet God’s conditions for abundant living? I suggest that the following pressures are pushing against us:

- **Desire for popular acclaim.**

Jesus warned us, “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26). I believe that conservative Anabaptists in North America see and hear more positive comment about us from the world around us than we did half a century ago. Let us not allow that to make us lax—or arrogant.

- **Selective Obedience.** James 4:17 reminds us that if we know we ought to do something and don’t do it—probably because we don’t want to—we sin. To serve Christ truly, we dare not simply take the course of least resistance. Life presents real challenges and we don’t get to “put it in park” when the going gets tough. Hardships are for our good, but we naturally avoid them. The emergence of a butterfly from its cocoon illustrates the value of struggle. If one tries to spare the emerging butterfly from difficulty, it dies. Without struggle, like the butterfly, we do not thrive. However, self-imposed hardship is not the answer either (see Col. 2:23). The answer is true Christian discipleship (Luke 14:27).

- **Lack of Intimacy with God.**

God has promised to go with us. Let us take Him up on this offer. “He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5b). With Him we are never alone. Without Him, we may have the moral support of many, but if our choices do not align with the Scriptures, we’re missing the blessings God would give us.

- **Shame.** We may ask, “Who wants to be the only one doing something—or *not* doing it?” Unless it brings us hero status, we naturally avoid it. However, let us be reminded that: *It is always right to do right.* and that, *It is never right to do wrong to do right.* Let us be reminded that Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).

- **Fear of Persecution.** *Surely, carnal man reasons, there is a way of being included in those reaching heaven without great inconvenience or misunderstanding.* Paul addressed such thinking in his instruction to 2 Timothy 3:12, “Yea, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Granted, the resistance we have been facing in the West has

not been as direct as persecution in other parts of the world. We appreciate that! However, we do face relentless invitation to step off the path of true discipleship.

- **Disrespect for precedent.** Valid Christian experience flows from personal encounter with Christ in repentance and faith. We must embrace truth. Furthermore, let us not lose respect for the insights of those who went before us. Surely we don’t expect each new generation to “re-invent the wheel.” Granted, only copying old patterns brings empty ritual. But to give little recognition to Grandpa and Grandma’s insights and solutions is a poor response to godliness of another time. 2 Thessalonians 2:15 indicates that Paul recommended some predictability in the early church. He instructed them: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” Surely this speaks to inter-generational issues in our time.

- **Love for Pleasure.** Jesus indicates that the “riches and pleasures of this life” may “choke the good seed of the Kingdom” (Luke 8:14). What materialism does not take away from us, love for pleasure would rob of us. Play, in moderation, is good but excessive play is a sneaking thief, stealing God’s treasures from us.

• **Love for Riches.** Have we underestimated the downward pull of riches? (Matthew 13:2). Have we neglected the heavenly wisdom of Jesus' words, "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15b)? Have we forgotten that he who wants to be rich "falls into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition"? (1 Tim. 6:9). The temptation is real to nestle down in the comforts of middle-class privileges while our service units and mission stations are in desperate need of workers. How many workers have you met who felt they had wasted their time in Christian service? We certainly do not regret the 14 years our family gave to missions in Northwestern Ontario from 1961 to 1975.

Pressures come from various directions. Let us ask God to show us the paths of faithfulness. Should open suffering for our faith in Jesus come upon us, let us pray that God would find in us "gold, silver, and precious stones" useful as building material in His Kingdom! (1 Corinthians 3:12).

Compromise often comes wearing a smile. If an offer of compromise does not get us to weaken, the enemy may use ridicule. Someone (I don't remember who) mentioned that we may now be more fearful of a finger pointed at us in mockery than faithful Christians of the past have been of a lethal weapon brandished in their face. Where that is true, God help us!

Let us commit ourselves anew to living by Kingdom values. Let us delight ourselves in eternal salvation made available through the blood of Christ. Let us lay aside all self-exalting views of who we are. Every day, let us serve Christ with the enthusiasm of a man who finds a treasure in a field "... and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44). When Christ finds in us wisdom and courage to resist apostasy because we humbly and courageously take God at His Word, we stand with John the Baptist in his perception of life goals, "He [Jesus] must increase, but I [we] must decrease" (John 3:30)

-PLM 

*The father of success is work;
the mother of achievement is motivation.*

The Movement of God is Forward

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

We have already begun another new year. Time moves forward. Victory campaigns for armies are always forward. Successful businesses have a continuous forward outlook. Children growing up look forward to the next stage.

A message recently seen on a tee shirt said, “Don’t look backward; you are not going in that direction.” We tend to go in the direction we are looking. Lot and his family were told by God to leave Sodom and not look back. Mrs. Lot looked back, and immediately turned into a pillar of salt. Lot did not dare to look back and see her fate.

God prepared the whole earth by His marvelous creation. In the midst of winter, we look forward to springtime. In the midst of planting in spring, we look forward to summertime harvest. In the heat of summer days, we look forward to the moderating weather of fall. In the extra work of fall days, we look forward to the slower pace of winter.

Life moves forward.

The three literary components of the Bible are law, poetry, and prophecy. All three of these were represented in the garden of Eden era. First of all was the beauty and symmetry of size, color, texture, the taste of good fruit, the sounds of nature, with the aroma of pleasantness everywhere. It was poetic, the prose harmonious, the meter of all things in perfect timing. The appetite for all the five human senses was synchronized into the Maker’s praise.

And then there was *law*, a minor (?) prohibition of not eating the fruit of one tree.

A simple violation of eating from that forbidden fruit from one tree caused Adam and Eve to be expelled and cast out of the garden. They would need to plow, plant, cultivate, harvest, and fend for themselves. The curse of sin was upon them.

The Creator God had a plan; it was stated as a promise. We call it the earliest prophecy of the Redeemer, stated in Genesis 3:15; the bruising

of Satan's heel by Christ.

Law, poetry, and prophecy could be somewhat regarded to encompass time in its three dimensions as it relates to us and our world. There is a great deal about law that causes us to look back to our *past*. We see where we missed it, fudged on it, made a few exceptions about it, didn't mean to disobey, but we did. The consequences can vary, but they do apply

Poetry is largely in the *present tense*; we enjoy it now, in any given present moment. The Psalms are restful and comforting. Proverbs is encouraging. Ecclesiastes is reflective, a curious meditation. Some people write poetic lines and others like to read them.

But then prophecy is the forward look, the aspiration of *the future*. Prophecy gives us something to live for, largely so. The biblical record was twenty-five percent prophecy at the time it was given. Prophecy is dependent on Him who originally gave it.

Biblical prophecy always moves forward in time. The Old Testament prophets spoke God's truth as it pertained to the future of Israel primarily, but also to all the nations and its people. It spoke of redemption in Christ, as well as ruin, bondage, and captivity for them if they are disobedient. The prophecy from

God held out hope for peaceful times, good harvests, and family joy. Prophecies are to us powerful promises from God, underwritten by His immutability ("unchanging word," Hebrews 6:16-20).

The prophecies spoken by Jesus in the four gospels are always directed forward, culminating in His second coming for the saints, and the end of the world for the unsaved.

When Israel paid no mind to the prophecies, it also gradually caused them to make exceptions to the laws of God. A clearer view of prophecy being fulfilled in the future (our future), will give us a clearer view into the commandments of God. Faith in the prophetic word carries over to a more genuine faith in God's precepts. An abstract faith results in an abstract life.

We tend to forget that the book of Revelation is the word of prophecy from God, given by Jesus Christ and thus also from Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:4,5). The book of the Revelation speaks forward to the seven churches of Asia and beyond into the future, with lessons in it for all the churches in all of time. The basis of prophecy is redemption—past, present, and future.

Jesus continued speaking to John the words he should write, and to describe the things which Jesus

showed and revealed to him. It all pointed forward to a climactic ending, made known to all as the end of the world.

I grieve about a system of interpretation that takes these words of Jesus in Revelation and forces those concepts to various present-day, spiritual experiences in the believer. That interpretation goes through most of the prophecy in Revelation to look back to our lives in the present, or to biblical history somewhere. The looking back either reduces the very words used by our Lord, or else robs them altogether of its prophetic message. It can adversely affect both our faith *and* our hope.

The prophecy in Revelation is a warning of the wrath to come, administered by the Lord God Almighty in a future time. Our living hope is tightly woven in the

integrated fabric of biblical prophecy. Causing those prophecies by our Lord to apply to the church now in this present time minimizes the hope intended for us in our future. Hope cannot rise when faith is low.

The Bottom Line is that Israel of old majored in the law, and set aside the prophecies given by God. They lost their way under God in tandem with losing sight of the forward view of the prophecies given to them. They gloried in their past and lived for the present. They disregarded the promises of God that were resident in the biblical prophecies; decline was their lot, instead of revival. There are some signs of similar conditions among us, caused in part by our weakness in seeing more fully how the prophecies of the Bible point forward rather than backward, both in general and in specifics. 

I Am Too

Simon N. Schrock, Catlett, VA

Stepping up to the counter in the office of one of my doctors, the lady receptionist behind the “Please sign in” counter greeted me with the usual “How are you?” My response: “Upright, walking and

glad for this new day.” Then I added, “This is the day the Lord hath made.” A young lady standing on my right was conversing with the receptionist. They both uttered somewhat of an agreement. Then I remarked, “You

might guess, I'm a believer." The lady standing near me responded in a low tone, "I am too."

Her response was somewhat surprising. There was nothing about her appearance that gave a clue that she was a believer. Her scant attire and jewelry reflected today's worldly culture. The immodesty she displayed was far beyond my comfort zone. Perhaps she never heard the Scripture on modesty and "love not the world, neither the things of the world" taught or preached. Maybe she heard a pastor teach that the Scriptures on modesty were written by Paul and Peter for their time and culture, and this outdated teaching did not apply to our enlightened culture today. Whatever the reason, she is missing a wonderful opportunity to live in the freedom of deliverance from the fashion craze of this present world. Perhaps the words of Jeremiah would be fitting: "My people do not know the ordinance of the Lord" (Jeremiah 8:7, NAS).

The Bible gives believers three specific instructions about our outward appearance as we journey through this present evil world.

First, it is to be clearly gender specific. The children of Israel were instructed that sex (or gender) is to be distinguished by apparel. "The

woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment. For all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 22:5).

The New Testament gives additional instructions relating to the believer's appearance while we wait for the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. The literal application of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 makes the believer clearly gender specific. Sisters wearing shirts and mimicking men's jeans distract from the beauty of a joyful testimony of being "a woman after God's heart." A believer's outward appearance should leave no question of gender.

Second, believers should be modestly clothed "to keep the shame of your nudity from being seen" (Revelation 3:19 Amp.). The Bible instructs believing sisters to "adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety" (1 Timothy 2:9).

The man, Legion, in whom many devils dwelled, wore no clothes. With permission from Jesus, the devils left the man and entered a herd of swine. Later, the man in whom the devils dwelt was found sitting at the feet of Jesus "clothed and in his right mind" (Luke 8:35). Being modestly clothed applies to both brothers and sisters.

Third, believer's apparel should not

reflect the “deceptive philosophy” and pattern of this world. “See to it that no one take you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (Col. 2:8, NAS). The deceptive world wants to take us captive by adopting its lustful and proud apparel. The world cannot match the believer’s freedom of practicing God’s way instead of its ever-changing fads and fashions. The Amplified Bible tells believers: “Do not be conformed to this world—this age, fashioned after and adopted to its external, superficial customs. But be transformed (changed) by the (entire) renewal of your mind—by its new ideals and its new attitude—so that you may prove (for yourselves) what is the good and acceptable

and perfect will of God even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect (in His sight for you)” (Romans 12:2 Amplified). Following God’s way instead of the superficial customs of the world opens the way for God to show you more of His good and perfect will.

Brothers—Sisters! If your congregation teaches and upholds modesty and non-conformity to the fads of this world, consider it a privilege to be a part of God’s family that does not neglect these truths. Give these standards your joyful and hearty support. (Phil. 4:4) Practice them with rejoicing, so the following generation will see the joy and freedom of following God instead of this perishing world.

Let your clothes verify that you too are a believer.



Volleyball, Anyone?

Lester Troyer, Stone Lake, WI

My concern is a youth group mentality where the non-athletic “*must play volleyball*” to learn communication skills. Across a broad spectrum of Anabaptist fellowships and congregations, it appears that volleyball is venerated as a kind of

anchor for youth group and church-related activities.

There may well be a valid place for some physical activity in the context of being confined to a classroom all day, etc. It is also true that both young and old should be involved in activities that are character-building

and serve a good purpose for the long haul, whether enjoyable or not. But let's not confuse a "must play" of a teenager with that of a sixth grader. I doubt that volleyball should rate on such a scale for young adults. Character building is more likely to take a hit at adult sporting events where childish things should be outgrown.

Our older generations "missed out" on those skills. But it has never been demonstrated that the individual with great athletic acumen has any advantage as a bricklayer, a cabinet maker or a host of other trades that don't carry the adrenaline rush of a good spike, a home run, or a touchdown.

Here is my observation: As a man, you can be passionate about sports, recreation, and athletic competition,

pursuing the vain excitement of the mere passing moment. Or, you can be passionate about Christ, about discipleship, and about the great needs of our time. It's just that you cannot remain passionate about both. There is going to be a winner and a loser as there is between God and mammon. As we get serious about trivial things, we lose sight of the things that matter most. Whatever happens in this regard will not stay in the youth group, but will shape the church going forward.

I can already hear the objections, "Our youth group does lots of service activities, and is active in street meetings, etc." I agree. We have lots of fine young people, But being active as a Christian is not the same as being passionate.

"I would thou wert cold or hot." 

Wheat, Tares, and Leaven

David L. Miller (1927-2016)

Kansas wheat fields are beginning to change color (May 22) and present prospects are for an average or better crop. But some fields have so much rye that both the quality and quantity of the wheat yield will be significantly reduced. Why the difference?

I thought about this as I looked for rye on our rather modest acreage. Two of the fields looked clean from the road, but a systematic search yielded a total of three clumps. How they got there is a mystery. But allowing them to ripen and run through the combine would mean

much more rye next year.

Rye in the wheat and leaven in the church have certain similarities. Rye and leaven are useful in their place, but because of their ability for rapid increase, must be taken seriously, as serious damage can easily result.

Rye is easily seen in wheat because it grows taller. Leaven in the church may be less visible. But early detection and prompt removal are needful in both cases. Neglect can only have bad effects. But neglect is easy. Dealing with leaven can be very difficult. There are people involved. Removing of leaven can be painful. But failure to remove a diseased appendix can result in death. An unwillingness to deal with leaven in the church can cause spiritual fatalities.

It is easy and relatively safe to generalize about such things. To become specific is more difficult and certainly much more risky. It's the old "he's left preachin' and gone to meddlin'" problem. Allow me to risk a few comments that are specific:

- The danger of a **Pharisaical-Laodicean mentality** is always with us. It is characterized by contentment with correct forms and outward security but is unconcerned about new life and a Christian walk. It could be called the leaven of self-righteousness and false security.

- There is the leaven of

individualism. This promotes things for personal interest or convenience. Such a person wants the benefits of the congregation without being encumbered with the inconvenience of loyalty or commitment. Personal agenda is promoted over group values. The blessings of freedom and accountability (these two are not contradictory) are offered on the altar of selfishness. Most of the dangers which the church faces are in some manner related to this malady that works against the welfare of the body of Christ.

- Another leaven could be called that of **accommodation** or **acculturation**. Quite simply this is the willingness to make adjustments and become more like our culture, but are clearly unscriptural. Usually this is done gradually, perhaps often unconsciously.

- We should settle once and for all the fact that contemporary society has neither interest nor ability in promoting Christian values or practices. It is therefore not surprising that some very common practices are conspicuously unbiblical. A **willingness to stand apart** is an essential part of authentic Christianity.

- We all know that a **questionable or wrong practice** is not made

right merely because it is long standing. Let us be reminded that the whole world cannot change God's commandments by disobedience. By God's grace, through responsible leadership and group accountability, let us steadfastly refuse to accept that which God's Word forbids.

- Yet another leaven can be correctly labeled **the legalistic mind-set**. This view may see the solution as having rules to cover every possible situation. Or the person who supports the church discipline only grudgingly, but may have a great preoccupation with detail, a very legalistic mentality. This will likely be for the purpose of discovering possible loopholes, or some excuse to do that which is forbidden because the forbidden is "really no worse than some other things which are allowed."

- A legalistic attitude may not have a conscience against frills, etc., unless

it has been specifically spelled out. The more mature and more spiritual mind will see such details in light of larger principles. The legalist may ask, "What is permitted?" or say it is not forbidden. Christian maturity will want to know **if it will build the church** and help it to adorn the doctrine of God.

The blessing of the Lord on our congregations is assured to the extent that we unitedly seek His blessed will and then join hands to follow Him faithfully.

[Calvary Messenger began publication in January, 1970, with Bro. Ervin Hershberger as editor and David Miller in an assisting role. This typically thought-provoking excerpt appeared in July, 1992, in David's "Observations" column which he wrote monthly from practically the beginning in 1970 until his death in November, 2016.] 

Don't brace yourself against the need
sometimes to change your mind;
***SOME OF THE BEST DECISIONS
REQUIRE U-TURNS.***



marriages

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

Beiler-Peachey

Bro. Michael Lynn, son of Jonas and Wanda Beiler, Malta, OH, and Sis. Sharla Jewel, daughter of Merv and Lois Ann Peachey, Belleville, PA, on Oct. 13, 2018, at Valley View A.M. Church, by Eli B. King, Jr.

Byers-Mast.

Bro. Nevin, son of Myron and Sarah Mae Byers, Good Spring, TN, and Sis. Jessica, daughter of Jay and Sarah Mast, Good Spring, TN, at First Baptist Church for Good Spring Mennonite Church on Oct. 13, 2018, by Perry Miller.

Beiler-Yoder

Bro. John, son of Katie and the late John Z. Beiler, Port Royal, PA, and Sis. Julie, daughter of John and Janice Yoder, Hutchinson, KS, at Arlington Amish Mennonite Church on Sept. 30, 2017, by Arlen Mast.

Nolt-Yoder

Bro. Darwin, son of Galen and Alice Nolt, Peach Bottom, PA, and Sis. Jean, daughter of John and Janice Yoder, Hutchinson, KS, on July 21, 2018, at Arlington Amish Mennonite Church by Arlen Mast.

Schrock-Mast

Bro. Jayden, son of Albert and Charlene Schrock, Squaw Valley, CA, and Sis. Bethany, daughter of Daniel and Lois Mast, Crossville, TN, on Nov. 3, 2018 at Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church, Crossville, TN, by John Mast. 

cradle roll

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

Becher, Keaton and Samantha (Rich), Owentown, KY, third child, second son, Isaak Christian, Oct.. 3, 2018.

Chupp, Daniel and Jana (Miller), Atwater, MN, fourth child and son, Hosea Menno, Nov. 16, 2018.

Clugston, Trent and Rhonda (Brenneman), Radiant, VA, third child, first son, Calum Trent, Oct. 25, 2018.

Jantzi, Michael and Twila (Yoder), Kiev, Ukraine/Stannardsville, VA, sixth child, fourth son, Kyrell Andrew, Oct. 23, 2018.

Kurtz, Rudy and Mary (Troyer), Jackson, OH, fifth child, fourth daughter, Ava Elizabeth, August 16, 2018.

Lapp, John and Jolene (Stoltzfus), New Holland, PA, third child, second son, Patrick David, Nov. 3, 2018.

Mast, Arlen and Gloria (King), Hutchinson, KS, fifth child, third daughter, Kara Janelle, Oct. 30, 2018.

Mast, Kendall and Virginia (Miller), Lincoln, MO, first child and son, Sawyer Joel, Nov. 10, 2018.

Miller, Brandon and Rosanna (Stoltzfus), Milford, OH, fourth child, second son, (one son deceased), Thomas Grant, Nov. 12, 2018.

Correction: Miller, Javan and Suetta (Hershberger), Dundee, OH, fourth child, third son, Adam Cody, August 28, 2018.

Correction: Miller, Jonah and Rosa (Headings), Sedalia, MO, second child and son, Deklan Kade, Aug. 15, 2018.

Schmidt, James and Joanne (Gerber), Millbank, ON, second child and son, Logan Cole, Sept. 19, 2018.

Sharp, Matthias and Debra (Peachey), Mannsville, NY, first child and son, Zachary Matthew, July 28, 2018.

Stoltzfus, Duane and Julia (Smoker), McVeytown, PA, second child and daughter, Jessica Raine, Oct. 2, 2018.

Stoltzfus, John and Lois (Overholt), New Holland, PA, first child and son, Sebastian Will, Sept. 30, 2018.

Troyer, Mark and Nancy (Jantzi), Jackson, OH, fourth child, third son, Justin Marcus, July 2, 2108.

Weaver, Matt and Beth (Wengerd), Greensburg, KY, first and second children, twin sons, Sidney Tye and Sawyer Todd, Oct. 24, 2018.

Yoder, Jerry and Rose (Miller), Haven, KS, seventh child (one deceased), fifth daughter, Brooklyn Jo, Oct. 30, 2018.

Yoder, Justin and Nettie (Graber), Lincoln, MO, third child, first daughter, Deidre Marie, Nov. 28, 2018.

Correction: Yoder, Kevin and Martha (Miller), Lincoln, MO, second child and son, Durant Clay, July 31, 2018.

Yoder, Leland and Donna (Stutzman), Owenton, KY, third child, second daughter, (one daughter deceased), Charlotte Elena, Oct. 5, 2018.

Yoder, Tyler and Joella (Yoder), Owenton, KY, first child and daughter, Adelyn Rayne, Nov. 1, 2018. 

ordinations

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

Bro. John Byler, 42, (wife, Barbara nee Erb), of Brunner, ON, was ordained bishop for Fellowship Haven A.M. Church, on Nov. 18, 2018. Preordination messages were brought by Lee Stoltzfus, Gap, PA. The charge was given by Laverne Ropp, assisted by Lee Stoltzfus and Arnold Jantzi. Matthew Ropp shared the lot.

Bro. Steven King, 35, (wife, Ruth nee Yutzty) of Arlington, KS, was ordained as

minister at Cedar Crest A. M. Church on Nov. 11, 2018. Preordination messages were by Brian Bontrager, Lott, TX. The charge was given by Lee Nisly, assisted by Brian Bontrager and Arlen Mast. Others in the lot were Anthony Shetler and Timothy Yoder.

Bro. Michael Kurtz, 35, (wife, Elizabeth nee Brubaker), of Henderson, NY, was ordained as minister for Northern Light Christian Fellowship on June 3, 2018. Preordination messages were brought by Leon Troyer, Plummer, ID. The charge was given by Wilmer Peachey assisted by David Peachey and Lavern Ropp. Others in the lot were Justin Yoder and Titus Peachey. 

obituaries

Beachy, Menno S., 92, of Salisbury, PA, died Oct. 25, 2018, at Goodwill Mennonite Home, Grantsville, MD. He was born June 26, 1928, son of the late Samuel and Lydia (Hershberger) Beachy.

He was a member of Mountain View Mennonite Church and helped establish Mountain View Christian School. He was the founder and director of the well-known singing group, Mountain Anthems, whom he led for more than 40 years.

On Oct. 24, 1948, he was married to Grace Beachy. She died in August, 2010. Their children are: James (Catherine) Beachy, Centreville, VA; Ellen (Tom) Wegman, Salisbury, PA; Joyce (James)

Maust, Harrisonburg, VA; and Thelma (Michael) Lanteigne, Grantsville, MD; five grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Other survivors include a brother, Sam Beachy, Jr., Manassas, VA; and two sisters: Elva Yoder and Fannie Beachy, both of Springs, PA.

Menno was owner of Sam Beachy and Sons and Beachy's Apple Butter, "The Apple Butter with Character." He became an Amish taxi driver in his later years and wrote an autobiography, "Grace Enough for My Life's Journey."

The funeral was held at the Mountain View Church on Oct. 29, with the local ministers serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Gerber, Edward “Arthur,” 79, of Wellesley, Ontario, died surrounded by family on Nov. 11, 2018. He was born Oct. 5, 1939, to the late Emmanuel and Elizabeth (Steckley) Gerber.

He was a member since his youth, a minister in 1973, and bishop since 1974 of Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite Church, Wellesley.

On July 14, 1962, he was married to Laurene Roes. She died Jan. 8, 2018. He leaves to mourn his departure four sons: James (Patricia) Gerber, Paul (Brenda) Gerber, Glen (Karen) Gerber, Timothy (MaryBeth) Gerber, all of Gadshill, OH; two daughters, Linda (Alan) Erb, Wellesley; and Ruthann (Larry) Wagler, Gadshill; 36 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Other survivors include siblings, Enos (Reta) Gerber; Nicholas (Emma) Gerber; Stanley (Emma) Gerber; David (Marilyn) Gerber; Amy (Melvin) Kuepfer; Shirley (Larry) Gerber; brothers and sisters-in-law: Ruth Albrecht, Melvin Roes and wife Marietta, Emma Gerber and husband Stanley, and many nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his brother Gordon, sisters: Marie and husband Ivan Jantzi; Kathryn and husband Willie Kuepfer; Margaret and husband Raymond Wagler; and brother-in-law Samuel Albrecht, and sister-in-law, Mary Roes.

The funeral was held Nov. 15, with Laverne Ropp and John Gerber serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Kurtz, Enos J., 59, of Adams, NY, died Aug. 22, 2018. He was born in

Lewistown, PA, on April 19, 1959, to Joseph and Julia (Byler) Kurtz.

He was a member of Northern Light Christian Fellowship. He was a minister for 33 years and for the past 25 years, he ministered at Northern Light Christian Fellowship. He was a lifelong dairy farmer, first in Belleville, PA, before relocating in Adams, NY, in 1993.

On June 12, 1980, he was married to Lucy Zook. She survives. Also surviving are sons: Mark (and Marla), Belleville, PA; Michael (and Elizabeth), Henderson, NY; Ryan, Adams, NY; Jonathan (and Janina), Belleville, PA; Timothy and Joseph, both of Adams, NY; Joshua, Lorraine, NY; Julian, Adams, NY; Marvin (and Alesha), Wiggins, MS; and Steven, Adams, NY; 11 grandchildren and two foster grandchildren; his brother, Joseph (and Sylvia) Kurtz, Mannsville, NY; and two sisters, Julia (David) Hostetler, Tura (Raymond) Hostetler; Rachel (David) Peachey, all of Belleville, PA.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Dorothy J. Kurtz and an infant brother, Samuel Kurtz.

The funeral was held at Pleasant View A.M. Church, in Belleville, PA, on Aug. 26, with burial at Locust Grove Cemetery.

Miller, Aden O., 85, of Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Oct. 30, 2018. He was born in Holmes County, Ohio, March 23, 1933, to the late Marnelius and Lizzie Ann (Yoder) Miller.

He was a faithful member of Maranatha Fellowship Church, Sugarcreek.

On Nov. 1, 1959, he was married

to Susan Beachy. She survives. Their children are: Jeffrey (Marlene) Miller, Walnut Creek; Matthew (Anna) Miller, Sugarcreek; Abigail (Mahlon) Stoltzfus, Killbuck; and Liz (Dan) Yoder, Sugarcreek; 26 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren, two brothers: Junior (Twila) Miller, Sugarcreek and Melvin (Betty) Miller, Walnut Creek and a sister-in-law, Mae Miller, Walnut Creek.

He was preceded in death by a son, Durban; a great grandson, Seth Elliot Miller, a sister, and four brothers.

The funeral was held on Nov.2, with Bishop Paul Leroy Miller officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Mullet, Ervin A., 93, of LaGrange, Indiana, died peacefully at home on Oct. 30, 2018. He was born Oct. 7, 1925, at Orville, Ohio, to the late Absalom and Fannie (Shetler) Mullet.

He was a member of Topeka Christian Assembly, Topeka, IN.

On Dec. 17, 1947, he was married to Ella Schlabach. She died April, 2010. Surviving are their six children: Elsie (Delbert) Schrock, LaGrange, IN; Paul (Marge) Mullet, Columbus, NC; Esther (Harold) Headings, Humboldt, IL. Martha (Ray) Stutzman, Lakeville, IN; Willie (Jessie) Mullet, Goshen, IN; and Myron (Angie) Mullet, Greenwood, SC, 21 grandchildren and 65 great grandchildren.

Close relatives preceding him are his brother, Jake and his wife, Susie Mullet; sister-in-law, Eudora Mullet and a great grandson, Jordan Sensenig.

The funeral was held on Nov. 3, at Townline Mennonite Church, with Delbert Schrock, and Ray Stutzman serving. Interment was at the Townline Church Cemetery.

Weaver, Barbara W., 63, of Kalona, Iowa, died June 12, 2018, after a courageous battle with cancer. She was born at Centerville, Michigan, Dec. 25, 1954, daughter of William LeRoy and Marjorie (Schlabach) Bontrager.

She was a member of Sharon Bethel A.M. Church and sewing group, Kalona. She was an excellent cook, serving with a special gift of hospitality.

On June 1, 1975, she was married to Simon Weaver in Kalona. She is survived by two daughters: Mary Beth (Kenneth) Miller, Wellman, and Rebecca Anne Weaver, Kalona; six grandchildren; her parents, LeRoy and Marjorie Bontrager, of Hicksville, OH; five brothers: William (Nina) Bontrager, Millersburg, IN; Melvin (Marie) Bontrager, Hicksville, OH; Marlin (Luella) Bontrager, Topeka, IN; Firman (Pauline) Bontrager, Ashley, OH, and Vernon (Beth) Bontrager, Leo, IN, three sisters: Lydia (Melvin) Yoder, Hicksville, OH; Christine (John Henry) Hochstetler, Goshen, IN; and Annie (Reuben) Knepp, Montgomery, IN.

She was preceded in death by a sister Irene Bontrager, a niece, Mary Knepp, and a nephew Steven Hochstetler.

Serving in the funeral were Delmar Bontrager, Leslie Miller and Elwyn Stutzman. Burial was in the Sharon Bethel church cemetery. 

As of this writing a group of travelers estimated to number between 5,000 and 10,000 people has gathered near the US-Mexico border in Tijuana, Mexico. They originate from Mexico and Central American countries further south. They have gathered with the intent of crossing into the USA to create a better life for themselves. The climate is tense as those seeking to cross into the USA are rebuffed by border authorities because they lack the necessary documentation to pass through. Sad economic conditions at home, along with dangerous criminal activity, coupled with the USA's stringent immigration policies are important ingredients in the recipe for this cocktail. The group of aspiring immigrants is alternately described as innocent victims who should be welcomed to the USA mercifully and a band of rowdy thugs, infiltrated by violent criminals whom the USA should vigorously defend themselves from. While cases for each description can be found, the general characteristics of the group likely lies somewhere between those two unhelpful generalizations.

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In November the famous Camp Fire of Butte County in northern California waltzed its way to destructive infamy. During its several-week rampage, it charred more than 153,000 acres—that's about 240 square miles—and destroyed 14,000 homes and over 500 businesses and 4,200 other structures! Those statistics are really pretty difficult for me to comprehend. But it helps to think of how I might feel if my home were burned, then try to multiply that by 14,000. Sadly, 100 people died as a result of the blaze and a couple hundred people remain unaccounted for. This blaze is considered the most deadly wildfire in recorded US history!

Earlier in the summer on August 14 the Danskin Congregation of Eastern Mennonite affiliation in northern British Columbia, found themselves under evacuation orders, due to a raging wildfire. The women and children left, but a majority of the brethren stayed to help fight the fires and protect the properties. A dramatic change in weather in early September helped tame the fire. By September 12 all evacuation orders were lifted. Those in that particular church family didn't lose

any structures, but pasture, timber and fences sustained damage. Some of their neighbors lost a lot more than they did.

When a wildfire gets going, its destruction is indiscriminate. The rich and the poor, the righteous and the wicked, the prepared and the surprised are all susceptible. Securing our valuables in a fireproof location—like heaven—is the only way to prevent losses that are eternally important.

James, in his epistle, reminds us about the destructive nature of the tongue, comparing its devastation to that of a fire. *“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”* James 3:6 The destructive nature of that “unruly member” deserves just as much attention from God’s children as those frightful wildfires. The writer to the Romans points us to yieldedness to God, rather than disappointing self-effort, as the way to harness the positive potential that our tongue represents. *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.* (my

emphasis added) Romans 6:13

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Lizzy Francis wrote an article that recently appeared in Yahoo’s Lifestyle section entitled, “Resilient Kids Come from Parents who do These Eight Things”. She made some very worthwhile points. Her list was as follows in quotation marks, with my comments following her list.

“They let the kids struggle.” Children who have everything done for them, don’t have the opportunity to develop the strength that comes to those who struggle, persevere and overcome.

“They let their kids experience rejection.” Children need to learn how to deal with being told “No.” When our children are chosen last on the playground or miss out on something that their peers are enjoying, it is tempting for parents to intervene so that they don’t get left behind. But children should learn that missing out is not the end of the road. We become stronger when we learn that we can move on when things don’t go like we prefer.

“They don’t condone a victim mentality.” We tend to blame our struggles on other people or circumstances. Sometimes our problems are not our fault, but sometimes they are. When the blame is ours, we should admit it rather

then blame something or someone else. Children who are conditioned to see themselves as victims of circumstances and other people's choices, are disadvantaged. Life isn't always fair and those who learn that lesson as children are better equipped to handle life's bumps and bruises.

"They do more than tell them to 'buck up' when struggles occur." It is good and right for parents to empathize and to help their children identify the feelings associated with failure or being mistreated. Helping them understand why they feel the way they do, can be helpful in knowing how to move beyond those feelings to right choices. Part of making good choices includes choosing to treat others nicely, which breaks the cycle of ill will rather than to perpetuate it. When children don't learn to move beyond legitimate negative feelings to right choices, they tend to wallow in those feelings which is quite problematic.

"They help their kids learn how to label their feelings and emotions." Someone who is able to identify and talk about negative emotions is less likely to punch someone in the nose. Some ways of handling anger and disappointment are better than others. Talking about those things is a better way to cope than exacting revenge on the person with whom

we are upset.

"They give their kids the tools to self-soothe." When children experience disappointment it can be helpful for some to engage in a distracting activity like a coloring book, sweeping out the barn, talking to the dog, licking a popsicle, etc. Sometimes this type of activity helps children to gain helpful distance from a problem and thus prevent a negative response. Obviously this isn't the whole picture, but can be one tool in a parents' toolbox.

"They admit their mistakes. And then they fix them." Example is a powerful teaching posture. When Mom and Dad can admit their failures and mistakes and correct them, this sets the stage for children to understand that this is normal. A child that learns that, has a big headstart on being a well-adjusted adult.

"They always connect their kid's self worth to their level of effort." This one is big. Complimenting your child on his good grades because he is so smart, reinforces his sense of entitlement. Praising him on his good grades because he studied diligently helps him to link fulfillment to his stewardship of opportunity and effort. There is a huge difference! It's much more important for a child to feel satisfied that he did his best than

that he scored the most points, or ran the fastest, or got the best grade. Those who experience fulfillment because they've done their best are much better adjusted than those who feel fulfilled because of what they have been given.

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I sometimes wonder why it was that God had Jesus born in a stable. Since God doesn't do things haphazardly, this must have been part of His design. Why? The stable was likely the dirtiest place that had any sort of weather protection in town. After all, this was where the beasts of burden and the food-producing beasts lived. These beasts are outstanding for ways other than their cleanliness. How is it that the only clean and pure baby

ever born to woman was born in an unremarkable, unsanitary stable among beasts that served mankind? It was those dumb beasts who served mankind that had room for this Jesus among them. Jesus came to serve and not be served. He came to live among the depravity that characterizes fallen humanity. He loved and served without becoming sullied by his surroundings. His purity spanned from his stable birth to the cross. This time period is only a span between sinless eternity past and eternity future. Jesus is God, made flesh. His birth in a stable serves both as a fitting illustration and a manifest reality of how he condescended to us when he "became flesh and dwelt among us."

-RJM 

Dear Pilgrim, Beware

(1 Timothy 6: 5-20, applied)

Leon Zook, Virginia Beach, VA

Dear Pilgrim, many have supposed and do suppose that material gain is an indicator of godliness. They have taught; "name and claim," "believe and receive," "believe and achieve," etc. Just recently a local church sign said, "ask, believe, wait, receive." Don't keep company with those

kinds of people. Great gain in God's sight is not material wealth, but godly living and contentment. For, Pilgrim, contrary to what men's actions would at times indicate, you brought nothing into the world and it is certain you will carry nothing out when you leave. Do you have enough food? Be content! Do you have

sufficient clothing? Be satisfied. If you make material wealth your goal, you will fall into many temptations because of that desire. You will fall into a trap. Traps are so hard to get out of. You will also fall into foolish, painful lusts, which choke out life, real life, the life of Christ and give in exchange for blessing and peace, destruction, misery, apostasy, and spiritual death. Love of money is the root of so much evil. It brings greed, selfishness, dishonesty, stealing, and a host of things which bring a very bitter end. Many already have coveted after money, and consequently, pierced themselves through, yes through (not a pin prick) with untold sorrow and misery.

Many have coveted and erred from the faith. Remember Ananias and Sapphira. They appear to have lost their eternal reward because of love of money. What a good beginning they had, but how quickly they walked away from truth. Where are they now? Is it worth it? And consider the rich young ruler. What a fine, gifted, upstanding man he was! What an asset he could have been for the Kingdom of Christ. The King himself, in Person, invited him to be one of His disciples, but he couldn't give up his desire for wealth. These are just a few examples of those who have pierced themselves through to

the death of their souls.

But you, Pilgrim, flee these things. Rather, pursue right living, good works, godly character and wisdom, always making choices in the light of eternity. Exercise faith, for this is our connection with God. Without it, we will never see Him. It is not automatic; it comes by hearing the Word of God. Learn to live, practice and walk in love, which is the nature of God. After all, the greatest commandment is to love Him above all else, and the second is to love your neighbor, which includes your church family, as much as yourselves. When difficulties come, exercise patience—not something that comes without the help of God, discipline and effort.

And be meek. What a leader Moses was! What quality stands out in him—the one who could probably have been the next Pharaoh? He could probably have had all the wealth of Egypt at his fingertips. Yet he turned it down, choosing rather to be identified with God's suffering people. The quality he is known for is meekness. Choose meekness rather than the pursuit of wealth.

Life is tough at times. It's a real battle. Yes, staying on course is a fight. With your weapons which are not carnal, fight that good fight of faith. Set your sights, your focus, your

goal on eternal life. Grasp it. Cling to it. Don't let go for the battle is not to the swift nor the strong, but to those who faithfully endure unto the end. God called you to this eternal life at an indescribable price, a cost you will never understand, the life of His Son, Jesus Christ! What a privilege to be called by Him! Nothing on earth can compare.

You have already professed the good profession in your community, and many other places. You will not realize until eternity where your influence has reached. Don't let the love of money hinder your working in the Kingdom. It can do so, as a wet rag extinguishes a flame.

I give this charge, Pilgrim, in the sight of God, Who is the Source of True Life, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession. Keep this commandment, to fight the good fight, without spot or reproach. Don't give anyone any reason to question your sincerity, honesty, integrity, and Christian witness. Give your best to the Lord Jesus Christ until He appears again, as He certainly will.

If you follow these principles, and some of you still have a surplus of wealth, as you probably do and will, I charge, Pilgrim, not to be high minded or proud. Look how our Lord Jesus, the Creator, humbled Himself

and became poor for our sakes. And please, do not put your trust in these uncertain riches. Because that is what they are; uncertain. They do not guarantee security. They will not give you the security and peace of mind that comes by being in the will of God and doing the things which please Him. Your security, Pilgrim, is in God. Trust Him. He is the One who gives you all things to enjoy. Have you noticed the clothing of the flowers? Have you taken the time to watch the birds feed? Have you found a cologne that beats the smell of a rose? Our Provider furnishes these blessings for your good and pleasure. He loves you more than the birds and flowers. Do as the birds do and trust Him. They work and He blesses their work.

What should you do with your surplus wealth? That is of great interest to God, and He tells you, Pilgrim. He says to be rich in good works. Allow the fruit of the Spirit to be always evident in your lives. Do for others. Be ready to distribute what you have. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned. Be sure to visit and encourage the fatherless and widows. Don't ever take advantage of widows, because God seems to have a soft spot in His heart for them. It takes money to do these things. What a blessing that you are privileged to share. It is a greater

blessing than being on the receiving end if you do it willingly. Jesus also said that you should go into all the world and preach His saving gospel. This also costs. Are you getting the idea? Remember, He became poor for your sake, that you might become rich.

Pilgrim, this will lay up in store for you a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life. Eternal life is far more important than living the American Dream. O Pilgrim, keep that which is committed to your trust! God bless you!



Out of the Mouth of Babes

Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS

It was 9:20 on Sunday morning; the sanctuary was quiet but for an occasional murmur. After I was seated, I located my journal and pulled out a pen, hoping to write for a few minutes before the service started. In the middle of my first paragraph, the silence was broken. My pen paused—mid-stroke.

Behind me, the sweet voice of a young child sang over and over, “Yesh, Jesuh luh me! Yesh, Jesuh luh me....” The tune was spot-on; the diction charming with childish imperfection. My heart leaped for joy—not so much for me as for the curly-topped toddler.

The soloist was JaCoby, a bright-eyed and precocious two-year-old. My heart sang because this small boy is singing of the love of Jesus,

though his first parents have not done their best job with their sons. JaCoby and Braxton now daily experience the love of God through the care of devoted foster parents.

It was 7:35 on Wednesday evening and we were well into the first song when I heard it. Same voice, same child. This time it was no thin-voiced solo in the pre-service hush; it was a full-throated and original composition impossible to miss. He bellowed with such enthusiasm that I found it hard to keep my place, though the hymn was familiar. As before, my heart leaped for joy and I think God smiled.

“Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength... to still the enemy and the avenger” (Ps. 8:2 ESV).



The “Ukrainian Amish”

Bruce Jantzi, Shipintsi, Chernovtsi Oblast, Ukraine

I encourage you to read the amazing story of the “Ukrainian Amish.” I thank Brother Bruce Jantzi for framing this interesting composition into a story form. This took time out of their busy schedule as missionaries in Ukraine. Bruce wrote, “These people say they do not have a name. They call themselves ‘believers.’ This identifies them in the area where they live as non-Orthodox and non-Catholics.” The name “Ukrainian Amish” is not given as a derogatory term. Rather in respect of their beliefs and convictions it fits them with the conservative Anabaptist group called “Amish” in the western hemisphere. I also thank Brother Paul Miller, who invested time in editing this writing.

Personal evangelism is usually considered the most effective methods in reaching the lost. Particularly in this respect that people who are won to the Lord will “hang in there” and hold out to the end. The following account proves this fact.

[Editor Paul Miller’s comment: I, too, thank Bro. Bruce Jantzi for this informative and welcome contribution to *Calvary Messenger*. However, I changed Canadian punctuation and spellings to USA standards. I well remember the differences in practice in Canadian schools from teaching school in northwestern Ontario from 1961 to 1975. U. S. rules of English are not better—just different!]

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

The room in the village cottage was crowded. Some men sat on the floor in front of us. Women sat on chairs behind them. Others stood behind them. One more row stood on chairs with their heads up at the ceiling. And on that warm summer evening in July of 2009, another 50 people stood in the yard with their faces close to the open window. We talked and shared for several hours.

A group of us were visiting the “Ukrainian Amish” in Kosmirin, a village perched atop a canyon wall of the Dnester River in western Ukraine. As interested as we were to discover who these people were, they were just as eager to learn about us. They are a group of sincere believers who worship simply, live simply, eat simply, dress simply, emphasize working with their hands, and shun modern technology such

as telephones, electricity, and cars, motors, and cameras. Having only the Bible to guide them, they live out their faith. Until the dark years of Communism passed away with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990's, they were persecuted for their faith. Their five congregations, which are located in five adjacent villages where they live among Orthodox and Catholic Ukrainians, have expanded rapidly in the past two decades, the growth stemming from some converts from among their neighbors, but mostly from their large families. There are about 3,000 "Ukrainian Amish" today.

Though the "Ukrainian Amish" have lived lives rather closed from the greater world, they had heard of Amish in America. They were quite curious to know how Amish live in America, and how they separate themselves from worldly society. They wanted to know how Mennonites and Amish Mennonites compare to, and relate to, the Amish. They asked questions about our doctrines and practices, how we raise our children, and how we understand non-resistance and going to war. They were intrigued to discover that there were other groups in the world that hold the same Biblical principles and doctrines precious as they do.

It was actually the media that exposed the Ukrainian Amish to the world. Despite that Kosmirin is a village tucked away from the

populous cities of Ukraine, the gathering of several thousand mourners at the funeral of their main elder, Evan (John) Derkach, in the early days of 2008, attracted the attention of journalists and reporters. Since this funeral took place when the world was still thinking about the Nickel Mines Amish school tragedy, the journalists seemed glad to announce, "We have Amish in Ukraine, too!" We were alerted to the existence of the Ukrainian Amish after one of our Ukrainian members from one of our other Mennonite churches was told by his sister, who is not a believer, that she saw a documentary of the Ukrainian Amish on television. The knowledge of this documentary triggered our first visits to these people, which generated many more visits and a friendship on both the personal and church level. Because Shipintsi, where our Mennonite Church is located, is only 100 kilometers from the Ukrainian Amish, we visit them several times a year, most often in the village of Deleva. They also visit us occasionally, usually at a time when they had been shopping in the large Kalinovskiy Market in the city of Chernovtsi near us.

When we first visited them, the Ukrainian Amish were quite reserved, displaying a fear of outsiders which stemmed from their experiences during the years of Communist

persecution. At first they did not show us where they gathered for their worship services; and neither did they tell us which of them were the ministers of the church. As trust was built after several visits, they showed us the larger rooms they used for their gatherings, and invited us to meet with their ministers. Today, they invite us to preach and sing at their Sunday services.

The Ukrainian Amish appreciate our literature which we give to them, and accept our books, which we have translated into Russian and Ukrainian, as doctrinally sound. They told us that they have taken many good examples from our books which they have read. They especially were interested in reading stories of martyrs such as *In the Whale's Belly* and *The Drummer's Wife*.

On our second visit I brought along several cases of Christian books and magazines, including the *101 Favorite Bible Stories*. When I set the boxes on the ground behind the van to shut the hatch, a group of children suddenly descended upon the books like a gaggle of hungry geese. When a teen-aged boy asked the children if they have permission to take the books, they sheepishly put them all back. An elder then told some young men to carry the boxes away, but the young men took the boxes only about ten meters from the van and set them on the grass. As the fathers looked on, again a swarm of

children began claiming the books, this time succeeding to carry them to their homes.

We wanted to know the origins of the Ukrainian Amish, and when and how the light of the Gospel began to shine in their area. I need to clarify that these people have no German, Swiss or central European Anabaptist background, as we think of an Anabaptist background. They are typical Ukrainian people, descending from the Kiev-Russ which we call the Slavic peoples. They have no family blood connections to the Amish in America, unless, I suppose, one would go back more than 1000 years. But these people have come to faith in Jesus Christ and have embraced a conservative position very similar to what we call an Anabaptist position. Because they told us about their church history in different visits, and various brethren told us the part of the story which they knew, it was rather difficult to piece together an accurate history.

They know that the evangelical faith came to their villages in the 1920's. Prior to that time all the people in that area were steeped in the Orthodox rituals and practices. A few of the people were Catholics.

During World War I, when war swept across these lands, a certain landowner named Philip was sent to a labor camp beyond to Ural Mountains. During Philip's eight or so years in the concentration camp,

he became acquainted with a believer who taught him much from the Word of God. Through the testimony of this other believer in prison, Philip was converted. We are quite certain that this other believer in the prison camp was a Mennonite, who would have been from, or at least had roots in, the Mennonite colonies situated near present-day Zaporozhe, Ukraine. When Philip returned to his home area he began to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, including the new birth and holiness of life. His teachings, which we observe being followed today, include separation from the world, non-resistance, believers' baptism, the woman's head covering, a communion table free of sin, a strong brotherhood, and excommunication including the ban.

When Philip returned home from the prison camp, he discovered that his steward had lived with his wife in his absence. It was Philip's way of handling this difficult situation that caught the attention of the neighbors and the people from the surrounding villages, and caused them to be receptive to the Gospel message. First, Philip kindly asked his wife, "Whom do you consider as your husband?"

When she said that he is her husband, Philip forgave her, and began to live with her again. And instead of punishing the steward, he also forgave him, and paid him wages for the years he had managed the

estate while he himself was captive in Russia. He then dismissed his estate-manager in peace.

Many people passed by Philip's house as they went to the market to sell their goods. (Since this area of Ukraine was not under Communism until 1939, private enterprise still existed in these parts in those years, whereas in central and eastern Ukraine at this time, Communism, which squelches free enterprise, was being forced upon the people.) Philip met many of these travelers and talked to them about the Gospel. Many people walking to or from the market stopped in to meet the man who forgave both his wife and the man who defiled her. Through his witness, many left the Orthodox and Catholic churches and gathered to worship as evangelical believers. This was at a time when the peasants of the land, who were themselves almost void of spiritual life and were grieved by the scandalous ministrations of the Orthodox clergy, hungered after a higher and a fuller spiritual life. In Jesus Christ they found healing and comfort for their souls, resulting in collective effervescence. Philip was a zealous evangelist and preached in many places, north to Lvov (formerly called Lemberg) and south to the Carpathian Mountains. In his lifetime he ordained twelve others as ministers of the gospel, and helped to establish many churches.

As was mentioned, it was because

of Evan Derkach's funeral that we learned about the Ukrainian Amish. Evan Derkach was a humble, yet strong bishop-type leader for his people, usually now referred to by his people as "the prophet." He was converted in 1946. He grew up as a pious Orthodox in Kosmirin, and married a believer's daughter. His father-in-law gave him a Bible, which, when he read it, opened the way of Christ to him. Later a voice from a fire told Evan that he would be ordained to the ministry. Eventually when he was ordained, the officiating minister said the exact same words spoken from the fire without knowledge that they had previously been spoken.

The church had emphasized the gifts of prophecy and miracles. When someone came to their gatherings, they shared through prophecy and psalms and opened the mystery

of the Lord. God later revealed to Evan the Prophet that they need to base their life on Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures. What had been happening was that some people had been prophesying by their own spirit, or by the spirit of the devil, and not by the Holy Spirit of God. Evan called them to repentance and endeavored to bring them under the Scriptures. Evan prophesied many things and was always accurate in his predictions. However, before he died he requested that they do not write his prophesies, visions, and revelations from God in a book. He explained that he had tried to teach them the Word of God and now that persecution has ceased they have Bibles. In our first visits, the Ukrainian Amish seemed to have an over-emphasis on prophecy, but today we hear very little on this topic.

concluded next month... 

A Woman After God's Heart

Sunday School Sisters

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



“Leading a Ladies’ Sunday School Discussion” is the name of this *recipe*. Preparation is almost identical to the one titled: “Lecturing the Ladies Class,” but the dish is

served differently. More on that later. Following a brief disclaimer, we’ll gather the ingredients.

I acknowledge that there are multiple ways to “do” ladies’ Sunday

School classes. I've been in a setting where one of the brethren taught us. It was, in my mind, then, the ONLY way to do Sunday school. I've been in classes where ladies were silent partners in the men's class. I've been where a sister was elected to teach for 6 months in a class of 30-40 ladies. I've also taken part of small classes (8-10 sisters) where the task of leading the discussion was passed from sister to sister each Sunday. We've used quarterlies or we've not used them.

This recipe is not to recommend one class setting above another. As frequently quipped in our household: "There is more than one way to can pickles." This article comes as a response to several requests, and to my personal need. I simply want to outline several key ingredients in what can begin to form a meaningful and inspirational ladies' Sunday school discussion. This *recipe* was given to me by life, my husband, other sisters, the Holy Spirit, practice, and much trial and error.

- Read the lesson portion of Scripture daily, maybe even several times a day, in the week prior to your assignment. Read it in different versions. Read it in another language if you've been blessed with more than one. A favorite translation for me is the Amplified which takes many of the KJV words and breaks them open, allowing me to see inside. Squelch the

urge to go to a commentary or a study Bible first thing. Allow the purity of the Word of God to permeate your thoughts *before* you check with Matthew Henry.

- I find it especially meaningful to follow cross references for related verses elsewhere in the Bible. As truths flood over you, grab your pen and notate them for your reference later.

- First of all it is important to establish the setting of your portion of Scripture. To whom was it written? Where? And when? Also to what purpose? When we were in grade school we used *Halley's Bible Handbook* in our studies. I still like to go there especially for help in establishing a setting. *Rose's Publishing* has excellent visual and practical helps, charts and maps, even allowing you to make copies for your class.

- One way to internalize your section of Scripture is to discuss it with those around you. I find it especially energizing to take a "trouble spot" to my husband to enlist his help. When a family member is preparing to teach, we often sit together and bat it back and forth. Input from other minds sheds light in areas I had not arrived at by myself. If you live by yourself this ingredient may be harder to come by. Godly masculine-wired thoughts are of keen value, either in written form or in person.

- Eventually a commentary

or another's study notes can be helpful. Even though at this point you might qualify to write your own commentary because you've wrestled, absorbed and been permeated with this Scripture all week and the Holy Spirit has shown you truths you would have never discovered had you only driven by quickly.

- I remember the violation I felt when studying through the pages of a popular commentary and being subtly instructed that once we have known the Light we can never fall from salvation. To state it bluntly, I've not trusted them since! Sift these "helps" through a very fine sieve, sifting out more lumps than Calvinism. That is why commentaries and books by Byler, Lapp, Hershberger, Schrock and McGrath on my shelf provide me with much more tension-free studying!

- And pray. Pray throughout the week for the members of your class. Ask the enlightening presence of the Holy Spirit to shine on this Scripture for you. Pray that you can be a tool that God will use to help others fall in love with God's Word and long to ingest it for themselves.

- Make copious notes for your own use while studying. Make a more organized (legible!) set of notes for your use during the Sunday morning class.

Don't be surprised if at this stage you begin to feel so invigorated by your studies that you can hardly

keep it to yourself. If, however, the prospect of Sunday morning still fills you with dread and apprehension, or the portion of Scripture feels bland to you, bring that issue specifically to the Author in prayer. We may come to the moment of our assignment sensing an utter un-doneness and insufficiency. Providing you have done your part in preparing yourself, that tension of not being big enough for the task is the way God will fill you with His own grace and energy. I have learned to thank God for the unspoken "holy terror" just before an assignment, because it helps keep things in perspective. We have in our hands Words from an Almighty God, and He allows us trifling, stammering humans to handle His Word among ourselves. It is appropriate that we feel intimidated by the assignment. But it is not God's plan that we look across the class at another sister and feel embarrassment to be leading in her presence. Deal with that decisively and conclusively.

This *recipe* precedes a part two that will treat the actual class discussion time. You are welcome to write it. Or pray for it. Or wait for it.

You may remember last month's article entitled: "Brand Name Sisters" where Teacher Tabitha bowed to Foodie Fran on food related assignments. In my neediness I wish to humbly yet strongly suggest that one (or several) of you write that "how to" food article. If God has endowed

you with delight and effectiveness in organizing and executing a “food event” we are waiting to hear from you. I speak of ministry from our kitchens and hospitality and grace in organization and serving. I know you are out there. I would be delighted to work with you in birthing your talents into an article for this forum. If it scares you to have your

name attached, we can negotiate that too. Even just the formulation of ideas and 1,2,3's can be submitted and I'll pool them all together for the benefit of the Calvary Messenger Sister-hood! Please refer to my contact information inside the front cover.



junior messages

In the Fields, He is with Us!

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

It was an experience worth having, standing out under the warm African sunshine in Samson's *shamba*, harvesting maize (corn), breaking all the corn cobs off the stalks and husking them. Working with people helps forge relationships like nothing else.

Numerous groups of friends had previously helped Samson in his fields. One year at planting time there was a church frolic (work bee). Many men and women came and helped Samson dig up his *shamba* and get the soil ready for seeding. It was worthwhile and a sight to behold. There was a row of sweating women with the large *jembes* (African hoes), swinging in unison. The men worked apart from the women. We ended up

under the trees in the shade. There was singing and food to cheer all hearts. The biscuits and quencher rapidly disappeared.

Mark's sons and Dishon returned to Samson's *shamba* another day. They poked a hole in the rows with a small *jembe*, then dropped in three kernels of corn, the African way of planting. They covered the golden kernels. Micah roared off on a *piki piki* (motorcycle) to purchase fertilizer and sodas. Farming by hand takes a lot of muscles.

On a bright humid morning youth who worked at Mt. View Nursing Home, were on a mission trip to Kenya. It was getting hot and muggy when Mark drove them to Samson's field. They diligently pulled weeds in

the cornfield for a few hours. They were grateful for showers at our house in Ngiya before we all passed out Bibles and 101 Bible Story books at a hospital in Siaya and also enjoyed lunch at a hotel.

One harvest season, the mission youth, Dishon and Ayub, energetically helped to harvest and husk the cut corn (maize) that was stacked on big piles in the field. When Rachel was husking corn, her finger somehow got sliced with a husk. But no one saw any reptiles.

On a day in August, 2017, Brian and Mary Jane's family, parents and their six energetic children, went out and helped Samson harvest maize. Samson is a sincere single man who has Parkinson's disease. He is on numerous medications, he often does not feel well and has trouble with stiffness and pain. But in spite of that, he had dug up his field by hand with a big African *jembe* and planted close to an acre of maize. God blessed his hard work and gave him a good crop.

It is difficult work for him to harvest this all by hand. Samson asked Brian if they would help him with the harvesting.

It was a worthwhile experience for them. There were neighbors and people walking the trail that loved to watch the action. They were amazed to see foreigners out there actually

working. Brian's children and others were running around and hauling sacks of cobs back to the house. This was a great family project.

Finally around lunch time the corn was nearly all in. The family was hot, sweaty and relieved to get done. A neighbor lady who was in instruction class had come by and given a helping hand too. Everyone was standing there in the hot corn field talking.

All of a sudden someone cried, "snake, snake!" Brian looked and to his horror not three feet away from his feet and even closer to the women and his small daughter, was a large brown snake. Its head was up above the grass. Its small beady eyes took in the scene in the maize field. It was not a little garter snake. The head was close to 2 inches wide and about that long. People were paralyzed for a split second, then turned and fled. Brian sprang for the slasher (a sharp blade used to cut grass). The snake was fast slithering away. He frantically tried to determine where the head was and gave a decisive whack. Praise to God, It proved a fatal swing, blood started coming out of the snake's wound.

He used the slasher to pick up the snake and carry it out where all could inspect the fearsome reptile. There was a small crowd of passersby gathering. They all determined that it was a very poisonous snake. In fact, if

you get bitten by that snake, you will die that day, they solemnly told us. Indeed, after researching, the Mast discovered it was a puff adder, a very dangerous snake. How had that snake gotten there in the middle of the field, right among the people who had been working in that patch all morning? Where had it been hiding?

On the way home, Brian's dear wife asked, "Do you think there are

more angels in Africa than there are in America?"

Thank you for praying for missionaries in Kenya. Is the number of angels watching over them directly related to the number of prayers being offered? Maybe you cannot work in Africa, but you can pray. Pray for the missionaries you know and those you have not met as well. Bless and strengthen them with prayers. 

thinking generation

Anabaptists Talk about Their Work: Funeral Director

Gideon Yutzy interviews Brandon Miller, Cincinnati, OH

What sparked your interest in this line of work?

I consider it a calling. I was singing with my youth group at a graveside when the idea first crossed my mind. I didn't have anyone in the profession to mentor me, so I Googled the licensing requirements and asked advice anywhere I could. It really has become a part of me since then. I feel called to this work and that is what gives me passion for it.

How does being a funeral director

further the work of God's Kingdom?

Even Jesus wanted someone to "watch" with Him during his difficult night in Gethsemane. Unfortunately, the disciples fell asleep instead. My mission in funeral service is to stand or "watch" with the bereaved and promote healthy grieving. I really hope to work in my home community [Holmes County, Ohio]. At this point it's a little early to tell how that will all play out.

What is your job description currently?

I'm an apprentice funeral director/embalmer, which in Ohio means I've completed my bachelor's degree and am working under the direct supervision of another funeral director for one year. By May 2019, providing the state board is happy with my paperwork, interview, and all, I will be fully licensed. We currently live in the upstairs apartment of a large funeral home in the Cincinnati area where I also worked while attending mortuary school. There's no better way to learn the funeral business than to live in it!

What do you do to get your mind off your work? Do you read?

I'm very bad at taking my mind off my work—just ask my wife. Without her and my daughters to balance my focus I would burn out quickly. I feel very blessed to have them. As for reading, I just finished reading *Grave Matters* by Mark Harris. He has a very balanced view of the modern funeral industry with some good information on the green burial movement. Also, my wife got me started on *The Great Brain* series which I find highly amusing. I enjoy some lighter reading like this in the evening before going to bed.

Has your work caused you to see the “Made of dust” aspect more or the “Temple of the Holy Ghost” aspect?

As an embalmer I think more on the “Made of Dust” aspect since we try to slow decomposition. When someone dies I think the term “human remains” best describes what is left. We respect these remains based on what they once were—fellow humans, loved by others, and created by God, rather than for what they are now.

How do Anabaptist funerals differ from the norm?

Size. When I see long lines at our viewings, it warms my heart. I've worked many visitations where the family would be proud just to have a line. The next time you get tired of waiting in line at viewing, just remember the blessing it is to be part of such a large support system. And to all the funeral directors in our churches, keep taking your responsibilities seriously. It's so ideal to have someone within the church take this position for several reasons: they know the church grounds, the pastor's preferences, the family dynamics, and a lot of the guests in a way a licensed director most likely cannot. I hope we can maintain their valuable roles in our funerals.

I've met dozens of mini-barn builders among our people, but you're the only funeral director I know of. I suppose that is understandable in some ways, right?

There are times you will feel light-headed or worse especially when dealing with “firsts.” I see a bigger danger though in becoming too desensitized to the work and not maintaining the respect that every individual rightly deserves. I think the licensing requirements and “working with dead bodies” is what keeps most people away.

Do you know of other conservative Anabaptist funeral directors?

I’ve met only two.

How’s the pay?

Less than most people think, especially considering the hours we work. Most funeral directors make less than a registered nurse and are expected to be available as soon as the phone rings on weekends, holidays, and during the night.

What aspects of the job would surprise us?

One is that you can walk into your local funeral home and ask for a General Price List. Every funeral home in the US is required by federal law to hand them out with no questions asked. This rule keeps funeral directors from adjusting their charges depending on the car you drive. That did happen, by the way, before this law was enforced in 1984.

You might be surprised also at how diverse our work is, in the sense that embalming is very science based

while funeral directing is more of an art and requires good people skills. Not all funeral directors are good at both. A bit of trivia: a coffin has six sides; a casket has four. And... for the record, don’t call it a memorial service if there is a body present. That is a funeral. And please pull to the side when you encounter a procession. It’s ever so meaningful to families when you do.

What should Anabaptist young people know if they are considering the profession?

If you value free time or don’t like being tied down, this is probably not for you. The upside is that families really do need your skills and stability when a death occurs, and they will even tell you as much. If you don’t want to go through the rigors of getting a license, most funeral homes do hire non-licensed staff to help with funerals and transport. Also consider Hospice. The service they provide before death is outstanding and there is opportunity to work or volunteer with them in various roles.

Writers for Thinking Generation wish above all to generate involvement in God’s Kingdom—especially among today’s generation of thoughtful young Anabaptists. Address correspondence about this article to brandonwmiller91@gmail.com



(USPS 767-160)
Calvary Messenger
2673 Township Rd. 421
Sugarcreek, OH 44681

Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Backsliding starts when knee-bending stops.

• • • • •

Knowing the Living Word is the key to understanding the written Word.

• • • • •

He who takes a child by the hand, usually
takes the child's mother by the heart.

• • • • •

Foolish fathers may give their sons almost everything but themselves.

• • • • •

In the Christian life, any time we let up, we can expect a letdown.

• • • • •

The closer we walk with the Shepherd, the farther away the wolf must stay.

• • • • •

If our religion won't take us to church it is
doubtful that it will take us to heaven.

• • • • •

Every seat in church is designed to be a love seat.

• • • • •

Floating members make a sinking church.

• • • • •

Coming to church? "Weather" or not, come on in!

• • • • •

When a church member is kicking, it leaves him only one leg to stand on.

• • • • •

Beware of the "rubber" conscience or the "concrete" heart.