

Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

AUGUST 2019

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Calvary Messenger

August 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.**

Calvary Publications, Inc., is a non-profit organization, incorporated in the State of Ohio, for the purpose of sponsoring, publishing, and distributing Christian literature. The board is elected, one member annually, by the ministers of the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches, at their annual spring meeting.

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Material for *Calvary Messenger*, marriages, births, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles—send to the *Editor*. Other material—mail to their respective *Editors*.

Subscriptions, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to **Circulation Manager**.

When you move, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

This periodical is digitally available at calvarymessenger.org

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Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications, 2673 TR 421, Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$8.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$24.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$7.00 per year to individual addresses. Renewal \$4.25 when you also give a 1-year gift subscription at \$4.25. Second class postage at Sugarcreek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 7498 Woods West Ave., London, OH 43140.

The Day Christ Said Good-bye

Donna Lowry, Hutchinson, KS

“What was it like, Lord, the day You said good-bye,
To Your Heavenly Father and the angels up on high?”

“Did Your Father hold You in His arms and almost change His mind,
When He looked into the future and knew You’d have to die?”

“What was it like, Lord, did the stars then cease to shine,
When they saw the pain and suffering the Son of God would find?”

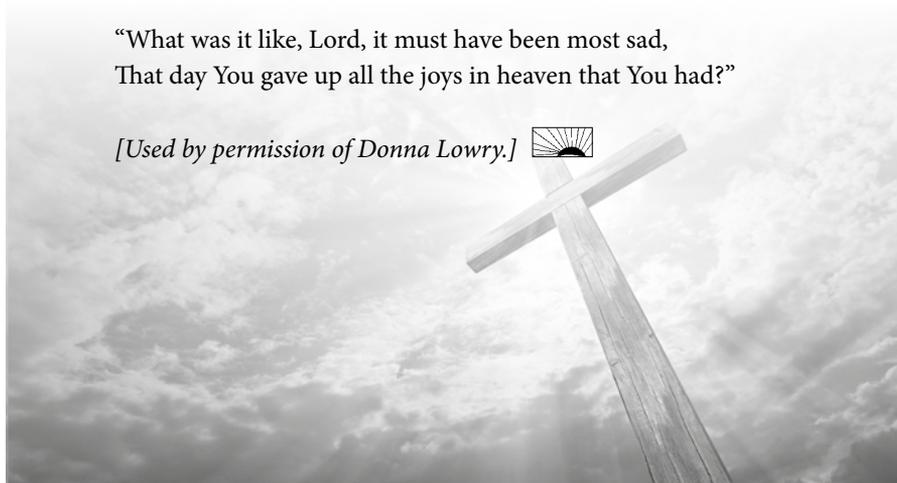
“Did it break Your Father’s heart—a heart so good and kind,
Knowing You’d be crucified, when loving was Your crime?”

“What was it like, Lord, to leave Your home behind,
And come into a sin-sick world to bear the cross of mine?”

“Did Your Father try to hide His tears, and turn His back to You,
So He could stand to let You go with all You would go through?”

“What was it like, Lord, it must have been most sad,
That day You gave up all the joys in heaven that You had?”

[Used by permission of Donna Lowry.]



Timeless Change

Ps 145:13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

The crowd pushed its way into the tent, eagerly searching through the loaded tables of household items, collectibles, tools, and knickknacks. The auctioneer's voice rang out with clarity, searching for the highest bid for each item. Some items failed to sell, while certain rare collectibles surprised the unlearned. Leaning on the side of a table was a four-foot-long demonstration slide rule, used in the owner's high school physics class. What is the value of a demonstration slide rule? Who knows the meaning of the markings and numbers on this 60-year-old calculator?

The graduate graced his table with items that revealed his interests and hobbies. In a well-worn leather belt case, instead of a Leatherman or Gerber, a slide rule showed its face. In the day of scientific calculators this college student kept this outdated calculator within reach.

Life is one fluid succession of

changes, rendering obsolete and valueless skills and services that people spent years to achieve and perfect. Items that seemed most likely to retain their value as a collectible suddenly can hardly be given away.

In a recent celebration of God's work at Calvary Bible School, the passing of time was obvious. In a mere fifty years, few seemed to remember the founding leaders and instructors. How many of us know the names of recent ancestors that may have passed away in our early childhood? People soon fade from memory when we can no longer talk with them.

We can bemoan the passing of people, skills, and items of value. But how many of us are ready to use a slide rule instead of an electronic calculator, or use a short-corded, single-speed, non-reversible electric drill with a Yankee screwdriver, instead of a variable-speed and

reversible cordless drill/driver and impact tool? We take for granted an intermittent wind-shield wiper instead of a slow or fast wiper that hardly ever matched the amount of moisture on the windshield. Maybe we are not aware that it is possible to mash potatoes with a hand masher and elbow grease?

Of course, there is vintage. Usually with exclamations at a discovery of an autumn gold appliance or a cast-iron lavatory come the groans of memories of the old and outdated. Time has a way of revealing true beauty and meaning.

While change happens, there are some things that are timeless and classic. No matter the method used, calculations have been made since Adam discovered that there were two of all other kinds and only one of his. The classics of beauty and design most closely follow the perfect symmetry and complementary colors used by our Creator. Changes that become timeless are not about improvements and progress, but about living God's creation principles today and for this generation. They are about understanding the will of God for His people today.

The Hebrew writer carefully challenged his audience to understand that the Blood of Jesus did not replace

the blood of bulls, but rather animal sacrifice was but the "copy of the true", that perfect sacrifice which cleanses our conscience. Jesus told his challengers, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58)

Our God, Who is outside of time, sees from eternity to eternity. "Thou, O LORD, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation." (Lam. 5:19) The Holy Scriptures are filled with principles that are best for all ages and generations. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." (Isaiah 40:8)

Somewhere, hopefully resting in a recliner, in central Kansas and reading this issue, a faithful servant of God likely suspected several paragraphs ago that this editorial was coming home to him. Lest I be misunderstood and accused of calling our retiring editor, Brother Paul L. Miller, obsolete or even vintage, I am calling attention to his nearly 20 years of faithful service in making sure this publication arrived in your mailbox on time every month. He diligently perused other periodicals for the best in topic and purpose for the current issue. I am also sure that he would not want me to linger long on this

recognition. However, it is scriptural for us to recognize the labor of the faithful (I Timothy 5:18). I'm sure that Brother Paul faithfully fulfilled his responsibility so he could hear the words of his Master, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matthew 25:21). Despite the eternal reward, it would be a very kind and gracious earthly reward if as many of you as found his labors meaningful, and regret to see him retire, would send him a line of appreciation or give him a call. Don't forget to give due recognition to his faithful wife, Martha, for her help in this faithful service. In case you have a hard time finding an appropriate retirement card, Brother Paul and Sister Martha have just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

In the meantime, many of you may struggle with the change, as we do with some new-fangled gadgets. I can understand and appreciate that struggle. A brief introduction to your new editor may help you know how to "read" this change and operate this new gadget.

I sprouted in east/central OH, one of the first babies born in the enlightenment age of Holmes County with the birth of the Beachy churches. Maranatha church and

school left their imprint on my life and mind. Along the way I was introduced to service in daily living by my parents which included their willingness to help various needy people. My siblings introduced me to Belize and Paraguay and the interesting food, culture, people, and languages abroad. Calvary Bible School and Faith Mission Home helped me spread my wings and gave me lots of lifelong friends, especially my dear wife, Naomi. I began my transition from a Buckeye to a Hoosier when I found employment in IN during a recession and where I have put down my roots. A time in Paraguay broadened our perspectives and challenged but strengthened our faith. Nature has been a great teacher, and I have enjoyed trying to record God's beautiful creation with film and pixels. Other interests are woodworking, language, horticulture, and music. The past nearly 30 years have found us busy raising our family of four and serving the Lord at Clay St. Church.

As Editor, I want to be a faithful servant to the church and to the Lord. Please continue in prayer and in writing inspiring articles as the Lord directs you. May the work of His church go on in timeless change!

AY 

Re: July 2019

Our newly appointed editor, Bro. Aaron Yoder, sent me the proofs for the July issue just before mid-June. It was deeply satisfying to see where this work is going. The content including the graphics, (thanks to Rachel Miller at Carlisle Printing) was excellent. The articles and poems were well done. Having said that, I offer no encouragement to rest on our laurels.

I am eager to see how the new editor will pursue new and better ways of carrying this work forward. I don't say that because I expect Bro. Aaron to publish exclusively things that emphasize our distinctives. We share beliefs with other Anabaptists, as well as other evangelicals.

While we may not need constant

reminders of our faith heritage, they are a valid point of reference.

Experience indicates that these persuasions tend to disappear unless we dare to claim and proclaim them from time to time. From Hebrews comes this appropriate entreaty: "Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1).

Our readership includes folks who have come to Christ by evangelistic outreach. I anticipate that our writers will continue to write so that we make sense to these readers. Let us maintain meaningful contact and challenge with our entire faith family.

To God be the glory!

Paul L. Miller, Partridge, KS

Editor emeritus



Announcement

Editor Contact Information

Please note the contact changes since Brother Paul has recently retired. Send info for marriages, births, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles to the current editor at the following address.

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See Title Page (inside front cover) for addresses of other Editors.



Announcements

New Book: Amish-Mennonites across the Globe

By Cory and Jennifer Anderson. Volume 2. This hardcover, coffee table-style book of 326 pages is a window into the lives of Amish- Mennonites in 19 countries on five continents. With many photos, maps, artwork, history, and essays, the book promises to engross your family for hours. Church/school libraries should also have a copy.

Thank you to all who pre-ordered your copies. We hope you are enjoying the books!

Copies are now publicly available for \$45 each. Several hundred copies of Volume 1 (*Amish-Mennonites of North America*) also remain (\$35). Order both books for \$70.

Shipping: \$5 for one book, \$1.50 for each additional; eight or more books ship free. Ohio residents add 7% tax.

Send payment to:

Acorn Publishing, 7010 State Route 241, Millersburg, OH 44654 

Faithful Men Seminar, November 9, 2019

Rebuilding

Disaster Strikes — Tom Johnson, Plain City, OH

Picking up the Pieces — Denver Yoder, Somerset, OH

Operation Rebuild — Dave Snyder, Plain City, OH

Breakout Sessions:

a. Pornography & Masturbation – Ben Waldner, Plain City, OH

b. Technology in the Home – Dave Snyder, Plain City, OH

Registration Deadline: October 26, 2019

Hosted by Free Indeed, Paradise, PA

For registration contact: Free Indeed Ministries, 143 Harristown Road, Paradise, PA 17562. (717) 442-4973, dking@freeindeed.biz

This seminar is sponsored by:

Deeper Life Ministries

5123 Converse Huff Rd., Plain City, OH 43064

(614) 873-1199 · www.dlmohio.org 

Salt and Light Seminar

September 2019

Are our neighbors in North America a new “unreached people group”? Does the typical young person in your neighborhood know who Jesus is? Has the Anabaptist community simply accepted the lost around us as normal and believe we need to board an airplane to be a missionary? What would the impact be if the Amish, Mennonite, German Baptist, and other Biblical church groups became intentional about being missionaries as a part of our daily lives?

To learn more about this outreach opportunity, register for upcoming Salt & Light training seminar:

Haven Fellowship, Plain City, OH

September 26, 27, and 28, 2019 (Thursday evening, Friday all day, and Saturday morning)

Registration deadline: September 3 (register by August 2 for \$50 discount)

Cost: \$150 per person or married couple (includes meals and meeting cost)

For more information or to register:

Call 330.893.2428

Email saltandlight@camoh.org

Visit www.christianaidministries.org/salt-light 

the bottom line

The Soul and Spirit of Man

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Genesis 2:7 “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;

and man became a living soul.” This text does not inform on the level of a psychological development or on the unscientific part of man. We will

use this text as a base for the origin of the spirit in man, whereby the Bible declares the result as “a living soul.”

I must say, I am awed and once again have tears in my eyes to, as it were, approach the stunning and fabulous work of God in creating the first man. In my evident humanness, I somehow sense an affinity to Adam as he lay prone and lifeless in that lovely and perfect garden, as an earthy paradise of God. But at the same time, there also seems to be a prohibitive nearness to God that might require the reprimand of having overstepped the boundary of trespass to the person of God. This is the divine record of God fashioning the body of man in every practical and purposeful detail upon which the indwelling, recurring seed will supply the microcosm and countless genes to be replicated to the billions who will ever dwell on the face of the earth. There currently are 7.7 billion persons now living, with 200 million being added to the world population every year, give or take a thousand or two!

The physical property of this body is clearly and unequivocally belonging to God. What will happen next will be a move and an overture of divine endowment that boggles the mind of the most accomplished scientist, educator, philosopher, philanthropist, or psychologist. The Creator God came down very close,

or at least close enough to breathe into the nostrils of this finely crafted, physically featured body that will become the breath and standard for all humanity for all time. The breath of God entering into this lifeless form immediately was alive and was breathing on his own instinct and initiative. Human life had begun! And since that breath was by the Eternal God, that life will never end. The body will die, but the soul and spirit will live on forever. The extension of life is unlimited and is given to every child to be born.

What is next? “The man” can think and meditate and choose and weigh options. He was not born; he was created as an adult and endued with sufficient knowledge for the needs and projects at hand. The Bible simply calls him “the man” until he is called Adam in Genesis 2:19.

He was endued with a soul and spirit. That soul had the full range of the potential of the mind for thought, mental alertness, imaginative skill, and the capacity to consider what is possible in the field of cause and effect, the possible and the impossible.

The capacity of the soul had the amazing functions of feelings and positive impulses expressed by gladness, emotional approval, and uninhibited joy. The mental capacity of the mind gave the sensation of approval to the emotional experience,

which was increasing on a daily basis. The mind and emotions had a full and favorable endorsement of each other, which is not always the case with natural man today. Sin has caused it to be unmanageable in some people, often causing confusion and conflict.

The will of “the man” was, therefore, not a battle with the emotions and mind. The will of the man was found to be serenely compatible with his mind and emotions. His will could easily comply with all his capacities, and thus be fulfilled day after day. The relational aspect with His Creator God is assumed to have been at peace and rest in the absence of interference of any rivals for an unspecified period of time.

The spirit of man was received from the breath of God. The Spirit of God is always life-giving, invisible, powerful, unlimited, free, engaging, uninhibited, and creative in a spiritual dimension. God is Spirit by His manifold revelation and is active in the world in many ways to assist in His continuing work among people throughout the world. It is not by a re-creation of the physical body, but by a restoring of a spiritual relationship with God by the grace of His redemption in Christ. The spirit of man can be restored in reconciliation with God, while the physical body must wait until later; until the appointed time of God,

either by death, or the Lord’s return for His saints.

The spirit of man includes the conscience as a means to ascertain right and wrong in the affairs of life. The conscience must have been a primary way for the first people on the earth to determine right from wrong. Cain and Abel evidently knew where those lines were, at least in a basic dimension. And Noah was a preacher of righteousness. The will of the people was inclined toward evil, apparently in a progression of anti-God reaction which increased with the passing of generations, until God destroyed the first world with a universal flood. Sin can cause physical and mental stress, even sickness. The body was designed by God to be at rest, even in work and mental pursuits.

This is to say that the spirit of man is the faculty for communication and inner communion with God, who is Spirit in being and function. The spirit of man is the means for contact with God in conjunction with the soul. The soul is understood to be our mind, emotions, and will. Prior to sin entering into the world of people, the spirit and soul of man was unhindered in its response to God whenever He visited “the man” in the garden of Eden. Being free from sin is the delight of the soul of man to now being free to be in fellowship with God.

We cannot fully appreciate the freedom of Adam in the garden before sin spoiled the divine arrangement of perfection, not only for “the man,” but also in Adam, in his own person.

Adam must have had a wonderful vacation as his beginning in life. The whole creation had the pronouncement of God calling it good, and upon “the man” as being very good. That goodness extended to the intricacies of the physical creation of man, along with being given to his spirit and soul. It was the divine endowment for the good of man, which was designed to help man achieve his highest potential. We are viewing Adam and Eve as God had created them, and as it was before sin entered their lives. Before

sin, it was perfection unlimited. After sin, it became perversion unlimited and continues thus until our day.

The Bottom Line is that God created man as a human being with three parts, made in the image of God, whom we know as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The work of God in Christ and by the Holy Spirit is a progressive program of renewal and restoration for that which was forfeited by one wrong choice by Adam and Eve. The origin of man in his body, soul, and spirit was unto eternal life. The first Adam lost it, the last Adam (Christ) has made the provisions for it, which is known as grace from God, accessed by our faith. Renewal and restoration begin with being reconciled to God. 

Mount Saint Helens after 40 Years

Elvin Stauffer

“He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke” (Psalm 104:32).

May 18, 2020 will mark forty years since Mt. Saint Helens in Washington State blew 1,312 feet off its top. The beautiful snow-capped mountain was reduced from 9,677 feet to 8,365 feet with an ugly cavity in the top. The power released in the nine-hour eruption was equivalent to 440 million tons of TNT or 30,000

Hiroshima type bombs. It spread ash across eleven states.

At 8:32 a.m. on that morning a magnitude 5.1 earthquake dislodged the bulging north side of the mountain causing the largest observed landslide on record ($\frac{2}{3}$ of a cubic mile). This released a flow of steam and rock debris that traveled in a lateral northward direction at

speeds over 650 miles per hour. In ten minutes, 230 square miles of forest was destroyed.

Thus a volcano activated in our lifetime demonstrated processes supporting the Biblical catastrophic understanding of earth's history—evidences evolutionists would rather that people forget.

Yellowstone Park “Fossil Forests” Refuted

One interesting phenomenon was the “forest” of vertical tree stumps that formed at Mt. Saint Helens on the bottom of the new Spirit Lake. The blast left a mat of over one million logs covering the lake. In the following years, as the logs became waterlogged, the heavier root ends sank first, causing the logs to float upright. As they sank to the bottom, they stood upright. From sonar some five years later, it was estimated that over 20,000 trees had sunk to the bottom with their root ends buried in the sediments. Draining the lake would leave trees standing without a complete root system that did not grow there.

This evidence from Spirit Lake overturns the evolutionary claim that petrified trees on Specimen Ridge in Yellowstone Park were successive forests. The trees up the ridge are bedded in about 50 layers. The state sign says that forest after forest was covered by volcanic eruptions and then another one grew requiring tens of thousands of

years. This was “evidence” used to destroy people’s belief in the Bible’s young earth chronology. However, it was shown that the trees had broken off root balls, not complete root system. Besides this, trees from different layers had the same tree ring sequences, showing they grew at the same time. The bedding sediments also showed a deposit by water and mud. The signs at Yellowstone Park were changed. One now says moving muds similar to those at Mt. Saint Helens relocated the trees.

Coal Forming Deposits

One fourth of the debris flow from Mt. Saint Helens went into Spirit Lake and raised the bottom three hundred feet. This was higher than the previous water surface. The water sloshed up the north side like water in a dishpan. When it came down, it brought along all the broken-off trees, logs, plants, animals, and topsoil, scouring channels in the rock base.

The first viewers by helicopter the afternoon of May 18, 1980, thought the lake was gone because of the solid debris cover. The logs had been stripped of their leaves, bark, branches, and root systems. In the following months and years this organic matter settled to the bottom making a three-foot layer of peat. This composition of materials is more like the texture of coal than peat formed slowly in bogs, which is more homogenous like mashed potatoes.

In the flood in Noah’s time, the

waters “prevailed exceedingly” (Genesis 7:19). Under flood waters, the mountains ascended and the valleys descended (Psalm 104:5-9). There would have been vast mats of organic matter, plant and animal, fish and fowl. This would have been buried between mud layers that hardened to rock in the following years. When organic matter is compressed, it heats and, in the absence of oxygen, forms coal. Sedimentary layers averaging 2½ miles deep are the origin of all our fossil fuels: coal, oil, and gas. Huge oil reserves have recently been found under the Gulf of Mexico.

Rapid Canyon Formation

The avalanche and debris from the Mt. Saint Helens flow filled the Toutle River valley six hundred feet deep. There was great concern as the level of Spirit Lake continued to rise over two years, that it would overtop the debris and empty, catastrophically wiping out the towns downstream. A tunnel was drilled through a mountain and the lake was lowered twenty-five feet. However, on March 19, 1982, nearly two years after the initial eruption, a small eruption melted a thick snow deposit in the crater. This started a mud flow that cut a channel through the debris dam, creating a new drainage channel for the north fork of the Toutle River. The mud moved at forty miles per hour and cut a canyon one hundred forty feet deep in a single day. It traveled

twenty miles destroying houses and properties in its wake. The mud even clogged the Columbia River, halting shipping for a time.

Evolutionists analyzing these canyons with small streams running through them would say it took thousands of years for the stream to wear down the canyon. The truth is that the canyon came first, quickly, and then the stream flowed through it. Empirical evidence now points to similar catastrophic processes for the Grand Coulee of Washington State, the Grand Canyon of Colorado, and other erosion features of the North American west and around the world. The little streams at the bottoms of these canyons did not erode them over millions of years. The meandering canyon of the Toutle River is one-fortieth the size of the Grand Canyon and has been called “The Little Grand Canyon.”

Old Radioisotope Dates in New Rock

As the Mt. Saint Helens volcano calmed down, it formed a new lava dome in the crater. This was blown off five times. The present dome is 1,150 feet high. In 1992, a rock sample was taken and dated by the potassium argon method. Some of the minerals in it were dated at 2.4 million years old. Averaging the ages gave an age of 350,000 years old. However, we know this rock only hardened a dozen years before the test. This is the usual result when volcanic eruptions

of recent history are dated. It is easy for scientists with a false sense of authority to make claims when no one, of course, is going to go back in history and prove them wrong. We should not believe dates for hundreds of millions of years ago, first of all, because the Bible is the Word of God.

Rapid Ecosystem Recovery

Another testimony to the Biblical record was the rapid recovery of the plant and animal life in the sterilized and devastated areas around Mt. Saint Helens. The pumice plain (scorched by 600 degree temperatures) had plants and animals in a few years. Lupines, which have nitrogen-fixing bacteria, were producing leaves, flowers, and seeds for pocket gophers that were busy mixing the soil.

Within a decade, elk had established themselves, breaking up the soil with their hoofs and enriching it with their droppings. With increased space, low population, and safe conditions, elk were bearing two or three calves each year instead of one every two or three years. The same effects would have occurred after Noah came out of the ark. Plant and animal life would have flourished. Large mammals spread to the coasts of Siberia where there were millions in a few centuries.

Other witnesses to the truth also became evident which we do not have space to explore.

Empirical Evidence

Empirical evidence is a fact that can be observed, tested, reproduced, and

thus proven. The dictionary defines it as “relying or based solely on experiment and observation rather than theory.” At Mt. Saint Helens empirical, observable evidence has repeatedly disproved evolutionary theory.

Humans tend to go to extremes. Atheists and agnostics promoted rationalism in the 1600s to 1700s. In that “age of reason” they wouldn’t accept anything they could not see. Thus they rejected God and anything supernatural. This was followed by romanticism in the late 1700s, a reaction to rationalism. Romanticism emphasized passion rather than reason and imagination and intuition rather than logic. Outside of God “The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest” (Isaiah 57:20).

We are able to know truth and believe and live right when we accept God’s Word as fact rather than vacillate with the philosophies of men. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8).

Resources:

Footprints in Ash by John Morris and Steven Austin

“Mt. Saint Helens, Lasting Lessons”—Answers Magazine, April-June 2015

[Used with permission from “Reaching Out”, Issue #86.] 

marriages

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

Garza-Miller

Bro. Ray, son of Ray and Bobbie Garza, Wellman, IA, and Sis. Debra, daughter of Marlin and Fern Miller, at Fairview Mennonite Church for Sharon Bethel A.M. Church on March 25, 2019, by Delmar Bontrager.

Hostetler-Schrock

Bro. Hans, son of Mark and Mary Ellen Hostetler, Rock Stream, NY, and Sis. Danella, daughter of Paul and Mattie Ann Schrock, Kalona, IA, at Fairview Mennonite Church, for Sharon Bethel A.M. Church on Feb. 9, 2019, by Delmar Bontrager.

Schrock-Herschberger

Bro. Galen, son of Eli and Lucille Schrock, Arthur, IL, and Sis. Carrie, daughter of Darrell and Judy Herschberger, Tuscola, IL, at Pleasant View Church on Nov. 3, 2018, by Matthew Bontrager.

Kurtz-Bontrager

Bro. Nelson Kurtz (widower), Hartwell, GA, and Sis. Esther (Byler) Bontrager (widow), Sullivan, IL, at New Life Tabernacle for Pleasant View Church on Jan. 4, 2019, by Matthew Bontrager.

Yutzy-Schrock

Bro. Aaron, son of Ferman and Lorna Yutzy, Goshen, IN, and Sis. Grace, daughter of Eli and Lucille Schrock, Arthur, IL, at Penn Station for Pleasant View Church on April 13, 2019, by Matthew Bontrager.



cradle roll

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

Beiler, Steven and Sharon (Fisher), Abbeville, SC, first child and son, Andre Jordan, April 19, 2019.

Gingerich, Derek and Deborah (Wagler), Loogootee, IN, fourth child and son, Nicholas Levi, March 30, 2019.

Gingerich, Marcus and Carol (Herschberger), Arthur, IL, fifth child, second son, Greyson Tyler, Nov. 25, 2018.

Herschberger, Darrell and Maria (Yoder), Arthur, IL, fifth child and daughter, Lucia Faith, March 15, 2019.

Hostetler, Stephen and Megan (Weaver), Russellville, KY, first children and daughters, Ariana Grace and Aliyah Rae, June 14, 2019.

Kanagy, Ron and Larissa (Miller), Accident, MD, first child and son, Trenton Zane, April 5, 2019.

Knepp, Jason and Janelle (Yoder), Whiteville, TN, second child, first son, Daxton Kyle, May 15, 2019.

Kuhns, Ronnie and Sheila (Miller), Leesburg, OH, first child and daughter, Hadassah Kate, April 23, 2019.

Mast, Aaron and Alicia (Byler), Hutchinson, KS, second child and son, Ryland Andre, June 27, 2019.

McGrath, Eric and Nicole (Vasquez), Bushnell, FL, first child and son, Luke Tyler, Feb. 27, 2019.

Miller, Barnabas and Elaine (Yoder), Concord, AR, first child and daughter, Kenzie Brielle, June 25, 2019.

Miller, Bob and MaryBeth (Kauffman), Goodspring, TN, third child, first son, Joshua Courage, June 14, 2019.

Miller, Joe and Karinda (Sommers), Hiddenite, NC, fourth child, second daughter, Kinsley Rayne, June 9, 2019.

Nissley, Matt and Miriam (Rocke), Tuscola, IL, fourth child, third son, Bryce Matthew, May 10, 2019.

Raber, Merle and Danae (Nissley), Middlebury, IN, second child and son, Bentley Dax, May 6, 2019.

Shrock, Karl and Darla (Ulrich), Covington, TX, fifth child, fourth daughter, Noelle Joy, Dec. 26, 2018.

Stoltzfus, Daniel and Mary Jean (Miller), Lewisburg, PA, first child and daughter, Janessa Lanora, April 9, 2019.

Stoltzfus, Eugene and Arlene (King), Mifflin, PA, second child, first son, Carson Eugene, May 26, 2019.

Troyer, Nathanael and Karen (Yoder), Covington, TX, second child, first son, Brian James, Feb. 10, 2019.

Wagler, Jeffery and Kristin (Wagler), Odon, IN, fourth child, second son, Easton Jay, April 13, 2019.

Wengerd, Timothy and Andrea (Mast), Whiteville, TN, first child and daughter, Shiloh Claire, May 9, 2019.

Zook, Danny and Karen (Zook), Belleville, PA, fifth child, fourth daughter, Joanna Faith, May 28, 2019. 



ordination

May the grace of God be upon our brother as he ministers faithfully. Let us pray for him.

Bro. Caleb Gingerich, 30, (wife, Melanie Kauffman), Leesburg, OH, was ordained as deacon for Faith and Light Mennonite Church on June 2, 2019. Preordination messages were brought by Jonas Beiler. The charge was given by Duane Troyer. Tom Miller was also in the lot. 

Swartzentruber, Ray, 80, of Abbeville, SC, husband of Lorene (Wingard) Swartzentruber, went home to be with his Lord and Savior, Tuesday, April 2, 2019, at Self Regional Healthcare in Greenwood. He was born in Virginia Beach, VA, to the late Jonas C. and Anna (Miller) Swartzentruber.

He was a charter member of the Cold Spring Mennonite Church. His life was known to be an example of dedication and faithfulness to God and others. Ray was the founder of Ray's Plumbing in Abbeville and a charter member of the Cold Spring Volunteer Fire Department.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his first wife, Elma (Hershberger) Swartzentruber, an infant son, three brothers: Norman, Lloyd, and Noah Swartzentruber, and one sister, Susan Yoder.

Ray is survived by his wife of 20 years, Lorene, of the home, five sons: Steve Swartzentruber (Karen), Lowell Swartzentruber (Anna Mae), Glen Swartzentruber (Gina), Kevin Swartzentruber (Retha), and Brian Swartzentruber (Dorothy), all of Abbeville; a daughter, Donna S. Wagler (Charles) of Cross Hill; three brothers: Eldon, of Moultrie, GA; Daniel (Marie), of Montezuma, GA; and Merlin, of Ware Shoals; two sisters: Catherine Troyer of Farmville, VA, and Bertha Yoder (Allen) of Fairview, MO; twenty-

four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held on April 5, 2019, with Javan Bender, Merl Beiler, Kendall, David, and Steve Swartzentruber serving. Donnie Swartzentruber conducted the committal at the Cold Spring Church Cemetery.

Yoder, Melvin L, 82, of Arthur, IL, died at the Arthur Nursing Home on May 19, 2019. He was born on November 17, 1936, in Arthur, IL, to the late Levi D. and Elizabeth (Hochstedler) Yoder.

He was a faithful member of Pleasant View Church, Arcola, IL.

On October 23, 1958, he was married to Rosa Mae Beachy. She survives. Also surviving are six children: Wesley (Wilma) Yoder, Arthur, IL; Mary Beth (Rick) Hostetler, Arthur, IL; Bill (Ruth) Yoder, Sarasota, FL; Phil (Sheryl) Yoder, Harrison, AR; Cindy (Phil) Kaufman, Bee Branch, AR; Gloria (Moises) Guadron, Valparaiso, IN; twenty grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Other survivors include three brothers: Joe (Rebecca) Yoder, Goshen, IN; Andrew (Viola) Yoder, Auburn, KY; Henry (Fern) Yoder, Middlebury, IN; and two sisters: Mattie (Ezra) Miller, Kalona, IA; Fannie (Allen) Miller, Shipshewana, IN; two brothers-in-law: Jonas Herschberger, Arthur, IL; Freeman (Bertha) Beachy, Arthur, IL; and one sister-in-law, Mary

(Lester) Miller, Arthur, IL.

He was proceeded in death by his parents, a sister, Edna Herschberger, and a stillborn sister.

Mel and Rosa owned and operated Yoder Cabinets and MelRose Quilts for

many years.

The funeral was held on May 24, with Wesley Yoder, Paul Plank, and Matthew Bontrager serving. Howard Kuhns conducted the committal at the Pleasant View Cemetery. 

observations

A couple of readers responded to my comments regarding vaccinations in the June issue. I'm grateful that these men took the time to respond. As I understand, the decisions that some of us have made to not vaccinate are grouped into two main categories. The first category involves the understanding that since the incidence of these diseases is so low, the risk associated with the vaccination outweigh their benefits. But the second category is a moral objection to some vaccinations. Let me explain.

Readily accessible information explains that the rubella vaccine used today was primarily developed by growing the culture in cells obtained from an elective abortion back in the 1960s in Europe. From that initial sampling of cells millions of live rubella vaccines have been grown and developed, including the rubella vaccines administered today. Many who choose to forgo

the MMR vaccine, would be ok with the measles and mumps vaccines, but object to the rubella strain since it was developed using human cells obtained from a baby that someone chose to kill before it was born. Some time later additional cells were used from another elective abortion. But the source still was from an elective abortion. My impression is that all rubella vaccines involve one of these two sources. Other sources indicate that there were more aborted babies than only these two who were used. But not all sources indicate this.

Some feel that the original source of the rubella vaccine makes those of us who willingly receive this vaccine complicit in justifying abortion. That is a serious concern that I do not wish to trivialize. However, there are a couple of reasons why I believe it is still appropriate to vaccinate for rubella. I'll expand a bit on one of those reasons.

Most significant to me is that while

those who developed this vaccine chose the cells of an aborted baby (or babies), they would not have needed to do so. I understand that there are many sources of cells in the human body that would serve quite well to provide the cells needed to grow this vaccine that wouldn't involve killing anybody in order to obtain them. The source could have been one that wouldn't come freighted with the objection of association with abortion. If the only way to grow this vaccine would be in the cells of an aborted child, as a parent who has chosen to vaccinate our children, I would struggle because I feel I would share, in some measure, the responsibility that belongs to those who chose the original source. But, since the needed cells could come from a variety of sources, I understand that the moral objection lies in the original choice, not the vaccination process.

I am a lay person, not a health care professional. I decided to make these comments without citing nor consulting with anybody in the health care field. I do not idealize this Observations column morphing into a vaccination forum, nor do I wish to argue with dear brothers who see this differently. In the June issue I commented that I wouldn't relish making this deeply personal decision

for any of you. I still feel that way. However, if you are "on the fence" with regard to vaccinations, and you sensed from me a gentle nudge to favorably consider vaccinating your children, you probably understood me correctly. Our choices not only affect us but those God has given us the opportunity to live with and to serve.

Rubella is one of those vaccines that do not benefit the one who gets the vaccine very much. The problem with rubella (also known as German measles) is the link to birth defects for those where an expectant mother becomes infected while carrying an unborn child. So, the primary beneficiaries of the rubella vaccine are the unborn. This is a priority that God's children rightly share. Isn't it ironic that many of those who feel we should vaccinate for rubella and those who feel we should not both base our concern on the common priority of protecting the unborn?

One of the brethren who responded encouraged us to contact the company who produces the MMR vaccine and urge them to make measles and mumps vaccine available without the rubella component. It was available separately some years ago, but it is not currently produced this way. I'm passing along the address that this brother provided in

case you'd like to contact them:
Kenneth Frazier, CEO
One Merck Drive
P.O. Box 100
Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889-0100



The New Yorker carried a piece written by Troy Patterson dated June 14 of this year entitled, “The Normcore Opulence of Preachers Wearing Four-Figure Sneakers”. In March of this year the Instagram account @preachersneakers started showing photos of well-known preachers wearing very expensive sneakers and citing the street value of the sneakers they were wearing. It’s easier for me to identify with the objection to the idea of paying more than \$1,000 for a pair of sneakers than the justification for this choice. One response in *Christianity Today* said it this way, “Perhaps the excess and superfluity of our present-day leaders’ clothing is a subconscious compensation for not being clothed with power from on high?”

The proprietor of the account began the project as a protest. However, he soon shifted his focus to a more introspective one. He understands that the matter of judging a person’s heart based on how he or she chooses to spend money is a “slippery slope”. It seems appropriate that a proper response

could recognize both the problematic implications of a preacher displaying these types of wardrobe choices and sober self-examination regarding the types of blind spots we might not notice in ourselves.



As of this writing, 24 Democratic nominees have indicated they are running for president of the United States in the next election. Of course, in the next months those opposed to seeing President Trump win a second term in the White House will need to consolidate their efforts if they hope to succeed in that effort. In spite of the best-laid plans of man, we Christians should remember that sometimes God installs “the basest of men” in positions of influence and importance. He understands the big picture in ways that we never will on this side of eternity. In a governmental system like we have in the USA, election results tend to mirror society. This reinforces several things for me:

I’m not optimistic that things are headed in the right direction.

It reinforces the priority that Christ’s Kingdom is grown one person at a time, in the hearts of people. Change in society happens when the hearts of people turn toward God. Political legislation is not very effective in changing

people's hearts. However, the power of Christ is VERY effective! Hence, I believe we do well to concentrate on cultivating redemptive relationships that offer Christ as the solution to man's needs.

Let's choose the variety of activism that is expressed by intercessory prayer in response to the societal ills around us. However, let's not hesitate to display the Spirit of Jesus and His perspective in word and deed when those opportunities are presented to us.

• • • • •

I've said this before in this column and will repeat it now. The mainstream media doesn't cultivate a priority to present those who profess Christianity in a favorable light. Examples of this abound. I won't cite any here at this time.

But as we sense public scrutiny increasing, it's a good time for us to

make sure that what we profess and what we live don't send conflicting messages. Prideful responses to the uncomfortable airing of both our mistakes and our sins do more to reinforce doubts than to generate sympathy. Humility is always an appropriate response. Transparency has a way of dissolving suspicions. It's good to be reminded that our words and deeds affect more than just ourselves. How we are perceived contributes to how others view people like us, whether that is conservative Anabaptists or Christians in general. Christ's reputation is the one we should be most concerned about. It is always appropriate to remember in prayer those who find themselves scrutinized and all those affected by our choices. Humility reminds us that "but for the grace of God, there go I".

RJM 

Church Music, Old and New: IT'S NOT EITHER-OR, IT'S BOTH-AND.

Wendell Nisly, Harrisonburg, VA

One of the many debates about what music is suitable and helpful for worship has focused on "old music" and "new music." The debate is at times

divisive; many churches segregate congregants by musical preference (think "Traditional Service" and "Contemporary Service"), using both older and newer music but

effectively setting them in opposition to each other. Other churches have a single service but sing either older or newer music almost exclusively.

To be sure, there are abundant examples of both old music and new music which are not suitable for congregational worship. But in principle, older and newer music are not opposed. We need both, and we need to sing both sitting together in the same service.

Surveying the best of older and newer music, we find unique advantages in each. Here are a few.

Old

Older song texts are *written in historic language*, with older word pictures and turns of phrase, reminding us that the church has a long, long heritage of song and worship that predates our time of iPhones and interstates. We worship with “so great a cloud of witnesses.”

Older songs *speak in an older musical language*. Singing this music, the older generation frequently connects at a heart level both with the music and with God.

Older songs *shape us toward being grounded and stable* and remind us that the Christian faith is deeply rooted in centuries of history; we are not free to reinvent the faith into our own modern, up-to-date, relevant image.

The vast majority of the songs in

our current hymnals were written by Catholics and Protestants. That we sing them is *a testament that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism*.

Older music sometimes creates a bit of discomfort for people who prefer new music. This is vital, as it reminds us that *this is the music of the church, not simply my favorite, most comfortable style*.

New

Newer song texts are *written in today’s language*, reminding us that God is present and active now. God’s work in the world is not simply a story from “back then.” God is the main character in the story of our highly connected, fast-paced world of 2019.

Newer songs often *speak in a current musical language*. Singing this music, the younger generation frequently connects at a heart level both with the music and with God.

Newer songs *require us to be learning and growing*, keeping us from becoming too complacent with where we are and what we know. They remind us that Christian discipleship requires growing and changing; following Jesus is a process and not a point of arrival.

Anabaptists have *a distinctive, prophetic note to sound* in the broad world of church music. We have an opportunity to sound that note through composing and publishing

new church music.

New music sometimes creates a bit of discomfort for people who prefer old music. This is vital as it reminds us that *this is the music of the church, not simply my favorite, most comfortable style.*

• • • • •

Additionally, let us remember that all the oldest and best hymns of the church were once new. Were it not for new music, and congregations willing to learn it, we wouldn't have any of the old favorites. But let us also remember that of the plethora of new songs being written today, only the best and most enduring will last, and they will inevitably become old music.

These observations do not answer all questions, and this certainly is

not intended as blanket approval of all music old and new. Discernment is crucial, and many other questions need to be asked as well in the process of discerning.

Indeed, both old and new music are subject to and constrained by something far greater, which transcends style or personal preference—our God whose is “the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty” (I Chron. 29:11). May we be those who “with unveiled face, beholding...the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory: (2 Cor. 3:18 NKJV).

[Reprinted with permission from Shenandoah Christian Music Camp.] 

On Two Small Words—Over and Next

Edwin Eby

An intriguing life philosophy caught my eye while leafing through United Airlines' seat back magazine, *Hemispheres*. I've been fascinated ever since. These two words were given by a TV celebrity as his “secret path” to stronger emotional health and longevity of life. His philosophy made strong logical sense. But is there spiritual substance?

Norman Lear, in a 2016 CNBC

interview, gave what he believed was his “secret” to a long life. Norman observed “...There are two small words that are the most important words in the English language; over and next.” After all, he was an active ninety-three-year-old. Norman pointed out that these two little words are sadly under used as it pertains to emotional stability, and sustainable, practical, anxious-free living. As a movie film producer, Norman realized the

potential disaster of lingering in the spotlight of the past show without seriously detracting from the next show. He knew the simple truth that life moves. He realized, as few do, that those “who choose to live in the limelight of the past lose.” Those who choose to “anticipate the future win.” Therein he thought he discovered a momentous life principle. But he didn’t discover something new. He only uncovered a hidden truth and what many miss.

Norman meant that “OVER” suggests ...recognize endings, letting go, releasing resistance to “what is,” acknowledging endpoints, and identifying the past as past. By “NEXT” he meant ...new beginnings, mapping a future, willing to take creative next steps, positive anticipation of the future, and believing in clear spaces for opportunity.

Of course, since Norman Lear is no Christian, let alone of Anabaptist identity, one might rightly ask, “and why should a Jewish, socialistic, atheistic, film producing, political activist, and philanthropist, known as the ‘godfather of comedy television’ teach a Christian what the Bible has already established? Maybe it is as Jesus once allowed, for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. Ouch. Why does the heathen so often bizarrely plagiarize truth? Well, why

do people miss it in the first place? Whatever the case, his worldly advice is drawn from Biblical precedent.

Paul penned the Biblical precedent this way, Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded... To be thus minded and press toward perfection must certainly be a Christian’s goal. Paul rejected the dependence and security of the past to shape his future and visions. Suppose Paul had lived and believed another way?

Jesus confirmed Paul’s values, no, He prescribed them, He commanded them, and He voiced them. ...no man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Really! Isn’t that a pretty heavy statement? Did Jesus really think that not following this principle takes away from our entrance into the kingdom of heaven? What about Jesus’ terse reminder, Remember Lot’s wife. Why remember Lot’s wife? What serious mistake had Mrs. Lot made?

Frankly, these two words, over and next, easily teach successful and secular life concepts. The serious problem is that using them on a merely human level for mere human

success leads a person toward two equally sad positions. Either toward persistent forlornness and on toward the insane asylum; or its opposite “lovelier” position—tremendous life success which spirals upward toward great riches, leaving in its wake, thirst for more. Both gender an anxious life. They leave us trapped—as buzzards in a low short cage, with freedom just beyond reach and insufficient “takeoff” space to take flight into it—trapped!

In contrast, the Biblical advice of over and next, practiced by faith, in real life situations, and also used for our spiritual future spirals one toward inward peace, eternal reward, and anxious-free living. Strange indeed that the same concepts used for different goals lead to such vastly different endpoints?

We must conclude. Over and next is a Jesus command. When used with an eternal focus, it leads one toward an anxious-free now and confidence in the beyond. It’s the life Jesus commanded. “Living in the past,” and “choosing from the past,” slowly but certainly constructs a hotbed for forlornness, hopeless feelings, and anxious living; we call it depression. The feelings from “living in the past” beg our minds for justice and revenge concerning the hurts it finds there. Its “lovelier” twin, which “lives in the accomplishment of the past” equally steals our vision; we call it success.

Building our lives upon the successes of the past make it harder and harder to accept God’s plans for our future.

“Living in hope” in contrast painfully causes one to sell more and retain less. After all, what did Jesus mean when He said, For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

God never intended man to “live in the past,” to relish its supposed security, or to grip tightly onto that which he must one day lose. Yes, today is our moment that connects us with tomorrow. Yet this truth seems too overwhelming since tomorrow never comes—except in the consummation of our eternal reward. We too often run back to the past because the unknown future looks too hard.

Yes, missing the concepts of over and next is a common Christian mistake. While memories and the past play an important role in Christian experience, yet one can neither relive the joy and success nor the sorrow of the past without unneeded repercussions of stress and anxiety.

No wonder anxiety and its mental consequences abound. No wonder serious rest escapes us. No wonder bitterness plagues American and Christian societies. Our affluence begs us to believe we deserve more. When we give in, only one tiny step remains from there to “retaining the past.”

No wonder it is so common to refuse to “let go” of things, money, and success, when in fact, Jesus said doing so is our only hope. Our minds crave the past successes. Security seems to abide there. Retaining and building upon past success seems to be a good answer to our craving.

Our minds want to twist reality, often overplaying the significance of our past joys and deeming our sorrows worse than they really were. Our minds want “closure for past sorrows.” They want justice for past hurts. They seek to dwell unrealistically in our past successes.

Our minds want to clutch our past successes by building a bigger empire which only calls for yet more. But more is not a remedy to anxiousness. It is the father of anxiousness—Jesus said so! Letting go is the real answer to anxiousness.

So, let us live over and next for Jesus sake, not for success’s sake.

There’s a lesson (or more) in those two words, over and next. What is in those two words for you?

[Reprinted from the “Pilgrim Witness”, June 2019. Used with permission from Brother Edwin Eby.]



mission awareness

The Spanish Magazine That Has Blessed Thousands

Duane Nisly, Pital de San Carlos, Costa Rica

The Spanish magazine, *La Antorcha de la Verdad* (*The Torch of Truth*) was born out of the vision of several brethren in Costa Rica in the 1980s. While most plain communities in the United States enjoyed an abundance of sound Christian periodicals, Christian literature in Spanish was in short supply back in that era, especially literature that was based on sound Biblical teaching. Earlier, the Mennonite brethren in El Salvador

printed a magazine, *Fuente de Luz*, from 1978 to around 1982. It was an effort to give the conservative Mennonite mission communities in Latin America encouragement in Bible doctrine and to be a supplement for their homes. With the onslaught of the war in that country in the early 1980s, it was decided to temporarily discontinue the production of this magazine.

After the war ended, the brethren in El Salvador felt it too overwhelming

to continue with the magazine with all the other things that called for their attention. Since there was some interest in Costa Rica for something like this, they presented the possibility of continuing a literature ministry with the Costa Rican brethren. Thus, with the encouragement of William McGrath, Neil Beachy, and perhaps others, a board was formed of local brethren in Costa Rica. The publication organization was named Publicadora La Merced. The magazine was first printed in 1987. Eight hundred copies were made of that first issue, and three editions were printed the first year.

From the beginning, the board projected a three-fold focus for the audience: 1) A solid Christian family magazine that would be an encouragement and support for the plain churches in Latin America; 2) To offer an alternative by presenting the Biblical gospel to the larger evangelical world which had espoused a watered-down gospel; 3) An evangelistic tool in bringing others to Christ. Our theme verse has been II Peter 1:19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

God has blessed the work far beyond our imaginations. Early on, the late Brother Yost Miller (Ohio)

encouraged Christian Aid Ministry to assist in providing finances for the project. CAM directors agreed. This organization has been the primary source of funds to produce the *Antorcha*. God has faithfully provided sufficient funds over these many years. Some individuals and other printing operations have contributed huge amounts in money and equipment. Our latest addition has been a Shinohara four-color press and a new building to house that press. When we were contemplating installing solar energy, a brother was eager to fund that project. God has been faithful!

Today we are printing close to 300,000 copies of the Spanish edition of the *Antorcha*. Of these, around 80,000 are printed in Peru and 20,000 in Paraguay. The *Antorcha* is also being translated into several other languages, including Haitian Creole, Khmer in Cambodia, Portuguese in Brazil, and English. The Spanish *Antorcha* is being sent to some forty-seven countries over the world. Our prayer has been that the printed page can reach areas where we would never have been able to go. God has done that!

In the early 1990s we began sending some *Antorchas* to Cuba. Many of these never got to their destinations, but some did. We began receiving correspondence from a man named Arturo from Ciego de

Ávila. The correspondence was most interesting, and the man seemed very sincere and appeared to have a sound doctrinal base. He referred to himself as an Anabaptist, but we were unaware of any Mennonites being on the island at that time. In 1996, several brethren made a trip to Cuba to investigate the interest and possibilities. We took along a micro list of contacts that were safely tucked away in a corner of a billfold to avoid the unnecessary scrutiny of the officials, with the idea of visiting some of the readers of the *Antorcha*.

One of these contacts was Arturo, and we had arranged to meet with him on this trip. We got to Ciego de Ávila late one evening and after finding a hotel, we hired a taxi to take us to the address of Arturo. We finally arrived there about 10:00 P.M. to one of the long four-story row houses. His apartment was almost at the end of one of the top stories. We were met with several surprises. Arturo and his wife Conrada were very congenial, and we talked long into the night. He had been a pastor of an evangelical church but had renounced that position. He handed in his pastor's ID card because he no longer could feel at home with the doctrine the church was teaching. He had found Biblical doctrine in the Anabaptist literature that he had acquired (including but not limited to the *Antorcha*) and felt himself to be a true Anabaptist. His

desire was that we would ordain him that night as a Mennonite pastor so that he could continue to form a Mennonite church in Cuba. We did not ordain him that night, but we prayed a prayer of blessing and affirmation for him to continue the path he was on and promised to keep in touch. Today, Arturo is not only a Mennonite pastor but a bishop in Ciego de Ávila and has had a very interesting and fruitful ministry.

And then we could speak of the family in Paraguay who began receiving the *Antorcha*. Here is an excerpt from an article in a Christian Aid Ministry newsletter:

“Soon after Mario committed his life to Christ at the age of twenty-one, he traveled to his home village, Villarica, Paraguay, and preached the gospel to family and friends. After several months he moved to Vya-Renda and helped start a church. One day an unbeliever, passing through Vya-Renda, sarcastically gave a *La Antorcha de la Verdad (The Torch of Truth)* magazine to an elderly Christian woman in the village. After reading the magazine, she passed it on to Mario. In the next two years, they acquired more issues of the magazine. The members at the small church in Vya-Renda were deeply impacted by the Biblical teachings they discovered in the *Antorcha* magazine. They decided to form a church based on its teachings and developed seven

articles as guidelines. These included work, business, clothing, music, sports, and more. They decided that tobacco, a common crop in their area, is not for the Christian. In the non-resistance article, they decided to not own guns or buy firecrackers. They also decided to not use instrumental music for worship. From an article in the *Antorcha*, on providing for our own, and the examples given on how to raise funds, they went to work and soon had enough money to build a church house.

For nine years the church worked happily together. Then a new family moved to Vya-Renda. They agreed to the church guidelines and became members but soon began to sow discord. About the same time, a local evangelist convinced the church to have revival meetings with loud music and “tremendous preaching.” When the evangelist ran off with a young girl from the church, Mario decided to take his family out of Vya-Renda.

After leaving Vya-Renda, Mario wrote Publicadora La Merced (PLM) to see if there were any churches in Paraguay that practice the doctrines taught in the magazine. A few months later, he received a letter from PLM with the name and address of a minister at the Luz y Esperanza Amish Mennonite church. But when he took the address to the main post office in the capital, they could not help him locate the church.

A year passed. Then Mario met a man named Michael who was also receiving the *Antorcha*, and he asked Michael to help him find Luz y Esperanza church. Michael found a phone number, and Mario called the bishop of the church. He was amazed to find a native pastor in a church that practices the teachings of the *Antorcha*. Immediately, plans were made for Mario to visit.

A house and work became available for Mario and his family. In December 2011, they moved to the La Belleza area with all their possessions on the back of a pickup truck. Joy overflowed from their hearts. Their faces glowed. After all these years, they finally located a church that practiced the Bible way.

A recent update stated that sadly, Mario has struggled in his Christian life since then. His wife, however, has remained faithful through it all. Another family, Paulino and his wife, came to the community at almost the same time as Mario did. They were also influenced and drawn to the Mennonite church through the *Antorcha*. Paulino said they lived two hours away from the nearest town. They would often go to town and visit a bookstore to see if any new *Antorchas* were available. Paulino has been ordained as pastor recently in this small church. Two of their children are also members.”

[To be continued next month.] 

Yes, Lord. But Cancer?

Barbara Yoder, Judy Beachy

Compiled by Susan Schlabach



Probably all of our lives have been touched by this one word: cancer. For some it has been personal; for others it is the experience of someone close to you. And for some it may become a personal experience *tomorrow*. I took the opportunity of interviewing two sisters (one, my flesh and blood sister) who have lived with the stark reality: I have cancer. We learn so much from those who navigate a path ahead of us. Personal testimonies are powerful demonstrations of Who God is. I deeply respect their walk with God and their response to life in this reality. I also took the liberty to add a few things I've learned after observing mothers and others who wrestled with this reality.

1. *Was there anything in your earlier life experience that prepared you for your diagnosis? Did it come to you as a total shock?*

It came as a total shock and with a kind of merciful numbness that

eventually disappeared as I felt able to deal with the issue.

My mother died of breast cancer when she was 37, over 50 years ago. Since she was this young, my sisters and I would talk of the real possibility of one of us contracting the same disease. But we all passed her age without having to face the issue. However, one morning two years ago, I discovered the dreaded lump. All these years I had never spent any time worrying about whether it would happen to me, but there it was.

2. *In what way did God minister grace to you in the first stages?*

I was reminded of a verse that struck me several weeks before: Isaiah 30:21. "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." I still think of it often and claim the promise of His divine guidance. I struggled to trust God's wisdom.

At the same time, we felt God's love through the church, family, and friends. Support was overwhelming! My husband's response helped me so much. We were in this thing together, and I knew he would stay with me every step of the way. We immediately began formulating a diet and applying other tips we learned from research. (He is a pro at reading and doing research on special issues.) I asked to be anointed, and we had a precious experience with our ministers and their wives. In fact, I was anointed twice. The first time soon after diagnosis, and again just before I started medical treatment. I felt God's presence in a very real way.

Several days after discovering the lump, I asked for anointing. We gathered family and close friends to our house for the service. They prayed for me, laid hands on me, and our minister anointed me with oil. I felt the oil run down through my hair. It felt like a blessing. As it turned out, God didn't choose to heal me from cancer. But I always felt that God had given me healing. From then on I always felt that God was right there with me no matter what I was going through. This was the gift that God gave me and not anything I worked up for myself. I

was and still am so greatly thankful for this gift!

So, in due time after a biopsy, a scan, and other tests, it was time to meet with the doctor. He showed us the scan and very kindly said that the news is not good. He said I have early stage 2 breast cancer. (Changed to early stage 3 later.) My initial unbidden thought was "Great! Now I get to go to heaven!" But in reality, it is not that easy! And I never really had to face the fact of imminent death. But it did take a while for the reality that I had cancer in my body to sink into my thought pattern. I was not prepared for that news. I wonder if one could be prepared?

3. How has that journey continued to where you are today?

As a whole it made me more sensitive to God and His Word and also to the needs of others. It has made me grateful for things that I took for granted, like being able to take care of my own needs and doing my own household chores. Life itself is a wonderful gift! If I have nothing else to be grateful for, I can still thank God for the gift of life. Looking back now to the times when I was anointed, it is amazing how God is answering those pleas for healing. The first time I was just hoping for

relief from pain. The second time we specifically asked that the medical treatment wouldn't make me sick. God answered both prayers in a marvelous way! At times I almost forget that I'm supposed to be sick. Praise the Lord!

Since my experience, I have spoken with many people. I have only met one person (with cancer) who had an idea beforehand of what they would do if diagnosed with cancer. Generally, no one is prepared for cancer. About six weeks after I recovered from the last surgery, I entered the chemo regime. At the time I couldn't gather my thoughts together enough to consider any alternative treatment. Maybe it would have been different if they had not given me a good prognosis. Did we make the right decision? Would we do the same again? I don't know the answers to those questions. The treatment I had was not easy or painless but cancer has no easy or simple solutions no matter what treatment a person chooses.

I did a lot of resting; a lot of sitting and looking out the window at the sky and the trees. I listened to singing, sermons, and scriptures—especially psalms. Here is a special song I listened to many times:

Healer of My Heart

(Robinson/Johnson)

*God of Light,
Take away the dark of night.
Fill me with Your pure delight.
Touch me with Your hand.
God of grace,
Flow into this holy place.
Listen as Your children pray.
Take me as I am.*

*Healer of my heart,
Lover of my soul,
Maker of the stars, the earth, the sky,
Come and make me whole.
Savior of this world,
My voice praises You alone,
Healer of my heart,
Lover of my soul.*

*Emmanuel,
Lead me to the deepest well
Where never ending love prevails,
Drinking from Your cup.
Prince of Peace,
Forever live inside of me,
Keeper of eternity, oh Lord,
Revive me with Your touch.*

4. *Share any dimension of this experience in which you struggled to fully trust God or were tempted to doubt His goodness.*

I was diagnosed with

adenocarcinoma, a kind of lung cancer. As I wrestled with the “why me” question, I felt the answer, “Why *not* me?” My mother died of a lung disease (not cancer), and asthma was a common problem in our family. In that way it made sense, and I could let it rest. But I had to bring the question, of why God had allowed it, to the feet of Jesus, confess God’s sovereignty, and leave it there. Unfortunately, it’s not a one-time thing. My goal is to trust His sovereign wisdom all the time without a shadow of doubt!

After the second treatment my hair started to come out by the brushful. After the third treatment they were all gone. To look into the mirror and see one’s head completely bare is an experience like no other! It brought emotions I never had before. Surprisingly, the face that I saw looking back at me reminded me of my dad’s face, and it was a comfort to be reminded of him. My dad died four years before this, and I was thankful I didn’t have to tell him of my cancer. I let few people see my bald head. Having no hair is easy enough to take care of; there’s nothing to the washing and drying of it! The hard part was knowing how to cover my head. I experimented with scarves, turbans, and hats. I used one or the other

depending on the weather. When there is no hair, your head gets hot or cold more quickly. Now I know what my husband deals with all the time! Going into public with a turban instead of a veil on my head was an interesting experience. Now my head covering was giving a different message; I belonged to a different set of people. I got sympathetic looks, and it opened the way for a different set of conversations. One time when I saw a young girl with crutches, I thought she must have broken her leg. When she came a bit closer, I saw that she had a prosthesis. Suddenly, everything moved into perspective. I was feeling sorry for having lost my hair, but my hair would grow back quite soon. This girl’s leg would never grow back. I still had so many blessings!

5. What advice do you have to share with anyone who is healthy and in the prime of life?

One thing I have been very thankful for is that I have always enjoyed knitting. It was so good to have something to do while I was doing a lot of resting and recovering. It was something I had control over that I didn’t have to learn or think much about doing. It has been a valuable hobby for me. I knit lots of

hats: for CAM, for grandchildren, or anyone else who needs a hat. Hats are simple to make and useful for many people. In the rhythm of the needles there is music for the soul. I would encourage anyone to learn a craft like this now while you are well and can think. It will comfort you in the times when you have to slow down and rest. And it will even calm you now in your busy, active life!

If you have the opportunity to do good, by all means do it. Also learn to accept the good others do for you. We

have been taught to do good to others, and that is right and good, but have we learned to be gracious receivers? Dad often said, "All of us would rather be on the giving end, but in order to have givers there must be receivers." So, let's be grateful for the good things done for us, including life itself!

(Next month will conclude these interviews. They will continue answering questions such as: how to walk with those battling cancer, sorting treatment options, a spouse's needs, etc.) 

junior messages

Whipping the Preacher

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

In the late 1700s and early 1800s the Methodist church had circuit riding preachers. These brave men rode on horseback to lonely isolated churches to encourage the followers of God. They also preached in crowded towns or cities and bravely went preaching the gospel of Jesus wherever the Lord led them. One of these circuit riding parsons was Jesse Lee.

One night when Jesse Lee was preaching to a big group in a crowded church, some youth at the back door

mocked the preacher and caused a disturbance. People were craning their necks to see what was going on in the back of the church.

Jack was one of the mockers. The preacher looked him straight in the eye. "My son," he kindly called out, "God is not to be mocked. He sees your behavior tonight. Turn to God and repent."

If Jack was upset and restless before, now he was livid. Jack felt that the preacher had disgraced his family with that rebuke.

“I will give him a good whipping this night if I get a chance,” he fumed.

He watched the road that night for Jesse, but the preacher, thankfully, had left by another route.

Thirteen years later Jack was no longer an angry youth. He forgot the incident. But one day something happened. At first, he felt foolish to retaliate at this late date. But the old hatred billowed up within his soul, and unbelievably in the moment of temptation, Satan whispered in his ear that he was a coward. Jack still wanted to whip the preacher.

Jack saw the old preacher as he was traveling along a lonely dirt road in his horse drawn, two-wheeled cart. He still recognized the man whom he felt had shamed him.

“Hey there, preacher man, are you Jesse Lee?” Jack called out. “Do you remember the rebuke you gave me at the church years ago? I wanted to whip you then. I will whip you now.”

The elderly pastor looked carefully at the man before him, “Yes sir, I remember,” the pastor calmly spoke.

“I am an old man; you are young,” the preacher kindly spoke. “If I wanted to fight, you would win. As a man of God, I must not strive. I will get down off my cart and kneel here on the road. Son, you may whip me as long as you please.”

Suddenly Jack felt weak. His knees

trembled; he shook all over. He felt sick at heart and degraded. How could he bend so low to whip a man of God? He leaped on his horse, spurred him viciously, and fled the scene as fast as he could go.

The old pastor looked on in amazement at the fleeing man. He knew God had protected him. Gratefully, he bowed his head and gave thanks.

Jesus calls us to fight a good fight, to endure hardness as a good soldier. But warfare for Jesus is not fought with guns and fighting.

Even in the Old Testament we find the words, “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee” (Proverbs 25:21-22).

Jesus said, “If someone wants to smite you, turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39).

What a comfort to know and believe that “our God within us is greater than he that is in the world” (John 4:4).

Forgiving love is the greatest weapon. Whipping a preacher would never pay.

*[Story related by John D. Martin
Anabaptist Identity Conference,
Millersburg, Ohio, 2018]*



Servanthood — God’s High Calling

Josh Wamble, Lebanon, PA

God designed us to serve, yet we have a difficult time getting the message that this is God’s call for our lives.

Jesus took the time to school His disciples on servanthood. Let’s go to school with them and learn some things that we need to be aware of if we are going to fulfill this part of God’s purpose for our lives.

First, if we are going to be a servant-hearted person, we must be aware of our motives. Simply put, a motive is the **reason** that we do what we do. It’s what’s behind our actions.

In Mark 10, the disciples had left everything to follow Jesus and were being discipled by Him to become future leaders in the church. During this process they were being taught to preach the Gospel message and to care for people. Sometimes their motives got a little messed up because they wanted earthly recognition. In the passage where the mother of James and John came to Jesus with a request, they were asking for honor, glory, and power.

When they started following Jesus, it seems that their motive was to experience God more deeply and

meaningfully. They didn’t realize that the godly motive of serving people naturally springs from loving Jesus. —see *Luke 7:47*

When we think about being a servant, we must be aware that we have within us the deep desire to be honored, to experience glory, to be important, and to be served. It is a natural desire for us—being mankind living in a fallen world with the “old man” to contend with. It is so natural that we see this phenomenon of vying for position and prestige even in nature. Years ago, farmers noted that if ten chickens were put together in a pen, within minutes the chickens (even if they were strangers to each other before) formed a hierarchy based on dominance. That’s where we get the term “pecking order.” Instinctively they will determine, through a series of skirmishes, which chicken is number one, which is number two, and so forth. It’s an important process because the lower one is in the pecking order, the more frequent the pecking. This is the thing we must fight against—the natural urge within our hearts to have dominance over other people. If we

are going to improve our ability to serve, we should check our motives.

Do we really want to make a positive difference and contribution to others in our world because of our love for Jesus Christ?

A second key to improving our servanthood is to learn from our Biblical model. Jesus calls His disciples together and gives them a principle. In the world, He says, this is the natural way of things, ...*Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.* -*Matthew 20:25*. The world's system tries as hard as possible to get to the top. But for the followers of Jesus, He says, there will be a different value system at work. ...*But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.* -*Matthew 20:26-27*. We should be people who serve. The word servant in this passage is translated slave. Interesting word isn't it? Slave? A slave was someone who really had no rights and no honor. The whole purpose of the life of a slave was to serve his or her master. In other words, our purpose is to serve Jesus. Our whole being should be directed to the cause of Christ. One of the ways we do that is by serving people that He brings into our lives. -*see Matthew 25:34-40*. Our primary mission is to **minister**

to people, not be **admired** by them.

To make His point even more forceful, Jesus points to Himself as the model. He says, *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* -*Matthew 20:28*. Do you want to know what servanthood looks like? Look at the life of Jesus. We read about Him in John 13, the scene where the disciples all arrive for a meal. Jesus got up, washed, and dried the disciple's feet. Then He says, *If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.* -*John 13:14*.

Let's follow the perfect example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ when Scripture says: *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But **made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*** -*Philippians 2:5-7*. This should be our attitude.

A nursing school graduate illustrates how this could happen in our lives. This woman took a job in a long-term care facility. One of her first patients was a woman named Eileen. Eileen had an aneurysm that ruptured in her brain, leaving her totally unconscious to the observing eye, and apparently unaware of anything that was going on around her. It was necessary to turn Eileen every hour to prevent

bedsores, and she needed to be fed through a stomach tube twice a day. Eileen never had visitors. Apparently, no one cared about her. One of the other nurses said, “When it’s this bad, you [as a caregiver] need to detach yourself emotionally from the whole situation.” As a result, more and more, Eileen was treated as a **thing** instead of a **person**, with people going in, doing their work, then leaving again as quickly as they could. But this young nurse decided that she, in living out her Christian faith, would treat this woman differently. She talked to Eileen, sang to her, said encouraging things to her, and even brought her little gifts.

On Thanksgiving Day, however, the young nurse came to work reluctantly, wanting to be home on the holiday.

As she entered Eileen’s room, she knew she would be doing the normal tasks with no thanks or appreciation from her patient. She decided to again talk to Eileen and said, “I was in a bad mood this morning, Eileen, because it was supposed to be my day off. But now that I’m here, I’m glad. I wouldn’t have wanted to miss seeing you on Thanksgiving Day. Do you know that today is Thanksgiving?”

Just then the telephone rang, and the nurse turned away from the bed to answer it. As she was talking, she turned to look back at Eileen. Eileen was looking at the nurse... crying.

Big damp circles stained her pillow and she was shaking all over.

That was the only emotion that Eileen ever showed, but it was enough to change the attitude of the entire staff towards her. A short time after that day, she died. The young nurse closed her story this way: “I keep thinking about her. It occurred to me that I owe her a lot. Except for Eileen, I might never have known what it is like to give [compassion and care] to someone who can’t give back.”

One of the ways of serving Jesus is giving to someone who can’t give back. So, examine your motives and look to Jesus. Then ask the Lord for the mind and heart of Jesus to dwell in you.

Where is God calling you to serve? Who is God calling you to serve? This is the tough part. You must make the choice repeatedly if you desire to be a faithful servant your entire life.

Let us pray and ask God to show us opportunities around us in which we can serve. Remember, when we choose to serve, we must not think what we will get out of it. Let us have a spirit of humility when we serve others.

Let us live out the servanthood life to the fullest of our ability. Let us be **willing** servants and not **duty** servants.

[From “The Heartbeat of the Remnant”, Volume 22, Issue 4. Used with permission.]



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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

It is not easy ...
 To apologize,
To begin over,
 To be unselfish,
To take advice,
 To admit error,
To face a sneer,
 To be charitable,
To keep on trying,
 To be considerate,
To avoid mistakes,
 To endure success,
To profit by mistakes,
 To forgive and forget,
To think and then act,
 To keep out of the rut,
To make the best of little,
 To subdue an unruly temper,
To maintain a high standard,
 To shoulder a deserved blame,
To recognize the silver lining
 But it always pays.

—Anonymous