



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

OCTOBER 2019

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Calvary Messenger

October 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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Eternal Light! Eternal Light!

Eternal Light! Eternal Light!
How pure the soul must be
When, placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight
Can live and look on Thee.

The spirits that surround Thy throne
May bear the burning bliss;
But that is surely theirs alone,
Since they have never, never known
A fallen world like this.

Oh, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before th' Ineffable appear,
And on my natural spirit bear
The uncreated beam?

There is a way for man to rise
To Thee, sublime Abode;
An Offering and a Sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God:

These, these prepare us for the sight
Of holiness above;
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the eternal Light,
Through the eternal Love.

Thomas Binney (1798-1874) 

Let There Be Light

“...darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night” (Genesis 1:2-5).

“Let there be light” were the first spoken words of God recorded in the Scriptures. On this first day of creation God brought light to this earth. He divided the light from the darkness. What was this light? Where did it come from? What was its source? The sun, moon, and stars were created on the fourth day. We are awed by the tremendous creative power of God when He created the greater and lesser lights. The power of the sun is an amazing source of light. Mankind cannot begin to build such a source of light. And then, almost as an afterthought, God created the stars also—billions upon billions upon billions of them. What light! What tremendous power to create that light! A Biblical Big Bang!

But what is light? Light is illumination, we say; something that helps make things visible. Of course,

there are technical definitions of light; “electromagnetic radiation to which the organs of sight react, ranging in wavelength from about 400 to 700 nanometers and propagated at a speed of 186,282 miles per second (299,972 km/sec)” (Webster). In Job 38:19 God asked Job, “Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof?” How do you define light?

At the time of this writing, we are losing approximately two and one-half minutes of visible light per day. As I step outside to observe the last minutes of visible light, I am awed with the strength and power of light. Even as the lesser lights become visible, a change comes over the world. As light fades and diurnal creatures go to rest, nocturnal creatures come to life. The sounds of crickets and katydids are recognizable close at hand, but from

the woodlands comes a cacophony of sounds and noises unheard in daylight. Surely, we understand the solar system and what causes night and day and seasons, but is there more to light?

The phenomenon of natural light has its counterpart in the inner life of man. As natural light makes things visible, mental, moral, and spiritual light brings “visibility” and understanding to the heart of man. Teachers and preachers watch for the moment when the light of understanding shines through the eyes and facial expressions of their listeners. What is the source of this inner light?

The Psalmist David equates light with Jehovah God. “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1). In Psalm 84 he says, “For the LORD God is a sun and shield.” We should not be surprised that our God can bring light to our dark hearts since He created all the lights in the heavens.

Supernatural and divine presence is often bathed in light. Moses turned aside from his shepherding duties when he noticed a fire—the angel of the Lord appeared in this light. God called to him from the flaming bush and sent him on his way to deliver

God’s people. When the children of Israel finally left Egypt, God led the way in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, “to give them light.”

As I mentioned earlier, there are creatures who enjoy light and go to rest when light is gone. There are also creatures who come to life when light fades and darkness comes. Some are afraid of darkness and others fear light.

The phenomenon of darkness also has its counterpart in the inner life of man. Under the cover of night, humankind feels freer to commit the acts of darkness. In the absence of light, the powers of darkness come to roam and prey. Where is the light that brings understanding to man? Where is the Light that can drive the darkness from man’s heart?

Many have been the dark nights when the sleepless soul waited for the morning. Job waited for the dawn but the night grew darker still. “When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness” (Job 30:26). This longing for light was not only in times of trial. The psalmist longed for the Redeemer as man awaits the dawn. “My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning” (Psalm 130:6).

The prophets spoke of the coming Light. Despite the prevailing darkness, there was hope that the Light would come. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isaiah 60:1-3).

But as Job's night grew darker still, so the night grew darker with God's people. Centuries passed with no new light; no revelation from Jehovah. God was silent. The night was dark and cold.

Despite the darkness, the faithful continued. They faithfully followed the light God had given them. As faithful Zacharias served his turn to burn incense in the temple of the Lord, an angel appeared with a message of hope and light! After John's birth, his father prophesied of his son, "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways... To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:76, 79).

Faithful Mary and Joseph also

heard and believed. And finally, the angel announced the birth of the True Light to the shepherds in the field, "...Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

Faithful Simeon in the temple lived to see the Light. He took the infant Jesus up in his arms and blessed God, "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32).

So the Light walked among men and brought hope and life. The faithful recognized the Light and followed Him. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matthew 4:16).

But again as it was with Job, so the darkness became even darker. The battle between darkness and light was raging, and as darkness fell upon the three crosses on Golgotha, it appeared that darkness had won. The faithful cared for Him in death. They laid the True Light in a tomb, closed the door with a great stone, and departed.

Oh, the darkness of the following days. Hope was shredded to pieces with His death. Where was this promised Light? The light of hope in their eyes flickered, and for some it went out.

But darkness had not seen the last of the True Light! As the faithful women came to the grave, they saw the angel of the Lord with a countenance like lightning and clothes as white as snow. The stone was rolled away and this messenger of light proclaimed the victory of light over darkness—of life over death. The True Light was shining! The True Light still shines and will shine forever!

The same God whose first recorded spoken words were, “Let there be light,” has given light for our own dark hearts! “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6). As the darkness “upon the face of the deep” fled when the power of the Creator brought light upon our planet, so we too can shine as children of the True Light. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

–AY 

Announcement

Funds Needed

As many of you know, the *Calvary Messenger* subscription rates are kept low to promote greater readership. Many of you have been generous in supporting this work by your donations. However, our costs continue to rise, and it looks like we will be about \$12,000.00 short by the end of the year. We would invite you to consider donating funds to help to cover this shortfall. Any help will be appreciated. Make checks payable to Calvary Publications, identify it as a donation, and send to 7498 Woods West Ave., London, OH 43140. Donations of \$50.00 or more will be sent a receipt. If you would like a receipt for a smaller amount, please request it. Calvary Publications is a 501-C3 tax exempt organization. Thank you.

–Enos D. Stutzman (*Circulation Manager*) 

Calvary Bible School Clean-up

We are again soliciting help from folks like you for the annual clean-up effort at Calvary Bible School on November 11-13, 2019. This short-term voluntary service opportunity features lots of good old-fashioned work for young (like recent CBS alumni) and old (like less recent “grandparent” type CBS alumni), ample chance for fellowship while working alongside others, generous helpings of good home-cooked food, and lodging provided in the CBS dorms! Should you and a number of friends from your church or youth group be willing to volunteer or have more questions, please contact Lowell Swartzentruber at 864-378-3394. Thank you very much for your assistance in the past and in the future!

-Lowell Swartzentruber for Calvary Bible School 

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 

The World of People

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

I made an error in my article in the August issue of *Calvary Messenger*. I stated that the population of the world increases by 200 million persons per year, a figure I thought I had remembered. Google says the world increases by “only” 83 million per year with the world population approaching 7.8 billion. An increase of 83 million per year, give or take several hundred thousand, would put the world population at 8 billion by 2020, at 9 billion by 2034, and at 10 billion by 2046. That will likely not happen in my lifetime but very well could in my children and my continuing posterity’s lifetime. (To date, I have seven children and thirty-nine grandchildren, breaking no social records). 83 million per year would make an average of 227,000 births per day worldwide!

The population of China is near 1.42 billion, and India is hovering upwards to 1.39 billion. Without tabulating every country in Asia, I will speculate that more than one-half of the world’s population lives

in Asia. The land area of China is 3.7 million square miles, and India’s land area is 1.2 million square miles (Webster). The population of the United States is said to be around 350 million with a land area of 3.6 million square miles. Imagine, if you can, how it would be to have four times more people living in our country which has only slightly fewer square miles than does China. But our imagination blows a fuse when trying to think of four times more people than are currently in the United States, but in a land area that is three times less than our country, as is the case in India. It comes as no surprise that Asian countries must import much food and grains.

Demographic specialists and scientists have stated that this world will be maxed out for food, water, and sustainable resources when the total world population hits either 9 or 10 billion people (Google). It is no wonder that many people are greatly concerned about our future here on planet Earth. Prestigious colleges have been offering classes

on studies about the end of the world which they say are “wildly popular.” (I would love to be their teacher!). One secular writer wrote a book on “end of the world” topics. He said that what the Bible says about the end of the age makes more sense for plausible answers than anything else he has researched.

The lure of the world is to enjoy yourself now; don’t worry about tomorrow or next year. Instant gratification is strong in advertising for consumer products, in entertainment, sports, hobbies, and travel, with forays into the forbidden and exotic and the erotic and immoral. They all make strong appeals to buy now or do it now. Call us today, they say.

Much of our teaching and preaching is about what to do now in our present time. It would seem to be helpful for our own Christian living to be more conversant with the great themes of our future redemption, the judgments upon a wicked world prior to the end, and the great white throne judgment.

Being better informed on the significance of these mighty declarations of the end time principles could strengthen our faith. It could give us an alternate view of our “here and now” to a surer “there and then.” The forward view is emphasized by

Peter in II Peter 3:11-14. These four verses use “seeing” two times, and “looking” two times. There are two mentions of the earth and its things being “dissolved” with great fire and tremendous heat.

Peter calls this prophecy a promise from God. Really, every prophecy from God is a promise from Him. Here it is, with a look into the future, and its attendant and desirable effect for us as believers right now. “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (II Peter 3:11-14).

We don’t need to be on a program to develop specialists in prophecy, but I suggest we should balance our preaching with a prophecy-sermon one Sunday every other month, which would only be six times out of fifty-two Sunday mornings in a year. The resource and variety would

have biblical material available right from the Bible without repeats of the same subject for many years to come. Biblical prophecy is a distinctive message that fits very well with a distinctive people. It could be the basis for an in-church revival, an impetus for outreach, and might just be an answer toward amendment of life which is sought by clients at our counseling centers. If I were a full-time counselor, I would likely have a little section of each session to look at what God says will happen to both believers and unbelievers in the future judgment. Perspective is lost if we fail or resist looking into the future.

The world is a stiff competitor for having our attention and affection in this present time. The study and belief in future prophecy, which are mighty declarations of the promises of God in the future upon the earth, will show that the world has absolutely no competition to us as something to look forward to in the future. The world system is under the domination of Satan, and the push of the world is to enjoy yourself now. The church has long held out the concept of believing God now, being saved now, worshipping God now, studying the Bible now, and serving God now. The Christian message is largely about NOW. It is not easy to

offset the “now” push of the world by using only the “now” things of Christian living.

Recently, I was asked by a pastor in another state how and why our churches keep on growing with increase. Without hesitation, my response was that our pastors make their best contribution by using a word value interpretation for all their preaching. Spiritualizing the teachings of the Bible produces a spiritualized faith. That kind of preaching can float unpredictably wherever the speaker wishes to take it. The spiritualized faith of the laity, which results, can also float unpredictably to wherever they wish to be guided. Spiritualizing Scripture makes it unclear and abstract that results in a faith that is unclear and abstract. The transition to worldly churches is made easier by it.

Prophecy is the only message the world cannot match nor supersede. Interpreting Bible prophecy in a spiritualized dimension into our own present-day experiences lacks heaven’s authority. The word value interpretation is proven to be the way to revival and growth in the church.

Unchurched people are also a people of faith, albeit a general faith, and quite often it is a spiritualized faith. They are satisfied and unafraid to meet the God of love after death.

They believe God loves them, and that love reduces or removes any possible disfavor, and by it most people will go to heaven. That veneer rubs off onto some of us in some ways. Spiritualizing Scripture is a dull message. What have we gained by it when people simply leave the church, exchanging how we spiritualize Scripture by how they spiritualize the Bible? It runs counter to trying to witness for Christ and win souls for Jesus, when we take things out of context in the Bible.

My Bottom Line will draw from the classic debate of Mr. Hastings, the avowed atheist, and

Mr. Campbell, a man of God. As I recall the story, it was time to wrap up the debate. Mr. Campbell said, “Mr. Hastings, what will you do when it comes time to die?” He boldly said, “I am not afraid to die.” Then Mr. Campbell asked, “Do you have hope in your death?” Mr. Hastings flatly and sharply said, “No.” Said Mr. Campbell, “You will die without hope after the grave; I have been saved from hell and have hope in God for a home in heaven.”

A living hope is always and only derived from a living faith based on what the Bible says. Otherwise, it is otherwise. 

The World More Beautiful

Serving Christ in Secret Places

Sharon Yoder, Nappanee, IN

Occasionally, I pull from my bookshelf a delightful children’s book entitled *Miss Rumphius*, by Barbara Cooney. In this story, Grandfather mentors his granddaughter, Alice, by precept and example. Often Alice sits on his lap in his house by the sea while listening to his stories of faraway places. Other days she works beside Grandfather in his shop. One day Alice declares that she too plans

to visit faraway places and live in a house by the sea. Grandfather wisely replies all that is very well, but she must do yet a third thing: she must make the world more beautiful.

Alice grows up and becomes Miss Rumphius, the librarian. She buys a cottage by the sea and travels to many places. On one of her journeys, she injures her back. While recuperating, she remembers that she has not

yet fulfilled her third goal. An idea comes to her as she takes walks during her recovery. She begins freely scattering, by the handfuls, lupine seeds wherever she walks up and down the pathways. First, people call her That Crazy Old Lady, but later as lupines dot the countryside, she becomes known as the Lupine Lady who made the world more beautiful.

This reminds me of another woman in the first century church who made the world more beautiful as she generously scattered hope and love. She lived in Joppa, along the Mediterranean coast below Caesarea. She worked among the widows and orphans of this fishing town, which frequently experienced the death clutches of a vicious sea that captured their loved ones. These destitute women and children depended on the charities of such people as Dorcas.

We know little about Dorcas's background. We do not know how she became a clothing designer. We also do not know whether she was widowed or unmarried. Perhaps we can glean a few ideas about her life from the short passage found in Acts 9:36-42. Dorcas's name means "gazelle." Her gentleness and compassion touched the lives of the poor as she generously sewed

garments for them. Dorcas lived in community and for community.

Dorcas also was called a disciple. She had become a follower of Jesus. We do not know her educational background, but certainly, she was on a quest. Disciples ask questions and make personal applications while modeling their teacher. As a disciple, Dorcas appropriated love, kindness, mercy, and compassion. Undoubtedly, she trained her mind to know Scripture and actively listened to the Holy Spirit's promptings. Her domestic duties did not interfere with her spiritual growth and maturity.

Thirdly, Dorcas's reputable character describes her as "full of good works and acts of charity" (Acts 9:36 ESV). What a summary of a woman known for her lifestyle of sacrificial giving! The passage refers to her benevolent works, charitable and kind acts, not an occasional good deed here and there, but a way of life in constantly giving as needs arose. Undoubtedly, her work had little payback in monetary terms, for she surrounded herself with the poorest of the poor.

A person's dedication and sacrifice always touches other lives. One day Dorcas became ill and died. Whatever the cause of her death, it caused much grief. When Peter

arrived, the weeping widows held out the garments she had made. Her love and kindness had deeply touched their lives. Peter saw the widows' deep grief, not because Dorcas could no longer make clothes, but because they loved the woman who had sacrificed lavishly.

God was merciful. The miracle of Dorcas's resurrection became news of the day, which resulted in many believing on the Lord. Is her resurrection the point of the story? Hardly. There have been many faithful men and women who have given their lives for the service of the kingdom, and yet have not been resurrected in this world. Rather, her resurrection imparted hope because they believed in the Resurrected One who has made the world more beautiful. I believe that after Dorcas's restoration, she went right on being who she was—a woman of God, a disciple, a sacrificial servant with a needle in her hand.

Like Dorcas, we too have a calling on our lives that constitutes sacrifice. Many of us desire to know the calling, but we get edgy about the idea of sacrifice. Sacrifice costs. However, there is no other recourse for a Jesus-follower. Jesus clearly states the prerequisites for being His follower. Three things are required. We need

to deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow Him (Mark 8:34). The call rests not on what we want or do not want, nor on who we are or who we are not.

Centering life on me negates sacrificial living and discipleship. Discipleship leaves no room for self-centered agendas. How vastly different were our world if seeds of love and humility were scattered wherever we went!

In God's kingdom, sacrificial living works most often in the back corners and alleyways of our world. The Holy Spirit issues the King's commands for these places with quiet, insistent directives. How might that look? Perhaps a father takes his family fishing instead of going to the coffee shop. It might mean choosing to wash dishes during an event rather than serving up front in the food line. It could be as insignificant as silently picking up clutter from the floor, smiling at a clerk, or praying for someone in town. Dr. Egeler once said, "Quiet acts of honor make a difference." I would like to add that they make the world more beautiful.

I think of two more examples of people who have lived sacrificially and thus changed their world. Gladys Aylward did not set out to become a famous missionary. No mission

board accepted her, but that did not stop her burning desire to answer God's call on her life. Gladys traveled alone to China while encountering many obstacles. She ministered to many Chinese people. During Japan's attack on China, she fled across the mountain with more than a hundred orphans to bring them to safety. Exhausted after such a feat, she collapsed. The trip weakened Gladys's health in general, and she died at the age of sixty-eight on foreign soil. Aylward's legacy lives on in the name the Chinese chose for her as the "Virtuous One." Her love and service brought hope and beauty to a war-torn country.

Another woman that comes to mind is currently of our Anabaptist heritage. Gertie Troyer was born in 1949 in Plain City, Ohio. At age twenty-one, she went to live in Kenilworth, an area of Washington, D. C. She heard the call for her life and joined a mission that reached out to people in the concrete jungle. When the mission closed its doors, Gertie chose to stay in the Kenilworth community. The baking business in her kitchen turned into a mission of its own. She has become a bridge builder of relationships in the city. This woman, now nearly reaching seven decades of her life,

left the comforts of her Anabaptist community many years ago, but she brought the beautiful presence of Jesus with her to the city.

Where sacrifices are made, love reigns. We might not be called to scatter seeds as the Lupine Lady did, nor hold a needle in our hand as Dorcas did, neither cross a mountain with orphans, nor use the kitchen as our ministry. However, Jesus calls all of us to deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow Him. If we choose sacrificial discipleship as His followers, we truly will make the world more beautiful.

Sharon came to Faith Builders in 1999 to teach elementary students and train teacher apprentices. In the 20 years since then, she invested generously in the school and local community, wrote a book for single women, and mentored dozens of young women. She returned to Indiana this summer to resume teaching grades 5 and 6. This article is based on a talk Sharon gave at REACH 2017. It reflects her goals and the way she lives. We are deeply indebted to Sharon for all the visible and invisible ways she has shared her life with us.

[Reprinted from the "Faith Builders Newsletter", Fall 2019. Used with permission.]



marriages

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

Farmwald-Troyer

Bro. Jason, son of Dean and Elva Farmwald, Monticello, KY, and Sis. Kendra, daughter of Melvin and Lois Troyer, Advance, MO, at The Assembly of God Church for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church, on May 31, 2019, by Dean Farmwald.

Helmuth-Lapp

Bro. Zachary, son of Eldon and Shana Helmuth, Kalona, IA, and Sis. Brenda, daughter of Merv and Ina Lapp, Latrobe, PA, at Christ United Methodist Church, Youngwood, PA, for Trauger Mennonite, on August 17, 2019, by Merv Lapp.

Peachey-Yoder

Bro. Josh, son of Paul and Geneva Peachey, Summersville, KY, and Sis. Bethany, daughter of Lyndon and Joann Yoder, Bloomfield, MO, at The Assembly of God Church for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church, on June 28, 2019, by James Hershberger. 



cradle roll

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

Beiler, Darren and Diane (Yoder), Plain City, OH, fourth child, second son, William Quinn, July 27, 2019.

Blades, Emory and Melody (Helmuth), Fredonia, KY, second child and daughter, Alexis Brielle, June 14, 2019.

Byler, Kendall and Diane (Stoltzfus), Drasco, AR, first child and son, Jesse Robert, August 8, 2019.

Byler, Nathanael and Kathryn (King), West Farmington, OH, fourth child and son, Theodore Paul, August 1, 2019.

Dziuba, Yasha and Anya (Grots), Kryvoshyintsy, Ukraine, second child and daughter, Rachel (Rakhil), April 10, 2019.

Eicher, Levi and Lillian (Mast), Russellville, KY, second child, first daughter, Audrey Rose, August 17, 2019.

Gingerich, Kendall and Sharon (Stoltzfus), Advance, MO, second child and son, Trent Montae, August 5, 2019.

Helmuth, Darrell and Regina (Troyer), Fredonia, KY, fourth child, second son, Travis Elliot, July 10, 2019.

Jantzi, Allen and Linda (Gerber), Wellesley, ON, fourth child, second son, Craig Allen, July 15, 2019.

Kauffman, John and Emily (Wagler), Fredonia, KY, first child and son, Chandler John, June 6, 2019.

Kensinger, Josiah and Sarah (Young), East Rochester, OH, first child and daughter, Elisabeth Maria, June 16, 2019.

Kuhns, Ron and Cindy (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, fifth child, fourth daughter, Ava Brielle, June 17, 2019.

Mast, Michael and Eunice (Miller), Mountain View, AR, fourth child, second daughter, Melanie Joy, August 19, 2019.

Miller, Allen and Fannie, Hutchinson, KS, third child and son, Kenton Reed, May 7, 2019.

Miller, George and Evelyn (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, third child, second daughter, Olivia Nicole, August 23, 2019.

Miller, Javon and Genevieve (Barkman), McConnelsville, OH, first

child and son, Theodore Zane, August 9, 2019.

Miller, Mike and Krista (Peachey), Minerva, OH, second child, first son, Jameson Mark, June 3, 2019.

Miller, Vernon and Melody (Mast), Goodspring, TN, second child, first son, Chad Wyatt, August 10, 2019.

Ramirez, Omar and Glenda (Miller), Grandview, TX, third child, second son, Axel Damian, August 6, 2019.

Showalter, Joseph and Janine (Ulrich), Grandview, TX, ninth child, fifth daughter, Jianna Grace, August 11, 2019.

Ulrich, Marcus and Juanita (Mast), Covington, TX, first child and daughter, Nikita Joyelle, July 13, 2019.

Weaver, Justin and Joanne (Ulrich), Covington, TX, seventh child, fifth son, Lyndall Valor, July 17, 2019.

Yoder, Shadd and Karen (Gingerich), Bloomfield, MO, fifth child and son, Easton Clark, June 11, 2019. 

obituaries

Hochstetler, Leroy D. Hochstetler, 88, of Plain City, OH, died Monday, July 22, 2019, at his residence. He was born April 26, 1931, in Nappanee, Indiana. He was a member of the Bethesda Mennonite Church.

Preceding him in death were parents: Daniel I. and Barbara (Schmucker) Hochstetler; siblings: Alma, Irvin, Lydia Mae, Ivan, Katie, Milo, Alvin, Edward; grandsons: Jeffry and Jerid Hochstetler.

Survived by his wife of 62 years,

Lydia Mae (Hochstetler) Hochstetler, whom he married on October 4, 1956; children: Rebecca (Cristobal) Irias, Daniel (Lorene) Hochstetler, Anna Sue (Epaminondas) Moreno, Ruth (Jesus) Irias, Joseph (Manuela) Hochstetler, Catherine (Sam) Stoltzfus, John (Miriam) Hochstetler, Barbara (Wilmer Irias) Hochstetler, Mary Jean (Phil) Shirk, Margaret (Mark) Miller, Martha Rapalo; 39 grandchildren and 33 great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held at United Bethel Mennonite Church July 27, with Ray Stutzman and Elmer Stoltzfus serving. Burial was at the Bethesda Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Peachey, Ezra T., 93, of Belleville, PA, died on July 19, 2019. He was born on November 1, 1925, in Belleville, PA, to the late Simon and Susan (Bawel) Peachey.

He was baptized in his youth upon the confession of his faith in Christ. He was a member at Valley View A. M. Church in Belleville, PA.

On August 25, 1955, he was married to Nannie M. Peachey, who survives. Also surviving are three sons: Nathaniel M. Peachey (wife, Sheri Troyer), Greensboro, NC; Jonathan C. Peachey (wife, Mary Elaine Stauffer), Espanola, NM; E. Timothy Peachey (wife, Carolyn Capabanco), San Diego, CA; a brother, Sylvanus S. Peachey, Belleville; six grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by five

brothers: Steve, Alvin, Aaron, Eli, and Simon; three sisters; Malinda Peachey, Amelia Graber, and Emma Zook.

Ezra and Nannie served as missionaries for 45 years in the Red Lake, Ontario, Canada, area and several other nearby communities. He was pastor at Believer's Fellowship Church in Red Lake. They relocated to Belleville, PA, in 2005, after his retirement and became members of Valley View A. M. Church. He shared in the ministry for some time after his return.

The funeral was held at Valley View A. M. Church on July 24, 2019, with Matthew Peachey, Wayne Schrock, and David Peachey serving. Eli B. King, Jr. conducted the committal at the Locust Grove Cemetery.

Gingerich, Mary (Hostetler), 90, passed from this life to her eternal rest at her home on June 4, 2019, following a lengthy struggle with congestive heart failure. She passed on while holding the hand of her beloved husband.

She was born March 9, 1929, in Middlefield, OH, to Monroe and Sarah (Detweiler) Hostetler. She had a busy life filled with many amazing expressions of love to her family, friends, and strangers. She found great joy in exercising her gift of hospitality to all who surrounded her table.

She was a member of Christian Fellowship Church of Minerva, OH, and rarely missed an opportunity to worship her Saviour and fellowship with her church family.

On May 19, 1949, Mary pledged her

lifelong commitment to Albert, and they shared 70 years of marriage. She is survived by her husband, Albert, as well as 11 sons and four daughters: Robert (Kathryn), East Rochester; Noah, Carrollton; Olin (Ruth), Middlefield; Laura (John) Burford, East Rochester; Linda (Jonas) Yoder, Kalona, IA; Philip, Carrollton; Monroe (Laveta), Leon, IA;

Miriam (Nate) Hostetler, Mesopotamia; Joe (Priscilla), East Rochester; Nelson (Melody), Richfield, PA; Paul (Regina), Hartwell, GA; Hannah (Rolin) Miller, Hillsville, VA; Eugene (Naomi), Berlin; Laban (Norma), Mifflinburg, PA; and Joel (Dorcas), Minerva.

She was adored by her 75 grandchildren and 69 great-grandchildren.



observations

When people wish to celebrate a special event like a birthday or wedding or even to mark the passing of a loved one, some choose to mark these occasions by releasing helium-filled balloons. Indeed, the view of many balloons rising into the sky and disappearing from view is a unique experience. But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is encouraging people to rethink these celebrations. After all, just because these balloons tend to rise until they disappear from sight doesn't mean they are gone. They do eventually fall back to earth. Instead of bright art in the sky they become litter on the ground or in the water. Sometimes opportunistic wildlife mistakes this litter for food and it becomes problematic for the critters that try to ingest the balloons

and their strings.



In early August Brenda and I were privileged to travel to Ireland for the annual Family Conference hosted by Dunmore East Christian Fellowship. Our daughter, Brianna, accompanied us as did a local church brother, Dean Lehrke. It was our first visit to Ireland and left us with a rich tapestry of memories and impressions. I'll outline a few here.

The Family Conference was attended by about 175 people, roughly half of whom were local. The non-locals who visited represented a variety of nationalities including Polish, British, Ukrainian, German, Ugandan, etc. While all speak English with varying proficiency, the mother tongue of many of those who attended the conference

was something different. Learning another language is a tedious and uneven process. But it adds rich layers of meaning and understanding to the world of those who are able to communicate in more than one language. Even word choices of those speaking English in Ireland sometimes left us smiling, because the selection was quite interesting. For instance, a horse-drawn cart was a “jaunting car.”

The non-locals who attended the conference represented a variety of vocational interests. One was a dentist, another a university professor, others worked, past or present, as teachers in other settings. At least one was a farm worker, one worked in IT, one drove truck, and one young lady works at the Dublin airport. We visited with her when we departed there for home. She was working with those flying with Delta airline, which was our carrier on our return.

Having never visited Ireland before, I was surprised by the temperate climate there for as far north as it is. In the winter the surrounding ocean keeps the temperatures above freezing most of the time. While we were there in August, daytime temperatures struggled to reach 70 degrees. We saw many dairy cattle that I would call Holsteins. I understand that they

are referred to as Friesians in the UK and Ireland. The moderate climate, with plentiful rainfall, is friendly to grass-based agriculture if the mud can be managed.

The Comeragh Wilderness Camp was launched as a ministry of Dunmore East Christian Fellowship. It is situated in the Comeragh Mountains, about 45 minutes or an hour's drive from the church community. In the beginning the thought was to have a camp similar to the wilderness camps here in the USA. Over the years the ministry focus has shifted a bit. Many of those ideas gleaned from US camps were implemented, but not all of them work equally well in Ireland. Unlike wilderness camps in the USA, Comeragh does not operate as a long-term residential facility. Those who come stay for a variety of shorter-term events scheduled throughout the year that target a variety of needs. While this brings with it both advantages and disadvantages, it enables them to touch many more lives than if those who came would stay longer.

We were privileged to make many new acquaintances and renew some old ones. Among the latter were touching base with one of Brenda's grade schoolteachers, John Hostetler, and his wife Karen. We were also

delighted to share a time of fellowship around the evening meal in the home of Gideon and Esther Yutzy and family. Gideon was part of our local congregation some years ago.

The challenges and blessings in the local church fellowship are both similar and unique to those we deal with here. They are similar in that rich fellowship and brotherhood are found wherever God’s children gather around the common faith. It is also challenging because there is ample opportunity to minister to people who desire to follow God and enjoy the fellowship, but for a variety of reasons, have not yet chosen to join the church there. One big reason for this is that many who enjoy the interaction don’t live anywhere close by. Furthermore, varying priorities related to how faith should be lived and practiced sometimes make a looser affiliation preferable to a total buy-in. My very superficial impression is that the church there does very well in reaching out to those hungry for more input, teaching, and fellowship, while providing space and time for the different journeys that are being traveled. They appreciate and are entitled to our prayers.

We ended up spending a couple of days sight-seeing after the conference was over. Words and pictures are

woefully inadequate in describing the arresting and luscious scenery we saw, especially in western Ireland. Ireland is green. But in addition to green, a flashy array of flowers add spectacular color to the visual array. Architectural variety also adds considerable interest. Sheep and cattle grazing the rugged and gentle hillsides, both along the windswept coast and inland, paint a tranquil picture. Here in America I tend to think of 100 miles as a short distance and 100 years as a long time. The preserved history of Ireland and the narrow tracks that characterized the most scenic routes made us feel like we were in a place where 100 miles is a long distance and 100 years a short time.



Joshua Harris, the oldest of seven children, was born in 1974 to parents whom many regarded as home-school pioneers. In 1997, when Josh was 23, he published his first book, one that many of you have likely read, entitled, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*. His contribution to the discussion regarding a Christian view of dating and courtship was very influential in what has been called, “Purity Culture.” He went on to become the lead pastor at Covenant Life Church, an evangelical megachurch in Gaithersburg, Maryland, at the

age of 30. He resigned that post in 2015 and worked closely with Sovereign Grace Ministries in various capacities. In 2018 he walked back his views on dating and courtship as explained in his first book and others he wrote with similar content. In July of this year, he announced that he and his wife of 20 years are divorcing amicably. He went on to say that he is no longer a Christian and apologized to the LGBTQ+ apologists for his prior views and teaching that alienated them. What observations can we make of this situation?

Because we can never totally separate a person from what he says and does, the life and testimony of God's children are quite important. So, when hypocrisy rears its ugly head, or beliefs change as they did for Josh Harris, we are reminded that our allegiance to Jesus Christ is appropriate. Allegiance to a popular figure whose life we don't really know needs to be pretty limited. Furthermore, the one who "is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore" eternally existed before Josh Harris came along to "validate" and then "reject" Christianity. There's not really much that Josh can say that alters truth. Josh said some really good things. His apostasy now doesn't make all that he said wrong.

However, it does provide us another opportunity to evaluate his teachings through the filter of Scripture, Christ, and Christian brotherhood if we sort of turned that filter off in the past.

Through his writings and pastoral role, evangelical Christianity—and that includes some of us—granted him great influence. Today we have the benefit of hindsight. I remember Paul's exhortation to Timothy that a leader should not be a novice. But I'm also reminded that sometimes a charismatic communicator eclipses our ability to be discerning. When our discernment is compromised, our vulnerabilities can be exploited.

Josh Harris was a Calvinist. I do not consider myself a Calvinist. But that doesn't mean there aren't things we can and should learn from our Calvinist friends. I am also very aware that when we use a term like "Calvinism" we tend to mentally group a very diverse group of "Calvinists" into our impression of what Calvinists believe. Since there is great variety and diversity among those who call themselves Calvinists, let's be careful with our tendency to paint all with the same brush.

The type of Calvinism that I understand Josh subscribed to seems to me to rely more on formula than relationship in our approach to God. Faith that is a formula rather

than a relationship is brittle and unbending. I propose that a better way to understand our approach to God is through relationship. Healthy relationships live and grow. Rigidity and brittleness are not words that we often associate with healthy growth and relationship. A faith that is brittle and rigid is susceptible to collapse when we learn things about God and our response to Him that we hadn't understood before. Someone once said, "The greater the island of knowledge, the greater the shoreline of wonder." Maybe we should paraphrase that to say, "As our relationship with God and knowledge of Him grows, the more we understand how much more there is for us to learn." May that growth and journey with God be one that anchors our faith rather than shakes its foundations. Whether it

does or not can help us understand where we place our security. Where genuine, relational, and living faith is active, it fosters both a deep security in Christ and generous humility towards others.

We also should take this opportunity to remind ourselves that the humans we look to for input and encouragement are imperfect. I will quote a brother who expressed it well, when he put some of his thoughts regarding the Josh Harris situation into words. However, since I haven't requested his permission to cite him, the quote will be anonymous. "Perhaps this situation can serve as a good reminder for us as Anabaptists (for me!) to get our marching orders from Christ and not be so easily impressed by the offerings from the plethora of glittering 'truth hawkers'."

-RJM 

LIFE, HOWEVER SHORT,
is made still shorter
BY A WASTE OF TIME.

The Potter and the Clay

Jeremiah 18:1-6

Daniel Lehigh, Hanover, PA

In a rugged village, high in the Hindu Kush Mountains of Afghanistan, lived a famous potter. The late Phillip Keller, author of the books, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23* and *A Shepherd Looks at the Good Shepherd and His Sheep*, told of his visit to this man's little shack. He told how he watched the potter going about his work. He examined the pieces of finished pottery on the hut's shelves. The pottery was exquisite, transparent, and shimmered in the light. The pieces were of the most varied shapes Phillip had ever seen. He said the pieces were equal to anything that could be seen in the most expensive china shop anywhere in the world. As Phillip watched the man working, the Lord brought to him some powerful lessons.

In Jeremiah 18, the Lord told the prophet to go down to the potter's house. Jeremiah obeyed, going down the winding, narrow streets in the lower city of Jerusalem, near the rich clay deposits in the Valley of Ben Hinnom. As Jeremiah entered the potter's house, he saw the potter working on his wheel. The King James Version records an interesting

historical note in verse 3 where it reads, "...he wrought a work on the wheels." There is no need to wonder if the potter was working on two wheels at the same time when we understand the construction of a potter's wheel in the time of Jeremiah. The potter's wheel in Jeremiah's day consisted of two parallel clay or stone wheels connected by a shaft. As the potter turned the lower wheel with his bare feet, the upper wheel revolved smoothly, allowing the potter to shape the lump of clay into a vessel that suited him.

As Jeremiah watched, he saw the potter place a lump of clay on the center of the wheel. As it revolved, he pressed his thumbs deep into the clay to open up the vessel. Then he drew the vessel into a bowl-like shape by applying upward pressure with his hands. As Jeremiah watched, the vessel began to wobble and crack. Quickly the potter pressed the flawed vessel back into a lump of clay. Then just as quickly, he began to shape another vessel from the marred lump.

The Bible contains many illustrations of potters and clay. The potter refers to God and the clay to His people. As

we seek to understand the potter's work, truths about our spiritual lives begin to emerge. In this lesson, we will look at six steps in the pottery-making process and draw lessons from each. There are lessons God can teach us today from even the ordinary, dirty clay. It is encouraging and exciting to realize that God can use the ordinary, simple things and people in His service. God is not particularly looking for clever or brilliant people, but for faithful people.

1. Gathering the clay

Before the potter can start, he needs to gather clay. Phillip told how the old potter in Afghanistan took him out behind his little shed to a riverbank. He lifted a trapdoor to reveal his clay bank. It was dirty, dark, and smelly. The old potter reached down with his long fingers and felt for the right clay with great care. He didn't take just any clay. He spent a great deal of time picking the exact clay that he wanted. He carefully lifted out the proper clay and placed it in his container. Phillip was amazed at the time it took and at the filth he had to sift through to find the clay.

This image reminds us of the horrible pit from which we were drawn. When the Master Potter came looking for us, He found us in the filth of our sins. We were lost, damned, and without hope. With

great love and infinite care, our Savior drew us up out of the filthy pit, set our feet on a rock, and established our going (Psalm 40:2). He had to exercise infinite love and patience with many of us as we resisted His Spirit's call to salvation. Aren't you glad His grace and mercy extended down into that pit and gave you salvation? Aren't you glad He didn't turn away from the dirty, sinful place where He found us? Aren't you glad His love constrained Him to provide for our salvation with infinite love and patience even while we were His enemies? Have you thanked Him lately for your salvation?

2. Cleaning the clay

With infinite care, the potter kneads and molds the clay. He searches out and removes any little twig, stone, or impurity. Sometimes this process is done with rods. The clay is placed on a table and beaten with the rod until it is smooth and all the impurities are removed.

This reminds us of our spiritual lives. After we are saved, God turns the great spotlight of His Holy Spirit on our lives and points out areas that need to be removed. The process can be painful but it is absolutely necessary. If the potter does not remove all the impurities and air pockets from the clay, it may explode when it is placed in the furnace. This will destroy the

vessel and may damage or destroy other vessels that are in the kiln with it.

Just so, if we are to be vessels that are useful in God's service, we must stay on the table until all the impurities are removed. We must be open and receptive to the Holy Spirit as He instructs us about areas we need to remove. Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me... If a man love me, he will keep my words... He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:21, 23-24).

Our natural inclination is to rush the cleansing process. We want to get off the table where we endure the painful probing process or the stinging rod. We strongly desire to resist God's chastening and go our own way. But we must not rush the Potter. We must submit to His will. Only as we surrender to God and allow Him to clean all the dross from our lives will we become vessels fit for the Master's use.

3. Shaping the clay

After the clay is thoroughly cleaned, it is ready to go on the wheel. The potter forms the clay into a lump and places it on the wheel. He begins to turn it. As the lump spins, he moistens his hands and shapes the clay. The moisture is very important. If it's too dry, it will pucker and resist. If it is too wet, it will refuse to assume the shape

the potter desires. Sometimes the clay is sticky and resists the potter's efforts. As he works the clay, he may smash it down and start over. He will do this until the vessel is formed to his liking. Sometimes the vessel will form correctly, but then as it nears completion it will collapse or wobble. Sometimes the potter will completely change directions and make a vessel quite different from what he started to make. He may take the broken piece of clay that collapsed and make an exquisite vessel from it. As the potter completes the vessel, he looks upon it with great joy. He can envision what it will be after the firing and finishing are done.

This process is rich in spiritual lessons. Sometimes we know what area the Potter is trying to change in our lives, but we resist Him. He is not able to make a vessel that is useful in His service because of our stubborn will. We need to allow His Spirit to work and shape our lives as He wants them. We need to develop a sensitivity to the Spirit's voice in our lives. We need to obey Him when He speaks to us.

Usually the problem isn't one of knowing what God wants. It is a problem of our wills. Sometimes in our stubbornness and arrogance, we continue to resist Him. How tragic that is, and what great harm it causes

to our spiritual lives.

Sometimes we allow God to shape us at first. We yield to Him, but then we resist Him, and God has to return us to the wheel. Our service for Him is marred and broken. But, like the potter, God can see what will be in our lives. God is a specialist in taking broken, ruined pots and making precious vessels out of them. The secret lies in our confession, repentance, and submission to Him. If you have been marred or broken, don't despair. Allow God, the loving Master Potter, to mend and mold you into a beautiful vessel for His service.

This picture is a powerful encouragement for those of us who have failed in some area of our lives. All of us are subject to failure. Sometimes we wonder if God can ever use us again in His service. But the God we serve specializes in mending broken pots. If we confess and forsake our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Climb back onto the wheel and yield to the Master Potter Who can make a beautiful vessel again, useful in His service.

After the vessel is shaped, the potter takes a fine thread, moistens it, and draws it across the bottom of the spinning vessel. The thread separates the vessel from the lump. The timing

of the separation is very important. The potter knows just when to draw the thread—not too soon or too late. The result is a vessel which is separated and on its own.

There are lessons we need to learn here. Sometimes we run ahead of God. We think we know His will, but we haven't checked it out with Him. Great harm is done to the cause of Christ because of our impatience. We need to learn to wait on the Lord.

Sometimes we have the opposite problem. We sit and sit, waiting for the Lord to send us into service. It is so important not to run ahead of God, but it is just as important to move when He calls—when you are asked to teach that class, or when you sense the Spirit asking you to speak to someone about Jesus. If you are having trouble discerning God's will for your life, pray for guidance, then begin to move in the direction He indicates. There are times when it is right to wait for God's leading. There are times when He says, "Wait." But when He clearly leads us to move, we must take up the task and begin moving. God wants us to move in His service so He can direct us to the path He chooses for us.

To be continued next month.

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Singing with the Spirit

Joshua Good, Halifax, VA

Someone has said that Christians make more false statements when they sing than at any other time. While this claim may seem presumptuous, it calls us to ponder the state of our worship. Isaiah bemoaned the spiritual condition of his day when he wrote, “Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me” (Isaiah 29:13). When reciting these words many years later, Jesus referred to insincerity in worship as hypocrisy.

I believe this error creeps into our congregational singing. Too often we pay little attention to the words we are singing, and perhaps even sing with hearts out of tune with their real meaning. In 1 Corinthians 14, the Apostle Paul makes it clear that all aspects of congregational worship must be both spiritual and understandable to be edifying. On the note of singing he writes, “I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Corinthians 14:15).

Here are two questions that should

concern us when it’s time to sing:

1. What does the song mean? This relates to my understanding of the text.

2. Is this what I mean? This reflects my spiritual desire.

Let’s consider several elements of spiritual singing.

Spiritual singing flows from a Spirit-filled life.

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:18, 19).

You’re a believer? Where’s your song? It’s noteworthy that singing is the first expression Paul lists of the Spirit’s work in our hearts. There’s an immediate connection between the two. No, not a faith that can move mountains or a dynamic speaking ability, but simply a heart that sings!

The rich indwelling of the word of Christ produces the same result: “Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). Those who are filled with the Spirit and Word of God have a different

perspective of life. They view life through the lens of the unmerited redemption they have experienced by God's amazing grace. With a grateful heart they see God's hand at work, orchestrating their lives and the lives of others. All this, and much more, causes them to overflow with a joyful song.

No, you may not have a bubbly personality, but joy is promised to every believer who walks by the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is alive and well in your heart, you will find much to sing about! God says, "My servants shall sing for joy of heart" (Isaiah 65:14). I believe that the "new song" (Psalm 40:1-3) joyfully flowing from the lips is authentic evidence of Holy Spirit power.

Spiritual singing requires purposeful preparation.

We are diligent when preparing for things that are important to us: that camping trip, the upcoming deer season, even a baby shower. But what about our worship and our singing? Does God honor singing that comes in a thoughtless, unprepared kind of way?

Exodus 19 tells how God called a meeting with His people. Because of His holiness, God gave them instructions for personal preparation. They were not allowed to show up at the meeting just as they were! The

ever increasing "come just as you are" attitude in many churches today flies in the face of our holy God. God is worthy of our best! Therefore, we must come to worship with a spirit of reverence and awe.

A heart in tune with God is at the core of spiritual singing. Jesus said that those whose lips and hearts were not unified in pure worship were hypocrites (Mark 7:6). Spiritual singing must be supported by the life of the singer.

In our corporate worship, we sing with people who know us. Our talk and our walk, our song and our lives must be consistent. How can an irreverent person sing songs of adoration to God? How can a rebellious person truly sing of commitment and submission? When we have behaved in a shameful way or have done shady business, how can we rightly sing songs of holy living?

This element of spiritual singing would be incomplete without considering the importance of physical preparation. To be wholly engaged in our times of worship, proper care for our bodies is essential. Sufficient rest and food will aid your tongue to sing God's praise. Remember, God is worthy of our very best. Purposeful preparation enables you to participate meaningfully.

Spiritual singing reflects God's

goodness and greatness.

The Christian’s song is different from the world’s song in many ways, but above all it points us to Jesus Christ. While the world’s song often centers around the “glamor” of sinful, selfish living, the Christian’s song rings with truth and beauty. Even though many of these songs are born out of difficult trials in life, they never leave us there. Instead, they always cause us to look up!

Spiritual singing recalls God’s mighty hand at work in the life of His people, and it should be our spontaneous response when we experience His power. There are numerous examples of this in the Bible. After being miraculously delivered from Pharaoh’s army at the Red Sea, the children of Israel sang, “I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation” (Exodus 15:1, 2).

Other examples include Hannah after God heard her desperate prayer

for a son, and Mary after Gabriel appeared with news that she would give birth to God’s Son. These songs were a response to God’s goodness and greatness displayed in their lives. Where is our song? Should we do any less?

I leave you with these thought-provoking words by J. Mark Stauffer in an article entitled “Developing Congregational Music”: “The most essential part of the music teacher’s work is to help people worship in singing. All the musical theory, beautiful voices, and lovely music in the world will not move our great eternal Father if the hearts of the participating worshipers are not back of their songs. Reverence for God’s house, spiritual preparation for singing, and sincere heart praise must be stressed. On this matter of real divine worship, our Mennonite congregational music will either rise or fall.”

[This is Part 1 of a two-part article. Look for Part 2 in the next issue of Calvary Messenger. From Life Lines, March/April 2019. Used by permission.]



HE WHO TRULY *Loves the Lord*
WILL LOVE HIS BROTHER.

South Asia Update

Aleta Miller, South Asia

Introduction:

I live in one of the most densely populated cities in South Asia. There is a small group of us here from the same sending organization and our desire is that the light of the Savior would shine through us and impact those around us as we live our daily lives. I teach English under an NGO, and my classes are in a variety of places and with a variety of people. Teaching English provides a great opportunity for conversation and is an open door in building relationships. I also volunteer at a place that works with vulnerable women. I do craft classes and spend time interacting with the children. The needs here are overwhelming, and the laborers are few. Who will come?

—Aleta Miller



“I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles” (Isaiah. 42:6).

As I stepped outside the superstore into the street, it felt almost like

Christmastime. The street was crowded with people rushing along, vendors selling their wares, people standing around visiting and eating, cars honking, bus boys calling out, and everywhere cheery lights brightening up the darkness. We hired a rickshaw and headed down a street entirely lit up with lights. There must have been a wedding taking

place on that street. Our driver was a bit confused on the directions, so we ended up getting an extra-long ride home, but we didn't mind. It was a lovely night to be out on the town. There is always so much to see! A girl staring out the bus window while another man sleeps. A young boy runs up to the bus driver and hands him a lighted cigarette as a well-dressed man takes a quick step to get out of the way of an oncoming motorbike. Four youth piled on a rickshaw seem to be having a jolly time while two other youth work hard to push/pull a cart full of tiles. Oops! The bus bumped into a rickshaw!



Shouting commences as a crowd gathers to see what is happening. In the shadows I see a young couple sitting with their heads close together and peering at a smart phone; just a few feet away an old lady with dirty clothes holds out her hands and asks for charity. I see a boy with a bundle of lighted balloons trying

to make a sale. I brace myself as we narrowly miss (inches!) hitting another rickshaw crossing in front of us.

In the summer it is cooler after dark, so the city really becomes alive. There are not many bright streetlights, just bright bulbs in the shops that line the streets. Not all of the vehicles have lights, so it makes the store lights seem even brighter.



I often think of the spiritual darkness that can feel so oppressive. The darkness doesn't make the lights any brighter, but it makes them more obvious. The book of Isaiah is one of my favorites; maybe because of the many references he makes to light. There are also many prophecies predicting the coming of the Light. What a privilege and responsibility we have to be carriers of that Light!

This past month I started meeting with a ten-year-old boy and helping him with his English studies. I also started another class consisting mostly of university students. Among

my classes there is quite a variety of ages, comprehension levels, and social statuses. I enjoy the variety, but it can be stretching at times.

Last weekend our team spent some time on the outskirts of the city in a quiet area for a few days. It was so refreshing to enjoy the beauty of nature! Getting to know each other in more informal activities was part of our time together. Pray that in our varied callings we could shine as lights in this city.

This next week we will be doing

some shifting around in our house. The people who own the furniture, etc., will be returning and dispersing of the things we don't want to keep. We will also be hosting a farewell for them since they don't have plans to stay.

Let us pray for each other that we can faithfully light the dark places with the Light of the Son!

[Reprinted from the July 2019 South Asia Update. Used with permission of Aleta Miller.]



A Woman After God's Heart

My Mother Used to Say

Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS



My mom passed away in May. Since then, I have tried to keep her voice inside my head, savoring its inflections, just remembering how she sounded. At home, we primarily talked the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect, in which I would have heard most of these proverbs. Here, in English, is a collection of Mom's well-worn phrases from my childhood laced with personal reflections from

my own mothering.

That will heal before the cat lays an egg.

We heard this when we came to her with the minor scrapes and bruises normal for active children. Many times what a child really wants is to know you care about the *owies*. When adults regularly make a big fuss over a scratch, a child may well learn to place inflated value on personal comfort. On the other hand, if you

don't acknowledge how they feel, they may give up checking to see if you care; then *you* will have an *owie* no band-aid can fix. Mom's words showed me she knew it hurt, and also assured me the pain will pass.

Lots of folks will travel through Chicago and won't see that.

This was Mom's stock response to our stressing over details. It requires a lot of wisdom to sort the trivial from the valuable. While it is important to do things correctly, there is not enough time to do everything precisely. Learning to pass over details that have no eternal value without compromise is quite a balancing act. I don't always get it right, but this homespun wisdom helps me lay to rest unrealistic goals about keeping things up to snuff.

You don't have to if you want to.

I never took to this one until I became a mother. The "Do I *haff* to?" mindset sprouts out of the fallen nature—the way of self. My mother saw this selfishness and called me to grow out of it by giving me work to do. I have found in my own mothering that appropriately assigned tasks sweeten the nature of a child. Mother, don't be discouraged when your child's unredeemed heart resists your instruction. Focus instead on the opportunity to bring order to your child's soul; if you teach

them to lay aside self in order to serve others, you give them a great gift.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

There should be a rhythm to our work and play, leisure and schedule. During the summer, we didn't sleep in. We joined Mom in the garden, well aware of the advantage of finishing before the blazing Kansas sun climbed high. She expected us to stay at our chores, more or less, through kitchen clean-up after lunch. Depending on the day's schedule, there followed a relaxed hour or two, which we could spend as we pleased: reading, art, outdoor exploration, or playing with kittens or dolls. And who can top the delight of the swimming hole in summer for the child who has worked hard in the garden or yard?

Do your children whine and fuss? Are they unable to play nicely for reasonable stretches either alone or together? Perhaps they have too much free time. When we give our children all play and no work, they find play has lost its luster and they complain of boredom. Take note of the child who is easily bored; help them recover the joy of play by age-appropriate work. Let's not rob our children of pleasure rightfully theirs in contributing to the household.

It seems to me that the rhythm

of work before play within the day increases the value of free time. I found our daughters stayed with me in the work much more willingly when they knew there was an end established. But beware, mother, if you never manage to get around to the play time! All work and no play breeds frustration and resentment.

Only two cookies.

This rule was one of several regarding meals. 1. Dessert was not an option if you didn't eat your vegetables. If we fussed, Dad posed a loaded, "Do you need some help?" by which he meant a trip to the utility room for a consultation or correction. This showed us Dad's respect for Mom's work in the kitchen and their solidarity. 2. We were allowed a mid-afternoon snack, but there was no snacking close to supper time.

I think it makes sense to help children moderate their appetites by these concepts. When cookies or junk foods are always available, how is a child to acquire a taste for vegetables? Is it sensible to expect them to dig into the hearty meal you made if you allowed a snack 30 minutes earlier? I think it is generally true that too much snacking depreciates the value of mealtime and trains children to whine.

The basis for the only two cookies rule was moderation. Moderation, I find, is easy to preach and hard to practice. Mother, are you modeling moderation in all things? Moderation extends to such things as working, closet contents, coffee consumption (ouch), and computer time. Let's lead the way for our children by willingly looking at our own habits. 

It may be difficult
TO WAIT ON THE LORD,
but it's worse
TO WISH YOU HAD.

The Surprise Dollars

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH

Sometimes I wonder, “How specific does God want me to be when I pray?” Do details bore God? In this true story, God gave me a clue, of how He feels about little stuff and about little people. He taught me a lesson with the **surprise dollars**.

My son, Kenneth, eagerly awaited his fifth birthday. It was all he could think about, even in his prayers. “And dear Jesus, please help Grandpas remember my birthday and about the five dollars, so I can buy an airplane or kite.” I grinned and flinched at the same time, breathing my own righteous prayer of “Oh Father, guard his young life from covetousness.”

Grandpas’ habitual gift of dollars hadn’t been that important to Kenneth on former birthdays, but now he’d set his heart on a few toys and saw birthday money as the means to an end!

Sure enough, Grandpas handed him his card and the coveted greenback. Kenneth thanked God and begged us for a trip to Walmart.

His birthday fell on a Sunday and the church mailbox held two envelopes for him. Happy surprise! Each card held dollars as well. Kenneth’s eyes grew wide with delight. This was his introduction to the world of money! He recognized the one bill to be the same as Daddy usually gave him for the Sunday School offering, so he suggested that one go to the offering, but the other could buy him an airplane!

That evening his prayer was along the line of, “And thank You, God, for all my birthday money!”

I recounted Kenneth’s prayer to the one sister who’d remembered him on his birthday. “So!” she mused, “that must be why I took out the one dollar that I put in first and traded it for a nice five that I had in my purse!”

Kenneth’s daddy took him to Walmart where he bought a kite with his growing stash of cash. There he laid eyes on a Styrofoam airplane that he thought would make him even happier. “But not tonight,” Daddy said, “one thing at a time.”

Daddy traveled to Virginia leaving his family at home. For a little compensation, I took the brood of six to Walmart. Kenneth wanted to show me the airplane that was waiting on him. We searched the toy department. He led me deeper into aisle after aisle until we came to Hardware, but without an airplane.

A tall gentleman clerk overheard our dilemma and offered his assistance. I told him that I really didn't know what we were looking for since it'd been a deal between my boy and his absent daddy. Mr. Clerk struck up a conversation with Kenneth, paying mind to the boyish cues. Grinning, he told me, "This is man to man talk."

We paraded (all eight of us) up and down the toy aisles searching for the kite/plane display. I was a bit embarrassed at spending this man's time searching for something I didn't know how to identify. I thanked the kind gentleman and assured him that we'd resolve the issue somehow, maybe once his daddy got home. We wandered away with a downcast Kenneth.

Seconds later we heard our tall friend call, "Hey, Kenneth! Is this it?"

Kenneth turned, saw the model plane in Mr. Clerk's hands, and ran to embrace the package. "Mom, here it is! This is what Daddy said I could

buy with my birthday dollars!" He danced with excitement.

The clerk and I exchanged pleased glances and it was easy to see he thought it'd been worth his time. We thanked him for his gracious persistence, and he turned to leave.

But then he stopped and turned toward me again. Fingering bills in his wallet he queried, "Do you mind, Ma'am, if I give Kenneth his airplane for his birthday?"

Speechless, I stammered an "Uh, well, sure, if you really want to." He handed bills to Kenneth.

Kenneth exclaimed to me, "Look, Mom! Two one dollars!!"

Mr. Clerk said, "Happy birthday, Kenneth! And stop by to say hi whenever you come around!"

We thanked him as best we could and tripped out of Walmart as if we'd been there by exclusive invitation.

That evening we thanked God yet again for ALL the birthday money, His creative ways of answering prayer, and for His obvious interest in delighting us.

The next day Kenneth's friend, Jason, came for the day. Explaining about the exciting new kite and plane, we told Jason about the prayers and the birthday money.

Jason, ever the budding businessman with a growing saleable bunny population, already knew

a bit about five-dollar deals. He told his mom that if praying for money worked for Kenneth it could surely work for him too. She cautioned him to pray and ask for what God wants above his own desires. And so for several days Jason kept reminding God that if He would so please, he could use a little cash.

Once again at Walmart where God had met a little boy before, Jason and

his mom were walking along. Jason glanced down at the floor and spied real money! “Mom, guess what?!” He announced excitedly. “God gave me a five-dollar bill!!”

Does God care about building faith into the lives of little men and their doubtful mothers? Today I hold a dollar bill and worship the One Who taught us the lesson with the **surprise dollars**. 

youth messages

Protect the Garden!

Ray Yoder, Bastrop, TX

Long ago when the earth was young, and everything was new, fresh, and bursting with life, God created a special place and called it the garden. It was an especially beautiful location that was landscaped with many beautiful plants, flowers, and everything that was needed to sustain life. The air was invigorating and the environment perfect! There were nut and fruit trees and many interesting things to sample and taste. God placed two unique trees in the center of the garden. There were many unique

and interesting creatures everywhere. There was song, mirth, and life!

Into the garden God brought a man that He had created and named Adam, strong and full of life. He gave him a tour of the garden and said, “This is your home. I am giving you the responsibility of keeping a watch over this garden. Keep it trimmed and beautiful. Guard it well! There is one tree in the center of the garden I am asking you to guard, to keep anyone from eating the fruit of it, because it will bring death into this garden. You are the protector of this garden!” And

then, God created an assistant for the man that was graceful, beautiful, and charming to help him tend the garden. And everything was right, good, and perfect!

Be very careful, Adam! The enemy is lurking around the corner! He has been watching this garden and may come in any form or guise, including taking on the form of one of God's created beings. Be watchful and protect the garden!

There are many young men seeking for a woman's hand in marriage and a father willing to give his daughter's hand in marriage. To those who are successful, listen carefully!

Young man, as you enter marriage, you are being given a piece of the garden by God. It is a beautiful place, full of the gifts of God. To you is given the responsibility of keeping a watch over this garden. The day you are married you are receiving an assistant from God to help you in keeping the garden a beautiful place. There are many beautiful, wonderful, and interesting things in this garden that will bring pleasure to you and your assistant. There is also a "tree" called the "knowledge of evil" that you are called to keep your family from partaking. Today you have a

song in your heart! At the moment, everything may seem perfect.

Be very careful, young man!

Lucifer is lurking around the corner and eyeing this piece of the garden with his own design of how he might get a foothold. He will try to send in his little serpents of pride, selfishness, and self-will which may seem harmless but can do much damage. If that doesn't work, he will send in other creatures of a varied sort to bring death into the garden.

Young man, to you has been given the responsibility of protecting the garden. Be alert. Identify what is coming into the garden. You have been given authority over the garden; use it. Rebuke the advances of the enemy into the garden but respond with gentleness and tenderness to the occupants of the garden. Jesus Christ has given you a pattern to follow! You can succeed where Adam failed!

Young man, guard and protect the garden!

And let there be a song in the garden; "O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together!"

(This message came by the Spirit of God in the wee hours of the morning in preparation for a wedding message.) 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

The strength that comes from confidence
can be quickly lost to conceit.

• • • • •

One reason for doing the right things today is tomorrow.

• • • • •

Great trials are often necessary to prepare us for great responsibilities.

• • • • •

It is impossible to drive in the wrong direction
and arrive at the right destination.

• • • • •

A smile is the whisper of a laugh.

• • • • •

The glory is not in never falling but in rising every time you fall.

• • • • •

It is better to shun the bait than to struggle on the hook.

• • • • •

A bright eye indicates curiosity—a black eye, too much.

• • • • •

One of the worst things about retirement is that
you have to drink coffee on your own time.

• • • • •

It takes a wise person to know what not to say—and then not to say it.