



# Calvary MESSENGER

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

*Galatians 6:14*

APRIL 2020

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## Calvary Messenger

April 2020

**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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## Contentment

Father, I know that all my life  
Is portioned out for me;  
The changes that are sure to come  
I do not fear to see:  
I ask Thee for a present mind,  
Intent on pleasing Thee.

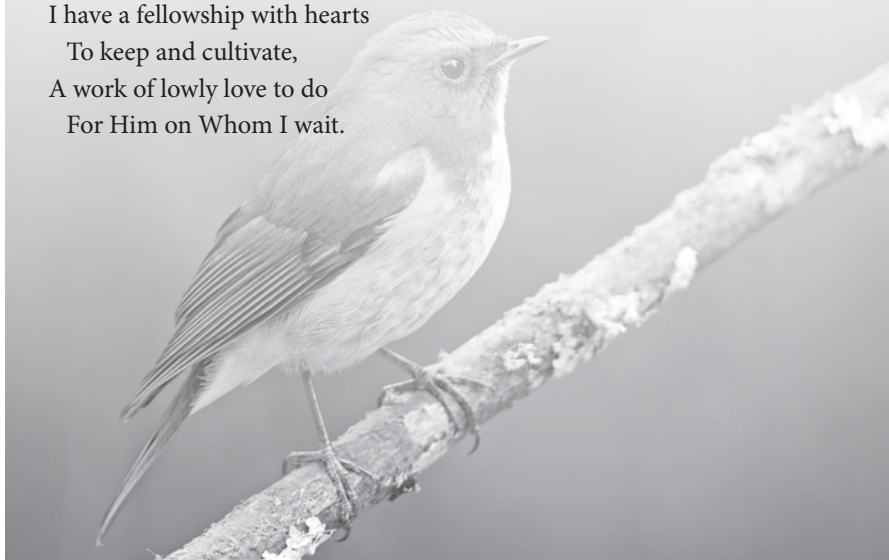
I would not have the restless will  
That hurries to and fro,  
And seeking some great thing to do,  
Or secret thing to know.  
I would be treated as a child,  
And guided where I go.

Wherever in this world I am,  
In whatsoever estate,  
I have a fellowship with hearts  
To keep and cultivate,  
A work of lowly love to do  
For Him on Whom I wait.

I ask Thee for the daily strength—  
To none that ask denied—  
A mind to blend with outward life,  
While keeping at Thy side;  
Content to fill a little space,  
If Thou be glorified.

In service which Thy will appoints  
There are no bonds for me;  
My inmost heart is taught the truth  
That makes Thy children free,  
A life of self-renouncing love  
Is one of liberty.

—Anna L. Waring  
[Public Domain]





## God and My Two Bits

Our family was traveling along a two-lane highway on our way to a wedding in VA. The string of traffic ahead of us was traveling at a slower speed as we drove through a farming community. All of a sudden, from the edge of the roadway, a six-inch rock rolled out into our path from the car ahead of us. There was nowhere to turn as traffic was oncoming at the time. With a bump and a thud, we hit the rock, which immediately resulted in a flat tire. We limped along for several hundred feet until we could pull off. The rim was ruined from the blow. After changing the tire with the temporary spare, we limped on for several more hours. Finally, we pulled into our hosts' driveway, grateful for God's protection.

When we arrived back at our hosts' place after the wedding the next day, there was a used wheel and tire that matched those on our vehicle. Our diligent host had found the last one at a used-parts yard and purchased it for us to buy. What a blessing and miracle to be able to drive home on a regular wheel and tire!

In my humanness it would seem that God could have saved Himself a lot of hassle (or was it my hassle) if He had given that rock a spin off the roadway instead of into the roadway. It would have been just as easy for God, wouldn't it? Or doesn't God notice those things in our pathways? He sees each sparrow fall, doesn't He?

Let's think about the time when Jesus and His disciples were in the temple observing people dropping their coins into the treasury. "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (Mark 12:41-44). How could the two mites that the poor

widow cast in be more than all that the rich had cast in? How does God make money work in His kingdom? Could God indeed stretch those two mites into an amount worthy of the widow's sacrifice?

Didn't Jesus take a young lad's meal of fish and bread and multiply it with His blessing to feed thousands of people? "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many" (John 6:9)? According to the Gospel of John the multitude of 5,000 men was given as much as they would eat. Afterward, the disciples gathered 12 baskets of leftovers, "which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."

This treatise is not an attempt to say how much we should or should not give. I would like to think about the ways that God is able to take care of His people and make their two mites reach across possible expenses that would burden a significant salary. I am not suggesting that a person of faith should expect to live in luxury and be without wants. Did not the widow of Zarephath believe Elijah when he promised that his God would care for her until rain would fall upon the earth? I tend to believe that she literally scraped the bottom of the barrel every time she reached for more meal and her cruse of oil

was tipped empty for each new cake. I Kings 17:15 says that "she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days." While we may think her faith was tested each time she scraped the barrel, it is probably truer that her faith in Elijah's God was strengthened as she trusted Him for each handful of meal.

Did not God care for His children in the wilderness, bringing them daily manna except on the Sabbath? He made their shoes and their clothes last and last. "And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot" (Deuteronomy 29:5).

Do God's children never need new clothes or never run out of groceries? No, that is not true. Neither should we be slothful providers and twist God's arm for clothes and food. But there are many, if not most, of God's children living in difficult situations across this world who reach out to God in desperate faith as they seek to provide for their families. Do we trust in our jobs and our abilities to provide for our families without realizing that it is God who blesses us with both? Faith is not needed when there is no lack. Somehow, subsistence living brings a greater awareness of "sí Dios quiere" spanish

for “if God wills.”

But to bring this closer home to us, I believe when the purpose of our lives is primarily to honor our Creator and serve our fellow man to the extent that we live in areas of our country or the globe where wages are less than lucrative, God will bless. Our work of ministry may keep us from earning a full salary, and we may scratch the bottom of the barrel. But God has ways to stretch our two mites when we call out to Him in faith and trust, by keeping our shoes from wearing out, or extending the life of the vehicle we drive, or keeping the roof over our heads from blowing off in that storm that passed through. Does He always do that? No. Sometimes He blesses us with a generous host who finds a good wheel and tire for us to purchase so we can safely drive home. We were both blessed. Sometimes He finds a generous heart that hears His nudging to give a generous gift to a servant of His who is facing difficult times. And for most of us, He has given us jobs that we can provide well for our households as well as cast plenty into the treasury at the temple.

There are likely some of you who have spent a significant part of this past decade of financial abundance on some field of service to our King.

You realize that if you had stayed at home and worked for wages you could have various options of added wealth in your bank account or accumulation of earthly goods. Recently, I talked with a friend from my youth who chose to work in ministry for the past 35+ years, knowing full well that he will never own a farm or two. How do these people prepare for retirement? Who will pay for their medical and funeral expenses? Are they irresponsible by not preparing for their future? It is very likely that they have learned to trust their faithful Provider through privations. God has shown them that the blessings of service have much greater returns than the 401K that is at the mercy of financial upheavals. May the two bits they have be multiplied by God’s blessing! May the churches and communities of career missionaries who come to their home communities in their golden years reach into the more than twelve baskets of fragments that God has given us and care for them.

Privations, in the way of providence, are the forerunners of mercy and goodness abundant.  
—Adam Clark

“The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22).

—AY 

## Announcement

### Youth Editor Announcement

We are pleased to announce that Josh Kooistra has accepted the role of Youth Messages Editor. Read his article for an introduction to his life. Please pray for him as he explores the challenges youth face in today's world.

—AY 

## the bottom line

# Connecting Prophecy to History

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Much of the Bible is history and is appreciated and believed as given. All history was known by God from before the beginning of the world, as James said in Acts 15:18, *“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.”* David said, *“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them”* (Psalm 139:16). There are multiple references to the fact that God knew the people and their variable happenings all over the world that would shape history and is the basis for prophecy.

Based upon that great incalculable knowledge of God is clearly and unmistakably what we simply call the

omniscience of God. Omniscience is one of the powerful qualifications that establishes without fail that God knows all things and had known them before the world was created. We can understand that great fact only in part. We must admit that when it comes to knowing God, we must accept that the part that is not known is larger, much larger, than what is known. That does not frustrate us or diminish our faith. Actually, it increases our faith all the more, to the full acknowledgment that all of biblical prophecy can also be fully relied upon and anticipated with total confidence.

That faith and confidence is the basis for the believer's rest. When anyone insists on relying on understanding first of all, that rest from God cannot be full and complete.

Prophecy that is fulfilled becomes history. It is said that 28% of the Bible was prophecy at the time it was written. That is a fairly large percentage, easily large enough to be tried and tested. As we relate the history to that which was earlier given as prophecy, we are instructed by illustration as to how we should view those biblical prophecies that are not yet fulfilled.

So, what connect does prophecy have to history? God said to Isaiah the prophet, speaking prophetically of Israel, that Israel, not the church, was cast off as “*a woman forsaken*,” and refused as “*a wife of youth*” (Isaiah 54:6), who also was disregarded for “*the reproach of thy widowhood*” (verse 4). Then in verses 8 and 9, God says, “*In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.*” (emphasis added). This simply is saying that the “*covenant of peace*” (verse 10) with Israel is as firm as was His covenant with Noah and the whole world, that God will never, ever cover the whole earth again with a universal flood. The prophecy to Noah, was actually a promise, and was firm as a non-negotiable point in history, and is now a non-negotiable point in prophecy with Israel.

In II Peter 2, reference is made to

the surety of the future judgment of God. Peter references the angels who had sinned (v. 4), who were cast down to hell. He cites Noah as a preacher of truth when God brought on the universal flood in a sure and eventual world-wide judgment. The greatest feature was how God secured Noah and his family before the waters gushed forth (v. 5). God points to Sodom and Gomorrah in a total, city-wide destruction by fire and brimstone (sulphur, which burns very hotly). The striking feature again was the prior rescue of Lot and his family (verses 6-8). He then assures us that in the future, God knows “*how to deliver the godly*,” and “*to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished*” (verse 9). II Peter 3 also makes some apt illustrations of future prophecy from the cataclysmic flood of Noah’s day. These are but a few cases where history was used to assure us of the certainty of prophecy.

Jesus frequently used the Old Testament happenings as an illustration.

1. *Israel’s current rejection will be worse than Sodom and Gomorrah’s judgment. (Matthew 10:14,15)*
2. *Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum will be worse off than Tyre and Sidon. (Matthew 11:20-24)*
3. *The current generation will be judged more severely than Nineveh. (Matthew 12:38-41)*
4. *The queen of the south will fare better in judgment than this generation.*



- (Matthew 11:42)
5. Jesus references Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as proof of His future resurrection. (Matthew 22:29-33)
  6. Jerusalem will suffer in conjunction with the blood shed from Abel to Zacharias. (Matthew 23:29-36)
  7. The suddenness of future judgment is likened to the several experiences of Noah. (Matthew 24:36:44)
  8. Jesus affirms the prophecy of Daniel, which is yet to be, as being valid and assured His audience that it would be the worst since creation. (Mark 13:14-19)
  9. Zacharias refers to David's prophecy and to the oath God swore to Abraham. (Luke 1:67-79)
  10. Several prophecies were given to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. (Luke 9:28-31)
  11. Jesus refers to the rich man in hell, and to the words of condemnation from Abraham, as proof of eternal consequence for those who are unfaithful in their stewardship, as in (Luke 16:1-15. Luke 16:19-31)
  12. Jesus called on them to remember Lot's wife as an example in future judgment. (Luke 17:32-37)
  13. David is quoted in the Psalms which is used to prophecy Jesus's resurrection. (Luke 20:41-44)
  14. The words from Isaiah 61:1-3 were spoken of Christ, and extended to Acts 1:1 and beyond. (Luke 4:16-21)
  15. Those words extended for immediate fulfillment and on through the church age. (Acts 2:14-21)

16. Jesus told Nicodemus that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must Jesus be lifted up. (John 3:14-16)

These passages can easily be referenced from the Bible while there could be additional scriptural references such as Acts 3:18-26 where Peter refers to Moses, Samuel, "and all the prophets." Quite a few in Stephen's sermon refer to the on-going fulfillment at that time, plus a continuing fulfillment today.

We are impressed with how much documentation there is to substantiate the wealth of past history that was originally given as prophecy. It provides a connection to history and serves as a guide to prophecies yet to be fulfilled.

**The Bottom Line** is that the field of biblical prophecy has become a vast fallow ground that has been largely left lying for a long time. It is dormant but not dead. If we will set in the plow to this field, we could see and experience a renewed revival in godliness and holiness among ourselves and a more urgent witness to the world. We have many people who sense that there is something lacking among us, despite our spiritual growth and numerical increase. We could experience some awakening by making a serious connection of prophecy to history in our meditations, studies, and preaching.



# Affirming Adventures with God

*Elmer Gingerich, Mountain View, AR*

David was a man of God, but he did not become that suddenly or without incidents that “trained” him. In his young shepherding life, a bear and at another time, a lion came and attacked his sheep. David later credits God with helping him kill both in his critical time of need. This memory of past experiences with God gave him reason to have confidence to face Goliath with God’s help.

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope” (Romans 5:3-4). What role does experience with God play in the life of a Christian today? How do memories of God’s help in the past affect our ability to respond to today’s experiences? Does everyone have experiences with God as they grow up? Does it matter whether or not we remember them?

A number of experiences come to my mind as “God experiences” in my past. One of the earliest was a preschool experience where my mother was reading a story just before supper time. In the story

Jesus returned and took a number of family members along to heaven because they were ready, but there was a member who was not ready and stayed behind. That night I could hardly eat supper as I pondered what might happen to our family if Jesus returned. I always thought of that as not just a childhood emotional experience, but as a “God experience.”

When we moved to Arkansas, our bank account was very limited. We moved in the confidence that I would be able to find a job, and we could pay for the 40-acre place we were buying. Without any initiative on my part, a brother from the church offered that a few of them would lend me the money to make the purchase, and I could pay them back as I was able. It was only later that I realized what a huge “God-send” that was.

When we decided to start the body shop business, I did so with some values that I felt God was teaching me. These values had resulted from teachings I had heard and some reading I had done, and I sincerely wanted to implement them in my life. One of those values was to not unduly pursue money but to pursue

serving, giving, and honoring the Lord. I therefore set it up that the shop would be the Lord's business and determined that I would only pay myself hourly wages. Whatever income the shop made beyond paying my and any other employees' hourly wages would be the Lord's money. I also avoided insuring the Lord's shop and business. I had for some time already avoided insuring my own things as a "trust-in-God" exercise.

A happening that felt very much like a "God experience" happened during this time. I bought a vehicle to repair in order to sell it later, because I often had requests from people for vehicles they wished to purchase. I did not have a buyer yet for this one, but it was the kind that would easily sell. One day, during the time it sat in the yard waiting to be repaired, it caught fire and burned beyond repair. I fought desperately to stop the fire, and even the local fire department was not able to extinguish it. It was completely ruined.

I will never forget this venture to please God because of several things that happened for me as a result. I found that considering this God's business and sealing it with the commitment that all profit was God's, after parts and labor were paid, to be very freeing. There was

no temptation to make extra money on some vehicles, because the extra would not go to me anyway. I also did not find it devastating when I lost some money on a few jobs. I had asked God to help me make honest estimates that included some reasonable profit. A few times there were unanticipated expenses that my estimate had not covered. And when the van burned I had the strange sense that it was God's van, and much as I tried to stop the fire, He was letting it burn!

I had not told other people about my adventure with God in the business. It was just a fact known by God and my family. To this day I have no idea how the next part of the adventure started, but gradually, over a month's time, I received money in the mail designated for the loss of the van that burned. I kept track of amounts, and the last check that I received I sent back because the entire amount had already been covered. The whole experience seemed to be a strong confirmation that God had taken me seriously.

I think there are two kinds of "God experiences" in our lives: the ones we initiate by making some serious "death-to-self" agreement with Him, and the ones that He initiates that we can't avoid because He sends "bears and lions" into our lives. Notice that

in Romans 5:4 it says, “And patience, experience; and experience, hope.” The word “experience” is used in the singular sense. We use the word in two ways. We have a happening, and we call it an “experience.” Other times we have a series of happenings that are similar, and we say, “Now we have experience in this area.” It occurred to me that it is in the second sense that the word is to be understood in this context. God likes to not only have Christians but especially Christians with “experience.” He therefore wishes to introduce experiences into our lives. On the other hand, we may be led to invite “experience”

into our lives by disciplined choices we make. Both of these experiences can be excellent training grounds for “experience” with God.

And so, I assume it is valid, maybe even important, that a Christian has these kinds of affirmations from God in his life! Do Christians have them and forget? Could David have forgotten his bear and lion experiences? How empowering it can be to remember some previous “God experiences” in our lives! They draw our hearts to rest in Him again now. Without these “God experiences,” the Christian life can soon become drab.



## The Gardener and the Rose

*John Petersheim, Narvon, PA*

*“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil for Thou art with me...”*

Death is a mysterious thing. Funerals and graveyards aren’t known to conjure up anyone’s fondest memories, and the uninvited thoughts of possibly losing a loved one will almost always bring a quickening sense of pain. This is especially true for those who are familiarly acquainted with funerals and graveyards since they have

already buried some of their own there. We struggle to understand why our Heavenly Father allows us to love, and to love so deeply, only to one day permanently sever us from those whom we cherish. It all seems so unfair and even indiscriminate on God’s behalf. And then there are the children; why would God give us these precious children to love

and to nurture, only to snatch them away again long before their time allotment of threescore years and ten.

There are of course the rare occasions when God momentarily draws back the curtain and allows some to peek fleetingly into the windows of heaven. These occasions are rare indeed, and they generally only come to those whose grief is fresh and to those whose hearts are soft and tender. It may be a vision of a small child resting in God's bosom, surrounded by eternal peace and happiness; sometimes a glimpse of pure and innocent children sitting in rapt attention in the presence of Jesus. And while these small glimpses into heaven have brought a sense of peace to many, they will most likely always remain fleeting, intangible, and frustratingly irretrievable. Many times, when I find myself pondering the death of young children, I'm drawn to a story that is somewhat etched into the recesses of my mind. Although it's true that stories can never alleviate the immediate pain of losing a loved one, they are, however, powerful in their own right and oftentimes can help us make better sense of life and death.

To the best of my recollection the story was told of two grieving parents who were standing by the graveside of their young child who was being

buried that day. Grief-stricken and numb, they watched silently through their tears as fresh earth was being placed into the grave. From across the graveside they could hear the muffled voice of the officiating minister who was doing his best to find the right words and to bring any amount of consolation to the weeping and broken-hearted parents.

As the minister spoke that day, groping for words, he suddenly began to tell of something.

He spoke of a man who lived many years ago. This man's occupation was that of a gardener, one who toiled each day working in a beautiful garden filled with trees and flowers of every kind imaginable. The gardener took great pride in his work knowing that his master trusted him completely in keeping the garden for him. Early one day as he was making his first rounds through the garden, he came to where a beautiful young rose was blooming. This young flower had only begun to bloom and was now basking happily in the brilliant rays of the early morning sun. Struck by the magnificence of the young rose, the gardener paused for a long while, gazing in awe at the unspoiled splendor of this new flower in the very first stages of its life.

"What magnificence, what splendor, what unblemished



beauty!” he mused. The brilliant colors, the exquisite contours, and all of these now joined together in its most vibrant proclamation to the onlooking world. The young flower stretched towards the heavens and spoke majestically to the gardener that morning of its Creator, for certainly nothing with such intricate detail could ever come along by chance. It spoke of promise. After all, isn’t youth endowed with the assurance of longevity, a long and vigorous life to be lived?

It occurred to the gardener then too that it even carried a message of redemption. Courageously it proclaimed that if thorny brambles can bring forth such glory and perfection, then surely its heavenly Father can also bring forth glory and perfection through Calvary’s wretched and gnarled tree. This young flower was God’s reminder to a broken and sin-weary world that all is not lost. Defiantly it replaced mankind’s message of a hopeless and lost estate with its heavenly Father’s message of a crimson, blood-spilled grace and a new-born life. Still deeply immersed in thought, the gardener eventually moved on to spend his day toiling in the garden.

Many hours later when dusk was falling, the gardener, having completed his labors for the day, was

making his journey back through the garden. As he walked along he came near the place where the beautiful young rose was blooming. Fondly, and wanting to enjoy its beauty and the warm memories of the early morning hours again, he invariably turned aside. And yet when he looked for it where it should have been, to his astonishment it was gone! “Who did this?” he demanded! “Who has taken it away? Who took this young flower in its first day of blooming? This flower was meant to be enjoyed by everyone for its entire lifetime. Who took it away?” And as the gardener stood there making his angry demands he was joined by another who also worked in the master’s garden. Placing his hand upon the gardener’s shoulder he began to explain.


“You see,” he said, “unbeknownst to you, the master came by today. He came to visit and to walk through his garden. And when he saw the young flower, he too was struck by its beauty. In fact, he was so taken by its beauty that he paused for a long while to admire it, just as you also did this morning. The master then reached down and gently took the smiling young flower with him. He said he had need of it.”

And when the gardener heard and understood that it was the master

who had taken the beautiful young flower, because he had need of it, then the gardener held his peace and said no more.

For after all, the gardener now remembered, he was only tending the garden for his master.

Yet losing a loved one, and especially a child, is a pain that may never be fully reconciled within our limited and earthly minds. Eternity, then, must be the perspective by which we consider the whole of God's plan. Perhaps God in His sovereign wisdom carries young children away from their families and into the heavens knowing full well that the hearts and the footsteps of the bereaved will follow their little ones there. I suppose it must be next to impossible to have a child in heaven, and not be constantly thinking and longing heavenward.

There is no doubt then that God is calling many hearts and minds toward heaven through the deaths of young children. First, although God uses numerous methods when calling hearts to Himself, there is hardly a more drastic measure known than to remove a child from the arms and the bosom of his mother. Earth may know of no greater pain. Then secondly, drastic measures by God should always be associated with drastic messages from God. Is it possible that by using a measure as drastic as this that God is hereby using unmistakable language in reminding us of the enormous importance in maintaining heavenly thoughts in proportion to our earthly thoughts and then reminding us too of the urgent necessity in making our own preparations for eternity? 

## marriages

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

### Anderson-Martin

Bro. Kenneth, son of Steve and Violet Anderson, Rochelle, VA, and Sis. Estalee, daughter of Emerson (Mike) and Evelyn Martin, Hayward, WI, on February 15, 2020, at United Bethel Mennonite

Church, Plain City, OH, for Bethesda Fellowship by Elmer Stoltzfus.

### Kauffman-Herr

Bro. Isaiah, son of Timothy and Ruth Kauffman, Reedsville, PA, and Sis. Sierra, daughter of Merle and Amy Herr, Guys Mills, PA, on September 28, 2019, at Plainview Gospel Fellowship for Meadville Mennonite Church by Melvin Lehman.

### Miller-Yoder

Bro. Alvin, son of Sam and Marjorie Miller, Yoder, KS, and Sis. Joanne, daughter of John and Janice Yoder, Hutchinson, KS, on January 18, 2020, at Arlington Mennonite Church by Arlen Mast.

### Miller-Yoder

Bro. Brandon, son of Sam and Marjorie Miller, Yoder, KS, and Sis. Cheyanne, daughter of Virgil and Sherilyn Yoder, Yoder, KS, on November 9, 2019, at Journey At Yoder for Arlington Mennonite Church by Arlen Mast.

### Miller-Zook

Bro. Anthony Miller, son of John Andrew and Irene Miller, Malta, OH, and Sis. Teneika Zook, daughter of Galen and Karen Zook, Georgetown, OH, on February 21, 2020, at Sardinia Church of Christ for Still Waters Mennonite Church of Georgetown by Marcus Yoder.

### Troyer-Brubaker

Bro. Christian, son of Philip and Effie Troyer, Millersburg, OH, and Sis. Jennica, daughter of Kenneth and Karen Brubaker, Landisburg, PA, on February 15, 2020, at the Perry Community Church by David Brubaker.

### Yoder-Headings

Bro. Doug, son of Freeman and the late Retha Yoder, Arlington, KS, and Sis. Tammy Headings, daughter of Weldon and Anna Headings, Yoder, KS, on November 30, 2019, at Plainview Church for Arlington Mennonite Church by Arlen Mast.



## cradle roll

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

**Beiler**, Larry and Karla (Mullet), Gap, PA, first daughter, third child, Hailey Joelle, February 19, 2020.

**Coblentz**, Jeremy and Carolyn (Lambright), Cochran, PA, fourth child and daughter, Melanie Wynette, December 7, 2019.

**Esh**, Javan and Nora (Mobley), Free Union, VA, second child and daughter, Sienna Maeve, January 7, 2020.

**Fisher**, Laverne and Grace (Miller), Woodstown, NJ, first child and son, Emerson Lee, December 21, 2019.

**Gingerich**, Joshua and Jonessa (Miller), McConnelsville, OH, second child, first son, Elliot James, January 28, 2020.

**Hege**, Jeremy and Veronica (Bontrager), Stanardsville, VA, second child and daughter, Ellana Beth, January 9, 2020.

**Hershberger**, Randy and Diane (Miller), Winchester, OH, second child and daughter, Giana Faith, February 11, 2020.

**Hochstetler**, Luke and Martha (Lehman), Goshen, IN, second child, first daughter, Harper Amari, January 28, 2020.

**Jara**, Jeremias and Rosanna (Otto), Crossville, TN, second child and daughter, Amelia Grace, February 6, 2020.

**Marten**, Jesse and Lydia (Troyer), Pulaski, TN, fourth child, third son, Trevor Melvin, January 23, 2020.

**Miller**, Christopher and Julia (Byler), McConnelsville, OH, second child and daughter, Zoey Cecilia, February 2, 2020.

**Schrock**, Lyndon and Gina (Mast), Montezuma, GA, third child, second son, Declan Zane, January 17, 2020.

**Stoltzfus**, Brian and Sarah (King), Perry, NY, first child and daughter, Kate Avery, February 24, 2020.


**Swarey**, John Mark and Maria Ann (Miller), Centreville, MI, second child and son, Logan Archer, September 30, 2019.

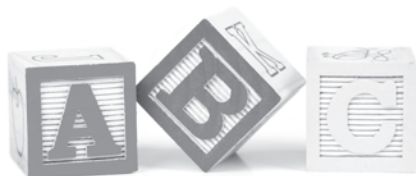
**Wengerd**, Melvin and Lisa (Jess), Bristol, IN, second child, first daughter, MaKenzie Grace, December 19, 2019.

**Yoder**, Andrew and Judith (Swartzentruber), Montezuma, GA, sixth child, third son, Lawson Blake, November 19, 2019.

**Yoder**, Mervin and Janelle (Beachy), Salisbury, PA, eighth child, fourth son, Cole Ethan, February 20, 2020.

**Yoder**, Ryan and Summer (Mobley), Stanardsville VA, first child and daughter, Willow Cadence, December 16, 2019.

**Zook**, Jason and Marla (Knicely), Mifflin, PA, first child and son, Michael Landon, February 1, 2020. 



## obituaries

**Graber**, Joanna, 79, died peacefully while surrounded by family following a brief illness on January 26, 2020, at Parkview LaGrange Hospital.

She was born April 10, 1940, in Goshen, to John and Katie (Miller) Troyer.

On October 25, 1962, she married her loving husband, Daniel Graber. He survives, along with their children: Beth (Doug) Snow, Southaven, MS; Cristina and Kathryn Graber, both of Sarasota, FL; Iva (Tim) Graber, Sturgis, MI; David (Shari) Graber, White Pigeon, MI; and

Steve (Anita) Graber, Amelia, VA; 18 grandchildren; a sister, Edna Mae Frye, Goshen; and many beloved lifelong friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son, Paul Graber; sister, Alice Troyer; and two brothers, Edward and Raymond Troyer.

She was a homemaker, an Amish taxi driver, and a member of Fairhaven Mennonite Church. Funeral services were held on February 1, 2020, at Fairhaven Mennonite Church, Goshen, with the Fairhaven ministry team and Pastor Ray Stutzman serving. Burial was at the Thomas Cemetery, Goshen.

**Kurtz, Mary L.**, 86, of Belleville, PA, passed away January 26, 2020, at Geisinger-Lewistown Hospital. Born February 23, 1933, in Lewistown, she was a daughter of the late Samuel C. and Arie E. (Byler) Yoder. On November 25, 1954, she married John T. Kurtz. John preceded her in death on August 31, 1994.

Surviving are her children: Lois Kurtz, of Belleville; Sara (Junior) Beachy, Winfield; Ruth (David) Peachey, Reedsville; Irene (Melvin Paul) Yoder, Montezuma, GA; David (Ruthie) Kurtz, Belleville; and John Arlan (Linda), Belleville; 17 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren; three sisters: Anna Hostetler, Belleville; Beulah (John) Kauffman, Reedsville; and Frances (Leon) Kanagy, Chambersburg; four brothers: David W. (Sara) Yoder, McVeytown; Marlin "Mo" (Karen) Yoder, Buhler, KS; Raymond (Nancy) Yoder, Reedsville; and John M. (Joyce) Yoder, Buhler, KS; and a brother-in-law, Ben Yoder, Elizabethtown. Mary is also survived by many nieces and nephews

who were very special to her.

She was preceded in death by a stillborn daughter, Mary Ellen, three sisters: Esther (Simon) Peachey, Elsie (Ben) Yoder, and Arlene (David) Spicher; a brother, Samuel L. "Sonny" Yoder, and his wife, Ruth Yoder.

Mary was a member of Pleasant View Amish Mennonite Church in Belleville. She enjoyed cooking, canning, and spending time with her family and friends. In her last days, she also enjoyed coloring.

Her funeral service was held on January 29, 2020, at Pleasant View Amish Mennonite Church with ministers DJ Peachey, Loren Yoder, Daryl Peachey, and David Byler officiating. Burial was at Locust Grove Cemetery, Belleville.

**Miller, Ada E.**, 77, Shipshewana, went to be with the Lord while surrounded by her family on January 26, 2020, at her residence.

She was born July 23, 1942, in LaGrange, IN, to Ezra and Anna (Bontrager) Yoder.

She married Nelson Miller on October 22, 1959, in Shipshewana. He predeceased her on December 24, 2012.

Surviving are five daughters: Dorothy (Denis) Graber, Leo; Doris (Marlin) Graber, Grabill; Betty (Tim) Frank, Goshen; Katy (Mervin) Miller, Goshen; and Anna (Gary) Bontrager, Vandalia, MI; two sons: Nelson Jr. (Rachel) Miller, Middlebury; and Ezra Jay (Ellen) Miller, Elkhart; 36 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; two sisters, LeAnna (John) Schrock, Middlebury; Katie Humble, Middlebury; and two brothers: Pete Yoder, Goshen; and Christie (Marlene) Yoder, Millersburg.

She was preceded in death by her



parents, husband, daughter, Mary Magdalena Miller; grandson, Timothy Bontrager; step-granddaughter, Jamie Frank; two brothers: Daniel and Elmer Yoder; two sisters and brothers-in-law, Mary (Sylvanus) Miller and Lizzie Mae (LaVern) Bontrager; sister-in-law, Katie Yoder; and brother-in-law, Thomas Humble.

Ada was a member of Fairhaven Mennonite Church and worked in home healthcare, assisting the elderly. She loved to host people in her home and enjoyed cooking for her guests. She was very faithful in attending her children's and grandchildren's sporting events.

The funeral was held on January 30, at Fairhaven Mennonite Church, Goshen. Services were conducted by the Fairhaven ministry team. Burial was at Grace Lawn Cemetery, Middlebury.

**Miller, Fannie**, 73, of Crossville, TN, passed away February 11, 2020, in her home surrounded by her family after a short battle with liver cancer.

She was born August 15, 1946, in Kalona, IA, to Jonathan and Annie (Gingerich) Miller. She was named after her paternal grandmother.

She was united in marriage to Alvin Lynn Miller on February 24, 1968, and they were married 47 years.

Survivors include four sons: Conrad Alan, Lynn Alvin, Edwin Anthony, and Walter Alfred; three daughters: Caroline Grace, Leanna Beth, and Luella Fannie; four grandchildren: Gracie, Mekenzie, Alexia, and Casey; one brother, Daniel (Katie) Miller of McConnelsville, OH; five sisters: Ada (Calvin) Miller, Lott, TX; Barbara Helmuth, Kalona, IA; Edith (Howard) Kuhns, Arthur, IL; Ann (Robert) Williamson, Chicago, IL; and

Ruth (Eldon) Kuhns; Mulkeytown, IL; and a brother-in-law, Henry Beachy, Berne, IN.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her husband, Alvin; a son, Leroy; two sisters; Martha Yutzy and Arvilla Beachy; and a brother-in-law, Ivan Yutzy.

She gave her heart to the Lord in her youth and was a faithful member at Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church. Having heard Ralph Palmer speak in her youth gave her a fervency to pass out tracts and gospel wallet calendars wherever she went. Having grown up on the farm and being a middle sister of eight girls got her out driving the Farmall tractor to help put the hay into the barn.

The first two years of her married life were spent at Hillcrest Home, AR, in voluntary service. The next seven years were in Kalona, IA, where they lived close to her parents and enjoyed work days with her siblings. On a bitterly cold day on December 31, 1976, they made their trek to the Tennessee mission in Mayland where she has enjoyed reaching out to those in the church and community.

She has traveled to a variety of places around the world to carry the gospel which brought two more sons into the family from Honduras. Also, she has enjoyed meeting others' needs through food supplement sales, in helping others help themselves. Her love for gardening and flowers has brought about many a bouquet given to others. She also enjoyed reading, studying family history, and tracing genealogy roots.

Funeral services were held on February 15, 2020, at Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church, Crossville, TN, with John Ray Miller officiating. Interment followed at the church cemetery.



# In Memory of Mother

*As siblings we stand at the grave of our mother,  
Thankful for the years we have shared together.  
We don't need to know all the reasons why,  
We just know we're under God's watchful eye.*

*Mom, you prayed for us with all of your heart,  
So that we'll meet in heaven—never to part.  
You were such a mother to a family of eight.  
You're waiting to greet us at heaven's gate.*

*Sharing stories with the family many a day,  
Making memories that will always with us stay.  
Taking time for the grandchildren so dear,  
It seemed Grandma was always near.*

*Gathering brown eggs on the Iowa farm,  
Driving the tractor and lending an arm.  
Eight happy sisters so lustily sang,  
The old farmhouse must surely have rung!*

*Working in the garden was such a pleasure,  
Those are the memories we'll always treasure.  
Picking flowers and giving them to a friend,  
Shared your support and love without end.*

*In the kitchen Mom would oft be found,  
Washing dishes that seemed to abound.  
Choosing the right song after a meal,  
Singing so heartily and with great zeal.*

*When at the church there was a sewing,  
We always knew you would be going.  
Quilting or knotting the patches bright,  
Hoping to make someone's burden light.*

*A letter and card were sent in the mail,  
To cheer someone's day, and that without fail.  
Passing out Thanksgiving plates was so much fun,  
It seemed your much visiting was never done.*

*You knew all the neighbors around so poor,  
And would send gifts often to their doors,  
Eager to tell of God's love to others,  
You gave out tracts and gospel calendars.*

*Going to visit and share at the jail,  
Mom would go often and that without fail.  
When called to serve in the duty of jury,  
You answered for Christ the judge's query.*

*Mom loved to help others feel better fast,  
It brought her great joy and it wasn't a task.  
When some dear soul was not feeling so well,  
You knew the remedy and good advice to tell.*

*Being an example at home and at church,  
Trying your commitments never to shirk.  
Mom, what a godly example you were.  
May this remembrance always be clear.*

*Watching your own son fade slowly away,  
To meet him in heaven, oh, what a happy day!  
Now you're with Dad after four and a half years,  
Even if you leave us also, in many tears.*

*Mom, as you stepped on heaven's golden shore,  
What blessed peace to be with Christ forever more!  
Tell Dad and Leroy we miss them here too,  
We think of them often when we're feeling blue.*

*Resting in faith in her Savior's great love,  
Trusting we'll meet her in heaven above.  
When Jesus calls us, may we ever ready be,  
With a heart and life from sin set free!*



—Written by family & friends of Fannie Miller



The annual Central American Leaders' Meetings were held on February 25-27 in Siguatepeque, Honduras. This event has grown from rather modest attendance, more than 30 years ago, to a well-supported and attended event that is a blessing to many. I've picked up positive vibes about this annual meeting for a number of years now from a variety of sources. Our son Christopher and his family, who are serving in El Salvador, were able to attend this year. He wasn't sure of the exact numbers and representation, but there were 10-15 different countries represented in the 250-300 persons who attended. Some who attend speak only English and some only speak Spanish while many are conversant in both tongues. All the English speakers' messages were translated into Spanish for those who have that preference. Those with speaking assignments who speak in Spanish also had their content translated to English for the benefit of those who did not understand Spanish. The gathering also represents considerable variety in church affiliation. In spite of the differences, upbuilding fellowship and mutual support flow freely across the lines of affiliation that characterize the variety that is present.

As I ponder this event, I feel a bit idealistic. It seems healthy to me when God's children can fellowship together and learn from each other in spite of the differences. I'm sure that we don't have to think very long before we can identify examples where an ecumenical focus has weakened a person's loyalty to the local body. I'm concerned about that too. But is it not true that the more settled and secure we are in our current contexts, to that degree we are less vulnerable to the dangers of ecumenism? From what I see and hear, this gathering of the leaders of conservative Anabaptist congregations in Central America works that way. I'm encouraged.

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The rise of nationalistic and patriotic fervor isn't a domestic phenomenon only observed here in the USA. The United Kingdom is enacting more stringent immigration policies by limiting entry for those who don't speak English and who aren't skilled workers. They don't want unqualified foreigners usurping jobs from the local labor force. Many industry leaders are alarmed. They say this step will reduce their access to inexpensive labor. They argue that this change in the cost

of production will have unintended ripple effects when the companies, who are unsuccessful in passing the increased cost of goods along to consumers, will be forced to shut their doors that will lead to higher unemployment. They believe that restricting the borders this way will result in shutting the doors of a segment of the manufacturing industry and raising the jobless rate.

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It doesn't seem appropriate that I, a follower of Christ, should rail against the "hideous and inhumane" US immigration policies. It also doesn't seem likely that Christian priorities of love and hospitality are demonstrated when we rise up with an indignant, protectionist posture against people who do not have legal migration status in this country. Fair is fair and legal is legal. I wish they were the same, but I'm afraid those two concepts don't always stay as close together as they should.

The ways in which the questions of migration are asked, answered, and avoided in some communities with a Russian Mennonite population reminds us that the clarity we sometimes confidently profess isn't what everybody experiences.

I need to acknowledge that my impressions of migration issues have not been tempered with the need to migrate. I suspect that migration to

a foreign country, where we would be subject to another set of laws and cultural expectations, could give us a perspective on these things that would serve to moderate the extremes some of us gravitate toward on these issues.

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Commenting on the coronavirus pandemic means that by the time you read this, current statistics may seem outdated. As of this writing, there appears to be plenty of "angst" in the general population due to the uncertainty of the duration and scope of this problem. Some companies are trying to arrange for employees to work from home in order to minimize the risk of exposure. Airlines have relaxed the fees associated with changing ticketed travel in an effort to blunt the reluctance to make the financial commitment of purchasing tickets. Some domestic routes have been reduced due to fewer passengers. Of course, some airlines have suspended air service into and out of regions with the highest incidence of coronavirus. The roller coaster we sometimes call the stock market reflects the financial uncertainty that investors feel. As I ponder these uncertainties several things come to mind.

1. We won't be here forever. We're liable to die or Jesus will return. Not many of us get out of here alive.

Historical statistics and current observation clearly support this.

2. Common sense prevention, refusing to be paralyzed by fear, and trust in God for what we need when we need it, don't seem contradictory, do they?

3. Those currently affected by coronavirus represent a very small number, statistically speaking. However, for those who are affected, the statistics don't mean much. It is very sad for those who have become very ill and for the families of those who have died.

4. It seems every once in a while God lets something happen that reminds us that we aren't quite as big, quite as smart, quite as prepared, or quite as invincible as we thought we were. This is such a time.

• • • • •

The Democrats are still trying to figure out who has the best chance to unseat the current president, whom they find to be a thoroughly unsatisfactory, unqualified, and even dangerous option. Currently it seems likely that the democratic nominee will be either former vice president Joe Biden or Bernie Sanders who is a self-described socialist.

Sometimes I need to remind myself to not let my interest in these things become inordinate. Then I often pray, or at least think, "May the Lord have His way, and may His Kingdom come." I guess it's possible,

but I don't see much evidence that those vying for the Oval Office share that priority, so I don't hold a high expectation that things will get better very soon. However, God is faithful. I don't really think our omnipotent God is frustrated or limited by governmental systems in general, much less who wins a particular election.

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Our family had the opportunity to attend a wedding some years ago which featured more congregational singing than most weddings we've attended. The couple also chose to recite the traditional and time-worn vows rather than write vows for each other. Both of these choices qualified as being a bit unusual in the setting where this wedding took place. The couple who got married said that the decision to involve the congregation in more singing and also to stick with the traditional vows was intentional. They wished these decisions to draw attention to the fact that love and marriage as God designed and intended is much broader than this event. The singing invited those who attended the wedding to move from a position of being a spectator to one of involvement. The success of a marriage is enhanced when the community is involved and doesn't just watch. I was impressed by the thought behind these decisions.

—RJM 



# Freemen in Bondage

*Rick Hess, Meyerstown, PA*

In April 1992, an angry resident of Sanilac County, Michigan, wrote a letter to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. He was announcing his rejection of the “Corporate State of Michigan and the United States.” He was denying his citizenship and their authority over him. And, he was expressly revoking his signature on any hunting or fishing licenses that they had asked him to sign, which he viewed as contracts that fraudulently bound him to the government. Three years later this man would become known to the world as Terry Nichols, friend and accomplice of Timothy McVeigh, the man who bombed the Oklahoma City Federal Building.

These men subscribe to a very unique set of beliefs. Their system of beliefs arose in the 1970s, out of the anti-establishment movement, developing more fully in the 1980s into anti-government movements. There are various groups within this movement with varying degrees of involvement in anti-governmental actions, from vigilante groups and White Supremacist groups, to groups that profess to be Christian (some closely paralleling Anabaptists in certain ways), as well as Islamic and pseudo-Jewish groups. Their doctrines are promoted by tracts,

vigilante courts, seminars, and shortwave radio, as well as Internet “Schools of Common Law,” YouTube videos, and through preaching.

Their tactics vary greatly. Obviously, most of them do not blow up buildings, but in varying degrees they despise and deny the secular government’s right to have authority over them. They believe they are standing for their rights; they are “freedom fighters,” using many tactics against the “great beast” of the U.S. government. Typically, they reject driver’s licenses, mandatory auto insurances, vehicle registrations, Social Security numbers, birth certificates, marriage licenses, and even the use of ZIP codes! They are known for using all sorts of methods to hinder the government, such as employing fraudulent liens, lawsuits, bogus financial documents, fake auto IDs, misuse of IRS forms, threats to government officials and their families, and various financial scams. Some even occasionally resort to armed standoffs with law enforcement. They call themselves by different names: Sovereign Citizens, The Posse, Ambassadors of Heaven, or most often... Freemen. They would say they are true patriots, standing for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Some would say

that only Yahweh is their authority and Him alone will they obey.

Really, none of these things are altogether new. I'd like to jump back 2,000 years and ask a few questions to stir our memory. Who were the Zealots? Why did they end up not following the Lord Jesus Christ? Why did they, for the most part, miss the salvation that God had sent for them?

### Zealots

The Zealots were a fanatical right-wing sect who were alive and well when Jesus was teaching and preaching in Israel. They were a political party of the Jews who (along with many others) despised the Roman dominion over them. They were very nationalistic, militantly opposing the Roman government. Their name means "Jealous" or "Zealous" in the Aramaic language. They were self-professed followers of Levi and Simeon (who avenged their sister's rape upon Shechem), Phinehas (who speared a Jewish man and Moabitish woman for their fornication, thus stopping the plague in the camp), and Elijah (who slew the 850 prophets of Baal and Ashteroth).

Masada was a Zealot fort near the Dead Sea. The name Masada comes from a Hebrew word meaning "stronghold." Are we defending strongholds upon false conceptions of God, strongholds that will some day fall just like Masada did?

They believed they were truly devoted to God and His laws alone. Though they held some similar views with the Pharisees, they were distinctly different on a few points. Zealots felt it was treason against God to pay tribute to Rome since God alone was Israel's King. They were willing to use any method of guerilla warfare to fight for Jewish independence. Although they were His contemporaries, sadly, most of them never accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, nor their God-sent Messiah!

Their movement eventually degenerated into a band of cut-throats called Sicarii (dagger-men, in Latin). Their increased fanaticism provoked the Jewish-Roman war of the first century. In 66 A.D., they attempted to take full control of Jerusalem. This led to the horrible siege and destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus in 70 A.D. This was what Jesus had warned would come to pass (see Matthew 24) before he was crucified. The last Zealot stronghold was the highly fortified Masada, which fell to the Romans in 73 A.D. when some 900 Zealots committed mass suicide rather than surrender to the Roman authorities.

Since the Zealots were so desirous to serve God, to know and do His will, why did they miss becoming followers of the only true Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ?

The problem was that they had a totally false concept of what true freedom is in the Kingdom of God. Like many other similar movements since that time, this false belief became a mighty stronghold in their lives. They failed to understand that true freedom comes when:

- *I am submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.*
- *I am submitted to Him in all my ways.*
- *I am subject to earthly authorities when I am not asked to disobey Christ.*
- *Like Jesus, I accept suffering for being obedient to the Father, patiently.*

When you study Jesus' teachings, it is not hard to see why the Zealots could not follow Jesus while still in their stronghold of false belief. Consider the following areas where Christ's teaching contradicts the "Freemen" mentality:

1. Jesus's birth, in fulfillment of the ancient prophecies, was at Bethlehem, due to His parent's *submission* to the Roman census and taxation. (Luke 2:1-6)
2. Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek." (Matthew 5:5)
3. Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9)
4. He blessed them who *accept persecution patiently*. (Matthew 5:10-12)
5. He taught that it was important not only to *accept the authority of*

the Roman soldier who asks you to carry his pack for a mile, but to volunteer to take it a second mile! (Matthew 5:41)

6. He gave all His followers the calling to "*love your enemies*; do good to them that hate you; bless them who despitefully use you and persecute you." (Matthew 5:43-48)

*Regardless of popular belief, He said that these are the qualifications for being called the children of God! (Matthew 5:45)*

7. He taught that the things that are truly valuable are not on this earth. (Matthew 6:19-21)
8. He gave His followers a formula of how we should respond to every other person when He said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matthew 7:12)
9. He told all His followers that if He is truly their Lord, these things will be a part of their lives. "Not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*." (Matthew 7:21)
10. Jesus commended a Roman centurion for his great faith and contrasted it with the Jews' unbelief. (Matthew 8:5-13)
11. Jesus taught to *flee*, not *resist* persecution. (Matthew 10:22-28)
12. The test of true love for Christ

- is in our willingness to “take up the cross” of submission and forbearance. (Matthew 10:37-39)
13. Jesus’ declarations to Peter, “the freedom fighter:”
    - a) *When he rebuked Jesus for talking about His crucifixion: “Get behind me, Satan.” (Matthew 16:21-28)*
    - b) *When He instructed Peter to go pay tax for both Peter and Him. (Matthew 17:24-27)*
    - c) *When He reproved Peter for using the sword to resist His arrest. (Matthew 26:51-54)*
  14. Jesus consistently taught that His kingdom is not like the world’s kingdom in operations. (Matthew 20:25-28)
  15. He told the Jews who were trying to trap Him in His words, “Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s”—pay your taxes! (Matthew 22:17-22)
  16. When Jesus taught His followers that Jerusalem was going to be destroyed, He warned them to flee, not fight for it. Some notable historians tell us that when Jerusalem fell, there was not one Christian left in it. They apparently obeyed their Lord!
  17. Jesus’ open declaration to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” (John 18:36)

18. Jesus did not resist Judas, His betrayer, though He knew of his plot against Him.
19. The last command Jesus gave was for His followers to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every tribe, nation, language, and people group. Not only that but baptize them and receive them as equals into the kingdom of God. The early Church understood this well: Jews didn’t become Gentiles; Gentiles didn’t become Jews; they both needed to be born again and be converted to become Christians under the New Covenant. (Matt. 28:18-20)

All this was unthinkable to the Zealots, whose “stronghold of false doctrine” blinded them to believe that God only speaks Hebrew, only accepts Hebrew culture, only saves Jews, and desires Israel as the only nation.

### **Barabbas**

One of the greatest reasons the Zealots didn’t choose Jesus was that they had already chosen another “savior”—Barabbas. It was he who had been arrested for sedition (rebellion to government authority) and murder, yet it was he whom the crowd chose in their blind passion. His name ironically means: Bar = “son of” and Abba = “the father.”

When the crowd was crying, “Free Barabbas!” it was like they were saying “We choose the son of

the Father!” But God has **only one** begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and for Him they cried, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” They followed a deceiver, a false deliverer, and a false messiah. Their end was death, destruction, and bondage to sin, self, and Satan... and for those who never repented, an eternity in hell.

So, what should I do if I realize that I have believed a lie and have allowed myself to be influenced by the Zealots of our day? Repent and submit to the rightful lordship of Jesus in your life. “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...” (1 Samuel 15:23), and no witch is right with God!

In this day of *easy-believism* and cheap grace, it is essential to consider whether we have been genuinely born again, surrendering our all to our resurrected Lord, since Jesus said “...Verily, verily... Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Have you ever seen yourself as hopelessly lost, without a single plea before the crucified Lord Jesus? If your life still belongs to you, you are not one of His.

Believe His word. “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of

them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king” (1 Peter 2:13-17).

Recognize that God is the final authority. It is He who raises up whom He will and puts down whom He will. Remember Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and others like them. Many times, God uses the ungodly to chasten His people. God has established earthly government and authority. The home, church, employment, and the government all establish order in society; the opposite is chaos and anarchy which is really every man being his own lord. (see Romans 13:1-14) Be ready to make godly appeals to the government when asked to do what is against the Lord’s will for us. Be ready to suffer like Jesus did, patiently, resigned to die, if needed, to fulfill the will of God the Father. (see 1 Peter 3:8-18) May God bless each one with true freedom as the children of God, living as strangers and pilgrims in this world—another kingdom! (see Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11)

*[Reprinted with permission of The Heartbeat of the Remnant, October/November/December 2009]*





# **The Purpose and History of Anabaptist/Christian Education**

*Peter Zucconi*

## **Part I – The Concept, Purpose and Distinguishing Marks of an Anabaptist/Christian Education**

### **The Concept of Education**

Some might say that education is the transferring of information from one person to the next. Others might say it is the imparting and acquisition of knowledge and skills. But for many those definitions are not adequate.

A more complete definition explains that education produces a permanent and inherent change in a person's thinking and behavior. One not only hears and sees new knowledge, but to be truly educated one must put that new knowledge into practice.

### **Concept of Education in the Old and New Testaments**

We see this view of education portrayed in the biblical text. In Deuteronomy, the children of Israel, having been taught God's principles, were to put those principles into practice. "Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God *commanded to teach you*, that *ye might do them* in the land whither ye go to possess it" (Deuteronomy 6:1). God's ways were not to remain

merely head knowledge. Their learning experience would be complete and successful only when head knowledge was evidenced in daily behavior.

The New Testament teaches the same standard. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declares, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:" In the educational economy of Jesus, a "wise man" is the man who does not merely absorb information, but the man who puts that information into daily living.

True education brings about a permanent change in a person's thinking and behavior. The success of God's people, both in the Old and New Testaments, was dependent upon putting into practice what had been taught.

### **Anabaptism and the Concept of Education**

Discipleship is a major component of Anabaptist thought. The Anabaptist view of discipleship is closely related to its view of education.

Writing on the Anabaptist vision of discipleship, noted Mennonite

historian, Harold S. Bender states, "The focus of the Christian life was to be not so much the inward experience of the grace of God... but the outward application of that grace to all human conduct and the consequent Christianization of all human relationships. The true test of the Christian, they held, is discipleship. The great word of the Anabaptists was not "faith" as it was with the reformers, but "following."<sup>1</sup>

For Anabaptists, discipleship centered on living out what one had been taught. One was not truly Christ's disciple unless one was truly following Christ. Inward faith needed to be expressed in outward action.

Mennonite educator, Paul Mininger, connects this view of discipleship to Christian education. "Christian education is therefore education with a vision. It is always an education for a decision. It makes possible dynamic living, not static. It is education for Christian action, action which is based upon insight and understanding. The Christian disciple who is undergoing Christian education is not so much learning a lesson, as he is learning to live a life."<sup>2</sup>

### **Purpose of Christian Education**

We see here the purpose of Christian education. The individual undergoing a Christian education is not merely gaining knowledge but is preparing to live a life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ!

Paul Fretz, long-time Mennonite educator, succinctly states, "God

would have each individual to be 'conformed to the image of His Son,' and desires 'to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.' The guiding principle must be 'whatsoever ye do, do you all to the glory of God.'<sup>3</sup> Or, as Mininger writes, "A Christian education should "lead the person into a life which expresses in every relationship the significance of the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord."<sup>4</sup>

### **Two Distinguishing Marks of Christian Education**

What will be the student's benchmark in learning to do all to God's glory? Fretz states, "God's word as recorded in the Bible is the standard. It provides the foundation and framework for all truth. Everything must be measured by God's word."<sup>5</sup> All subjects from art to zoology are studied through the filtering lens of God's Word. By so doing, we "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Having the Bible as the foundation is a distinguishing mark of Christian education.

A second distinguishing mark of Christian education is love. Those involved in Christian education should take special note when reading I Corinthians 13. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Christian educators should be fully and appropriately trained. But lectures and lessons

presented without love's leavening might reach the head but are unlikely to reach the heart.

Christian parents and their children show esteem for teachers, staff and other families. Principals and teachers have hearts filled with patience, kindness, and humility as are only appropriate for God's under-shepherds.

Christian educators have the utmost concern for the eternal destiny of their students. They pray regularly for their students to lead lives under God's authority and to His glory. Christopher Dock, Mennonite schoolteacher in colonial Pennsylvania, realized his role as God's under-shepherd to his flock of students. His school teaching ministry was characterized by love. We will visit Christopher Dock's

story in part two planned for the next issue.

1. Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision", in *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*, edited by Guy F. Hersherberger, (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1957), p. 40.

2. Paul Mininger, in a Conrad Grebel lecture on "Christian Education" given at Eastern Mennonite College, November 21-22, 1952. Notes taken from an unpublished transcription of the lectures, p. 28.

3. Paul C. Fretz, "The Christian Philosophy of Education", an unpublished paper, June 1982, p. 13.

4. Mininger, p.25.

5. Fretz, pp. 11-12.

*[Reprinted from the KMF Messenger.  
Used by permission.]*



## mission awareness

# Life at Friedensheim Mission in Berlin, Germany

*David and Marie Yoder, Stanardsville, VA*

In April 1958, Simon and Elsie Schrock from Grantsville, MD, arrived to replace Joe and Salome Roth who served in Germany under Amish Mennonite Aid the first several years. One week later, six volunteers from the States came to help with a building project.

They added a thirty-by-eighty-foot multi-purpose structure to the Hesse house. This large addition included a spacious living room with a seating capacity of one hundred and fifty people (later used as a chapel), a kitchen, and rooms for sewing, reading, and storage.

The mission was located three miles from the border that separated West Berlin from East Berlin which was then under the control of communism. Out of forty-five suggested names for the neighborhood center, Friedensheim (House of Peace) was chosen. Some refugees scoffed at the name, regarding it as western propaganda, saying there is no real peace today. The local police believed that an undertaking of this nature in this community would be liable to be anything except peaceful. However, on April 6, 1959, various speakers and visitors participated in the official opening and dedication of Friedensheim.

The original purpose of the work at Friedensheim was to give relief to the refugees. Marienfelder Lager, which was a large refugee camp less than a mile from Friedensheim, provided housing for hundreds of refugees who fled from East (communist) Germany. A large number of these came to Friedensheim for clothing needs.

The government had built apartment houses for refugee families with the project beginning one block from Friedensheim. These apartments were allotted to families with as many as twelve or more children. Hundreds of children roamed the streets near the apartments where they lived,

with no other place to go during the day. Friedensheim soon provided a playground on the property where children could enjoy swings, monkey bars, slides, and so on. A ping-pong table was provided for youth in the garage. In the sewing room, children eight years old and older had the opportunity to embroider ready-stamped items they could claim upon completion.

In a short time, the missionaries at Friedensheim had contact with five to six hundred children. They soon systematized designated play times. Those whose family names began with A-H received a red card attached to a string around their neck. Family names beginning with I-R received blue cards and those names beginning with S-Z received a green card. On each card was the child's name, address, date of birth, age, and names of the parents. This system worked well and remained intact for a number of years.

With political pressures increasing in 1961, the flow of refugees also stepped up. (During this era of history, Berlin was the hot spot of the world. -fs). Thousands fled to West Berlin in that year. It was reported that the total number of refugees who found freedom from the rigid communist regime totaled some over 4,000,000. On August 13, 1961, starting at 2:00 AM on a Sunday morning, barbed wire was

strung along the border, dividing the eastern and western section of the world's fifth largest city (in area). More horrible than having the city divided, were the divisions it brought to families, relatives, friends, students, employees, and churches, as well as many other organizations. The construction of the Berlin Wall brought a sharp and sudden drop in the flow of refugees. Within one and a half years, the relief clothing distribution was discontinued except to some needy families in the community and to some individuals in the eastern zone.

In 1959 Sunday school was started. After several months this ministry averaged around one hundred children. Children's Bible school was of great interest as well as Bible studies with adults.

The church developed and grew as a result of the weekly Bible study. There were two Christians, Anna and Herbert Acksel, mother and son, who became members before there was an established church. Earlier they were received as members with the understanding that they are a part of the brotherhood of the future church. Anna had received adult baptism earlier in life. Those who knew her felt her faith in God was genuine. Therefore, she was accepted as a member by her testimony in the Lord and consistent Christian life. Herbert was baptized upon his confession of

faith in Jesus Christ. They were both eager to share their faith in Christ with others.

The Christian youth and voluntary service workers joined for chorus practice and sang in church services. They shared the gospel through songs, testimonies, and preaching at the most modern streets in West Berlin. They also distributed gospel tracts which generated serious dialogues and inspired people to attend church services at Friedensheim and to learn more of the precious gospel of Jesus Christ. Children, youth, and adults availed themselves to sound reading material by checking out books from the library at Friedensheim. Christian books were not found on the common market. Many expressed their appreciation for available wholesome books.

The church at Friedensheim became a haven for many seeking souls. The concept of belonging to the state church was deeply ingrained in the adults. Many found it difficult to leave the security of belonging to the state church and all it provided and to commit themselves to become members at Friedensheim. However, many came for the spiritual food they did not find elsewhere. Christian youth who attended hoped that in years to come the same spiritual haven would be available for their children and oncoming generations.

During the 1970s the church at Friedensheim became independent and extended membership to those active in fellowship, lost the doctrine of nonconformity, and offered open communion. It was during this time that AMA discontinued the ministry at Friedensheim and sold the property to the church at half the market value. Today (2020)

there is still a small fellowship at Friedensheim. Many are still grateful for what the Mennonites have taught them. We are confident that God's Word which was sown through the years will accomplish its purpose.

*[This article first appeared in Bringing in the Sheaves (AMA's fiftieth anniversary book); used by permission.]*



## A Woman After God's Heart

### Who Am I and Why Does It Matter? (part 2)

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



*(In last month's column we talked about the desperation in living with an identity crisis, the identity that wants to cripple abundant life. This is part two of three discussing the Identity Issue for Ladies.)*

It is not so much that we lose our identity when we embrace Christ, but that we gain what was intended for us from the beginning. The word is "wholeness." "...Complete in Him" (Colossians 2:10). "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:29-30a). "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10b). Think of it this way: in ourselves it is about *achieving*. In Christ, it is about *receiving*.

God's Word flows liberally with promises of Christ's image being born in us; of the overflowing, abundant, extravagant exchange between His sufficiency and our insecurities. Jesus came to redeem everything that is broken or corrupted in our hearts. The cross is more than something to hang on the car mirror or place in front of an auditorium. The cross means redemption for all that Satan steals, kills, or destroys. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and



to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Satan intends to steal our identity. If Satan had known what Jesus’s death on the cross would mean, he wouldn’t have done it.

There are two simple facts. There is an Enemy. There is a Redeemer. Whatever is precious to God, Satan sets out to destroy.

The enemy is on a rampage to give us cheap substitutes for what only Christ can give. If we buy into his thinking and persuasion, our existence becomes ever more frazzled, desperate, and hopeless. Under his dictates we can never walk straight enough. We can never do enough good, cook enough company suppers, be kind enough, or sweet enough. Our account is always in the red. It is always overdrawn. In our own eyes we are fat, lonely, ugly, not gifted, clumsy, contaminated, unlovely, and unwanted. Let’s not go there again.

Let’s evaluate what it’s going to cost us to change some deeply imbedded ways of thinking. Our new identity is a whole new way of talking, a new way of thinking. A new way of doing relationships. A new way of living.

If we don’t get this right in any given aspect of our lives, God will faithfully keep bringing us into circumstances to invite us to refocus, to change, and to get it right. We begin to embrace

His redemption and let go of our old rags of performance and self-justification. As we encounter our own insecurities from time to time, we learn to see it as an invitation from God to recognize the false beliefs we’ve hung on to, and in their place accept Jesus’s peace in Who He is and Whose we now are.

He wants to be everything for us. He died for our wholeness. He invites us to crucify our reputation, our efforts at being the best, doing the best, and appearing the best. He longs to infuse us with His rest, deep soul rest. You can finally find your sufficiency in Him, you can allow Him to right wrongs, and you can leave your fingers out of it. If rejection comes your way, you can step to the side, hold out your hand, and say, “Lord, can You take this from me?” The same is true for the opposite. If praise and affirmation come your way, step to the side and say, “Lord, this is about You. I am who I am in You, not in myself. I can’t deal with it. The applause is for You and You alone.” The Holy Spirit in us develops this new way of thinking. As a Christian, the life of God in Christ is in me.

*[To be concluded]*

*Recommended resources:*

Oasis Ladies’ Retreat 2009, Teresa Beachy, ([smbi@smbi.org](mailto:smbi@smbi.org))

The Search for Significance by Robert S. McGee



## From Indian Boy to Christian Apologist (Part I)

*Margretta Yoder, Hutchinson, KS*

Many of us are jolted out of sleep by our alarm clocks. The morning sounds we hear are birds singing or roosters crowing. Imagine waking up each morning to the cries of street vendors shouting out their wares. “Milk!” “Eggs!” “Knives!” “Vegetables!” For the Indian boy, Ravi, these sounds were completely normal.

Ravi Zacharias was born in India. Today he is a captivating author, speaker, and Christian apologist. An apologist is one who can answer difficult arguments about his beliefs. A Christian apologist can answer difficult questions about Jesus, heaven, creation, and many other controversial topics.

How did an ignorant Indian boy become such a famous Christian apologist? *From East to West* is Ravi’s autobiography, the book about his life, from which I will share.

Ravi grew up in India playing on

the streets with his friends. Many hours were spent kicking balls, riding bikes, eating lime corn or spicy Indian treats bought from food stands, or hopping rides on buses. Ravi saw people in extreme poverty struggling for survival. He observed religious people on the streets; men and women with deep cuts on their faces, goats being sacrificed, and once he even saw a man rolling down the road chanting. Ravi’s mother told him that these people were worshiping their gods.

Ravi’s first memories of religion were tainted with fear. Although he grew up in the midst of Hinduism, his family was considered Christian, thanks to his great-great-great grandmother finding Jesus through missionaries many years before. However, by the time Ravi was born, his family did not understand much about Christianity. Ravi doesn’t remember ever hearing the Gospel

message at church, but his great-great-grandmother's decision started the path for his ancestors to find Jesus.

As he grew older, Ravi searched for meaning in life. During his school-age years, a close friend died because of a mistake in an operation. Ravi visited the site of the cremation and asked a Hindu priest. "Where is she now?"

The priest gravely responded, "This is a question you will be asking all your life, and you will never find the answer." Ravi felt discouraged that a man who devoted himself to religion did not know the answer to his question, but he refused to accept that there was no answer to be found and began his search in earnest.

Ravi did not make good grades in school, much to his father's disappointment. He often felt purposeless and inferior, so he poured his life into the game of cricket and cracked jokes to make people like him. Lacking his father's approval and not having found purpose in life, Ravi decided to end his life as an early teen. He took some chemicals from the lab at school, sneaked them home, and gulped them down in the bathroom. As his life was starting to fade, he screamed for help from a family servant.

Before the attempted suicide, Ravi had begun attending Youth for Christ meetings. While he was in the hospital recovering, Fred David from the mission visited him and read scripture and prayed with the teenage Indian boy. He gifted a Bible to Ravi. In the hospital, Ravi's mother picked up the book and read this verse found in John, "Because I live, you also will live." The words resonated deeply as hopeful words offering a more abundant life than Ravi had ever experienced. Ravi made a commitment to Christ before he left the hospital.

In Ravi's words, "God was in the shadows protecting me and guiding me."

Ravi began spending hours at the Youth for Christ mission. There he grew spiritually by leaps and bounds. He read voraciously, even reading Bible commentaries. He was growing spiritually and found that he loved to learn, and it was fun.

Ravi began succeeding in his studies because now he looked at life through the window of meaning. One day he decided to pursue a career in hotel management. Ravi's dad finally began to show pleasure in his son as Ravi's life began showing signs of much promise.

*[To be continued]*



## Introduction

*Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH*

*“I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2:14b).*

*“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future. –Franklin D. Roosevelt.”  
(NobleQuotes.com)*

I recently accepted the position of Youth Editor for the Calvary Messenger. I am excited about the opportunity to get to know our readers—that means you. I’d like to get to know you as our readers and the things that you would like to see addressed, researched, answered, and discussed. I’m open to suggestions, and I welcome feedback in regard to content. Please submit questions you have for our church leaders and other people in our congregations. I would like to do some interviews and get some insight into the issues you would like to see addressed. What are some of the issues that you are facing today?

Many questions have been running through my mind as I contemplate researching and finding content to bring to you. Being a young person in the world today is difficult. Being a young person living a God-honoring, victorious life takes work, self-control, and intentional living. I’m thirty, but I got married only a little over five years ago. So, I spent around a decade in your shoes. There are very real, very important decisions that we make in this time of our lives that have a lasting impact. By the time we become youth, many of us have already made the decision to follow Christ. Some of us have chosen to align ourselves with a body

of believers and became members of a church, while others of us may be holding out, hoping that we can find the “perfect” church.

This is when many of us begin exploring career options. What field of work would I like to go into? What skills do I need to develop to be successful in that field? Does my choice of occupation have a healthy work environment? What influences will I be under when I am there? How can I bless others and bring glory to God with the work that I’m doing? Whether it is homemaking or home building, our focus should be to build God’s kingdom and influence others for good while we’re doing it.

This is also the stage of life when we begin making decisions about spending time in voluntary service whether domestic or abroad on the mission field. I speak from experience when I say that time spent in voluntary service can be a tremendous blessing, not only to the people you are serving but to yourself personally. For me it was a time of growth and realizing my identity as an individual—not under my parents’ roof. People learned to know me for who I was and not who my parents were; my actions reflected back on me and the mission I was serving. No one knew who I was, and I had to build my own reputation.

What kind of friends do I have? Am I surrounding myself with people who will encourage and build me up, or am I cultivating questionable alliances that could influence me for the wrong? Along this same line comes one of the biggest questions we face. What is God’s will for me in regard to a life companion? Believe me when I say that it is difficult to discern God’s will on this difficult question (especially when the answer to our query is no or wait).

These are some of the questions that we face during this phase of life. Some of these we need to continue to ask ourselves the rest of our lives. Others, when answered, will alter the course of our lives forever. I look forward to hearing from you and interacting with you through this publication. Let’s ask questions, seek answers, and find inspiration through God’s Word and the writings of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Contact me with any questions, topics to study and discuss, articles you’ve read and want to share, or an article you may have written yourself. God bless you!

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Periodicals

## THOUGHT GEMS

God invites us to burden Him with what burdens us.

.....

God takes heed to our every need.

.....

Little things become great things when done in God's power.

.....

Man's limited potential underscores God's limitless power.

.....

If one allows God to guide, He will provide.

.....

God does not always change circumstances, but He may often change us.

.....

Divine resources are never exhausted.

.....

Clouds in our lives are sent many times to bring showers of blessing.

.....

It is comforting to know that God, Who guides us,  
sees tomorrow more clearly than we see yesterday.

.....

Christians show what they are by what they do with what they have.

.....

Wanting less sometimes is a greater joy than having more.

.....

Christians don't own their wealth—they owe it.

.....

April is the month when the green returns to the lawn, the lilac, and the IRS.

.....

No one is poor who by prayer can open the storehouse of God.

.....

Don't try to cheat the Lord and call it economizing.

.....

Misers aren't much fun to live with, but they do make wonderful ancestors.

.....

We may face situations beyond our reserves but never beyond God's resources.

.....

Lord, I don't know how You are going to solve my problems,  
but I know You have something in mind, and I thank You for it.