



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Calvary Messenger

September 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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Return

Michelle R. King, Port Royal, PA

We live in a time
of chaos and unrest.
The world is fearful
and very anxious.
Wickedness abounds—
that's not hard to see.
The devil's at work,
it's hard to believe
That things could get worse—
yet that's reality.
Shout TRUTH on the rooftops;
be valiant in battle!
We fight against Satan—
his works to dismantle!
Speak Jesus's Name
with faith and power!
Darkness will flee
and demons will cower!
Let the Gospel message
ring clear and strong!
In a world that screams fear,
let HOPE be our song!
Rise up from sleep
you stagnant soldier!
Fight for the TRUTH;
let hope be your banner!
We cannot be silent,
for Jesus is true!
The return of the King
could be very soon!

On that incredible day
when you see Him at last,
Will fears cringe in your soul,
or will they be past?
Will you know you have fought
for TRUTH with a might,
Or will you have lost
your love for the LIGHT?



The Mighty Oak

In northwest-central Ohio, along US 30 on an island in the middle of a lake stands a large oak tree. This huge, globular-shaped oak tree was likely standing in the middle of a field for the last hundred years or more. When one of the final four-lane stretches of this national highway in western Ohio was constructed nearly two decades ago, the highway construction company excavated a large amount of soil from this field, leaving this tree standing in the middle of what became a large lake.

As we traveled this new highway, this mighty oak tree surrounded with a large body of water was noteworthy. However, as the years progressed, the tree began to show signs of stress. It lost its perfect, globular shape and appeared jagged from loss of leaves and branches. Today, this tree is still alive, but there are numerous dead limbs protruding from its now much smaller leafy body. What could have caused this obvious disruption to this mighty oak? How could a tree surrounded with a body of water suffer so much?

In another situation even longer

ago, I helped a friend cut firewood from a wooded pasture after an electric highline passed through this field. While we were cutting firewood from these trees, I noticed other trees in this pasture that were dead or dying, some also mighty oak trees. What could have caused these trees to die?

On various construction sites over the years, I have observed homeowners trying to build a home in the middle of wooded areas. Sometimes there were trees saved for shade and beauty close to the house with a fence of caution tape surrounding them. This was to keep equipment from coming close to these large, healthy, and strong hardwood trees. How could this affect these mighty trees?

While the only part of a tree that is visible is the trunk, branches, and leaves, there is a hidden part that likely is larger than the visible part. It is a part that must be healthy and substantial to provide life and support to the visible part. The root system provides nutrients and water to the tree. It stores food for the plant

as well. Support for the stem and branches comes from the root system, providing an anchor for the storms it encounters. Does this information shed light on the stress the US 30 oak tree has endured these past 20 years? Is there a correlation between the mighty oaks and Christian “oaks?”

While I often think of the well-known saying, “No man is an island,”¹ when I see this tree, this particular tree likely was a sole survivor from land-clearing 50-75 years ago. It was not dependent on other trees around it. It did, however, obviously suffer from being on an island. It suffered from a lack of moisture, despite being surrounded by a huge body of water.

There is one thing that connects the three examples of trees I gave in the introduction. It goes beyond having an excavation around the tree. There are various ways that roots can be damaged, and they don't need to be dug out for the tree to suffer damage. It seems that having heavy equipment drive over the area that contains the roots can cause damage. That is likely why a fence of caution tape surrounded the trees on the home construction sites. In the wooded pasture where my friend and I cut firewood, the trampling by animals' hooves and the “rooting” of swine could cause fatal damage to a tree's roots.

While we see the larger roots when we transplant small plants, there are many, much smaller root hairs that we don't see. A botanist from the Ohio State University Extension said that “a rye plant can have more than 14 billion root hairs that make up a surface area about as large as a football field.”² All these small root hairs are collecting moisture and nutrients for the plant.

Like trees, including the mighty oak, most of our lives are not visible to those around us. We may project a perfect visible image to those around us. And we may be the equivalent of a 100+ year-old oak tree. But there are things that can damage our root systems and cause our spiritual lives to suffer and fail. Let's look at a few of these.

One of the most difficult things that a well-established “oak tree” faces is excavation of his roots or foundation. This particularly unusual year has proven that change is not only difficult for the “mighty oak trees,” but I hear many people comment and complain on the changes that have been forced on us. Maybe our roots have been drawing moisture and nutrients from the wrong source. In 1825, John Bowring wrote “God Is Love, His Mercy Brightens.” He writes in the second stanza, “Chance and change are busy ever; worlds

decay and ages move; but His mercy waneth never: God is light, and God is love.” God knows what we’re facing!

It’s possible that some heavy equipment has run roughshod over your root system. Unbeknownst to you, many of the root hairs have been torn from your root system and your spiritual life is running dry. One of your family members may be facing a sickness or hospitalization, or maybe you have lost your job. You may have gone through the death of a loved one, or your church may be facing a division. All of a sudden you see some of your branches shedding leaves. John Bowring must have faced times like these as well. Stanza three says, “E’en the hour that darkest seemeth will His changeless goodness prove; from the mist His brightness streameth; God is light, and God is love.”

Then there are the small issues that we face at times. Sharp and critical words can be like little hooves that seem so small that they shouldn’t bother us, but they do. Maybe it’s a rooting around in your life that is destroying your peace. Is the stress causing damage to the pride in the image you project to those around you? Peter says, *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due*

time” (1 Peter 5:6). A little pruning is often good for better fruit-bearing.

During times of stress to root systems, extra moisture is needed. Take extra time to drink deeply of the Water of Life. Search out the promises of God’s love and care for you. *“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD”* (Jeremiah 9:23). God has the perfect “plant food” for our difficult times. He delights to care for us! “He with earthly cares entwineth hope and comfort from above; everywhere His glory shineth; God is light, and God is love” (stanza 4, God is Love).

–AY 

Resources:

1. <https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/no-man-is-an-island.html>
2. <https://web.archive.org/web/20040806065528/http://www.hcs.ohio-state.edu/mg/manual/botany.htm>

[For an interesting oak tree story, read about the Mingo Oak in WV. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mingo_Oak]

Announcements

Reminder

Please send all material for births, marriages, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles for *Calvary Messenger* to the **Editor, Aaron Yoder**. E-mail is the preferred method, but USPS or fax is also available. E-mails and faxes will receive a confirmation that the message was received.


Brother Paul L. Miller still receives various announcements and needs to forward them to me. This will delay the publication of your information. He has retired from the general editorial work but remains in an advisory position.

Thank you,
Aaron Yoder (Editor)

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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 9-11, 2020. 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 for Calvary Bible School 

Human Strengths and Weaknesses

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Human life is sometimes easy to figure out and at other times is nothing short of a mystery. There are times when we think we understand ourselves but cannot find a reason for the peculiarities of others. We consider it to be an advantage to be ignorant of ourselves, but we can easily see through the whys and wherefores of others, where they should change for the better, while we give ourselves too much slack for the worse.

Like the Quaker who said to his wife, “Methinks the whole world is queer, except me and thee, but at times I am not even sure about thee!” That substantiates the line of worldly thinking that supposes that men can never understand women, or vice versa, that women can never understand men. The ideal Christian marriage is that husband and wife are being fulfilled to the extent that they are progressively able to understand their spouse over the course of time. Love is nurtured, wherein

the understanding of each other is increased, and the undesirables are cast into a mental waste basket and disposed of along with the other mental trash of the week.

In the dynamics of human relationships, the richness of give and take increases the value of being connected as we try to lovingly understand each other. A larger congregation can absorb better the cantankerous ones while a smaller congregation has the same percentage of people who are difficult but scarcely enough ideal people to absorb their peculiarities. Here is a list of what constitutes strong characteristics that are desirable. We might suppose the strengths as being our fortunate lot. It is easy to see only our strengths, while some others, who are “hung up” on us as a person, can only see our weaknesses. As the Bible says, “*Why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ*” (Romans 14:10). The Bible

calls on the church to address the sins of the members of the church but forbear with each other's in-house weaknesses. (Oh Lord, help us to do each part with love.) Many church problems can arise when some sins are overlooked, and some weaknesses are overcooked.

Here is my list of twenty strengths and their corresponding weaknesses.

Strengths/Weaknesses

1. Industrious/Selfish
2. Restless/Aggravate, agitate
3. Rise/Put others down
4. Vision/Perfectionist
5. Preacher/Never wrong
6. Creative/Manipulative
7. Dad/Always right
8. Helpful/Bossy
9. Inquisitive/Suspicious
10. Chairman/Controlling
11. Punctual/Judgmental
12. Early at it/Self-congratulating
13. Teaching/Know-it-all
14. Overconfident/Fearful
15. Successful/Boastful
16. Expressive/Complain, find fault
17. Collector/Show off
18. Traveler/Stories of self
19. Quiet/Lack of concern
20. Excellent memory/Snoopy

We judge ourselves by what we intended to say and do, whereas we

judge others by what we thought we heard them say and by what we thought we saw them do. We are naturally kind to ourselves.

Our human weaknesses will likely be noticed and mentioned by those who have not appreciated us over time. Whereas those who always have thought well of us will think of our strengths when they see us or when our names are mentioned. We scarcely think of ourselves as being stuck in such a humanness of variable judgmentalism. Choosing to love the unlovely and choosing to trust those whom we are not sure about is the way of release for ourselves. There is grace from God whenever we desire to do His will, live as Jesus lived, and think of others more highly than ourselves.

These things of human judgment can be lessened by a growing discipline in Christlikeness and by thinking less of self and more about others. On this context Jesus said, *"For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven"* (Luke 6:33, 36,


37). There is also the classic principle given by Jesus, “*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*” This verse is given in Matthew 7:12, which is easy to remember as we recognize it applies to seven days of the week and twelve months of the year (7x12).

The helpful grace of God teaches us to work on it when our inclinations are toward pride and selfishness, to where our strength can increase toward more favorable Christlikeness and our weaknesses decrease. Our dispositions and native characteristics are seldom completely changed but can be modified by the sanctification of the Spirit.

We are not discouraged by the fact that we cannot be brought to perfection in this life; God has assured us of being perfect in the life to come, in heaven. We are encouraged to know that the teaching by the grace of God is toward being “a peculiar” people, as those who are divinely “His very own, redeemed from sin, and purified unto God,” partially restated from Titus 2:11-14. That text says, “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and*

godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

The two words, “teaching” and “soberly” are translated into the word “discipline” in Luther’s German. “Discipline” is a direct link to “disciple,” which involves being taught mentally, along with a conscious mental assent, as in agreeing with Christ, and a mental consent to follow up and do accordingly in life as His disciple.

The Bottom Line is that everyone needs the crisis of saying “no” to Satan and their own fleshly desires, and saying “yes” to Jesus. From there we give consent to follow Jesus as a disciple of His and accept His discipline all through life. Conversion is the personal crisis in a moment of decision for Christ. Christian growth is the day-by-day cleansing from our personal weaknesses, which can be sins, even after we are born again. The grace of God saves us in a moment of a crisis decision, and His grace disciplines us in an intentional denial of self and the acceptance of His way to live in a continuing renewal. 

The Year That Changed Everything

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

The newscasters called it, “The Year That Changed Everything.” A black man’s life was tragically cut short and taken from him by a white man. Demonstrations broke out across the nation. Smoke rose from destructive fires in the city started by the angry mobs. Property was destroyed from riots. Looting burst into a rampage. It turned into a politically explosive environment.

The uproar and national disturbance had Bible scholars and teachers proclaiming the return of Christ is very near—at the door. It was reported that a certain pastor stopped his car, stood by the road observing the sky in anticipation of seeing the Lord coming in the clouds. The year proclaimed to be “The Year That Changed Everything” was not 2020. It was 1968. The future looked very bleak with uncertainty, doubts, and deeply felt fears. What will our three-year-old face in growing up? A young sister turned down a courting relationship out of concern of bringing children into such an unsettled world. While the faithful were expecting the Lord’s return, they continued to meet to worship,

sing, and pray. They were very active in being occupied till He comes.

Not only did the normal things of this present world change, things happened pertaining to the kingdom of God. During that era, significant and powerful ministries rose up, proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus around the world. In a certain daily devotional I read, I have a number of prayer guides to remind me to pray for these ministries that started around that time and afterwards.

It was during this tumultuous, turbulent time when the vision emerged to get Christian reading into the public marketplace, giving answers to the problems of the day. During “The Year That Changed Everything” Washington National Airport gave permission to place ten titles of Christian books on their shelves, giving travelers a choice of reading among all the other stuff. Pornographic reading was readily displayed in the public market at that time. My young child saw a near-nude model on a book cover and exclaimed, “Daddy, look there!” In following years laws were passed requiring it be behind

modesty panels. Many companies discontinued selling porn. In the meantime what started out with ten titles in one airport has increased to Christian books being available in 132 airports from 458 displays across America, flying these books around the world.

During “The Year That Changed Everything,” God moved a brother with a vision to start proclaiming the “good news” on the air. Today, this ministry is beaming the Gospel around the world into countries that are hostile toward Christianity and persecute believers. It is thrilling to follow their daily prayer guide and realize it is the making of disciples in many nations. Their “Meditate and Pray” bulletin gives a little insight of the far-reaching effect of the ministry. “Ask the Father to bless listeners to our daily Hindi language programs to northern India.” “Praise God that many listeners to our Hausa language program in Nigeria are finding hope in Jesus.” “Rejoice with us in our continuing partnership with Shema Media in Turkey.” “Pray that our ‘Hope for Today’ programs aired from Equatorial Guinea to West Africa ...will renew hope and spiritual vitality to many listeners as they too wrestle with the effects of COVID-19.” “Pray for our twice-weekly broadcasts to North Korea.”

“Pray for the persecuted believers in Sudan.” “Praise God for the many Indonesian Muslims coming to faith in Jesus.” This is a sample of this mission’s part in taking the Gospel to the lost world.

In the era “that changed everything,” God called others to proclaim the good news in those troubled times. Another vision proclaimed the gospel to the northern First Nations people. Their Daily Prayer Calendar is an affirmation to God’s work in this part of the world. Pray for “two-week family counseling program,” “chaplain at the Kenora jail,” “workshop in Island Lake, MB, this spring,” “Thank you for your prayers for First Nations Christian counselors who travel into isolated communities to help their people with grief and abuse.” Then there are the boys’ clubs and connecting with local teen girls to point them to Jesus.

During the era “that changed everything,” God’s Spirit nudged believers to take the Gospel of Jesus to thousands of inmates behind prison bars. “I was in prison and ye visited me.” This ministry has teams going to prisons, preaching and singing the “good news” in prisons across America and Canada. They provide an excellent selection of Bible study lessons for inmates, guiding them in studying the Bible.

Bibles and other Christian literature are provided for their study. Around 200,000 inmates have enrolled in these courses. Each inmate is given a personal grader who reviews the answers, grades them, and personally responds back to the student. There are 700 volunteer graders. Their “Prayer Guide” reminds us to pray for the “Bible Study Graders,” the “Spanish Graders,” the “Chaplains,” the “Prison Volunteers,” “Freedom Rallies and Seminars,” “Inmate Families,” and much more. This is a ministry that has “changed everything” for inmates, even some on death row.

One daily prayer guide is from a ministry that began years after the era “that changed everything.” It began in a small way from a vision to preach the gospel to the poor, bring healing to the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives. This mission has expanded into an exciting outreach in ministering to the poor and needy by providing food for body and soul around the world. Providing “approximately 24.5 million pounds of food, medicines, clothing, comforters, seeds, Bibles, Christian literature, and other aid” in one year is no small task. This includes two million Bibles, New Testaments, and Bible story books. They reach to the brokenhearted who

are suffering hunger and destruction in war-ravaged countries. They provide bread and milk to the elderly who are spending long days cooped up at home because of coronavirus.

The light of Jesus shines in 119 countries and territories like the Middle East, Greece, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Bahamas, Nicaragua, Haiti, and many more places in this distressed world. Then there is the mission of pointing Americans to God through billboard evangelism. A team of over two dozen brethren have had over 39,000 conversations by phone with callers in 2019 who responded to the messages on 1800+ billboards across America. This ministry has “changed everything” for thousands of people.

Many other majestic, life-changing ministries have emerged that embrace the Spirit of Jesus when He declared in the synagogue, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”* (Luke 4:18-19 NKJV). One constituency alone is reported to be involved in more than seventy outreach efforts and missions. Volumes of books

could be written about the many missions that “changed everything” in the lives of people who received the Good News of Jesus.

1968 was called “The Year That Changed Everything.” 2020 started with great New Year’s resolutions and expectations. It suddenly turned into “we’ve never seen anything like this before” and drastically changed our “normal” lifestyle. While many of us long for the good old normal, I wonder through what life-changing ministry God may be calling His saints to give healing to the oppressed and brokenhearted. Could this be the year that God calls His church to minister in ways “we’ve never seen anything like this before?” One thing for certain, the coming of the Lord is nearer than it was in 1968. The chaos in the world behooves us to let our light shine faithfully and intentionally for Jesus. The darker the night, the brighter the light when we walk with Him. Could the 2020 pandemic and riotous disturbances lead to a rising up of God’s people to bring on a great awakening just before the Lord’s return?

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3).


1. Rely on the promises of God by bringing your concerns and needs

to Him in earnest, intercessory prayer. *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus* (Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV). Someone has penned, “Prayer is the greatest work.” Be an intentional prayer warrior for God in what He is doing in missions today and what He might do in this 2020 pandemic and unrest. Many of these active missions will be glad to provide you with their prayer guides.

2. Be an active partner in supporting God’s work by regular and systematic giving of your income. What has worked well for us is to give God’s portion of our income first, at the beginning of the month, before spending on other things and coming up short at the end of the month. Perhaps you think what you can give is “only a drip in the bucket.” However, a bucket under a dripping valve eventually gets full. Give prayerfully. One missionary commented she wants “prayed-over money” to carry on God’s work. Another commented, “Rejoice with us in the generosity of God’s people that enables the Gospel to keep circling the globe.”

3. Be available. In God's encounter with Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul said, "*Lord, what do you want me to do?*" God then used Paul in a way that practically "changed everything." He was mightily empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim that Jesus Christ is the Messiah Who died for the sins of mankind, rose again, and is at the right hand of God "*who also maketh intercession for us.*" God used him to write over a dozen New Testament epistles to guide the saints in living for Jesus until He comes again. Three times in his Romans epistle he calls for believers to present or yield themselves to God. "*Present yourselves*", "*present your members*", "*present your bodies.*" Why? To become "*instruments of righteousness to God,*" resulting in sanctification,

"which is your reasonable service."

In this year that "we've never seen anything like it," say with Paul, "*Lord, what do you want me to do?*" Or with Isaiah when he heard the Lord saying, "*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me*" (Isaiah 6:8). Maybe such response might be giving a cup of water to the oppressed, an encouraging card or phone call to the brokenhearted, or an act of kindness to the discouraged. Maybe it could mean being more focused on prayer and giving to God's missions. Or maybe simply, here am I, available for His service in these trying times. Be assured God can take small deeds and make them spring up, and bear fruit, a hundredfold. God's Word assures us that our work for Him is not in vain. 

God Is Love, His Mercy Brightens

John Bowring, 1825

God is love, His mercy brightens
All the path in which we move;
Bliss He forms and woe He lightens;
God is light, and God is love.

E'en the hour that darkest seemeth
Will His changeless goodness prove;
From the mist His brightness streameth;
God is light, and God is love.

Chance and change are busy ever:
Worlds decay, and ages move;
But His mercy waneth never;
God is light, and God is love.

He with earthly cares entwineth
Hope and comfort from above;
Everywhere His glory shineth;
God is light, and God is love.

—Public Domain



marriages

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

Brenneman-Hooley

Bro. Joel, son of Lowell and JoAnn Brenneman, Falkville, AL, and Sis. Sharla, daughter of Dan and Sue Hooley, Millersburg, OH, on February 22, 2020, at Maranatha Church for Zion Church by Perry Yoder.

Fox-Miller

Bro. Jesse, son of Raymond and Alta Fox, Shiloh, OH, and Sis. Davida, daughter of David and Esther Miller, Lexington, IN, on June 19, 2020, at Hanover Baptist Church for Living Waters Mennonite church by Floyd Lengacher.

King-Mast

Bro. Ryan, son of Wendell and Ruthie King, Goodspring, TN, and Sis. Stephanie, daughter of Jay and Sarah Mast, Goodspring, TN, on July 25, 2020, at Mars Hill Baptist Church for Goodspring Mennonite Church by Perry Miller.

Kuepfer-Erb

Bro. Dale, son of Darryl and Susan Kuepfer, Verner, ON, and Sis. Julia, daughter of Allan and Linda Erb, Millbank, ON, on June 21, 2020, at Donegal Mennonite Church for Cedar Grove A.M. Church by John Gerber.

Miller-Martin

Bro. Laban, son of Omar and Rose Miller, Leon, IA, and Sis. Lori, daughter of Curvin and Esther Martin, Leon, IA, on June 6, 2020, at Leon Christian Fellowship by Darren Shank.

Mullet-Yoder

Bro. Jerry, son of John and Cheryl Mullet, Brooksville, MS, and Sis. Kendra, daughter of Dave and Esther Yoder, Newcomerstown, OH, on July 18, 2020, at Maranatha Church for Meadows of Light Amish Mennonite Church by James R. Mullet.

Troyer-Beachy

Bro. Shane, son of David and Leona Troyer, Sugarcreek, OH, and Sis. Maria, daughter of Crist and Marlene Beachy, Fresno, OH, on June 13, 2020, at Maranatha Fellowship by Paul Leroy Miller.



cradle roll

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

Beachy, David and Anna (Byler), Richmond, MO, third child, first daughter, Chloe Tzafania, June 24, 2020.

Beiler, Duane and Samantha (Hostetler), Leesburg, OH, first child and daughter, Regan Nevaeh, August 11, 2020.

Beiler, Marvin and Lydianne (Stoltzfus), Dundee, NY, fifth child, fourth daughter, Jacqueline Hope, July 22, 2020.

Bernik, Andrii and Hannah (Miller), Warsaw, OH, fifth child, third son, Andrew Patrick, August 9, 2020.

Fisher, Josiah and Janell (Stoltzfus), Lott, TX, first child and daughter, Elizabeth Claire, June 26, 2020.

Fisher, Merle and Stephanie (Byler), Lott, TX, first child and daughter, Lindsey Anne, July 21, 2020.

Gerber, Trevor and Kathryn (Schmidt), Millbank, ON, fourth child, third daughter, Zibiah Erma, March 27, 2020.

Groff, Will and Heidi (Miller), Russellville, KY, third child, second son, Karter Matthew, August 3, 2020.

Jess, Jeremy and Lorraine (Yoder), Arcola, IL, second child, first daughter, Jada Rachelle, July 5, 2020.

Kanagy, Tony and Marla (Troyer), Grantsville, MD, first child and daughter, Eleanor Robin, June 9, 2020.

Miller, Allen and Mary Ann (Hershberger), Leesburg, OH, second child, first daughter, Allison Rayne, July 27, 2020.

Miller, Freeman III and Lydia (Graber), Oskaloosa, KS, fifth child, fourth son, Byron Myles, July 1, 2020.

Miller, Jason and Allyson (Ballard), Mifflinburg, PA, third child, second son, Trevor Jace, June 26, 2020.

Schlabach, Anthony and Kari (Yoder), Lexington, IN, first child and daughter, Traci Jules, August 7, 2020.

Schlabach, Marty and Kristina (Yoder), Cochran, PA, third child, second son, Shawn Daniel, June 5, 2020.

Troyer, John Jr. and Lois (Whitt), Georgetown, OH, fourth child, third daughter, Annabelle Peace, August 3, 2020.

Yoder, Delbert and Elizabeth (Yoder), Fredonia, KY, second child, first daughter, Madalyn Kate, June 23, 2020.

Yoder, Johnny and Laura (Miller), Middlebury, IN, second child and son, Jack Riley, August 6, 2020.

Yoder, Kevin and Rhoda (Beiler), Wesley, AR, first child and son, Gabriel Edward, August 4, 2020.

Yoder, Michael and Melissa (Troyer), Kinsman, OH, second child and son, Mason Andrew, May 22, 2020.

Yoder, Ray and Alina (Miller), Minerva, OH, sixth child and daughter, Ivy Laray, July 14, 2020.

Yoder, Tristin and Lois (Hershberger), Ozawie, KS, second child and son, Glen David, June 26, 2020.

Zook, Joel and Wilma (Beiler), Leesburg, OH, third child, second son, Seth Malachi, July 23, 2020.



ordinations

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

Bro. Floyd Graber, 52, (wife, Esther Yoder), was called by the voice of the church and ordained as bishop for Maranatha Bible Fellowship, Rose Hill, VA, July 26, 2020, by Raymond Fisher, assisted by Leroy Kauffman and Dave Stoltzfus.

Bro. Ethan Stutzman, 36, (wife, Julia Miller), Advance, MO, was called by the voice of the church and ordained to the office of bishop for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church, Advance, MO, July 19, 2020. Preordination meetings were brought by David Miller, Grandview, TX. The charge was given by Floyd

Lengacher, assisted by Joshua Yoder and Gary Raber.

Bro. David Yoder, 57, (wife, Dorothy Overholt), Oskaloosa, KS, was ordained to the office of bishop for Ebenezer A.M. Church on July 12, 2020. Preordination messages were given by John Mast, Crossville, TN. The charge was given by Lawrence Overholt, assisted by Rudy Overholt and John Mast. Jonas Weaver shared the lot.

Bro. Kevin D. Yoder, 26, (wife, Emily King), Fresno, OH, was ordained as minister for Meadows of Light Amish Mennonite Church on July 12, 2020. Preordination messages were by Ivan Chupp. The charge was given by James R. Mullet, assisted by Roman B. Mullet and Bobby Miller. Ryan Miller shared the lot.



obituaries

Hochstetler, Mary, 95, of Goshen, IN, (formerly of Middlebury), died on August 6, 2020, at Courtyard of Goshen. She was born on April 18, 1925, in LaGrange County to the late Moses and Barbara (Hershberger) Glick. On February 6, 1947, in LaGrange County, she married Joe J. Hochstetler. He died October 25, 2005.

Surviving are two sons: Maynard (Laura) Hochstetler, Middlebury; Marvin (Arlene) Hochstetler, Topeka;

six daughters: Barbara Etta (Laban) Mast, Goshen; Edna Fern (Gordon) Bauman, Goshen; Irene (Daniel) Marner, Constantine, MI; Linda (Marvin) Yoder, Dade City, FL; Treva (Aaron) Bauman, Monterey, TN; Carolyn (Allen) Miller, Arthur, IL; 35 grandchildren, 71 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-granddaughter.

Besides her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by a daughter, Joanna Hochstetler, five brothers: Dan,

Milo, John, Levi, Andrew; three sisters: Elizabeth Miller, Rosa Glick, Anna Kramer; and a grandson.

Mary was a homemaker and enjoyed quilting and gardening. She was a member of Fair Haven Mennonite Church, Goshen.

The funeral was held on Wednesday, August 12, at the Fair Haven Mennonite Church. Services were conducted by the Fair Haven ministry team and a nephew, Joe Hochstetler. Burial was at Thomas Cemetery, Goshen.

Jantzi, Elmina, 98, of St. Jacobs, ON, passed on to her eternal reward on February 13, 2020, surrounded by her family at Derbeckers Heritage House in St. Jacobs. She was born January 30, 1922, in Wellesley Township to the late Noah and Katie (Zehr) Jantzi.

On September 15, 1943, she married Elmer N. Jantzi who predeceased her in 1992. They shared the joys and sorrows of married life for over 48 years.

She was baptized upon the confession of her faith in Jesus Christ and was a member of the Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite congregation.

She leaves to mourn her departure a daughter, Dorothy (Ian) Kuepfer, Wellesley; and a son, Kenneth (Bernita) of Lisbon. She is lovingly remembered by 16 grandchildren, 67 great-grandchildren, and ten great-great-grandchildren. She will be sadly missed by her three sisters: Katie Wagler, Nancy Martin, Emma (Nick) Gerber; a sister-in-law, Mary Jantzi, and brother-in-law, Floyd Kuepfer.

Along with her parents, she was predeceased by a daughter, Ethel, in 1956, her stepmothers: Mattie (Lichty) Jantzi, and Mary (Gascho) Jantzi, a brother and wife, Aaron L. and Katie Jantzi, brothers/sisters-in-law: Aaron N. Jantzi, Solomon Wagler, Amos Martin, Samuel N. and Katie Jantzi, Claytus N. and Fannie Jantzi, Ezra N. and Katie Jantzi, Nick N. and Mary Jantzi, Norman N. and Laurene Jantzi, Amanda and Emmanuel Gerber, Katie and Aaron L. Jantzi, Harvey N. and Katie Jantzi, Aaron N. Jantzi, Leonard N. Jantzi, and Laurene (Jantzi) Kuepfer.

The funeral was held on February 16, 2020 with John Gerber and Paul Jantzi serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

King, Calvin Daniel, 67, of Harrison, AR, passed away July 21, 2020. He lived over three months after being diagnosed with an aggressive cancer. He was born August 19, 1952, the son of Enos and Elizabeth (Zook) King.

Calvin was a gentle, hard worker who loved to spend time with his family. Most of all, he loved God and His Word. He was a faithful member of Cornerstone Mennonite church and is greatly missed in the church and in the home.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a brother, E. Benuel King, and a son, Lovell E. King.

Calvin is survived by his wife of 43 years, Judy (Yoder) King; his children: Yvonne (Yoder) King, the wife of their son, Lovell; son, Steven (Angela), Chiang

Mai, Thailand; son, Orlondo (Kimberly), Harrison; daughter, Hadassa (Carlin) Beiler, Harrison; son, Nathaniel of the home; six brothers: Jonas, Samuel, Mahlon, Emmanuel, Raymond, and Mark; a sister, Mary; eight grandchildren: Tirzah, Kenton, Carson, Isaiah, Abbie, Eliya, Kaitlyn, and Reagan; and a host of nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at Harrison Faith Church. Officiating were Clarence Yoder, Jr. and Elmer Gingerich.

Miller, Irene, 75, of Bremen, IN, passed away on August 1, 2020, at her home. She was born on June 3, 1945, in Nappanee, IN, to Levi and Anna (Gerber) Helmuth.

She accepted Christ in her youth and loved her Lord and Savior. She was a member of Clay Street Amish Mennonite Church. She was a lifetime resident of Nappanee with Phoenix, AZ, as her winter home.

On October 25, 1962, she married Mahlon A. Miller, who survives. She is also survived by their children: Linda (Thomas) Mast, Nappanee; Lauranna (Alpha) Miller, Owenton, KY; Lucretia (Larry) Hochstetler, Bremen; Matthew (Pam) Miller, Bremen; Marcus (Debra) Miller, Nappanee; Joyce (Joel) Helmuth, Nappanee; 33 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, a son, Mahlon Mark, granddaughter, Lynell Irene Hochstetler, brothers: Joe Helmuth and Crist Helmuth; sisters: Florence Miller, Laura

Yoder, and Mary Schrock.

The funeral was held on August 5 with Scott Burkholder and Alan Byler serving. Dan Byler conducted the committal at the Maple Lawn Cemetery.

Nisly, Timothy Allan, infant son of Wayne and Sharon Nisly, Hartselle, AL, went to be with Jesus on April 5, 2020. Timothy was born May 27, 2019, as a two lb. preemie and spent all his life in the hospital where he had excellent care.

He is survived by his parents, Wayne and Sharon, siblings: Abigail, Edward, Christina, Josiah, Andrew, Jonathan, Benjamin, Anthony, Matthias, and Micah, all of the home. Also surviving him are paternal grandparents, Sam and Arlene Nisly, Hartselle, AL, and maternal grandparents, Donnie and Naomi Brenneman, Virginia Beach, VA.

A private family funeral was held because of COVID-19 restrictions on April 8, 2020, with both grandfathers serving. Interment was at Emmanuel Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Overholt, John Martin, 64, passed away of a heart attack Saturday, April 25, 2020. He was born March 31, 1956, in Canton, OH, to Leonard and Amanda (Sommers) Overholt. He married Linda K. Troyer on September 1, 1979.

John dedicated his life to serving his heavenly Father and his family. There was nothing he wouldn't do for his family. He was a man of many talents, strengths, courage, and wisdom. His analytical skills could always conquer

the challenges, and he would tackle any project set before him. His love for architectural design served many in the building industry. He was the owner of J. Overholt & Associates and after moving to Amanda, OH, worked in sales and design for Hostetler Truss.

He faithfully served the church in many different capacities. He and his family answered God's call to pastor a small church in Belize. While serving in this capacity, he came to love the people of Belize and many of them he counted as family.

He was the best father his children could ever ask for. He leaves behind nine grandchildren, whom he loved beyond words.

In addition to his wife Linda of 40 years, he is survived by his children: Judith (Wendell) Beachy, Alexander Moses Overholt, and John Martin (Heidi) Overholt II. He also mourned the loss of infant daughter, Gabrielle Hope, and infant son, Gabriel Lyndon. He is also survived by grandchildren: Isabella, Sophia, Jackson, Elliott, and Jacqueline Beachy; Troy, John Martin III, Greyson, and Miles Overholt; his mother, Amanda (Sommers) Overholt, and siblings: Patricia (Joseph) Hochstetler, Ruth (Ronald) Border, Philip (Sara) Overholt, Joseph (Ruth) Overholt, and Christine (Sylvan) Weaver. He was preceded in death by his father, Leonard Overholt.

The funeral service and burial were held outdoors April 30 at Emmanuel Mennonite Church. Services were conducted by the Emmanuel ministry

team: Ryan Good, Kenny Beachy, and Phil Stoltzfus, with the message by cousin, Mark Wagler, Hartville, OH.

Ropp, Laverne, 65, died peacefully August 3, 2020, in Kiev, Ukraine. He was born April 12, 1955, in Kitchener, ON.

Answering the Lord's call, Laverne passed away from a massive heart attack with his faithful companion by his side.

He was the beloved husband of Elaine (Jantzi) Ropp whom he married May 28, 1977, and the cherished father of Jonathan and Marie (Byler) Ropp, Atwood, ON; Mary Ropp, Atwood, ON; Eugene and Dorcas (Lapp) Ropp, Augusta, WV; Michael and Monica (Eash) Ropp, Romney, WV; David and Arlene (Yoder) Ropp, New Philadelphia, OH; Jonathon and Donita (Ropp) Yoder, Wellston, OH; and Christine Ropp, Atwood, ON. Laverne will be sadly missed by his 18 grandchildren.

Laverne was the oldest son of the late Elmer and Edna Ropp. He was the dear brother of Stephen (Rosemary) Ropp, Brunner, ON; Donald (Laurie) Ropp, New Hamburg, ON; James (MaryEllen) Ropp, Monkton, ON; Larry (Susan) Ropp, Lucknow, ON; Andrew (Wanda) Ropp, Brunner, ON; and brother-in-law, Murray and Hannah Wagler, Crosshill, ON. He is lovingly remembered by mother-in-law, MaryJane Jantzi, Brunner, ON; and brothers/sisters-in-law: Harold and Marie Erb, Milverton, ON; Stephen and Rosemary Ropp, Brunner, ON; Paul and Nancy Jantzi, Milverton, ON; and Larry and Beatrice Jantzi, Brunner, ON.

Laverne was predeceased by his parents, Elmer and Edna (Wagler) Ropp, sister, Miriam (Ropp) Wagler, and father-in-law, Leonard Jantzi.

Laverne was ordained to the ministry at Fellowship Haven Amish Mennonite Church, Monkton, ON, September 10, 2000, and ordained bishop June 12, 2005. Laverne was presently serving as assistant pastor in Kiev Evangelical Mennonite Church in Kiev, Ukraine.

A funeral service was held in Kiev Evangelical Mennonite Church August 5. Burial was at the Mornington A.M. Cemetery, ON.

Sommers, Raymond, 95, of East Rochester, OH, entered eternal rest surrounded by his family on July 21, 2020. He was born on April 19, 1935, in Uniontown to Enos and Etta (Troyer) Sommers.

He was a lifetime farmer and member of Minerva Christian Fellowship near East Rochester.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Mary Katherine (King), five children: Karen Detweiler, Sarasota, FL; Margaret (Dennis) Miller, Louisville; John, East Rochester; Jim (Diane), Hamilton, MT; Dorothy Bender, Middleburg, PA; 17 grandchildren, and 26 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by five sisters: Amanda Coblentz, Lydiann Weaver, Emma Yoder, Katie Williams, Alma Hall; twin brother, Roman, one son-in-law, one grandchild, and several great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held outdoors near the Minerva Christian Fellowship Church.

Yoder, Retha, 58, Arlington, KS, passed away peacefully at her home on November 5, 2019, after a two-year battle with cancer. She was born November 4, 1961, in LaGrange, IN, to Amos and Edna (Yoder) Wickey.

Retha was a homemaker and especially enjoyed gardening, flowers, and entertaining guests. Retha made many friends in her years of service in Mountain View Nursing Home, VA, and the Luz y Esperanza Clinic in Paraguay. Her love for the Lord was often expressed through her joyful singing.

On March 12, 1994, she married Freeman Yoder from Kansas in Goshen, IN. After living in Indiana for eight years, Freeman and Retha moved to Kansas on a farm east of Arlington.

Retha is survived by her husband, Freeman, daughter, Kayla, two sons: Douglas (fiancée, Tammy Headings), and Joshua, all of the home; four siblings: Barbara (Maynard) Miller, Millersburg, IN; Dave (Ruth) Wickey, LaGrange, IN; Suetta (David) Beachy, Middlebury, IN; Vernon (Yvette) Wickey, Hutchinson; seven nieces, and six nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, stepmother, Viola (Mast) Wickey, sister, Irene, and one niece.

The funeral service was held at Arlington Amish Mennonite Church on November 8, 2019. Burial was at the church cemetery.



Sportsman Double Diamond is the official name of a ram lamb that turned some heads at a recent auction in Scotland. His sire was reported to have sold for \$86,000 USD equivalent and his dam for about half that. This resulting offspring demonstrated remarkable physical characteristics and conformation. A three-way partnership won the bidding war for ownership of this ovine specimen. The auction price of \$490,000 USD equivalent bested the previous world record price paid for a sheep by almost \$200,000 back in 2009.

The Texel breed of sheep originated in the region of the Netherlands that bears the same name. They are a wool breed renowned for their outstanding muscled carcasses of very lean meat. Sportsman Double Diamond is a Texel ram. The three farmers who pooled resources to purchase this ram are optimistic they will be able to market enough of these superior genetics through his offspring to justify this jaw-dropping investment.

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A family friend called my attention to something that they had noticed recently. I had never heard of Amber Teething Necklaces for teething children. Raw amber is reported to halt acne, eczema, teething pain, fever, inflammation, and other physical maladies. The theory is that when these beads come in contact with warm skin it releases small amounts of succinic acid naturally found in

these gemstones. In turn, this acid is absorbed through the skin. This process, as reported by promotional materials, “magically eliminates” pain and fevers.

Our six children are well past the teething stage. Some of them are navigating the teething journey with children of their own. But fifteen years isn’t long enough to make us forget the challenges associated with irritable, teething children. My sympathies are with parents and children currently navigating these choppy waters. However, the possibility exists that our eagerness for a solution might lead us to seek solutions that are unwise, or worse. Regarding using amber gemstones, especially necklaces for infants, I offer the following cautions:

1. People who have studied this gemstone report that succinic acid is not released from the stone until it’s heated to about 400 degrees.

2. The gemstones are referred to as very “chic jewelry” by some who market them. Not all readers of this column feel the same way about jewelry, but because of my understanding of Scripture I choose to avoid jewelry.

3. Teething children are quite young. Any kind of necklace is regarded as a choking/strangulation hazard for young children. It may be especially tempting for a parent to leave a necklace on a sleeping child if the perception exists that the presence of the necklace might

contribute to the child's comfort.

4. Some report that the efficacy of amber wanes after six months or so. Detailed instructions are available by some vendors regarding how one can "cleanse" and "recharge" the stones with appropriate "energy" when they weaken.

5. I'm thinking of three other cultures that I'm somewhat familiar with or heard about. Each of these employs a string or a bead or something else that is worn by infants and children to ward off evil or health problems. I thought the similarity of these necklaces to these other practices was noteworthy.

It can be accurately noted that my cautions are not related to the effectiveness of these stones. I have no experience with them. However, witchcraft can bring about results too. Our culture has historic ties to dark practices that were employed to address physical problems. Many who were involved in this sort of thing have come to understand that these practices needed to be rejected and forsaken when they understood that these practices weren't appropriate for a child of Christ who walks in the Light since these practices were rooted in the realm of darkness rather than the Source of Life.

When God heals, He does it freely. When our enemy offers some sort of healing, there is always a cost associated with the offer. Sometimes the cost is not evident until later, and it is never worth it.

I need to say yet, that there is much more about our bodies, the laws of

nature, etc., that I don't understand than what I do understand. Just because I don't understand how Amber Teething Necklaces could physically work without some objectionable spiritual component doesn't mean it is impossible. I may learn something in the future that modifies my considerable resolve to avoid this remedy based on my current impressions.

In the meantime, a little compassion and understanding extended toward the little ones who are teething, and their frazzled parents, would probably feel pretty good to those affected.

• • • • •

What is QAnon? According to Wikipedia, "QAnon is a far-right conspiracy theory alleging that a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles running a global child sex-trafficking ring is plotting against President Donald Trump who is battling them." While I won't vouch in every regard for this definition, it does encapsulate a few of the major themes of this theory that operates with enough ambiguity that it complicates clear definition.

An interested reader sent me a recent article that ran in World magazine written by Emily Belz entitled, "Questions About QAnon." He wondered if this might be influencing some of us conservative Anabaptist folks. I regard his question as insightful.

There are a whole variety of theories that operate under this loose umbrella called QAnon. Some of them have elements of fact. Most of them arrive at conclusions that are impossible

to independently verify by most lay people. This doesn't seem to be much of a problem for the believers of these claims since all these reprehensible things operate in top secrecy in order to avoid detection. The veracity and authenticity of these claims then rests on the assumption that "certain people" are privy to secret information. So, it is very difficult to have an objective conversation with people who subscribe to these theories.

A brief sampling of theories floated by adherents of QAnon are...

1. COVID-19 is caused by 5G technology.

2. Samaritan's Purse erected a tent hospital in a New York City park to treat COVID-19 patients this spring. Some felt that this was a marvelous guise. The theory was that these tents were placed above certain tunnels in New York City, and they were using these tents to free children from sex-slavery. Samaritan's Purse released a statement clarifying that this was not part of the operation.

3. One theory suggests that Mother Theresa was a child-trafficker, and Dr. Anthony Fauci is her son.

4. Some feel that John F. Kennedy is still alive.

5. Others believe that the COVID-19 pandemic was designed purposefully to make sure Trump doesn't get re-elected. Some believe it was a coordinated effort of multiple governments designed ultimately to control people.

Many of the ideas promoted by QAnon are a bit closer to the mainstream and

more believable than this sampling. And as I stated earlier, many of these theories progress from a grain of fact to fantastic and sinister assumptions and conclusions. A profession of Christian faith by those who promote these views is often part of the package.

I invite us to be careful about this sort of thing that supposes that only a few enlightened people really know the truth and its implications for us. This is one hallmark of Gnosticism and has been around a LONG time.

Let's take our cues from the timeless truth of Scripture. The influence of QAnon grew exponentially when people were locked down due to the pandemic. Think how much better it would be if those who name the name of Christ would have taken that opportunity to become further grounded in the Scriptures and the teaching of Jesus rather than ingesting the always-available, online message of QAnon. A proper response to the perplexities of the day are clearer if we begin with what Jesus taught and said. There is no shortage of opportunity to apply scriptural truth to our walk and talk today.

Allen Johnson has this to say about QAnon, "One of my longest and best-committed Christian friends is caught up in QAnon. No dialogue possible, he just says I'm not doing the research. Yes, my research finds Satanic deceptions and lies at the root, seducing people who are confused and frightened about the complex and rapidly changing world we live in. The ancient heresy of

Gnosticism involved secret, hidden keys to knowledge that the initiated elect would be able to unravel. QAnon that infiltrates the Church is a heresy to be soundly denounced and fought against with Truth.”

How would you answer my brother’s musing whether QAnon is influencing our branch of the church?

• • • • •

Much has been written and said regarding the voting process. After all, it’s election year. Some feel as if citizens should be able to submit a ballot by mail and others are concerned that mail-in ballots are not very secure. I’ll leave that discussion to others.

I feel quite privileged that I belong to

a select group of people who have the opportunity to “vote” early and often and in the most secure manner possible. Now maybe the privilege of praying for those in positions of civil authority isn’t exactly the same as voting. But we, the children of God, are blessed with the privilege of an audience with the Sovereign every day, not merely voting in the election of only one country every few years! Furthermore, there’s no danger in going to those polls or in our “ballot” getting lost. God is way more accessible than any politician, and He actually knows what is going on and what is best. With all due respect, He presents an immense contrast to those who run for office!

–RJM 

A Medical Analysis of the Passion of Jesus Christ (Part 2)

Curvin Gordon, Duncansville, PA

[In the previous issue the author addressed the sufferings Jesus encountered from Gethsemane to His journey to Golgotha. AY]

Jesus must carry His own cross to the site of crucifixion (John 19:17), a common sport for the condemned, yet a worthy lesson for the follower that the Crucified bore His own cross without complaint. According to the practice of the day, the upright beam itself is already planted on that Hill called Golgotha.

The “cross” that Jesus carries is the crossbeam known as the patibulum. The patibulum is rough-hewn and weighs about thirty pounds (Bishop, 1977). Jesus very likely carries this upon His back. The back of the Divine is raw with the stripes from the scourging. The rough patibulum rubs cruelly on the wounds, breaking

them open again. Possibly the patibulum is long enough that it hits against the crown of thorns still matting Jesus' head, adding again to His pain. Nothing other than Divine Love can lift the feet and move Jesus' body forward toward His final sacrifice of love. However, Jesus is too weak to bear the patibulum, and as a result, Simon of Cyrene is forced to bear this honor for Jesus (Matt. 27: 32).

The somber procession comes to the little hill outside Jerusalem. It is not a scriptural oversight that the Gospel writers give no details regarding the crucifixion itself. Crucifixion was such a horrible death that no man wished to write of the details. And yet it was the death that Christ died for you and me. The executioner lays the patibulum on the ground. Jesus, clothing removed, is thrust backward onto the ground, the patibulum fitted under his neck. His wrists are grasped and thrust onto the rough-hewn wood (Bishop, 1977). The executioner takes the rough nail and feels quickly for the hollow of the wrist, then with a few quick strokes hammers the nail through the wrist, considered in ancient times to be part of the hand (Davis, 1965). He moves to the other side and performs the same action with the other wrist. The hands will remain stretched out

for the rest of Jesus' earthly life, the arms open to invite and embrace all mankind into the Love of the Divine. Two soldiers then grab the crossbeam and lift, dragging Jesus by the wrists. The crossbeam is hoisted on to the top of the upright post, which stands about six to seven feet high (Edwards, 1986), forming a cross like an uppercase "T." The executioner then kneels down and drives the nails through the feet into the cross with the right foot likely nailed over the left foot (Bishop, 1977).

Jesus' body hangs, His arms in a "V" position, His full body weight hanging on His wrists. Three major nerves run through the wrist, and it is almost certain that the nails impinge directly on at least one of those three nerves, causing constant searing pain. The pain in the wrists is unbearable, and as Jesus hangs down, His shoulders and ribs are forced inward in an inspiratory condition, the muscles of the chest paralyzed and unable to breathe. Jesus experiences the unmistakable desperation that comes with asphyxiation. The Breath of Life must push himself up on His nail-pierced feet to intake the very air that He himself created. Three major nerves also course through the ankles into the foot, and again, as Jesus pushes Himself up on His feet, the nerves are almost assuredly

impinged, causing searing pain. Jesus alternates between pulling Himself up to breathe a few quick breaths and then slumping down to relieve the pain in His feet (DePasquale and Burch, 1963). Jesus can only take shallow breaths; the reason why the statements on the cross contain few words.

Jesus can only draw small amounts of air into His lungs. Due to this, His lungs begin to collapse. His lungs retain carbon dioxide, and His body begins to go into respiratory acidosis. His heart beats faster to compensate, His lungs fill with fluid. In the stress on His heart, fluid begins to build up in the pericardium that surrounds the heart. The fluid around the heart decreases the ability of the heart to expand and contract to pump blood.

Three hours pass by. In this time, Jesus utters six statements on the cross, one of which is a request for pardon for your and my sins. A storm is brewing on the horizon. The pain mounts. Jesus recognizes His mother, who is standing at the cross, a fulfillment of the travail of birth that came through the consequence of sin (Gen. 3:16). What woman could see her son in this travail and not relieve her own travail of giving him birth? Jesus is dying. Asphyxiation is the cause of death. Jesus pulls Himself up for one last breath, glimpses

Jerusalem, the anguish of His friends, the jeering crowd for one last time, and with the words, It is finished, (John 19:30) His body sags, His head bows. The Creator of Life is dead.

The soldier comes forward and thrusts his spear into the side of Jesus. John tells us that water and blood pour forth in direct fulfillment of the prophecy, They shall look upon me whom they have pierced (Zech. 12:10). This water and blood most likely came directly from the heart of Jesus Himself. The water was most likely fluid from the pericardium around His heart, cleansing water that had accumulated directly from the strain of love upon the Heart of the Divine. The blood is likely liquid blood from the heart that had only recently ceased beating. It is noteworthy that John does not state that water mixed with blood came forth but that rather blood and water (John 19:34) came forth. These two come forth separately, a clear demonstration of the separate doctrines of justification and sanctification that are present in the death of Jesus. Blood for the remission of sin as well as for atonement; water for regeneration as well as for purification.

The Sacrifice is over, and the Passion is finished. The body has been given, and the blood has been

shed for you and me (Luke 22:19-20). Pain, humiliation, nakedness, thorns, travail, death, and even the wiliness of a supposedly victorious but defeated serpent have all been fulfilled; the curse of sin is vanquished. The Son has truly glorified the Father in rising triumphantly from the grave on the third day and finishing the work that God has given Him to do (John 17:4). All things [are] now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled (John 19:28).

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Jumping to conclusions
IS NOT NEARLY AS GOOD
A MENTAL EXERCISE
as digging for facts.

History of Scotland Halfmoon Mission, Belize

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

The thirty or more families in Scotland Halfmoon are scattered in a dense jungle, twenty-five miles west of Belize City. It has a huge population of baboons (howler monkeys) living in the trees and eating its leaves. These can often be spied when you drive the main road through the community, jumping from branch to branch, swinging gaily with their tails. These animals are next to the lions in volume, blaring out loud roaring sounds.

Steve Yoder was a seasoned minister (bishop) from Nappanee, Indiana. He and his wife, Alice, and several of their children served at Isabella Bank, Belize, for several years. We as a young family at Double Head Cabbage deeply appreciated Steve and Alice filling the role as missionary grandparents for our children.

Steve's wisdom and counsel were easily receivable especially in relation

to church administration. He was certainly not nonchalant on various topics of discussion, which refreshed our spirits while serving the Lord in a foreign land. There was a sense of awe and reverence to our great Almighty God when Steve got behind the pulpit to preach. His appearance was one of lowliness, humility, and an unpretentious character. When the Holy Spirit ignited his heart and voice, the message of God flowed out like pouring rain and mighty thunder. It fed and nourished the deep longings in our spirits for heavenly manna.

While Steve and Alice were serving in Belize (1978-1980), they often drove through the community of Scotland Halfmoon heading to Belize City. They stopped and visited with people along the way. God gave Steve a burden for these people without a biblical Anabaptist church and no school. The children who attended school (some did not go to school)

had a distance to walk and crossed a deep river on a ferry or a dory (dug-out canoe).

Some people begged Steve to establish a school. With the blessing of Amish Mennonite Aid, the missionaries in Belize, and the wholehearted support of the community, Steve organized a school. School books were ordered, the community building was cleaned, old desks were washed down, and chalkboards were set in place. Two Belizean girls from Isabella Bank were the first teachers. School opened in September 1979, with around 22 eager students, according to a photograph of the writer.

In 1980 Amish Mennonite Aid purchased seven acres of bush land to establish a mission. A house, shop, and chicken house were constructed on the premises. Eldon and Lois Hochstetler were the first missionaries at Scotland Halfmoon, arriving in June 1981.

A unique thatch-roof church building was erected on the lot where they conducted Sunday school and regular church services. Revival meetings (two years in succession) were a marvelous blessing from the Lord of harvest. Many people received the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior. Some were further instructed in the faith and baptized.

In November 1982, the Scotland Lighthouse Mennonite Church was officially established. Eventually a schoolhouse was built on the grounds and a new church building with a metal roof and Sunday school rooms. Sadly, the mission school closed in 2011 due to uncontrollable and worldly influences of the community that permeated the institution.

Some years ago, the church members at Scotland Halfmoon, Double Head Cabbage, and Isabella Bank combined as one church calling the fellowship Zion Mennonite Church. (This was the original name of the Mennonite church in Double Head Cabbage). They have services at Double Head Cabbage and Isabella Bank on Sunday mornings with the three ministers rotating from week to week between these two villages. The people living in Scotland Halfmoon attend the church service of their choice. All three localities meet at Scotland Halfmoon for mid-week prayer meeting and Sunday evening services. The church has around forty members and is strong and vibrant. There are lots of children with a bright future.

The missionaries who served in the Pine Ridge community, today called the River Valley, remember so keenly the ferry at the Belize River and the deep ruts of the sandy road, especially through the four-mile trek

of Scotland Halfmoon with its dense jungle of harmonious music of wild life. What if someone would not have listened to the heartbeat of these people like Steve Yoder? What if a Christian school would never have been established? What if a couple would never have traveled through Mexico to Scotland Halfmoon with a truck and established their home

in this small spot in God's universe? What if the evangelist would have rejected the call to preach the gospel to these needy people? Well, we might say, someone else may have gone and shared the good news. But maybe not. Oh hallelujah! A witness and bright light is still shining today in that region of Belize.

To God be all the glory!



A Woman After God's Heart

A Garden Enclosed (Part 2)

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



(In this article we conclude a two-part discussion of a subject that will stay with us as long as there are sisters who want to mirror the image of God while living in an immodest world. May God give us wise and eager hearts!)

Let's think of it this way. God was a dress designer in the Old Testament. Adam and Eve tried aprons. But God provided coats for them. Think full cut vs. slim cut. Think conceal vs. reveal. Tunics or loin cloths? Coats or aprons?

We can be covered, yet immodest. The covering itself can be revealing. But wait. Don't we usually know in our spirit what our intentions are?

We can even be modestly clothed, yet maintain an immodest spirit. But we cannot have a modest spirit and be sensually clothed.

While walking across a parking lot in Columbus one day, I was apprehended by a man with a lady on his arm. I remember the black leather he wore, dangling chains, tattoos, and dreadlocks. He greeted me respectfully, almost stumbling

over his words, “Ma’am, uhm, do you mind if I ask you a question? What are you? You look so—holy.”

Noting his genuine earnestness, I suppressed a chuckle, and tried to put him at ease with my response. “I’m a pretty normal person really, but I am a follower of Christ. I try to live by God’s design in the Bible, and I’m part of a Mennonite church.” He thanked me, thoughtfully, as we parted. For me, the encounter was a defining moment.

We showcase the beautiful holiness of God, dear sisters! We hold an incredibly motivating, affirming, blessed, and awesome privilege to mirror His likeness. My passion is that we begin to paint modesty with positive strokes. No longer do we sigh when hearing messages on non-conformity and separation, but ours is deep soul-satisfying peace upon realizing that God chooses to invest in us His beautiful holiness, and we choose to not veil that beauty with the devil’s distractions. We are peculiar, chosen, and beloved.

All eyes hunger for beauty. Our eyes chase, move, and search intently for the next display of God’s awe-striking beauty. I feel it when I look over my rose bushes, seeking the perfect

one. I’ve seen it repeatedly when touring scenic areas. I remember the shocking beauty at Tunnel View in the Yosemite Valley. Emerging from the tunnel, we were met by the sight of El Capitan, Half Dome, and Bridal Veil Falls all at once, their imposing majesty leaving us breathless. Tourists were falling over each other, trying to capture it all with their eyes and lenses.

Val Yoder: “The beautiful character, message, and practices that flow out of a holy life lived in vital communion with the Lord Jesus Christ are the attention-getters for a broken, sin-cursed world to be drawn to the holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ! Through His holiness they become aware of their sinfulness. That awareness points them to the Savior who longs to make their lives reflect His beauty as well. When we are caught up with the holy beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ and His teaching, we will no longer look at the world to make our guidelines directly or inversely.”

Following Christ has never been culturally popular. If you find it difficult to see the beauty in holiness, reflect for a moment on the ugliness in unholiness. Picture infidelity,

A garden inclosed is my sister.
Song of Solomon 4:12

divorce, self-exaltation, substance abuse, fear, and exploitation of the vulnerable. It's one and the same package with immodesty. Hold beside that a picture of a young father, cherishing his wife and babies, or of an eighty-year-old couple, hand-in-hand. For way too long we've considered modesty and holiness as restrictive and legislative. If we regard this principle as a negative and a burden, it will become a distant memory in a short time. If we view it as a positive and a holy privilege, it will be with us to stay, and will continue to be treasured by our children's children. I Timothy 2 and I Peter 3 talk about the ornament of our spirits, and about adorning ourselves with modest apparel. Husbands have said that the quality they most appreciate in their wives is sweetness. That sweetness is not about dress/hair style or makeup. It has everything to do with countenance, tone, expression, and body language. A gracious presentation is the frame for the ornament of a sweet spirit.

In our conservative Anabaptist counter-world culture some may have interpreted modesty something akin to intentional homeliness. If we give no regard to "this goes well with that," but choose only on the basis of serviceability, we may be modest in one sense, but erring at

being a distraction to the adornment of a sweet spirit. Tasteful feminine attractiveness is not synonymous with immodesty, even as slipshod and careless does not signify modesty.

Allow me to say that middle-aged ladies can be immodestly dressed, not intentionally, but due to negligence and general blindness. If our physique has changed, our dress patterns must also change! Be aware of that, young or old, especially if weight has been gained. You may be in denial about your weight gain, but tightly fitting garments announce it loudly. If pattern adjustments puzzle you, ask for assistance.

Perhaps you scanned these articles quickly for practical applications and to see where you come out with your personal convictions. If so, here are just a few filters for consideration: V's, lines, dazzling colors, snug fit, make-up, transparency, necklines, and more. A man in your life or another godly lady can give you more powerful guidance than I can in this forum.

And perhaps you read each word carefully, reflecting on your own past stories and brushes with immodesty and resolutions to embrace God's holiness. Thank you for the examples of modesty I've seen in many of you. I am indebted to God's people for helping me form convictions,

entreating me, and helping me to slay my own willfulness. I conclude with a personal confession, in an effort to make a closing point.

I was young married. A lady whom I respected and whose approval I desired, approached me one day about an immodest aspect of the dress I was wearing. I bristled; devastated. I thought I was modest! What she said was true, but...! My immediate response was resistance. My secondary response was acknowledgement. And before long, my final response was one of gratefulness at her willingness to entreat me. I am still utterly grateful.

Another time, my daughter shared her convictions about something I wasn't keen on. My first response: it's not a big deal. By the grace of God, I reflected carefully what she was saying and today, I too gladly embrace where she drew the line. I am deeply grateful for the sisters who are willing to shine light on my foggy perception of modesty.

I submit to you a number of concise guidelines that can be effective for a daughter of God who is serious about framing His holiness in a way that portrays beautiful modesty.

1. Ask God to help you view modesty as a privilege, not a burden.

2. Study God's Word and other literature or messages on the subject.

3. Be willing to repent and change lifelong patterns and blind spots.

4. "Page through" your wardrobe with a critical eye.

5. Ask a man, whether husband, father, or other to help you analyze.

6. Invite godly women to help you define specifics.

7. Receive their wisdom gratefully, not defensively.

8. When in doubt, throw it out.

Nurture the garden inside your fence. Enjoy its beauty and production. And for God's glory, maintain the fence.

Resources:

Feminine Beauty by Evelyn Miller

The Beauty of Modesty by David and Diane Vaughan

"The Beauty of Holiness" message by Val Yoder

"Please, Sisters" tract by Simon Schrock
Separation and Nonconformity Essays, Faith Builders Colloquy, 2013

https://www.fbep.org/sites/default/files/Separation-and-Nonconformity-Colloquy-Essays_0.pdf



YOU MUST LOOK INTO PEOPLE
AS WELL AS AT THEM.

A Dark Kenyan Night

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

Mark and I were back in Kenya. The day was packed full visiting numerous friends. We had traveled the muddy back roads with the mission piki piki (small motorcycle).

After a big feast at Morris and Mary's house, Mark fought to keep the cycle upright on the slippery muddy road. I chose to get off and walk. My flip flops were soon heavily caked. Germs or not, I went barefoot. I washed the mud off my flip flops in a brown puddle close to the tarmac road and got back on the piki piki with Mark.

Finally, close to dark, tired and weary, we arrived at our former home in Ngiya. This place held so many memories. I was nearly done cleaning up when I heard someone calling my name, "Mama Mary, Mama Mary."

I called out the window, "I will come." I walked out into the dark African night with a flashlight. Irene and Jennifer, my former neighbor girls, were by the yard fence. "Our granny is dying," they sobbed. Mark went with the girls and me down the

dirt road the short distance to their home.

The two-room hut was dimly lit. The old grandmother was all bundled up in bed in the small bedroom with a dark blue beanie on her head.

I put my hand on her head. She felt feverish. Mark prayed while Irene, the young granddaughter, interpreted. We sang "Jesus Loves Me" in Luo. The words came flooding back to my mind.

I had ibuprofen in my suitcase. The girls walked with me through the darkness back to the house for the pills. When we returned, dear little motherless Idah was crying forlornly on the old worn couch. I told her to come. She limped over. I held her and looked at her swollen foot. Was it a splinter? "Soak her foot in warm salt water," I encouraged them.

"Tomorrow evening I will return, Lord willing, with Dishon," I told them. "He can look at Idah's foot and assess the health of your grandmother." It was precious to

have the privilege once again to be in this African hut with my friends, and share God's love and kindness.

The next afternoon Dishon walked with me back to Jennifer's house. He thought the granny had malaria. We gave her meds. It was a special time to visit other former neighbors with Dishon too. My neighbors were pleased to greet Dishon and me. The children followed us. I left colorful

calendars and some books.

On Sunday morning we told the girls and their granny good-by. They were sad. Only God knows if we will meet again.

There is much illness and disease in Africa. The night is so dark without Jesus. Jesus is the Light of the world. His love dispels darkness. Here or there, will we share His light and love?



youth messages

Blessings in Service (Part 2)

To Serve or Not to Serve

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

As we continue to look at the topic of voluntary service, I reached out to the administrators of Faith Mission Home and Mountain View Nursing Home. I felt they may have some insights for us and asked them to answer a few questions. The first question I asked was, **“What qualifications and qualities do you look for in a volunteer service worker?”** Howard Eichorn from FMH had this short list.

1. New birth experience/born again Christian. 2. Member in good

standing in home congregation. 3. Obedient to church standards. 4. Respectful to those in authority/relating well with authority. 5. Able to live and work agreeably with others. 6. Dependable worker, fulfilling responsibilities well. 7. Being a team player. 8. Willingness to learn.

I found it interesting that many of the things mentioned in this list are also mentioned or referred to in some way by the following answers to this question that I directed to some former and current VS workers, **“What advice would you have for**

someone who is considering a term of service?”

“Go into your term of service fully committed. God will change you and help you grow if you let Him. Let go of self and realize how small you are, but realize what a great impact you can have.” Bryce Raber, current staff at Faith Mission Home

“Don’t think that going into service is going to fix your problems—you take them with you... Choose your place of service wisely. Talk to people who have been there before and make sure it’s going to be a healthy place for you to go... Never go without the support of your parents and church. It will be a life-changing experience that you will not regret.” Miranda Miller, current staff at Mountain View Nursing Home

“Follow God’s call on your life. Be prepared to experience hard things, but remember that even in the middle of difficulty, God is there. He is growing and shaping you to become more like Him. If you are considering a term of service in another country, remember that your culture is not elite. Be humble and be willing to do things their way, even though your way might be more efficient or easier. Relationships are more important than your agenda.

Be a learner!” Melody Lapp, current teacher at Olive Branch Mennonite Mission, Grenada

“Go for it!! Do it while you can! If you ever get married, you won’t have the opportunity again. However, if you do choose to go into service, be wise with your time!! It’s very easy to think that I’m serving all the time, so I don’t need to spend time with God as much. This is not true!!! You can either use your time in service to change you, or you can waste that time and go backwards in your spiritual life. If it’s tough, you’re growing.” Aaron Lapp, current staff at Choice Books of Kansas

“Go with an open heart and mind, be open to new ways and to put your entire heart into whatever you are doing. Don’t look at it as a job or just a term of service, but as an opportunity to serve those God brings into your life.” Monica (Yoder) Mast, former staff at Penn Valley Christian Retreat

“If you feel called to go into service, do it with all your strength! Whether it’s building relationships, socializing, or simply being prompt and on time for whatever job or activities you’re to attend! I feel like too many young people miss a huge blessing by only giving 80% of their effort during their time of service, only to realize and

regret this when they leave their place of service. The spiritual blessings and the lifelong friendships are definitely worth every ounce of strength put into your life in service.” Matthew Miller, former staff at Mountain View Nursing Home.

What are some common threads you saw through these testimonies? Did they match what the administrators were looking for? Coincidence? I think not!


The second question I asked the administrators was, **“When you ask someone to consider a term of service and they turn down the opportunity, what are some of the reasons that they give for their choice?”** Mark Yoder (Personnel Director at Mountain View Nursing Home) had this to say. *“Here are the reasons I’m given most often. 1) I have other plans made already such as teaching school, dating, or other mission opportunities. 2) I just don’t have a clear leading to do this. 3) I don’t have my parents/church leaders’ blessing. 4) I have financial obligations that don’t allow me to do this. 5) I just don’t see myself working at a nursing home.”*

Some of these reasons are things that we cannot change. Howard Eichorn from Faith Mission Home

said he had been given reasons of health concerns, family and work obligations, and need for growth in their relationship with their parents. A key thread I saw woven through this was the need for the blessing of parents and church leaders. This is not a coincidence. As a former VS worker, I have experienced the tremendous blessing it is to have your family and church supporting you 100%. God often speaks through our parents and the church. Pushing ahead without that blessing would make us a candidate for my next question. **“What are some behaviors and attitudes that can be a detriment to a place of service and possibly lead to termination of the service worker’s term if not corrected?”**

Voluntary service is such a blessing as is evidenced by the encouragement of those who have served or are currently serving a term in voluntary service. Is God calling you to serve? What are you doing to prepare if He does call you? What can you do now that will help prepare you for VS?

To be continued...

[Thanks to Howard Eichorn, administrator at Faith Mission Home, and Mark Yoder, Personnel Director at Mountain View Nursing Home. JKJ] 

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No one who ever followed Christ ever went astray.

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Jesus often spoke of Christianity as a banquet but never as a picnic.

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Some learn from experience—others never recover from it.

• • • • •

There is nothing like a little experience to upset theory.

• • • • •

Bad men excuse their faults—good men abandon them.

• • • • •

The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none.

• • • • •

Faith is the daring of the soul to go farther than it can see.

• • • • •

The feeblest knock of faith opens heaven's door.

• • • • •

Nothing is politically right that is morally wrong.

• • • • •

An apology is a good way to have the last word.

• • • • •

It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend.