



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

Galatians 6:14

JANUARY 2005

Meditation

Let Us Be Prayerful 1

Editorial

The Nicolaitans 2

Reader Response 5

Vaccinations—Part Two 6

The Bottom Line

Election Reflections 9

What Happened in the Election? 11

Marriages 15

Cradle Roll 15

Ordinations 16

Obituary 17

Observations 18

What Do They Think? 21

Mission Awareness

Paul Kauffman, 1937-2002 26

A Scriptural Formula for Resolving Issues in the Church 29

Examine Yourself 30

Abundantly Blessed 31

Helpers at Home

The Proverbs 31 Woman—Part 6 32

Junior Messages

A Melody of Love 34

Youth Messages

Just Friends 35

Worker Needs 37

Thought Gems back cover

JANUARY 2005

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 Saviour;
 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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Let Us Be Prayerful

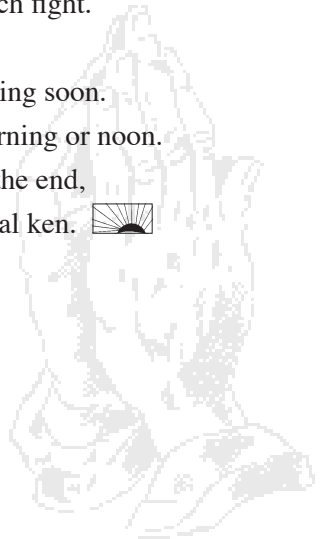
*Gloria Mast
Caneyville, KY*

Let us be prayerful; the Master is near.
Let us be careful; each word He does hear;
Let us be joyful, let us adore Him,
Let us be reverent and bow low before Him.

Let us be watchful; the tempter is nigh,
Bringing his pitfalls in on the sly.
Let us be mindful of needs all around.
Be willing to share, for blessings abound.

Let us be tearful when others are sad;
Let us be happy when some heart is glad.
Let us be loving, though someone may spite.
Let us be peaceful, try parting each fight.

Let us be ready—the Lord’s coming soon.
He may come at midnight, at morning or noon.
Let us be faithful, all the way to the end,
In Heaven to dwell, beyond mortal ken.



The Nicolaitans

“**B**ut this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate” (Rev. 2:6). These strong, arresting words, spoken by Christ Jesus to several churches in Asia Minor, deserve our careful consideration.

What were the deeds of the Nicolaitans? Who were these people? What can we learn from the fact that the Lord hates their deeds? Many Bible students believe that they were people in the early church who disagreed with the decisive action of the early church leaders in Acts 15 and the fact that these decisions became “decrees for to keep” (Acts 16:4). The Nicolaitans apparently thought the church’s leaders had erred in spelling out four prohibitions, even though the apostles and elders had carefully and prayerfully arrived at their conclusions with this guideline: They meant “To lay upon [early Gentile Christians] no greater burden than these necessary things” (Acts 15:28).

I think what may have caused the most problem for them was the first of the four prohibitions: “That ye abstain from meat offered to idols.” (Acts 15:29a)

The Apostle Paul even mentioned how he conducted his life on this issue, and how he avoided causing offense. He saw the implications of allowing his own freedom to rule over the consciences of his brothers in Christ. He wrote in Romans 14:21, “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” In 1 Corinthians 8, the whole chapter deals with this issue and teaches that taking such liberties when a weaker brother’s conscience forbids it, is neither charitable nor safe.

Paul, however, counseled against asking questions about the source of meat when buying in a public market. In 1 Corinthians 10:23-33, he clarifies that all foods may be eaten, unless the context of such eating brings with it additional considerations aside from simple questions of nutrition. Included in this presentation is the inclusive statement, twice given: “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof,” (verses 26 and 28), implying that the “clean and unclean” classifications of the old covenant are obsolete.

It is not easy to give up one’s per-

sonal freedom for the sensitive conscience of a brother. But it is right. Sometimes Christians must choose what is safe for the larger family of faith, rather than simply what their own conscience might clear.

The Nicolaitan problem was addressed several times: Ephesus (Rev. 2:6) and Pergamos (Rev. 2:14,15) and possibly also Thyatira (compare 2:20 with 2:14). Here's a quote from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:

"The Nicolaitans disobeyed the command issued to the gentile churches, by the apostolic council held at Jerusalem in 49-50 AD, that they should refrain from the eating of 'things sacrificed to idols' (Acts 15:29). Such a restriction, though seemingly hard, in that it prevented the Christian communities from joining in public festivals, and so brought upon them suspicion and dislike, was yet necessary to prevent a return to pagan laxity of morals."(From Volume 4, page 2142, boldface added)

Let us not despair when we are blamed for being legalistic in our efforts to make relevant the life of Christian obedience in our time. While specific applications are limited to time and place and do not have the enduring quality of the inspired Word of God, they are necessary if we are to give practical expression to

principles of biblical truth.

No, church standards are not written in the "indelible ink" of the God-breathed Bible, but are ideally written with the safety concern of: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Setting group standards with concerned carefulness accepts the premise that the church is given delegated, divine authority to make guidelines derived from biblical principles. According to what the Lord Jesus told the early churches when He warned them about the error of the Nicolaitans, it is spiritually hazardous to regard such guidelines lightly.

• • • • •

Edward H. Yoder, 1932-2004

When Ed Yoder, widower for three months, went to the hospital for surgery on October 29, 2004, we hoped the doctor could remove the sizable tumor in his abdomen and get him on his feet again. It was not to be. The surgery was not successful and the doctor could not risk removing the tumor. Six days after that, on November 4, 2004, Ed's body succumbed to the trauma of infection that set in after the surgery.

I first met Edward at a benefit auction in the late 1970's and I distinctly remember having him approach me with a sprightly step and a smile. We exchanged names and got briefly

acquainted.

Later their family moved from Anderson County, KS, to Reno County. We saw that God had graced him with an unusually enthusiastic and friendly personality. We also noted that while he was earnest in preaching, he never seemed unkind. That combination made listening to him preach a joy and inspiration.

His preaching was not only in the pulpit. Seldom have I met a man who as readily struck up a conversation with strangers as he did. He would often lead everyday conversation onto a spiritual topic, as soon as it was feasible. While he was a hard worker, work was not more important than Kingdom interests. He was diligent about his Father's business.

As the years went by, he and I worked together in church work for the flock at Thomas, Oklahoma, some 4 hours away, for most of 16 years. We (Ed and Laura and Martha and I) traveled there and back numerous times and found good fellowship as we did so. In the course of those many miles, I don't think I ever heard him make a sarcastic remark.

"Speaking the truth in love"—that's one outstanding thing I re-

member about my dear, departed brother. Note the obituary in this issue.

• • • • •

In this issue we include two articles about the national election in November, 2004. I trust we can appreciate the concern these reflect. Permit me to add my simple comments to this discussion.

One reason I cannot conscientiously participate in a national election is because the President is Commander-in-Chief of U. S. armed forces. Jesus said in the trial that sentenced Him to death, "**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).

With no disrespect, I think we simply have more important things to do than things political. It is as Jesus clearly implied at 12 years of age, when he asked his distressed parents, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49 NKJV).

Let us be busy with His business!

—PLM



Faithfulness

Dear Sir,

Greeting you all in most blessed name of our Saviour Lord Jesus Christ. My sincere thanks to you all for your kind remembrance of me and for I regularly receive Calvary Messenger. I heartfully wish and pray that Lord will richly bless your ministry in His vineyard.

In Sept., 2004, CM, page 1, under the caption "Faithfulness," it is mentioned that Elisha went to the widow's house at Zarephath. Was it Elisha or Elijah? Kindly clarify the same.

Bro. Julian
71/2RT (10-3-396)
Vijayahagas Colony
Hyderabad – AP
INDIA – 500057

[Bro. Julian: Thank you for pointing this out. You are right; I failed to notice the error. In 1 Kings 17:8-16, the account is given. The second part of the poem refers to Naaman. Elisha ministered to Naaman. 2 Kings 5 gives that account. —PLM]

• • • • •

Choices That Matter

Bro. Simon,

Greetings from Kansas. Last Sunday evening a young brother used Psalm 90 and your story on Pedro.

("Choices That Matter," Oct., 2004, p. 25) Several times he paused because of emotions. I was blessed by reading it earlier and blessed further by noting the effects it had on him. Keep up the good work.

Rudy Overholt
Lyndon, KS

• • • • •

To the editor:

Here's a thought gem. "Living water isn't drawn from a wishing well."

A personal note about the headship veiling more literally covering: I have looked at Strong's and now figure literally along with the common observation of context... I think of Christ's cover for us, not partial, of course, comprehensive.

My unofficial fiancée is yet to agree with me. If you see me wrong, here, then please let me know. Local ministry is quiet about it, by fearfulness or carefulness, I don't know.

(name withheld by the editor)

[I welcome thoughtful, Scriptural comments on the concern this man expresses. We may print them in this column in the future. —PLM]

• • • • •

The Terrible Price of Darkness

Enclosed are all but two of the books we ordered. After reading one,

I felt I wouldn't want to sell them in our store. Sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you.
(name withheld by the editor)

[Have other readers found reason to question the value of this book?

—PLMJ



Vaccinations – Part Two

By the editor

In August, 2004, I wrote about the experience of an anonymous family who felt unduly exposed to illness by families who chose not to vaccinate their children for common communicable diseases. This couple's "special needs" child, now deceased due to other causes, was especially susceptible to disease. They felt seriously inconvenienced by acquaintances who opted not to vaccinate their children.

I sided with those who vaccinate, but invited input from readers. In this article I will acknowledge feedback and attempt to represent some of the sentiment that was brought against vaccination. I will also give input from several who practice medicine. Let me acknowledge that I do not expect to resolve this debate. This writing will simply attempt to present some comments on both sides of the question.

Con

"There is no more heated and vociferous debate today than the topic of vaccinations," writes Dr. Joseph

Mercola, who opposes vaccination. He further comments, "We should seek truth with an open mind and a glad heart." While I cannot vouch for the first statement, I heartily endorse the second.

Objections to vaccination include: **1)** the excessive profits pharmaceutical companies realize; **2)** the "gargantuan lie of evolution;" **3)** the claim that vaccinations are distorting and afflicting our immune systems; **4)** and the possibility of bioterrorism by contaminated vaccines. One pediatrician supplies his clients with information against vaccination found in a book by Neil Z. Miller, *Vaccines—Are They Really Safe and Effective?* (R. Garden, Inc., P.O. Box 417, Kettle Falls, WA 99141-0417 Price: \$6.35, +\$5, S&H)

I know one adult person who carries serious lifelong disability from a childhood vaccination gone awry. Any time medical mistakes occur, we all sorrow and the medical community loses credibility. Vaccination with bad results is no exception.

Pro

I inquired from three medical doctors for their comments on this issue:

1. Dr. Jana Nisly, MD, has been practicing medicine in rural El Salvador for over a decade. She reported that government methods there strongly urge parents to get the protection of vaccination against a handful of the most common communicable diseases.

“But what do you think of it?” I persisted. Her comments indicated that she believes that it is advisable to be vaccinated and that those who choose **not** to vaccinate, are actually benefiting from those who **do**, because epidemics, she believes, are held at bay by vaccination. She pointed out that pandemics which decimated large numbers of a regional population were fairly common before the days of mass vaccinations.

2. I also brought this question to Dr. LaVerne Miller, MD, Hicksville, Ohio. He sent me material from the book, *Vaccines: What You Should Know* by Paul A. Offit, MD, and Louis M. Bell, MD. The cost: \$14.95 from your local bookstore or www.wiley.com

Chapter 15, (p. 92-115), “Common Concerns about Vaccines” lists the following concerns most commonly brought against vaccination: (After

each objection and concern the writers present their viewpoints to answer that concern with an informed medical response.)

- Vaccines don’t work.
- Vaccines aren’t necessary.
- Vaccines are not safe.
- Infants are too young to get vaccinated.
- It’s better to be naturally infected than immunized.
- Children get too many shots.
- Vaccines weaken the immune system.
- Vaccines “use up” the immune system.
- Some vaccines contain other infectious agents that may damage my child.
- Vaccines cause autism.
- A mercury— containing preservative (thimerosal) contained in many vaccines harms children.
- The hepatitis B vaccine causes sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Pharmaceutical companies occasionally manufacture lots of vaccines that cause high rates of adverse events (“hot lots”).
- Vaccine— preventable diseases occur more often in vaccinated people than in unvaccinated people.
- The hepatitis B vaccine causes arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and long— term (chronic) neurologic disorders.

— The DTP vaccine causes a disease that looks like “shaken baby” syndrome.

— The polio vaccine is the cause of AIDS.

— The polio virus vaccine is contaminated with a virus that causes cancer.

— Vaccines may contain the agent that causes “mad-cow” disease.

3. When I discussed vaccination with Dr. Nolan Byler, DO, Mt. Eaton, Ohio, he reported essential agreement with my comments in the earlier article in *Calvary Messenger*. He sees the risks as small when compared with the benefits in preventing and controlling an epidemic. He mentioned that epidemics still occur where large populations are not vaccinated.

So Then...

You wouldn't expect me to undertake discussion of all that came to me on these questions. What was sent is far more extensive and intricate than my meager medical orientation can handle. It would be somewhat parallel to asking a man who grew up in a remote jungle setting, who never used a motorized vehicle, to overhaul the engine in my car. He would surely face much learning by trial and error.

If one's acceptance or rejection of vaccination rests on religious reasons, we must, first and fore-

most, do what we believe biblical obedience requires. In that case it is simply as Peter observed in Acts 5:29a, “We ought to obey God rather than man.”

Let me acknowledge that alternatives to mainline, traditional medicine are available. While I do not quickly consider alternatives, I would be narrow-minded to maintain that no one but medically trained persons can discover effective treatment. Medical discoveries have been made by non-doctors.

Let me also mention that I have high regard for some chiropractors.

Furthermore, I do not argue that current medical costs are defensible. They seem, in fact, excessive to me! I have sometimes theorized about what it is that drives up medical costs. One is the high cost of malpractice insurance. For instance, I know of one doctor who pays \$100,000 per year for such protection. A second hike to our costs is the patients that simply cannot pay. It looks to me as though our medical costs are about triple of what they ought to be. We pay for: 1) services rendered to us, 2) malpractice insurance, and 3) to compensate for the nonpayment by those unable to pay. If we could pay just for the first item, it wouldn't be so bad. Obviously, we live in a fallen world. In the perfect abode Jesus is preparing there is no sickness. Hal-

lelujah!

Nor do I think that Christian people honor God by turning to Him for healing only after all other avenues have been tried. Prayer to God is ideally the Christian's "first thought," not his "last resort." When illness occurs, it seems to me that Christian families rightly first pray and seek God's healing. At times, they will reach out to their pastoral team for prayer and anointing with oil.

It does not, however, seem faithless to me for Christians to consult with medical professionals. Clearly,

whether seeking treatment or prevention, prayer for healing and health as God wills, is the Christian's spiritual birthright. I conclude that when I am trying to find my way through a health problem, after religious considerations have been factored in, **my best option is simply to consult the best authority I know.** As I read what readers sent to me, it seems clear that that is exactly what those who contacted me are already doing. May your families enjoy good health!



the bottom line

Election Reflections

*Aaron Lapp
Kinzers, PA*

Has anyone noticed? The election is over! The news writers are in their mode of post-election analysis.

Exit polls indicate that 81% who voted for George Bush did so for moral considerations. Values, they say, were considered over other issues. This simple fact is unsettling to the party who lost, since they had not made morality a big campaign matter. But people still know. Being

for abortion and same-sex marriages are still associated with a vacuum of values and morals. Some things just go together.

Plain people in Lancaster County went out to vote in record numbers. In just one local township, registered voters this year went from 1,000 to 1,729 on record.

Amos (last name withheld) was on hand to help his brethren who came to vote. Election workers sent inter-

ested people to Amos, because “he had more experience.” More members of the plain community voted this time for the simple reason, as Amos put it, “Bush has better morals. But if Bush loses,” he continued, “I’ll be happy anyway. I’ll pray for Kerry that he’ll see the light and rule this country in a God-fearing way.”

At two campaign appearances by Bush this summer and fall here in Lancaster County, the Amish came out in great numbers.

Several plain people placed signs in their lawns or bumper stickers, sometimes on their mail boxes. This President Bush seems to connect better with them than any previous president.

Local liberal Mennonites are said to have voted against Bush, probably because of the war in Iraq. How can they do that? Because of their strong emphasis on peace, an identification mark of their current witness.

One of their own told me with strong feeling, “Every nation will be faced with the question of war. We need to get beyond that and think of moral values and thus make our choices.” Was he against prevailing sentiment in his church? Perhaps that is why he felt so strongly about it.

Is it possible that the Anabaptist

vote was neutralized? If the liberal vote matched the conservative vote, little was accomplished, besides the fact of exercising one’s freedom to vote. Our newspaper had a picture of a married couple in Freemont, Ohio, with their arms around each other. Her lawn sign was in support of Bush; his was for Kerry. What feelings might they have had as they left the voting booth, each offsetting the other’s vote. It could be representative of the Anabaptist family’s voting record.

What is the bottom line? Make it two lines: 1. If the Anabaptist family is drawn more and more into politics, this can expend a lot of energy that is neutralized, if we merely offset each other at the polls. 2. The other bottom line in the recent election was needing to choose between an unfortunate war in Iraq and approval for abortion and same-sex marriage. Neither option seems desirable to New Testament, nonresistant Christians.

As long as we let our political involvement be limited to submitting “to every ordinance for the Lord’s sake,” and praying for the “king and all that are in authority” we do not paint ourselves into a tight, unbiblical corner.



What Happened in the Election?

Simon Schrock

Fairfax, VA

When the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in favor of “gay marriages,” an alarm went off across the nation that carried the issue into the presidential campaign. President Bush favored a constitutional amendment to define marriage as being a bond between a man and a woman, which would ban “gay” marriage in the U.S. Mr. Kerry opposed the amendment.

Other campaign issues included abortion. The President declared all of life sacred, including the unborn. His opponent clearly articulated that he would do all he could to protect a woman’s right to abortion and to appoint judges to the Supreme Court that would protect her right to choose. This would continue to lawfully protect the ungodly practice of killing 4,000 babies a day in the U.S.A.

Another hotly debated issue was terrorism and the war in Iraq. Each side boasted of doing a better job than the other. The difference in the two is still unclear. The national moral issues were of great concern to Christians. The realization that gay marriage further invites the judgment of God weighed heavy on

godly hearts. Raising our families for Christ in a culture whose laws now protect sins that once were unlawful and punishable by the state is not a light matter.

These “hot button” issues brought people on both sides to the polls in record numbers. Poll takers predicted a very close election with some giving the edge to the liberal side. Election day exit polls were showing a big win for Senator Kerry, including the swing states of Florida and Ohio. Some Kerry supporters believed many voters would “Sleep till noon, drink beer, and vote for Kerry; and put him over the top.” Columnist Jack Kelly wrote: “For about eight hours Tuesday, his many fans in the news media imagined John Kerry was going to be the next president of the United States.” Kerry’s running mate was anticipating a big celebration in Boston. Around nine o’clock the excitement turned to concern and later to desperation.

The Democratic hopefuls were not the only ones that were concerned. It was reported that en route from Texas to the White House, administration officials became sickened at the prospect of a vast landslide against the incumbent. Yet, in the

end, President Bush was re-elected with over 60 million votes, while Mr. Kerry received something over 57 million. The constitutional amendment on marriage received a large margin of support wherever it came to vote. The liberals in the media and political arena are asking, “What went wrong?”

Bush Foes

“Anybody But Bush” was the slogan of many Bush detractors. Three billionaires alone spent over \$60 million to defeat the president. Newspapers and television fabricated unfavorable stories about him. “Project for Excellence in Journalism” found that 59% of stories about Mr. Bush were negative, while only 25% of stories about Mr. Kerry were negative.” Jack Kelly wrote, “The entire liberal establishment—not just in America but worldwide—tried to beat George Bush by means foul as well as fair.”

Voters in the Mennonite Church USA went 73% for Kerry. In spite of the Bush detractors and Mennonite voters, Kerry lost. What went wrong?

What Some Say Happened

Political analysts and news editors are giving plenty of opinions. Evangelicals say the 79% of their votes and the 52% of Catholics are what gave the incumbent another four years. Some declare that moral

values brought out the voters. Others credit 9/11. What happened in this election will be studied for years to come.

Hollywood and the press were counting on the polls that favored Kerry, but as one newsletter stated, they “overlooked the clout of values voters, Wal-Mart Republicans and Evangelical Christians.” Some in the “gay” community now say the “gay marriage” issue was ill-timed, and that they should have gone for a less controversial agenda. Kerry himself now blames his defeat on Osama bin Ladin’s video released just days before the election. According to *The Washington Post*, it will be weeks “before we know exactly what went wrong.”

What Really Happened

I’ve lived through at least 14 presidential elections that I remember. Many of them were thought at their time to be the “the most important and decisive” in our history. However, I do not recall an election where there was so much emphasis on prayer. As November 2 drew near, phone conversations with people in other communities often led to the subject of the pending election. What stood out is that **people were praying**. There was a calling on God for leaders that would be favorable to righteousness, for God to have mercy on us while at the same time

recognizing the sinfulness of godless living in the land. From the Amish community that called for prayer and fasting, to the special prayer meetings in our churches, to a large Christian congregation in Washington, and no doubt many others, people were calling on God to intervene in this election. Hearts were burdened because of the ungodly direction some candidates want to lead this nation.

My thoughts go to 2 Chronicles 7:14, “If my people which are called by my name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

God heard the cry of His people who were burdened about moral issues and the shape of the future Supreme Court. While I realize that others may disagree, it is my humble opinion that the prayers of God’s people are what has the analysts still asking, “What went wrong?” After all, the poll takers probably missed the prayer meetings.

Another thing that is pertinent is that the exit poll takers must not be well-versed in God’s Word that Daniel proclaimed. He reminds us, “But there is a God in heaven,” (Daniel 2:28a), and “that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and

giveth it to whomsoever He will.” (Daniel 4:17b).

Sigh of Relief?

Does this mean a great victory for God’s people? Has the kingdom of God advanced? Does this mean we can breathe a sigh of relief and rest on our oars? No, this election did not and will not usher in the kingdom of Christ. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). The election allows a sigh long enough to catch our next breath and make sure we are fully armed for the battle that continues “against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph. 6:12).

The Battle Goes On

Only weeks after a nice concession speech, Mr. Kerry has called the liberal troops back to action to “fight the values assault and renew the battle against President Bush.” It’s politics as usual.

In the religious arena, the liberal leaders are saying they need to address the “God gap,” turn up the heat and fight for their liberal agenda. The gays plan their legal attacks—in the right place, at the right time. They want to use language that is friendlier. Instead of the term “gay-lesbian marriages,” they hope to “mainstream same-sex couples.” They hope for town hall meetings and rural barbecues for honest discussions with people who disagree with them. The abortion rights people are

gearing up to fight for “pro-choice” as a truly American value.

Where Does This Leave Us?

1. We can be assured of God’s hand in shaping history. In Genesis 3:15, God gave the promise of the Savior. God directed events and kings across thousands of years until “the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (See Gal. 4:4,5)


2. We are part of Christ’s unshakable kingdom. “Wherefore we received a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and fear. For our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28,29). In this kingdom Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and He will not be ousted out of office.

3. We are Christ’s ambassadors. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20a). The government and this administration will not invite people to faith in Jesus Christ. That is our job.

4. We have the promise of the Lord’s return. He said, “Occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13). This elec-

tion did not usher in the Kingdom of Christ. The result may hold back the advance of evil practices. It may give Christ’s disciples more freedom to proclaim the Gospel. At any rate, we should be diligent in using our freedoms in the Lord’s work.

When it comes to promoting a candidate, a *USA Today* reader passed on some good advice: “Recently my pastor told us what while issues are critical, it is more important to share God’s love, reach out to our fellow man and share the Good News. By putting a sign in the yard we would have risked polarizing our neighborhood. We have a long way to go in our neighborhood. But this is a start.” (Letter to the editor 11-8-04) [This reader seems to acknowledge that a testimony of our spiritual values makes greater impact for His Kingdom than does expressing our political views. —PLM]

We journey from birth to eternity. We travel with temporary citizenship privileges granted by world governments. For a safe and peaceful journey, we pray for our governments, we pay toll (taxes), we obey the traveling rules, and we witness about our real King, the Lord Jesus Christ. 

Worry is a misuse of the imagination.

marriages

Eicher-Miller

Bro. Reuben, son of Levi and Leona Eicher, Whitehall, IL, and Sis. Rosina, daughter of Norman and Martha Miller, Roodhouse, IL, on March 24, 2004, at Whitehall First Baptist Church for Rehoboth A.M. Church by Marvin Yoder.

Oatney-Yoder

Bro. Jared, son of Brent and Susan Oatney, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Yolanda, dau. of David and Susanna Yoder, Partridge, KS, on Nov. 27, 2004, at Cedar Crest for Center A.M. Church by David Yoder.

cradle roll

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

Eicher, Tim and Judy (Lengacher), Grabill, IN, sixth child, fifth son, Jaden Lynn, July 18, 2004.

Gingerich, Carl and Joy (Kratzer), Nicaragua, C. A., second child and dau., Ariana Faye, Oct. 12, 2004.

Glick, Myron and Joleen (Lapp), Himrod, NY, first child and dau., Victoria Ann, Aug. 31, 2004.

Graber, Loren and Katherine (Yoder),

Stutzman-Greenauer

Bro. Owen, son of Perry and Judith Stutzman, Hutchinson, Ks, and Sis. Wanda Greenauer, dau of Bill and Marvalene Boyd, Macon, GA, at Montezuma A.M. Church, Montezuma, GA, Oct. 30, 2004, by Donnie Swartzentruber.

Wickey-Yoder

Bro. Brian, son of Vernon and Yvette Wickey, Hutchinson, KS, and Sis Darla, dau. of Norman and Mary Yoder, Grantsville, MD, at Maranatha Church for Mountain View A.M. Church, Aug. 21, 2004, by Jerry Yoder.

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

Russellville, KY, fifth child, third dau., Jessica Dawn, Nov. 2, 2004.

Herschberger, Andy Ray and Leona (Plank), Sullivan, IL, second child, first dau., Lara Jean, Nov. 14, 2004.

Hershberger, Michael and Gloria (Nisly), Hartselle, AL, fifth child, third dau., Carla Diane, Nov. 9, 2004.

Keeney, David and Faith (Wanner), Roodhouse, IL, seventh child, fourth dau., Frieda Carol, Sept. 29, 2004.

Martin, James and Dora (Nissley), Nokesville, VA, eighth child, sixth dau., Deborah, Nov. 1, 2004.

Miller, Arno and Linda (Nisly), Hutchinson, KS, second child, first son, Landon Harley, Nov. 25, 2004.

Miller, Kim and Monica (Beachy), Sugarcreek, OH, third child, first son, Nevan Cole, Nov. 3, 2004.

Miller, Mark and Maureen (Beachy), Newcomerstown, OH, second child, first son, Eli Mikhail, Oct. 26, 2004.

Miller, Matthew and Liz (Coblentz), Sugarcreek, OH, sixth child, third son, Hans Matthew, Nov. 19, 2004.

Raber, Matthew and Leona (Lapp), Antrim, OH/Romania, third child, second son, Jared Lynn, Oct. 30, 2004.

Schlabach, Lamar and Rosa (Garcete), Middleburg, PA, fourth child, first dau., Destiny Jennifer, Oct. 29, 2004.

Stutzman, David and Rebecca (Troyer), Roodhouse, IL, second child and son, Kaleb Glen, June 24, 2004.

Weaver, Harry and Rhodora (Stauffer), Russellville, KY, third child, second dau., Katrina Rose, Oct. 26, 2004.

ordinations

Bro. Mark Gingerich, 33, Mountain View, AR, was ordained to the office of minister at Shadylawn Mennonite Church on Nov. 21, 2004. Preordina-

Yoder, Delbert and Rosetta (Yoder), Shipshewana, IN, fifth child, fourth son, Mikaylen Chase, Nov. 11, 2004.

Yoder, Dewayne and Lori (Miller), Millersburg, IN, fifth child and dau., (one deceased), Kierra Joy, Oct. 31, 2004.

Yoder, Harley and Margaret (Troyer), Roodhouse, IL, fourth child, third dau., Carol Louise, Aug. 13, 2004.

Yoder, LaVern and Elizabeth (Miller), Roodhouse, IL, third child and son, Jamison Shawn, Aug. 24, 2004.

Yoder, Michael and Amy (Miller), Roodhouse, IL, first child and dau., Rhoda Joy, Sept. 15, 2004.

Yoder, Roman and Brenda (Miller), Belvidere, TN, first child and dau., Cynthia Joy, Oct. 23, 2004.

Yoder, Trenton and Amber (Plank), Montezuma, GA, first child and son, Eric Trenton, July 1, 2004.

tion messages were brought by Nathan Yoder, Free Union, VA.

The charge was given by Elmer Gingerich, assisted by Freeman Hochstetler and Nathan Yoder. Others in the lot were Robert Byler and Jason Miller.

Bro. Jonas Lapp, 25, Gap, PA, was ordained as minister at Bethel Mennonite Church on Nov. 21, 2004. Preordination speaker was Homer Zook, Uniontown, OH.

The charge was given by John U. Lapp, assisted by Homer Zook and Jonathan S. Stoltzfus. Others in the lot were James Stoltzfus and Omar Stoltzfus.

Bro. Ben A. Stoltzfus, 38, Morgantown, PA, was ordained as minister at Pequea A.M. Church, on Sept. 12, 2004. Simon Schrock, Fairfax, VA, gave preordination messages.

The charge was given by Jonathan S. Stoltzfus, assisted by Simon Schrock, John U. Glick and John U. Lapp. Also in the lot was Curtis Stoltzfus.

Bro. Mark Webb, 38, Aroda, VA, was ordained as deacon for the Oak Grove

Mennonite Church, on Nov. 21, 2004. Bennie Byler, Stuarts Draft, VA, was preordination speaker.

The charge was given by Tim Miller, assisted by Bennie Byler and Edward Hochstetler, Hicksville, OH. Others in the lot were David Martin and Lamar Hochstetler.

Bro. Tim Yoder, 35, Lewisburg, PA, was chosen by united voice of the church and ordained to the office of minister at Shady Grove Church, Mifflinburg, PA, on Nov. 21, 2004. Preordination speaker was Paul A. Miller, Millersburg, OH.

The charge was given by Joe Peachey, assisted by Ray Byers and the home ministerial team.

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

o b i t u a r y

Yoder, Edward H., 71, Partridge, KS, died on Nov. 4, 2004, from complications after surgery for abdominal cancer in Hutchinson Hospital. He was born at Lovington, IL, Dec. 20, 1932, son of Alma (Schlabach) Yoder and the late Reuben Henry Yoder.

He was a member and minister at Center A.M. Church, Hutchinson.

On Sept. 6, 1956, he was married to Laura Ellen Helmuth at Nappanee, IN. She died August 7, 2004.

Survivors include three daughters: Marijane (Titus) Nisly, Hutchinson; Anna Jolene (Sanford), Partridge; and Janice Renee, Partridge; five grandchildren, his mother, a brother, Howard, Arthur, IL; and a sister, Katie Marie (Elmer) Miller, Arthur, IL.

He was preceded in death by his father, a brother, Reuben Henry, Jr., and a sister, Ruby Hershberger.

Funeral services were held at Cedar Crest A.M. Church Nov. 7, with David Yoder, Paul Miller, both local, and David Hershberger, Sioux Lookout,

ON, serving. David L. Miller served in the committal at the West Center Cemetery.

Correction: Roman Mullet's death oc-

observations

Members of a school board in Grantsburg, Wisconsin, have revised the science curriculum to allow the teaching of creationism. State law requires that evolution be taught, but school districts are apparently free to add variations in addition to this mandate.

This decision provoked more than 300 faculty members and deans from Wisconsin state institutions to request that this decision be reversed. (AP, courtesy Duane Nisly)

In Cobb County, GA, warning stickers have been placed in biology textbooks saying that evolution is a theory, not a fact. This reflects a concern of more than 2,000 parents. The sticker further states that “this material should be approached with an open mind and studied carefully and critically considered.”

A group of parents and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) have filed a lawsuit over the stickers. (AP) This seems to be another case where freedom *of* religion is being confused with freedom *from* religion.

curred on July 3, 2004. It was wrongly reported as 2003 in the November issue. I apologize. —PLM

We believe that the founding fathers of this country had no intention of encouraging people to be irreligious. They were quite simply concerned that the government should not be allowed to impose a particular religion upon its citizenry.

A school board in PA has voted to require alternative theories to evolution to be acknowledged in the schools.

• • • • •

This is being written November 10. It will be almost two months until it reaches our readers. But at this point the recent election is still fresh in many minds. News columnists are busy analyzing the factors behind the outcome of this highly charged campaign. It seems to be widely acknowledged that moral issues, abortion, same-sex marriages and voters' perceptions of the candidates' values in general were significant to the Bush victory. Others point out that there are moral issues besides sexual depravity and abortion.

A Mennonite observer, who supported Kerry, lamented the deep divisions that this election is causing, not only in the nation, but also in

churches and families. Rather than to allow our view to become a relational problem, we would do well to commit this matter to our all-wise God who is sovereign in the affairs of the nations. Agreeing to do this should neatly resolve relational problems. Why would anyone disagree with God? It should not surprise us that when we assume that our opinions are most important that this position itself creates conflict.



Columnist Cal Thomas, an obviously conservative Republican, notes that liberals have lost because the majority is rejecting their liberal ideology. He feels that the losing party seems slow to understand this. Some have shown that they are poor losers. Thomas quotes one such writer as asking this question: “Can a people that believe more fervently in the virgin birth than in evolution be called an enlightened nation?” Thomas responds by referring to Ps. 14:1, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God...”



Columnist Clarence Page reports that since the election there has been a rush of interest in immigration to Canada. It is also reported that significant numbers are seeking professional counseling to cope with the disappointment of the election.

Perhaps the Supreme Court of

Massachusetts did the Bush campaign a favor when they legalized homosexual marriages. This is John Kerry’s home state.

The eleven states which submitted this issue to the electorate voted by large margins to ban gay marriages.



An anonymous article in *Christianity Today*, 12-04, includes a powerful message by one who struggled with same-sex attraction. Part of the struggle was that there were those in the church who sought to help him by affirming his unnatural attraction and urging him to act it out. But he knew that what the Bible clearly calls sin is to be taken seriously.

His story is much too long to go into detail here. He finally decided to get help and was delivered from his bondage. He laments the fact that the affirming church propagates lies and bondage. He says it is practiced homosexuality, not its suppression, that enslaves people. Christian victory is possible.

According to Randy Thomas, director of Exodus International, there are tens of thousands of ex-gays who have moved beyond same-sex attractions.

The writer points out three possible stances that we may take to this problem:

- 1. We can tell people trapped by homosexuality bondage that it’s al-

right for them and that they should be true to themselves.

2. We can act harshly, with eager condemnation and self-righteous indignation.

3. We can respond like our Savior would, with respect for God’s absolutes and for them in their struggle. Then we can invite them in a Christ-like attitude, “Be ye reconciled to God.”



For Christian people to defend that which is clearly forbidden in Scripture seems to defy easy explanation. One can only conclude some other authority or influence gets primary consideration. Perhaps a recent article in an Anabaptist periodical sheds some light on how this can happen.

The author says he grew up under preaching that claimed to be based on the infallible authority of Scripture, especially the New Testament. But

this did not seem right to him. He acknowledges that the lordship of Jesus is foundational, but he believes that the setting in which human authors wrote the Bible gives him the liberty to dismiss whatever is not currently relevant. From my perspective, it seems that this is precisely the mindset that has contributed to the issue discussed in the item above. The writer is a student in a non-Mennonite seminary.

When intellectual respectability takes precedence over biblical authority, people lose their moral compass. The evidence of loss of moral restraint is widespread. Proverbs 29:18a, says in KJV: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” A free translation of Luther’s German translation gives us this: “Where there is no prophesying (word from the Lord), the people become unruly and undisciplined.”

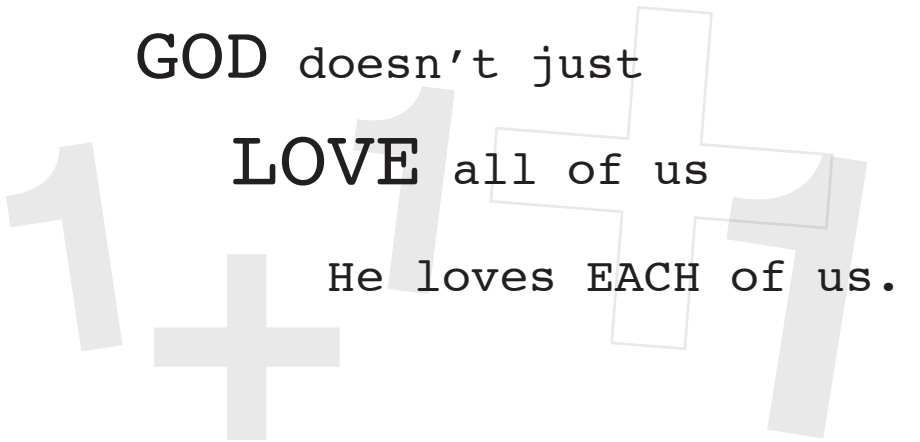
—DLM



GOD doesn't just

LOVE all of us

He loves **EACH** of us.



What Do They Think?

*Darrell Hershberger, et al**

Public Opinion Regarding Conservative Anabaptists

What in the world did we think we were doing? We didn't know what we would experience as we set out on an unprecedented adventure on September 3, 2004. As Ministry Apprentice students from Faith Builders Educational Programs in Guys Mills, Pennsylvania, we wanted to learn more about the perceptions the general public has of us as conservative Anabaptists. We designed a survey in an attempt to assess those perceptions. After an initial trial survey in Guys Mills, we headed to the tourist town of Shipshewana, Indiana. There we spent two days doing 168 surveys in an indoor shopping area, out in the flea market, and along the street.

In addition to conducting a survey, we wanted to develop skills and engage in experiences that will help us to reach out to the world in various ways and ultimately point people to Jesus. How were we to get people interested in talking with us? How could we work as a group and relate to people in a godly way? How should we present ourselves to those who do not know much about us? What do we have to offer the world? We had questions for them, but we

also wondered: Will we be able to answer their questions for us?

Even though we conservative Anabaptists are diverse, we are alike in our commitment to separation from the "outside world." Many of us have a distinct "us and them" mentality, and we often wonder what they think of us. If we are living the way God intends for us to live, why are not more people following us? Maybe they think we are just another ridiculous fringe group, not worthy of serious attention or respect. Or maybe they believe us to be an exclusive ethnic community that is not open to new members.

We realize that public opinion should not be the ultimate guide as to how we should live or appear, and that true discipleship does not always result in a positive response from those observing. However, we thought an awareness of public perception could still be helpful, so we set out to assess it. We returned with the following dominant impressions: (1) The public knows very little about conservative Anabaptists. (2) Their general impressions are positive. (3) They see us as disconnected and reclusive.

In our survey we simply used the name "Mennonite" to identify

ourselves, not attempting to explain that some of us had other “helpful handles” in our name, such as Beachy Amish. We hoped that the respondents would see us as conservative Anabaptists and answer accordingly. This is what happened for the most part, although some of them took us to be Amish and some took us to be mainline Mennonites. We simply smiled and thanked them for their helpfulness. In this project, we attempted to get a feel for public opinion toward conservative Anabaptists in general. We use the names Anabaptist and Mennonite interchangeably to describe the broader conservative Anabaptist community known as Plain People.

The most common response to our queries about Mennonites was, “I don’t know much about Mennonites.” Mennonites were a mystery to many of our survey participants. They could not provide us with much helpful information, but only shook their heads in perplexity at many of our questions. We were frustrated at their ignorance, because we were expecting a lot of revealing answers. This ignorance, we decided, may be significant in itself.

We talked to many people who came from areas where few or no Mennonites live, and it was understandable that these folks had little to offer us. We were surprised however,

to learn that even those who live in a community with several kinds of plain people seemed to know little about them. Almost a third of our participants did not know whether Mennonites would accept other Christians into their churches. Professing Christian people were just as ignorant as non-believers. Why, we asked ourselves, is there so little knowledge of a group who is distinctive and visible?

Not only did we find many people uninformed, many are misinformed. Many hold ideas about conservative Mennonites that are simply wrong. The question, “Why do you think Mennonite ladies wear white caps?” brought some surprising responses. The most common was, “I don’t know.” A close second was, “Tradition.” Several thought it has something to do with marriage. Others guessed that it represents purity, is something commanded in the Old Testament, is to set us apart from the world, or has something to do with humility and holiness. One person commented that he thought it was for the purpose of attracting men. Only a few correctly identified the white cap as a prayer veiling.

It was encouraging to note that, although we were very different from them, the survey participants seemed to respect Mennonites. When asked what they thought Mennonites think

is most important in life, they most often mentioned God or faith. Family came in second; religion/morality came in third and tradition was a surprisingly low 8%.

On the question, “What would you say is the most outstanding characteristic of Mennonites?” “Dress” was a significant answer. One comment we received was, “Mennonites are the best missionaries in the world.” Another thought that came through was that we believe in a life of discipleship, following Christ in all of life.

Many people seem to believe that we are outstanding citizens who work hard and improve things. Mention was made about Mennonite disaster relief. People also mentioned the neatness and beauty of Mennonite houses, yards, and gardens. Someone thought that our most outstanding characteristic was the furniture we make.

Participants also felt that we seem open and friendly as we related to them. We could sense that they appreciated being around us and felt comfortable with us. They felt free to ask questions about our beliefs, which we answered to the best of our ability.

People did not seem offended with the way we were dressed; rather, they appreciated our modesty and were glad we practice what we believe.

We didn’t get the feeling that they thought we were backward or stubborn because of our dress. Some people also thought that we *should* be isolated to a degree in order not to be influenced wrongly by the dominant culture.

Though respected and admired, Mennonites are apparently perceived by general society as inherently different. Not only are we seen as unusual in the things we do and the way we look, we are also viewed as a distinct ethnic group with a common racial background. The Pennsylvania-German speaking Amish are especially viewed this way, but the characterization extends to conservative Mennonites. People wonder if ethnic purity is one of our goals, asking if Mennonites are allowed to marry people from the “world.”

The people seemed to view our self-sufficiency and work ethic with a good deal of admiration, but it did not seem to be “I wish I could be like that” admiration. Rather it seemed to be admiration from a distance. While they admired the positive points, such as a good work ethic, neatness, integrity, family values, and simplicity, they did not see themselves as adopting it for themselves. These positive traits, along with ethnic peculiarities, synthesize into a sub-culture that is often seen as impenetrable.

Most people we talked with seemed to think we are satisfied to remain secluded in our cultural enclaves and were a bit surprised that we were actually out asking questions of them. They believed Mennonites to be secluded people who dislike speaking with others about their faith. One church history buff we interviewed thought we are shy about expressing our faith so as to avoid persecution.

Although the majority thought we would accept other Christians into our churches, they believed the requirements for membership to be extremely difficult if not impossible. “Extreme dedication” was one person’s take on what is required to become a Mennonite. Others correctly guessed that becoming a Mennonite requires a major lifestyle change. Most expressed little or no desire to become Anabaptist, although almost half of those interviewed said they found the Mennonite way of life attractive.

We asked them what we could do to be less isolated. Suggestions ranged from visiting other church and community activities to featuring ourselves in magazine and TV ads. However, most told us they did not think we should try to interact more with society in general. They like us the way we are, separate and distinct, comfortable and distant.

Just what is the place of conservative Anabaptism in today’s world? How do we relate to an increasingly secular society? What kind of image are we projecting? As students with limited experience, we do not pretend to know many answers. However, we have found that most people know surprisingly little about conservative Anabaptists, even those that live near them. We were surprised and pleased to find a strong, positive public opinion toward conservative Anabaptists overall, but we were not thrilled to hear that we are viewed as disconnected [uninvolved] and reclusive. We wonder if this is how Christ’s church should come through. We do not know. Think with us.

Other Interesting Perceptions

On Wealth:

Someone said that he thought we were too wealthy and exploited our workers. He had seen some businessmen who were too shrewd, and noticed a transaction that he didn’t appreciate.

Someone else thought that although some Mennonites become millionaires in their businesses, he didn’t have a problem with it. He and other people did not think that Mennonites were materialistic.

On Transportation:

One person said that we drive nice cars. Several people told us that some

of us drive too fast. One offered this: “Show them where the brake pedal is!” One boy commented that his Mennonite neighbors with the big pickups “think they own the road.” Some people who were confused about our mode of transportation mentioned that we should do away with horse labor. One animal lover mentioned having “one skinny little horse pulling five or six people.” Another thought we should put diapers on the horses.

On Heart Matters:

Most importantly, we had some thought-provoking and encouraging times that caused us to think and evaluate what we believe. Someone perceived that what was most important to us was preparing for eternity. We were reminded to beware of legalism and to be careful that we don’t think ourselves better than non-Mennonites. Someone advised us to

make sure all people in our churches have the option to change.

What made it all worthwhile was having even one meaningful encounter with someone. If we were able to pray with someone or bring encouragement to him or her, we knew we had experienced an appointment scheduled by God. We praise Him for His faithful leading and caring for us.

**Students helping in this project were: Irene Bontrager, OH; Brenda Hershberger, VA; Lydia Crouch, MD; Sherilyn Troyer, OH; Vincent Beiler, PA; Lonnie Weaver, OH; Keith Yoder, VA; Robyn Soukup, WV; and Darrell Hershberger, VA. They acknowledge that this survey was not done in a statistically scientific way. The results gathered do not necessarily represent nationwide public opinion.*



Experiencing God’s work in our lives puts a new song on our lips.

Paul Kauffman, 1937-2002.

Sue Wagler

April 2, 2002, began as a busy day for everyone at the Cayo Mission. Paul Kauffman went to our nation's capital, Belmopan, to sign papers to complete his citizenship and receive his Belize passport. Freida baked bread. School was in session; classes were taught; assignments were given; and play was supervised.

The day was hot, leaving no doubt that the dry season had arrived. It was one of those days when one thought longingly of the river and its cooling properties. After Paul returned from Belmopan, he told Freida, "I think I'll check out the river." The time was approximately 3 PM.

About 6:30 PM, Freida began to feel anxious; Paul had not yet returned. She asked Kevin Graber if he would go see what was keeping Paul. Kevin and a young friend went down to the river through the orange grove and pasture, about one-half mile from the house. They didn't see anything of Paul. Several more people joined the search, and they began combing the bank, calling as they went. Finally, about 9 PM, they found the clothes Paul had worn that day, about five feet from the edge

of the water. The clothes appeared as if someone had left them to take a swim.

A larger search party was organized. Friends and neighbors began walking and wading along the water's edge, using flashlights to search the area. A diver began working about 10 PM. Two boats with bright lights passed up and down the river, especially concentrating on the still water close to the edge. The atmosphere was tense.

Friends arrived to be with Freida. We cried out to God.

The police were notified and arrived sometime during the night. About 2:30 AM the decision was made to call off the search until daylight. Most of the searchers went to their homes. A few stayed by the river to guard a boat that had been used for the search.

The night dragged on slowly. Calls came in. People were praying, wondering, and hoping. Tim, Paul and Freida's son, arrived about 3 AM from his home in Sayaxache, Guatemala. He rested a bit until daylight. About 6 AM, Harvey Kaufman and Tim walked down to the river. As Tim arrived at the river, he sighted

the body, floating face down on the surface of the water, only a few hundred yards downstream from where the clothes had been found. The face was bruised and bleeding.

The body was taken to the mission house before it was transported to the police station. An autopsy in Belize City determined drowning caused his death. Tuesday and Wednesday passed as in a dream for those of us grieving. People came and went—brothers and sisters from church, patrons of school, widows from the community, neighbors, business acquaintances, and friends. The support was almost overwhelming. Sisters in the church cooked to feed the visitors, as Belizean hospitality demands. Friends came Tuesday evening to the mission house to sing with us.

A memorial service was held Wednesday night. A tent was set up beside the church. The church and tent were both full, with standing room only. A wake was held after the service for all those who wished to stay and share in our grief.

The family and some friends went to Belize City Thursday morning to view the body. It was not officially viewed by the family at any other time. The body was then flown to Dallas, Thursday evening, and on to Philadelphia on Friday morning. The family and Cayo mission staff flew

to Pennsylvania on Friday to attend the memorial service there.

The theme of the long, long week was a favorite verse of Paul's: Romans 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God..." How can it be? We have many questions about his death. What happened? Why did it happen? Where does God fit in all of this? It has been traumatic for the family, the church, and the school.

Faith must believe that God is good, though we do not understand how His goodness allows this. We know that we have experienced His tender mercies; joy that peeps through the sorrow; peace that surpasses understanding; assurance that things are in God's control. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Corinthians 1:3,4).

Facts of Paul's Death

Floyd Stoltzfus

Numerous questions came to the minds of friends and neighbors in the Cayo community concerning Brother Paul's death. Yes, the bottom line on the death certificate states, "Asphyxiation caused by drowning."

But normally the body of a person that drowned will not surface to the top of the water until after two or three days. Paul's body was found floating near the riverbank less than 15 hours after he left the house to go swimming. His foot was caught in some vines near the edge of the water. Otherwise his body would have likely drifted downstream in the swift current of the Belize River.

After the body was recovered from the river, bruise marks could be seen on Paul's face and head. These injuries were even more pronounced several days later when the family and friends viewed the body in the morgue.

Due to some complications and unanswered questions of an autopsy of Paul's body in Belize, the family requested another autopsy in Pennsylvania. After a thorough examination of Paul's body, Coroner Wayne Ross, Lancaster, wrote a five-page account to verify the cause of his death. The Coroner's summarized analysis stated: "After autopsy and review of history, it is my opinion that the cause of death is **Multiple Traumatic Injuries**. The manner of death is homicide. -Wayne K. Ross, M.D."

In spite of many unanswered questions, God was glorified, especially at the memorial services, both in

Belize and Pennsylvania, where approximately 600 people gathered at the Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church. God's angels seemed very near. The preaching was dynamic and timely. Many tears were shed, mixed with joy and sorrow. But the singing was heavenly and triumphant. It brought great hope and encouragement!

My Time

My time of birth was in the hand of God.

Likewise my time to die will be in His hands.

I need not fear for my time is in the hands of God.

There is no need to fear volcanoes,


No need to fear an accident while on the bus or airplane,

No need to fear robbers or other bad things when God

Has everything in His hand.

He has a plan for me.

God's timing is best; I desire that.

This writing was found in Paul's Spanish-English Bible. It may have been written for an assignment in Spanish school in Antigua, Guatemala. It was based on Psalm 31:15. The article was originally written in Spanish and later translated to English by Paul's son, Tim. 

A Scriptural Formula for Resolving Issues in the Church

Lester Gingerich

Sarasota, FL

All congregations or churches are made up of people. Where there are people, there will inevitably be problems. Problems present issues which the church needs to work through. Acts 15 provides us a classic example of how the apostolic church handled working through potentially divisive issues.

It gives us more than just a biblical basis to support having a conference structure. It does indeed support the idea of having inter-congregational conferring meetings. And more, it seems to provide a formula that can be used and applied in most situations, in all times, by all peoples and races, in resolving church issues.

Following are a few of the steps we can glean from how the apostles handled their problems. We are not so concerned to discuss the issues as to note their formula:

- The issues were brought to the elders and leaders.
- The elders and leaders reviewed the issues and called together the whole church.
- All the brethren were given opportunity to share their counsel and

to be heard.

- The ordained ministers shared their views and exerted their influence.

- The presiding elder or bishop shared with the church what he felt led of the Spirit and the Word to be “a scriptural recommendation.” (15: 19-20)

- The whole church listened to his words, evaluated the proposal, and ultimately, unanimously supported him, for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them.

- What the whole church was pleased to support became the rule and order on the issues in question.

- The decision was made known to all those directly affected by the issues. (16:4)

- Those church decisions were regarded “as decrees for to keep,” not mere suggestions.

Our Anabaptist forefathers in the Reformation returned to this approach in handling issues within the brotherhood. It has been preserved by the Amish and some other plain churches to this day. These long-standing concepts are couched in the concise statement by our German-

speaking brethren as, “A scriptural recommendation and unified counsel.” (The first part speaks of the ordained leaders’ responsibility and the latter part of their accountability.) We might simply term it, “A unanimous voice of the church.”

This is what effectively prevents leaders from ruling too strongly: the need to acquire a consensus, unanimity or a unanimous voice of the church.

Following this pattern is sometimes more difficult than at other times. At times, unanimity can be attained in

one or two meetings. Sometimes several meetings and more time are required. While leaders must go out ahead and lead, they need to go at a pace comfortable to their flock.

This leaves room for neither laity nor leader to undertake to dominate others. The spirit that motivates one to dominate another is generally carnal. My observation substantiates this: When God’s Word is honored and followed in these areas, God blesses the efforts with outcomes that honor Him.



Examine Yourself

Author Unknown

CAN YOU:

1. Admit an error?
2. Follow instructions?
3. Acknowledge your faults?
4. Do more than is required?
5. Take criticism without resentment?
6. Stick to something until it is finished?
7. Work faithfully without being watched?
8. Withhold judgment until sure of the facts?
9. Resist the temptation to speak cutting words?
10. See good qualities in those who disagree with you?
11. Make yourself do the unpleasant tasks that need to be done?
12. Use the property of others with the same care you give your own?

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23,24).



Abundantly Blessed


Author unknown

- If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep—you are richer than 75% of the world's people.
- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish somewhere—you are among the top 8% of the world in wealth.
- If you woke up this morning with more health than illness—you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.
- If you have never experienced the dangers of war, the loneliness of prison, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation—you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.
- If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death—you are more blessed than nearly half of the people in the world.
- If your parents are still alive and still married—you are very rare.
- If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful—you are blessed because the majority, even if they could, don't bother.
- If you hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder—you are blessed indeed to have someone who is near and dear to you.
- If you can read this message, you just received a double bless-

ing: *first*, because someone was thinking of you; *second*, because two billion people in the world can't read but you can.

Thank You, LORD!

Have a good day, count your blessings, and pass this along.

Submitted by Ervin and Emma Stutzman, Hutchinson, KS, who have served much time in the last two decades in Haiti, which is often referred to as the poorest country in the western hemisphere. 

helpers at home

The Proverbs 31 Woman—Part 6

Mary June Glick

Our final study of the Proverbs 31 woman challenges us with these thoughts drawn from verses 25, 26, 28, 30 and 31. May it be the goal of each of us in the New Year, 2005, to develop the inner qualities of godly womanhood.

Verse 25: "Strength and honour [dignity] are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come." Living Bible paraphrases it this way: "She has no fear of old age." Strength and dignity are the clothing of godly character. We strengthen our minds by dwelling on wholesome, positive, happy thoughts. We put aside regrets of the past and anxieties for the future. We enjoy TODAY and

anticipate the surprises God has in store for us. We are willing to try new things, to develop the gifts God has given us. We carry ourselves with dignity; we have nothing to be ashamed of. We are beloved daughters of God, forgiven and accepted by Him. We are not afraid or ashamed of growing older.


Verse 26: "She opens her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness." Our thoughts control our speech, so it is important that we think before we speak. We should never use hurtful or destructive speech. Kindness does not allow gossip or slander or anything that would hurt another. Kindness cares

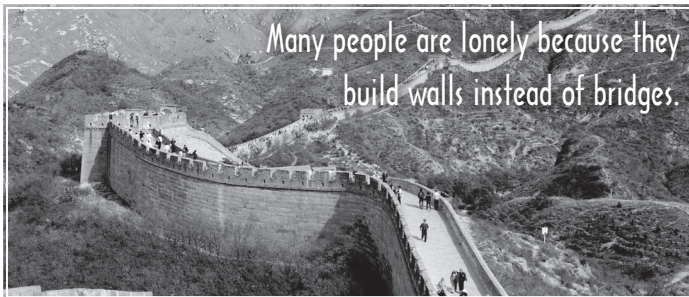
about the other person, whether that person is a stranger, a friend or a member of the family. Kindness makes the other person feel comfortable. A beautiful principle to follow in this verse is to “speak only if the words are kind.”

Verse 28: “Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praises her.” Our greatest blessings (or disappointments) usually come from those we love the most, our families. The words “rise up” here probably mean “grow up.” Young mothers, you experience many thankless jobs with few words of appreciation, but your day will come, if you model gratefulness. As the children grow up, suddenly Mom and Dad seem to become much wiser and more appreciated. Perhaps your child is wayward and doesn’t respect the things you have taught him. Maybe your husband isn’t appreciative. You may not even have a husband or children. Remember that you are loved by God. Your worth

and value is not dependent on other people. Live your life in anticipation of God’s approval and somehow man’s approval doesn’t seem quite so important.

Verses 30, 31: “Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.” LB states it, “charm can be deceptive and beauty doesn’t last.” God is concerned about the inner beauty that results when a woman loves and fears God. As we follow the principle of the Proverbs 31 woman, we can anticipate the harvest of praise referred to in verse 31. It reminds me of the expression we often hear, “Give me the roses while I’m living.” Let’s do that for each other: a few words of encouragement, a warm hug or kiss, a friendly smile—even some roses—will make the day brighter and the heart lighter.

God bless you in your endeavor to be a Proverbs 31 woman! 



A Melody of Love

Anita Yoder

Ligonier, IN

Elton M. Roth spent his childhood days in Berne, Indiana. He loved music and at the age of 14, he directed his first choir. As Elton grew older, he traveled helping in evangelistic meetings. It was while he ministered in Texas that he wrote, "In My Heart There Rings a Melody."

One hot summer afternoon, Elton took a walk to the cotton mill outside of town. On his way back through the streets of the village, he became weary of the oppressive heat and walked past a church. The door stood open and he walked in. A lingering sacredness seemed to fill the emptiness and quietness that greeted him. He walked up and down the aisle, singing and composing this song. He hurried to find paper and sketched a staff and melody. He stayed there until he had completed the song.

1. I have a song that Jesus gave me; It was sent from heaven above.

There never was a sweeter mel-

ody, 'Tis a melody of love.

2. I love the Christ who died on Calvary, For He washed my sins away.

He put within my heart a melody, And I know it's there to stay.

3. 'Twill be my endless theme in glory, With the angels I will sing;

'Twill be a song with glorious harmony, When the courts of heaven sing.

Chorus: In my heart there rings a melody,

There rings a melody with heaven's harmony;

In my heart there rings a melody, there rings a melody of love.

That evening Elton Roth introduced his new song to a crowd of 200 boys and girls in an open air meeting. Their spirits lifted as they sang the inspiring words.



Just Friends

Name Withheld

[The writer, a mature single person with experience on the mission field, writes anonymously. To allow the Lord to satisfy us, to live above reproach, and to cause no offense requires us to be careful. Otherwise, we may give offense to others or, God forbid, stumble into sin ourselves. —PLM]

Have our churches swung on a pendulum from one extreme to the other? When our parents grew up, talking alone between youth boys and girls usually indicated special friendship or a dating relationship. Today's youth on the whole seem to have much greater freedom to interact with each other and do so with less accountability. It is beautiful to see a youth or singles' group enjoy Christian fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ, but I would point out some potential problems with too much freedom.

Here are some true accounts, names changed, that may help us develop God-honoring relationships:

1. Hank, a Christian man of 50, works in a store. There he becomes acquainted with several young Christian girls who also work there.

After about a year, Hank begins to call these young girls at home just to chat. When Hank and his wife are Youth Sponsors, he may be seen at any given youth function sidling up to these girls to share a joke or to chat with them. Our first impulse is to say Hank should know better. Before we point fingers, let us remind ourselves that these patterns did not begin AFTER Hank's marriage.

2. Edward is a single man of 40 who feels God is calling him to remain unmarried. His kind, listening ear earns him many friends among the youth of his church. Twenty-two year-old Elsie is hoping to save her dying relationship with her boyfriend. In desperation she turns to Edward as an understanding friend. Edward patiently listens for hours when Elsie calls him. After her relationship with her boyfriend ends, Edward meets Elsie for coffee when she is having a bad day. Edward is convinced God is using him to encourage youth. Why is Elsie confiding in a single man rather than a Christian sister? What personal needs does Edward indicate by his helpfulness to a girl much younger than he?

3. Kate is in Voluntary Service but struggles spiritually. One night she is on duty with Josh. He encourages her with Scripture and promises to pray for her. As the months slip by and they go back to their respective communities, Josh continues to give Kate encouragement in the form of cards and phone calls. After Josh's wedding, he hears that Kate has turned her back on anything that has to do with Christianity. He feels guilty that he couldn't do more for her. What unworthy motives may Kate have had in using Josh as an encourager? Was Josh wrong in trying to help Kate spiritually at the same time he was nearing marriage to his "one and only sweetheart"?

4. Janet and Joe are both 24 and great friends. They have even discussed that they are not looking for a serious relationship with each other. In fact, Joe's girl friend is Janet's sister. After Janet's sister turns Joe down, Janet is there with kind support and prayers. As Joe waits for God's leading in his life, he continues his friendship with Janet. Among their many activities together, they usually manage to be in the same carload to go on visitation. Recently they enjoyed the challenge of going to night classes together. During

this time, a sincere Christian fellow asks Janet for a date. She begins to compare his character with Joe's and struggles about giving up a satisfying friendship for a relationship that may not work. Several more fellows are disappointed as Janet waits for God to send her a husband like Joe. Was Joe selfish to expect Janet to share with him when he had a close friendship with Janet's sister? What were Janet's sister's reasons for quitting Joe? Is Janet being realistic in her expectations?

Young man, what kind of husband would you make if you assume a close friendship with a young lady who could be your special friend, but you are "only helping her"? Are you deceiving yourself by reckoning your spirituality to be high because of your commitment to help struggling sisters in your circles?

Young lady, is it not foolish to think God will show you His will for marriage, if you are already enjoying close friendship with a fellow? Can a man, married or single, continue to show you extra attention if you do not encourage it?

Parents, is this what you want for your dear children?

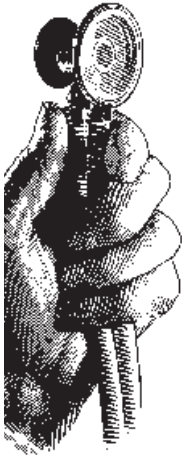
Ministers, are you aware of what's happening in your youth group?



Worker Needs

at Mountain View Nursing Home

<Christian Care for the Aged>



- Nurse Aides—2 in January; 2 in March
- Orderlies—1 in January; 2 in March
- Kitchen—in March
- Activities Aide—Now
- Janitor—Now
- Receptionist/Secretary—January

PLEASE CONTACT MARK WEBB AT:

1776 Elly Road . Aroda, VA 22709

(540)948-6831 · E-mail: Markwebb4@juno.com

...Voluntary Service Opportunities... at Hillcrest Home

"...who then is willing to consecrate
his service this day to the Lord?" (1 Chronicles 29:5b)

- Nurse aides—Many immediate and future openings
- Orderlies—Immediate and future openings
- Kitchen Workers (Ladies or Men)—Immediate openings
- Janitors – Immediate and future openings
- Floaters – Immediate openings
- Laundry Couple – February

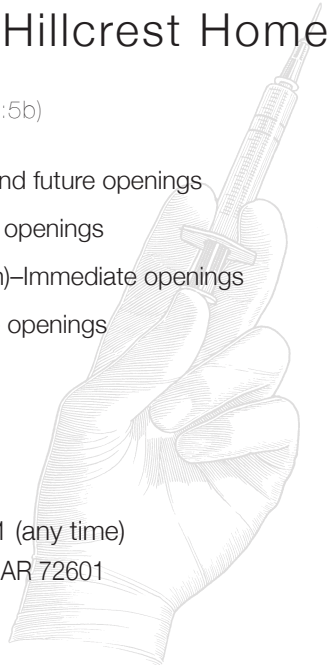


PLEASE CONTACT:

Jason Miller or Ken Kauffman at: 870-741-5001 (any time)

Hillcrest Home . 1111 Maplewood Road . Harrison, AR 72601

E-mail: goyetherefore@characterlink.net



THOUGHT GEMS

Living water is not drawn from a wishing well.



Actions speak louder than bumper stickers.



Study God's written Word to know Christ, the Living Word.



Being green with envy means we are ripe for trouble.



Wise people sometimes change their minds; fools seldom do so.



He who falls in love with himself has few rivals.



Laziness is a luxury few people can afford.



God can use reverses to move us forward.



Buying what we don't need leads to needing what we can't buy.

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