



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

Galatians 6:14

SEPTEMBER 2008

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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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We Would See Jesus

Joshua Gipe, Berlin, PA

O, we would see Jesus, to revive our fainting hearts,
Faith's shield has been battered by hell's fiery darts;
By waves of temptation and trials we're tossed,
It's flesh against spirit, and often we've lost.

O, we would see Jesus, for dark is the night,
And cloudy the path without Thee as our light;
We pray for Thy mercy; we plead for Thy grace;
Return, blest Redeemer, again show thy face!

The absence of Christ and the presence of sin
Is the loneliest place that a man could be in;
O Jesus, our Shepherd, we long for Thy fold,
We're weary of wandering; we're hungry and cold.

What a blessed relief, for the promise is sure,
That the poor wandering souls who His mercy implore,
If they turn, He'll receive them, their prayer shall be heard,
And strength shall be giv'n to abide in His Word.

The absence of sin and the presence of Christ
Will surely be worth our whole lives sacrificed;
No sorrow, no sickness, nor death shall be there,
And God, with His hand, wipes away every tear.

Of mansions, white robes, and a crown we've been told,
Of great pearly gates, and streets of pure gold;
But more than for mansions, O Father, we pray,
That we would see Jesus in heaven some day.

[From *The Vindicator*, August, 2008, with permission.]

Does Prayer Makes Scents?

God desires communion with His people. When He led Israel through the wilderness, He had told them in detail how to make the tabernacle. Those details are instructive. The Holy Place was the place of daily worship. It was a room about 30 feet by 60 feet and had in it three furnishings, one of which was:

The Altar of Incense

The Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1-10) was placed just outside the Holy of Holies. It was a small altar, only about 18 inches square and 36 inches high, with “horns” projecting from the corners, and had rings to put handles through for carrying. It was made of wood, overlaid with gold.

The priest was instructed to enter the Holy Place every day, morning and evening. He was to smear blood from the sin offering on the horns of the altar. Naturally, this procedure created some rather unpleasant smells. Even though the priests were the only persons going into the Holy Place, God offered a solution for the stale odors they encountered there. The priests were to place aromatic spices on the Altar of Incense gathered from mountains far to the East and burn them on the Altar. Thus the unpleasant smells

would be neutralized.

Sin and Scents

Sin is an affront to the sensibilities of a holy God. In everyday English, we might say, “It stinks!”

We are all born with a natural bent to sin. We can do nothing about it, *but our merciful God*, who would have all men live an abundant life, *can and did*. He took the initiative and approved pardon with the blood of slain animals. God also prescribed sweet-smelling incense to overcome the foul odors where sin was confessed and forsaken.

Only Jesus can remove your sins and mine. Whether or not we dislike them, our sins “stink” and our efforts at reform don’t change “the smell.” Only God can give us new desires and make us good. If we try to make ourselves good, the result is the “filthy rags” of self-righteousness.

Daily Worship in the Tabernacle

The Altar of Incense:

- It was placed in front of the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.
- The priests appeared before God at the Altar of Incense every morning and every evening.
- The priests were forbidden to offer incense to any other gods.

Let us learn from their experiences:
•We are to come before Him with a keen sense of our need.

•We need to make daily prayer contact with God.

•We may offer prayers only to God, through Jesus Christ.


The Prayers of the Saints

In Revelation 5:8, the aged Apostle John noted vials of perfume being poured out before God's throne. The Holy Spirit explained to John that this pleasant fragrance issued from the prayers of God-honoring saints.

Some prayers "reek!" When the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14) went to the temple to pray that's what happened. He boasted about his good religious habits to God, but he went home unchanged, his proud heart fairly bursting with self-satisfaction. Phew!

A stench not unlike a soiled diaper rose to heaven in his wake!

The sincere, contrite prayers of God's children "smell good." The publican who went to the temple to pray when the Pharisee did shows us that. The publican humbly acknowledged his need and asked for mercy. He went home in an atmosphere like lilacs and roses. Surely the wonderful scents of his prayers wafted to heaven!

Let us not live and pray like the sinners we naturally are! Let us present ourselves to God in the fragrance of penitence and pardon and reap abundant life in Christ! Let us bring to God acceptable prayer! "For we are unto God a sweet saviour [taste or smell] of Christ..." (2 Corinthians 2:15a). —PLM 

reader response

The Headship Veiling, May, 2008.

Dear Bro. Donald,

This is an excellent exposition on the Christian's woman's veiling. I believe the covering is a keystone in maintaining Bible doctrine. You stated that you believe the enemy has a keen interest in seeing this practice done away with. Amen!

Are we going to just stand back and

allow this crucial biblical practice to ever so gradually diminish into nothingness? Let there be an army of godly men who will rally around our sisters in the call to a biblical veiling as well as true modesty and separation from worldly fads!

Allen Beiler, Stuarts Draft, VA 

The Emotional Part of Forgiveness

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Forgiveness is a spiritual and physical issue, but it is often primarily an emotional issue.

The hurdle, known or unknown, recognized or unrecognized, is about damage. We look at the wreckage; we assess loss. Very large in our minds is the sense that someone must “pay for damages.” Because of great loss we come to the conclusion that those responsible must pay for most of the cost. And what do we do if they cannot? Our emotions become “constable” and cast them into prison until they pay the very last farthing.

Knowing the Scriptures, we say we forgive, partly because we don’t want our conscience to condemn us for not forgiving, partly so we can say to anyone who brings up the damage issue, “Oh, yes, I forgave them a long time ago,” because we know we must forgive. The price not to forgive is too high. However, forgiving merely on a spiritual level may not cost us very much.

Forgiving “from our hearts” deals with forgiveness on the emotional level. Here the price is very high and we still maintain that until the offender does thus and so, he or she must stay “in prison.” That is where they belong. I forgive them spiritually only. The full transaction where

our emotions are involved must wait until they “pay.”

Damage done to us causes us great emotional pain. Not until we experience deep hurt, do we realize the pain that is associated with forgiveness. The emotional release in forgiveness can bring us deep pain. We resist pain. Physically, anything that brings on pain motivates us to stop it as quickly as possible. In accidents where there is injury, “911” is usually called and the attendants immediately go into rescue mode, taking care of the damage and stopping the sensation of pain as soon and as much as possible. That doesn’t bring about instant healing, but continued pain can prevent or delay healing.

Dealing with damaged relationships on a spiritual level takes care of some of the pain. However, the pain doesn’t all go away until the damage is also dealt with on an emotional level. Healing and full recovery don’t happen until we forgive on that most difficult level of all—the emotional level. Forgiving from our hearts is difficult. It also very tricky and finds various escape avenues and subtle bypasses.

When physical damage is progressive and healing does not happen, the person eventually dies. Some-

times damaged emotions fail to heal because of personal resistance and relationships die. Death closes the door to further healing. Anger and bitterness take the energy needed to forgive and are expended in holding shut “that door.”

The Bible depicts people who are able to do all the physical functions of the body, but their spirit is dead. In Christian people, it is possible to be alive physically and claim to be alive spiritually and yet be dead emotionally toward certain people or toward a church where one was previously a member. Wounded emotions cause death of spirit and take their toll physically, too. The various compartments of our lives are interconnected. The “gangrene” in the finger spreads to the hand, the arm, eventually to the vital organs, finally bringing death. Unforgiveness is like that. Left to itself, it spreads, invades, cripples, brings pain and (ultimately) spiritual death.

The crucial question is: “Who is going to pay?” You see, forgiveness is costly. It is not cheap. We try to lower the price and forgive only on a spiritual level. That, for many of us, is affordable. But to forgive on an emotional level comes with a high price. It costs too much. Hence, we say they must pay. Becoming thus deadlocked over the issues holds a death grip.

In forgiving “from our hearts” we let go of that which our emotions

hold onto so dogmatically. Dogmatically? Yes, it is “dog-like” all right. The watch dog in us barks when the wrong person or idea invades our space. We may “snap” at an opponent’s “heels” or take a “bite of flesh” out of an enemy’s “leg.” Did you ever notice how determined that dogmatic dogs are to be dogs? That’s how we are when we are unforgiving.

Jesus said, “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye *from your hearts* forgive not every one his brother their trespasses” (Matthew 18:35). Forgiving from the heart lays a finger on the emotional part of us. Forgiving from the heart is truly the hardest part and the most urgent need.

Being human, we tend to forget how much we have been forgiven. God has likely forgiven us many times. We can’t remember how often, for what, or for how much. People have also forgiven us. We have trespassed many times against others. We have been forgiven when we haven’t even sought forgiveness. We haven’t deserved it. No doubt, all of us have been forgiven by others when we didn’t even realize we had caused an offense.

God forgave us and bore the enormous cost of our offenses by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross. Others have forgiven us, bearing those costs by their love for us.

The Bottom Line comes from the life and lips of Jesus: “Go and do thou likewise.”



“Power On Her Head”*

Paul L. Miller, Partridge, KS

I endorse the message my fellow minister, Bro. Donald Miller, preached in our home church on February 24, 2008, which was condensed and published in *Calvary Messenger* in May, 2008. A number of sisters prefer the flowing veil to be worn over their long hair. It seems a satisfactory expression of a New Testament headship principle given in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16.

Martha and I lived in Northwestern Ontario from 1961 to 1975. In that setting the fairer ones found flowing veils a great convenience in winter, when a heavy scarf was needed against the cold. They appreciated the added ease of caring for veils, because of the softer material used.

We bless and encourage those who acknowledge the teaching of this principle in Scripture that seems to have roots in both Creation and Redemption. In the face of constant pressure to diminish the principle and practice, it seems appropriate that we re-visit this important doctrine periodically and when necessary speak correctively. We would not discourage anyone who conscientiously does what they do.

It seems that a typical neglect of this

principle and its practice follows this sequence: first it is questioned, then mostly spiritualized, then observed without enthusiasm (and shrunken), then dropped entirely.

Let me make several observations:

- We may have emphasized mostly “symbol” when “covering” is the word used in a number of English renderings. Shall the angels go around the back or hover overhead to decide on whom to bestow power?

- The ideal of *uniformity* is sometimes devalued. *Unity* is the basic goal, of course. Actually, *uniformity can foster unity*. “When we all work together, how happy we’ll be; when your work is our work and our work is God’s work...”

- Holiness is encouraged by men who bless and encourage women in this principle and its practice. **It is not easy for a Christian woman to carry a joyful testimony of her role as man’s complementary counterpart, if she is not truly respected, lovingly led, and sincerely affirmed by Christian men.**

- The mutually complementary role of the genders is not limited to those who are married; it applies to all men and all women. Certainly, to

have women take leadership in the church does not correspond with Creation or Redemption parameters. Who's to blame? Probably both men and women are. Who can help correct this situation? Both genders have their part to do.

•The tailored, bonnet-shaped covering of more recent times does not reflect popular style. It is noticeable in current mainstream dress. It has been used for some time and has quite a pleasing appearance. The hanging veil probably has less form than the tailored, bonnet-shaped covering. Properly worn, however, the flowing veil also expresses the principle well and presents a modest and feminine appearance.

We have seen sketches of early Christian women who took refuge in the catacombs of Rome. In those sketches, I have never seen anything like the nondescript patch of cloth (sometimes frilly) which some women now place on their heads. Early coverings were apparently placed on top of the head and hung down to (or beyond) the dress's collar, and yet such a veil would not have obstructed

a clear view of her surroundings, should a sister wearing it have driven a chariot through the streets of Rome, Corinth, or Jerusalem.

May God give us courage in these times of questioning and forsaking the teachings of God's Word! How sad it will be for some who claim to accept the whole Word of God! Will they one day stand before the Judge of all the earth and try to explain to Him that they are aware of what He inspired faithful men to write in the New Testament, but that surely He did not mean it to be taken so literally, did He?

No one can earn his or her salvation, but if we have experienced salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, let us not think that we are free to revise His commandments. Bro. Donald said it well, "**The Lord would have us unapologetically practice scriptural directives.**" Scriptural directives are not burdensome when we—both men and women—embrace the underlying principles and their practical expressions *sincerely and joyfully!* (1 John 5:3) **Hallelujah!**

[* 1 Corinthians 11:10]



Everyone can see farther than he can reach, but that doesn't mean we should quit reaching.

Building on a Solid Foundation

—Part Four

Lowell Miller, Nickerson, KS

This is the fourth and final installment of the keynote address given at Hutchinson, KS, at the area-wide Christian education meeting on January 19, 2008.

C. Kingdom Christians

1. Our allegiance is to Christ our leader. Accepting the leadership and lordship of the Leader of the heavenly kingdom is the noblest goal we can have for our children. It is the Holy Spirit who ultimately draws men to Christ. But we can have a ministry of cooperation. We cooperate by modeling the life of Christ. We cooperate with a strong, proactive teaching program. We cooperate by dealing with sin and wrong in our own lives as well as in the lives of the children in our care.

Our response to circumstances both good and bad can be tremendous teaching tools. Something good happens. We praise the Lord. Something bad happens. We praise the Lord. Or we quickly go to the Lord in prayer. We involve our family in mission through prayers, finances, and even our presence in some field of ministry.

2. We are ambassadors. As servants of the King he entrusts us with being His ambassadors. As ambassadors, “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). In Managua, we had a place

of special interest to us as American citizens. It was the American Embassy. At the embassy was the Ambassador. He was placed there by the U.S. government to represent American interests in Nicaragua. As U.S. citizens we had special access to the embassy. Nicaraguans could be waiting in a long line and we would be granted admittance ahead of them. As members of Christ’s kingdom, we are to represent His interests in the kingdom of this world. The U.S. government tends to be stingy with extending visas or citizenship privileges. By contrast, our King invites everyone into His Kingdom.

3. We are to be reconcilers. The same passage speaks also of a ministry of reconciliation. The reconciler invites opposing parties to come to peace. Sin brings conflict. We can work to bring reconciliation between two estranged parties. As Christians we have a call to bring the ministry of reconciliation to a lost and dying world. It also is a vision that is transmitted wonderfully by example.

Let me tell you a story as I recall it: A

lady was entertaining a visitor. She was bemoaning the fact that all of her sons had gone to sea. She felt that going to sea was not a noble choice. Why, she asked, could they not have done something better with their lives? The visitor listened and then asked about a picture displayed prominently on the wall. The picture was of some great vessel out at sea. He asked the lady about the picture. Oh yes, the picture had been there for many years! The visitor had his answer. He saw the picture on the wall as kind of a magnet that drew all of those sons out to sea. As these boys grew up seeing the picture every day, it was creating a desire for the sea. Our life's passions as parents model the goals our children will see and likely follow.

Let me refer to my father-in-law, Sanford Yoder, again. He is imperfect, but he has a passion for souls. Sanford would take time for neighbors who stopped in. He would even bring hippie types into his home. He had an interest in people and that took priority in his life. We model our priorities by taking time for our neighbors. How we spend our time shows our children where our life's passions lie. Reading missionary stories can be a tremendous time for parents and teachers to present godly role models for our children. Caleb Yoder expressed this goal for the youth of today: "I dream of the day when our youth would be

as familiar with the stories of Dirk Willems, Hudson Taylor, and David Livingstone as they are with the stories of Peyton Manning, Tom Brady, Terrill Owens and Kobe Bryant." As Anabaptists, it is helpful to read stories peculiar to the struggle our forefathers experienced as they broke away from the state church. Our brethren in the Amish church may be doing better in this than we are with their reading of *Martyr's Mirror*.

In recent months, Judy spent some time reading various books about early Anabaptists to our children. It helps create an awareness of who we are, where we came from, and at what cost. Our history does so much to clarify who we are. Not knowing and transmitting that history leaves our children missing a major piece in their life's puzzle. It should come as no surprise if children don't embrace these values if they don't know them or never learned them on the heart level. The five years our family spent in Central America was a tremendous opportunity for us and our children to have our eyes opened to needs in the world. All of these things can help instill a passion in the hearts of our children.

4. Servanthood is the mark of a Christian. Jesus modeled servanthood. He was equal with God, yet he did not grasp that privilege, but became a servant. Man is innately selfish. We didn't have to teach our children to

hoard their toys, or to grab for the biggest piece of candy. Servanthood is contrary to human nature. There is something so attractive about someone who has learned the art of serving others. The servant is the one who quickly sees when someone needs a glass of water, or encouragement, or to have help with a burden.

If someone comes into a position of leadership it is so important that they have learned servanthood. There are many crises in our churches today, crises brought, in part, by those who have not learned servanthood. The best way to teach servanthood is to model it ourselves.

5. Humility. A Kingdom citizen is to be a humble person. As we learn humility, we learn usefulness. It is very hard to get angry with a humble man. Once Daniel E. Mast, (1848-1930) an early church leader in this community, had a critic “dress him down” for his supposed weaknesses. Apparently this visitor was fairly thorough with his negative evaluation. When he was finished, Dan asked if that was all he had to bring. The accuser indicated that it was. Dan told him, “I have many *other* faults besides those you have mentioned.” His response disarmed his accuser. If we are always right and never back down or apologize, we are poor models of humility. If we expect our children to learn humility, we must model humility.

Conclusion


The future of our churches, communities, and culture hang largely on the values that are instilled in our children. In conclusion, let me mention five concepts that may help our goals become reality:

We need to be consistent in our own lives if we expect positive results in the lives of our children.

As communities, we need unity in goals. The home, the church, and the school need a united front.

It may be good to have a mission statement for our schools (and churches) that clearly defines the goals we are striving for in our programs. With no goals, how do we know if we have reached them? School boards could spend significant time with new teachers explaining the goals and their expectations in seeing them met.

The pastors, parents, and board should unite in creating game plans to make these goals attainable. These could include courses in Anabaptist history, life values, mission awareness month, poverty awareness week, etc. The possibilities are many.

We desperately need God’s blessing on our schools. Without that, all the craft and cunning and the plotting and planning, will avail little of lasting worth. With God’s help, building a solid foundation, we have hope for the oncoming generations. Let us all pull together to that end. 

Tanya's Teddy

By Tanya, as told to Dianne Roth, Milverton, ON

Tanya's real name and birthplace are not important. This story may resemble parts of others' pain, so if you can identify with it and receive healing, Tanya will feel that her pain was not wasted. Think of Teddy as that which reflects Tanya's experiences. —PLM

Tanya was born into a poor Ukrainian home. She seemed to grow up with a precious Teddy bear clutched in her arms called *Trust*.

When little Tanya was two years old, she was hospitalized for constructive surgery. In those days parents did not spend much time in the hospital with their children. And poor Teddy lost an ear from his fuzzy head due to separation anxiety.

As a child, Tanya suffered from many tummy aches brought on by separation from her parents. The adult woman, Tanya, has learned to cope with the stress of being separated from friends in strange places. Teddy is now retired. He has had his ear replaced (even though it is rather patched) and God now gives Tanya grace to travel alone.

When Tanya was eight, Teddy lost a very significant member—his right arm. Tanya recalls being offered candy by a “predator” so he could satisfy his ungodly lusts. When Tanya told an adult what was happening, she was soundly scolded for taking

“that dirty candy.” Mistrust and self-blame became a very real to Tanya. As a Christian adult, Tanya feels her responsibility to help others see that sexual abuse is not their fault.

Poor Teddy became very unattractive. When Tanya was in Grade Five she went into a closet to get a broom to do her school duties. An older boy in the school unexpectedly grabbed her in a frightening grasp and firmly covered her mouth as he held her fast. She struggled to get free. He did his evil groping then he left the closet, slammed the door and shut off the light. When she begged to be let out, she heard her tormentor laughing as he continued to refuse to let her out of the closet. When she was finally released, she was mocked for crying.

Teddy's left arm went missing as Tanya's child heart locked up these horrors; she did not know where to turn for help. Tanya worked very hard to overcome panic in small places. The adult Tanya still sometimes suffers mild anxiety when she hears footsteps behind her in certain situations and she doesn't

know who is there. She has learned to smile so she will not appear rude as she turns around to see who is behind her. Both of Teddy's arms look a little shabby but they are stitched back in place by forgiveness from God.

Teddy lost his tail in Tanya's 10th year as she sat in the funerals of two family members. Tanya's fears of death and dying were very real to her. Tanya began to express her feelings less and less. Teddy's tail is intact now, as the adult Tanya has learned to accept the deaths of loved ones, as she has brought her own fear of death to Jesus, and as she speaks sympathy to others.

As Tanya grew older, she was sensitive to the fact that she was physically somewhat different from other children. Teddy's bright eyes fell off as she struggled to accept more reconstructive surgery during Grade Nine. That year she failed math because she missed so many days in school. She felt shame and guilt as if it were somehow her fault that she had failed a subject in school and was different from others.


It took many years for Tanya to talk freely about her physical differences. Tanya now, as a grown woman, is a medical professional and thanks God that she was able to get her diploma even after failing math in High School. Today Teddy's two new eyes have a delightful twinkle in them as

Tanya ministers to the sick.

In the same year, around her 15th birthday, Teddy's two legs were horribly yanked off as a family friend came into Tanya's room at night and woke her up rudely. Mercifully, God sent his angels to stop him from finishing his terrible act. Teenager Tanya had many feelings of ugliness and extreme worthlessness and though she tried to cope with those feelings, she eventually became anorexic and self-abusive. This was her way of feeling in control of her life, even though she had already received Christ as her personal Savior. Once again, God intervened and spared her from serious consequences and health problems.

As a woman, Tanya, thanks God for the tenderness she feels for those who suffer. Teddy is now gratefully sporting two legs with new stitching called *Compassion*.

Teddy is whole again with significant visible scarring and uneven lines. Tanya is an adult with a smiling face and by God's mercy she continues to enjoy the gift of returning trust. Tanya credits God for helping her even as a child, when she could not speak about her inner horrors and anger to anyone.

Tanya and her precious Teddy show us that God graciously hears the cries of those who are weak and small. 

To the Newlyweds, Tony and Judith

Steve L. Yoder, Nappanee, IN


*The following verse, composed for the above-named couple, has
profound meaning for all marriages.*

Love is blind; marriage is revealing,
When one is hurt, love brings healing.
The wedding is over; it's time to start living.
Instead of receiving, you must start giving.

Judith has committed to you her life,
When she agreed to become your wife.
So be kind to her; I'm sure you can.
You're head of the home; now be a man.

Remember, Tony, the Lord is your head,
Whether you're on the job or asleep in your bed.
Lift up Judith's spirit when she feels low.
God said she's the weaker vessel, you know.

Tend to your business; don't be a jerk;
Get yourself a job and go to work.
Love your wife, as the Lord does the church.
To learn how it's done, in the Bible you must search.

By the grace of God, I wish you and your wife
A long, happy, and blessed married life.
This poem is meant as a sweet-smelling odor,
From your Indiana Grandpa—Steve Yoder. 

marriages

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

Beachy-Miller

Bro. Jared Matthew, son of Paul and Erma Beachy, Millersburg, OH, and Sis. Sara Elizabeth, daughter of Dan and Rita Miller, Sugarcreek, OH, at Sharon Mennonite Church for Maranatha Fellowship, July 19, 2008, by Paul Leroy Miller.

Graber-Otto

Bro. Brandon, son of Ben and Miriam Graber, Bunker Hill, IN, and Sis. Esther, daughter of Dan and Martha Otto, Kokomo, IN, were married at Bethany Fellowship Church on April 26, 2008, by Marvin Beachy.

Mast-Weaver

Bro. Aaron, son of Alvin and Esther Mast, Millersburg, OH, and Sis. Regina, daughter of Joe and Fern Weaver, Williston, SC, at First Baptist Church for Calvary Fellowship Mennonite Church, on July 12, 2008, by Alvin Mast, the groom's father.

Peachey-Kauffman

Bro. James, son of Linda and the late Louie J. Peachey, Allensville, PA, and Sis. Rachel, daughter of Kore and Erma Kauffman, Adams, NY, at Croghan Mennonite Church for Northern Light Church, April 19, 2008, by Wilmer Peachey.

cradle roll

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

Aguilar, Misael and Regina (Miller), San Salvador, El Salvador, seventh child, second dau., Natalie Yvonne, July 30, 2008.

Fisher, Sam and Christine (Miller), Russellville, KY, fourth child, second dau., Autumn Danae, July 19, 2008.

Gerber, Glen and Karen (Wagler), Gadshill, ON, fourth child, second dau., Heidi Marie, May 13, 2008.

Hochstedler, Paul and Sarah (Yoder), Martinsburg, OH, fourth child, first dau., Amber Joy, June 9, 2008.

Hostetler, Arlin and Elsie (Kauffman), Belleville, PA, first child and dau., Marylynn Irene, June 13, 2008.

Kurtz, Michael and Elizabeth (Brubaker), now residing at Woodville, NY, then serving at Cayo, Belize, second child, first dau., Makayla Shannele, Feb. 26, 2008.

Martin, Jonathan and Lavonna (Yoder), Kisumu, Kenya, second child and son, Kaiden Drew, July 2, 2008.

Mast, Aaron and Kathy (Gaines), Caneyville, KY, fifth child, third son, (one daughter deceased), Michael James, July 1, 2008.

Miller, Eli and Diana (Miller), Crossville, TN, fourth child, second son, Kendrick Albert, June 18, 2008.

Miller, Glendon and Lisa (Yutz), Huntsville, AR, first child and dau., Josalyn Dawn, July 13, 2008

Miller, Jonathan and Anita (Graber), Huntsville, AR, third child, second dau., Natasha Faith, July 16, 2008.

Raber, Timothy and Glorianna (Helmuth), Kimbolton, OH, third child, first son, Carson Timothy, July 21, 2008.

Schmucker, Nelson and Janice (Martin), Franklin, KY, first child and son, Landon Ray, May 12, 2008.

Stoll, Quinton and Debra (Coblentz), Millwood, KY, first child and dau., Autumn Dawn, July 12, 2008.

Stoltzfus, Dwayne and Lois (Troyer), Plain City, OH, second child, first son, Isaiah Benjamin, June 19, 2008.

Troyer, Vernon and Mary Ann (Coblentz), Advance, MO, fourth child and dau., Krystal Diane, June 28, 2008.

Williamson, Lee and Rhonda (Overholt), Franklin, KY, fourth child, third son, Joshua Edward, March 3, 2008.

Yoder, Lyndon and Joann (Hostetler), Bloomfield, MO, sixth child, third son, Luke Eugene, Feb. 27, 2008.

Yoder, Ray and Alina (Miller), Minerva, OH, first child and dau., Kelsea Lynae, May 11, 2008.

Yoder, Terry and Linda (Yoder), Grantsville, MD, second child and son, Blake Daniel, June 29, 2008.

Yoder, Tim and Ruth (Miller), Phoenix, AZ, first child and son, Lance Christian, Feb.2, 2008.

ordinations

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

Bro. Dean Miller, 36, Harrison, AR, was ordained to the office of elder at Cornerstone Mennonite Church, Harrison, AR, on June 22, 2008. Preordination messages were given by David Fisher, Alexandria, PA, who also gave the charge, assisted by Truman Yoder and Elmer Gingerich. Daniel Miller was also in the lot.



Byler, Kimberly Janelle, premature daughter of Alan and Audrey Byler, Martinsburg, OH, died peacefully in her parents' arms on May 20, 2008. Although Kimberly lived here on earth for only 30 minutes, her tiny footprint will be stamped on our hearts for all time.

She is sadly missed by her parents, three brothers, Trenton, Kevin and Preston; grandparents

Wallace and Edna Byler and Nathan and Betty Shenk; and many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Graveside services were held on May 21, with Nelson Beachy officiating.

Huber, Ira J., 92, of Teeswater, ON, died June 1, 2008. He was born Sept. 18, 1915, at Elida, OH, son of the late Simon and Amanda (Bontrager) Huber.

He was a member of Whitechurch A.M. Church, Whitechurch, Ontario.

On Nov. 8, 1936, he was married to Hannah Marie Heatwole, who died June 5, 2004. Their children are: Margaret (Jacob) Kuepfer, TN; Mildred (David) Showalter, WI; Clara Halteman, NY; Samuel (Rhoda) Huber, KY; Ruby Huber, TN; Roy (Anna Mary) Huber, TX; David (Susie) Huber, NY; Rhoda (Melvin) Beachy, IA; Dorothy (Jerry) Beachy, IA; Simon (Doris) Huber, KY; Irvin (Frieda) Huber, ON; and Nathan (Violet) Huber, KY. Also surviving are 99 grandchildren and 136 great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were a son,

John Mark; a son-in-law, Wilmer Halteman; daughter-in-law, Maureen (Samuel) Huber; three grandchildren; three great grandchildren; a brother, Clarence; and a sister, Mary.

The funeral was held on June 6, with Arthur Gerber officiating. Burial was in the Cedar Grove Cemetery.

Graber, Ernest, 77, of Amboy, IN, died at his home on June 26, 2008. He was born in Daviess County, IN, on August 19, 1931, son of Elmer and Elizabeth (Stoll) Graber.

He was a member and pastor for many years at Bethany Fellowship church, Kokomo, IN.

On Nov. 2, 1952, he was married to Emma Miller. She survives. Also surviving are five sons: Ben (Miriam) Graber, Bunker Hill; Carl (Linda) Graber, Kokomo; Kenny (Rita) Graber, Bunker Hill; Ronnie (Waneda) Graber, Amboy; six daughters: Carolyn (Marvin) Beachy, Amboy; Mary Ellen (Philip) Knepp, Macon, MS; Tillie (Mervin) Lichty, New Hamburg, ON; Linda (Richard) Yoder, Amboy; Elmina (Keith) Hochstedler, Amboy; Roseanna Graber, Amboy. Other survivors include three brothers: Wilmer Graber, Peru, IN; Lester and Patty Graber, Kokomo; Ben and Sylvia Graber, Crawford, MS; one sister: Ruth Otto, Cannelburg, IN; 51 grandchildren, and 15 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by one

brother and two grandchildren.

The funeral was on June 30 at Bethany Fellowship School, with Darlton Bontrager and Clarence Bontrager serving. Burial was in the Christner Cemetery, Kokomo.

Troyer, Henry H., 104, from Greentown, IN, died June 16, 2008, at Century Villa Health care. He was born April 29, 1904, son of the late Hiram B. and Amanda (Hochstetler) Troyer.

He was a member of Bethany Fellowship Church, Kokomo.

On Nov. 10, 1923, he was married to Silvia J. Hoschstetler. She died May 31, 1989.

He is survived by daughter Celesta Bontrager, Middlebury, IN; three sons: Paul Troyer, Twelve Mile, IN; Ralph (Kitty) Troyer, Kokomo; Eldon (Sue) Troyer, Kokomo; one son-in-law: Lyle Burkholder, Moulton, AL; 23 grandchildren; 33 great grandchildren; six step great grand children; and two great great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by two daughters: Edna Mast and Salome Gingerich; daughter-in-law, Barbara Troyer; sons-in-law Melvin Bontrager and Fred Mast, and one great grandson.

The funeral was held on June 20 at Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, with Darlton Bontrager and Marvin Beachy serving. Burial was in the Christner Cemetery, Kokomo.

observations

The Creation Museum is located just outside Cincinnati, Ohio, across the state line in northern Kentucky. It has, in a very short time, become a major tourist attraction. Its purpose is to bring to the public answers in Genesis rather than Darwinistic evolution as the explanation for origins on living beings on earth.

Area hotels have benefited from the visitors who needed overnight lodging. The Christian character of these people is making a lasting impression on hosts.

Karen Bennett, Director of Sales at Country Inn and Suites said, "Creation museum guests are very different from other leisure visitors. They are respectful of hotel property and other guests. One pastor even had his youth group wipe down their tables after they had finished eating. I can't tell you what a powerful impact this had. They talked about it for days."

It is stressful to hotel employees and other guests when visitors who need their rest have groups come in that become loud, drunk, and disrespectful. One employee expressed her surprise at how "genuinely happy and fulfilled they are in their faith."

Our conduct—whether good or

bad—makes a lasting impression to a watching world. “Creation Museum guests have definitely made an impression on people at area hotels perhaps even for eternity.” [From *Answers Update*, courtesy of Ernest Hochstetler.]

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A kind reader has sent me some excerpts from a book not familiar to me. The following information is included: In 2003, eighteen tourists met in Beijing, China, with a scholar from that nation’s most prestigious institute in philosophy and social science. What the scholar had to say astonished them. He said they (the scholars) were asked to look into what accounted for the success and preeminence of the West all over the world. After considering historical, political, economic and cultural perspectives, they came to the conclusion that Christianity was what made the West so powerful.

To think of our country as a Christian nation is simply not supported by the facts. It does seem apparent that the founding fathers were influenced by certain Christian principles. Freedom of religion provided a setting where Christianity could flourish. But it is sobering to notice that there are many things about modern culture that are decidedly un-Christian. It

seems regrettable that unchristian practices have become commonplace in many churches. No one has the rightful authority to “Christianize” unchristian behavior or principle.

Our sovereign God has been known to judge nations who have forsaken Him and turned to their own ways. Old Testament history teaches us that sometimes He used other wicked nations to do this.

At any rate, there is simply no room for national or religious pride. Let us rather, by God’s grace, seek to be salt and light in the midst of “a crooked and perverse nation, among whom [we are to] shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15).

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We have received a very long article from a reader with a heavy heart and a fervent plea. The article is entitled, “The Elusive Church Membership.”

The writer considers himself a born-again Christian who wants to follow the Lord and the Scripture whole-heartedly. He sees needless man-made obstacles as being in the way of church membership. He expresses fervent love for the small group with whom they worship, but is very frustrated that full acceptance is so elusive. He suspects that his non-Germanic name may be a factor of influence.

I have had telephone conversation

with the author. I have no reason to question his sincerity or the soundness of his faith. I am well aware that it is not realistic to assume that I see the whole picture from a distance. I am appealing to several church leaders in the area where the family is located. I hope and pray that a satisfactory solution can be found for this fervent entreaty. This may well include willingness on the part of the inquirer to fit in rather than to make demands from the standpoint of personal preference and perceived need.

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Gerald Hostetler is a high school teacher from Orville, OH. His letter in the *Mennonite Weekly Review* , (7-21-08) includes the following paragraph: “Within the last several weeks, 31,000 credible scientists have written off global warming, but did we see or hear it in the news? Many facts have been overlooked or suppressed in order to get us to act quickly without studying possible consequences. Is it possible that global cooling in each of the last seven years will continue and one day confirm the folly of many?”

The letter is a reminder that political correctness with mainstream media partisanship may represent something different from honest and accurate reporting. Let us not,

however, lightly dismiss all concerns related to the global warming theory. Good stewardship of natural resources is a virtue, one that we do well to practice whatever the political climate may be.

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Floyd Landis made international news in 2007 by winning a high profile bicycle race in France. His glory was short-lived when a French lab determined that he had illegally used artificial testosterone to enhance his performance.

Landis has steadfastly maintained his innocence. My nephew, Landon Beachy, (also a bicyclist) has followed the case closely. He feels strongly that the case was a serious miscarriage of justice.

Paul Schrag, editor of *Mennonite Weekly Review* (7-21-08), acknowledges that the case is legally closed. He also notes that those who believe Landis has been wrongly accused include a team of doctors, scientists, and lawyers who cite hundreds of errors and inconsistencies by the lab that analyzed his drug test. Landis has written a book, entitled: *Positively False*.

This high-profile case is a fresh reminder of several things:

- Human beings are subject to human error. This includes labs and courts of law. Life is not always fair.


•When there is serious question it is better to give the accused the benefit of the doubt.

•Landis is the son of conservative Anabaptist parents. His involvement in high-level sports competition is a deviation from his upbringing.

•Christian priorities do not place major value on corruptible crowns. There are many opportunities to expend our energies in things that outlast this life.

•Let us be slow to declare the accused innocent or guilty, especially if we are not close to the situation.

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In 2006, a study of Mennonite Church USA revealed that 50% of those surveyed considered peace and non-violence essential to their faith commitment. (*MWR*, 7-21-08) This is roughly the same percentage that took the CO position in World War II. It is yet another reminder that an official position may not reflect where grassroots membership is on a given issue. It is also a reminder that the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) may be compromised by popular pressures. —DLM 

Ministers’ Meeting Messages—2008

This is a condensation of a message given at the annual ministers’ meetings, held on March 25-27, 2008, near Arthur, IL, at Otto Center. The complete set of eight cassette tapes or nine CD’s is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA, 20136, for \$45, postpaid.

4. Confronting the Evils of Technology

Samson Eicher, Butler, IN

I believe that technology is a gift from God that we can use rightly. I realize that we can also abuse it like any other gift from God. This morning we shall attempt an examination of some evils of technology. I realize that this is a controversial topic. I want to point out ways of using new technology safely.

I’ve entitled my slides: “Threat

Awareness.” This is a term we use in the information technology industry. It means being aware of the security threats that are out there which can cause problems for you. We use them in terms of computer security, but I believe we can also use them in terms of spiritual awareness.

The verse from Ephesians 6 that was given to me in this topic is: “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand,…” God expects us to stand. He has put us in the 21st century.

Many things around us may puzzle, confuse, or even frighten us. But God is not irrelevant today. His principles are just as relevant in this century as they were in the first century. I praise the Lord that when we apply them we are just as safe as the apostles were back then. I note that the best and only fool-proof protection is spiritual.

There is no electronic substitute for the Holy Spirit Who can protect us in any environment. We must also be practical and remove ourselves from undue temptation. Our primary emphasis must be *to be in the will of God, being led by the Spirit of God, and showing discernment as we use the gifts He has given us—including technology.*

Let us also note Ephesians 5:15, 16: “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” The word “circumspectly” in Greek and in English means: Being aware and keeping an eye on your surroundings. I think it is better *to be aware* of those evils than *to be preoccupied* with those evils. “Redeeming the time” in the Greek gives the thought of “seizing the moment.” Were the days evil in the first century? Yes, they were. Are these evil days? Indeed, they are! First-century believers were (and we are) to focus on the Lord Jesus Christ, by being guided by His Holy Spirit, by

carrying the Word of God to others, by being accountable to one another and by working as a body.

Colossians 2:8 says, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.” Notice the word, “spoil.” It means, “To take away from you.” There are evil men around us who attempt to take away the things we hold most precious. They want to destroy us. We will not be “spoiled” if our focus is on Christ. I shall speak of some of those attempts as we go through this topic.

Identity Theft and Financial Fraud

These are very prevalent in America today. These are not spiritual threats, but are dangers technology brings to your financial well-being. These threats affect you whether you own a computer or not. We may think it would be nice if I could just turn off my computer and disappear into some isolation. We are still affected, because of the way the world functions today.

* “Phishing” is a contrived term that combines “phony” and “fishing.” These can come from falsified e-mails that invite you to give a technological thief access to your bank account and other confidential information.

* “Pharming” plants the seeds and waits for the harvest. If someone

attempts to access a secure internet site such as your bank, they direct a request to the internet. Hackers try to break into this and cause mischief.

* This kind of attack is very difficult to make and rarely occurs. Another way this is done is through a virus attack. This underscores the need for virus protection. If something looks wrong, be aware—something may be seriously wrong. If you use online banking, and if something like this comes up, take note. If you have questions, call your bank and say, “I just accessed your site and this is what I got.”

* ID thefts are more common by telephone than computer. ID thieves must piece together information. I have tried to make it a rule of thumb that if anyone calls me and asks for personal information on the phone, even if I think they are legitimate, I tell them, “Let me call your company and ask for you.” I won’t ask them for a number because they could very well give me a phony number. I will look it up or get it by asking Information. “I will ask for you and then we’ll continue our conversation.” If they’re phony, they will hang up.

* Identity thieves want credit card numbers, social security numbers, and other such confidential information. They may steal your credit card to get access to your credit. They may steal your social security card. They may steal your

bank statements. If you are nervous about someone, I would discourage giving him a check, because that gives him routing information to your account. They may craft a forged document that looks very real, like a money order. This practice is called social engineering.

* Keep personal information secure. Ladies, don’t carry your social security cards in your purse; or men, in your wallet. Keep that secured at home. Guard your mail and your trash. If you place an item of personal information in the trash and place it at the end of your driveway, shred it first. Delete personal information before disposing of a personal computer. Get rid of the hard drive that has personal information on it before you sell it.

Protecting Purity

I plead with us to continue the discussion of purity. The advent of the internet has forced a discussion among our people about pornography, purity, and related topics, which is something we really need. Impurity was not invented with the internet. Yet, the internet can disseminate it more quickly.

* The sale of pornography is big business, both on the internet and otherwise. It has taken a grip on the American culture and takes a terrible toll on people. If someone in your congregation gets involved in pornography, it will not affect just

that person. It will affect that person's family and your brotherhood. You may not know about it, but there will be insidious problems arising from it that will destroy lives.

* Moral purity is challenged also by immoral lifestyles. We are constantly reminded that divorce and remarriage are alright. Common law relationships are fine. Homosexuality is alright if we just make up our minds to accept it. First we tolerate these situations, and it no longer shocks us; then we accept them; finally it becomes convention, where "everybody does it."

* Impure thought is everywhere around us. Information is given that we really don't need. How much do we need to know about a popular entertainer's night life? We can avoid that and steer around it. Playing on our greed has given rise to many ploys to get fast, easy money. Since so many of these easy money schemes come through North Africa, they have been named "Nigerian Schemes." In these situations you may be sent an e-mail or a letter attempting to scam money from you. These schemes play on our gullibility. We tend to trust people, so some people play on that gullibility.

* Right now in our home community there is teacher named C... S..., who speaks about end-time prophecy. He actually seems to whip people into hysteria. He claims that the United States government was

responsible for flying the jets into the Twin Towers on 9-11-01. He says that there are concentration camps being set up all over our nation in which to incarcerate people in the near future. If you do research on this man, you will find that he does not have the credentials he claims to have.

* Our gullibility is used because we naturally want to help the unfortunate. I got an e-mail about year ago from M..., who supposedly was a young Russian woman. She was coming to the United States and needed someone to help her find her way around, once she got here. They probably sent this message to hundreds of men. They wanted us to say, "Sure, I'll help the poor lady." But it was simply a ploy to get money or to entrap me in an affair that was wrong.

* What are some ways that we can protect our purity? Let me tell you about some of the internet filters that are available, because one of the primary ways this information is spread is via the internet. Sometimes people make a distinction between "blockers" and "filters." Today, these two protective devices are basically the same. "BSafe Online" has now merged with "Characterlink." There is a balance between security and practicality. I personally use "www.cleaninter.net" at home, which is very securely installed. (Here Bro. Eicher went into a more detailed

presentation of what's available, including "emypeople.net").

Protecting our Children

What is more precious than our children? When men would "spoil" us, they can do so with those most precious to us. There are predators out there trying to harm us. I recently read that 1% of the American population is incarcerated. Many of their offenses are sexual.

* *Anonymity* is the term describing what some people do to "hide behind a screen and pretend to be someone else." Predators like anonymity to contact your child and pretend to be somebody else.

* Internet contact can bring with it access to "chat rooms," which have instant messaging. This can be to one another or to a large group of people in this chat room. Most internet filters will block chat rooms by default, because they can be very dangerous. There are good, Christian chat rooms that are well-monitored, but most chat rooms are not wholesome.

Managing Time

"Redeeming the time." Time is a precious asset. How can we use technology to the betterment of our families and to the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom? Technology can be a toy. It can tie us up for hours when we ought to be spending time with our families. On the other hand, it can save time. We can use it wisely in order to have more time with the family and

with the Kingdom of God.

* If we properly use technology, it will save time. If you find yourself frittering away a lot of time with technology, that represents a problem. When that is the case, it is failing to serve its intended use of saving time. If you are playing with a toy instead of meaningful interaction with your child, you are wasting precious time. Make it a family activity.

Staying in Touch With the Next Generation


Our children have grown up with much more exposure to technology than we grew up with. I saw my first personal computer in my 20's. That is when I became really interested in information technology. Our children have grown up with it. Sometimes we feel confused and helpless because we say they know more about it than we do. How am I supposed to govern it? How shall I guide them?

* When you have a child who is interested in certain technology, be a cautious participant rather than a detached skeptic. It's easy to sit back and say, "I don't understand it. I don't like it. I lived without it. He's not gonna' have it." It takes more out of you, and yet, it is far more rewarding to say, "Let me look at this with you. Is it good? Is this what we ought to have? If it is, how can I use it, as well as you?"

* Don't too quickly say, "I don't

understand it. We won't have it." Ask them to teach you. Teach conviction and be a part of their lives. Those two things are timeless. Those things were effective in the first-century church and are effective today. Teach conviction as a part of their lives. Go back to the Word of God, showing them how the Word of God is relevant in the 21st century. Spend time with them in family devotions, teaching them godly principles, thus bringing conviction into their lives. Those things cost time, which is a

precious commodity. But you'll never invest it better.

[* indicate points where Bro. Samson came back and further expanded his opening comments on a given subject. Thus the message on the tape is not in the same order it is given here; a capital letter, followed by ..., indicates a person who was named; and finally, Bro. Samson also invited his hearers to engage him in further explanation of some of the more technical aspects of this topic which I have left out. —PLM] 

Christian Believers under Oppression

Robert Lehigh, Hanover, PA

In this modern age where values of acceptance and tolerance seem to rule the day, can it be possible that many people around the world are oppressed and persecuted? It is not only true, but oppression of committed believers in Jesus Christ is greatly increasing in many places.

On a recent visit to China, Evangelist Franklin Graham publicly proclaimed his opposition to what he called illegal missionary work in this country where the regime maintains strict control over the official church, seminaries, and individual congregations (AP).

Police recently raided a gathering of about forty members who were meeting in secret. The participants were told they were "suspected of being involved in illegal religious practices." Members were detained

for hours and photographed. Their Bibles, hymn books, and Bible study materials were confiscated. While it is true the Bible admonishes Christians to obey those who have the rule over them and to pay their taxes, there does come a time when true believers in Jesus can be forced to choose between their loyalty to the state and their loyalty to God.

In Acts 5:29, Peter and some of the other apostles had been repeatedly harassed and put into prison for preaching in the Name of Jesus Christ. When they were again brought before the council and threatened never again to preach in the Name of Jesus, Peter answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men." This is not something to be taken lightly or without a lot of prayerful thought, but rather only after a very careful

and deliberate season of counting the cost (see Luke 14:25-35).

Many true and committed followers of Jesus Christ around the world are living under severe oppression from their neighbors and their governments. Following are just a few examples of Christians being tortured and persecuted because of their faith in Christ. All these incidents took place within the past 12 months. We are omitting the names of the countries for the sake of security:

- A pastor who was returning to his home from a prayer meeting service was beaten by two militants with an iron rod. They robbed the pastor and also accused him of forcibly converting villagers to Christianity. He sustained serious injuries and required stitches in his head. (VOM)

- Approximately six public security police officers disrupted a house church meeting and forcefully detained seven believers during a Sunday service. The believers were interrogated about taking donations in the name of the house church to an area that suffered from a natural disaster. Officials say they will not release six of the prisoners until they pay a fine. (VOM)

- Police arrested twelve Muslim converts to Christianity and confiscated their books, computers, and printers. Many others are being harassed and arrested in this oppressive country. (VOM)

- Some Christians who were

meeting in a private home for prayer and fellowship were arrested. The 24 men and 10 women were taken to prison, while their children were left behind. The women were later transferred to a military confinement facility. (VOM)

- A Christian bookstore owner was re-arrested. He had been previously arrested, but was released from jail due to insufficient evidence. This believer's bookstore was legal, but there was word that he was printing Christian literature for the house churches. The demand is so great and the government presses do not print enough Bibles. The Christians are forced to do anything they can to get additional Bibles. (MNN)

In light of these and many other examples of severe oppression and persecution of Christian believers, it is difficult to understand why so many so-called "Christians" from Western countries suggest believers need to follow the laws of the land where free expression of faith in God is prohibited.

While it may be true that some of these countries allow official, state-sanctioned churches, it is also true that the state has full control over those churches. There are many underground churches composed of genuine believers who are persecuted by these governments. They are forced to choose between following the rules of the state or getting God's Word into the hands of as many people as possible. How would you choose under these circumstances?

We are grateful that some of the “walls” of oppression against true Christian believers did come tumbling down about 15 years ago. There has been more openness in some countries to freely spread the Gospel message. We should thank the Lord for the many places around the world that are open to the Gospel Message.

Jesus reminded us in the Beatitudes to rejoice when times of persecution come our way. In fact, He suggests that His followers should welcome persecution. This goes against the flesh. Pray for the true Christian believers in the oppressed countries! Pray also that we in the Western countries would continue to have religious freedom. And never forget that we are not [primarily] citizens


of this world, but of the Kingdom of Christ (John 18:36).

Sources:

AP – *Evangelist Franklin Graham visits China ahead of the Olympics*, Associated Press, 5-10-2008.

VOM – *VOM-USA News & Prayer Update*, The Voice of the Martyrs, 5-27-2008; 6-10-2008.

MNN – *Mission Network News Headlines*, Mission Network News Daily, a news service of Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids, MI. 4-23-2008.

[Used by permission of Bible Helps, July, 2008, P.O. Box 391, Hanover, PA 17331. This article gives us a welcome word of testimony from an Anabaptist “cousin” in The Church of the Brethren. —PLM] 

mission awareness

West Indies Witness Assistance Fund

May, 1983, Isaac D. Martin

An American traveling in the countryside of Dominican Republic is immediately impressed with a standard of living that is far different from what he is accustomed to. The word *poverty* comes to mind again and again. A Christian American missionary confronted with this poverty every day naturally thinks of the many Christians back home that would gladly help with their means. The

WIW Assistance Fund was born with this purpose in mind. Loans were made to many needy believers to help them rent land, buy land, build houses, or to begin some profitable enterprise.

After two years of helping people financially, we are discovering the damaging effect that money can have on missionary endeavor. Jesus satisfied the multitude with bread, but a few days later He exposed a

problem: “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled” (John 6:26).

Money clouds the issues. Many come wanting to be saved. They want to belong to the church. But not long after, they come with a material “need.” Are they sincere? Are they coming for the miracle of salvation or are they looking for the loaves? We sometimes discover their sincerity by kindly showing them the resources that the Lord has given them. They must learn that the Christian life is a life of sharing on the part of all. We want them to learn that it is more blessed to give than to receive, even if they have no more than two mites to give. If they grasp this truth for their own life, you have a soul committed to the Gospel. If they turn away, they [may have been] looking for the loaves.

We have only one recourse: let the assistance fund die. Having locally-ordained deacons, we expect them to stay alert to the needs of their brethren. When help is needed, help will be given. This is scriptural. It will work.

In the El Porton area they suffered drought. Twelve families supposedly needed help. The deacons and a Dominican minister visited the

families and decided that only four families really needed help. An appeal was made in all the other churches. Offerings were lifted to help the needy. Those who did not have money could give rice or beans. The local deacon distributed to the families in need. We could have immediately dipped into the mission treasury and met the need, but this would have robbed the local people of a privilege and blessing. We will continue assisting from the States, but we want to give the Dominican Christians opportunity to help first.

Our North American brethren need wisdom to direct their compassionate impulses in order to best help the Dominican brethren mature as they should. Compassion must consider the spiritual welfare as well as the material.

In the Dominican Republic, as well as anywhere, poverty does not keep people from wasting money. Many pesos go to the lottery, drink, tobacco, etc. When Dominicans are converted, this money can go to the charities of the church if they understand that the Christian life is a life of giving.

Many have been helped through the aid fund. But many have also been hurt. Considering the involvements of the assistance fund, we concluded

that it is more American than Christian. The missionary who lends makes money-servants of his fellow Christians—a relationship that is not healthy. We hope to eliminate this relationship as soon as feasible.

Christian missionaries need to follow the example of Paul: “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). We carry with us many ideas about economics, social life, and even church structure that are strongly American. Our American financial expertise on the mission field can make us targets as foreign capitalists. It takes Christian determination to keep our time occupied with salvation and spiritual nurture.

The purpose of the WIW missionary is to live and preach the Gospel, live simply, and help the needy—helping them learn the blessing of sharing among themselves as Christians. We want to build indigenous churches.

Materialism in Rags?

Excerpted from WIW Newsletter, April, 1984

Some folks say, “Materialism threatens whenever people prosper, but it doesn’t bother the poor.”

What would you say? Is this right or wrong?

Wrong: Most of our Dominican

brethren are poor. Does materialism threaten them? Yes, it does.

You ask, “How could the poor Dominican brother working for his daily rice and beans possibly be materialistic?” To answer that question, we must know what materialism is.

Materialism is the focus of the heart on material things. While riches tend to increase the temptation of a materialistic focus, poverty by no means eliminates it. True, Christ denounced the selfish accumulation of wealth, but He did not reduce this malady to a mathematical formula. He went to the heart of the problem: men’s hearts. When a man allows his preoccupation for material gain to crowd out his quest for true spiritual treasures, he becomes a materialist. The Latin American peasant struggling to feed his family is no more immune to this deadly disease than is the prosperous North American farmer trying to expand his operation. His temptations are different, yes, but no less.

Let us look at some of the threats of materialism facing the Dominican church today:

A materialistic view of the Christian life

A poor Dominican comes to us desiring conversion. His reason? “Life

is hard; I want to be converted that God may bless me (*i.e.*, materially).”

We sympathize with him. Oppressive poverty makes life hard to bear. But we also realize that a materialistic focus has dulled his vision to his real need—the need of his soul.

Many Dominicans look at the church as the way out of their perpetual economic pinch. This attitude has been nurtured by church groups who have turned away from a true spiritual ministry, emphasizing social programs. We face the challenge of preaching the pure Gospel, free from material incentives. A gospel frosted with material incentives that fills churches and sends men away “warmed and filled,” but leaves them in spiritual poverty.

The snare of dishonest gain

Covetousness often leads the rich into dishonesty to get what they want. But are poor folks exempt?

Because work is hard to find, hunger threatens to push our Dominican brethren over the brink to spiritual ruin. How easy for them to become involved in business deals that violate Christian principles! For example: selling Haitian rum, although illegal, makes the coins clink. Fighting cocks can tide over the farmer who has had a crop failure. The lottery, with its get-rich-quick promises, snares the

unsuspecting victim.

The snare of worldly education and success

Education and good careers beckon our youth to pursue success in the city away from home and church. Membership in a political party, with its guarantee of a job, tempts many to abandon conviction and join up. In a land where most of the wealth is owned by a small, elite group, Communism lures many into its fold with its doctrine of economic equality. Many of our brethren rub shoulders with brothers, sisters, teachers, and classmates who champion the Communist cause.

Seeing materialism’s threat to our churches, we often ask ourselves, “How can we help our brethren avoid the encircling tentacles of grasping materialism?”

Like Jesus, we must go to the heart of the matter, starting with a change of heart. Then we must teach them to trust Him who has promised never to leave or forsake us. We must help them be content with God’s will even in hard circumstances. Finally, we must teach them to seek the true riches that are eternal.

To teach all this, we ourselves must demonstrate it. And we must have the support of a brotherhood that demonstrates it.

[Used by permission.]



Loving Your Grandchildren

Mary June Glick

If you are not a grandma, you may just skip this article, but if you're a young mother, just remember—it will likely be ONLY A FEW SHORT YEARS until you find yourself in the “grandma” role. Maybe you are childless and don't expect ever to experience being a grandma. Let me assure you there are many children who need “substitute” grandmas. There may be children in your congregation or community that need a grandmotherly touch. Just ask God to lead you to that child.

A grandmother leaves a legacy for her grandchildren--both consciously and unconsciously. I personally don't have a lot of “special” memories of my grandmothers and yet I know that I desire to have them because, even now, I continue to reach back in my mind and try to pull out particular times I may have shared with them.

I realize also that older children in a family may have more memories because as Grandmas get older, they are not physically able to interact as much with their grandchildren, so the younger grandchildren may feel cheated. It is important to be con-

scious of that and give the younger ones your loving attention. We have thirteen grandchildren, ranging in ages from one to 17. I find that I relate differently to each age level, but enjoy each of them at their stage and development.

We give our grandchildren *the gift of love* by taking time with them. We must be available. If our grandchildren live at a distance from us, it is important to make those visits very special. Young children enjoy receiving a small gift. They like it if you play with them. Older children enjoy a craft project, going to an activity they enjoy and simply talking and listening to them.

Don't forget their birthdays. You can mail stickers, balloons and cards. Birthdays are very special days for young children and they hope that Grandma will remember.

The zoo is a good place to make memories, especially with young children. Living closer to family makes it easier to spend more time with grandchildren, but we still need to remember to make it quality time. I want to be able to listen even if I

have work to do.

Sometimes my granddaughters come down to our house simply because Mommy is busy and they hope Grandma will have a little extra love to share. I enjoy teaching them about birds and their nests. We have watched eggs hatch and the little birds fly away. We see different kinds of butterflies and flowers in my garden. I teach them that God is Creator of it all.


We have also developed a library of reading material, including missionary biographies, books with devotional meditations, good, clean, historical novels, and children's books. Our older granddaughters often come down to our house looking for a book. It gives me opportunity to talk about the book they choose. Books make great gifts for children.

We can let our grandchildren help us cook or bake and do other work around the house. Plan a tea party for the girls. Boys always enjoy [helping to make and eat] Grandma's cookies and other goodies. Taking them out to eat one at a time is a good way to talk about things that are important

to them. Don't spoil grandchildren but show them love—lots of it.

We want to pass on to our grandchildren *the gift of faith*. First of all, we do that by example. Our grandchildren will sense if our faith is genuine and is lived out in everyday life. We also pass it on by teaching, telling Bible stories, explaining WHY we believe what we do. We teach values: honesty, integrity, service, missions, impartiality, stewardship and other values. We teach by telling stories about the past: stories about our parents and life when we were young, about their parent who was once our little boy or girl. We tell them about the miracles and answered prayers in our lives and we challenge them to pray and watch God answer prayer in their own lives.

We talk about Bible verses that will help them in the struggle they are experiencing. Special times as a family express our faith together such as a worship service, prayer times and singing together.

Grandmothers, we have a great responsibility to pass the torch of faith on to our grandchildren! 

***Kindness is the golden chain that
holds society together***

The Man in White—part 5 of 6

Roseanne Peachey, Oakland, MD

Jesus had become a real friend to Mohammed, helping him through the dreams, through his family turning their backs on him. Now he would need to trust Him for the future, because Jesus was all he had.

Mohammed obediently walked off into the woods, leaving his childhood home behind. “Jesus, You are my Shepherd. Lead me in the way You want me to go,” he prayed.

He had known a Christian missionary by the name of Jonathan living in a village about four miles away. Perhaps he could help him. As Mohammed walked along the familiar winding path, sadness engulfed him as he realized that he might never see his family again. *I must trust You, Jesus, that You can change their hearts.* With that reassuring prayer, he quickened his pace.

Suddenly several dark shadows flitted through the underbrush. Leaves rustled nearby, yet there didn’t seem to be any wind. An eerie silence followed. Mohammed felt eyes all around him watching his every move. He looked around but saw no one. Mohammed kept on walking. Suddenly an arrow shot out from a bush stabbing him in the lower hip.

Mohammed screamed in pain and quickly withdrew the arrow. It was then that he realized with horror that the arrow was tipped with poison.

“Lord, Jesus, help me!” He cried in desperation. All was silent except for the humming of insects. Mohammed carefully stood to his feet, groaning in pain and despair. He couldn’t even bring himself to stand upright. The nearest hospital was nearly 20 miles away. Jonathan’s village was much closer, but could he endure walking with poison seeping through his veins and blood flowing from the wound?

He threw himself on the ground and wept. “Lord Jesus, please send help!”

Scarcely had he prayed these words when he felt a firm hand press his shoulder. The man helped him to his feet and slowly walked him to the main road. “God must surely be with you today, because I hear a vehicle approaching,” the man said.

It was an answer to prayer indeed,

for Mohammed was then transported to the hospital where he received an operation that saved his life. The Christians in Jonathan's village paid his hospital bills and kindly took Mohammed into their midst. He grew stronger in his relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christians there were delighted to hear how Jesus had appeared to him in his dreams and talked to him as a special son. Deep in Mohammed's heart, however, was a lingering sadness for his father, Baba, and his family. If only Jesus could break through their darkness and save their dear souls, too!

For a year Mohammed lived hidden in Jonathan's village. But one day everything changed. Baba discovered that his son was alive. He had Mohammed arrested and thrown into a cruel, dark prison. For six long months Mohammed spent his days trapped in a prison cell. How he wished for a Holy Bible to grow in the Lord and to help pass the time. Yet he thought it mysterious how close to Jesus he often felt.

"Am I really alone? I have my Lord with me!" Bible verses went through his mind..."The Lord is my shepherd, I shall have want of nothing...Blessed are the persecuted...Perfect love casts out fear...Let not your heart be troubled; In my Father's house

are many mansions...I send you a Comforter..."

Finally the long-awaited day for Mohammed's release arrived. He was sent back to his childhood home with a police escort. As he walked toward his family's hut, Mohammed was surprised to see Baba reach for his hand, saying, "We will put the past behind us. We encourage you to do the same."

For seven months Mohammed lived in harmony with his family and relatives. Baba gave him back his cattle and began making plans for buying three wives for his son. Mohammed's spirit grew more lonely and restless every passing day. He knew his faith was slowly dying. He realized then that his family's kindness toward him was a trick to try to make him forget Jesus.

Mohammed thought: *I must make a decision. As much as this hurts, I must forsake my family and live somewhere far away. How can I ever starve my walk with my Savior?*

"Baba," he said one night, "Thank you for all you have done for me, but I have a need beyond farming and marriage. Only Jesus can fulfill my deepest desires. I have decided to move to Jos." His father suddenly looked very old, sad and tired.

...to be concluded



Dear Youth,

We tend to consider our anger to be righteous. While there is such a thing as righteous anger, the Bible indicates that man's anger is often sinful. Thanks to youth for putting time and energy into providing good questions and good answers. —EE

This Month's
QUESTION

“The apostle James writes, ‘For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.’ What are some root problems we might have that could produce this type of anger?”

r e s p o n s e f r o m o u r r e a d e r s ...

First of all, what is anger? Anger is one of the five core emotions: joy, fear, love, grief--and anger. We are born with these emotions and have little control over what triggers them. Anger, in itself, is not a sin as some people think it is. This is evidenced by Jesus' cleansing of the temple. Rather, the way anger is commonly dealt with is what has given it the name of a “bad” emotion.

How should we as Christians deal with anger? We all know that screaming and yelling in rage are wrong. However, I believe another way most of us tend to respond is equally wrong. Two of the most common triggers to anger are pride and selfishness. When we are not treated as we think we should be or when our

wishes and desires are crossed, we may think we have earned the right to be angry. But, being good Christians, we do not scream and yell. Instead, we “sweep” our anger “under the carpet” of our mind. No one sees or hears it, but it is still there. From time to time, we dig it out, dust it off, and examine it. We pat ourselves on the back for not getting mad easily and carefully put the anger back where it stays until we again need an ego boost. I believe this method of dealing with anger can be very dangerous. If it is being well-nurtured, it will continue to grow and poison our whole outlook on life while we congratulate ourselves on obvious self-control.

I believe that, as Christians, the

best way to deal with anger is simply to take it back to the One who gave us our emotions and allow Him to do with it what He wishes. Although we will probably not “forgive and forget,” we will be able to recall the incident without guilt or bitterness. Thus we will truly be able to “work the righteousness of God” in a way that gives all honor and glory to Him.

Kaylene Bontrager, Arlington, KS

I believe the main problem is often self love. If we think too highly of ourselves, criticism or tough situations tend to make us angry. Also personal rebellion to authority creates such anger.

Raphael Jantzi, Chernovtsi, Ukraine

One of the problems that come to mind right away is bitterness. When one is bitter at something, he is likely to get mad and act on impulse rather than sitting down and thinking things over. Most of the time when one is angry he does things that later on he wishes he hadn't done. The apostle James, in the verse before this tells us, “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” Then also, in Proverbs 14:17, it says, “He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly.” When one is angry, he is less likely to show the love of God in his heart.

Stanley Graber, Loogootee, IN

This type of anger in James 1:20 is an expression of when I'm thinking about myself and not of others—a bruised ego. It is also a stronghold of bitterness and unforgiveness. The righteousness of God is better served by mildness and meekness than by wrath and fury. A verse in Ecclesiastes 9:17 says it well: “The words of the wise are heard in the quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.” And verse 19 also holds a good key to apply, “... let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.” When I let Christ reign in my life, I become less self-centered and look at people the way God sees them—through a heart of love.

Amy Gingerich, Fresno, OH

Some of the root causes of anger are pride and selfishness. Anger is often created by having a wrong view of ourselves in relation to God and others: When we feel we “deserve” more than we're getting. But when we realize that no one owes us anything and that we owe God everything, we don't have reasons to be angry. Anger can control us, but with God's help, we can control it.

Anthony Byler, Middlefield, OH

What are some of the root problems that might lead to the wrath of man?

•*Are we questioning God's will in allowing difficulties and hardships to come our way?*

•*Do we feel jealousy or envy toward someone else if it appears to us as if they might have more advantages than we--or maybe an easier life?*

•*Have we been focusing so much on ourselves that our pride has been hurt or our "toes stepped on"? When our wounded feelings are the center of our thoughts, we become unfeeling of the pain we may be causing others, or the trials they face. We will also be blinded to what God is trying to show us.*

•*Being closed to God's Spirit and not trusting Him to work out everything for our good will lead to frustration and thinking that we need to take control of our lives.*

These things can happen when we concentrate on our own selfish desires rather than giving ourselves totally to God and letting Him use us.

Susan Gingerich, Linneus, MO

The "wrath of man" that this verse speaks about is clearly not something God approves of. The first thing that comes to mind is that it's an entirely selfish anger. When we get angry "for" ourselves, it's because something did not go the way we wanted it to. So we become angry and it seems righteous—until we see that nobody (not even myself) is benefited from it. How do we redirect our passion? If we focus on knowing God personally, our "need" to react to things done against us should become less.

Rosalie Byler, Windsor, OH

The first thought that came to my mind on this subject was pride. Too many times we get angry with our brother when he does not agree with us or opposes us on a certain religious subject. Pride tends to blind us to the other's point of view and causes us to get angry instead of humbly working together with our fellow men.

Anthony Martin, Whitewright, TX

*Next Month's
QUESTION*

(From a youth reader in Dundee, OH)
"Numerous Christians, especially in countries where persecution is prevalent, risk their lives to meet with other believers. Why do we so often not want to go to prayer meeting or even church on Sunday? What can we do to stimulate more desire and enjoyment for church services?"

THOUGHT GEMS

A man cannot be good enough to save himself; nor so bad that the Lord
Jesus cannot save him.



A thoughtful driver is one who gives the pedestrian a break instead of a
fracture.



A man without principle doesn't deserve our interest.



As the chest and head swell, the heart shrinks.



Friendships cemented together with sin do not hold.



Why does sleep seem more important the morning after than it does the
night before?



Generosity leaves a much better aftertaste than stinginess.



The fellow that does things that count usually doesn't stop to count them.



To be unsympathetic is simply pathetic.

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