



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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2010

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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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The Truth Sets You Free

James M. Hite, Palmyra, PA

God's truth sets you free
from the bondage of sin.
Yield to the Holy Spirit
and a new life begin.

No longer in fetters to worry and fear,
We are assured our Liberator is near.
The Bible as comfort when we're distressed,
Burdens are lifted, our souls are blessed.

The Truth sets you free to reach out in love;
With heavenly peace sent down from above.
Your spouse, children, and enemies too.
No longer will chains of hatred hold you.

You are set free from spiritual pride;
Others are recognized and *you* step aside.
Jesus Christ gets the honor for any success;
He is ever greater and *you* are made less.

The Truth frees us from spiritual lies;
It gives back sight to sin-blinded eyes.
Let us seek Truth with all of our heart;
With Christ in eternity we then have a part.

[From *Hite's Home Mission Outreach Newsletter*.
Slightly edited and used by permission.] 



Reddy Rooster

We have a small flock of laying hens in our backyard. The hens appear contented, but Reddy Rooster often seems agitated. We bought Reddy after reading that fertile eggs are thought to have less bad cholesterol than do infertile eggs. Reddy and the 17 hens graze on grass in a movable coop and pen.

We use *people* pronouns when we speak of this bird. Even though Reddy deserves to be called an “it,” we call it “he.” He is covered with beautiful red feathers, but something ugly still shows through. He acts as if he owned everything in his world. Sometimes, when I approach the flock, he rushes up and tries to peck me. He probably doesn’t like the metallic taste of chicken wire, but he still tries to “get” me.

Does he think I dislike him? Does he realize that I want only the best for him? Does he appreciate that I daily provide him with shelter, feed, and water? Maybe not. Recently, when I needed to handle the flock, he had a “fowl” reaction and pecked my hand so hard it bled.

Does he think I will harm “his” hens? Does he suppose that I would like to *remove* him? Does he imagine

I might wish to move in? Although there’s not one iota of truth in these ideas, that seems to make no difference to him.

We call Reddy our alarm clock with no on/off button. He is our only rooster and has no competition, yet he repeatedly lifts his head, flaps his wings, and belts out a loud and musical, “Cock-a-Doodle-DOO-oo-oo!” Such masculinity is so impressive it sounds like he’s reminding us: *‘I’m the King of the COO-oo-oop!’*

Reddy and Human Beings

God made us and placed us on earth for fellowship with Him. Through Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden we lost our innocent purity. If we repent and give Jesus our loyalty and love, His death and resurrection rescue us from our plight. The Holy Spirit promises to teach us and to lead us into all truth. Yet, in spite of all God’s compassionate mercy, we puny human beings tend to have difficulty receiving His grace without some “cockeyed” conclusions about our own importance. For instance:

- Some people think their basic, God-given rights are threatened if they are warned against living an addictively sinful lifestyle. They

want to be able to do whatever they want, whenever they feel like it. *Why should someone else decide what's best for me?*

- Some husbands/fathers seem to think they may order their wives/children around with little consideration or mercy. They disdain suggestions from their wives and advice from anyone else. When offered counsel from others or help from God's revelation, they bristle with: *My family is my own business--no one else's.*

- Some church members think of good conduct as strictly an individual matter. They see church leaders' efforts at feeding and shepherding as more meddlesome than helpful. *The church has no right to interfere with my decisions. I can take care of myself.*

- Some church leaders, it seems, see mostly that part of ministry that involves *ruling*. They fail to see that *servicing* is equally important. John D. Yoder, my friend and bishop of 60 years ago when I was a teenager, once said to his fellow ministers: "We are not the church; we work with the church." That describes the task of church leadership better than does the attitude that seems to say, *I'm in charge here. Don't ask questions.*

Reddy Doesn't Understand

If Reddy understood, he would realize that we're for him--not against him. We wish him well.

He doesn't grasp the difference between "chickenly" and human understanding. Reddy can only do bird-brained things like scratching the ground, chuckling "gruk! gruk!" in search of food or strutting proudly and crowing loudly. His "sisters" utterances are often just "gah, gah, gah," with an occasional more vigorous, "Buk! Buk! Buk! Buk! b-GUK!" Apparently these few utterances are about all the chicken family needs to say.

Reddy doesn't know that we paid a princely sum for him. He knows only what instinct tells him: *He must protect his turf. He must drive off all intruders. In all his cocky thoughts, he is The Boss!* We hope Reddy doesn't become so obnoxious that some day we feel constrained to say, "Reddy's arrogance has become intolerable! He goes into the cooking pot—ready or not!"

No one else is as awed by Reddy's importance as he is, but he is only a rooster and his instinctive behavior is not sinful, even though it definitely resembles the antics of self-centered human beings. *Foibles in poultry look like faults in people; but what is comical in chickens is serious in humans.*

The Good News is that human individualism and over-control is best overcome by acknowledging that God is really in control. I am a little above Reddy, but God is *vastly* above

me (Isaiah 55:8, 9). The Holy Spirit teaches us not to think of ourselves more highly than we “ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3b).

We humans all need each other. Actually, “none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself... whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:7, 8b). Church leaders who relate humbly and wisely to “God’s heritage” can be examples of *true* godliness “to the flock” (1 Peter 5:3).

New life begins when “the old, red rooster of self” sincerely repents and believes. That’s when Jesus’

resurrection power replaces puny human effort. **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”** (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV).



We assume it is understood that Reader Response does not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of Calvary Publications and the Editor. We see some value in giving readers freedom of expression, even when it does not quite square with our thinking. Are we helping the cause of Christ by this open policy? Your feedback is welcome.

— PLM 

reader response

Re: Sport Hunting, March, p. 24 and Reader Response, May, p. 4.

I appreciate concerned elders among us who take the time to alert us to the thinking and practices we may be adopting from our surrounding culture.

I too am saddened when I learn of individuals or families who experience negative consequences because someone’s hunting pursuits were not governed or shaped by the nature and character of God. Perhaps anyone who disagrees with the original article will discover in eternity that he altered the course of

at least one individual, one family, or even a family tree.

When I first subscribed to *Calvary Messenger* 14 years ago, I read an article written by Eli Kauffman (April, 1996). In this article, the author humbly submitted his concerns about the losses that seem to accompany the employment of special singing and choral presentations in worship. Not everyone appreciated his concerns and many have probably long forgotten that there ever was an article on this topic, but I am one who has often benefited from Eli being willing to bare his heart.

When elders share concerns that are consistent with the perspectives of faithful believers in centuries past, we are wise if we learn from their observations. While some of us may

differ with the “logic” of our elders and some of their conclusions, we are the losers if we focus on their words and miss reading their heart.

Ernest Eby, Mt. View, AR 

the bottom line

Discerning between God’s Judgment and His Chastisement

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

How can we discern between God’s chastisement and His judgment? Crisis points give rise to this question. There are times when we fail to be confident about our life, our vision for ministry, and specifically our attempts in what we considered to be our interest or calling. Consequently, some have backed off from attempting very much in the area of brotherly address: Coming alongside individuals to inquire or seek to give counsel in possible areas of need in their lives.

Job’s friends had it all figured out and were unanimous in telling Job that his dilemma was a judgment from God. He really needs to get right with God, they said.

Jesus’ disciples seemed to be sure that someone had sinned in the case of the man born blind. They asked, “Master, who did sin, this man or

his parents...?” (John 9:2) Jesus confidently exonerated both the man and his parents. God had a larger purpose in the matter, which Jesus said was for the glory of God.

Paul’s shipwreck brought them to land at the island of Melita. While Paul was gathering sticks for a fire, a poisonous snake bit his hand. The people immediately assumed it was a judgment of the gods. Miraculously, he suffered no harm. So they took him to be a god himself.

Jesus also was derided for His “judgment” of being nailed to the cross. His suffering was as an offering for sin, not for His (He had none) but for the sake of chastisement for our sins. The Hebrew writer states, “Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8).

We ourselves may not always be able

to determine whether Christians who suffer setbacks, sickness, financial loss, various misfortunes (even death) because of God's judgment or His loving chastisement.

The times of reprimand can be as crucial to shaping one's life as are the times of encouragement. These two streams in our personal lives become crucial to the direction in which we apply time, resources, energy, and personal lessons. Eventually, it becomes our life quest.

Statements of reprimand can *refine*, *define*, and *confine* us as individuals.

Refining is something we all need. Our desire is to be refined. God uses it for the development of godly character. Some of us have rough spots that need the refinement of correction with direction, when someone will come to us and say, "Not this, but this." Refinement that blesses is that correction which can acknowledge the good, and kindly point out the "dross."

Defining is something that helps. Reprimand can show character flaws. It can clarify life purpose. It can stop the person so he can dutifully inspect his own motives and actions. Many times a life is defined through correction so that life's direction can be changed or perhaps appropriately modified. None of us has all of

life's answers; all of us need some correction. Defining moments are most acutely borne out in crisis events. They are most profitable to have us see ourselves.

Confining is refining turned inward. The process hurts too much, so we bottle it up inside. We shut down in certain areas and refocus on safe areas. We may respond with social withdrawal, contributing the bare minimum to church life, or blaming others.

Confining has the idea of narrowing our choices, or even of a reduction in carrying out a given choice. We usually don't like the experience of narrowing in our lives. Confinement is threatening; we don't know how far this will go and whether it will ever get better.

Confinement can also be a prison-type experience. Serious accident victims are sometimes confined to lie on their back for weeks. Whether or not they caused it, it brings unwelcome restriction.

Refining, *defining*, and *confining* experiences are to make us better. By these means the Lord *purifies*, *clarifies*, and *intensifies* His purposes for us. Who is at fault is not always necessary for Christians to determine. Frequently, it is not even helpful in regard to what God has in mind for the individuals directly affected.

1. Chastisement purifies, for God says, “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Hebrews 12:5,6,11).

We may not always be able to distinguish between God’s judgment and His chastening in our lives. In either case, we can safely and confidently draw near and He will make known His will. If we need to repent of sin, God will address it by His Spirit in conviction. If we do not have guilt for specific sin, then we have confidence and trust toward God. His love is expressed to us as we partake of His holiness.

The larger text in Hebrews 12 says, “For they [earthly fathers] verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness” (verse 10). The purging is for our benefit. Profiting happens by God’s correction. The correction is toward being partakers of his holiness. Verse 14 says, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without

which no man shall see the Lord.” Being partakers of his holiness is a progressive participation, often highlighted by chastisement. Earthly correction is needed for heavenly participation.

2. Chastisement clarifies. Correction, even the human type, helps us to clarify our goals. Maybe our vision is not as important as we thought. Or maybe the timing is off. Visionaries are often ahead of their time. Death of a vision can result. Later, it might be raised again. And if not, perhaps it needed some alteration or change of direction. Chastisement clarifies, sifting the less important from the more important.

Accepting chastisement can clarify God’s will for my life. Thinkers and visionaries are not always appreciated. Their views are too challenging and upsetting to the status quo. But that doesn’t mean they are not needed or at times useful.

Ideas in embryo are sometimes aborted before they go full term. Chastisement under God may appear to be a judgment which comes at the hands of people. God sees the larger picture. Yielding our desires to God is the best way to carry forward God’s work in the right time and way.

Correction also intensifies those corrected, in one of two ways.

One way to respond is to become

bitter. Grown men in particular do not like to be told when they need to change. Chastisement has to do with correction for the past and direction for the future. The in-between point is now: the moment of personal decision.

Rejection of chastisement can easily and naturally grow into bitterness. Man and women who react in bitterness usually do something they will regret.

The classic Scripture in Hebrews 12 about chastisement warns about the defilement of bitterness, “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God: lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Heb. 12:15). The resulting defilement is inward for the infected individual. The defilement may also go outward, affecting many others.

Bitterness has a faulty reasoning of self-justification that inevitably leads to self-deception. At that point, the self-deception solidifies and intensifies its grip on the human heart.

The grace of God cannot be applied to a life controlled by a heart of bitterness. Hence, the warning from God about failing God’s grace. One does not need to become bitter. There is another way:

The other way is to become better.

Many men and women have gone through the fire of chastisement and become better people. They know the experiences of loss, rejection, being misunderstood, being falsely accused, suffering physical ailments, or emotional strains from life’s stresses.

These experiences have made them more patient. See how they flourish by God’s grace in their chastisement. They are more inclined to listen, to empathize, and to give an encouraging word. They are better, not bitter. They can also acknowledge personal need and also give to others who have need. We never have too many such people in our midst. It takes more than ten better people to absorb and offset the ravages of one bitter person.

The Bottom Line is that only the saving grace of God can deliver the bitter person. Saving is the important word here. Even Christians who had once been saved can backslide to a lost condition by their reaction to the trials of life. Such have need of being saved from a life of ruin caused by intensifying bitterness. The grace of God can purify us as we yield to God and produce the peaceable fruit of righteousness. This comes as we submit to His chastisement, without our knowing why.



The Dangers of Anti-Groupism

Denny Kenaston, Stevens, PA

Anti-groupism stems from many different things, and many are the reasons that you may say, “Phew, Mennonites...” or, “Ugh, Baptists...” There may be many different reasons why you have developed an attitude against some group—whatever name they might have, I warn you, there is real danger behind that attitude!

It could be that you had a traumatic experience with a certain group in your past church life. One occasion that comes to my mind is a young man that went through a church split. Church splits are not good—certainly an unfortunate experience. Usually when there is a church split, somebody gets hurt; young people are often confused and don’t understand what is right and who they are supposed to follow. So they get hurt.

In the case I am thinking of there was a young man who got hurt in a church split. So his attitude was, “Mennonites, puh...I don’t ever want to see another one. I never want to hear of one. And I am never going to go to a Mennonite church again as long as I live.”

He had a traumatic experience in his life, and he developed an attitude that is detrimental to his spiritual life. He is half shipwrecked already because of his attitude.

You may have been hurt in a past

church situation where someone dealt with you in a wrong way. Perhaps they were too hard on you, and sort of kicked you around spiritually. Possibly you were even driven away or excommunicated from that church. Because of that, you may have developed an “anti-group” attitude.

Sometimes people grow up in a church setting that says, “This is the way we do things around here. We have the right way, and if you want to get to heaven, you do as we say and get baptized into the church, and everything will be alright.” Then someone wakes up to see that error exists in the church, and that salvation is by following Jesus, not simply man-made rules. Often the immediate reaction is to develop an attitude about “that church” that taught them wrong things all their life.

Or maybe you were in a group that took an extreme position about some truth in the Bible. Because of that extreme position—after all, taking things to extreme is false doctrine—you developed an anti-group attitude.

Consider the pendulum. When a pendulum is pulled to one side and released, it swings to the opposite side almost as far. How often we overreact to error, just like a pendulum! When we see something that is wrong, our natural tendency is to swing to the

other side. In our zeal to get as far away from the error as we can, we often end up in another error on the opposite extreme.

But praise God for the balancing of the Word and of other brothers and sisters, and of those gentle promptings of the Spirit of God! I think most of us could testify of where our attitudes swung too far one way on some issue and God had to bring us back to moderation.

In my own experience, I went through one of those traumatic church experiences. In reaction, for a time I wrote off everything from my past church experience. All of it! I said in my mind: *They hurt me. They have ruined me. They have taken care of my future opportunities to minister. They must be totally wrong.* At that point, I quit witnessing and wrote off all my past church experience.

That is what I call anti-groupism. Of course, we all have different groups that we may have reacted against, but the principle is still the same. God was very gracious to me in my experience. He was patient with me until the pendulum came back—truth was looked at properly and balance was restored. God worked out all of the anti-groupism that was in my heart towards those people, and I thank God for that. People are sometimes shocked when I tell them that I now relate well with those who treated me wrong. It is all because that anti-group attitude got worked out of my heart.

There are several dangers in anti-group attitudes. Let's look at them closely:

• If you hold those “anti” feelings in your heart, you will not be able to help the group you oppose.

It is God's will that we reach out to those within our circle of influence. Each one of you has a circle of influence from your past, into churches that I do not, and God wants to use that influence. But if you harbor “anti”—which signifies “opposed to, against”—attitudes, you will NEVER be able to minister to those people. We want to stand against the attitude that says, “I am against those people that I came from.”

What is very interesting to me is that often the very people that we hold attitudes against are the ones we want to reach out to the most; yet we cannot do it because of our attitude. When we reach out to them, they sense the attitude and refuse to receive what we have to say. In reaction, they then will sometimes begin to “throw things back.” And I realize that this reaction of theirs will sometimes come even if we approach them in a pure way, but too often we carry an anti-group attitude towards the group we have left. So we then justify ourselves and quote Paul's words, “I go to the Gentiles....” It is pretty hard to have a burden for people, if you are disgusted with them for what they did to you in the past. It is hard to pray for them.

Paul had several reasons to have an

anti-Jewish attitude. After all, he had been deceived by them, being told by them that they had the right way, the only way. Paul believed this, so much so that he hounded Christians to death for turning away from Judaism. Yes, he was deceived; he had plenty of “reason” to react against it. After he found faith in Jesus Christ, the Jews chased after him, wherever he went, causing him trouble. His name was well-known among the Jews, but in a negative way: They stoned him; they argued with him in public places; they had him thrown into prison; but not only that, he was even called by God to the Gentiles, so that he could have easily said, “Jews... huh...I am done with ‘em! I’ve had enough of them! Somebody else can minister to them; I am called to the Gentiles.”

Just listen to Paul’s heart in Romans 9:1-3: *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*

Accursed from Christ for the sake of my people—what an amazing attitude! There was apparently no pendulum in his life. He kept the spirit and attitude of Christ; he still loved them. Even though they criticized him and persecuted him, he would not allow that anti-group attitude to rise up in his heart. In chapter 10 of the same letter, we can read some more of Paul’s

heart for the Jews: *Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

We can hear the burdened heart of Paul as he ponders his people. We cannot sense any reactionary spirit in these verses, but rather a pure, sweet desire that the Jews would come to the light and understanding that he himself had come to. Even though Paul did say those words, “I go to the Gentiles,” we need to hear his heart in the spirit in which he spoke them. It is not wrong to say those words and mean them, but may we have the same attitude that Paul had!

When the time came for Paul to return to Jerusalem, he could joyfully submit to the Jewish customs and do things that he knew were not necessary for salvation. Had he had an anti-Jewish attitude when James came to him and said, “Paul, I want you to shave your head and go on a fast so that while you are here in Jerusalem there won’t be any trouble,” what do you suppose his response would have been? He may have spouted out something really “holy,” like, “I am free from the Law; I don’t have to do those things!” There were a lot of Scriptures he could have quoted to James. But his love for these people, his people, caused him to act without any “anti” reaction.

So we see that the first and foremost danger of an anti-group attitude is that we cannot help the ones we oppose; they will not receive what we have to say if they sense that attitude in us.

• **An anti-group attitude will cause you to do things that will offend those very people.**

You will not consider them when making choices in your life. Paul was not that way. His testimony was, “To the Jew I am going to be like a Jew, and to the Greek a Greek.” Paul did not have an uncaring, inconsiderate attitude when it came time to making choices. No, he did not compromise (not that he would take part in their ungodly ways to win them), but he did consider and think, “Is this going to cause hurt among those people? Is this choice going to further the Gospel among the Jews?”

If you have, for example, an anti-Amish attitude, you will not think like Paul did. In fact, even if someone would try to suggest the idea of submitting to “those people’s ideas, you would immediately come up with one of those “righteous” answers. There are times, of course, for those “righteous” answers, but I challenge you to consider what your attitude is, and ask yourself at decision time: “Will this hurt my opportunity to speak to those people? Is this worth doing?” After all, it may be more than just “that group” you are dealing with; “that group” may include those who are your brothers or sisters in the Lord.

Hear the words of the Apostle Paul: “If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” Consider how an “anti” attitude will blind you to this principle. You will make choices—buy things, go places, wear clothes, and do things—that will offend those you are trying to win.

• **An anti-group attitude will hurt the next generation.**

Perhaps you have already heard the words coming from the mouth of your children...words that made your conscience twinge. The next generation is at our mercy. They are making evaluations based on our attitudes. It has been said—and it is very true—that what we do wrong in moderation, our children will do in excess. Ponder that!

Maybe for you it is simple, “Ugh, Mennonites...” But for your children, that little sigh may cause them to write off the whole Anabaptist movement and cause them to become wholly Evangelical. If we have a reactionary spirit toward a certain group of people or a certain set of principles, our children will react even stronger than we have.

Have you ever heard the words from some of “those people,” such as, “Watch where you are going, you will lose your children”? These are words given from observation—wise words! Well, the answer is not necessarily to return to the old group, because, yes, there were likely valid reasons for leaving. But let’s

develop a Christlike attitude toward them, not a reactionary one.

• An anti-group attitude will cause you to throw away truth—pitch it!

We have all seen people who have reacted and thrown away beautiful truths, because “such-and-such a group hurt me and taught me wrong. I am getting away from them!” It causes people to go from a church with strong authority—perhaps too strong—to completely abandon the idea of authority in the church. It causes people from a church where there was strong brotherhood accountability, to no church at all. These folks may not even believe that there is a church, and they stay at home.

Of course, the oncoming generation gets hurt tremendously for this. The hills are filled with these “individualists,” people who cannot find anyone anywhere to fellowship with—no one they can agree with. What causes this? Many times it was a bad experience in the past with a group that perhaps abused church authority. I recognize that there are people who are in an area where no good options exist, but I speak to people who are not even seriously looking for a church any more.

People also react from churches that focus primarily on the outward, and they leap into the error that says the outward doesn't matter; only the heart matters. In the process, many powerful Bible truths get thrown out the door. The Scriptures say, “Let your

moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”

What happens is, because of our “anti” attitude, we develop a blind spot. For example, take the subject of clothes. You may hear someone saying, “Clothes! I am sick of hearing about clothes! I am sick of ‘plain suits and cape dresses!’” So the whole “clothes” thing gets pitched out...and blindness comes over that person. And we stand back amazed at what those people end up doing. This all stemmed from that “anti” attitude—reactionism.

• An anti-group attitude fosters pride and deception.

Here's how it happens...remember that pendulum. We say, “They are wrong, and I am right. And I have got to prove that I am right, and they are wrong.” This whole attitude is not good for us. An attitude that says, “We are right, we have the answers, we have found it...and they are all wrong!” will foster pride in us.

I remember a preacher once saying, “We don't need revival; we already have revival!” Now, I had been in a number of their church services, and I had not observed revival among them. It seems that man honestly thought they had revival. However, spiritual pride had arisen in his heart and had so darkened his heart and apparently his mind, convincing him that they were right, even when they were wrong. May God help us! May He keep us from such proud reaction!

There was once a church that took

some firm stands against apostasy, biblical stands, and they were right to do that. God blessed them for it. But spiritual pride came in, and now that same church is so convinced that they are right, they say, "It has got to be done exactly like we do it, or it is not right." Slowly but surely, an attitude begins to develop in the congregation, "We are IT. This is THE place, the place where everyone needs to be." We must be on guard so we do not begin to think we are better than others. God help us! This how an "anti" attitude develops into spiritual pride.

• **There exists a danger of building a fellowship around "anti" attitudes.**

Have you ever had "fellowship" like that? "Fellowship" centered around "them" and what "they" said and what "they" did, and what's happening "over there"? Have you ever spent a Sunday afternoon like that? Well, I have, and it is NOT very edifying. What a terrible foundation to build a church upon! But it happens. The bottom line is: fellowship based on others' faults will not build the church. If you find it really easy to open up about "those people" and start shooting from the hip at "them," I encourage you to just cleanse your heart of all that. Such talk will cause you shipwreck. Let's talk about Jesus!

Examine yourself and ask, "Do I have an anti-group attitude?" If you cannot discern your own heart, then just ask a couple of honest people that know you well. They can tell you!

If you have found that you indeed are infected, here is how to come clean:

You need to acknowledge it. This is the first step. You need to forgive those who did you wrong, if you haven't. The anti-group attitude is there because you got hurt or misused.

You need to open you heart up and retain anything and everything that was good in the group you came from. Some are so reactionary that they will not even consider a truth if "that group" also believed it.

You need to purpose to overcome those attitudes, because they will haunt you for a long time if you harbored them.

We need to remember the Lord Jesus, who came unto His own, but His own did not receive Him. How did He respond to those who did not receive Him? He laid Himself on the cross and died for them! This is the attitude that God would have us foster towards our background.

Anti-groupism has been a real hindrance to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God, and a real hindrance to the perfection of the saints. Overreaction has shipwrecked many a soul, and blinded many others. May we be on our guard!

[Based on sermon #834, preached in June, 1991. Free cassette or CD available upon request. Edited, not a literal transcription. Used by permission of Charity Ministries, 400 W. Main St., Ephrata, PA, 17522.]



marriages

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

Hochstetler-Lapp

Bro. Lonnie, son of Perry and Mary Hochstetler, Wesley, AR, and Sis. Ruth, daughter of Leroy and Naomi Lapp, New Holland, PA, at Ephrata Business Center for Summitview Christian Fellowship, on May 1, 2010, by Leroy Lapp.

cradle roll

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

Gingerich, Vernon and Rosalyn (Yoder), Wytheville, VA, eighth child, sixth dau., Janelle Dawn, May 1, 2010.

Graber, Justin and Carolyn (Villalobos), Quenemo, KS, second child, first dau., Kaitlyn Rose, April 21, 2010.

Hostetler, Dan and Kris (Gingerich), Belleville, PA, third child and dau., Chloe Danae, April 19, 2010.

Hostetler, Marvin and Karen (Miller), McVeytown, PA, second child and son, Carson Eric, April 17, 2010.

Kinsinger, Milt and Faith (Yoder), Falkville, AL, fourth child, second dau., Kendra Rachelle, May 1, 2010.

Kuepfer, Darryl and Rosetta (Ropp), Monkton, ON, second child, first son, Kaiden Darryl, April 27, 2010.

Miller, Dale and Myra (Hershberger), Uniontown, OH, second child and dau., Kari Beth, April 21, 2010.

Miller, Loren and Mandy (Miller), Eden Valley, MN, third child, second dau., Renita Fern, April 6, 2010.

Nisly, Wayne and Sharon (Brenneman), Hartselle, AL, fifth child, third son, Andrew LaVon, May 16, 2010.

Overholt, James and LaDonna (Baer), Auburn, KY, fourth child, third son, Edward Russell, March 9, 2010.

Peachey, Mervin and Lois Ann (King), Nakuru, Kenya, East Africa, tenth child, ninth dau., Caroline Jane, April 21, 2010.

Peachy, Richard and Twila (Miller), Lewisburg, PA, fourth child, third son, Brendon Alex, April 19, 2010.

Robbins, Matthew and Linda (Floyd), Vinemont, AL, fifth child, fourth son, Noah Michael, April 29, 2010.

Schlabach, Norman and Doreen (Martin), Auburn, KY, first child, and son, Kyler Eugene, March 21, 2010.

Schmidt, Toby and Rosetta (Wagler), Trout Creek, MT, third child, second dau., Kaitlyn Marie, May 3, 2010.

ordinations

Stoltzfoos, Adin and Heidi (Denlinger), Burgettstown, PA, fifth child, third son, Rodney James, April 28, 2010.

Stoltzfus, David and Roseanne (Zook), Christiana, PA, sixth child, second dau., Leandra Nicole, Feb. 27, 2010.

Stoltzfus, Larion and Cheryl (Spicher), Kennedyville, MD, third child, second son, Danny Abraham, Jan. 26, 2010.

Troyer, Tim and Ann (Yoder), Fredonia, KY, fifth child, fourth son, Brian Lavon, Jan. 20, 2010.

Troyer, Titus and Kathryn (Mast), Fredonia, KY, first child, and son, Tyler Austin, Dec. 11, 2009.

Wickey, Mark and Fanny (Stutzman), Bronson, MI, fourth child, third dau., Damaris Grace, May 4, 2010.

Yoder, Jesse and Teresa (Yoder), Clarkson, KY, first child, and son, Garreth Lee, May 6, 2010.

Yoder, Lawrence and Janet (Troyer), Lott, TX, a son, Jerian Cordell, born April 2, 2008; adopted April 2, 2010.

Yoder, Timothy and Julie (Brovont), Sarasota, FL, second child, first dau., Jerusha Dawn, May 6, 2010.

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

Bro. James Kline, 42, was ordained as minister on May 16, 2010, at Agape Christian Fellowship, Sugarcreek, OH. Preordination messages were brought by Mark Yoder. The charge was given by Bill Mullet, assisted by Lonnie Beachy, Plain City. Henry Beachy was also in the lot.

Bro. Jonathan Overholt, 44, of Auburn, KY, was ordained as bishop of Franklin Mennonite Church on March 21, 2010. Preordination messages were brought by Eli Kauffman. The charge was given by Lavern Eash, assisted by Eli Kauffman and Jim Yoder.

Bro. Lavon Stoltzfus, 30, Dundee, OH, was ordained to the office of minister to serve at Messiah A.M. Church, May 9, 2010. Preordination speaker was Nathan Yoder, Free Union, VA. The charge was given by Philip Miller, assisted by Paul Leroy Miller and James Mullet. Merle Miller was also in the lot.



Kramer, Ashlie Michelle, 22, of Franklin, KY, died in a tragic accident while traveling with the John Esh family on I-65 in Hart County, Kentucky, near Munfordville, on March 26, 2010. She was born on July 30, 1987, daughter of Alvin and Leona (Overholt) Kramer.

She was a member of Franklin Mennonite Church.

Survivors include sisters: Rosanna Kramer, Franklin; Julia (Pete) Miller, Russellville, KY; Regina (wife of Mark Beachy) of Franklin; Margaret (Daniel) Miller, Russellville; Dorcas (Kenneth) Beachy, Franklin; brothers: Nathanael Kramer, Franklin; and Stephen (Ellie) Kramer, Franklin.

She was preceded in death by three nephews.

The funeral was held at Franklin Mennonite Church on March 29. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Mullet, Ella, 84, of Lagrange, IN, died April 24, 2010, at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Elsie and Delbert Schrock. She was born Sept. 13, 1925, daughter of the late Harvey and Susanna (Gingerich) Schlabach.

She was a member of Faith Haven Chapel.

On Dec. 16, 1947, she was married to Ervin Mullet, who survives. Also surviving are six children: Elsie (Delbert) Schrock, LaGrange; Paul (Marge) Mullet, Columbus, NC; Esther (Harold) Headings, Sheffield,

IL; Martha (Ray) Stutzman, Lakeville, IN; Willis (Josephine) Mullet, Goshen, IN; Myron (Angie) Mullet, Greenwood, SC; 21 grandchildren; 38 great grandchildren; two sisters: Mary Miller, Gambier, OH; and Amanda (Roy) Wengerd, Millersburg, OH; and a brother, Emanuel (Mary) Schlabach, Millersburg, OH.

She was preceded in death by two sisters, Verna Schlabach and Mattie Troyer, and a great grandson, Jordan Sensenig.

The funeral was held at the Townline Mennonite Church on April 28, with Henry Hershberger and Daniel Bontrager serving. Burial was in the Townline Cemetery.

Nisly, Edna, 82, died at her home in rural Partridge, KS, on May 23, 2010. She was born at Hutchinson, Kansas, August 29, 1927, daughter of the late Harmon and Lizzie (Garver) Yoder.

She was an active member of Center A.M. Church. She wrote many letters of encouragement and was keenly interested in many aspects of outreach. She was involved in the lives of her family, hand making a quilt for each of her 31 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

On May 21, 1950, she was married to Menno Nisly. He survives. Also surviving are five sons and two daughters: Grace (Leo) Madonna, Mulvane, KS; J. Samuel (Brenda) Nisly, Oswego, KS; J. Arthur (Lillian) Nisly, San Salvador, El Salvador; J. Harold (Judith) Nisly, Partridge; J. Marvin (Rosa) Nisly, Hutchinson; Hope

(Richard) Kramer, Hutchinson; J. Arnold (Judy) Nisly, Hutchinson; grandchildren, great grandchildren;

Other survivors include brothers: Harley Yoder, Topeka, KS; Crist Yoder, Hutchinson; Ora Yoder, Kingfisher, OK; sisters: Gertie Yoder, Hutchinson; Fannie Miller, Hutchinson; Orpha Nisly, Clearwater, FL; and Erma Yoder, Pratts, VA.

She was preceded in death by brothers: Fred, Roy, and an infant brother; and granddaughters: Evie and Kari Nisly.

The funeral was held at Center Church on May 26, with David Yoder, Gary Miller and David L. Miller serving. LaVerne Miller conducted the committal at the West Center Cemetery.



observations

People who text while they drive are 23 times more likely to be involved in an accident than those who don't. Eighteen states have made it illegal. (Tool Kit/MMA, May/June, 2010)



Daniel J. Johns (1850-1942) served as a minister, then bishop, at Clinton frame Mennonite Church near Goshen, IN. He is remembered as an able leader who was creative in working through disagreements.

D. D. Miller, pastor at Forks Mennonite Church asked D. J. Johns for his help because of a serious disagreement on where the doors should be placed in their new church building which was under construction.

Johns preached a strong sermon on unity then told them he would prefer they would not have doors at all rather than having such dissension. They could set up ladders at the

windows so the door placement would become a non-issue. By that time people were so ashamed that they were ready to allow a majority vote to settle the matter.

On another occasion the young folks wanted to have week-day singings to learn English hymns. The older people frowned on this. Bishop Johns preached a sermon on being submissive to one another. He then asked the people under 30 that if they would let the older people settle this matter, they would show it by standing. All the young people stood. He then asked the older people if they would be willing to allow the young people to have their singings. Then the older folks responded by standing.

These situations provide vivid examples of being subject one to another.

The above items are taken from the

booklet, *Clinton Frame Mennonite Church*, 1863-1988, by J. C. Wenger.

• • • • •

An Anabaptist brother had become the lead pastor of a congregation. The weight of leadership weighed heavily on him. He was distressed that there seemed to be so little respect for leadership. He tearfully shared his burden with an older brother who was an experienced team leader.

A decade or so earlier this brother had become involved with others who considered their leaders and congregation needlessly restrictive. This resulted in the formation of a new group that was more to their liking. This brother now has the privilege of viewing things from a new perspective.

I know of no instrument that registers the true motive for dissatisfaction and unrest. Does it not narrow down to two possibilities? Either God-given conviction or self-centered carnality. The passage of time often gives a clearer indication which it is or was.

• • • • •

The matter of restriction or boundaries for church people is not considered necessary in the larger evangelical community. It is certainly possible to misunderstand or overrate their function and importance. God's people are often referred to as sheep.

Sheep, left to themselves, do go astray. (Isaiah 53:6) Boundaries or restrictions do nothing to nourish the sheep. They simply identify an enclosure in which it is safe to graze and flourish.

For sheep to spend their time walking the fence eyeing the "greener pastures" outside does not make for healthy sheep.

The Good Shepherd takes good care of His sheep. To follow Him is to be nourished for growth and protected from spiritual danger. (See Psalm 23)

• • • • •

James Davison Hunter has written a book, entitled: *Faithful Presence*. He notes that the Christian Right, the Christian Left, and neo-Anabaptists employ similar strategies to influence culture through government intervention. Hunter sees their goals and methods as misguided and ineffective.

He maintains that Christians are not called to change the world, but rather "to honor the Creator of all goodness, beauty, and truth, a manifestation of our loving obedience to God and a fulfillment of God's command 'to love our neighbor.'"

He says over the course of the 20th century all Americans, including Christians, have turned more and more to the state to solve their

problems. This includes the Left, the Right, and neo-Anabaptists. Law is the language of the state. We should note that as law increases, cultural consensus decreases. It is ironic that different groups use similar tactics with different goals. They partake in “the will to power,” the very thing they decry in society. Hunter says we must segregate the life of the church and the life of the nation. He notes that the desire to be relevant has come at the cost of abandoning distinctiveness. To be aggressive and confrontational does not reflect the methods that our Lord modeled. It belongs to the other kingdom.

“Christians need to abandon talk about ‘redeeming the culture.’ Such talk...implies conquest and domination.”

The desire for faithful presence calls on the entire laity in all vocations to be ambassadors of God’s peace. “Faithful presence is not new; it’s just something we need to recover.”

• • • • •

The above information is taken from *Christianity Today*, May, 2010. It was particularly interesting for several reasons. It was the first time I had come across the term neo-Anabaptist. Author Hunter is apparently aware that some Anabaptists are active in political

expressions that are not consistent with historical position and practice of the denomination.

Hunter also mentioned James Dobson, Stanley Hauerwas, Charles Colson, and Jim Wallis as persons with the mistaken notion that Christians are called to convert the culture. We may well admire some of the things these men believe and work for. At the same time, an unguarded acceptance of the message and manner that an influential person models us to run the risk of accepting baggage that is foreign to Christian ideals. That is why it is important to “prove all things” by God’s standard of truth. It is also important to be closely involved with a body of believers to provide stability and fellowship.

As I understand this unusual article, I felt encouraged that our ideal of being a Christian sub-culture that idealizes faithfulness rather than aggressive activity in behalf of virtuous causes is a worthy ideal. We should also be on guard lest our faithful presence sinks into passive disinterest.

• • • • •

Yitta Schwartz recently died at Monroe, NY, at age 93. She was a member of a Jewish sect called Satmor Hasidic. She was a holocaust survivor where she lost two children.

Another child died in a summer camp accident.

When the Schwartzes came to the United States in 1953 they brought 11 children. Five more were born after their arrival here. Survivors include 15 children, more than 200 grandchildren, with great grandchildren and great great grandchildren so numerous that the family estimates these could be as many as 2,000 direct descendants. Her survivors include a daughter who is 64, who has 16 children and more than 100 grand and great grandchildren. Mrs. Schwartz was a widow for 34 years.

She was a modest person who did not want her family to collect photographs of her. "Just keep me in your heart," she would say. (From *The New York Times*, courtesy Floyd Stoltzfus.)

• • • • •

Today (May 8), Mary and I attended an awards assembly at the local Pilgrim Christian Grade School at Center Church. It was a blessing to observe teachers who are committed to help the students become their best selves not only in academic performance, but also in character development.

This occasion is called character awards assembly where students are commended for positive character

traits of unselfishness, diligence, and improvement. I was impressed that this does not discredit the value of outstanding achievement but it does call attention to something even more important.

• • • • •

In 1960, 5.8% of persons in medical school were women. In 2005-06, the percentage was almost 49. (*The Hutchinson News*, 5-9-10).

• • • • •

The popular notion that a college degree is essential for real success is being challenged by a growing number of economists, policy analysts, and educators. They say more Americans should consider other options. Vocational training is considered one of those options. This provides more intense and specific preparation for the job market.

The emphasis and widespread interest in college degrees seems to have created more graduates than there are openings for college-trained persons. One study reports an unemployment comparison of high school grads at 4.9% compared to college grads at 10.8%.

Spending time in school is expensive. A 2008 study reports that the average student debt load was \$23,200, which is an increase of about \$1,000 per year for the last five years.

A mother of a college-age daughter

who is choosing vocational training over pursuit of a four-year degree expressed her disappointment as follows: “It is sad to know that she’s going to miss that open-minded effect of an undergraduate degree... To discover new ideas to become more worldly.” (*The Hutchinson News*, 5-14-10, by Puritan writer, Alan Scher Zagrier)

• • • • •

The above quotation by a mother identifies a very good reason why young people need to be well-grounded and firmly committed before being exposed to the unstable influence of humanism.

Formal training is needed for some vocations and ministries. For

us ordinary folk to have access to the services of trained people when necessary is truly thankworthy. But let us remember that sound formal training never contradicts sound Christian doctrine and Christian character. Good work habits and manual skills can be developed without formal training.

• • • • •

Illegal immigration continues to be an issue that is prominent in the national news. Columnist Cal Thomas says that the reason that political resolution has not happened is that Democrats are catering to Hispanic voters and Republicans see cheap labor as a national asset.

—DLM 

Faithful in Little

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

In my journey of Christian faith a number of principles from Scripture have become like foundational corner stones. Building on these has been helpful in navigating through the fog of today’s world. These principles have been like guiding lights in my personal walk with God, in my call to the ministry and the outreach mission of Choice Books.

One of these foundational principles is given in Luke’s gospel.

“He who is faithful in *what* is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what* is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own? No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other: you

cannot serve God and mammon” (Luke 16:10-13).

Consider the statement: “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much” (verse 10, NASB).

Someone compiled over 1,000 commandments found in the New Testament. Several examples follow: “Abstain from idols” (Acts 15:10).

“Be careful to maintain good works” (Titus 4:8).

“Be doers of the word” (James 1:22).

“Have no fellowship with the works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11).

“Exhort one another” (Heb. 3:13).

“Do not adorn yourselves with gold, or pearls, or costly array” (1 Tim. 2:9).

For the Christian woman; “let her be covered” (1 Cor. 11:6).

Insights into the riches of God’s nature and His will for our lives come through step-by-step obedience. Every step of obedience is a step into the light. Every step of disobedience is a step downward into spiritual fog and darkness. Spiritual growth stalls at the point of willful disobedience. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Every little step of obedience is a step upward into being faithful in much. It is important that we do what we already know. Once a year, I read

My Utmost for His Highest.

I am reminded by that author: “Spiritual muddle is only made plain by obedience.

Immediately when we obey we discern.” (page 258) “God will never reveal more truth about

Himself until you have obeyed what you already know.” (page 284)

Imagine yourself being my guest as I park in a CVS parking lot in Richmond, VA. A homeless man approaches us as we walk toward the store. He says he is very hungry and hasn’t had anything to eat for several days. With compassion, you take five dollars from your wallet and direct him to an adjacent Hardee’s for a breakfast value meal. As you leave the CVS store, you see him purchasing cigarettes. What might you do the next time he approaches you? Would you give him a ten-dollar bill?

Colossians 3:19 commands husbands to “love your wives, and be not bitter against them.” In 1 Corinthians 11:14, Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit asks, “Doth not even nature teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him?” Can a man who harbors bitterness toward his wife, or anyone for that matter, and “lets his hair down” expect God to step over these transgressions and reveal more of Himself? Can he expect God to entrust him with more of His great riches? He can expect that

God will keep his promise, “He who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.” The bitter spirit and disobedience will bring on more darkness.

The Apostle Paul gives us further insights into knowing God’s will and being faithful in much. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1,2).

Here are several practical applications of these verses, to help you know the will of God and be faithful in much:

A decisive dedication of your body, your life, and your future to God. This is a call to yield yourself to Jesus Christ. As the song writer wrote, “I Surrender All” (*Life Songs*, Number 2, page 248). Step by step, I bring my life in line with God’s Word.

Do not conform your life after the passing customs of this present world. To know the will of God you need to be “unyielding” to the passing fads of this world. I will not surrender to the world’s appeal. The principle: “Yielded to Christ, unyielded to the

world” is what turns “faithful in little” into “faithful in much.”

Over 40 years ago, I was given permission to place ten titles of Christian books among the non-Christian reading material in Washington National Airport. I wanted to put a 56-title display into that newsstand. Even though I was a bit disappointed not to get permission to place our own display, I took the little ten-title space. After faithful service and surprising sales, I was given permission to place a big display in the main store. This led to giving me space in all eight stores of that airport and eventually leading to selling around 600 books every 14 days. Faithful in little leads to faithful in much. It appears to have been the beginning of the trail that eventually brought us to serving over 6,000 displays (pulpits in the marketplace) today.

If a beggar squanders a five you give him, he should hardly expect you to give him a ten. A person who grumbles about having to carry out the trash shouldn’t expect to be asked to be treasurer of the church’s funds. A person who doesn’t obey the known will of God shouldn’t expect God to reveal more of His greater riches.

Faithful in much starts with being faithful in little.



What a Mighty God We Serve!

Selected; source unknown

How awesome and orderly GOD is! For example, in the hatching of eggs:

- the eggs of a potato bug hatch in 7 days;
- the eggs of a canary, in 14 days;
- the eggs of a barnyard hen, in 21 days;
- the eggs of domestic ducks and geese, in 28 days;
- the eggs of the mallard duck, in 35 days.

Notice, that all of these numbers are divisible by 7, the number of days in a week.

God's wisdom is seen in the design of certain animals:

The four legs of the elephant bend forward in the same direction. No other quadruped is so made. God apparently planned that this great animal would have a huge body, too large for two legs, so He gave it four fulcrums so that it can rise from the ground easily. The horse is given much greater speed than the elephant; it rises from the ground on its two front legs first. A cow rises from the ground with its two hind legs first. How wise is the Lord in all His works of creation!

Other numbers in creation are amazing!

- Each watermelon has an even number of stripes on the rind.
- Each orange has an even number of segments.
- Each ear of corn has an even number of rows of kernels.
- Each stalk of wheat has an even number of grains.
- All grains are found in even numbers on the stalks, which corresponds with how Jesus specified the harvest to be thirty-fold, sixty-fold, or an hundred-fold—all even numbers.

•Every bunch of bananas has on its lowest row an even number of bananas, and each succeeding row decreases by one, so that every other row has an even number and every other an odd number of bananas.

•The waves of the sea roll in on shore 26 times to the minute in all kinds of weather.

•God has caused the flowers to bloom at certain specified times so that Linnaeus, the great botanist, once said that if he had a conservatory containing the right kind of soil, moisture, and temperature, he could tell the time of day or night by the flowers that were open or closed.

Thus the Lord, in His wonderful grace, can arrange the life that is entrusted to His care in such a way that it will carry out His purposes and plans, and will be fragrant with His presence. Only the God-planned life is successful. Only the life given over to the care of the Lord is fulfilled. **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not to your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct* your paths”** (Proverbs 3:5, 6 NKJV; *Literally make *smooth* or *straight*).



Courage or Cowardice?

Janet Yoder, Lott, TX

The other day while I was shopping an older lady came over to me and wondered if she could ask me a question. I said, “Sure.”

This was her question: “About ten years ago, my son moved to another state. There’s a Mennonite church in his community. All the ladies dressed like you. They wore these long dresses and they were very different from the rest of the world.

“Three weeks ago, I went to visit my son and I was shocked at what I saw! The ladies are wearing these short skirts and low cut blouses. It

seems like they’re trying more and more to fit in with the rest of the world. So I would just really like to know—is this what’s happening in your churches these days? If you people give in to the ways of the world, well then, the rest of us might as well not even try because we’ll never make it.”

This was a timely reminder for us that people are watching us all the time! What do they see? Are we leaving a clear testimony for our Lord?

[Submitted by Dave Kauffman, Lott, TX. Slightly condensed.]

God tries our faith so He may try our faithfulness.

Mobilizers and Senders

Floyd Stoltzfus

A well-seasoned missionary in Guatemala wrote: “Missions are not just about missionaries. For every effective missionary we find a dozen or more people who support missionaries and boost the cause of missions. The life of sending can be particularly challenging because sending is voluntary and most senders remain immersed in their home culture. Mobilization is a special kind of sending which lifts the vision and involvement of many people in the work of evangelization.”

The word mobilize can rightly be used in the task of missions because Christians are called to spiritual warfare. Paul charged Timothy, “Thou, therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3). Stuart Holden declared a biblical fact about missions when he said, “The Gospel is not only a promise of bliss, but a proclamation of battle.” Sjogren and Stearnes offer this definition of mobilization: “When a country goes out to war, it isn’t just the frontline soldiers whose lives are affected. An entire line of support personnel must stand behind

them, supplying whatever the combat troops need to do battle. Publicity campaigns urge people to pray for their troops, to write to them to keep up their battle-fatigued morale, to sacrifice luxuries for the sake of the war effort, and to give up the use of items that are more desperately needed on the front lines.” This comment does not justify warfare but is an analogy of the great task of bringing God’s light against Satan’s darkness.

Sending is a vital principle in calling a missionary. God’s call to Moses was, “...I will send thee unto Pharaoh...” (Exodus 3:10). Jesus urged His disciples to pray that the Lord would send forth laborers into the harvest when He saw the people as scattered sheep without a shepherd. Numerous times in the Gospels this principle of sending was active in heaven between the Father and Son: “thou hast sent me.” (John 17:18)

Paul knew soon after his conversion that his mission for life was to preach Christ to the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. (See Acts 9:15) Even though he was preaching

Christ at Antioch and elsewhere for years, he waited to go as a traveling missionary until he was sent by the Holy Spirit and the church. To the Romans he wrote, "And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Romans 10:15a). A director of a mission organization wrote: "God is summoning many believers to serve as senders with the same zeal and consecration of life purpose as frontline missionaries."

Paul urged his friends to pour out their lives with the imagery of a "drink offering" of wine or oil to be poured out as a sacrifice in order to ignite others to full flame. May God call more senders on the home front to fan the sacred flame of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our missionaries with live coals from the altar. Think of the various means of technological communication we have today to send messages swiftly to missionaries in remote places of the earth.

The following article was published in *Calvary Messenger* in January, 2004. It is a message of encouragement to stay in touch with missionaries away from home.

No News is Good News?

By a Missionary Mother

Our family has been on the mission field for several years now, and to be honest, I'm missing things from

home. No, it's not peanut butter or chocolate chips. Nor is it being able to be at a grocery store within 15 minutes. What I miss is feeling connected with our dear church family back home.

When we arrived, our fellow missionaries saw our stacks of mail for those first few months, eyed them jealously, and commented, "Just wait; they'll slack off!" How right they were! Even when our birthdays roll around, we rarely hear from anyone besides family.

So, you say, "What can I write about? Their lives always sound exciting. They'll think my letters are boring. Besides, I just don't have time."

As I mentioned earlier, it's you we miss. We picture you gathered casually after prayer meeting, everyone busily chatting. Someone's relating what cute things your young ones said or did recently, or telling who's sick, or how your elderly parents are doing. Someone else tells how your remodeling project is going, or who's expecting a baby, or how your recent trip went, and so on. Even writing this, I'm feeling a wave of jealousy, a feeling of not being a part of you anymore. Is this disconnected feeling just a price missionaries have to pay? Is it possible to bridge the gap that time and distance have formed?

Would our church brethren want

us to feel this way? No! they love us, support us in prayer, and have a schedule for writing letters. Still, communication gaps occur. For example, news about a coming baby doesn't reach us until just weeks before the event. Or after someone was dating, and we expected soon to hear news about a wedding, we find out that the courtship ended months ago. Although letters are appreciated, they sometimes lack the very thing we're hungry for. We long for updates of our friends' own families. We can hardly remember some of the babies' names, and have no idea how old they are. Little Sally is going to Sunday School already? Really? How can Dick be old enough to go hunting with his daddy? Imagine Jane being old enough for a cape dress!

Are you into quilting? Tell us about it. You've decided to retire. We want to hear about how the adjustment is going. We miss the deep discussions, too. How are you looking at church issues? And, by the way, what *are* the current issues? What are your concerns? Again, the list is endless.

It's always special when someone includes pictures with a letter. But while you're waiting to get the family

picture taken, don't forget that even casual snapshots mean a lot. We also enjoy it when folks include bulletins of special events, a memoriam after a death, an especially good recipe, thoughts or verses that have been an encouragement to you recently—you get the idea.

Pringles or cheese make us feel special when you've chosen them especially for us. We enjoy the books, magazines, and small gifts you send for the children. But please don't forget that it's the newsy stuff we really look forward to.

Are you teaching a class? How about making a class project, and sending cards and letters? Or give your home-schooled children an assignment. It can count for Art and Language both. Most children will do this enthusiastically with proper guidance. Our children have enjoyed receiving a colorful pack of letters several times in the past.

Hubby hasn't been in town to check the mail for several weeks. Maybe we'll have some when he next goes in. But at least there were several e-mails today, plus a fax. Those were special. I wonder if we'll ever hear from YOU? 

***Don't be afraid to go out on a limb for God;
that's where the fruit is.***

Five Gifts for our Grandchildren

Mary June Glick

Do grandparents need to learn to love their grandchildren or do we automatically become good grandparents with the birth of our first grandchild? I recently read a quote, “A grandmother is born with the arrival of the first grandchild.” In one sense, that is true, however, I believe we can always improve our grandmothering skills, even as a mother grows in her mothering abilities.

I remember seeing our first grandchild for the first time and sensing an instant connection to her. I felt like I knew her. That sense does not come alone from the biological connection because I have felt similar connection to our grandchildren who are not related to us by blood but by adoption.

I believe God planned for grandparents to help mold and shape the lives of their grandchildren. We want to help instill our values in the next generation. We want to pass on a legacy to those who follow us. It is up to us to choose whether we will make an impact on the lives of our grandchildren or whether we

choose to follow our own dreams and interests in our older years. There are many things we did not have time or opportunity to do with our children, their parents. Nevertheless, if we have the privilege of getting to know our grandchildren, God is giving us an extra bonus allowing us to touch the lives of our grandchildren. Let us look at five gifts we can give to our grandchildren.

The gift of prayer

Pray daily by name for each grandchild. Pray specifically for needs in their lives, regardless of their ages. Ask them about their hopes and dreams, their problems and concerns, so you can pray intelligently for them. Assure them of your prayers—in your letters, on the telephone, or face to face. Who knows whether their knowledge of our prayers may protect them in a time of temptation? Pray with them. Encourage them to pray and rejoice with them in answered prayer.

The gift of teaching

Teach, teach, and teach. The Bible tells us to teach the principles of His Word to our children and our

grandchildren, here a little, there a little; precept upon precept; line upon line. This kind of teaching never ends.

There are many ways of teaching. We teach in our everyday conversation, by our words and attitudes. A child learns gratitude, contentment, kindness or prejudices and anger by the words they hear us say. I believe it grieves a small child to hear their grandparents complain or speak unkindly about other people. We teach by telling, simply by expressing our values and telling them *what* the Bible says. We teach our small grandchildren that Jesus loves them, by telling them that God made the flowers, by reading Bible story books, or by simply reading to them from the Bible. We teach them about creation, laying a foundation for the rest of the Bible. A good way to do this is to take them to the Creation Museum. We are hoping to do this for our family some time. We teach until we die, hopefully our teaching will always be godly and will inspire those who follow us.

The gift of your life's testimony

I wish I knew more about the lives of my grandparents. I wish they had left me a legacy of their lives, either written on paper or passed on by word of mouth. I know so little about them. I do know my paternal

grandmother was an artist and some time in her life she decided she should do *more worthwhile things* and I wonder, "Why?"

Pass on your life's story. If you enjoy writing, you can write a book even if it never goes farther than your family. There are also books available in which you answer questions about your life; these may be easier than starting from scratch. Family reunions, Christmas dinners, birthday and anniversary celebrations are excellent times to share your story. Tell what God has done for you, the times He worked a miracle in your life, answered prayer, and other interesting tidbits from your past.

Build memories with your grandchildren

Before you build memories, you must have a relationship with your grandchildren. There are so many ways to build memories. Family dinners can include special activities such as hunting treasures, playing games, or having water fights. Taking the grandchildren or the whole family on picnics, camping trips, visiting a museum, or the zoo, can be special memory makers.

We started taking our grandchildren on mission trips. So far we have only taken our oldest two, but we hope to continue with the rest. Small things can mean just as much, like a tea

party, packing lunches for the little ones, playing table games, baking and cooking together. Small children love when Grandma reads to them; it's a special snuggle time. You can do school with the preschoolers which makes them feel big and important.

Love them

Can we ever love our grandchildren too much? No, we will never love anyone too much. I am not talking about spoiling someone. I believe true love nurtures, disciplines (I

believe spanking is the parent's job, unless the child is your responsibility to raise), listens, and cares. I believe love will respect the parents' wishes in regard to the child. However, I believe we must not be so busy with other activities that we do not have time for our grandchildren. All ages understand love. Love will overlook a multitude of faults.

Such gifts as these five will multiply and grow into a spiritual legacy for our grandchildren. 

junior messages

Lydia and the Healer – Part 2 of 2

Grace Klewin, Age 12, Thorp, WA

What would Lydia see today? Was Jesus able to heal her friends? Someone had stopped the storm during the night. Did He have anything to do with it?

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L ydia made her way down first one street then the next, but with the crowds of people everywhere, it took quite a while. Finally, she decided to take a shortcut by walking close to the sea. It seemed quieter down there and Lydia enjoyed it. Stopping to rest, she put her hand across her forehead to shade her eyes from the bright sun. It looked like a

crowd of people up ahead. “What are they all doing there?” Lydia said aloud to herself as she hurried closer. She did not want to find herself in the middle of a crowd, but she had to get through somehow. For some reason, she felt like Tirzah needed her and that if she didn't make it in time...well, she didn't really like to think about it. Slowing down as she neared the crowd, she scanned the faces, looking for someone she knew. No one looked familiar, but she could tell some were from her village.

“Excuse me, please,” Lydia said

squeezing past a woman in a bright colored dress.

“Oh well, excuse me, you little dear!” The woman reached out and touched Lydia’s cheek. “Isn’t He wonderful?” the woman gushed on, “Why, He even healed little Gideon! Isn’t He just wonderful!”

“I suppose...but,” Lydia hesitated, “who are you talking about?”

The woman looked surprised for a moment and then said, “If you would have told me you didn’t know who I was talking about I would have told you!”

“Can you still tell me?” Lydia asked, trying not to sound impatient.

“Of course! Jesus! Jesus of Nazareth!”

Lydia stepped back, “Oh! then really? Is that really why everyone is here?”

Suddenly Lydia remembered Veronica’s pleading with her. The crowd shifted and Lydia got elbowed in the stomach by a thin man beside her. *I need to get out of here*, Lydia thought, as the man’s sharp elbow poked her side.

Looking ahead, she saw a gap in the throng. She could go through it and try to work her way out from there. It would be easier, but she would have to go right through the middle of the people. Her shyness made her draw back just thinking about it. But she

knew she’d better get out before one of her mother’s friends saw her and told her mother where she was.

“Would you mind, eh,...moving just a little?” Lydia asked, squeezing behind a man wearing the clothes of a fisherman. The man looked surprised.

“Oh, sorry!” He took a step forward and let Lydia pass behind him. He smiled at her, his eyes crinkling at the corners. “My name’s James. I’m a disciple of Jesus.” Motioning with his head, he said, “That’s my brother, John.”

Nodding slowly, Lydia asked, “You’re a *what* of Jesus?”

James smiled again, “A disciple—a follower of the Messiah.”

Lydian nodded again, “I guess I’d better go.”

James grabbed her arm gently, “Why don’t you stay—to listen to Jesus?”

Lydia hesitated. James seemed so nice and she was curious to see Jesus. “I really wanted to go see my friend. But I guess it wouldn’t hurt to stay a while longer. I really want to see what He looks like.”

James led her as close as he could to Jesus, but there were so many people she still couldn’t see very well. “There, that man right there. He’s the one you’re looking for.”

Lydia glanced up quickly, “I’m not

looking for Him; I just wanted to see what he looked like.”

“Oh, yes.” James nodded seriously, with a hint of a smile in his lips.

Standing on her tiptoes and craning her neck, Lydia could just see where Jesus was standing. His eyes scanned over the crowd and for moment they met Lydia’s. *There is power in His eyes! I can see it! It reminds me of...* Lydia stopped. What did it remind her of? Then it dawned on her! *That’s it! Royalty. It makes me think of a King.* Another thought popped into her head. *The Messiah! The Son of God!*

She was bumped out of her thoughts by James who was talking to her. “Look, here comes Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue.”

Lydia glanced around, “Where?”

James motioned with his hand, “Over there. See? At the feet of Jesus.”

Alarm spread over her; she knew it had to do with Tirzah. “Did you hear what He said?” she questioned.

James nodded, “His daughter is sick unto death.”

Oh, it can’t be! Sick unto death! Lydia’s thoughts raced, *I must go! I must see her!* James brow wrinkled, “Who?”

Lydia almost started to cry. *No! Not in front of everyone.* “Tirzah! Jairus’ daughter! She’s my friend.” Lydia finished with a little choke in

her voice.

James gripped her arm again, this time firmer. “Don’t go; stay here.”

She looked up in shock, “But she’s my friend! I have to see her!”

James shook his head slowly. “Don’t. It will only make things worse. Jesus can handle it.” He released her arm. “Trust Him.”

Lydia swallowed her tears. “Okay,” she whispered. She didn’t know why, earlier this morning she never would have trusted Jesus. She felt so much sorrow in her heart but now she felt peace, too. Peace like she never felt before. It reminded her of something. At first, she wasn’t sure what, but then she remembered. It was the peace after the storm had passed last night.

James had started telling her something again, but she wasn’t paying attention to him. Something else had caught her eye. At the edge of the crowd she could see someone, bent over and slow, but steadily making her way through the crowd. Her heart started to hammer in her chest. It was Veronica; it had to be. She recognized the steps—the way they’d falter, then go on; falter, then go on. Lydia felt hope rising for the woman; she wanted to help her get to Jesus, but she was embarrassed to help in front of the crowd. Especially, since she had already told her she

wouldn't be able to bring her to Jesus. *Oh, Jesus*, she found herself praying, *Please notice Veronica! Please! I know she trusts that you can heal her.*

Just as Veronica was about to reach Him, He took a step forward and the people closed in around Him again. He was talking intently to the people gathered around Him. Lydia knew Veronica would never interrupt. "Oh, please," she heard the sick woman cry out softly, but no one heard her except Lydia. She saw Veronica try again, leaning closer. A man stepped in front of Lydia, blocking her view for a moment. *Oh, dear!* She squeezed in beside Him. By the time Lydia located Veronica she was straightened up and there was a look of peace, a look of healing about her.

Then Jesus spoke; He did not speak loudly, but everyone hushed immediately. His voice was calm as He asked, "Who touched me?"

James laughed quietly behind her and called out, "Master, in this crowd, how can You tell someone touched You? Many have touched You today." *James has just rescued Veronica*, Lydia thought, *Now she doesn't have to tell anyone it was her.*

But Jesus answered back, "I felt power go from Me."

And then, before Lydia knew what was happening, Veronica

was kneeling before Jesus. When Veronica lifted her face, Lydia could see faith shining in her eyes. "Master, I knew You could heal me, but with the throng pressing about, I knew I would never be able to ask You." Tears glistened in her eyes and her voice trembled. "I touched the hem of your robe. I am made whole."

Jesus reached His hand, "Daughter, be of good courage; your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

Lydia felt two emotions going on inside her. One of anguish for her sick friend—the other of joy for Veronica. And she couldn't really tell, but there was another feeling too, deep down in the bottom of her heart—a sense of peace.

A moment later one of Jairus' servants came running up to Jairus. He was panting hard and his forehead glistened in the afternoon sunshine. "Do not bother the Master any further."

There was a look of confusion on Jairus' face, "What is it? Is she dead?"

The servant hung his head for a moment then said softly, "She is."

Jesus started making his way through the crowd, Jairus at his side. His disciples gathered around Him. Lydia followed from a short distance, wishing she could go and talk to Tirzah. Lydia was surprised.

Normally she would have felt angry that she wasn't able to see Tirzah, angry that Jesus didn't come to heal her, but now she felt calm inside.

When they reached Jairus' house, Jesus stopped. "What is all the noise?" He asked. Lydia knew that Jesus already knew what the noise was—it was the mourners and weepers. But it almost seemed He was rebuking instead of asking, as the servant rushed forward and opened the door, the wailing from inside grew louder. Jesus said something to the people, but Lydia couldn't hear it.

"What did He say?" a little girl beside Lydia asked her mother. The lady leaned over and told her daughter, "He said the little girl is not dead. But we know she really is, don't we?" We wouldn't believe what Jesus of Nazareth says, would we?" Lydia felt like shouting at the mother, *How could she say that about Jesus?*

Lydia glanced up. Jesus had gone inside. All the people that had been in the house were now standing outside. Some were angry. It seemed like time stood still; some people left, others came to see what would happen. One person shouted, "What's taking so long?" Another man laughed, "It's only been a few minutes."

I'm going to see what's going on, Lydia thought, *it doesn't matter what*

people think of me. Lydia almost made it to the door when suddenly it opened and Jesus stepped out. Now's my chance! Squeezing behind Him, she stepped into the dim entry room. Had anyone seen her? No one was following her. She took a step toward Tirzah's room then stopped. Her heart was pounding in her chest. *Would Tirzah be dead...or alive?*

James' words popped into her head, "Trust Him." Could she? Could she believe that Tirzah was alive? Lydia knew she needed to decide before she went to see her. She drew a deep breath. "Jesus," she whispered. "I believe that you are the Son of God, the Messiah. And that Tirzah is alive." She breathed out deeply, feeling deep joy inside her, like a spring bubbling up.

"Tirzah!" She called, "I'm here. It's Lydia!" She heard a call from the other room and her skin tingled. Lydia ran now—her heart racing.

She stopped outside the door of the room. The door was wide open. In the middle of the room stood Tirzah—her hair down, her night clothes on, and a piece of bread in her hand. Her parents were on both sides of her, laughing, crying, and hugging. And Tirzah was smiling!

[This story placed first in the 9-12 year-old writing group.]



God of the Wilderness

Jean Yoder, Hutchinson, KS

The sun eases over the edge of the horizon as you stand, awed by this daily miracle. It's as though you were back in Eden for a moment and you expect God to come up behind you and tap you on the shoulder.

Or there's the fierce rush of a summer storm. You stand outside the screen door to feel the push of the wind and watch the jabbing lightning draw out the growling thunder. God is riding on the wings of the wind!

Trudging in from the barn at night, snow surprising you, you pause to look up into the unending swirl of snowflakes. On a clear night, you can see the stars; on a snowy night you can see infinity.

God is a Spirit without boundaries. He is always everywhere. He can see you inside a building, but can you see Him?

Ever since "men began to call on the name of the Lord," people have sought God outside. Is it remembering the Garden of Eden where God met the first man and woman? If we're in a building, we're in something that people made, but outside, we're surrounded by what God made.

Spiritual giants in the Bible met God outside the confinement of four walls.

Moses spent forty years as a shepherd and was enabled to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land. Elijah spoke with God on a mountain then he headed to the contest on Mt. Carmel. David herded his father's sheep on the hills and became a man after God's own heart. John the Baptist "was in the wilderness until the day of his showing unto Israel." His powerful preaching made way for Christ.

Jesus often talked to His Father at night alone on a mountain. God gave Him the strength for His ministry through times like this. The night before the crucifixion, Jesus prayed earnestly to God for strength for His sacrificial death on Calvary.

You can talk with God, too, and He gives you Peace. He fills you beyond what you can imagine. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

Seek Him outside where His majesty is evident. Lie on your back and look at the sky. Your perspective is refocused. When your insignificance is established you can let God handle your problems. He'll do a better job than you could!

[Submitted for *Christian Writing and Expression* class at Calvary Bible School, 2010.]



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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

If it's such a small world, why does it take so much money to keep it going?

• • • • •

Rejoice that although not all your dreams have come true, neither have all your nightmares.

• • • • •

Some men are satisfied not to leave footprints on the sands of time—only tire tracks.

• • • • •

A good teacher works to capture a student's attention so he can direct it toward God.

• • • • •

One tough test for the heart is to hear of an enemy's success and rejoice.

• • • • •

We are not all called to be apostles, but living epistles.

• • • • •

People take our example more seriously than our advice.

• • • • •

If all the crutches were gathered up, there still wouldn't be enough for all the lame excuses people use.

• • • • •

Admit your mistakes—don't brag about them.