



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

Galatians 6:14

FEBRUARY 2014

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If I Would Stand Alone

Marlee Friesen, Shipshewana, IN

If I would stand alone before the world,
Would I lift up the flag of God unfurled?
Or would it drag limp, hanging by my side
Because a coward chose to let it hide?

Would I in shame, dejected stand before the royalty?
Or would I rise and boldly fly my loyalty?

If I alone would represent my Chief,
Would I still hide my love for Him beneath?
Or would I shout for the whole world to hear—
“I love my Jesus, comrade always near!”

Would fear of men always clutching, always pulling?
Or would my love, my fear of God, be stronger ruling?

If only I would stand alone, forsaken,
When all my friends the other side had taken,
Would I be strong and steadfast in the strife?
Or would I turn and waste away my life?

I pray that I with succor from my Lord Commander,
Might live and die a soldier to the cross surrendered.

And who may know but seeing me still stand,
Would inspire hearts of others to join the band,
That all in one the weak will be made strong
And strengthened all will bravely flee the wrong.

Then raising banners high, and keeping Truth alive,
And pressing on towards the Dawn we shall arrive
HOME at last!



“Do I Have To?”

Several years ago, a visitor asked a young man hitching his horse to his buggy if he expected to continue this mode of transportation. He answered readily with, “Oh, yes, I don’t *have* to do this. I *want* to do it!” I realize that most of us don’t drive horse and buggy, but I see this man to be on the path of blessing. Even though I use different transportation, I agree with his enthusiasm. He could be chafing at every vehicle that passes him. He could make himself quite unhappy if he grumbled about the inconvenience of his choices. But then his eyes would be off Jesus.

Resistant thinking is what the devil wants, any way he can get it. “*Do I have to?*” easily comes from the lips of a resistant child. That question does not stop in childhood. It can surface at any time later in life. It always spreads a cloud of unhappiness over a situation. It is a heaviness to both the child and the parent asking compliance. The question kills good things everywhere it goes. It squelches the spirit of adventure and eagerness that is the birthright of all of us who carry God’s image.

By contrast, “*May I?*” has the

potential of bringing great joy to both supplicant and authority. It indicates willingness and eagerness. It pauses for approval before doing something. It invites action and challenge.

We are subject to a humanistic enthusiasm that is very self-absorbed. But let us look for the kind of willingness that Jesus showed when He said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God” (Hebrews 10:7). His eager participation in the Father’s plan brought joy to God, which we know by God’s voice coming from heaven to the Mount of Transfiguration, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5). Paul wrote about Jesus’ mindset when he wrote Philippians 2:1-10. There we find the path of blessing and attitudes that Jesus lived out. The pathway of Jesus that Paul describes in that passage could be termed simply, “Joyful Abandon to the Will of God.” Hebrews 12:2 says that for the *joy* that was set before Jesus, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sits at God’s right hand. Indeed, Jesus gives joy even when we face life’s severest trials and greatest challenges!

The principle of serving God with joy applies to all of life. It works for any of us who would not only *serve* God, but *please* Him. Jesus gives grace to approach our duties eagerly. If we don't, a negative attitude destroys what could have been a good time. Even sarcastic humor does nothing to offset the damage of unwilling compliance.

Results of negative thinking:

- We aim at bare minimums and complain about those.

- We make disparaging remarks about others who are more conscientious than we are.

- Our unwillingness feeds on itself so that we justify ourselves when cutting corners.

- We shift blame to the authority to justify our own lack of good response and motivation.

- We revise our commitments, while still claiming sincerity.

Positives and Negatives in Scripture

We note that writers of Scripture often taught in positives. Philippians 4:8, for example, says: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, ...honest, ...just,...pure, ...lovely,...of good report, if there be any virtue,... and praise, think on these things." That marks the path of blessing!

In the latter part of the Ten Commandments, however, God chose simple, clear negatives. With

that thought in mind, let us identify some negatives today. Negative attitudes show in: Disrespect for the human body—God's temple (e.g., *self-indulgent food choices, dirty jokes*), dishonesty (e.g., *white lies, exaggeration*), non-support for brotherhood agreements (e.g., *church and school covenants*), disrespect toward civil servants (e.g., *police/political leaders*), neglect of our financial commitments (e.g., *failure to make satisfaction for debts we make*), and evil speech (e.g., *destruction of others' reputation*). I'll stop before this list gets longer than the Decalogue.

Results of positive thinking:

- We see serving others as an opportunity to serve Christ.

- We wish others well in their service to Christ.

- If we see that others do something better than we can, we encourage them.

- If we don't understand what an authority wants of us, we respectfully ask questions.

- If we find that we can no longer support the goals of the situation we're in and if scriptural change is possible, we respectfully ask to be excused, then quietly go where we can give support without badmouthing the situation we left.

We don't need to walk in the contrariness of, "Do I have to?" The

highway of holiness in the joy of the Lord, even though too lightly traveled, is where God's blessings are to be found. Joyful willingness puts a joyful spring in our steps, befitting this acknowledgment: "Thank God, I am part of the body of Christ. Jesus gives me goals greater than my ego! My

supreme joy is to please my Savior!"

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CORRECTION

Joshua Yoder's phone number featured on page 4 of the January 2014 issue was incorrect. The correct number is: 620-708-1317

—PLM 

reader response

Re: The Festival of Earl, Dec., 2013.

I found "The Festival of Earl" very interesting and even convicting. I believe it would be pleasing to Earl if all who admire him would honor him every day of the year. I also believe it would grieve the heart of Earl if he knew that his honorable name had been incorporated in the Festival of March.

To the question, "What would you do?" I would endeavor to honor Earl each day of the year and not participate in the detestable Festival of March. Sincerely,

Eli Kauffman, Montezuma, GA

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I might ask, What would Earl say if we could bring him back

to the hamlet of Cardwell? Would he not be equally disappointed about the festival as he was about the pay that had been offered? Would he not say, "My most cherished honor is to observe you showing benevolence to your neighbors every day of the year?"

Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

Clayton Weaver, Bastrop, TX

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It would also work pretty well as a parable of Easter, except that we have kept the pagan name, "Easter."

David Kipps, Aroda, VA 

2014 Ministers' Meeting Announcement

The annual Beachy Amish Ministers' Meetings are scheduled April 8-10, 2014, in Yoder, KS, hosted by the Center, Cedar Crest and Arlington congregations.

The theme of these meetings is "Guarding the Gift Entrusted to You," with topics from 2 Timothy 4.

- To request time in a business session, contact James Shetler: jameshetler84@gmail.com or 620-728-9926.
- To request display tables or booth space, contact Nathan Nisly: natemarj@gmail.com or 620-728-9925.
- If you plan to attend and have not yet received an invitation, contact Harry Shenk: harry@sturdi-bilt.com or 620-899-1438



mission awareness

To Kenya and Back

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

[Editor's note: Bro. Aaron was asked to give Calvary Messenger readers highlights of their recent time in Kenya. He writes: "May God bless this message and give Holy Spirit impressions to accomplish His good purposes."]

My wife, Esther, and I visited the Kisumu missionary group sponsored by Amish Mennonite Aid (AMA). The missionaries live in an attractive

compound in the city of Kisumu. The larger compound is inside an eight-foot high security fence. Each house has its own security fence and gate besides.

It is not appropriate or safe to be on the road after dark. Missionaries do all pastoral work and domestic business in daylight hours. Each church has a daytime Bible Study-Prayer Meeting every Wednesday. Sunday services begin with a one-hour devotional and instruction class (IC).

Attendance records are kept. Attendance is required before baptism. Skipped sessions need to be made up the next time around. IC is year-round. Some people come who are not officially in the class nor are they church members. They are seekers.

Next is Sunday School, with adult, children and youth classes. Children stand up front to recite Bible verses after classes. The young people like to provide special singing for the whole church. All preaching is translated: either English to Luo or Luo to English. Open testimony time is every Sunday after the sermon. The U. S. pastor might say, partly under his breath, "Keep it short." The reason becomes obvious: the pastor means to keep it to one-half hour.

The Kisumu area in western Kenya has 12 Christian Believer Fellowship (CBF) churches, with seven U. S. pastors and 14 native pastors. Several CBF churches do not have a U. S. pastor.

The Kujula church is starting a church outreach! Imagine, a mission church planting another church! These churches are growing. People walk or hitch a ride with a missionary van. Once we had 29 people in our van. Mrs. Lapp sat on Mr. Lapp's lap, and a Kenyan girl sat on Mrs. Lapp's lap!

Some go to church via motorcycle taxi. They walk out to the main road, pay a taxi, then walk in to the church location. In those cases, the children can't go. They ask for a Bible study at their house. They will invite others. There is no problem getting enough people together! Some become saved. They want to be baptized, of course. You need an instruction class.

When you baptize persons worthy of it, you are starting a new church. A new church means it will be possible for more children to attend. Missionaries must actually limit requests for Bible study. They know where it will lead. You can rightly do only so much. This generation of Kenyan church leaders could spread out to the next generation. Exciting prospect!

While we were there this past September, we visited with a man who himself conducts Sunday morning IC and Bible study for 40 people. He set up poles from young saplings and put a roof over it. The

Word of God is given and souls are saved in a church house that cost less than \$1.00 per person! The man was being approved by CBF to be commissioned as a pastor. It seems to be a repeat of the early church when Paul directed Titus to ordain elders in every city where believers gathered. One can know these people aren't coming for the "loaves and fishes." There is a hunger for the Word of God and salvation in Christ.

Kenyans who qualify and are members, where the need arises, are first commissioned and later, upon favorable proving, are ordained. Men and women are saved. Their sincerity is usually not long in coming. They serve as Sunday School teachers, have devotions, give a topic at Wednesday Bible Study. Some serve as translators. There is much work—always much work!

The Nakuru area, under AMA, has a similar setup to Kisumu, which is three hours away. The two missionary networks have a combined membership of close to 1,000 members.

The primary missionary activity for the U. S. workers is not evangelism. They work much in nurture and discipleship. The Kenyan brothers and sisters bring them in. They are doing

the evangelizing. It is the most exciting missionary work I have ever seen.

Jesus said the field is the world and it is ripe for harvest. In Kenya and other parts of Africa, it is very ripe. Old men with tears, say, "Where were you all my years? I never knew Jesus. But now I am saved before I die." But Satan has his programs too. Everyone is poor. They can also be distracted and discouraged and fall back into sin. Despite Satan's strategy and devices, the numbers of the faithful still increase. They are poor—very poor, but rich in faith in Christ.

Our hearts yearn for them; our tears flow. We wish to go again, stay longer, nurture many souls into the grace and Kingdom of our Lord. Our age gives us pause. We bless those who sense the call to go.

The work is far greater than the AMA newsletter reports. The missionaries and the AMA board are very modest about the Kenyan missions. We are aware that there are more para-church ministries and missions starting who also wish for funding. In the current success of AMA missions, let us see to it that our own mission boards receive all the financial support they can utilize. Our dollars stretch farther when we give to foreign missions!



Honesty—Praise or Punishment?

Denver Yoder, Somerset, OH

740-743-1124

Jesus said, “And ye shall know (speak) the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The Apostle James says, “Confess your faults one to another...” (James 1:15). This seems to refer to specific struggles. To confess indicates mentioning live, real, formidable foes we deal with, victoriously or defeated. There is nothing abstract or pretentious about this verse. James also says, “Pray for one another that ye may be healed.” Without doing injustice to the Scriptures, we can apply this to spiritual, mental, or emotional healing as well. James does not say, “Forgiven,” but “healed.” Honest confession is imperative and lays the groundwork for the healing process to begin.

We have such a tendency to rush in and pounce on those who may be grasping for healing. But we may fail to take the time to listen and visualize with empathy the heart cry of the individual. Human tendency is to diagnose purely on assumption, rather than to really deeply understand the need first. *Seek first to understand, then to be understood.* This principle is a key to effective interpersonal

communications. Communication is among the most important, yet often neglected, gifts in life. The ability to do this is vital to our effectiveness.

When troubled hearts share with us we dare not focus on doctrine before we we pay attention to the heart. When an individual is hurting and struggling inside, no amount of doctrine or correct theology will heal or change the heart. When the heart is healed and cleansed the hunger for doctrine and theology will follow!

The good Samaritan carefully and compassionately checked the mangled and bruised places, making sure the sore spots were tenderly cared for. He knew full well that the wounds must be cleansed for healing to begin. He worked slowly and gently, knowing that he would cause pain. He poured in the oil of gentle words and comfort. He assured the hurting person that healing was within reach.

As listeners, it is of utmost importance that we portray a pledge of trust to those who share their hearts with us. What is shared must be kept in strict confidentiality. If we as listeners betray that trust, all hope

of helping them is lost. Often broken trust cannot be regained. Assuring and convincing one of such a trust is established by our portraying genuine caring and concern. This is also done by giving of ourselves, our time—unconditional, unreserved, whatever and whenever needed. Others will be no more able to trust us than they are able to sense that our own anchor is firmly fixed in Christ.

The real key to your influence on others is your example, your actual conduct. Your example flows naturally out of your character, or the kind of person you are. Your character is evidenced in how others perceive your care for their heart.

Many people today seem to have confessed their sins to God and man. They may have taken all the proper steps as it appears to man. They have asked for forgiveness but are still living under bondage, or feel guilt for unconfessed sin. Why? Is the debt not canceled? Can the guilt not be erased?

Confessing your sin to God, we believe, brings forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Often the guilt and shame of the sin remains with the person for a time. True deliverance is a process. The thing we need to do is to be honest with those to whom we bring our confession. Remembering the fact that truth is what Jesus said will set us free. Tell specifically what

we have done. Only then can we be free of the guilt. Then the process of removing guilt and shame can begin. In light of this fact, we find a very interesting question: Why do so many church-going people find it difficult, at best (or even impossible) to be completely honest with their feelings and struggles?

Several reasons may play an important role:

Being open and honest makes us very vulnerable. We give others the information they need to hurt us deeply; we place it right into their hands. Our deepest heart struggles are put on the auction block. Sometimes, sad to say, this is the last and final blow that pushes the hurting person over the edge of no return. Very unfortunately, true to human nature, others will hurt us. Little regard is given to the damage done in the hurting person's heart as the condemnation and criticism is dished out. We may comfort ourselves by thinking we are only fulfilling our duty by admonishing them. After all, if they were sincere, they would not be offended.

As listeners, it is important that we listen with empathy. We must listen with our hearts. Listening with empathy gets inside the others person's frame of reference. You look through the same window they do; you feel their heart beat; you

understand how they feel.

Openness and honesty are often punished. Punishment comes in many forms. Condemnation (criticism) is one form. Openness may not lead to punishment even if the hurting heart feels it is so. It is our responsibility to listen with the intent to understand rather than listening with the intent to reply. Too often, as listeners, we filter others' experiences through our own autobiography. Remember that the glasses you wear may do little good for the other person's vision.

Sometimes honesty is punished within the church setting, the very place God intended to be a haven and a balm for the weary sinner. An individual with the church repents of and confesses sin in a public setting. This often brings prompt disciplinary action from the church. Membership is taken away and a time of proving is given.

Baring one's heart in complete honesty is sometimes labeled as bad attitudes. The hurting person may be under stress or pressure, such as hidden sin, difficulties in families, in business, in church, in marriage, or unmanageable debt. Often when would-be helpers forcefully express their thoughts, rather than seeing the hurting heart, listeners may quickly assign bad attitudes as causes. Often

because of a lack of caring and our own wrong perceptions, we securely close the lid on the hurting heart and our chance of offering redemptive help is lost. Instead of crying to God for mercy and direction, and asking for help in relating to such, we go on in our pious, traditional, starched manner. We shake our heads and say, "It's just as we thought, his heart is not right." Another fate along life's journey is marked. Another tombstone is erected in the memorial park.

We may not find words of Jesus addressing this in the Scriptures. There are sins that we can commit to disqualify our ability to serve in certain offices in the church body. It would also seem some do confess simply to avoid the consequences of their actions. Lip service without repentance from the heart is a possibility that must be properly considered. (Matthew 7:18 and 3:8). True repentance from the heart calls for restoration for the individual confessing, and acceptance from those to whom it is confessed. The individual involved will automatically suffer the consequences of his actions—often long after we *should have* forgotten it. It is interesting how well our memories work when *my thinking* was not accepted.

Once a person has opened his heart to us and shared everything

in it that pertains to his concern, confessed his struggles or sins, then I need to respect his honesty in order for healing to begin. Condemning or criticizing the person at this crucial time will cause him to bury his guilt or shame deeper, making it extremely complex to dig out again. Freedom will not be found and the problems in the person's life will be compounded when honesty is punished.

While venting feelings or frustrations are usually an accurate picture of a person's feelings at the time, it may not always be an accurate picture of the situation. As listeners, it is better to save judgment or admonition until a person is not emotional. We do better to listen with empathy and he will more likely respond favorably, given some time. This is a virtue that can only be acquired by and with the grace of God.

Jesus said, "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). He also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). I believe Jesus is saying He is our salvation. Eternal life is found in none other. Jesus also said in John that He is the word made flesh. Jesus' body is not what saves us, but the giving of His life and shedding of His blood, and our acceptance of the atonement by faith brings salvation.

The truth will set us free. The

culmination of true freedom will only be fully realized when we are welcomed home by Jesus, the Son of God, into His eternal presence. We shall abide forever with Christ, the saints, and the angels.

By the same token, shall not truth and honesty set us free as brethren and sisters? I personally know of a faithful church member who said, "Honesty is what gets you into trouble." *We dare not lie to each other, but why must we have such selective speech?*

Truth must be spoken in love. Love will also help us decide how much and what to say. An eternal vision will help listeners determine what to digest, and which part of the platter needs to be passed on to others.

Human nature is basically the same. It has been said that, in general, human struggles are universal in nature and pattern. Why then do some often confess? Do some people simply not face the struggles that others do? The difference most likely is that some tend to be very honest with their heart and others are not. Pride is a real killer to confession and honesty. If we struggle, but are not able to confess the same, we need to check our hearts for the stealthy killer: pride.

In all fairness, we must realize that when truth is spoken it may reveal sin. For such a confession we place

a premium on honesty. If sin should be exposed, scriptural patterns need to be followed to correct the matter. This needs to be directed by faithful ministers and the church. The extent and severity needs to be determined by prescribed scriptural patterns. We might release a person just because he shared his heart. However, it would seem that such should be beaten with fewer stripes (Luke 12:47,48).

It is not man's obligation to press the truth out of others, even though we may sense that they are not speaking all the truth. God will ultimately reveal all the truth. "For he knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Psalm 44:21). "God will bring every secret thing into judgment" (Eccl. 12:14). Would to God we could properly care for each other's feelings and struggles on this side of the grave! From our limited human perspectives, God's judgments may seem tardy and lenient, but God is not fraught by the time limitations humans are.

My burden is to somehow help others see and appreciate the importance and blessing of being completely honest and always truthful. Divisions could at times be avoided if we could get out those ugly, but sugar-coated feelings of hate. Unconfessed feelings of ill will or spite will devour our spiritual life.

If we bite and devour one another, we must take heed that we are not consumed one of another. (Gal. 5:15). "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth" (James 3:14).

Could we grasp a spiritual vision of the importance of being free from feelings that weaken or destroy our relationship with God and with our fellow men? The pure in heart shall see God. A heart that is emptied of hate and bitterness and filled with love for God and man is a heart ready for service. That may well mean we can live with those of our own brethren we previously found intolerable. A heart at rest in God is a heart at rest with fellow humans. However, if brethren relocate and are faithful to God, a forgiving heart will not close the door behind them.

My burden is also that others who may not have reached this place could be allowed to release feelings of their heart that they may be holding back and find true freedom without fear of backlash. The fact remains if guilt or sin is hidden, just being quiet will not remove accountability to God and condemnation or judgment. Let us make the way easy for those struggling. Let us help them find peace.

Honesty, is it praise or punishment?



Thorns

Susan Garcete, Hartly, DE

Thorns prick and cause pain. Thorns are unwanted, yet they grow in many places. They grab for you when you reach for delicious fruit or lovely blossoms. Thorns make long scratches. They can pierce the skin and leave their sharp points embedded in your flesh. The effects of thorns can go with you for a long time.

When your path goes through a briar patch, you wonder why God made thorns. You stretch to see if there's still the blue sky above you. "Ouch!" Every movement hurts. Where's the way God said

He would make in the desert? You think, "Thorns. An enemy hath done this!"

Your cries are not in vain. A ray of light, of hope, of truth, pierces the gloom offering balm, showing God's care and love. But thorns are still glaring at you. They still stick and tear.

Do thorns have a purpose? Can anything good come from these cruel brambles? Thorns—just drops of blood and sweat and tears.

Continue taking your hurts to God. He can cause the stem with thorns to blossom into a Rose of Purpose. 



marriages

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

Chupp-Miller

Bro. Daniel, son of Paul and Marian Chupp, Paynesville, MN, and Sis. Jana Sue, daughter of Daryl and Kay Miller, Paynesville, MN, at Evangelical Free Church for Believers Fellowship Church on Nov. 30, 2013, by Melvin Beiler.

Hochstetler-Riehl

Brto. Tyler William, son of Eldon and Lois Hochstetler, Aroda, VA, and Sis. Heather Nicole, daughter of Abner and Sally Riehl, Due West, SC, at Cold Spring Mennonite for Whispering Pines Mennonite Church on Dec. 14, 2013, by Melvin Yoder.

Jara-Miller

Bro. Joel, son of Justo and Barbara Jean Jara, Crossville, TN, and Sis. Rosetta Marie, daughter of Paul and Elizabeth Miller, Crossville, TN, at Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church on Nov. 23, 2013, by John Mast.

Miller-Peachey

Bro. Michael James, son of James and Rose Miller, Minerva, OH, and Sis. Krista Lyn, daughter of David and Ruth Peachey, Reedsville, PA, at Calvary Bible Church for Pleasant View A.M. Church on August 31, 2013, by David J. Peachey.

Miller-Stoltzfus

Bro. Brandon, son of Paul Leroy and Miriam Miller, Sugarcreek, OH, and Sis. Rosanna, daughter of Mahlon and Abigail Stoltzfus, Killbuck, OH, at Maranatha Fellowship Church on Nov. 23, 2013, by Paul Leroy Miller.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. Timothy D., son of David and Effie Miller, Shreve, OH, and Sis. Deborah Naomi, daughter of Nathan and Elsie Yoder, Fredericksburg, OH, at Messiah A. M. Church on Oct. 26, 2013, by Nathan Yoder.

Stoltzfus-Byler

Bro. Lyndon, son of Steve and Mary-Etta Stoltzfus, Kennedyville, MD, and Sis. Shaina, daughter of Harvey and Wendy Byler, Smyrna, DE, at Harmony Christian Fellowship for Central Mennonite, Sept. 6, 2013, by Steve Stoltzfus.

Troyer-Kline

Bro. Eric Jon, son of Norman and Erma Troyer, Weldon, IA, and Sis. Tamara Ann, daughter of Marie and the late Paul Kline, Fredericksburg, OH, at Messiah Fellowship for Peniel Christian Fellowship, on August 24, 2013, by Nathan Yoder.

Yoder-Dienner

Bro. Robert, son of Robert and Elsie Yoder, Blackville, SC, and Sis. Linda, daughter of Christ and Mary Dienner, Perry, NY, at Silver Lake Mennonite

Church, Perry, NY, on Nov. 2, 2013, by Ernest Stoltzfus.

Yoder-Stoltzfus

Bro. Ernest Ray, son of Jonnie and Betty Yoder, Advance, MO, and Sis. Rosa Elaine, daughter of Omar and Nancy Stoltzfus, Advance, MO, at First United Methodist Church for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church on Nov. 29, 2013, by Melvin Troyer.

Zimmerman-Miller

Bro. Andrew, son of Allen and Mary Zimmerman, Clarkrange, TN, and Sis. Lela Ann, daughter of Paul and Elizabeth Miller, Crossville, TN, at Lantana Road Baptist Church, Crossville, TN, for Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church on March 1, 2013, by John Mast.

cradle roll

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

Beiler, Carlin and Haddassah (King), Harrison, AR, fourth child, second dau., Eliya Hope, Oct. 22, 2013.

Bontrager, Matthew and Lacry (Harvristiuc), Sullivan, IL, sixth child, third son, Andre Lynn, Dec. 12, 2013.

Gingerich, Marcus and Andrea (Gingerich), Plain City, OH, first child and son. Bennett John, Nov. 27, 2013.

Jantzi, Raphael and Amy (Gingerich), Wellesley, ON, first child and son, Dominic Ryan, July 23, 2013.

Kimberlin, Ryan and Joyce (Ulrich), Cleburne, TX, third child, second dau., Jenna Rose, Dec. 27, 2013.

Lapp, Ivan and Naomi (Stoltzfus), Ephrata, PA, sixth child, second dau., Angelica Grace, Dec. 2, 2013.

Martin, Lloyd and Priscilla (Yoder), Cleburne, TX, second child and dau., Brianna Nicole, August 18, 2013.

Miller, Jason and Carolyn (Schrock), Cambridge, OH, third child, first dau., Pamela Rose, born July 2, 2011; received August 19, 2011; officially adopted Dec. 11, 2103.

Miller, Jeffrey and Rachel (Raber), Sugarcreek, OH, first child and dau., Sadie Rayanna, Nov. 30, 2013.

Miller, Joe and Karinda (Sommers), Hiddenite, NC, second child, first son, Jordan Lane, Nov. 29, 2013.

Miller, Jonathan and Ruth Yvonne (Yoder), Big Prairie, OH, third child, second dau., Lanae Hope, Nov. 16, 2013.

Miller, LaVon and Twila (Yoder), Partridge, KS, fifth child, fourth son, Jerome Dean, Dec. 27, 2013.

Miller, Philip and Jessica (Graber), Oskaloosa, KS, second child and dau., Aubrie Alise, Sept. 21, 2013.

Reyes, Santos Guadalupe and Eunice (Yoder), Stark City, MO, sixth child, third dau., Leanna Grace, Nov. 11, 2013.

Stoll, Quinton and Debra (Coblentz), Leitchfield, KY, (presently serving at Seven Miles Mission, Belize), third child, second dau., Natalie Susan, Oct. 31, 2013.

Stoltzfus, Alvin and Norma (Stoltzfus), Morgantown, PA, eighth child, third dau., Olivia Joy, Sept. 20, 2013.

Stoltzfus, Glen and Rhoda (Stoltzfus), Narvon, PA, first child and son, Brycen Cole, Nov. 5, 2013.

Swartzentruber, Gary and Lynita (Yoder), Swanton, MD, first child and son, Dylan James, Dec. 3, 2013.

Troyer, David Dean and Rhoda (Beiler), Leesburg, OH, fifth child and son, Zachary Dean, Nov. 25, 2013.

Troyer, Luke and Mary Ellen (Swarey), Auburn, KY, first child and son, EricSon Lee, Nov. 26, 2013.

Villalobos, Charles and Loretta (Miller), Itasca, TX, first child and dau., Angelynn Rose Samara, Nov. 19, 2013.

Wagler, Dave and Hannah (Yoder), Lyndon, KS, third child, first son, Caleb

Lee, Dec. 20, 2013.

Weaver, Ernest and Patricia (Weaver), Grandview, TX, fourth child, third son, Kenrick Earl, Nov. 28, 2013.

Weaver, Justin and Joanne (Ulrich), Cleburne, TX, fifth child, third son, Karlin Ron, Oct. 18, 2013.

Yoder, James and Lucrecia (Wagler), Stone Creek, OH, sixth child, fifth dau., Brielle Hope, Nov. 27, 2013.

Yoder, Julius and Verna (Schwartz), Auburn, KY, fourth child, second son, Adrian Clyde, Nov. 13, 2013.

Yoder, Luke and Christina (Beiler), Middlebury, IN, fourth child, second son, Christopher Andre, Dec. 3, 2013.

Yoder, Samuel and Naomi (Imhoff), Covington, TX, fifth child, fourth dau., Sophia Lynn, Nov. 1, 2013. 



King, Daniel N., 98, of Belleville, PA, died July 10, 2013. He was born July 14, 1914, son of the late Samuel Y. and Sadie C. (Newman) King.

He was a member of Pleasant View A.M. Church, Belleville, PA. He was ordained a minister in 1944. He served his denomination with peace-making activities, serving many hours with Mennonite Central Committee. He was also a self-employed painter and farmer, making many friends wherever he went.

On Nov. 19, 1936, he was married to Sylvia A. Hostetler. She died on Feb. 1, 1997. On July 15, 1998, he was married to Mary M. (Sharp), whose first husband was Noah H. Peachey. She also is deceased. The children from his first marriage are: Samuel J. (Joyce) King, Reedsville, PA; Nancy S. (Richard) Marsh, Jacksonville, FL; Omer E. (Martha) King, Fayetteville, PA; Esther R. (Glenn) Troyer, Sugarcreek, OH; Verna M. (Guy) Rocker, Port Leyden, NY; 11 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death was a son, Daniel N. King, Jr., two brothers, Eli King, and Levi King and a half sister, Mary Yoder.

The funeral was held on July 15, at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, PA, with Jesse Spicher in charge. Burial was in the Green Lane Cemetery, Reedsville.

Kurtz, Joseph E., 84, of Belleville, PA, died on August 22, 2013. He was born April 15, 1929, son of the late Enos and Mary (Sharp) Kurtz.

He was a member of Pleasant View A.M. Church, Belleville. He enjoyed reading, studying history, visiting and hunting.

On Nov. 12, 1953, he was married to Julia Byler. She preceded him in death on June 6, 2013. Their children surviving are: Julia A. (David) Hostetler, Belleville; Tura M. (Raymond) Hostetler, Belleville; Enos J. (Lucy) Kurtz, Adams, NY; Joseph E. (Sylvia) Kurtz, Mannsville, NY; and Rachel L. (David) Peachey, Belleville; 39 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren, and one sister, Amanda (Noah) Yoder, Lewisburg.

He was preceded in death by an infant son, Samuel Kurtz; a daughter, Dorothy Kurtz; a stillborn granddaughter, Sara Hostetler, two brothers, Crist and John Kurtz; five sisters: Elsie Yoder, Sadie Peachey, Lena Kauffman, Mary Zook, and Bertha Peachey.

The funeral was held on Aug. 25, with brethren David Peachey, Arthur Gerber, and David Byler serving. Burial was in the Locust Grove Cemetery, Belleville, PA,

Kurtz, Julia A., 88, of Belleville, PA, died June 6, 2013. She was born April 21, 1925, daughter of the late John B. and Annie B. (Yoder) Byler.

She was a member of Pleasant View

A.M. Church, Belleville, PA. She enjoyed puzzles, quilting, crocheting, and growing flowers.

On Nov. 12, 1953, she was married to Joseph E. Kurtz. Their surviving children are: Julia A. (David) Hostetler, Belleville; Tura M. (Raymond) Hostetler, Belleville; Enos J. (Lucy) Kurtz, Adams, NY; Joseph E. (Sylvia) Kurtz, Mannsville, NY; Rachel L. (David) Peachey, Belleville; 39 grandchildren, 16 great grandchildren, and one brother, Samuel K. (Elsie) Byler, Mill Creek, PA.

She was preceded in death by an infant son, Samuel Kurtz; a daughter Dorothy M. Kurtz; a stillborn granddaughter Sara Hostetler, and two sisters Rachel Kanagy and Sadie M. Byler.

The funeral was held on June 10, with brethren David Peachey, Arthur Gerber and David Byler serving. Burial was in the Locust Grove Cemetery, Belleville, PA.

Lapp, Leah S. 89, of Ephrata, PA, died at Fairmont Home, Dec. 4, 2013. She was born Oct. 8, 1924, at Kinzers, PA, daughter of the late Joshua and Annie (Stoltzfus) Lapp.

She was a member of Weavertown A. M. Church.

Survivors include a brother, Daniel A. Lapp, and a number of cousins.

The funeral was held at Weavertown Church on Dec. 6, with David Stoltzfoos, Norman Kauffman, Daniel Ray Lapp, and Aaron Lapp serving. Burial was in Summitview Cemetery.

Miller, Rebecca (Lantz), 79, of Fairmount Homes, formerly of Leola, PA, died Nov. 29, 2013. She was born in Gap, PA, daughter of the late Stephen and Mary (Glick) Lantz.

She was a member of Weavertown A.M. Church, Bird-in-Hand.

Rebecca trained in nursing in Harrison, AR, and graduated as an LPN, working as a nurse until her retirement in 2004. She served in Belize and Paraguay, as well as in Arkansas, Indiana, and her native Pennsylvania. She especially loved working with mothers and the newborn.

On April 4, 2004, she was married to widower Jacob Miller. He is deceased. Surviving are three sisters: Miriam (Jonathan) Stoltzfus, Sadie Stoltzfus, and Naomi (Bob) Sebourne and one brother, Reuben Lantz. Others survivors are nine step children: Verna (Amos) Esh, Dryden, ON; Leona (Dan) Peachy, Strasburg; Lloyd (Mary Ann Smucker) Miller, Lancaster; Esther (Melvin) Kauffman, Lancaster; Linda Miller, Leola; Dan Lapp, Ronks; Marvin (Mary Lapp) Lapp, Lancaster; Anne (Lapp) Blank, Gap; John (Sylvia Rhinier) Lapp, Brownstown; 28 step grandchildren; a number of step great great grandchildren, also 57 nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by eight siblings: Elam, Alpheus, Phares, Levi, Omar Lantz, Barbara Fisher, Lydian Glick, and Susie Beiler, two nieces and one nephew.

The funeral was held on Dec. 3, with burial in the Weavertown Church Cemetery.

Miller, Sovilla A., 81, of Arthur, IL, died at Mason Point, Sullivan, IL, on Nov. 20, 2013. She was born April 13, 1932, daughter of the late Adlai B. and Katie (Mast) Miller, in Arthur, IL.

Sovilla was a member of Pleasant View Church, Arcola, IL

Survivors include two sisters, Lucy (Ben) Schrock and Ella (Ray) Bontrager, both of Arthur; three sisters-in-law, Mattie (Henry) Miller, Alta (Fred) Miller, Ardythe (Daniel) Miller, one brother-in-law, Adlai (Lena) Yoder, and 29 nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by three brothers, one sister, one niece and one nephew.

The funeral was held at Pleasant View Church on Nov. 23, with Duane Kuhns, Paul Plank, and Howard Kuhns serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Overholt, John Dale, 28, of Melvern, KS, died at his home on Nov. 19, 2013, after a three and a half year battle with cancer. He was born July 17, 1985, son of Rudy and Elsie (Mast) Overholt.

He was a faithful member of Lyndon Amish Mennonite Church.

On June 8, 2007, John was married to Rebecca Miller (daughter of Freeman and Ida Miller, Oskaloosa, KS).

John was a devoted son, husband, father, and a faithful friend. He is survived and lovingly remembered by his wife, Rebecca and daughter Rosalie; his parents, Rudy and Elsie Overholt, Melvern; siblings: Heidi (Robert) Byler, Maypearl, TX; Carolyn (Loren) Troyer,

Smithville, AR; Lawrence (Beth Anne) Overholt, Lyndon; Ruth Anne (Michael) Mast, Auburn, KY; Matina (Javan) Zimmerman, Oswego, KS; Lewis (Marge) Overholt, Oskaloosa, KS; Lois (Lester) Wagler, Lyndon; April (Darren) Jantzi, Wellesley, ON; 44 nieces and nephews, and many extended family members and friends.

The funeral was held Nov. 24, with Leon Yoder, Paul Overholt, and Charles Hamilton serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Daniel A., 79, of Goshen, IN, died on Nov. 25, 2013, from complications following a broken hip in Sept, 2013. He was born in Lumberton, MS, on Feb. 11, 1934, son of the late Andrew M. and Emma (Schrock) Yoder.

He was a member of Fair Haven A.M. Church, Goshen.

On Jan. 19, 1963, he was married to Elizabeth Yoder, who survives. Surviving children are: Martha (Elvin) Schrock, Colby, WI; Susie (Walter) Schrock, Wakarusa, IN; Edna (Wendell) Zimmerman, Goshen, IN; Delilah Mears, Middlebury, IN; Andrew (Martha) Yoder, Bittering, MD; Moses (Meg) Yoder, Constantine, MI; Jonathan (Anna) Yoder, Goshen, IN; and Henry (Norma) Yoder, Clarkson, KY; three sisters: Mary Yoder, Lydia Troyer, and Mattie (Samuel) Hostetler, all of Ethridge, TN; five brothers: Andrew (Sarah) Yoder, Memphis, TN; Noah Yoder, TN; Joe (Iva) Yoder, of Ethridge, TN; Eli (Fannie) Yoder, Ephrata, PA, and Enos (Mary) Yoder, LaGrange, IN. Also

surviving are 28 grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

Preceding him in death were three brothers: Moses, Gideon, and Jake; two sisters: Lizzie Yoder, and Delilah Yoder.

The funeral was held at Fair Haven church on Nov. 29, with Wilbur Yoder and Dale Hochstetler serving. Burial was in Thomas Cemetery, Goshen.

Yoder, Esther A., 88, of Stuarts Draft, VA, died at home on her birthday, Dec. 14, 2103. She was born in Holmes County, OH, on Dec. 14, 1925, daughter of the late Andy C. and Anna (Yoder) Yoder.

She was a member of Mt. Zion A.M. Church.

On Feb. 14, 1946, she was married to Eli A. Yoder, who survives, thus they lived together for 67 years and 10 months. To this union were born five sons: Paul (Mabel) Yoder, Gap Mills, WV; Dan (Barbara Mast) Yoder, Dunmore East, Ireland; Andy (Rachel Hershberger) Yoder, Harrisonburg, VA; Alvin (Sadie Peachey) Yoder, Stuarts Draft; and Timothy (Treva Kinsinger) Yoder, Dickson, TN; and one daughter, Anna (Amos) Beiler, Stuarts Draft. Also surviving are 30 grandchildren and 60 great grand children; one brother, Jake (Jemima Mast) Yoder, Dundee, OH; and two sisters, Katie Ann, Dundee, OH; and Fannie (Atlee Raber), Apple Creek, OH.

She was preceded in death by one brother and two great grandsons.

Burial was in the Mt. Zion Church cemetery.

Yoder, Sara (Miller), 93, of Grove City, MN, died Dec. 1, 2013, at Koronis Manor, Paynesville, MN. She was born July 8, 1920, in Stark County, OH, to the late Adam and Anna (Schlabach) Miller. She moved with her parents to Kokomo, IN, and later to Kalona, IA.

She was a faithful member of Believers Fellowship Mennonite Church, Grove City. She was active in teaching Sunday School, sewing circle, and giving encouragement to many.

On June 15, 1954, she was married to Amos J. Yoder. He survives. Children surviving are Philip Yoder, Canby, OR; Marcus (Anna) Yoder, Grove City; Fred (Lorraine) Yoder, Corn, OK; Rebecca (Rod) Barbo, Dayton, VA; Dorcas (Paul) Smucker, Halsey, OR; Margaret (Chad) Koehn, Kutztown, PA; 17 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Other survivors include a sister, Lovina Kauffman, Kalona, IA.

She was preceded in death by a grandson, Leonard Yoder and three brothers: Ervin, David and Mahlon.

The funeral was held on Dec. 5, with Melvin Beiler, Paul Smucker, and Abe Yoder serving. Paul Chupp conducted the committal with interment at Burr Oak Cemetery.

Zook, Moses J., 90, of Belleville, PA, died Oct. 23, 2013. He was born in Belleville on August 31, 1923, son of the late Stephen W. and Mary E. (Peachey) Zook.

He was a member of Valley View A.M. Church, Belleville.

On Oct. 26, 1944, he was married to

Lomie E. Peachey. She survives. Children surviving are Paul J. and Miriam (Beachy), Belleville; Ruth Anne (Harold Dean) Miller, Honey Grove, PA; Mark J (Gloria) Zook, Belleville; Raymond (Deborah) Zook, McVeytown, PA, 16 grandchildren and 44 great grandchildren. Also surviving are siblings: Sadie Peachey, McVeytown; Mary Peachey, Belleville; Ezra Zook, Belleville; Stephen Zook, Jr., and wife Bertha, Belleville; brother-in-law, Sylvanus Peachey and

sisters-in-law, Naomi Zook and Katie Zook.

He was preceded in death by three sisters: Katie Yoder, Lizzie Zook, and Ada Peachey; five brothers: Jesse, Jacob, Daniel, Mark and David Zook; and a great grandson, Angelo David Miller.

The funeral was held on Oct. 16, at Valley View Church with Eli King, Mark Zook and Earl Peachey serving. Burial was in Locust Grove Cemetery, with the committal conducted by Leroy Yoder. 

observations

A *nabaptist Forum* is a bi-monthly publication “for conservative Christians with intellectual interests.” November, 2013, is their first issue. They are trying to be careful not to duplicate something that is already available. Topics they hope to address include:

Science: This can include creation science as well as a wide variety of scientific topics that are consistent with biblical truth.

Doctrinal issues will be in agreement with traditional Anabaptist teaching.

History: This may include ancient history, Anabaptist history, Biblical history, etc.

Astronomy: A study of the heavenly bodies from the Christian, biblical perspective.

Nature: This may be wide-ranging, but also in harmony with Scripture to the honor and glory of God.

The table of contents has thirteen titles. These include: “Go ye out into all the world,” “A brief overview of Modern and Ancient Learning,” “Sky Watch,” “A Young Earth,” “Where Did the Indians Come From?” There is also a very fitting poem written August 9, 2013, in memory of brothers Leander, 7, and Jethro, 9, who drowned in a farm pond. Their unaffiliated Amish Mennonite parents are Marlin and Savannah Troyer, of Branch, MI.

Irvin Shirk of Thorp, WI, is editor/president of their board. Subscriptions are available from Brian Martin, 871 Balder Rd., Kutztown, PA 19530. \$25 a year. To

place a 1/8, 1/4, or 1/2 page ad, call Lynford Oberholtzer, 660-346-2160.



Mennonite World Review (MWR 12-23) came in today’s mail. The year’s final edition is a stimulating read. News reports and editor and reader feedback often weigh in on opposite sides of controversial issues. All this is a helpful reminder to “prove all things” and to “hold fast that which is good.” It reminds me of a quote that says, “What is wrong is always wrong, even when everyone is doing it. What is right is right, even when nobody is doing it.”

To assume that we have nothing to learn from others with whom we do not fully agree is not realistic. Wisdom from above is among other things, teachable. But to be tossed about by every wind of doctrine lacks the stability of a firm base of truth from which to begin. Our Lord is full of grace and truth. Truth without grace tends to become harsh and overbearing. Grace without truth is unprincipled license. To grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, is a life-long challenge and a helpful safeguard against being misled.



The classified section of MWR has six entries under church employment. Four of these are seeking lead pastors.

One seeks a half-time youth pastor. Another specifies a “Family Life Pastor.” One includes the question: “Are you an exceptional pastor and teacher?”

The pastoral epistles are very explicit in the mention of ministerial qualifications. It seems entirely reasonable that a healthy church body who is serious in their study of the Word would develop persons capable of pastoral leadership. Plural leadership teams seem to have been the norm in the New Testament era. It would be wrong for us to be critical of a system of church leadership because it is different from what we are used to. But to want to pattern after early church practice is a worthy ideal.



There is an interesting article in the same issue of a young pastor with formal training who grew up on a farm. He wanted to serve in a rural congregation and have farming as part of his ministry. He wanted to be involved in farming for personal fulfillment and to better relate with the members of his church.

He says that many Mennonite young folks have gone to college and not returned to the farm. Eventually, their parents retired and also moved away. Presently, this church is attracting persons with diverse backgrounds who have not been part

of a church. Pastor Brett Klingenberg of First Mennonite Church, Beatrice, NE, lives with his wife and two young children on a 37-acre farm with a large garden, some chickens, sheep, and cattle.

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Many years ago, a patron in a restaurant saw a Mennonite family praying before they ate. They were readers of *Saturday Evening Post*. They reported it to artist Norman Rockwell as an idea he might want to express with his painting skill. This he did and entitled the painting, "Saying Grace." The Post paid Rockwell \$3,500 for the scene, which appeared on the cover of the Post in the Thanksgiving 1951 issue. On December 4, 2013, this painting sold at auction in New York City of \$46 million. This is the highest price ever paid at auction for an American painting. (MWR, 12-23).

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Sarah Hershberger from Medina County, OH, has been in the news for some time. She was under treatment for leukemia. Her family does not oppose conventional medical treatment for religious reasons, but feared for Sarah's life because chemotherapy was making her very sick. When hospital officials threatened to take legal guardianship and continue treatment, the Hershbergers left the country. The

medical community has withdrawn their threat and the Hershbergers are back in the country, but not in Ohio. (MWR 12-23). Recent reports indicate that Sarah is doing well.

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An editorial by Paul Schrag mentions that the Mennonite Brethren are considering making a change concerning their involvement in the military. The present wording is: "In times of national conscription or war, we believe we are called to give alternative service whenever possible." The proposed change would say: "As in other peace churches, many of us have chosen alternative service rather than military participation." The editor points out that the change from taking a stand "We believe we are called" to the neutral ""many of us choose" is to lose an important witness.

The above situation has developed because unified support for the earlier stand is no longer true. It is unfortunate when indifference toward a scriptural principle or practice causes leadership to revise a standard . We should not consider ourselves exempt from such possibilities.

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A federal judge, Clark Waddoups, ruled on December 3, that Utah's law that forbids polygamy is unconstitutional. Social

conservatives who have been vocal in their support of traditional marriage have been predicting that legalizing homosexual marriage will result in legalizing polygamy. This ruling was made in behalf of persons belonging to a fundamental group of Mormons who are not part of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, who do not condone polygamy. (MWR, 12-23).

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By *Their Blood*, by James and Marti Hefley, is about Christian martyrs of the 20th century. This 692-page book is a well-researched record of happenings that some of us have not known much about. This is a further record like *Martyrs Mirror* and *Fox's Book of Martyrs*. We are told that more Christians have been martyred in the 20th century than in all of previous church history combined. To me it seems incredible that most of this happened during my lifetime. Uncivilized cruelty was evident in the heartless body mutilation both before and after the death of victims. The book is a fresh reminder of several things: (1) The conflict between the seed of the woman and the serpent is still very much alive. (2) Persecutors are limited to inflicting physical and mental torture and killing a human body. They cannot destroy the faith and future of those whose faith in

the Lord is more precious than their physical life. The fourth printing of this book by Baker Book House was done in 2002.

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World magazine (12-23) quotes Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church as saying, "I fear the disapproval of God more than your disapproval or the disapproval of society." He said this in an interview with CNN's Peter Morgan on his opposition to same-sex marriage.

The same issue has a report about Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) that to me seems altogether foreign to my earlier impressions of this school and its founding faculty. The board of trustees has authorized a six-month listening period during which a policy against same-sex relationships for faculty will be suspended. The issue is to be revisited after six months.

Unrest over this issue is widespread and persistent throughout the church at large. It is true that change is not always wrong and sometimes necessary. But when undershepherds assume that they are ethically free to endorse a principle or a practice that is contrary to the Chief Shepherd and His Apostles, it seems misguided and does not bode well for the future of time or eternity.

—DLM 

Fairness, Justice, and Consistency

Ronald J. Miller, Oswego, KS

A friend was recently telling me about a book he had read that dealt with the current political climate in the USA. I don't remember the title of the book nor the author, but I remember this nugget from our conversation: In outlining some defining characteristics of the political left, the one that I remember was the pursuit of "fairness." While fairness sounds very good, several things make fairness somewhat elusive. First, fairness depends on whose perspective it is viewed from. Secondly, somebody needs to decide when to start keeping track and when to stop keeping track of what's fair. Furthermore, fairness is often confused with equality. Children raised with the understanding that fairness is their right, are poorly prepared to navigate life's bumps and bruises.

A kind reader sent me a subscription to the *Mennonite World Review*. I find reading this publication helpful in giving a window into one slice of Mennonite thought and practice. If someone were to ask me what mainstream Mennonites are concerned about, the first issue

that comes to mind is "justice." I note great interest in MWR in advocating for the economically, socially, and politically oppressed. The prophet Micah said in 6:8, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Certainly, doing justly should characterize the person who follows God. However, when justice is the chief guiding principle, we are again left needing to decide whose definition of justice we are to apply, when to start keeping track, and when we're finished keeping track of what's just. Often times, correcting one injustice creates another elsewhere.

If someone were to ask me what *our* branch of the Mennonite church is concerned about, one thing that comes to mind is "consistency." I believe consistency is something we should idealize. However, is the question of consistency always the first or only question?

Let me illustrate: We have maintained a policy of non-use of the radio and television. The advent

of the internet and its outpouring of information has left people asking what a current, consistent position should be on the question of radio and television.

Here are three responses that I've heard to this dilemma:

- The most consistent approach is to prohibit the use of the internet, since we don't approve of the use of radio or television.

- We can't conscientiously prohibit the radio and television if we use the internet, since both of these are now available on line. (This assumes that the internet is necessary for some of us, some of the time, at a minimum).

- The central issue is how we respond, not what is possible. They say, "I shop at WalMart, but I don't buy everything they sell, even if I could. That's the way we need to use the internet." It is inconsistent with our expression of faith to assume that *access equals usage*.

Each of the aforementioned positions is defended based on someone's understanding of consistency. Which is most consistent? Is it not true that some inadvertent inconsistency is a result of the human condition and comes with taking a stand on any given issue? Is it not also true that the only way to achieve flawless consistency is to refuse to take a stand on anything

and just "go with the flow"? That is much too dangerous!

The fear of inconsistency should not paralyze us. We might not always get it right, but we should try. Is it not also true that pursuing consistency as an end in itself can sometimes lead to greater inconsistency? The desire to attain greater consistency in practice can be accomplished in either of two ways: by avoiding a current activity or practice, or by making an additional accommodation. I fear that most often the appeals for consistency result in the latter.

I have come to believe that most times we should begin with the question, "Am I being faithful?" rather than, "Is this consistent?" One of the benefits of God's genius when He places us in churches where we decide things together is that sometimes I don't have the whole picture and God leads me through the perspective that He has given my brother, a rigid allegiance to consistency assumes that I have all the information I need in order to make an accurate assessment and judgment. It is alright to ask if we are being consistent in order to understand if our response is faithfulness to Christ. Would not God's people be well served to think of consistency more as a *diagnostic tool* than as a *guiding principle*? The

desire for consistency should come under the pursuit of faithfulness. As we respond to life's perplexities with faithfulness to God's leading, the result will be one of growing consistency.

Oswald Chambers said, "The Golden Rule for understanding spiritually is not intellect, but obedience. If a man wants scientific knowledge, intellectual curiosity is his guide; but if he wants insight into what Jesus Christ teaches, he can get

it only by obedience."

What do fairness, justice, and consistency have to do with the gift of salvation. I deserve death and am given life, which doesn't seem fair or just except in God's economy, it is consistent with who He is. Life in this sin-marred world, isn't always fair, just or consistent. I'm looking forward to eternity when all that's wrong in this world will melt away in the reality of God's perfection. Praise the Lord!



Creation or Evolution?

Dallas Barkman (10th Grade), McConnelsville, OH

Did the earth evolve or was it created? This important question has started many arguments and debates. The two major groups are creationists who believe that God created the earth and everything in it—in six days. The evolutionists, on the other hand, believe that the earth evolved slowly over billions of years.

As a creationist, I believe that God created the world with order and laws, which we call *constants*. Evolutionists say the earth is chaotic—without rhyme or reason, but true science, which is built on biblical principles, does not support such conclusions.

Evolutionists also say that man is merely a highly evolved animal. If this were true, there should be intermediate creature fossils to support those claims. However, even though there have been cases of fossils presented as "the missing link," they were hoaxes. No true fossils like this have ever been found.

Also if we evolved from animals, we would be guilty of murder every time we killed an animal, since we would be killing a blood relative.

Another problem I have with evolution is the wide variety of beliefs held. Each evolutionist's idea of evolution seems to be different. I like

one of the definitions of evolution in our biology book. It says, “Evolution is a threat to modern science because the theory is actually based largely on imagination!” (page 367)

How do we know that creation is true? One of the biggest reasons for me is how complex everything in the world is. Orderliness of things on earth give evidence of a Creator.

Many people agree that there are supernatural forces on the earth. Evolution has poor explanations for this!

I believe the biggest reason that

people say that they believe in evolution is because they do not want to be accountable to God because of wrong desires and unresolved sin in their life. I am thankful that the Creator of this world has ordained laws to keep order and also that He cares for each one of us as His own children.

“Thank you, God, for making nature call out your name. Thank you that You care for each one of us!”

[Submitted for publication by Dallas’ teacher, Joshua Gingerich, with permission.]



O, Worship the King

Based on Psalm 104, Robert H. Grant, 1833

O, worship the King all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

O, tell of His might and sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plains,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust nor find Thee to fail;
Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend.

Depression

Author unknown

Depression is a sickness, true,
Of which not many have a clue;
Most often it's misunderstood—
Thought of as sin, which is not good.

Just as diabetes, or a bad heart,
So this with sickness shares a part;
But illness of the brain and mind
Is hard to see, and be defined.

This illness is real—is in the brain;
Affects the mind and all thought train;
The concentration runs so low,
That victim's memory oft will go.

One gets upset for no real cause,
And often cries with little pause;
But sometimes when the pain's too deep,
The tears are locked, and one can't weep.

The sleeping patterns often change,
And appetites can rearrange;
Some people lose a lot of weight,
While others will increase their gait.

Digestive symptoms may occur—
Real pain, severe, one may endure;
Headaches are present most of the time,
And racing mind will not unwind.

The body's actions may slow down—
It's hard to talk, or walk around;
They're tired, but they cannot rest—
Their mind's a-whirl—black thoughts infest.

Enthusiasm often goes—
Int'rests in life, one may not know;
The victims may not even care
For those with whom their life they share.

Sometimes bad happenings of the past,
Increase—makes it longer last;
Traumatic incidents and grief
Makes all look hopeless—no relief.

The victim often worthless feels—
Guilty, unwanted, with no zeal;
And in the cases more severe,
Don't want to live—of it won't hear.

The turmoil racing in the mind
Is agony—can't be defined;
So worthless, hopeless in despair—
To live at all, one doesn't care.

Words can't express depths of despair—
The ceaseless hurting one must bear;
The pain of future, present, past,
In guilt, forever seems to last.

The chemicals, and all the brain,
Is all messed up—must be retrained;
The mind gives messages, unreal,
And tells the body how to deal.

And in the most severest kind,
The body copes, and tells the mind;
"Life's hopeless horror I can't face."
And without help, life may erase.

Of this disease, there's no control;
Alone, one can't out of it roll;
But it takes time and helpful care
To right the problem—lift despair.

Some people think: "If you just pray,
Then all these troubles go away."
A leg stays broke, through just belief—
So prayer alone won't bring relief.

It takes a doctor's kind, true care,
And understanding that is rare;
It may take medicine of sorts,
And from the patient, true efforts.

And then from family and friends—
Unjudging faith, to prayerful ends,
Time, love, and try to comprehend—
It takes all this to help minds mend.

[Submitted for publication by Mrs. Carol Schmucker, Hutchinson, KS.]



Maturity in Time

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Writing a monthly article takes discipline and much wisdom. I consider carefully, “What should I write this month?” I am writing this on the first day of the new year, simply because I forgot to write earlier with the busyness of Christmas and with family being at home for the weekend. Now my thoughts focus on time, and how would God have me use my time as a woman in the coming year.

Time is a gift from God. We are given the same number of minutes and hours in each day. However, there are days when we look back on the day and ask, “What did I accomplish?” There are other days with a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment. We need to remember that God does not judge us according to all that we accomplish, rather by our faithfulness.

I want to look at several time areas in our lives. We want to be relaxed and at peace within ourselves, rather than constantly struggling with the

issue of time. How often do you find yourself saying, “If only I had more time,” “Where has the time gone?” or “I don’t have time to do one more thing.”

Destroyers of time:

Procrastination

Procrastination affects a person in two ways: first, by work going unfinished, and second, by wasting energy and putting off things that remain undone. It produces worry and frustration as work piles up. It also leads to irritation in our relationships with others.

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is actually the opposite of procrastination. However, it can also sap our energy and waste our time. We are being bombarded with books, magazines, media, and social interaction that tell us how to dress, eat, decorate our homes, raise our families and in essence—how to be perfect. Each woman needs to find God’s will for her standard of performance without being influenced by peer pressure.

Using your time wisely:

Become a woman of excellence, not of excuses.

Whatever job you are called to do, do it with your might. There is joy in seeing a job well done, whether it is washing dishes or sewing a new dress. Do your work without making excuses for lack of time or ability. Do it without complaining or grumbling. Work is so much easier when it is done cheerfully and with a good attitude. Do it as unto God.

Put first things first.

Prioritize your day. Start at the very beginning, what is the first item on your list? It may be as simple as making your bed, getting dressed, or preparing breakfast. Priorities will be different at different stages in your life. For now, it may be feeding

your newborn, dressing your toddler, getting the children off to school. Whatever your stage or situation at this season of your life, *just do the next thing*. Remember, God is interested in you. He cares about your schedule. Turn your day over to Him; allow God to help you organize and prioritize your time.

Be patient with yourself.

God is not finished with you, yet. You will make mistakes; you will have days of frustration and days with not enough hours to accomplish all you need to do. However, as you give God your time and learn to prioritize and not make excuses, you will become a more relaxed and joyful woman.

Time began in the garden with a man and a woman. Time ends in eternity.



junior messages

The Devil in The Storage Shed

A true story

Mary Ellen Beachy

Bertram Rudge was a Christian leader who operated a business in Zambia, Africa. He bought local produce : peanuts, honey, beeswax, dried fish, kasava meal, and millet. Then he would

load his lorry (truck) with the goods and travel to town. The people in town were glad for food. He would purchase items from them and return with blankets, cooking utensils, clothing, and other useful items for

people who lived far from town in the “bush.”

Mr. Rudge built a large storage shed on his “bush” headquarters. The walls were corrugated steel sheets, with large sliding doors at the entrance. The only light in the shed was from a narrow opening between the top of the walls and the roof. Here he would store the produce he bought till he had enough to take it to town.

One afternoon, Mr. Rudge was working in his office when one of his African workers rushed in totally shaking with fright! “The devil is in the storage shed!” he gasped.

Mr. Rudge responded, “What do you mean?”

“Satana (Satan)!” he emphatically stated. What would you do if you were told that Satan was in your storage shed?

Mr. Rudge grabbed his shotgun and went to check things out. The soil in that area is very light-colored and sandy-textured. That, along with the fact that most buildings were white washed and the glaring tropical sun beats down most days of the year, makes it easy to realize that when you come in from outdoors, it takes quite a while for your eyes to adjust well enough to see things inside. In fact, for a while everything is black. So it was that when Mr. Rudge entered the shed

from the bright glaring sunshine outdoors.

“For the one and only time in my life,” he said when he told this story, “my hair literally stood on end!”

There, right in front of my face (Mr. Rudge is tall) were the head, horns, and forelegs of a goat, but the body was that of a huge serpent swaying menacingly from side to side. The head had to be between five and six feet from the ground. The tail was coiled and from appearances the creature had to be 18 to 20 feet long.”

The Christian mission gives out a booklet entitled, “The Heart of Man,” which has a picture representing the devil that looks just like this horrible thing in the shed. Well, this creature was not Satan. It was a huge python having its lunch.

When a python captures its prey, it first crushes its victims and carries it to a secluded place where it can eat in peace and quiet. In this case, lunch was an unfortunate goat and the secluded place was the storage shed. The python covers its meal with spit so it can swallow it.

A place all alone is what the python wants. Swallowing takes quite a while and, in this case, it began swallowing the back end of the goat. Having swallowed it to the arm pits or front legs, his lunch got stuck. When the worker came in and disturbed the

python, he naturally reared up and was wrongly identified as Satan.

Mr. Rudge used the shotgun to dispatch the unwelcome intruder in the storage shed and things settled down once again on the produce farm.

It is with great confidence that I tell you that, although the devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, we do not have to defend ourselves with a shotgun. God has given us tremendous and effective weapons with which to fight. You will find them mentioned in Ephesians 6:11, beginning with “Put on the whole armour of God.” Our God is greater

than all the forces of evil.

(Acknowledgment: Thanks to David Lorah for this story.)

Seven facts about the amazing python:

- They are among the world’s largest snakes, growing to be 20 to 30 feet long.
- They are called constrictors because they squeeze their prey to death.
- They eat rats, cats, and larger animals.
- They swallow their prey whole, which may take more than a day.
- They hatch from eggs.
- They live in tropical regions
- They can climb and swim well. 

youth messages

In the January issue we looked at different forms of persecution that come to those who live for Jesus. Have you experienced any minor persecution already this year? This month we will consider true suffering for Christ and what it means to “live godly in Christ Jesus.”

Suffering and Godly Living

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men...”

Have you ever been around people who gave you the impression that

the world would be a better place if everyone was as godly as they? Most of us don’t enjoy being around such people. We may wish that they would go live in a perfect world rather than irritate those of us who still live on

Planet Earth. Some of us may even react to self-righteous people and conclude that we should not be too godly lest we irritate others.

If we come to such a conclusion, we are mistaken. There is no such thing as being too godly. The world doesn't need more people who are afraid of being too godly. **The world needs more people who are doing all they can to live godly in Christ Jesus, even if it means suffering!**

There are three main causes of suffering:

- One kind of suffering is the result of sin—the suffering that we experience as a result of living on planet earth since sin entered the world. Thorns, thistles, sweat, backbreaking work, misunderstandings, health problems, imperfect parents, discordant music, theft, pain, poverty, and more are the result of a fallen world and are experienced by everyone--the godly and the ungodly.

- A second kind of suffering comes as a result of doing the wrong thing or pursuing the wrong thing. The Apostle Peter asks, “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” It is hard for most of us to imagine being beaten by our employers for making a mistake on

the job. However, in this situation, Peter is writing to slaves and telling them, “If you failed your master then patiently endured your beating, the patience you display will not make your employer forget about what you did wrong. It would be much better to suffer patiently for good behavior than bad behavior.”

- A third kind of suffering is the result of being persecuted for righteousness. This is the suffering we experience as a result of doing right and being right. It is the suffering that we experience simply because we are living for Christ.

With this in mind, consider a snapshot from the lives of Kyle and Crystal...

Kyle is a young man who pours himself into the work of God. He keeps some tracts and recorded messages in the door of his truck so that they are readily available for men he meets at the gas station. Kyle reads his Bible quite faithfully and often has something spiritual to say when opportunity is given to share a verse or thought. He knows what he believes and is willing to take a stand for truth and right. Kyle knows his Bible and is not ashamed to share what he understands it to say.

Kyle is bothered by the lack of dedication he notices among many of the people with whom he goes

to church. He wishes they would be more eager to serve the Kingdom of God. Sometimes when Kyle comments during Sunday School, his tone is contentious or caustic and this makes it hard for others to profit from what he has to say. When Kyle mentions ways he wishes his fellow church members would grow in the Lord, they find it difficult to profit from his comments because of the attitude they sense in him.

After church Kyle is likely to talk about his work and his projects. He finds it easy to mention ways that he contributed to the Kingdom of God during the previous week. Kyle doesn't take a lot of interest in other people's lives. He doesn't ask questions about their week or take an interest in tests and trials they may be facing. When Kyle does ask people direct questions, people are afraid they may be judged if they don't give the answers that Kyle wants. Many people feel that Kyle comes across as an instructor rather than a learner. They think of Kyle as being quite self-centered even though he is quick to start a spiritual conversation or support the work of the church.

Kyle does not see himself as having many needs, and he assumes that the reason others in the church do not like to talk about spiritual things is because they are not as

dedicated as he. Kyle does not have deep friendships with others in his church. Nor does he invite mature Christian brothers to speak into his life and help him improve his character. When fellow church members hint to Kyle that he might profit from opening his life to some mature individuals, he doesn't pursue those suggestions. He doesn't think it necessary and is quite sure that others would not evaluate him correctly.

In members' meetings Kyle notices that his opinions are not given much weight. Even though he passionately promotes scriptural ideas, his fellow brothers and sisters don't seem to care much about what he has to say. He assumes this is because people don't appreciate his passionate zeal for the things of God. Sometimes Kyle overhears the adolescents talking about him and from the smirks on their faces he realizes that it must have come from a joke about him. Kyle finds that other young men rarely invite him to spend time with them or ride with them to an evening meeting. Kyle notices all these rejections and assumes that he is suffering for righteousness sake.

Crystal is a young lady who pours herself into the work of God. She keeps some tracts and recorded messages in the door of her car so that they are readily available to

give to women she meets at the gas station. Crystal reads her Bible quite faithfully and often has something worthwhile to say when opportunity is given to share a verse or thought. Generally people listen to what she has to say, even though they may find it difficult to identify with everything she says.

It is not uncommon for Crystal to get involved in a spiritual conversation after church and bless someone or give an encouraging word. Often, though, she listens to others talk about their pursuits and takes an interest in them even if she does not value some of these pursuits. Crystal doesn't talk a lot about herself, her gifts, and the things she does for the Lord. She doesn't spend a lot of time thinking about the Christian she will be some day, in the future. She mostly focuses on the Christian God wants her to be right now.

Some people at Crystal's church are not very comfortable around her. Because there is such a gulf between her interests and theirs, they see very few points of connection. They can't identify with her behind-the-times appearance and her Kingdom values. Some are slightly uncomfortable with her...to say it bluntly...godly demeanor. It is not that Crystal imposes her convictions on others

or that she isn't cheerful, she just doesn't...well...fit the mold.

Interestingly, many of the church people do respect Crystal a lot, even though they might not mention it or think about it very long. However, if you would ask them who at their church is the most saintly, quite a few would think of Crystal. She is the one who willingly does the jobs others don't want to do. She is the one who welcomes visitors, and befriends the disadvantaged. She is the one who is down-to-earth and does not put on airs. And you won't find Crystal defaming others. Nobody would even think of making jokes about her. There is something about her godly character that keeps people from wanting to do her harm.

Crystal periodically meets with other women in the church who sharpen her perspective and help her see her blind spots. She does have faults and idiosyncrasies but over the years these seem to be getting less and less obvious. Crystal is not as polished as some folks are, but then she hasn't had the opportunities or the time to become the most genteel person around. On the other hand, Crystal is about as generous and gracious a person as you will find. She is flexible, forbearing, and forgiving.

In spite of these notable characteristics, many people in the

church do not seem to pay much attention to Crystal. She is not the favorite pick for a shopping partner or a position in the church. She is sometimes not invited to certain events. An onlooker might not understand why Crystal is not the most well-liked person in the congregation. Why wouldn't the most saintly person be the most well-liked person as well?

Crystal feels the rejection and it saddens her. She talks to God about it.

As you read these two stories, I suspect you notice the difference between wanting to be known as a godly person and actually living godly in Christ Jesus. The rejection Kyle faces is mostly the result of character deficiencies. The rejection Crystal faces is the result of genuine, godly living. So before you too quickly conclude that your suffering is the result of being godly, make sure that people are not reacting to the part of you that is not yet like Christ.

Do you experience mild rejection? If not, perhaps the “seeking the approval of men” is a problem of yours. If you do experience some rejection and are willing to try hard things, I would encourage you to find someone who will be honest with you and ask them, “What do you see in my life that could mar the image of Christ in me? Is the rejection or ‘persecution’ that I am experiencing the result of godliness or character deficiencies?” Then listen carefully to what they have to say. Ask questions to better understand what they see in you and ask them to pray for you.

Sincere brothers and sisters are an invaluable resource. They can help us understand and discern which rejections from others are the result of un-Christlikeness and which rejections are the result of godly living.

May God bless you this month and in the future as you seek to live godly in Christ Jesus!

—EE 

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• • • • •

Zeal without knowledge is fanaticism.

• • • • •

God's laws last longer than those who break them.

• • • • •

A lie is so weak it has to be supported by other lies.

• • • • •

The simple life can get pretty complicated.

• • • • •

Looking back helps us understand life,
but we must live it going forward.

• • • • •

All nature speaks God's language.

• • • • •

If you stand for the right, you win, even when you seem to lose.

• • • • •

Those who deserve love the least, need it the most.

• • • • •

Beware lest a *necessity* is simply a *luxury* you see your neighbor has.