



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

Galatians 6:14

FEBRUARY 2006

Meditation

All Things Well (Mark 7:37) 1

Editorial

Miry Clay..... 2

Reader Response..... 5

A Beautiful Scene 5

Be Aware of God's Holy Trinity 6

Lynette Speaking..... 10

Mission Awareness

Breaking Down Cultural Barriers—Part One..... 12

Marriages 16

Cradle Roll..... 17

Ordinations 18

Obituaries 18

Observations 20

Ministers' Meeting Messages—2005..... 23

Who Will Teach Our Children? 29

Helpers at Home

Comforters..... 31

Junior Messages

Love is Tender—Part One of Three 32

Youth Messages

Answers To This Month's Question..... 34

Worker Opportunities 37

Thought Gems back cover

FEBRUARY 2006

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 To propagate sound Biblical doctrine;
 To stimulate a deeper study of God's Word;
 To anchor and fortify the faith of Christians;
 To point lost and dying souls to Christ the Saviour;
 To welcome prodigals back to the fold and family of God;
 And to help defeated Christians find victory in Christ Jesus.

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All Things Well (Mark 7:37)

Marcie Yoder · Clarkson, KY



“The deaf can hear; the dumb can speak!”

The excited throng did tell.

His healings quite astonished them,

“He doeth all things well!”

When in the blackest of the night,

Our fears this will dispel,

Though questions still do linger on—

“He does do all things well!”

If changes come, disrupt my plans,

The future no man can tell,

May I say in simple, childlike faith,

“He will do all things well!”

Then when I meet Christ face to face,

Forever with Him to dwell,

Doubtless, I then shall say of Him,

“He hath done all things well!”



Miry Clay

As I see it...

Depression comes without invitation. It drapes a “wet blanket” over things. It saps courage and brings sadness to many faces. It offers exaggerated fears of the future.

Emotional Aspects

Depression afflicts the elderly if they feel they are in people’s way when they cannot take care of themselves or *give* as much as they *take*. It affects the middle-aged when they find the struggles of life overwhelming. When things get tough, such people often turn to liquor or some other drug “crutch.” Such crutches are *not* a good source of courage. Though a bottle for the baby satisfies his need, for an adult, a bottle doesn’t work that way.

Depression can cripple the young who have been hurt in the heart. For them life seems like a no-win situation, with nowhere to turn to, if early experiences were marked by abuse—whether it was verbal, sexual or neglectful abuse.

Depression among men seems to hide behind masculine swagger. It can be a difficult form of depression

to diagnose. It may manifest itself by such symptoms as “sleep troubles, fatigue, headaches, or stomach distress.” Furthermore, “depressed men are more likely to behave recklessly, drink heavily, or take drugs, drive fast or seek out confrontation.” Actually, “instead of acting like they are filled with self-doubt, depressed men may bully and bluster and accuse those around them of failing them. For many men, anger—a masculine emotion that one ‘manages’ rather than succumbs to—is a mask for deep mental anguish.” (*The Hutchinson News*, Nov. 24, 2005, “The Buzz,” p. 9). That mask of denial seems to convey that all is well.

God made us for loving, respectful relationships. When hard times come, the Christian home provides a haven of order and acceptance. Father and Mother love and respect each other and each child is treasured and none is singled out for special favor or disfavor. When this is so, the children look forward to good things the future holds for them. But when times of joy are rare at home, destructive patterns of thinking set in that

will make life much more difficult.

Suicide among the young is usually triggered by acute emotional pain and hopelessness.

Physical Dimensions

How we feel actually affects our health. “Depression [more than] doubles the risk of heart attack, stroke, and congestive heart failure; it quadruples the risk of death after a heart attack.” Furthermore, “blood platelets are more prone to clumping and clotting in people who are depressed. Even a tiny clot can cause a heart attack or stroke by acting like a stopper in a blood vessel, depriving heart muscle or brain tissue of oxygen.” Since “stress and depression seem to switch the immune system into ‘alert mode,’ by dumping extra inflammatory compounds—chemicals that help you heal when you’re sick or injured—into the bloodstream...this chronic, low-level inflammation raises your risk of clogged arteries and heart attacks.” (*Better Health and Living*, supplement to *The Hutchinson News*, Winter, 2005, page 7). Clearly, depression compromises one’s health.

Depression is a big subject and I realize that these observations do not do justice to all angles. Chemical imbalance is sometimes basic to the failure of finding satisfactory courage

to face life. I thank God for drug prescription therapies that bring relief to depression, even those not caused by chemical imbalance.

Spiritual Considerations

One more aspect should be considered with regard to depression—the spiritual dimension. In many cases this dimension is required for things to make sense. Let us not be hasty to label something a spiritual problem that has been caused—or at least aggravated—by other causes. But let us not fail to acknowledge spiritual realities, either. Let us avoid simplistic, “feel-good solutions” that hold out false hope. You don’t get vanilla by changing the label on a bottle of turpentine.

Let us pursue peace with God. Unacknowledged sin drags us down. Real guilt (not false guilt that enemies would pin on us) lets us know that something is wrong. Unconfessed sin takes away our sense of God’s favor. All of this can be remedied by coming to Jesus Christ with sincere acknowledgement of our need for forgiveness of sin and salvation. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

David, the sweet singer of Israel, may sometimes have struggled with

more than mere discouragement. Was he depressed when he wrote Psalm 40? Note the opening verses:

*“I waited patiently for the Lord;
And He inclined to me and heard
my cry.*

*He also brought me up out of a
horrible pit,*

*Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.*

*He has put a new song in my
mouth—*

*Praise to our God;
Many will see it and fear,
And will trust in the Lord.*

*Blessed is the man who makes the
Lord His trust.”* (1-4a NKJV)

Doesn't “miry clay” sound like the “goo” of depression? The sticky mud and even the wonderful feeling of relief in standing on solid rock—doesn't that describe the bliss of getting back on track? David's deliverance came as he waited patiently for the Lord, as he kept on crying to the Lord, and as he clung to the promises of God. After he had passed through the experience, David had a new song on his lips. He knew where he stood with God! His freedom and joy were back! When we turn in repentance and faith to Jesus Christ and when we walk in faithfulness to the Word of God, we are in a position to win

over energy-robbing despair.

The next time a fog of depression moves in, let us look to God for wisdom to see how it came and crept over our outlook. Let us be willing to share with a brother or sister—or a minister. If necessary, let us consult with doctors or counselors. Let us not get stuck in a rut of hopelessness and despair. Let us meet this foe with fortitude and faith in God.

As children of God, we are not given freedom from trials, but we have the privilege of drawing on God's strength and grace. Yes, we all have hard times. *That's normal.* When we deny our down times or refuse to face them, nothing improves. A long-traveled rut of negative thinking only gets deeper, often ending in depression. The Lord offers His enabling grace for every situation. Fortunately, finding a spiritual solution is a *normal* option for the child of God.

A song writer said it well, “Joy is a flag flown high from the castle of my heart when the King is in residence there!” Glory to God! “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning!” (Psalm 30:5b NKJV)

—PLM



Re: Barrabas Ministries

[In a letter to me, part of which was printed in Reader Response, Dec., 2005, page 3, Robert Zani wrote: "Candidly, in this country, 98 out of 100 prison ministries are, in fact, Barrabas ministries." I asked, "What's that?" Here's an abridgement of Robert's response: —PLM]

"A Barabbas ministry is one that keys on, EXCLUSIVELY, the guilty prisoner....I split long ago with _____, [because] theirs is a Barabbas ministry. They were offering some well-financed programs for prisoners *only if* you have admitted your guilt.' That is their sole criterion...When I asked what they had/were doing for innocent prisoners, I

got nothing [meaningful]...

"Yes, there are some prisoners who have pled guilty, but will tell you they are innocent. They are generally after money...

"People who say prisons are full of innocent prisoners [and also those] who say there are no innocent prisoners in prison, are simply lying to promote some political agenda...the best guesstimates are that about 2% of American prisoners are actually, truly innocent..."

Sincerely,

Robert J. Zani

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A Beautiful Scene


Lydia Nissley · Catlett, VA

We were visiting a neighboring church for prayer meeting. The sisters scattered out in the auditorium, with two or three together. First they shared more needs; then they prayed.

A bench or so in front of me, I noticed three grandmothers. Godly women with veiled heads, they knelt to pray to their Heavenly Father.

They knelt to pray.

Most of the prayer groups sat where they could hear each other easier and simply bowed their heads. But the three grandmothers knelt. May God bless them and their prayers!

May God bless all the older grandmothers who pray for their churches and their children and grandchildren and then live lives that show us how to live. 

Be Aware of God's Holy Trinity

Ervin N. Hershberger (1914-2003)

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As Creators

In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

We think of God the Father as the First Cause, the Chief Commander, the Master and Controller of the universe. Elohim is definitely a plural noun, which suggests a united plurality working in unison and perfect harmony. Paul speaks of Him as a plurality, but as one God. He wrote,

"To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we [mankind] by him" (1 Corinthians 8:6).

"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). ("Moved" is defined by James Strong as a primary root: "to brood.") The Holy Spirit played a vital part in the Creation. And the waters did "bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth" (Gen. 1:20). The enormous variety and volume of fish

and fowl that God created exceed our human comprehension.

We have no record of when or how the multiple millions of angels were created. May we not reasonably assume that the Holy Spirit was actively involved in their creation as well? Because of His personality and function, it seems most reasonable to believe that the Holy Spirit participated in the creation of everything that has breath or spirit, and that He continues to provide for their care.

The Gospel of John points to a beginning in eternity past, aeons of time before the Creation described in Genesis.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1, 2).

The first chapter of Genesis also puts special emphasis on the Word. Ten times it declares that "God said." When God spoke the world into existence, He did it by the Word, and that Word was Christ.

The New Testament repeatedly affirms Jesus' creative role.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made....He was in the

world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (John 1:3, 10).

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16, 17).

“God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,...by whom also he made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:2).

Both Genesis and John reveal plurality, relationship, and unity. “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). “God is love,” which requires relationship. Love could not exist without something or someone to love. Obviously, there actually was a Holy Trinity of nonphysical Spirits, a Triunity of Holy Personalities, who eventually created a physical universe and living creatures in physical bodies. It took God’s Holy Trinity to give us physical life, and we need this Holy Trinity daily for constant preservation.

For Conservation

Our finite minds are not capable of perceiving the perfect and total unity possible only in the Holy Trinity. Perhaps a network of computers within

a corporation provide an example we can more nearly understand. Picture a medical team with offices in three adjoining townships. The medical records of all their patients are constantly updated and kept identical on one central computer accessed at all three places of business. Far more accurate and uniform, God’s eternal Trinity has always been of one mind. This Trinity consists of three Persons thinking identical thoughts in perfect harmony. They have a perfect unity that cannot be matched.

Our triune God created the universe out of nothing and controls it with a spoken word. He set the sun, moon, stars, and planets in precise orbits so that man’s timepieces and calendars are set and regulated by these orbits. He governs animals, fowl, and fish with an inherent instinct. Only men and angels have violated and transgressed God’s laws of order, and all nature suffers as a result. Thorns, thistles, weeds, and destructive animals are the results of fallen angels and fallen man.

“Trinity,” “omniscience,” “omnipotence,” and “sovereign” are words not found in the King James Version. However, the Creation of the universe and God’s plan of redemption have so adequately demonstrated those four attributes of God that

adding these words could not make the Scriptures more convincing. If you are interested in researching the Trinity further, see chapter one of the author's book *Seeing Christ in the Old Testament*. [Available from Vision Publishers.] If you want something more scholarly, see *The Great Doctrines of the Bible* by William Evans. If you want something indisputable and indestructible, study the Bible. Because the Bible is timeless, it anchors our life in eternity. Our temporal needs are for this life only, but our spiritual needs are eternal.

For Redemption

Because God knew all things from eternity past, (Job 26:6 and many other passages) He knew before creating anything that both angels and men would fall into sin. The Holy Trinity was not taken by surprise when that happened. They had their plans all ready. Apparently, the Second Person of the Godhead had already agreed to empty Himself of the form of God and be made in the likeness of men, to reduce Himself from the role of Creator to that of a bondservant and suffering Savior. (Phil 2:6-8).

A major difference between men and angels is that angels are not born and do not reproduce. They were all created by [a direct act of] God, equipped with instant intellectual

maturity. They did not descend from fallen ancestors, but are "all ministering spirits." Angels who fell, as many of them have, did so by their own choice, and we find no indication of any redemption offered for fallen angels.

Of the human race, however, God created only two people, and they both fell. All others are their descendants, and therefore were born with a fallen nature, not by choice, but inherited from fallen ancestors. Not only some of us, but "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Jesus voluntarily came all the way from heaven, went to the cross, and with His own sinless blood paid the full price of our redemption. He suffered more for our redemption than any of us have ever suffered for Him! He offers salvation to all by the cross.

"No man hath seen God [the Father] at any time" (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12). Therefore, all the theophanies of God in the Old Testament must have been Christophanies (visible appearances of Christ, instead of the Father). He talked with Abraham. I do not know of one case in which God the Father or God the Holy Spirit took on physical form. Jesus, even in the flesh, was still "God with us," "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

The Father knew He could trust

Jesus; although stripped of the basic prerogatives of Deity in being made flesh, to be “in all points tempted like as we are,” He never once fell into sin. And Jesus fully trusted the Father. His dying words were, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). He was absolutely sure of His resurrection on the third day. (See Matthew 16:21; 17:22, 23; 20:19; Mark 9:31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 13:32; 18:33; 24:7.)

The Father and the Son had absolute assurance in saying that, “When He, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13 NKJV).

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit fully understand each other. They are always unanimous in everything that any one of them thinks, says, or does. Nothing can be more reassuring than the inseparability and the absolute unanimity of a Triune Godhead that cannot err and cannot fail.

For Consummation

When the world became too wicked, God destroyed mankind with a universal flood, but spared eight people, with whom He repopulated the earth. When the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah exceeded God’s tolerance, He destroyed the inhabitants

with fire. But “God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow” (Gen. 19:29). Today, this wicked world is again madly racing in a headlong plunge of defiance against God.

The second Psalm, attributed to David, has an important message for the present and the future. It may also have had some local application in David’s day, but its basic message is definitely Messianic, revealing some future activities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It consists of twelve verses that can be divided into four sections of three verses each.

Psalm 2:1-3 says the heathen rage, and kings of the earth set themselves against the only true God and His Anointed—exactly what the Islamic nations and thousands of Americans are doing today. They plan and boast of breaking free from God’s restrictions, denying the fact that they are answerable to God.

In verses 4-6, the Lord responds in sore displeasure, warning that He has, and will yet, set His king upon the holy hill of Zion, and He will be in control. David’s victory over all his enemies only foreshadowed the greater David, of whose “government and peace there shall be no end.”

David by divine inspiration wrote, possibly a thousand years before

Christ was born, quoting Jesus as saying, “The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day [the day of His incarnation] have I begotten thee” (Psalm 2:7).

Verses 8 and 9 are what the Father has promised to Jesus, speaking of power that neither David nor any other mortal king has ever had.

The last three verses seem to be the Holy Spirit warning the kings of the earth to “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (Ps. 2:10-12).

We certainly can, and gladly do, depend on God’s Holy Trinity for all

our eternal needs, even beyond the end of time.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Even so come, Lord Jesus.

(The end)



Lynette Speaking

Phyllis Yoder · Grandview, TX

[Lynette Kaye Bontrager’s obituary appears in this issue. Her sister, Phyllis (Mrs. Gareth Yoder) provides this glimpse of what her handicapped sister might be saying if she would speak to the family. It seems appropriate that we give Lynette this opportunity, now that she has been delivered from the constraints of her handicaps, of urging us on to that heavenly goal. —PLM]

To my dear family, friends, and caregivers—
Oh, how I would love to

show you my new home! And I’ve seen Jesus! He’s given me a brand new body! I can talk!...and sing!...and walk! I can understand the wonderful things Jesus tells me!...and the praises we sing...Oh, you should hear them!

Those 49 years in my crippled earthly body, although they seemed like a long time down there, now seem as nothing. How true it is in Romans 8 where it says that the sufferings on earth are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall

be revealed in us.

I was seen by many earthly doctors, but they could do so little, if anything. How Dad and Mom would have desired if I could have just touched the hem of Jesus' garment. But God's plan was to wait, and while I waited, there was often much discomfort and suffering to endure. God has a great variety of callings for His children, but all of them are to bring glory and honor to Him. He has helped me fulfill my calling. Romans 2:7 says: "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, (their reward is) eternal life."

There were so many things I never did:

- Never rocked my dolly to sleep;
- Never played hide-n-go seek;
- Never raced with the wind on a bike;
- Never helped sing "Silent Night" at the school program;
- Never poured out my heart's dreams and hurts with a friend over a cup of tea;
- Never helped plant the garden in the spring, burying my bare toes in the soft dirt;

But you know—there are a lot of other things I never did:

- I was never selfish or unkind to my siblings;
- I was never unforgiving or held

a grudge;

- I didn't struggle with pride or inferiority complex;
 - I never gossiped or spoke hateful of anyone;
 - I never disobeyed Dad and Mom;
 - I was never jealous of anyone else.
- I just filled my own little spot to the praise of His glory.

I know my Bontrager family loved me very much and did what they could for me. I also know my "El Dorado family" loved me and did a wonderful job of caring for me. May the Lord bless them as they continue to care for Faith and the other "ladies." God has faithfully provided for me just as He said He would in Isaiah 46:4, "And even to your old age I am He; and even to white hairs will I carry you; I have made and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." And what a wonderful deliverance this is!

I trust all of you will always love the Lord with all your heart and patiently continue in well-doing so you can join me in this bliss that never ends.

Love,

Lynette

P.S. Faith, are you missing me? Don't be sad. Jesus is still with you and He will help you.



Breaking Down Cultural Barriers—Part One

Timothy Weaver

Someone has well stated: “Culture is the more or less integrated systems of belief, feelings, and values and their associated symbols and patterns of behavior shared by a group of people.” There are also hidden values in every culture. Then there are beliefs, feelings, customs, and behavior patterns in every culture that need the cleansing blood of Christ to purify its adherents in one body with Christ.

Convictions about the nature of truth and righteousness require us to hold all cultures, including our own, under the light of God’s perfect Word, affirming the good of all people, but renouncing and forsaking the evil.

We American missionaries can never detach ourselves from every aspect of our culture, no matter how hard we try. However, this does not give us liberty to run roughshod over the beliefs, feelings, and behavior patterns of those in foreign lands where God has called us to serve.

The Apostle Paul adapted himself to the varied situations he found himself in: “...being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ, I am made

all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:21b, 22b). Paul emphasizes and summarizes after lengthy discussion on this subject, “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (1 Cor. 10:32).

The following article describes a few down-to-earth issues of being non-offensive in certain areas that we may not have given much thought to. The concluding article stresses the importance of learning well the language of the people whom we serve. It also encourages understanding why people think, speak, and act the way they do. —FS

We have come as foreigners to Guatemala to help in preaching the gospel. Our most important work here is relating to other people. We relate to our fellow workers, our brethren in the church, our neighbors, the strangers we meet, and those who become our enemies. The way we relate must help encourage each other toward heaven and away from hell. To do this effectively, we must

understand which barriers become a tool for Satan to use to hinder us from accomplishing our purpose for being here.

Barriers between people are inevitable. Some barriers such as age, gender, or race differences are imposed on us. Some barriers we construct ourselves—like pride, prejudice, and jealousy. Some barriers are circumstantial—like differences in geography, family relationships, and language. Cultural differences can include any of these differences, but they are mostly differences in how we think.

Christians are “*members one of another*” (Ephesians 4:25) and belong to “*the household [family] of God*” (Eph. 2:19). Many of us since childhood have heard Bible teachings about the importance of loving each other. Love gives us a common ground for good relationships also.

Furthermore, we understand that Christ “*hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us*” (Eph. 2:19), and that “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:28). Other Scriptures also teach this truth so we understand that the closer we walk to Christ and imitate Him, the more successful we

will be in eliminating the barriers that hinder our work.

Pride is always divisive and disruptive, but being clothed with humility will help make healthy relationships. Openness and honesty are healthy in our relationships, if they are tempered by kindness and care. Differences need not be barriers, as difference in gender proves. Both men and women find fulfillment as they are faithful in their Scriptural roles. But differences can become barriers if we allow them to. We would like to consider three main barriers that we need to confront: economic barriers, language barriers, and social barriers.

Economic Barriers

The economic barrier is the most obvious difference between Guatemalans and us. Do you remember the first impressions you received when you visited here or in another third-world country? Probably some of your impressions had to do with the poverty you observed.

We need to reckon with these differences and the barriers they create. The Bible tells us, “*...the poor always ye have with you,*” so we know that the questions we face because of our prosperity will not go away. The questions do not have a magic answer just around the corner because of better government or better management.

We have been disappointed at times with the results of giving hand-outs, especially when we discover the stories people tell because of them. Our business projects to help make work available to the Guatemalans have also brought doubt and criticism. It is easy to become cynical and suspicious because of these experiences. Sometimes when we were trying to reduce the differences between us, we ended up adding to the barriers. But we also have our own consciences which have been enlightened about helping those in need by Scriptures like 1 John 3: 17 and many others. How do we relate to this barrier?

First, I would suggest that we must try to work with this barrier and not try to remove it. The Scriptures give examples of faithful people from all parts of the economic spectrum. We must also remember that the Scripture is clear and frequent in warning against the deceitfulness of riches. Verses from 1 Timothy 6 speak directly to our work. The main points to consider are: riches are fleeting and temporal, and that riches are a snare (verse 11). The godly are content when they have their basic needs met (verses 6-8). Those who have riches are responsible to God as stewards (verses 17-19).

Second, the economic barrier is best bridged by recognizing God as the absolute owner of all material things. We are stewards of what we have, and are therefore accountable to Him and to each other for how we use our things. In a Christian brotherhood, the rich will have less than they would if they lived according to the flesh, and the poor will have more than they would if they lived according to the flesh.

The way we deal with the economic barriers gives the world around us evidence of what the church represents. Can we see the far-reaching effects of sterling honesty? Can we see the damage we do when one of us becomes greedy, covetous, proud, or selfish? How can we fall prey to this, and where should we be especially careful?

We need to continually consider our image. Our vehicles, houses, clothes, and furnishings give a message. Let us be practical, sensible, and contented. How often would we ask off if we were working a regular job? Time is money in Guatemala like it is anywhere else. How often would we ask off for a day of sightseeing, climbing a volcano, and similar activities? What time would we arrive on the job? How long would we stay? We need to think of these things in our work here. If we are careless, we

indicate that we are here for adventure and not to fulfill a calling.

We need to be careful in our spending. A meal at *Pollo Campero* represents a day's wage to a common laborer. I have been shocked to hear of the amounts of money lost when someone had their pockets picked. We do well to shop locally, and usually there is no reason not to. What costs less in the city also costs the trip to get there. Transportation costs represent a large portion of the mission budget, and Guatemalans are very conscious of the cost of transportation. If we count fuel and mileage, it is almost impossible to make a trip to the city for less than \$20.00. Running to and fro at whim will project the message that money is no problem for us. Maybe we should use public transportation more than we do.

Maybe we should also consider more seriously the cost of airline tickets and furlough travel. Guatemalans are not ignorant of these

prices either. Yet we need to consider the larger picture. The Guatemalan culture does encourage strong family ties, and so they understand the need for occasional visits to North America. We also appreciate the value of maintaining regular interchange with the extended brotherhood, faithful family members, and ministerial exchange. Such travel is not a luxury; it is a necessity, when it is practical.

In general, we appreciate the basic practice of our mission personnel. But we want to be sure that we consider how our travels could affect our Guatemalan brethren.

(to be concluded)

[Timothy Weaver is a missionary in Guatemala serving with Conservative Mennonite Fellowship Missions. Used by permission from The Harvest Call, July/August, 2005.]



Man's soul has

“MADE IN HEAVEN”

stamped on it.

marriages

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

Alimowski-Overholt

Bro. Marek, son of Jerzy and Walentyna Alimowski, Narew, Poland, and Sis. Sarah Judith, daughter of Vera and the late John J. Overholt, Sarasota, FL, in a double wedding at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church for Sunnyside Mennonite, Sarasota, on Nov. 20, 2005, by Lester Gingerich.

Burkholder-Hodgdon

Bro. Owen, son of Weaver and Edna Burkholder, Saegertown, PA, and sis. Kathryn, daughter of Dale and Erica Hodgdon, Sandy Lake, PA, at Lyona Bible Church, Oct. 15, 2005, by Ervin Miller.

Helmuth-Miller

Bro Philip, son of Jacob and Laura Jean Helmuth, Sarasota, FL, and Sis. Wendy, daughter of Lee and Delores Miller, Sarasota, at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church for Sunnyside Mennonite, Sarasota, on Dec. 10, 2005, by Lester Gingerich.

Kanagy-Stoltzfus

Bro. Kenneth Lee, son of Virgil and Fannie Mae Kanagy, Blackville, SC, and Sis. Susanna Joy, daughter of Simon and Joyce Stoltzfus, Minerva, OH, at First Christian Church, Malvern, OH, for Minerva Christian Fellowship, Minerva, OH, on Aug. 20, 2005, by Virgil Kanagy.

Miller-Mast

Bro. Wyman, son of Crist and Sylvia Miller, Guys Mills, PA, and Sis. Linda, daughter of Clarence and Barbara Mast, Cochranon, PA, at Pleasantview Church, on Oct. 22, 2005, by Ervin Miller.

Overholt-Peaster

Bro. Nathan Jonathan, son of Vera and the late John J. Overholt, Sarasota, FL, and Sis. Janet Marie, daughter of Dale and Sherie Peaster, Okolona, MS, in a double wedding at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church for Sunnyside Mennonite, Sarasota, on Nov. 20, 2005, by Lester Gingerich.

Spicher-Sharp

Bro. David, son of Jesse and Annie Spicher, Belleville, PA, and Sis. Esther, daughter of Katie and the late Noah B. Sharp, Belleville, PA, at Pleasant View A.M. Church, on Nov. 24, 2005, by David J. Peachey.

cradle roll

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

Beiler, Ernest and Elmina (Stoltzfoos), Gap, PA, second child and dau., Erika Diane, Dec. 12, 2005.

Beiler, Matthew and Yvonne (Swarey), Paradise, PA, first child and dau., Janessa Fern, Dec. 1, 2005.

Engel, Travis and Martha (Troyer), Plain City, OH, fourth child, third dau., Sarah Ann, Dec. 2, 2005.

Fisher, Sam and Rosetta (King), Ronks, PA, fourth child and son (one deceased), Adam Bryce, Nov. 17, 2005.

Gerber, Steven and Janette (Schmidt), Brunner, ON, fourth child, first dau., Jewel Ranae, Dec. 12, 2005.

Hershberger, David and Luann (Troyer), Linneus, MO, eighth child, fourth dau., Lena Faith, Oct. 19, 2005.

Hershberger, Roy and Ruth (Wengerd), Saegertown, PA, fourth child, first son, Travis, Nov. 17, 2005.

Hershberger, Titus and Ella Mae (Frey), LaGrange, IN, second child and son, Benton Lee, Dec. 23, 2005.

Hochstetler, Lamar and Margaret (Beachy), Aroda, VA, fifth child, first son, Ethan Daniel, Dec. 30, 2005.

Jantzi, Ronald and Jennifer (Mullet), Milverton, ON, third child, first dau., Laurie Raquel, Dec. 13, 2005.

Kauffman, Phineas and Martha (Beiler), Wytheville, VA, third child, first son, Dallas George, Dec. 3, 2005.

Kauffman, Sheldon and Joann (Bontrager), Bird in Hand, PA, third child, first son, Christian Thane, Dec. 15, 2005.

Mast, Daniel and Lois (Byler), Crossville, TN, fifth child, fourth dau., Abigail Lucille, Dec. 5, 2005.

Miller, Crist and Linda (Slaubaugh), Townville, PA, seventh child, fourth son, Brandon Ray, Jan. 25, 2005.

Miller, Jason and Ruth (Beachy), Concord, AR, tenth child, sixth son, Thomas Grant, Dec. 4, 2005.

Schmidt, Thomas and Rosetta (Wagler), Trout Creek, MT, first child and son, Thomas Daniel, Dec. 13, 2005.

Stoltzfus, Lee, Jr., and Lorene (Stoltzfus), Gap, PA, second child, first son, Benson Lee, Dec. 3, 2005.

Troyer, Jerry and Jana (Miller), Millersburg, OH, first child and dau., Alana Grace, Dec. 2, 2005.

Whitt, Lee and Miriam (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, eighth child, fourth son, Joshua Lee, July 29, 2005.

Yoder, Michael and Kathy (Hostetler), Montezuma, GA, second child and dau., Katurah Mei Xiao, Dec. 8, 2004, received for adoption from China, Nov. 13, 2005.

ordinations

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

Bro. Jason D. Miller, 37, Quaker City, OH, was ordained as deacon to serve at Antrim Mennonite Church on Nov. 13, 2005. Preordination messages were brought by Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA, and Andy Miller, Sugarcreek, OH.

The charge was given by Edwin Weaver, assisted by Homer Zook and David Raber. (Jason is to serve in David Raber's place. Davids are serving in Romania as houseparents.) LaMar Lapp was also in the lot.

obituaries

Bontrager, Lynette Kaye, 49, died Dec. 10, 2005, at Susan B. Allen Memorial Hospital, El Dorado, KS. She was born April 26, 1956, the special daughter of Eldon and Mary Ellen (Yoder) Bontrager, Arlington, KS. She was born at Hutchinson, KS. She has lived in Hutchinson, Winfield and El Dorado.

She was an honorary member of Arlington A.M. Church.

She was diagnosed with cerebral palsy which left her totally dependent and severely handicapped. She was cared for in the home for a number of years until

Bro. John Nolt, 35, was ordained to the office of bishop Dec. 4, 2005, to serve at Zion A.M. Church, Thomas, OK. Delmar Bontrager brought preordination messages.

The charge was given by Dannie Diener, assisted by Delmar Bontrager. Serving in the ministry with John are Kevin Schrock and Eugene Yoder.

Bro. Laverne Yoder, 48, was ordained to the office of bishop Dec. 18, 2005, to serve Ebenezer A.M. Church, Malta, OH. Preordination messages were given by John Mast, Crossville, TN.

The charge was given by Raymond Barkman, assisted by John Mast and Perry Troyer. Serving in the ministry with Laverne are Jonas Beiler, John Andrew Miller, and Thomas Miller.

her care required more intensive medical procedures than could be provided at home.

Besides her parents, she is survived by two brothers: J. LaVon (Mamie) Bontrager and Myron (Ilene) Bontrager, both Arlington; and four sisters: Carolyn Bontrager, Arlington; Faith Bontrager, El Dorado; Phyllis (Mrs. Gareth Yoder), Grandview, TX; and Marilyn (Mrs. Dan Korver), Ladysmith, WI; and ten nieces and sixteen nephews.

She was preceded in death by a sister, Regina, and grandparents Menno

and Elizabeth Yoder and Eli and Delila Bontrager.

Funeral services were held at Cedar Crest A.M. Church, Dec. 13, with Willis Nisly, David Yoder, Conrad Miller and Paul Miller serving. Burial was in the West Center Cemetery.

Hochstetler, Doris Jean, 64, died at her home, Hicksville, OH, Nov. 23, 2005, after a two-year bout with cancer. She was born in Ft. Wayne, IN, Mar. 23, 1941, daughter of Noah and Rosanna (Yoder) Miller.

She was a faithful member of Hicksville Christian Fellowship.

On March 31, 1962, she was married to Edward Hochstetler, who survives. She is survived by two sons: Brad (Grace), New Haven, IN; Barry (Karen), Hicksville, OH; and four daughters: Brenda (Don) Witmer, Leo, IN; Bonnie (Jeff) Martin, Hicksville, OH; Beverly (Mark) Webb, Aroda, VA; Bethanie (Jadon) Yoder, Hicksville, OH; 22 grandchildren; four brothers: Jesse and James Miller, Ft. Wayne, IN; Edwin Miller, St. Joe, IN; Robert Miller, Corunna, NY. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Funeral services were held at Hicksville Christian Fellowship, with Melvin Bontrager, Willard Hochstetler and Samson Eicher serving. Burial was in the Hicksville Christian Cemetery.

Nisly, Mary (Headings), 84, died Dec. 5, 2005, at Mennonite Manor, Hutchinson, KS. She was born on Sept. 23, 1919,

in rural Hutchinson, daughter of the late Valentine and Mary Ann (Helmuth) Headings.

She was a lifetime resident of the Hutchinson community, a homemaker and a member of Center A.M. Church.

On Nov. 14, 1946, she was married to Fred L. Nisly. He survives. Fred and Mary had two sons: Maynard (Irene) Nisly, Berne, IN; and Mark (Lynda), Hutchinson; and five daughters: Mary Jane (Orville) Miller, Hutchinson; Miriam (James) Miller, Hutchinson; Martha (Jon) Miller, Hutchinson; Esther (John) Christner, Oak Hill, KS; and Ruth (Bill) Yoder, Sarasota, FL. Also surviving are 26 grandchildren, and one sister, Barbara, South Hutchinson. [Barbara died on January 8, 2006.]

She was preceded in death by two grandsons, Kyle Miller and Jason Miller; five brothers: Levi, Noah, Raymond, Valentine, Jr., and John Headings; and two sisters: Sarah Headings and Leona Kuefer.

Funeral services were held Dec. 9, with brethren David Yoder, Gary Miller and LaVerne Miller serving. Burial was in the West Center Cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Jadon Andrè, was stillborn Nov. 26, 2005, at Reading Hospital. His parents are Jesse and Michelle Stoltzfus.

Funeral services were held at Weaver-town A.M. Church Nov. 28, with Glenn Esh officiating. Burial was in the Weaver-town Cemetery.

observations

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U. S. naval installation at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Eighteen ships were sunk or severely damaged; about 170 planes were lost. There were about 3,000 human casualties. This surprise attack drew this country into World War II. (from World Book Encyclopedia)

The following information is taken from a devotional meditation by Melvin L. Yoder, in *Beside the Still Waters*. The account was taken from the book, *Real Stories for the Soul*.

A Japanese man, Mitsuo Fuchida, led the squadron of several hundred planes in the Pearl Harbor attack.

The following April an American pilot, Jacob DeShazer, flew his bomber over Nagoya in a dangerous raid. After releasing his bombs, he became lost in dense fog and had to eject. He became a prisoner of war. He suffered torture, cold and hunger. He hated his captors and treated them with contempt.

In the course of time he was given a Bible. He studied it seriously. Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" influenced him to treat the

guards kindly and respectfully. Soon the guards began to treat him kindly.

After the war, DeShazer returned to Japan as a Christian missionary. One day a Japanese man came to his door. He had become a Christian by reading a pocket New Testament that had been given to him. It was none other than Mr. Fuchida, who led the air attack. The two became dear friends. They had learned that the way of Christ is forgiveness and love. Fuchida spent the rest of his life as a missionary.

Let us note two observations:

- God can change the lives of persons who are in the forefront of military destruction.
- We have been entrusted with the stewardship of divine seed, God's Word of truth. The necessity and value of its distribution is obvious.

• • • • •

Should nonresistant Christians have an opinion about the state's use of capital punishment? The execution of Tookie Williams on December 12 in California has gotten national and international attention.

Generally speaking, politically conservative persons are more likely to favor the use of the death penalty than those who are considered more liberal. Christians have been known to cite an Old Testament principle of

“life for life” in support of the practice. Romans 13 is also a pertinent passage.

In 1971, Williams was co-founder of the Crips street gang. They were blamed for hundreds of inner-city deaths across the United States. In 1979, he was convicted of four brutal murders.

In solitary confinement, he read and reflected seriously on his past. He deeply regretted his role in helping form a notorious street gang. He steadfastly maintained his innocence for the murders for which he was convicted. He said he could not in good conscience admit to something for which he was not guilty, even if that might save his life. (Presumably life in prison)

In prison, he wrote a series of children’s books urging children to avoid gangs. He wanted to dedicate his life in prison to helping children avoid the wrong choices he had made. He said he found redemption. It is not clear to me what all he meant by that comment.

In spite of a lengthy and costly appeal process and the governor’s consideration for clemency, the state of California “legally” killed him on December 12.

In Europe, there is strong negative sentiment against capital punish-

ment. Contributing to their perspective is the memory of Adolph Hitler’s ruthless attacks on people he considered inferior.

Could we agree on the following?

- Since courts and juries consist of people and are therefore fallible, there is the inherent risk that innocent people could be executed.

- We are told that life in prison is by far less costly than the legal process that precedes execution.

- Let us assume that the state’s God-given role to keep order in an unruly society may include the option of capital punishment in rare cases.

- For nonresistant Christians to be outspoken in support of the practice seems out of harmony with Christian faith in general, and nonresistance in particular.

- Let us be grateful that in many of our communities there is opportunity to witness to prison inmates with the message of life—eternal life.

• • • • •

It seems that current news is dominated by evidence of declining morals, conflict and violence. Roth Report (12-10-05) shares the following snippets of good news:

- Between 1990 and 2004, the number of Christians in Cambodia grew from 200 to 400,000.

- Prior to 1990, there were about 600 murders in a certain prison in Colombia. Since prisoners began receiving Christianity in large numbers, the atmosphere of violence has been erased.

- More Muslims have turned to Christ in the last 10 years than in the previous 1,000 years.

- Eight out of ten humans now have access to the entire Bible in their own language.

- More than 100,000 North Vietnamese of the Hmong tribe have turned to the Lord by listening to Christian radio broadcasts.

• • • • •

As the prolonged military involvement in Iraq continues and recruitments are running below quotas things could change, perhaps suddenly. Selective Service continues to tell us that there are no plans for a military draft.

Meanwhile, Cassandra Costly, who directs alternative service, encourages us to get work projects pre-approved, just in case they might be needed.

In mid-20th century, Mennonite Central Committee and other Men-

nonite ministries led the way to provide voluntary service opportunities. In 1953, Hillcrest Home at Harrison, Arkansas, became the first VS unit to open under the auspices of Mission Interests Committee. Post-war service opportunities developed soon after that under newly-organized Amish Mennonite Aid.

How things have changed!

There are now dozens of VS opportunities available to our people. Regrettably, there is generally a shortage of volunteers.

If our government would suddenly require two years of military or alternative service, our shortages could suddenly become a surplus of problematic proportions. There are reasons to believe that Selective Service would be favorably impressed if our young men of draft age were already giving two years of appropriate VS, even when there is no draft.

More importantly, don't we feel that this would also please our Heavenly Father? Let us earnestly pray that we would be sensitive to the Lord's leading as we continue to face an uncertain future. —DLM



Being fun-filled is not the same as being fulfilled.

Ministers' Meeting Messages—2005

This is a condensation of a message given at the annual Ministers' Meeting, April 5-7, 2005, at Stuarts Draft, VA. The set of eight tapes of these messages is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA 20136, for \$40, plus S & H.

9. A Vision for Godly Homes

Phil Beiler, Suceava, Romania

Is there love in your home? If there is, thank God for it. There are millions of homes that don't know love. Is there laughter in your home? Thank God for it.

One alcoholic father saw a book we give out, *The Drunkard's Children*. He was quite angry that his daughter had the book. Another such father, who likes to read, started reading the same book, then wondered what he was reading and where it came from. He was not happy about it, but his family noted that he did not touch alcohol for the next week. Then he started going to church. His family is praying for his repentance.

In Psalm 78, Asaph has a vision for godly homes. His vision is that the people in such a home "might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." Here are three things that characterize a godly home: 1. A conviction for life. 2. The courage to care for the emotional

needs of our children. 3. A commitment to secure our children's future.

1. A Conviction for Life

The first commandment given to Adam and Eve was to be fruitful and multiply. That means to have children. That was and is God's intention for families. A conviction for life includes welcoming children.

Life is cheap today. It is considered by many to be trash. It is thrown away. It is sold. It is bartered. It is destroyed. But in God's eyes, life is very precious. There is something special about people who love and accept children. They can be any denomination, from any background, and they may not even have children themselves, but a love for children makes them special.

Abraham had a conviction for life. According to Genesis 18, the Lord and two angels came to him with two purposes: to tell him about Isaac's birth and to warn him about the judgment God was bringing to Sodom.

God creates life. He loves and increases life. He gives life. He welcomes life. When God must bring death, I think it must bring grief to His heart. We seem to see Him standing and musing, as He asks, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do, seeing that Abraham will surely become a great and mighty

nation, and all the nations in the earth shall be blessed in him?”

When you have a tragedy, who do you talk to? You wouldn't talk to me. You would talk to someone you know well—your wife, your husband, or someone close to you. You bare your heart to someone close to you. Here God had a burden on His heart. He was going to have to go down to Sodom and bring death and destruction upon them. He didn't want to, but He had to. This burden was heavy, so He decided to tell Abraham, “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, and do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Genesis 18:19).

Abraham was a very wealthy man, but that's not why God wanted to tell him. He was a strong man politically, having prominence in his area, but that's not what got God's attention. Abraham was a strong man, militarily. He and his men had just defeated the strongest army in their region, but that didn't impress God. The reason God bared his heart to Abraham, was because of Abraham's love for children. God knew that when Isaac would be born, Abraham would welcome him and Isaac would become the center of Abraham's universe. And that moved God's heart. Abraham loved life. If you

want to get God's attention, love life.

When Rebecca left her parental home to become Isaac's wife, the blessing her family gave her was, in essence, “Have lots of children!”

In Exodus, when Moses was born, God's people had increased greatly. “And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.” They outnumbered the Egyptians. This made the king afraid and said, “Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we” (Exodus 1:9). When God's people love and have children, what a wonderful way to have an impact on the earth!

When the Israelite midwives loved life and would not murder the newborn children, God gave them a special blessing. If you had lived then, would you have had children? It was dangerous. It broke a law. But they loved life and because of that, Moses was spared.

Life today is cheap. In Romania, a country of 21 million, every year there are a million abortions. The average woman, in that country, has 10-12 abortions in her lifetime. What is worse, thousands of those claim to be Christians. How can that be? Part of it is ignorance and rebellion, but it's a sad fact.

In 1852, the United States Congress passed a law, called the Fugitive Slave

Act, which made it illegal for someone in the north to help a slave escape to Canada. They put fines on people who helped an escaped slave to reach freedom. They would place a fine equal to the value of one's farm. Some people did it anyway. Would you have loved life, or would you have said, "Well, it breaks the law"?

In 1941, the ten Boom family in Haarlem, Holland, had a heart for Jews. The Jews were being persecuted and sent off to concentration camps. Mr. ten Boom said, "These are people whom God loves. We must help them. They did and helped over 600 of them at great risk. Because they loved life, they gave their own lives. Would you and your family have done that?"

God loves life. In Psalm 127:3 and 5, children are described as "an inheritance," and also as "arrows." The full quiver speaks not of how many children you want, but how many children God wants to give you. We have many abortions today, because people don't love life. We say that's in the world and that's understandable. I think it is really sad that Christians artificially limit the size of their families for the same reasons that people in the world have abortions. Are we really free from the world in this matter?

2. The Courage to Meet the Emotional Needs of our Children

In 2 Samuel 15, we have the story of

Absalom. He was a rebel. He had turned against his father, against God's people, and against God. He was responsible for this. Yes, rebels are responsible for their actions. Absalom shows us what is in the heart of a rebel.

The first thing that Absalom did, was to listen to a man's story. Rebels have a story to tell, a burden on their hearts. They've been rejected and hurt; someone has taken advantage of them. Did you ever notice how rebels find each other? Absalom listened sympathetically to these rebels and identified with them because he had unresolved issues with his father, King David. He loved those with complaints. Every rebel wants to be loved. Actually, this is true of our children, even if they aren't rebels. They want someone to listen to them and identify with them. They want to be loved. Yes, they need correction, instruction and discipline, but they especially need love.

I gave this teaching in Bucharest last winter. A man came up to me and said, "I was a rebel like you spoke about."

I said, "But you're here! What happened?"

He said, "Somebody loved me."

I asked, "How long did it take for him to win your heart?"

He said, "Two years." It takes a long time, but our children want that. They want someone to listen to them, to identify with them, someone to love them.

Absalom rebelled. He's responsible for his rebellion. He must give account to God for what he did. However, when we look at David, we can also see some things he did that contributed to Absalom's rebellion. In 2 Samuel 11, we have the account of David's sin with Bathsheba. That was a horrible thing for him to do. It was blot on the royal family, a blot on God's people and on the whole nation. In his hypocrisy, David did not provide for his son's emotional needs.

In 2 Samuel 13, we have the account of Amnon and Tamar. What Amnon did to Tamar was terrible, when he abused and violated her. It ruined her prospects for marriage. She was just a young lady and it essentially destroyed her life. Amnon deserved to be taken outside the city and stoned to death. Amnon knew that. Did he get stoned to death? No. Why not? He was the king's son and heir to the throne. Here was a special situation, the Jewish leaders reasoned, and so nothing happened.

Can you imagine how Absalom felt? He was Tamar's brother and protector. Someone had come in and stolen her and violated her and no one did anything about it. Can you imagine how he felt let down? Hopefully, his father, David, would do something about it. But David did nothing. Can you imagine how that contributed to Absalom's rebellion? Was his rebellion right? No. Did David have a part in Absalom's

rebellion? I think so. When we fathers don't settle matters that are our responsibility in our homes, that can turn our children away.

Sometimes we say, "Well, what does the church say about this?" Shame on us! If you look to the church to do for your family what you are unable or unwilling to do, you will be disappointed. Don't look to the church to teach your children obedience. That's your job!

David failed in that and Absalom was turned away. Absalom was full of anger and took matters in his own hands and had Amnon killed. Then he had to flee for his life. He went away for three years. It was probably a confusing time for David—he wanted him back, and yet, I think he didn't.

After three years away, Absalom came back. But he was a rebel on the run. Can you imagine what expectations he may have had? *My father wants to see me. He wants to talk to me. Finally, we can talk.* David sent Absalom to his own house and was not really open with him. At this crucial time, when the situation could have been redeemed, David again turned away from his son. Absalom was responsible for his sinful rebellion, but David contributed to the problem. I think David was filled with confusion and didn't really know how to respond or how to think. And so he turned away.

We fathers must learn to identify with our children and listen to their

hearts. Let's listen to their stories and hold their hearts in our hands. If we meet the emotional needs of our children, we will also have the privilege of meeting their spiritual needs. But if we fail them emotionally, they won't listen to us spiritually.

When our children were little, we cuddled them. When they grow, they still want closeness, but it needs to be a different kind. It is closeness that comes through words, spoken or written, through asking for advice, and through accountability to us parents.

3. The Need to Secure our Children's Future

Jeremiah 35 is the very interesting story about the Rechabites. This story actually starts in 2 Kings 10, where Jehu, the new king of Israel, was purging the land of Israel of the descendants of Ahab. He's the one that drove his chariot furiously. On his way to Samaria, he was intending to do justice to the descendants of Ahab. On his way there, he finds Jonadab, father of the Rechabites, alongside the road. Jehu saw Jonadab and asked, "Is your heart like my heart?"

Jonadab said, "Yes!"

Then Jehu said, "Come and ride in the chariot with me." They rode on together and those two men purged the land of Israel of the wickedness of King Ahab. It was an important time for Israel—a time of renewal, of restoration, of new hope, but it was also traumatic. They

removed the ways of wicked Ahab and Jezebel. Their new king had a heart for God. That's the way Jehu started, but soon he began to turn away from God.

Jonadab saw this and realized that if nothing happened, Israel would go right back to where they were, which is what happened. Jonadab looked at his family, and said, "I need to protect my family, and keep them on the straight and narrow way." Jeremiah 35 tells us what he did.

2 Kings 10 and Jeremiah 35 are about 242 years apart. That's a long time! Jeremiah called the Rechabites, descendants of Jonadab, into the temple and commanded them to drink wine. They explained to him that they couldn't drink wine.

Jeremiah 35:6, 7 says: "But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons forever: Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers." Jonadab established patterns for his family that secured their future. His objective for them is found in verse 7: "That ye may live many days in the land." He knew that if Israel returned to wickedness, they would have to leave the land of promise. He wanted to preserve his family. He made four

conditions in order to reach that goal:
1) Drink no wine. 2) Build no houses.
3) Sow no seed. 4) Plant no vineyards.

How did that limit them? I think they were shepherds—nomads who lived in tents. When the Assyrians came and overran the northern section of Israel, they simply moved. It was easy for them to move. They had no houses, crops, or vineyards to lose. They simply gathered up their flocks of sheep and moved south.

Jonadab provided for them four things: He gave them a workable plan. Not only should they drink no wine; they should have nothing to do with wine. They disciplined themselves to do what they were taught. He had given them an objective, then priorities, then a schedule to help them maintain those priorities, then a daily discipline that kept them on track. (In Philippians 3:10-14, Paul follows the same four-step plan): 1) an objective, 2) priorities, 3) a schedule, and 4) a daily discipline. That's what we need to do with our children. We need creativity and God's wisdom to know how to do that.

I worked for a time with an ambulance squad. We had a place for snacks. Sometimes that place got messy. Finally, someone put up a sign that said: "Please clean up after yourself. Your mother doesn't work here." Our children need to learn to take care of themselves.

It's amazing to me that 240 years after

Jonadab, God's prophet Jeremiah commanded the Rechabites to drink wine. I can imagine that they might have said to themselves: "So this is God's prophet. He's current. He's now. Our father lived 240 years ago. So maybe God changed His mind by now. Surely our ancestor will never find out if we start drinking wine now." No, they were so established in their father's instruction, that they said to Jeremiah, "We don't drink wine. We just can't do it."

A minister friend of mine had a rebellious son. Finally, he had to ask him to leave the home. But this father said to his son, "We want you to come home for supper one meal a week." He did that for some years. That son eventually came back to the Lord. When that father put his son out of the house for his rebellion, he allowed a little hope there. He showed him love. In time, he won him back.

If your son or daughter is rebelling against God, don't be discouraged. I'm sure it's difficult. Don't give up hope. Keep praying and reaching out to him or her. Keep showing love, and God may reward your efforts.



Who Will Teach Our Children?

Mary Ellen Beachy · Dundee, OH

[Lester and Betty Miller, later founders of Life Ministries, were living in south central Pennsylvania away from the larger Mennonite settlement of their birth. They brought a need to God and found His answer—one step at a time. —PLM]

How is Wendel doing with his school work and all?” Lester asked the teacher at the Parent-Teachers’ Association meeting.

“Wendel? Ah yes, Wendel, ah, I believe he is doing alright, Mr. Miller. There are seventy first graders, you know, but yes, your son does fine.”

“Les,” Betty said on their way home from PTA, “I think Wendel’s teacher didn’t really know which child is our son. And I just hated how so many of the teachers stood around smoking tonight.”

“It doesn’t seem right, Betty, to be sending our children to be taught by people who don’t love the Lord,” Lester commented. “Oh, how I wish there were a Christian day school for them to go to, but the nearest one is one hundred miles away. Hon, we must pray. Maybe the Lord wants us to start a Christian school here.”

The desire for a Christian school for his children grew in Lester’s heart. Betty shared his vision. Each morning they would sing and read Scriptures with their children, then send them off to school to be educated by the world. It did not seem right. Together, they continued to pray for a Christian school—where teachers loved the Lord, and the Word of God.

Some time later, Lester served as evangelist for revival meetings in Lancaster County. Before he went back home, he shared with the church his desire for a private church school. He asked the people to pray about this need.

Five days later, Betty got a phone call that left her excited and praising God. “This is Virginia Mumaw,” a sweet voice said, “I was in the audience the night Lester spoke of your need for a Christian day school. I am a teacher. There are a number of teachers here in Lancaster. I feel led by God to give you a call and let you know that I would be willing to come and teach for you. I believe I could get one more teacher, too.”

Betty was overjoyed and could hardly wait to share the good news

with Lester.

Some people encouraged Lester in his vision for a school, others told him it could not be done. When springtime came, Lester felt ready to call a meeting. He invited friends from other churches in the area. Russel Baer, a bishop from Lancaster was there too. He shared Les' vision. Russel told Lester and the audience, "Don't hurry in planning for a school. Vote 'yes' if you are behind this project in prayer, and would send your children."

Previously it had been decided that twelve votes were needed to go ahead with plans for a school. At the meeting a basket was sent around for people to drop in their votes. While they were voting, a couple came in late. Les took time to explain to them what they were voting about. The couple later told Les, "We were so glad you hadn't voted earlier; we voted 'yes.'" There were exactly 12 votes cast in favor of going ahead. That was in April.

Ben Lapp generously donated land for the school. Galen Groff, Virginia Mumaw and Mim Musser were the first teachers. Lester Miller was the school administrator, and a faithful school board of godly men helped with much of the work and details.

One evening before the school opened, the board met at Lester's basement. They hoped that night to decide on a name. Lester had spoken to Betty about the need for a name. While she was upstairs reading stories to their four children, suddenly the name Maranatha came to her mind. Maranatha Christian Day School. She wrote it on a slip of paper and asked Wendel to quietly take it down to his daddy.

Later, the children were all asleep when Lester came up and told Betty, "The name is Maranatha. There were other suggestions, but the vote for Maranatha Christian Day School was unanimous!" Lester and Betty rejoiced and praised God! Maranatha means 'The King is Coming.'

They had prayed that their school would be a means of helping many neighborhood children learn to love the Lord and to be ready when Jesus comes.

By fall of the next year, a new school was ready to open its doors for 58 eager students. The next year there were over 100.

And that's the story of how Cumberland County got its first Christian day school!



Comforters

Mary June Glick

God desires to use women to bring comfort to people in the church and community. As we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit we can bring the comfort God wants to bring to other people. The first thought that comes into our minds and tells us to reach out to someone through a card, a telephone call, a visit, or just a friendly smile may be the prompting of the Holy Spirit. We may hesitate to be comforters because we feel awkward or simply do not know how to give comfort. God's mind is revealed to us through Jesus. As we become better acquainted with Him, we will be better comforters.

Jesus identified with people.

Jesus identified with all ethnic and social groups, with people from every walk of life, the poor and the rich, the child and the adult.

Jesus ate with publicans and sinners. He talked with the woman taken in adultery and the woman who had had five husbands. He did not condone their sin, but rather He loved and forgave!

Identifying may mean being misunderstood. As a consequence our

reputation (not our character) may be at stake. To identify may mean drinking coffee out of a cup that seems dirty. It may mean talking to a beggar on the street. It could be giving up our precious time to listen to someone who has deep hurt in her life. To identify means learning about pain we may never have experienced such as rape, incest, abortion, AIDS, and so on. We will never be able to meet people's needs unless we are willing to identify with them.

Jesus became involved with people.

Jesus went to Mary and Martha when their brother died and cried with them. We grieve with women by becoming involved in their lives and their hurts. It is much easier to *not* become involved. Involvement brings personal pain and suffering. We must spend time with God to enable us so that we don't become emotionally drained ourselves.

Involvement means placing a hand on the shoulder, caring with others in times of sickness, death, or other painful experiences. Involvement is *not* a single experience, but it means

standing by that person until he or she finds healing, which may take weeks, months, or even years.

Jesus showed compassion.

He could have sent the multitudes away without food, instead He fed them. Compassion means sharing my food with the hungry, helping my sister who is having financial struggles, opening my home to the homeless, and showing love to the stranger. Compassion means reaching out to the elderly, the lonely, the

handicapped and the less popular. Compassion does not come naturally; it must be taught. Parents must teach their children to be compassionate to those who look different, act different, or even smell different!

Let us allow Christ to teach us how to bring comfort by learning to identify, to become involved, and to be compassionate.



junior messages

Love is Tender—Part One of Three

Anita Yoder · Ligonier, IN

The life story of Annie Johnson Flint is a remarkable story. Sometimes God takes His pupils through the school of pain to make them His prized students. Was life fair to Annie? –AY

On Christmas Day, in 1866, in the town of Vineland, New Jersey, great happiness came from heaven to Eldon and Jean Johnson. Baby Annie came, a welcomed gift.

Three years later, Annie got a baby sister. But when God gave her a new baby sister, He took her dear mother.

Annie was so young that she did not remember her mother in later life, except for how she looked lying in state.

He father didn't know what to do. He had a new baby and a toddler to take care of. He found a widow willing to take in the two children. They were not welcomed or wanted, but lived with her two years.

A neighbor intervened. She was a school teacher who stayed in the home of the Flints. She became very attached to the little girls, and talked about them so much that

the Flints decided to adopt them. The household took in the two little girls and loved them with great tenderness. Annie and her sister called the schoolteacher Aunt Susie. Annie could not remember her by any other name, although she was no relative at all.

Soon after the girls were adopted their birth father became ill and died. Then they were completely at the mercy of the Flints and Aunt Susie.

Mr. and Mrs. Flint were true Christians and took the sad little girls into their lives and loved them as their own. They taught them about God, how to love others and also how to work. Being people of high principle, they made sure the girls had enough—but not too much. Theirs was a good place in the country, on the farm, but when Annie was eight, they moved to town.

Annie, a dark-eyed girl with dark hair, was loved by her schoolmates. She loved to read and spend time in her father's library. She contemplated

her good fortune that the Flints had adopted her and her sister.

When revival meetings came to town, the Flints took the girls along to the meetings. One evening Annie sensed God's Spirit speaking to her heart and she accepted Jesus by faith. She had an insightful mind and loved the things of God and of nature, His creation.

She discovered that she liked poems and tried her hand at writing verse. One of her friends shared this interest. They planned that on Saturday afternoons when the work was done they would meet and try writing poems themselves. They both greatly enjoyed this.

All of Annie's childhood experiences played a part in making her a strong, courageous person. She was known to be cheerful and fun-loving. But God was not done with beautifying His servant. Trials of refinement would yet come her way.

(to be continued)



**Does your
mental diet build
healthy tissue?**



Dear Youth,

How can youth make an excellent contribution to the kingdom of God while they are young? How can youth begin a course of life that will lead to rich rewards?

The youth responses to the December Question give helpful insights on these questions. Being filled with the Spirit of God, one's life will reflect God Himself, and no matter wheth-

er he is talking, working, eating, or thinking, his life will bear the fruit of the Spirit. Allowing the Spirit of God to take control of our hearts while we are young is the best way to begin a course of life that will leave us with fewest regrets.

“Thank-you” to each person who contributed to this month's question. —EE

This Month's
QUESTION
(from a reader)

According to Galatians 5:16 and Romans 8:5-10, isn't the “filling of the Spirit” something that is “achieved” and not something that just “happens”? If I am correct, how can we achieve that “filling”?

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

Here is the answer, according to two different English renderings:

Galatians 5:24-25:

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

24 Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.

Okay, but how do you do that?

May I share my experience? I struggled for years with this, and I am finally coming to a little better understanding of how it works. It's really simple but it's not all easy. And, trust me, you will be tested on your dedication to this. All you need to do

is fling yourself at God and jump into the dark. It reminds me of a true story I once read.

A man was working on a big building project that was running behind schedule. So the crews were working in shifts, around the clock. One man who was working on the night shift went to another section of the building to get something, and on his way back, he slipped. He was able to grab hold of a beam he had been walking on, but he was not able to pull himself back up. It was dark. He screamed for help, for someone to help him. He hung on for a long time, and finally, losing his strength, he fell—five inches. You see, a scaffold was right beneath him, but he was unable to see it because of the night. All along, he was praying for someone to see him, but God already had things under control.

What can we learn from this? Well, the first thing you need to believe is that God is good. Furthermore, that He loves you and has your best in mind. The only thing you can “do” is to believe this and just give up. (This is not to be confused with death, dying, or as a way of killing the desires that God has given you. It is a purification of them.) You have to understand that all sin and sinful desire is merely a

perversion of good and good desire. The devil himself is merely a perversion of an angel, who was once good. All that is evil is merely twisted truth.

So what you have to do is just give your perverted self to God and let him straighten you out and purify your soul. To crucify the flesh is to give your carnal self into the hand of God. He will change you so much, that you will think you have died, but you have only begun to be truly born again. But, for this to happen, there may be NO RESERVES, PERIOD. Keep in mind that this is a long, drawn-out experience that tests your patience.

So the filling of the Spirit is just the increasing control that He has on your and my life, through the process of becoming aware of our problems, of surrendering them to Him, and of the healing that comes as a result. Remember, this is simple, but not easy. “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy (have joy) in Jesus, but to trust and obey.”

Glendon Kuhns, North Bloomfield, OH



If you pursue the things of the flesh, you will be filled with those regrets. If you pursue the things of the Spirit, you will be filled with the Spirit. It is not what you know or what you

say, but what *your life shows you are pursuing*.

Rachel Shank, Rochelle, VA



Perhaps the filling is something God does at His discretion. We are to walk after the Spirit, *i. e.*, choose to act in accordance with the Spirit of God in us and to think of spiritual things. Yet, in the same way that the original indwelling is a gift, so the greater power and presence of the Spirit in our lives is, in a sense, unmerited.

Craig Miller, Partridge, KS



I want to answer this question very carefully, and am open to correction on what I write. From what I found, we *receive* the Spirit when we allow Jesus (which is also the Father and **the Spirit**) to come into our hearts. And since He is a being, we cannot be only partly filled. *He dwells* in us. Concerning this question, rather than us becoming “more filled” with the Spirit, we must become *more obedient* to Him. As we do so, we sense His presence more strongly in our lives. I would encourage the reading of John 14 and the book of Galatians. There is much information on the Spirit in these passages.

Jeff Sommers, Newcomerstown, OH



“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.” We are as full of the Holy Spirit as we want to be. God’s desire is that we be filled with Him. We need to be emptied of ourselves. Our own will must be surrendered. We must be willing to embrace His truth about our sin, willing to fly to Him in repentance and trust Him for forgiveness right away when He speaks to us. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him, (Luke 11:13) and to those who obey Him (Acts 5:2). We are as full as we are surrendered. Are we willing to have our life and personality taken over by another? As we surrender and seek Him, our lives become an outworking of Jesus’ character.

Daniel Strubhar, Perkins, OK



I don’t think the filling of the Spirit is “achieved,” nor do I believe it “just happens.” If we are serious about being Spirit-filled, we need to be emptied of ourselves and willing to sacrifice in order to follow His leading. Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time experience; it’s a relationship with the Lord. As we read the Word and get to know Him, we are drawn to him and to an obedient, love relationship with Him. I’m amazed at how simple and beautiful it is!

Please sign me: "A youth reader, PA"

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Being filled with the Spirit is not something that just happens or something that we can achieve. We can do nothing of ourselves to be filled with the Spirit. It is God alone who can fill us with His Spirit. We need to be open

and sensitive to Him as He works in us and follow Him closely. The closer we are to God the more He will fill us with Himself and His Spirit.

James 4:8a: "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you."

Durrel Strite, Itasca, TX

Next Month's
QUESTION

Many believers (especially younger ones) struggle with knowing whether or not they are accepted of God. Why do you think this is so?



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Much of the modern clothing industry
seems to lack intelligent design.

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Christian discipleship is a voluntary imperative.

• • • • •

The great I AM tells it like it is.

• • • • •

God created man upright, but he tends to slouch.

• • • • •

Let us reflect God's image, not engrave images of our own.

• • • • •

Do you see the headship veiling as a
covering statement or a symbolic suggestion?

• • • • •

Decadence thinks it has another decade to waste.

• • • • •

Let Golgotha be your Rock of Gibraltar.

• • • • •

Low esteem of others is more common and often
more destructive than low self-esteem.

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