



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

Galatians 6:14

JANUARY 2004

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

Calvary Publications, Inc., is a non-profit organization, incorporated in the State of Ohio, for the purpose of sponsoring, publishing, and distributing Christian literature. The board is elected, one member annually, by the ministers of the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches, at their annual spring meeting.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to CIRCULATION MANAGER. WHEN YOU MOVE, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

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Like Joseph Did

*Stephen Miller
Belle Center, OH*

Ye brave young **men**, of you I bid,
Will you stand true like Joseph did?
Away from home in distant land,
Where no one seemed to understand.

With no one near to see your deed,
Will you still then the Spirit heed?
With purity of heart and soul,
Just let the Lord your life control.

And when your kin despise, abuse
The way of love, will you still choose?
Return for wrong a heart of love,
Approval from the God above.

Or **maidens** fair, with face aglow,
Can you still love and honor show,
To those who have maligned your name,
And made you suffer grief and shame?

Like Joseph did when he was wronged,
Can you retain the peace you longed
To have, and keep with joy serene?
So honor God with heart that's clean.

Be brave, ye **youth**, with courage stand.
Be it at home or in distant land.
Arise, be strong, stand for the right.
Stand for the right and be a light.

The path of God, sometimes unclear,
And things arise that make you fear.
Misunderstood and often wronged,
The easy life for which you longed—

Has slipped away and in its place,
You learn to lean upon God's grace.
For God alone can see you through,
And be your Guide in all you do.

But you will have to face the test.
A humbled heart is always best.
Accept what God brings to your life.
For brokenness means sacrifice.

With broken pieces God can make
A noble youth that's truly great!



Lift Your Glad Voices!

God has given us humans a special ability. We are to use it to acknowledge His greatness. This outlet serves us well in sunshine and shadow. It is the gift of song.

I enjoy singing. I like to hear it and to help make it, when health and opportunity permit. Even those voice parts out of my range interest me. Thus I have always enjoyed hearing a good bass “rumble,” sometimes called a “mellow bellow,” that I can only wish for, but never achieve. I like hearing saintly women’s melodious voices, joyful and clear, especially when they join with redeemed men in praising God. I think these are some of the most spine tingling sounds to be heard this side of heaven.

Not all music ministers to my spirit. There is music that plods repetitiously along, without swooping and soaring melody so expressive of the delights of the forgiven and aspiring soul. There is difficult music with very close harmony that, while it challenges our best efforts, does not nourish the inner man as does a simpler song. There are also mo-

notonous chants that leave me less conscious of God, high and lifted up, than of man, discouraged and dispirited. Then there is music that interrupts regular rhythm and refuses to be predictable. Syncopated and loud, it jerks and pounds my sensitivities. I wonder if those who like it are at peace with themselves and with God. Indeed, some music is not worthy of being called the language of the peaceful and rejoicing heart.

I try to think how this whole issue looks to God. The Psalmist says that God inhabits the praises of Israel. (Ps. 22:3) That tells me that the enemy of our souls inhabits the grumblings of the ungrateful. God gave music to His children to express their love for Him. He delights in our praises of Him. When we put our best efforts into singing from the “bottom of our hearts to the top of our voices,” He is glorified. To an ardent singer, the apostles’ motivation for proclaiming God’s truth fits well. “We cannot but sing the salvation we have experienced.” (Paraphrase of Acts 4:20)

What happens when an unbeliever looks to music for a means of expressing his experiences? Let’s say

a man lives immorally. He will glorify lust and compromise. Could he find any enjoyment in songs that express the joy and triumph of “Christ in you, the hope of glory”? Hardly. If intoxication fascinates him, will he not like songs that glorify drinking? If he lives at odds with the authorities in his life, will he not find and enjoy songs that glorify rebellion? If he sees it his duty to join in a military effort to crush, or at least put to flight, the enemy, will he not find bravery in martial music?

Clearly, our choice of music indicates where our hopes and dreams lie. Does this then exclude all lesser forms of song? Shall not children, for instance, sing songs about and for the enjoyment of nature and God’s gifts to man? We sometimes hear songs about human love that uphold purity and seem worthy of Christian values. Every aspect of life is to be enjoyed and dedicated to God, the Giver of every good gift, “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17b). Let us sing what we live, as we live to the glory of God. Let us honor virtue and valor. Let us, above all else, honor Him who made us in His likeness, with the ability to sing.

In June of 1999, Martha and I were part of a touring group which included some forty Americans. We were privileged to visit Israel for

ten days. At special, historic places and in certain buildings, Bro. Edwin Troyer, our tour guide, encouraged us to hearty singing of hymns and Gospel songs. It was exhilarating! Also in our tour group were about a dozen Romanian Christians. Sometimes we sang songs both groups knew, each in our own language. At other times, they sang Romanian songs we didn’t know. It became apparent that the hard times they had been through had brought to them a treasure of songs of wondrous beauty and melody, expressing triumph in adversity. We spoiled Americans who grew up in the lap of luxury, comparatively speaking, could only listen in gaping wistfulness and wonder.

In the Scriptures, we find that twice the Holy Spirit specifically moved the Apostle Paul’s pen to encourage Christian song. In Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, he gave us ample evidence as to why the work of God often goes forward on the wings of song. Let us note specific encouragements. We are to:

—Let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly.

—Bring life’s experiences into our worship of God.

—Use song to teach and admonish one another.

—Let **psalms** and **hymns** and **spiritual songs** express our love for the Lord.

—Make melody in our hearts to the Lord.

—Sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord.

The hymnbook of the Old Testament closes with this splendid invita-

tion and privilege, “Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD,” (Psalm 150:6).

Hallelujah!

—PLM



reader response

Tapes

I value the tapes recommended in Calvary Messenger. I am getting them all and find great inspiration from listening to these sermon tapes as I drive.

(from a conversation at Ministers’ Week at Calvary Bible School, Nov. 11-14, 2003.)

Paul A. Miller
Millersburg, OH



Ervin Hershberger

Thank you for the space you gave in the November issue of Calvary Messenger in tribute to our

dear brother. I along with you, feel a great loss. I learned much from Bro. Ervin. I could go to him with questions about the Scriptures that were not clear to me and get a clear answer.

I always looked forward to his preaching. Some of his sermons and interpretations of Scripture have made a lasting impression on me. I cherish the fellowship I enjoyed with him and count it a blessing and privilege to have known him. I believe I am a better Christian for having known him. To God be the glory!

Elmer Beachy
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Salisbury, PA 15558



**COINCIDENCE IS OFTEN GOD
CHOOSING TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS.**

God's Order Within the Church

by an Amish Bishop

from *Family Life*, May, 2003

The word discipline is found only once in the KJV Bible. Elihu, the young friend of Job said to him, "He [God] openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity" (Job 36:10). The meaning of the Hebrew is chastisement, reproof, warning or instruction, restraint.

Webster in his dictionary also includes chastisement as a synonym for discipline. It is the kind of training that corrects, molds, and perfects orderly conduct. It can also be a system of rules to govern conduct and practice.

The German word Zucht is a term that includes various forms of discipline. The words nurture, sound mind, sober, or sobriety are all biblical terms related to discipline. Even though the word discipline is not found in the New Testament, the principle is taught throughout.

We would like to consider three types of discipline, especially as they relate to the church:

1) Preventive discipline. We have all heard the old saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Preventive discipline includes

the giving of direction through rules, laws, and regulations. We may think of this as a negative approach, but it also teaches the positive side of how to live rightly. There should be just as much emphasis on "thou shalt" as on "thou shalt not."

2) Corrective discipline. This becomes necessary when preventive measures are ignored or rebelled against. The intent of corrective discipline is to get the erring one's attention and to correct the unacceptable behavior. Punishment should never be given in a spirit of vengeance or anger, or to flaunt one's authority. Rather, it should draw a person to respond in a positive way. True, the chastisement of the Lord is not pleasant, but grievous for the moment. But as we yield to it, the result is the peaceable fruit of righteousness. (See Heb. 12:11)

3) Inner Discipline. This is the true object or goal of the two previous forms of discipline. In child training, the intent of early prevention and corrective measures is to teach the child inner control, or what we sometimes call self-discipline.

We have utterly failed our 12-to-

16 year olds if they still need to be told everything they may or may not do. By then they should know what behavior is acceptable, and what is not. If our discipline was given with love and understanding, there will usually be a willingness to follow and submit to discipline.

If our discipline is designed to control the child for selfish reasons, or if we use fear tactics or expressions of anger, we can expect some form of rebellion to appear. This is also true of discipline in the church, for the patterns are very similar.

THE ROLE OF CHURCH STANDARDS

Today in our churches, we see various degrees of reaction against discipline. Our preventive discipline (written standards, or the *Ordnung*) is being challenged as unscriptural, and corrective discipline is often being ignored or considered a form of oppression. The lack of inner discipline is actually being labeled as true liberty and freedom in Christ. How should our churches be responding to these reactions?

A reaction is a negative response to something. It becomes obvious that reacting to someone else's reaction is part of a vicious circle that accomplishes nothing. So the first point for our churches to keep in mind is not to react toward these reactions

against discipline in the church.

We need to look for and then apply truth. No matter how well-worded or how biblical our standards are, they have no life in themselves. True spiritual life comes only through Jesus Christ who said, "I am the Way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by [through] me." When we seek spiritual life through other means such as baptism, church membership, ceremonies, rituals, or church standards, these become a form of idolatry. Article 6 of the Dordrecht Confession states this very clearly.

In Revelation 3 we read of the church at Sardis which had the name of being alive but was dead. This same thing can still happen today if we place more emphasis on outward conformity than on inward change. Even though we believe an inner spiritual renewal often brings a very notable change, we must beware of judging one's right standing with God only on what can be observed outwardly. No set of standards can change a person's heart—only God can do that as man responds to Him.

Without a changed heart, rules become a burden to be endured, or an instrument to greater self-righteousness. Carnality cannot be controlled with regulations—it will always find ways to express itself. Rather, the

carnal nature must be crucified and brought to death. (See Galatians 5: 24) Only then will church discipline and church standards be effective.

THE MISUSE OF STANDARDS

However good and right something may be in its proper setting, there is always a danger of misusing it, getting out of balance, or going to some extreme. With regard to church standards, we would like first to list four pitfalls in our use of them and then four dangers of reacting to them:

1) One subtle danger of church standards is the tendency to measure our spiritual status by them. Since a truly spiritual person would surely not rebel against biblical standards, we are inclined to equate obedience with spirituality. This mindset may lead to the reasoning that being more conservative than the rest of the church is being more spiritual. We measure ourselves with others and may end up putting people in categories as to their spiritual level.

2) Another risk has to do with church leadership. When the above thinking has settled in among the ministers, then church discipline becomes a means of control rather than an expression of faith. When a carnal nature hides behind outward piety, we may resort to making more rules as a means of constraining the

worldliness that seeps through the shell of piety. Too often the ministerial team ends up filling the role of policeman instead of shepherd, thus getting so bogged down with fine details that the church's witness as a light to the world is obscured.

3) A related threat is the confusion between principle and application. When the central focus is on church standards, we tend to forget that the applications are not the principles. Biblical convictions are based on biblical principles, and applying these principles to our lives may vary from congregation to congregation.

When our spirituality is measured by our obedience to the application, confusion may set in when someone else's application differs from ours. We may quickly label that person as not spiritual, a conclusion that is harmful and that breaks down relationships. This kind of thinking also keeps churches from making positive changes in the standards.

4) Still another danger of over-regulation is that uniformity often replaces unity. Spiritual unity is an important biblical principle that is often neglected. True unity derives from a body of believers who have a common bond through faith in Christ, and this results in a certain degree of uniformity. Spiritual unity is willing to sacrifice the independent spirit and blend together in one body

in which the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, and so on,—is evident. (See Eph. 4:1-6 and Gal. 5:22,23.) Uniformity should be expected more than demanded—the natural result of brotherly love and submission to one another in a functioning body.

A LACK OF STANDARDS

On the opposite side of the spectrum come the reactions to the above misuse of standards, ending with not having any regulations at all in the church. Since there are various [so-called] pietistic movements today that are making inroads into some of our churches, let us also look at the dangers of not having any standards.

1) Without a collective agreement within the brotherhood as to the application of principles, each individual is burdened with trying the spirits and making decisions on his own. Such independence downgrades the role of the brotherhood. Love is portrayed as tolerance to allow each one to do his/her own thing. This tolerance has very few restrictions. Compared with rules and regulations, it feels like liberty and freedom.

Such people often find a common ground based on their reactions toward where they came from rather than upon the response of faith in God where they are going. When

decisions are made individually, diversity of the spirit (not unity of the Spirit) becomes a lifestyle that is easily lured into the world.

2) Related to the above is the confusion with regard to Christian liberty. There is no liberty without law. Could we safely travel the highways if there were no restrictions, laws, or directions? Romans 3:27 mentions the law of faith. Titus 2:11-13 teaches us about the law of grace.

Christian liberty comes as a result of denying our selfishness, loving others, and submitting to a Scriptural brotherhood. Rules and standards become bondage only when they are abused or we resist them. The “live-and-let-live” philosophy allows for individual expression and interpreting of what is sin and what is not, of personal convictions and preferences without being accountable to one another. It ignores the deceitfulness of man’s own heart and the need to be our brother’s keeper.

3) Another peril is the emphasis on personal impressions and revelations. The cry from the no-regulation camp is that the Word of God is all we need and that anything more, such as a confession of faith or written standards, becomes idolatry and is an addition to the written Word.

It is ironic, that to those same individuals, such verbal expressions of faith or private interpretations

are considered valid and “from the Lord.” This again promotes individualism and undermines the protection one experiences within a close-knit, structured brotherhood.

As mentioned before, when written standards or confessions of faith are held equal to the Word of God, then indeed they become a form of idolatry. But this is equally true of unwritten, independent confessions and private interpretations that are given the same validity as Holy Writ. Not only are they a form of idolatry, but also delusive and deceptive.

4) By reacting to the abuse of overregulation, it is easy to convince ourselves that all restrictions are legalism or formalism. Yet one biblical example of written standards from the early church is recorded in Acts 15. There the Apostles and the church at Jerusalem welcomed the Gentiles into their fellowship, based on their faith in Jesus Christ. The willingness of the Gentiles to submit to certain restrictions proved their sincerity.

“But that we write unto them [Gentiles] that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled and from blood,” (verse 20).

In verse 25 we are told that they had assembled “with one accord,” which indicates a collective decision. Some of the requirements were

so-called “man-made rules” and all of them were restrictions. Had the church resorted to legalism by not allowing the Spirit to reveal His will individually? I find it interesting and encouraging to discover God’s approval plainly stated in verse 28:

“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;”

The example of Acts 15 confirms the belief that collective decisions (written or not) can be, should be, and often are an active function of the Holy Spirit. These guidelines often include restrictions as well as admonitions. Spirit-filled forms and traditions are useful tools to maintain spirituality, stability, and preservation. When we deny that truth, we often lose the ability to keep the very saving faith we claim to have, and so sorely need.

SEEKING A BALANCE IN THE CHURCH

Having reviewed the dangers on both sides, let us now look for a balance between the two extremes. If Christ is not the life of the church, then to have rules will avail nothing in eternity.

The Word of God is clear that man must die to himself and become alive as a new creature in Christ before he can enter into the kingdom of God.

This is more than an experience—it is a commitment. Keeping all the moral rules in the world cannot take the place of this life-saving commitment to follow Jesus in a spirit of brokenness and humility.

Even with this commitment, our subtle old nature, the world, and Satan still tempt us to depart from God. When the carnal nature comes to the surface, we do well to repent and revive the spiritual man rather than generate more rules. The carnal man can never become spiritual by creating and keeping rules. The carnal must be replaced by the spiritual.

When church disciplines or regulations are made, they need to be done collectively. The book of Ephesians portrays the church as a building, a body, a marriage, and as an armored warrior. To function properly as any of the above, there must be order. Godly order for the church can only be attained when there is a willing submission to collective decisions. These decisions are designed to provide preventive discipline and to give direction to believers. Even though there is a suitable application of a principle, this alone is not enough unless it is also an expression of our faith.

Although there is beauty in uniformity, we still need to leave room in the church for some diversity.

We believe the Holy Spirit dwells within the church as a collective body of many members, yet unless He dwells within each member personally, it will hardly be possible for Him to work through the church collectively. The body of Christ made up of members with various gifts, talents, and abilities but working together in spiritual unity, has a unique beauty as a bright light shining in a dark world.

In Ephesians 4:3 we are reminded of the need of “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace,” Here the emphasis is on the unity of the Spirit, not on the “diversity” of the Spirit. The Spirit of God always promotes unity in a biblical church. When the Spirit speaks to us, He will also speak in unity to the brotherhood. Even the various Spirit-given gifts for the church will enhance peace, unity, and edification. It is when we fail to faithfully prove the spirits and give heed to “another” spirit, that confusion and discord tend to abound.

Jesus prayed for a oneness among His disciples, and this is especially needful for each local body of believers. The unity of belief will translate into a unity of practice. The most powerful living witness to the fallen world is a brotherhood in which love and submission are consistently practiced, through the supernatural

strength of the Holy Spirit in the common bond of Jesus.

In Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8, Paul instructs each believer to be considerate of each other's consciences. One's conscience is trained by the influences we are under and that is how we develop a sense of right and wrong. Not everyone's conscience, however, is properly trained. Sometimes a conscience needs to be retrained, but never should it be violated or defiled.

Church decisions on certain cultural issues may not be so much a matter of right and wrong as a concern which direction these issues are leading us. Eating meats offered to idols did not make a person better or worse, but to someone raised in such a setting, eating that meat would defile his conscience. When we do something deliberate that offends a brother's conscience, we do not walk in love. Collective decisions provide a means to live in peace with one another. Where this love reigns, the weaker conscience can be retrained through faith without violating it. What is not of faith is sin.

Another important element for a church to successfully function is consistency. Once an agreement is reached, it will need to be put into practice. Any willful violation of the agreement needs to be considered a sign of spiritual decay. It is not that

changes can't be made, if done so collectively. But when individuals ignore or rebel against the church standards, they should become subject to corrective discipline. To know and to teach has very little value when it is not lived. Faith without works is dead.

Lastly, our accepted standard dare not hinder the vision and purpose of the church in reaching out to bring souls into the kingdom. Too often troubled churches spend so much of their time in corrective maintenance that they lose sight of this goal. Where preventive discipline is applied in a spiritual setting, it creates an atmosphere that draws seekers of truth. Where love flows without offense, a sense of security is provided and peace is preserved in spite of differences of opinion.

Such love and peace cannot be found in the world. May God grant us the grace to allow His love to flow through us in esteeming others more than ourselves. Where such love prevails in a church, hopefully the preventive and corrective discipline will create an effective inner discipline in each member—a discipline that is approved of God and that enables the members to work together in the church in true unity of the Spirit.



*Submitted by Edward Hochstetler,
Hicksville, OH. Used by permission.*

marriages

Hershberger-Frey

Bro. Titus Jay, son of Elmer and Elva Jean Hershberger, Hartselle, AL, and Sis. Ella Mae, dau. of Elvie and Clara Frey, Shipshewana, IN, at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church for Fair Haven A.M. Church on Nov. 1, 2003, by Wilbur Yoder.

cradle roll

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

Bayless, Kirsten and Kim (Bowling), Amboy, IN, fifth child, third son, David James, Oct. 26, 2003.

Beachy, Nate and Joy (Stoltzfus), Dover, DE, second child, first dau., Leanna Rochelle, Oct. 13, 2003.

Bontrager, Nelson and Krista (Wray), Greentown, IN, first child and dau., Destiny Faith, Aug. 28, 2003.

Diener, Arnold and Teresa (Petersheim), Lovington, IL, fourth child, third dau., Serena Anne, Oct. 28, 2003.

Good, Chris and Debbie (Brunk), Logan, OH, first child and girl, Delaney Lou, Nov. 26, 2003.

Yoder-Miller

Bro. Michael Wayne, son of Marvin and Esther Yoder, Roodhouse, IL, and Sis. Amy Beth, dau. of Norman and Martha Miller, Roodhouse, IL, at Calvary Baptist Church, for Rehoboth Amish Mennonite Church on Aug. 13, 2003, by Marvin Yoder.

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

Graber, Myron and Joanna (Wagler), Montgomery, IN, first child and son, Westan Andrew, Oct. 30, 2003.

Helmuth, Allen and Melody (Yoder), Chappells, SC, sixth child, second dau., Heather Elaine, Aug. 24, 2003.

Helmuth, Ernest and Danelle, (Helmuth), Whiteville, TN, first child and dau., Nicole Elizabeth, Nov. 5, 2003.

Hershberger, David and Luann (Troyer), Linneus, MO, seventh child, fourth son, Jordan Lee, Sept. 26, 2003.

Hochstetler, Norman and Norene (Miller), Roodhouse, IL, third child and son, Lyndon James, Oct. 17, 2003.

Kauffman, Mark and Rosanna (Raber), Millersburg, OH, second child, first son, Jonathan Allen, Sept. 16, 2003.

Lehman, John and Hannah (Stoll), Roodhouse, IL, second child, first dau., Sharon Rose, Mar. 13, 2003.

Miller, Darryl and Renee (Hochstetler), Utica, OH, first child and son, Sean Michael, Nov. 9, 2003.

Miller, Jason and Ruth (Beachy), Concord, AR, ninth child, fourth dau., Merrit Elizabeth, Nov. 17, 2003.

Miller, Jason and Ruth (Yoder), Millersburg, OH, fifth child, second dau., Twila Ruth, Nov. 6, 2003.

Miller, Merle and Monica (Miller), Eden Valley, MN, third child, first dau., Jeneva Fern, Nov. 2, 2003.

Miller, Nathan and Polly (Miller), Crossville, TN, sixth child, fourth son, Levi Albert, Nov. 4, 2003.

Mullet, Wayne and Maria (Miller) Roodhouse, IL, third child, first dau., Dianna Joy, August 25, 2003.

Pollard, Donald and Diane (Sullivan), Belleview, FL, third child, first son, James Leslie-Sullivan, August 22, 2003.

Stoltzfus, Aaron and Anna (Zook), Gap, PA, ninth child, second dau., Naomi Rose, Nov. 10, 2003.

Stoltzfus, Daryl and Rose (King), Ronks, PA, first child and dau., Rebekah Nicole, Nov. 13, 2003.

Stoltzfus, Steve and Beulah (Blank), Perry, NY, seventh child, third son, Shawn Michael, Oct. 29, 2003.

Stutzman, Leon and Katrina (Yoder), Roodhouse, IL, first child and dau., Beth Darlene, May 22, 2003.

Wagler, Lynford and Theresa (Wagler), Montgomery, IN, third child and dau., Shawna Raylene, Nov. 3, 2003.

Weaver, Thomas and Elaine (King), Summersville, KY, seventh child, fourth dau., Emily Dawn, Nov. 4, 2003.

Wingard, Loren and Marsha (Wagler), Washington, IN, fourth child, second dau., Andrea Lynn, Nov. 4, 2003.

Yoder, Mark and Martha (Stoltzfus), Whiteville, TN, third child, second dau., Marcianna Brooke, Oct. 22, 2003.

Yoder, Norman and Barbara (Miller), Roodhouse, IL, third child and dau., Joann Lanae, Oct. 10, 2003.

Yoder, S. Wayne and Clara (Bender), Wytheville, VA, second child and dau., Shanda Danae, Oct. 29, 2003.



obituaries

Schrock, Lucy, 74, Staunton, VA, died Sept. 15, 2003, at her home. She was born Feb. 22, 1929, at Hutchinson, KS, the daughter of the late Ben and Mary (Nisly) Yoder.

She was baptized in her youth upon her confession of faith in Jesus Christ. She was a devoted member of Zion A.M. Church, Stuarts Draft, VA.

In 1946, she moved with her parental family to Stuarts Draft. On Oct. 17, 1948, she was married to Alvin S. Schrock. Though afflicted with Parkinson's Disease for some 19 years, she longed to be useful as long as she was able. A recent illness of several months came to an end when she peacefully went to be with the Lord. Her toil-worn hands are folded in rest, but her example lives on. Her husband survives. Also surviving are four daughters: Barbara Ann and Miriam Beth, Staunton; Mary Lou, Raphine, VA;

Sharon Joy, Madison, NY; and two sons: David Alvin (m. to Miriam Hershberger), presently of Honduras; and Philip Ray, Whiteville, TN. Also remaining are 10 grandchildren.

Other survivors include three brothers: Sanford B. Yoder, Costa Rica; Eli B. Yoder, Floyd, VA; and Harvey B. Yoder, Harrisonburg, VA; and five sisters: Lovina (Mrs. Ernest Yoder), Rustburg, VA; Esther (Mrs. Robert Yoder), Gladys, VA; Fannie Mae, Staunton, VA; Magdalena (Mrs. Alvin M. Schrock), Cumberland, VA; Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. Harvin Shifflett), Free Union, VA.

Funeral services were held at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, conducted by Mt. Zion Church. Serving were Robert Bates, Eli A. Yoder, local, and William Beiler, Gap Mills, WV. Burial was at the Mt. Zion Cemetery, with the committal conducted by Milton Yoder, Carrier Mills, IL.



ordinations

Bro. Philip Miller, 40, Dundee, OH, was ordained to the office of bishop at Messiah Fellowship, Holmes County, Ohio, on Sept 21, 2003.

Preordination speaker was Ivan Beachy of Mission Home, VA. The charge was given by Jonas J. E. Miller, assisted by Bill Mullet and Roman B. Mullet.

Bro. Verlynn Yoder, 35, Grove City, MN, was ordained to the office of minister on Nov. 23, 2003, at Believers' Fellowship Church. Preordination speaker was Monroe Gingerich of Leon, IA.

The charge was given by Mel Beiler, assisted by brethren Monroe Gingerich and Tim Zook. Also in the lot was Glen Chupp.



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

Leadership is a magazine produced by the company that publishes Christianity Today. Editor Marshall Shelley discusses several methods of choosing church leaders in the fall issue, 2003. It seems surprising to me that he finds the use of the lot worthy of editorial comment. He describes the experiences of Bro. Pablo Yoder when their family was chosen to move from Costa Rica to Nicaragua. The information is excerpted from the book, *Angels over Waslala*. The report is a quote of five short paragraphs.

The experience described in vivid detail includes resignation, intense emotion, and reverence. Understandably this is viewed by the editor as an oddity, perhaps even a relic held over from the past. He notes that the practice has been dropped by most Anabaptists. I am not aware that groups other than conservative Anabaptists use this method. It seems in order to evaluate such a method from time to time. Please consider with me the following:

—While such a method is supported by scriptural example, it is not the only method that can be supported from the Bible.

—It is fairly common that after the votes are received that the use of

the lot is not needed.

—Most of the qualifications from the Pastoral Epistles are character qualities. “Apt to teach” has been seen as the one exception.

—It seems that the church which gives the Word its rightful prominence should be developing servant leaders “who are able to teach others also.”

—The lot should not be used to decide who is qualified. It should rather determine which of several qualified brethren God is calling to a designated office at a particular time.

—I believe it is correct to say that serious minded men in churches where the lot is used live with the awareness that they may be called to serve in some leadership role. When the voice of the church makes them eligible to share in the lot it creates a situation where each candidate needs to be doubly prepared. He needs to be willing to serve. But God may choose another qualified brother. This is a healthy exercise for the entire congregation as well as the candidates themselves.

—A minister should remember that the church which considered him eligible for leadership should be entitled to review his eligibility from time to time, if circumstances should so indicate.

—It is apparent that the early

church chose from brethren among themselves to shepherd the flocks. The concept of a single, salaried pastor per congregation was not the norm. Team leadership seems to have been taken for granted.

—Plural leadership has the advantage of some variety in gifting and, ideally, a smooth transition of leadership. I would hope this method would continue to serve us well until the Lord returns to receive His Bride.



Speaking of leadership reminds me of an incident that involved the Union Rescue Mission in Wichita several years ago. A church that was planning to provide an evening program asked permission to bring a woman preacher to bring the message. They were told that it would be acceptable as long as such a person would meet scriptural ministerial qualifications, which includes being “the husband of one wife.”



Ageing is an interesting subject. Eventual death is as normal as birth. At any age it is important to remember that the sting of death and the victory of the grave does not have

the final word. A new body that is not subject to the aging process awaits all who trust and follow the One who is the resurrection and the life.

But the aging process can become a challenge for the subjects as well as their caretakers. To be gracious and easy to live with is certainly a worthy ideal for an aging person, or any others, for that matter.

Melody Davis, writing in the *Mennonite Weekly Review* (11-10-03), writes a column entitled: “A Loving Legacy for Aging.”

She suggests that parents themselves may want to plan ahead before they reach the 70’s, 80’s or 90’s. For children to propose this to parents in difficult times is obviously not ideal. The following excerpts are used by permission:

“The idea I’m going to put forth here is something I’ve been mulling for the last 10 years as my husband’s father and aunts and uncles have died and my parents have entered years of serious aging issues.

“One person said, ‘If you have good, loving, healthy communication with your children, I don’t think [such a tool] is necessary.’ That might be true, but most of us get more stubborn as we age, may be in serious denial or don’t communicate as well as we should. I hope this might help.

“A Loving Legacy”

“For parents to check applicable items and sign:

Being of sound body, mind and spirit, I would like for you, my children, to do the following things when, after much thought and prayer, you think it is for my own good:

—Tell me when I should stop driving.

—Tell me when I need a hearing aid.

—Tell me when I need to consult one of the children before making a big financial decision.

—Tell me when I need to have someone go over my finances or checkbook.

—Tell me when I need to go to the doctor (if I’m stubborn).

—Tell me when I need to eat better, or stop taking too many nutritional supplements just because my friends take them.

—Tell me if you think I’m really, really getting forgetful and that I need to see if there is any medicine that will help.

—Tell me if I need to focus on the need of others instead of my own aches and pains.

—Tell me, gently, if I have said or done anything that has hurt or may hurt a grandchild or child.

—Tell me, tactfully, if I talk too much or don’t communicate enough.

—Tell me when I need to accept help doing chores like mowing, cleaning and general maintenance.

—Encourage me to make funeral plans ahead of time.

—Tell me when it is time to sort and toss some of my junk. Tell me what you would enjoy having in memory of me.

—Encourage me to write down what personal items go to what family members, and write the stories about the items.

“Things I may welcome talking about or having you do:

—Tell me if you want to talk about our family, the successes and the failures, and God’s faithfulness through the years.

—Tell me what precious memories you have of our special relationship.

Signed _____

Date _____

“For the children to sign:

We, the undersigned children, because we love, respect and honor you, want to uphold your dignity and decision-making abilities. We honor the fine qualities you possess and the way you have conducted your life, and wish to help you make your latter years as happy as possible. We promise to visit you more often when

you can no longer drive, take you to church or on other errands, discuss decisions to be made rather than making decisions for you, and do all we can to keep your grandchildren in touch with you. We pledge to talk about the items you have checked and then, when necessary, to use the above as your permission for us to help you make decisions.

Signed _____

Date _____

Perhaps this is a good time to go on record as saying I do not want to exceed the boundaries of my usefulness in writing this column. Life seems to teach us that older people often need the counsel of friends who can view matters from a helpful perspective.



A book just off the press is entitled *The Kingdom That Turned the World Upside Down*. This 281 page book has five parts; Each part is divided into chapters:

Part I The Kingdom with Upside Down Values

Part II The Big Stumbling Block [Non-resistance]

Part III What is the Gospel of the Kingdom?

Part IV A Hybrid is Born

Part V When it was Illegal to be a Kingdom Christian

Part II is devoted entirely to the subject of Christian non-resistance as taught by Christ. Chapter titles follow:

- Love My Enemies?
- But What If...?
- But Don't the Scriptures Say?
- What About the Kingdoms of the World?
- Life Under the Two Kingdoms
- Am I of this World?
- Does This Make Us Justice and Peace Activists?
- Has Anyone Done This in Real Life?
- But is This Historic Christianity?

As these chapter titles indicate, this section is a combination of biblical foundations, common questions, and the practical outworking of this important doctrine. If every leader and every young person in Anabaptist circles would read this portion, it would greatly strengthen a principle and practice that is in constant danger of being compromised by other influences. The author is obviously a serious student of the Bible and early church history.

An extensive bibliography and additional notes give evidence of careful research. The author does not try to support his conclusions

with merely isolated incidents and proof texts.

His fresh treatment of well-known and lesser-known facts of history will interest people who believe that history has important things to teach us. He says things about Constantine, Augustine, and others that I had not known. His report on the Waldensians and other remnant groups is very informative.

A basic theme of the book is, The Gospel of the Kingdom as taught by Christ and the Early Church. The style of writing makes for easy reading. But the contents are potentially life-changing to the nominal or casual Christian.

I recently had the privilege of meeting the author, David W. Bercot from Tyler, Texas. I was encouraged

to learn that, after a faith journey that, at times, may have raised questions in the minds of interested people, his present situation seems reassuring. His family is presently attending Gray's Prairie Mennonite Church at Scurry, TX. They are committed to finding membership in some conservative Anabaptist church, as God leads.

I don't remember when I've read a book that I felt so strongly deserved a wide reading in our churches.

This book and/or a free catalog may be ordered from Scroll Publishing Co., P.O. Box 4714, Tyler, TX 75712 <www.scrollpublishing.com> Phone: 903-597-8023; Fax: 903-597-4176



—DLM



*Keep in tune
with God
and you
can sing
in the dark.*

No News is Good News?

by a Missionary Mother

Just when you wondered what you could do for those away from home, here's a trove of ideas. Let us bless those who can go where we can't. It presents an opportunity to "do good, especially to those of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10) —PLM

Our family has been on the mission field for several years now, and to be honest, I'm missing things from home. No, it's not peanut butter or chocolate chips. Nor is it being able to be at a grocery store within 15 minutes. What I miss is feeling connected with our dear church family back home.

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

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

As I mentioned earlier, it's you we

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

Would our church brethren want us to feel this way? No! they love us, support us in prayer, and have a schedule for writing letters. Still, communication gaps occur. For example, news about a coming baby doesn't reach us until just weeks before the event. Or after someone was dating, and we expected to soon to hear news about a wedding, we find out that the courtship ended months ago. Although letters are appreciated, they sometimes lack the very thing we're hungry for. We

long for updates of our friends' own families. We can hardly remember some of the babies' names, and have no idea how old they are. Little Sally is going to Sunday School already? Really? How can Dick be old enough to go hunting with his Daddy? Imagine Jane being old enough to need a cape dress? Are you into quilting? Tell us about it. You've decided to retire. We want to hear about how the adjustment is going. We miss the deep discussions, too. How are you looking at church issues? And, by the way, what are the current issues? What are your concerns? Again, the list is endless.

It's always special when someone includes pictures with a letter. But while you're waiting to get the family picture taken, don't forget that even casual snapshots mean a lot. We also enjoy it when folks include bulletins of special events, a memorial after a death, an especially good recipe, thoughts or verses that

have been an encouragement to you recently—you get the idea.

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

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

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

YOUR FINAL EXIT
WILL BE YOUR
GREATEST ENTRANCE.



CHASK/NATHHAN

by the Editor

Some months ago, I got a mailing from an organization that would like a greater exposure to conservative Anabaptist homes. I am remiss in this that I did not sooner act on this request.

This organization purports to help in two ways:

Option #1 To help birth parents of a child with disabilities to raise that child.

Option #2 If a birth family cannot raise a child with special needs, they want to connect the birth family with families who are willing to raise such a child. Whether or not the two families continue to keep contact, seems to depend on each case and the interest by the birth parents for such contact. In the case of special needs children, their interest in maintaining birth parent connections is usually not strong.

The creed of this organization

is: **Any baby, with any disability qualifies for a loving home.**

The fact is that right now, CHASK/NATHHAN finds that 80% of all babies diagnosed with disabilities are aborted. Their urgent need is to have a list of loving, Christ-centered homes for a baby destined for an untimely death.

At this time, they have only a handful of families who are either Amish or Mennonite. They asked me to inform the readership of Calvary Messenger to help find more such families. If you are interested, please contact:

Tom Bushnell (a member of Kootenai Valley Mennonite Church)

CHASK/NATHHAN

P.O. Box 39

Porthill, ID 83853

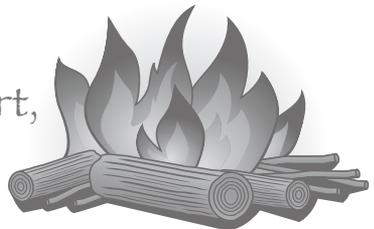
(208)267-6246

www.nathhan.com

www.chask.org



If you want God's fire
to burn brightly in your heart,
take out yesterday's ashes.



Hurting Hearts/Crying Needs

David L. Miller

Partridge, KS

People in our circles who become available to counsel those who are hurting or struggling with difficult issues for whatever reason report similar findings: The number of people needing help seem to outnumber people who are willing and able to help them. This being the case some who urgently need help must sometimes wait for months before an appointment slot opens at a counseling center.

Persons involved in counseling ministries deserve our profound gratitude and appreciation. But it is obvious that more counselors are needed or the present situation will not get better. The purpose of this article is to explore possibilities for improving the situation.

It is not a question of whether or not these needs exist. The pressing question remains how we should respond to them. Perhaps too many of us have seen all counseling needs as requiring professional expertise. Some experienced counselors seem to agree that a more basic qualification is a fervent desire to reach out and help others. A struggling counselee is not so concerned about how much a counselor knows. But

he does need to know how much a counselor cares before he feels safe to share whatever problem that is troubling him or her.

It seems to me that the following considerations may be pertinent as we seek helpful solutions to this need:

In some cases a stigma seems to be attached to a need for counseling. Such attitudes are foreign to the spirit of Christ that is willing to bear another's burden. Every temptation and struggle is common to the human experience. (1 Cor. 10:13) Furthermore, God's grace is assured for satisfactory resolution. The One "who gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness," (2 Peter 2:3), is infinitely greater than our problems.

We are sometimes inclined to be fearful about things we don't understand very well. Even if we don't understand a situation, we should not discourage people from seeking counsel to help with emotional or spiritual problems.

Several experienced counselors and several ordained brethren have expressed the view that most people should ideally be able to find needed help in their respective congrega-

tions. But since this is sometimes not the case, steps could be taken to move in that direction.

There are those brethren among us who have a sincere interest and church loyalty who already have considerable experience in helping others through counseling. If such persons would provide instruction to others in our various congregations, does that not seem a reasonable approach?

One experienced lay counselor warns against the “lone ranger” mentality in counseling. While there are important issues of confidentiality and trust, every counselor needs to be accountable to someone. It is assumed that that would normally be the pastoral team.

The Bible is considered basic in our understanding of human needs. Lay counselors must be perceptive, and willing to refer a counselee to

others when he/she is in need of medical or other attention beyond the counselor’s competence.

This article is preliminary and exploratory. It is being shared with a number of interested brethren. Persons who are interested as potential counselors or counselees are invited to respond to either of the following addresses:

Elmer Smucker
Route 1 Box 103 M
Lott, TX 76656

David M. Yoder
9815 Trail West Rd.
Partridge, KS 67566

These two brethren are presently serving on our five-man bishop committee. Other members are Nelson Beachy, Glenn Yoder, and Joseph Peachey. These five brethren support this proposal and effort. 

When you get to your wit’s end,

remember

that

God

is close by.



The History Test

PART I

Chester Weaver

Grandview, TX

We as a people have too often failed our history test. One reason for this is that we have not respected history as we should have. We cannot say God did not admonish us; we must acknowledge that we have neglected it. Wherein a person or a people do not learn from history, they are condemned to make mistakes they might have learned not to make, had they studied more diligently. Time is too short to learn everything we should know by experience. If our forefathers have already taken a certain course and experienced certain results, we are foolish to take the same course and expect different results.

Let me offer some evidence for what I am saying. I will ask questions to begin: Why have many Anabaptist people been drawn into what we know as the Pietist movement in the last 15 years? Why are many Anabaptist groups turning to an Old Order solution to drift in these days? Why are Anabaptists reverting back to the Roman Catholic model of the church? Why do some turn to the Protestant model? Why don't more Anabaptist groups teach and maintain the Anabaptist ideal? I sadly propose that **many Anabaptist people have lost sight of their own historic vision!**

Solomon told us there is nothing new under the sun. Old Testament

Israel lost sight of her own historic vision of what it took to remain under God's blessing. Post New Testament history records the union of Church and State less than 300 years after Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world. Generally speaking, it is safe to say that whatever has been, will be. Only the names and faces change; the issues are the same. Granted, the new issues are not precisely the same, but they are the same in principle. Must it be this way? Are we doomed? Of course not!

Why then have we Anabaptists not been more diligent to trace the history of our people? We cannot say the resources are not here; they are. We cannot say we don't have the time; we find time for what we consider most important. We cannot say history is not relevant because it is extremely relevant. History is so relevant that often one can predict the future of a person or a group based on how they start.

This subject is too extensive for one article. I hope some readers' minds can be motivated to do some personal research and discover the fascinating story of Anabaptism in America. I believe that would aid them in charting a blessed course for themselves as well as those for whom they are responsible.

I would sound one warning note:

When we read history, we must avoid the temptation to play God. We must not arrogantly determine that we understand exactly the causes of previous generations' failures, nor that we know exactly the answers for today's problems because we have read history. A little history makes an arrogant man; more history makes a humbler man. The story of the past is so complex that only God can thoroughly assess it. We are not God.

One other note: People claim Anabaptist sanction for both liberal social concerns on the one hand and for formalism on the other. Neither is correct. Who is reading history to discover the facts? Let me give an illustration: Bundling has been justified because the fathers brought it with them from Europe. History indicates that later the European Amish churches quit the practice. Amishman Chris Swartzentruber deplored the practice when he found it in America. But by that time it had become a common practice among the earlier immigrating Amish.

I. The Bible and History

To conserve space, I will list rather than write out five passages:

a. Joshua 4:1-9. We also have stones among us that are serving us and our children well. While we need more stones, let me mention several that are in use. *The Martyrs' Mirror*,

The Hutterite Chronicle, The Dortrecht Confession of Faith, The Mennonite Encyclopedia, and the Anabaptist Vision. The last title (a classic of only 36 pages plus footnotes) deserves to be read by every adult Anabaptist living today. (Available from Christian Light Publications, Harrisonburg, VA)

b. Psalm 78:1-8. God pleads with His people to pay attention to history in this classic Scripture.

c. 1 Corinthians 10:1-14. This must also be considered a classic, calling us to a thoughtful study of history.

d. Job 8:8-10. This gives us a Biblical philosophy of history. It reminds us of our limitations and the urgency of reaching beyond our own limited perspective. Furthermore, it urges us to search the past record to discover how our fathers handled matters in their days.

e. Ecclesiastes 7:10. Finally, we must note the caution that speaks to every generation which looks back and longs for "the good old days." "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this."

What about non-sacred history? Consider the diagram below.

Should we know anything about the 400 silent years before Christ? Should we know anything about the 2000 years since the book of Acts? I believe that God expects us to read

Creation	Calvary	2003
Old Testament	New Testament (Gospels, Acts)	

and learn from non-sacred history. The Bible passages previously referred to teach us that. Based on that premise, we would like to consider some matters that particularly relate to us as Anabaptist people. You will remember that Anabaptist distinctives have descended in several different forms—Hutterite, Brethren, Mennonite and Amish. Baptists also claim an Anabaptist heritage and we do not deny the connection, although theologically, Baptists have not retained two pillars of Anabaptism, Nonresistance and Nonconformity.

II. Ten Lessons

In preparation for this article, I requested input from several people. I asked the question, “What are seven things Mennonites should have learned by now from their experience in America?” I wanted answers relating to what we have learned or should have learned. I have chosen to discuss ten lessons. I will freely use the input shared with me without naming the sources. I am indebted to these brethren. I must also tell you that I come from the Mennonite tradition, whereas many of this reading audience come from the Amish tradition. If many observations seem tilted one way, that is one of the reasons. I am open to challenge for what I share and invite further observations from readers.

Lesson 1.

The perennial question is, “**What is the relationship between inner spiritual life and outer church order?**” Few spiritually alive churches survive from generation to generation unless they get

the answer to this question right.

The inverted V’s below illustrate a fundamental relationship between truths. Note that each element is valid and noble. The diagrams illustrate the relationship between truths. Diagram A illustrates the relationship between spiritual experience and church order. Diagram B illustrates other truths which relate to each other in a similar way. For God’s own reasons He designed the universe this way. When we deviate from the divine balance, we do so at our own peril.

Blessings in the Church of Jesus Christ

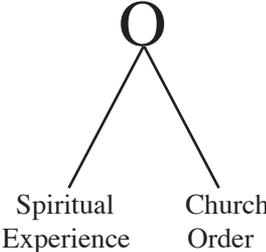


DIAGRAM A

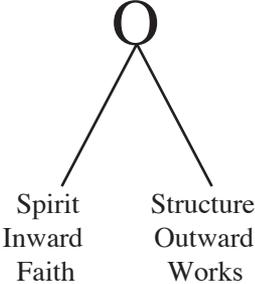


DIAGRAM B

Experiential tradition vs. church order

a. This is a long-standing problem.

The Epistles of Galatians and James are both in the New Testament. Galatians deals with the problem of falling down one side of the inverted V and James deals with the problem of falling down the other side. How Jews and Gentiles could harmoniously work together in the same church was a most serious problem in the early church. The conference in Acts 15 convened to deal with that problem.

b. In today's language the experiential tradition has been labeled Pietism. This label resulted from Robert Friedman's *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries*. We are experiencing some unnecessary problems today because of this misnomer. The fact is that all of us appreciate much that has been historical Pietism. We Mennonites are very Pietistic in our church life, in our homes, with our songs, and with our emotional patterns.

In recent years a different definition of Pietism has developed among conservative Mennonites. This definition focuses on some of the abuses that grow out of historic Pietism. While the term is partly useful, it is also detrimental. We are heading into problems if we keep using this term Pietism because after a while some of us will start to believe our rhetoric about not believing in Pietism. Already some well-meaning people have embarked on a Pietism witch hunt.

The Bible and experience both teach us that certain kinds of piety are very conducive to church order, community, and the Anabaptist concept of gatheredness. For example, personal devotions are a Pietistic prac-

tice which we promote, so are prayer meetings and revival meetings.

Our concern has to do with wrong expressions of piety such as: "The Lord told me this; I don't care what the church says." "You do what the Lord told you to do and I'll do what the Lord tells me to do." "The church is a resource group, not a functioning body."

We would serve ourselves well if we would replace the term pietism with "The Experiential Tradition" or some other more appropriate, descriptive term. The writer has already bumped into people of non-Anabaptist background who understand historic Pietism and wonder why we disapprove of it.

c. The churches that have prospered over the years are the ones who have cooperated with God to keep the ball on top of the inverted V. Some churches are doing well with this today. They are nurturing their people's spiritual lives while they are maintaining church order. They are meeting the deepest needs of their members and at the same time they are maintaining an ongoing church order involving corporateness and community. Lifestyle is graciously regulated and that gracious regulation is appreciated by these people who desire the benefit of gracious regulation. Submission is voluntary. Salvation and ethics are married.

When the ball falls down one side or the other, supposedly Christian people react in strange ways. If the ball falls down the experiential side, the majority are satisfied. In reaction the

alarmed minority, those who strongly desire church order, often fall down the opposite side. As they hang there, they condemn those hanging on the opposite side as descending into error. Likewise, when the majority falls down the side of strong church order, the alarmed minority falls down the opposite side. They cry out about deadness, creating a following among those who desire a strong experiential emphasis. Again in reaction, they condemn those hanging on the opposite side as descending into error.

In fact, when strong denunciations are made of opposite sides like this, the denunciations themselves are evidence of having fallen from the supernatural balance on top of the inverted V. Those who are supernaturally remaining on top of the inverted V are too busy dealing with their own weaknesses and are so busy being redemptive with pressing needs that they do not have time to make strong denunciations of others. Furthermore, they understand that such condemnation is wrong to start with.

d. We should not be alarmed if the ball wobbles a bit on the inverted V. Maintaining a God-blessed church includes wobble because both shepherds and sheep are human and all struggle to keep a God-blessed balance. We desperately need divine aid. Keeping the ball up there is a supernatural experience. What child of God does not desire to be part of a corporate supernatural experience?

e. Let's be practical with history. The Charity movement of today is

similar to the development of the River Brethren in the 1780's. The River Brethren movement began when a group of Mennonites wanted more emphasis on experience. In that case, they desired to remain Mennonite. The Charity movement also has parallels with Daniel Brenneman's move away from the Yellow Creek congregation near Elkhart, Indiana, in 1874. On the other hand the Old Order movement which devoted itself to resisting change has its own story. Did the Old Order movement maintain spiritual life and vitality? How have the River Brethren (and their daughter, The Brethren in Christ) maintained their ideal? Where are the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (United Missionary Church) today? Which of all the above have maintained their ideal?

f. As mentioned above, we are tempted to fight the opposite extremes, a waste of time. We are probably inadvertently recruiting people for the group we are attacking. We can quietly and respectfully explain why we cannot go with either extreme. But we must not focus on "evil groups." Some bombastic preaching is happening today as a result of ignorance. A better approach is to ask ourselves why any other group holds an appeal to a person who is dissatisfied.

Shepherds must lead their sheep into green pastures and beside still waters. We cannot afford to stand in the pasture and throw stones at wolves all day.



(to be continued)

God's Design for Older Women

Mary June Glick

God has specific guidelines for older women. Growing older is a fact of life. We can try to disguise or deny it, but we cannot change the fact that our bodies change and our strength wanes. In spite of the increasing aches and pains, we can find joy in this season of our lives and we can be a blessing to those who are younger.

The Bible speaks specifically to this subject in Titus 2:3: "Teach the older women to be reverent [holy] in the way they live, not be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good." (NIV)

Holiness is an attribute of God. Our behavior must always reflect holiness and a reverence toward God. We do this by our attitudes, our words, and our actions. We teach it to the next generation by telling them of God's goodness and faithfulness to us in our journey through life, as well as by the stories of godly people.

We are not to be slanderers. This has the meaning of a "malicious utterance designed to hurt or defame the person about whom it is uttered." It is much like gossip, which is "tell-

ing things about other people that we would not want anyone to say about us or our loved ones, whether true or untrue."

What a different place this world would be if we would only tell the good about others! What a blest atmosphere where we use our tongues to encourage and express love and care for others!

A godly woman should be a person who can be trusted with the burdens and confidences of others. We older women should be available to the younger women in our church to listen to their problems, to weep and to pray with them. We must never accuse anyone falsely but always look for the good in others.

Titus mentioned that we must not be addicted to much wine. I doubt that we should be addicted to anything, other than to love and good works. There are many good things that we enjoy like reading, hobbies, sewing, and gardening, but we must not allow them to take the place of ministering to others. I think of Grandmother Lois, who taught Timothy genuine faith; of Dorcas, who

was known for her good works of sewing for the needy; of the couple in 2 Kings 4, who prepared a room especially for Elisha; and of the many

older women who have blessed me in my lifetime.

May God help us to **do** and **teach** godly living to the next generation!



junior messages

The Plan

Anita Yoder

Ligonier, IN

Chapter One

This is the first part in a continued story. It is based on the account of some Russian Mennonites in 1930. Must they leave their homes forever, so they can live by their Christian consciences? The Amur River lies between them and China, a land of freedom. How can they get to freedom?

Klaas Wenger pulled his fur cap down further. Brrr! The cold hit the exposed skin around his eyes. His last job of the day was to fill all the wood boxes on the farm. He jumped on the sled and wished he were already headed for the house.

In 1927 they had bought this land, and along with other families, moved closer to the Russian border in the town of Shumanoska, in hopes that

the Stalinist government would leave them alone. They lived in freedom for several years, but by now all their farms were united into collective farms with the government taking almost all profits. They still lived on the farm, even though it seemed to Klaas he saw his father age every day. When his older brother, Heinrich, married they had turned the small woodshed into living quarters for the newlyweds.

Klaas headed his team in that direction, mechanically filling the wood box in the wash house. The kitchen door opened and a good aroma of cooking food filled the air. He knew it would not be a table laden with rich foods. But it smelled good. Quite likely, it was potato soup.

“Do you want to eat with us tonight, Klaas?” Heinrich invited. “Anna says there is enough borsch for you, too, and Valentina has already eaten.”

“Oh, Heinrich, I’d love to. I’m so cold. But I’d better not, because by the time I would have eaten, I’d start warming up and hurting. Then I wouldn’t want to go out into the cold again to go home. I didn’t get to work inside today like you did.”

“You’re right,” smiled Heinrich knowingly. “How we all hate to fight this sub-zero weather.”

Before Heinrich got the door closed, two-year-old Valentina peeked out between her brother’s legs. Her curly hair framed by a bonnet, with her clear blue eyes sparkling warmed his heart. What a sight! He wanted to reach out and touch her, but he was too cold. She’d run away, not doubt. “Good night, Valentina,” he called instead.

How hard life had become in Russia! What had he to look forward to? They all lived in such miserable conditions. He had so many questions. Where is God? Somehow all his thoughts turned into a desperate prayer, *God, help us!*

That evening in his loft bedroom, Klaas sat by the chimney rubbing his hands and feet. *They ache extra much tonight*, he thought.

What is that? Do I hear horses? He got up and went to the window. Several teams turned in their driveway. Klaas saw several more headed in their direction. *What does this mean? I will find out.* He lifted

the loft door just a bit and propped it open. Grabbing the woolen comforter from his bed he lay close to the opening. *Will Father care if I listen?*

Quiet greetings were exchanged as the neighbor men gathered in the room below. He could hear Jacob Siemens take charge. He was the Mennonite administrator of their village. Klaas liked him. In fact, everyone he knew respected Jacob’s leadership.

Jacob cleared his throat, “I suggest each farm should ask for another team and sled. If this is granted, of course, we will need to wait for permission to use them. Then we will go work in the forest.”

Oh no, Klaas thought. *I’ll be out in the cold even more—from morning to night. Is Jacob Siemens thinking right?*

Klaas listened as Jacob explained his reasons. They would work through the winter. Then next winter they would have enough teams with sleds for them all to leave their village, Shumanoska. The group would hire a guide to take them across the frozen Amur River at night. Jacob saw it as their only way to leave Russia, for by now the borders were all closed. No one could leave freely.

Klaas lay on his bed long after the men left. *What shall I do with this information?*



(to be continued)

Changed by a Divine Woodsman

Val Yoder

Reprinted from The Monitor, February, 1998

Have you ever seen a Jack-pine tree? It hardly qualifies as the “prince of trees.” Due to its abundance of irregular branches and the characteristic profusion of dead branches clinging to its trunk, it has scornfully been referred to as the “scrubby jack.” Its short needles seem inferior in beauty and elegance to the majestic Norway Pine. The wood is often full of knots and lacks the resilience of many other trees. The Jackpine will snap off in a storm quicker than most other trees in our native Minnesota forests. The tree has what we may think of as adequate reason to feel inferior.

In reality, the “scrubby jack” provides a poignant example of what each of us were like before we became Christians.

Imagine with me: We were situated in our corner of the forest trying our best to appear an elegant tree. Yet our limbs were characterized by intemperance and passion. We had many imbalances. The branches that we knew should grow were dying. The ones that were growing were ex-

cessive and uncontrolled. We had one large branch there, another one over here and then the “monster” up at the top. Things just weren’t uniform. There was little symmetry. On one hand we despised our imbalance, but on the other hand we were helpless to change it. The branches carried the fruit of our darkness. Harshness, jealousy, anger, rebellion, lust and extravagance all glared off certain branches, while loneliness, fear, and possessiveness covered off others. Apathy, tardiness, and slothfulness dawdled in another sector. The good deeds that we mustered in our more congenial moments hung like plastic decorations that were “add ons,” not at all native to our true identity as a “scrubby jack.” Each limb was nurtured by the sticky, slippery sap of deception. The multiplicity of lies that surged through our veins continued to nourish our branches. They were our motivations. They gave us rigidity. We were convinced that if we could hang enough ornaments on the exterior, then the other trees wouldn’t see and, consequently,

wouldn't despise what we truly were. Hiding some things and showing others became our endless chore while keeping all other trees at a distance from our core. Drinking up our deception was so normal, so expected, that it became as truth to us. Hiding was not only acceptable, it was intrinsic to our existence.

Our entire being was sustained from a well-concealed root system of personal pleasure. There was one question that, though not always consciously considered, defined the nutrients that would be allowed to flow in our veins. That question had preeminence over all others. The question, "What is in it for me?" was the appetite of our god. It was the absolute question! All data was siphoned through this sieve.

One day I noticed a beautiful tree at another spot in the forest. Its loveliness was awesome. Why had I never seen this tree before? There it stood, exquisite and stunning to look upon. I was not attracted to it because of that which had been hung on it, but by the tree itself. In fact, nothing hung on it to hinder its comeliness. Its beauty came from its being. There was not even one discolored needle on the entire tree. What a creative demonstration of beauty! The symmetry of this wonderful tree created a perfect pyramid silhouette against the sky. Its long lower branches

tapered consistently to the short delicate branches that made up its peak. Beautifully uniform, the tree far outclassed every other tree in the forest. The root system was otherworldly! There was one passion in the roots of that tree. Only one passion! The only desire of the tree was to please the Divine Woodsman. By pleasing Him, we'd all been pleased. The tree got its nourishment from the River of Life and the sap of nutritious truth flowed gracefully up its trunk to brighten and intensify its beauty.

I had barely begun to enjoy the exquisite loveliness of the stunning tree when I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, a movement at the edge of the forest. What was that? Oh, yes, the Divine Woodsman. But what was He carrying? No, it couldn't be! But yes, it was! He carried beside Him the celestial chainsaw. The expression on His face was one of intense sadness. He seemed deeply grieved by what He planned to do. Oh no, I thought. My time has come. He is going to cut me down. I've been sapping up His resources for my own pleasure too long. I've become too disproportionate, too imbalanced, too ugly. My time of recompense has come. Grace for me has run out. He would cut me down to clean up His forest and to provide fuel for his eternal furnace. My day of reckoning was here!

But wait! He's turning! He's not walking toward me! He is going toward the beautiful, unmarred tree! What is He going to do? No! NO! Not that tree! It is so unique! Its beauty is unmatched! Why cut down that tree? What a travesty! Any other tree, but not that one! The Divine Woodsman's grief breaks into heart-rending tears as He pulls the rope to start His chainsaw. I cannot bear to look so I turn away and soon I hear the crash of the fall. It's over! The destruction of earth's best. There was none to match it. Now it is gone.

As I turn to see what has happened, a new wave of fear overcomes me. The Divine Woodsman is walking toward me! Oh, I knew it would happen! If he would cut down the very best, how could I hope to be spared. I notice in my fear that the same look of sadness remains upon His face. Yet, there is confidence. It's as if He knows something that none of His creation does. Then it happens. He cuts into my trunk. Oh, the pain! The separation! This is death! Life for me is over. Judgment will come. There is no escape! If only it could all be done over. If I could try again... but would that help? My root system seems to have been directly linked to my destruction. How can a tree get another root system? The fall to the ground is excruciating! I am dying!

Just as I seem to be losing consciousness, I feel the powerful arms of the Divine Woodsman pick me up. What is He doing now? What will He do with me? I thought He would cut me up. I thought He would destroy me. But, no, instead He is carrying me. Where am I going? We are headed for...can it be? We are headed for the stump of that beautiful tree! The tree whose beauty passed description before being cut down. But, what is He doing? This is incredible! This is unthinkable! I can't believe it! Can it be true? He is grafting me onto the root system of the beautiful tree! The tree He has just cut down. Oh, this is too unreal! Me, connected to a perfect root system? He is placing me where the perfect tree had been?

What a strange looking tree I now am. Any enlightened woodsman would marvel at such a weird combination. A perfect unblemished root system which has such a disfigured, disproportionate tree growing above it. The "scrubby jack" branches of my former life attached to the beautiful perfection of His roots. This is inconceivable! This is awesome! This is absolutely astonishing!

But, if you look closely, you will observe an even stranger phenomenon. In passing by me, you will notice two kinds of branches growing from my trunk. This highlights the miracle of my grafting. You will

notice that there are “scrubby jack” branches and there are also beautiful branches. The “scrubby jack” branches are residual remnants of what I used to be. The beautiful branches have been grafted into my trunk by the Divine Woodsman.

They are increasing while the former branches are decreasing. I am going from glory to glory even as the Spirit of the Divine Woodsman works in me.



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Don't let the best you have done so far be the standard for the rest of your life.

• • • • •

Those who have a right to boast don't need to.

• • • • •

Do all you can and make no fuss about it.

• • • • •

Those who fear the future are likely to fumble the present.

• • • • •

The man who boasts that he never made a mistake probably has a wife who did.

• • • • •

A man who is straightforward and honest, doesn't need to worry about a good memory.

• • • • •

Few of us want what we deserve; we long for something better.

• • • • •

Liberty is not worth much unless it is liberty under law.

• • • • •

Those afraid of death are often afraid of life.

• • • • •

Idle Christians are the raw material from which backsliders are made.

• • • • •

No man is too big to be kind, but some are too little.

• • • • •

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