



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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2006

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JULY 2006

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.

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Heaven

Grace Yoder · Dundee, OH

The beauties of heaven,
What joy we'll behold!
As we gaze on our Savior
While the ages unfold.

Seeing loved ones long parted,
From earth here below;
Heartaches will be lifted,
No more sorrow to know.

What joy that will be
As our voices will ring,
Singing in glad chorus
To our Savior and King.

Forever with Jesus,
There'll be no more night.
Forever in heaven—
What joy! What delight!



The Pause That Refreshes

As I recall, a soft drink of yesterday year promised to deliver, “The Pause That Refreshes.” Simon Peter, in Acts 3:19, recommended a **spiritual pause that refreshes**. With sincerity and courage, the regenerate Peter, to whom Jesus had earlier given the keys of the Kingdom, thus admonished the people of his day: “Repent and be converted, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”(RSV)

Notice that refreshment doesn’t come first. The steps to God, in order, are: First, *repentance*; second, *conversion*; and third, *refreshment from the Lord*.

Repentance

In repentance, we must take action. We acknowledge that God is right when He disapproves of sin. We realize that we have transgressed His holy commandments, for “There is none righteous, no not one” (Romans 3:10). We experience sincere sorrow for our sin. Instead of making sure that others think we are sorry, we are actually sorry—so sorry that we turn resolutely away from sin.

Some people stutter-step—like a man traveling in a dangerous path.

He frequently starts and stops but does not turn back. Even though he sometimes hesitates, apparently sensing that something is wrong, yet his face remains turned away from God and he goes on toward destruction.

Some people profess Christ to promote themselves. One Bible teacher, working in prisons, wrote: “It is quite important that the essence of genuine repentance is addressed, because many who make a profession of faith never actually repent. They never change the motive of promoting self supremely....” Billy Sunday, outspoken evangelist in the early 20th century, was once admonished to be more politically correct in his preaching. The person illustrated his concern with how one must stroke a cat’s fur so the cat enjoys it. “You must stroke the cat’s fur from front to back.” Billy saw through that flimsy objection and offered this lucid rejoinder: “Let the cat turn around!”

In true repentance, we turn around. In false repentance, we may squirm uncomfortably when God’s truth is shown. But once our faces are turned toward the light, we find that the same treatment which before made

us uneasy is now comforting because we have changed direction.

In true repentance, we acknowledge our wrong doing and wrong thinking. We stop blaming others for our willfulness. We feel shame for our sins. We bring our sins to Jesus. Glory to Jesus—He carries them all away!

True repentance, as it is used in the Bible, has several shades of meaning. It can mean: 1) panting, 2) sighing, 3) turning, 4) being concerned, or 5) changing the course of life.

Like the prodigal son in Luke 15, we must see ourselves as we are: “pig-pen dirty,” helpless and vile. But then we must also see God as the perfect God He is: High and lifted up! Indeed, “He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He” (Deuteronomy 32:4 NKJV).

In true repentance, the intellect, the will, and the emotions are all involved. Intellect must first discern one’s need. After that, the will can act. Emotion, although it is less predictable, will follow. False repentance, instead of a new birth, produces spiritual “miscarriage.” Such “repentance” cannot bring forth the Jesus miracle—the new life.

Conversion

In conversion, God acts. He alone can give us a new heart. Without that,

we continue to find ourselves strongly attracted to sinful things by wicked thoughts. We may be able to keep from doing specific sinful acts with “lift-yourself-by-your-own-bootstraps” determination. But we are still beset with strong desires to do wrong, unless and until The Great Physician implants a new heart.

When the stony heart has been replaced with a heart of flesh, as Ezekiel 36:26 promises, we love and approve what God loves and approves. But because going our own way and “doing our own thing” is a hard habit to break, we still don’t get to follow the path of least resistance. Increasing that struggle is our adversary, the devil, who walks about, “seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). The cause is not hopeless, however, because “greater is He that is in you [us] than he that is in the world,” (1 John 4:4), and victory comes about as our faith latches onto Jesus, Who went into “the holiest of all” with his own blood. (Hebrews 9:7-14)

Refreshment from the Lord

When we repent and the Lord converts us, it’s refreshing! Even though we sense that we have not moved out of the devil’s reach, we possess new desires given by the Lord Jesus that provide life with a much brighter outlook. We are at peace with God. We want to do His will and not disappoint

Him. We find the truth fulfilled in ourselves that says, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

It’s refreshing when we face the truth about ourselves, embrace godly repentance and are converted by the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world. We are given a living hope of being with Him in heaven, where we’ll be with saints from all over the world and from all times in history. There we will gather and praise the Savior! “What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see, When I look upon His face, the one who saved me by His grace...What a day, glorious day that will be!”

Are you refreshed?

If not, perhaps your penitence has gone stale. Could it be that your “repentance” simply reflects what you want to do? You actually have plenty of taste for “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” (1 John 2:15-17). You aren’t particularly bothered by the practices of those who don’t prepare for eternity. You simply adopt their patterns, accepting

little responsibility to be “light” or “salt.” You don’t need your brothers and sisters. If that is your case, I doubt that repentance is refreshing you.

But maybe that’s not your case. Instead of that, you’ve decided that you would simply do everything right, because you know what is right. Furthermore, you know you’re right, because people who live badly disgust you. But does your heart go with the shepherd who seeks his lost sheep? Do you feel with the father who longs for and goes out to meet his returning wayward son? Or are your sympathies with the elder brother of the prodigal son in Jesus’ parable? (Luke 15)

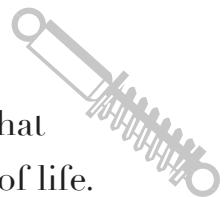
Stop and think. When we ponder our purpose for being here and when we regard lost souls like the Good Shepherd does, we enjoy God’s grace. We live in the joy of sins forgiven.

True repentance is indicated when the joy of the Lord puts a spring in our step, when we delight in Him and His cross, and when we sincerely want others to find “The Heavenly Pause That Refreshes.” —PLM



Laughter...

is the shock absorber that
eases the blows of life.



Re: All Things Are Not Expedient

I am a single person and would like to respond to the article in the May issue, entitled: "All Things Are Not Expedient." I agree with the writer that married couples should act appropriately in *public* (not just in front of singles). However, there were some ideas suggested in this article that I did not find "expedient." When singles are portrayed as deprived people who are longing for something they don't have, it creates a stigma that is neither kind nor helpful and not true of **all** singles. Just because the writer has heard from **some** singles about their struggles, does not mean that he has a true picture of what singleness is like for everyone. If a marriage counselor formed his opinions of marriage entirely by the stories he was hearing from troubled couples, would he have a balanced view of marriage?

We have an example in Scripture of an unmarried person who recommends the single life as a place of happiness. 1 Corinthians 7:40 says, **"But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment, and I think also that I have the spirit of God."** Is it scriptural to suggest that a happy single has either "*struggled bravely to*

become victorious or is simply putting up a brave front"?

—*Enjoying the blessings of God*

• • • • •

A Witness in Europe

To the editor of Calvary Messenger:

I am living part of the time in a caravan near the church building at Dunmore East Christian Fellowship. I live part of the time with my father in the county of Worcestershire in England. He is 84 and in need of some company since my mother died two years ago.

I have been to many different denominations of churches but [have not found] a church in all England like the Dunmore East Christian Fellowship. I see the Beachy Amish Mennonite Church as a serious attempt to live the Christian life with a heart faith.

To send missions to Europe is tilling hard soil and giving an undeserved second chance to your persecutors. But as time goes by and new generations are born they need to be reached with the true message of Jesus. Europe has been thoroughly evangelized, but with what? People have only seen a partial and distorted picture of Jesus; they have not had the chance to accept or reject the

real Jesus and His nonresistant way of sharing and modesty.

Who knows which of us will stay on the narrow way? As one of your women martyrs wrote to her son, there are few who find the narrow way and fewer still who stay on it. I come from an unbelieving, liberal, worldly background. The struggle is a long, hard road. You may think it is hardly worth all this effort to be in Europe, especially Western Europe, but don't expect me to agree with you [on that].

Plenty of churches make many converts and baptize many people,

but this is partial and not satisfying to the Lord. God gave the Beachy [church] the special task of making sure that the other half of the commission that Jesus gave his disciples is carried out. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:20). Only *all things* is enough and it needs taking to all places, even to those English.

Graham Bevan

*Dunmore East Christian Fellowship
County Waterford, Republic of Ireland*



Music for Heaven and Earth

Wilmer Swope · Leetonia, OH

It is time to head home. We seem to be on a self-imposed exile to secular Babylon in church worship music. Have we become commercial rather than spiritual? Have not our musical tastes become worldly rather than respectful? When will the exiles return to spiritual Jerusalem?

May the Holy Spirit touch our heart strings and make us all aware of our wandering out into the field of worldly music away from the Good

Shepherd. God help us!

There is great sorrow in my heart. This is why in humbleness I venture out to share my heart and soul on the great subject of worship singing. May God lead us to more spiritual hymn texts and to sanctified, honest, and fervent singing that pleases Him. The decadent music of the world is not appropriate either for earth or for heaven.

[Abridged by the editor.]



Life's heaviest burden is to have nothing to carry.



The Faces of Anger

Tim Good · Lancaster, OH

Menno* had been a church member for most of his adult life. He was married, had a sizeable family ranging in age from very young to late teenagers. Interaction with other church families seemed to be just fine, with a subtle degree of tension sometimes palpable during visits and activities. Warm, spontaneous communication was rare, and indeed, sometimes surprised others when it did occur. Menno engaged quite freely in light conversation, with lots of participation, smiling and teasing.

Do you know anyone like this? Have you yourself wrestled with these feelings or emotions? Have you ever had the experience of leaving a church meeting or activity, mentally kicking yourself as you reflected on your behavior? Have you, or do you, get these feelings and emotions and wonder how they came? Or why they came?

Menno* is a composite portrait of several men, including myself, who became my friends and fellow repentant pilgrims as residents at a Christian adult men's rehab program a little over four years ago. We were all conservative Mennonite men; married with children and extended

families. We had tried, over the years, with increasing agitation, to "keep the lid on" our personal and home situations. Almost without exception, our carefully constructed edifices of a "Christian" home toppled with the advent of our children reaching the late teens or early married years.

Let us continue with further description of our composite character, Menno: Some subjects were avoided. Discussion of *personal* areas and feelings were distinctly uncomfortable. Expressions of private faith issues or admission of individual problems or struggles did not occur. Menno, however, particularly when called upon in a public worship service, could give quite an impressive testimony. He could even make very pertinent comments regarding the sermon or topic under discussion.

At home tension was frequently like a taut wire. If displeased, his anger was cold, hard, and silent. Very few words were spoken. His wife and children moved cautiously around him throughout the day. They seemed to do almost anything to prevent an explosion, and just maybe in a few hours he would return to the dad and husband they loved. Oh, if they could only figure out what trig-

gered these bouts of rage!

This side of Menno was hidden, never coming out except at home. To neighbors, fellow church members, and most relatives, Menno was known as a serious, devout man. He was concerned about church standards and discipline. He seemed especially concerned about the spiritual lives of his family—if spirituality can be equated with external appearance and public behavior.

Church activities were a high priority for Menno. He was usually the first to arrive at any church activity, be it a scheduled service, a “work bee” or business meeting, and frequently the last to leave. He was vitally interested in any church issues under discussion. Other members tended to tread cautiously in discussions with him about issues—particularly in a committee or business meeting setting. He readily accepted assignments on committees, yet frequently seemed to heighten the level of tension in a committee.

Annual reorganization or other special meetings which seemed to require or suggest the application of Roberts’ Rules of Order would frequently elicit comments or reminders by Menno that such rules were not being followed. These reminders were usually given in a caustic, or at least dismissive manner, which also

heightened the tension in the meeting as the group attempted to work through issues. Although usually right in his interpretation of parliamentary procedure, the group still tried to process this feeling of tension which his interventions brought into the meeting.

Anger

Anger, particularly *repressed anger*, is like an acid, which burns and cauterizes everything and everyone it touches. Since explosive anger is easily recognized, and usually not tolerated in repetition, *other* anger behaviors are substituted, many times unconsciously, to express our feelings and frustrations.

“Of all the emotions, anger is the one most likely to be labeled as something else. Of all the emotions, anger is the most likely to be identified as dangerous. What are some of the most common disguises anger can take? When we begrudge, scorn, insult, and disdain others, or when we are annoyed, offended, bitter, fed up, repulsed, irritated, infuriated, incensed, mad, sarcastic, up tight, cross, or when we experience frustration, indignation, exasperation, fury, wrath or rage, we are probably experiencing some form of anger. Anger can also manifest itself as criticism, silence, intimidation, hypochondria, numerous petty complaints, depression, gossip, sarcasm,

blame, passive-aggressive behaviors such as stubbornness, half-hearted efforts, forgetfulness and laziness.” (Oliver/Wright, *When Anger Hits Home*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1992, p. 216: quoted in *Marriage Works*, American Association of Christian Counsellors)

Menno carried most of the manifestations of anger noted above. Explosive anger, particularly in public or around fellow church members, would expose the spiritual vacuum in his heart and life. But anger, uncontrolled and unredeemed, must have an outlet. Unfortunately, in the home, such *explosive* anger may be foisted on helpless children and trapped spouses without damaging public image. In public, and in church, the expressions of anger different from the well-known explosions must be used to perpetuate the myth of spiritual leader of the home, the church member who can be used in church activities, and the loving husband and father.

The “Mennos” at the rehab center learned that the root problems of their anger came from either one or a combination of three causes: past hurts, present frustrations, or anxieties about the future. Multiple actions then trigger anger when one or more of the three root problems are present.

Anyone who has been at the receiving end of anger, may ask the question: “Why?” or “I wonder what sets him off like that?” and, “What is that chip on his shoulder?”

Anger comes out in response to a person’s personal world—either his past, his present, or his future. Although this list is not exhaustive, this person’s personal world may include past or present *hurts*, past or present *sins*, *anxiety* about past or present events and sin, or *anxiety* about future events including those that show anger events or situations. In any of the conditions noted above, the “taut wire” description applies. *Anything* can set off the angry response.

Menno has a great need for *control*, since his personal world must be controlled to *hide* the hurts, the sin, or the anxiety. Any threat to this world must be dealt with immediately—and reflexively, for it seems that the most effective way to handle the threat is to *distance* himself from the person or situation which causes loss of control. Distance from others will decrease the ability for them to see, to find out, and will allow Menno time and space to regroup. Intimacy and transparency are impossible.

Yet as Menno thinks he is buying time and protecting his space, he is adding another layer of hurt, guilt and sin, which continues to feed the

anger cycle. Events and actions by other people—family, church, fellow workers, even strangers, will trigger anger.

The Bible gives several examples of events which cause anger:

We frequently quote Proverbs 15:1: A soft answer turneth away wrath, *but grievous words stir up anger.*” [Italics added] Although this is not the only application of this verse, it does apply to our discussion. There is such a psychological phenomenon as the “mirror image” response: talk loudly to someone and they talk loudly back to you; talk harshly or angrily to someone and they will respond in the same manner. Giving harsh or thoughtless words to an angry man, is like pouring gasoline on a fire.

Proverbs 22:24-25 talks about the “cage of anger.” “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.” The anger cycle is unbreakable without the power of the Holy Spirit applied to the repentant and broken heart. The angry man cannot be pacified long-term, without spiritual intervention, because it is impossible for him to be open or transparent to the person who wishes to be his friend. The only way to be his “friend” is to “buy into” his perceived hurts and anxieties. Think about it;

have you ever talked to an angry church member and then realized that the only way to be friends with him is to agree with his perception of a given situation, whether it involves the ministers, the standards, or whatever? The cage and cycle are perpetual.

One more example: Proverbs 16:28, “A froward man soweth strife...” The root word for froward is the Hebrew word for pervert, change—thus “froward” becomes the word for perversity and fraud. An angry man causes strife. The angry man who claims to be a Christian is the personification of being froward and fraudulent, persisting in error or fault, obstinately disobedient, difficult, intractable. Does this sound like the angry man you know in your church? In your home? I hope not, but it describes Menno.

The effects of an angry man on the victims, in addition to himself, are devastating. In the short-term and over a lifetime—anger takes a heavy toll. Consequences include emotionally battered spouses, families, and children. It tends to be perpetuated in the children creating unhealthy and erroneous perceptions of what a father/mother is, inability for the children to trust an adult, bitterness, emotional “shut-down” of spouse and children, withholding of love, trust,

openness—the list goes on.

In the case of Menno and as presented in this account, anger is *sin*. The ability to “be angry and sin not” is extremely rare. Chronic or perpetual anger is *always* sin and, as we learned at the rehab center, a *result* of unresolved hurt, anxiety and sin. Victory over anger begins at the cross of Christ. There can be no victory over anger without brokenness, account-

ability, and transparency. My time with my fellow pilgrims at a Christian rehab center allowed me and all of us to see ourselves as we really were. It allowed us to stop living as frauds, to break out of the “cage,” to stop the “mirror-imaging” of an angry world, and to quit hiding. Praise God, when that happens, the reason to be always angry is gone.



the bottom line

“Utter-wise” and Otherwise *(Inspiration from Psalm 106)*

Aaron Lapp · Kinzers, PA

The Psalms have a richness that is unequalled in the world’s literature. The range of descriptive terms gives them a characteristic beauty that we can pass over too lightly. These terms are used in many favorite songs and hymns, in poetry and prose, in theses and in “one-liners.”

This month we will highlight one strange word, “utter.” This word will be our base for a psalm in which this word is used: Psalm 106. Verse two says, “Who can *utter* the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth his praises?”

1. *The Psalmist uttered praise.*

(Psalm 106:1-5) He leads off with “Praise ye the Lord.” Luther’s German introduces it by the exclamation, “Halleluja!” (Exclamation point included) Pardon the bother, but you really should open your Bible to Psalm 106 and at least scan the text for this seven-point outline.

Praise and thanks and giving glory to God can hardly be overdone. None can overspeak or exhaust praise due to God. It should issue in doing righteousness and in remembering God. That is a fitting basis to ask God to remember me throughout my days.

2. *Israel pattered in their ways.* (verses 6-15) They sinned, lacked

understanding (willful ignorance, the chief cause) and they forgot God. God saved them for his name's sake, led them through the Red Sea, and redeemed them from their enemies. Israel rallied with faith and praise for past mercies, but not for future life thrust.

They soon puttered by dilly-dallying, swaying from the ditch on one side to the ditch on the other side. They even puttered backwards, fantasizing about Egypt. Their *puttering* was similar to the *sputtering* of a dying car, having uncertain jerks and unsteady spurts, like it was low on fuel or had a bad electrical connection. What was to be a victorious, progressive march turned into frustrated setbacks and delays because of their puttering.

3. *Israel muttered many days.* (verses 16-27) *Muttering* is distinguished by grumbling and complaining, synonymous to murmuring, usually in angry discontentment.

They envied Moses, probably never realizing the weight of his responsibility. There was widespread revolt led by Korah, Dathan and Abiram. They worshiped a golden calf. They despised God's good gifts to them. In all this there was perennial complaint and dissatisfaction toward Moses—and God. It greatly displeased God, and He thought to end their lives in

the wilderness.

Modern-day *muttering* results in the same backsets, the same poor witness for God, the same leanness of soul. The blessings intended for ministry are instead turned into wastefulness and consumption.

4. *Israel stuttered always.* (verses 28-35) Israel's backsliding caused static, and broken-up enunciation about credit belonging to God. They joined themselves to Baal. They concocted godless inventions. They blamed Moses for their own sins. They failed to destroy the heathen nations. Instead they moved in among them and learned their worldly ways and their degraded worship. Their witness went into spasmodic *stuttering* and convulsive *stammering*.

Peter and John's testimony in the time of the early church was clear, confident and convincing. The agitated authorities sternly threatened them not to speak in the name of Jesus. The apostles explained, "For we cannot but speak...." But many contemporary Christians today say, in effect, "We cannot speak." Forcing a testimony brings forth *stuttering*.

5. *Israel was in the gutter unfazed.* (verses 36-42) To be unfazed is to be undisturbed, unembarrassed and without phobia.

Israel was in an immoral, anti-God ditch many times. They were in the

gutter and didn't seem to mind. They took it even to sacrificing their precious sons and daughters to the god, Moloch. It was a terrible thing, putting their children on the red-hot arms of this iron statue to appease that heathen god.

A bloody gutter it was, for our text says, "The land was polluted with blood." God abhorred Israel on account of it, and His wrath was kindled so that He gave them over to oppressive enemies.

These things are written for our admonition, that we should not lust after evil things. (1 Corinthians 10:1-11) *Partaking of worldly practices always leads to worldly forms of worship.* Not all at once, nor always in one generation. There is a common pattern, when compromise rules, by which history repeats itself. Beware and give heed!

6. *Israel shuddered in malaise.* (verses 43-46) An awareness of moral and spiritual decline again settled in. They cried to the Lord—not when they were high, nor when they were sinking in decline on their way down. But they cried unto the Lord when they *hit bottom*. Trapped. Captives. Serving as slaves. Everything was lost. No table, no bed, no house, no land of their own. No joy in the present nor prospects of it in the future.

Not unlike today—same human

nature, same mistakes, same sins, same judgment, same God. Even today many go out on Saturday night and sow wild oats, then go to church on Sunday morning and pray for a crop failure!

7. *Israel uttered their prayer and praise.* (verses 47-48) Help! Save us! What pitiful cries from desperate souls! Especially from such who could (should) have known not to go in the wayward paths of the ungodly. Israel often assumed that God owes them His providence, because of His promises.

Every generation is blessed in part by the faithfulness of the previous generation. That is great! Let us be aware that deviating from the disciplines of the previous generation will change the spiritual landscape for the next generation. If we truly appreciate our heritage, *we must do more than emulate our forebears.* We must accept those disciplines ourselves if we desire the same for our children. Israel's cycles of straying and returning to God are amply documented. Read Psalm 107 for a classic example of this. Observation of the last several generations in our time points to the very same thing.

The prayer of deliverance is, in one sense, a sad prayer, for it is a commentary on a life gone astray. This prayer of deliverance is also a glad

prayer, for in its need it calls to the God who can save.

Praise to the Lord God of Israel is a fitting conclusion. The writer ascribes it from everlasting to everlasting. Luther renders it from eternity (past) to eternity (future). The psalmist en-

joins all people to say, "Amen. Praise ye the Lord." "Amen, Halleluja!" (LG)

The Bottom Line is: **It is better to stay and prosper than to stray and return.**



marriages

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

Alvarez-Fisher

Bro. Dan, son of Oscar and Martha Alvarez, Gordonville, PA, and Sis. Sharon, daughter of Ab and Sarah Fisher, Kinzers, PA, at Spring Garden Church, for Summitview Christian Fellowship, on April 14, 2006, by John U. Lapp.

Eash-Byler

Bro. Steven, son of LaVern and Carolyn Eash, Whiteville, TN, and Sis. Anna Louise, daughter of Ray and Elva Byler, Whiteville, TN, at Bolivar, TN, on March 18, 2006, by Lavern Eash.

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Gabriel and Sheila (Ropp), Wellman, IA, fifth child, second son, Isaiah Lynn, Jan. 15, 2006.

Graber-Swarey

Bro. Kevin Leon, son of Herbert and Odie Graber, Odon, IN, and Sis. Mary Anna, daughter of Ivan and Lena Swarey, Stuarts Draft, VA, at Pilgrim Fellowship Church, Stuarts Draft, VA, on March 31, 2006, by Bennie Byler.

Miller-Hochstetler

Bro. Kevin, son of Gary and Rosanna Miller, Hutchinson, KS, and Sis. Donna, daughter of Jacob and Inez Hochstetler, Middlebury, IN, at Fair Haven A.M. Church, Goshen, IN, on April 8, 2006, by Wilbur Yoder.

Beachy, Toby and Sharon (Miller), Arcola, IL, fourth child, third dau., Sabina Jewel, May 1, 2006.

Bontrager, Cameron and Monica (Hochstetler), Goshen, IN, first child and son, Brayden Cameron, May 18, 2006.

Byler, Paul and Rose (Yoder), Whiteville, TN, fifth and sixth children, third and fourth sons, twins, Karl Wayne and Kyle Duane, April 6, 2006.

Coblentz, Firmen and Marlena (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, fourth child, third son, Jamie Melvin, April 10, 2006.

Herschberger, Ed and Amanda (Kaufman), Sullivan, IL, seventh child, (one deceased), third dau., Emily Kay, May 8, 2006.

Hershberger, Kelvin and Beth (Hershberger), Stuarts Draft, VA, first child and son, Lawrence Chadwick, May 12, 2006.

Kauffman, Ervin and Edna (Yoder), Pierrepont Manor, NY, first child and son, Travis Layne, April 19, 2006.

Kauffman, Anthony and Jody Lynn (Riehl), Gordonville, PA, third child, first dau., Morgan Joanna, April 19, 2006.

Mast, Keith and Linda (Stoltzfus), Honey Brook, PA, fifth child, fourth dau., Marjorie Marie, April 29, 2006.

Mast, Leonard and Caroline (Miller), Harrison, AR, third child and son, Derrick Leonard, March 30, 2006.

Miller, Eldon and Faith (Smucker), Stuarts Draft, VA, fourth child, third son, Zachary Tyler, April 18, 2006.

Miller, Jacob and Regina (Yoder), Kalona, IA, third child, second dau., Kendra

Jean, April 18, 2006.

Miller, Karlin and Rosemary (Zook), Honey Grove, PA, first and second children, twin sons, Joshua Elliot and Josiah Rene', May 9, 2006.

Miller, Nelson and Laura (Coblentz), Whiteville, TN, first child and dau., Brianna Danae, Feb. 12, 2006.

Miller, Wayne and Rhoda (Kemp), Auburn, KY, third child, (one deceased), first son, Samuel Wayne, March 23, 2006.

Stoltzfus, Daryl and Rose (King), Ronks, PA, second child, first son, Nicholas Daniel, May 7, 2006.

Swartzentruber, Norman and Dorcas (Wagler), Arcola, IL, sixth child and son, Brandon Ray, May 19, 2006.

Wagler, John and Susan (Summy), Leon, IA, fourth child and dau., Daisy Joy, May 15, 2006.

Yoder, David and Faith (Troyer), Quenemo, KS, eleventh child, sixth son, Jacob Micah, April 26, 2006.

Yoder, Doug and Lil (Bontrager), Auburn, KY, second child and dau., Megan Jo, April 28, 2006.

Yoder, John Dale and Karen (Kreider), Belvidere, TN, fourth child, third son, Abner James, May 22, 2006.

Yoder, Steve and Carolyn (Fisher), Port Royal, PA, third child, first dau., Sheila Faith, May 17, 2006.

Zimmerman, Javan and Matina (Overholt), Melvern, KS, third child, second son, Logan Paul, April 10, 2006.

ordinations

May the grace of God be upon our brother as he ministers faithfully. Let us pray for him.

Bro. Leon Yoder, 44, was ordained to Christian ministry at Lyndon Amish Mennonite Church, May 28, 2006. Preordination messages were given by Jim Yoder.

The first message on Sunday evening was by Steve Garber. The charge was given by Rudy Overholt, assisted by Jim Yoder and Melvin Troyer. Also in the lot was Kevin Miller.

KINDNESS is the oil



that takes
the friction
out of life.

obituaries

Troyer, John N., 93, of Plain City, OH, died at his home April 24, 2006. He was born May 10, 1912, near Partridge, KS, son of the late Noah L. and Fannie (Mast) Troyer.

He was a member of Bethesda A.M. Church, Plain City. He was a retired farmer.

On Nov. 25, 1936, he was married to Edna Gingerich. She died April 28, 1986. He was married the second time to Fannie (Yoder) Gingerich. The first union was blessed with four children: Alvin (Cathy) Troyer, Plain City; Susie (Joe) Miller, Plain City; William (Sharon) Troyer, Sarasota, FL; David (Carol) Troyer, Plain City. Other survivors include 12 grandchildren; 27 great grandchildren; 11 step children and 44 step grandchildren; and seven step great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his first wife of 49 years and second wife of 11 years; brothers: Dan and Eli; sisters: Sarah Miller, Elizabeth Miller, Emma Gingerich, Barbara Troyer, Mary Yutzzy, and Fannie Stutzman.

Funeral services were held at Canaan A.M. Church, April 27, with Elmer Stoltzfus, Perry Troyer and Nelson Beachy serving. Burial was in the Canaan Church Cemetery.

Practical nonresistance makes a difference. Glenn Bender told the following story in his speaking assignment at the meetings of Mennonite Christian Fellowship held at Richmond, MO, April 22 and 23, 2006.

Jacob Frederick Swartzentruber, (1851-1924), was an Amish minister at Kalona, Iowa. Jacob and his family had a close neighbor who had a very hot temper.

One day the neighbor's dogs attacked the family milk cow. She was down and the dogs were about to kill her. The Swartzentruber sons were able to save the cow by driving the dogs off with clubs and stones. This made the neighbor very angry. He came to the Swartzentruber home with his shotgun. He lined up the parents and children and announced that he was going to kill the father, then the other family members. The minister father knelt down and prayed out loud for the neighbor's salvation. Their lives were spared.

Some time later the neighbor became ill. He called for Brother Swartzentruber because he wanted to get right with God. He was led to reconciliation with God during what turned out to be his final illness.

• • • • •

Glenn also related the following story about Abraham Lincoln: Someone once challenged Lincoln to a duel. The person being challenged was supposed to be able to choose the weapons to be used. Duels had been declared illegal around 1840.

When Lincoln was asked what weapons he would choose, he suggested throwing bricks at each other from about 100 yards apart. This idea was rejected as ridiculous.

"Well, how about using axes in close contact?" Lincoln asked. This was rejected as being uncivilized. Lincoln reflected in conclusion, "That's my point, there won't be a duel."

• • • • •

Our editor received an earnest letter in behalf of another person who has an unusual but very troublesome handicap. The problem has been identified as MCS (Multiple Chemical Sensitivity). He is sensitive to such things as perfume, hairspray, furniture polish, and other products someone in a large gathering might use. Certain cleaning supplies even create breathing difficulty. His sensitivity makes it hard for him to concentrate and thus to worship meaningfully.

The person who wrote the letter of intercession feels that the church would do well to try hard to under-

stand such a situation and to seek an appropriate solution. To see it as essentially a spiritual problem seems simplistic and erroneous. It is a very serious appeal that churches should make an honest effort to meet people's needs, even if they are unusual.

If there are spiritual problems it would be much better to address those than to isolate a person who is struggling for another reason.

We invite readers who have experience or information that might be helpful to write to the editor, who will use it in Reader Response.



A Canadian Mennonite father's child misbehaved in public. The father disciplined the child by spanking in a public place. A policeman told the father that he could be imprisoned for that. The father's response was: "Either I deal with him now, or you deal with him later."

The officer quickly agreed with this response, but suggested that this should not be done in a public place. (From a conversation with Jim and Vicki Bechtel, ID)



Again and again I am impressed that God's Word is an inexhaustible storehouse of treasures not to be found anywhere else. Central and supreme is the One Who is, Who was, and Who shall come, Who is the

same yesterday, today and forever. To commit our past, present, and future to Him is safe, and it is wise.

The first 18 verses of John's Gospel present Jesus in simple language, profound and glorious in grandeur. To as many as receive Him, He is Creator, the living and prophetic Word and the true light. He is God's provision for becoming part of the family of God.

Let us look more closely at verse 14: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

—Jesus was God incarnate, fully human and fully divine. He was the prophetic Word, temporarily clothed in human flesh, where He experienced the temptations common to humans, without sin.

—His glory—the glory of the Father, was apparent to those close to Him.

—He was *full of grace and truth*. Verse 16 mentions that, "Of his *fullness* have all we received grace for grace." Verse 17 repeats that "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Grace is the only way in which we can receive salvation. It is only by grace that we live the Christian life. It is Christ's continuing presence and divine enablement that makes the

Christian life authentic and victorious. The fact that this grace is offered from His supply of *fullness* tells us that we may draw on this supply of “grace for grace” (grace upon grace) at any time, day or night. So may countless other believers, without diminishing the supply of fullness. But grace has a companion word: Truth.

Not only is our Lord full of grace, He is also full of truth. Is it not true that truth is too vast for any infinite mind to grasp? But it is certainly true that to believe and receive the One who could make the exclusive claim that He is “the way, the TRUTH, and the life,” is our blessed privilege to experience. It is important to notice that the two concepts go together. To emphasize one without the other is a serious mistake.

Truth, properly mixed with grace, is friendly. It offers freedom and security. If we were to emphasize truth without grace, it can become harsh and legalistic. Perhaps the more common tendency, however, is to forget that grace without truth is not the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It can become an illusion of freedom that is actually bondage to self and sin. Let us eagerly receive both grace and truth that is sufficient for the present and the eternal hereafter.



The June issue of CM includes a

condensed version of the first message of the 2006 Ministers’ Meetings held at Sugarcreek, Ohio. Ernest Stoltzfus repeats a question that a young person raised: “Where is God when there is serious church trouble?” I offer the following points for your thoughtful consideration:

—While there is obviously too much tension and conflict in churches, is it not also true that there are many cases where leaders and congregations work together in beautiful God-honoring harmony?

—We notice that twice in Scripture, leaders are admonished to take heed to the flock, also to themselves and to the doctrine. When there are serious, unresolved, relational problems, it is at best a testimony to our humanness, perhaps also to our carnality.

—“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” Let us simply acknowledge the enemy’s role and influence in wanting to disrupt and frustrate God’s purposes for His church.

—Characteristics of a healthy Christian include: “the mind of Christ” (Phil. 2:5); “wisdom from above” (Jas. 3:17); and “the peace of God” (Col.3:15, Phil. 4:7). It seems highly unlikely that church trouble would develop or persist when these things are given their rightful prom-

inence.

—Disruption is the occasion for serious self-examination, which can be a painful exercise. But the rewards of doing so with honest, humble hearts are more than worth it. An unwillingness to do so by church

members, including leaders, would seem to give consent for church troubles to continue without satisfactory resolution. —DLM



Ministers' Meeting Messages—2006

This is a condensation of a message given at the annual Ministers' Meetings, April 4-6, 2006, at Sugarcreek, Ohio. The set of eight cassette tapes with 11 messages is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA 20136, for \$40 or a set of 11 CD's for \$45, postpaid.

2. A Healthy Balance in Preaching

—David Yoder, Partridge, KS

In 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Paul encourages Timothy to be the preacher that God called him to be. God has called us His ministers to preach, and Paul refers to preaching as foolishness. Why does God use what the world considers foolishness to win the world?

I found the book, *Biblical Preaching*, by Haddon W. Robinson, a valuable resource. It's a "how to" book. Though it's not written by an Anabaptist, it is instructive, and is almost "clean" of doctrinal com-

plexities that arise between us and mainline evangelicals.

Those who planned these meetings expressed a concern that we have among ourselves a tendency toward mostly topical preaching, to the corresponding exclusion of expository preaching. We may choose a topic and try to fit the Bible around it, even though we don't aim to do that. It is a worthy goal to take the Scriptures and develop our messages from them, instead of speaking from personal perspectives. We acknowledge the obvious irony of assigning a topic against topical preaching, but that is my assignment.

What is preaching? What is it to accomplish? Here's a homespun answer: A verbal declaration of the truths and principles or concepts of God's Word as a result of careful study and a personal encounter with God in his Word. Preaching is expounding and declaring the truths

of God's Word to yearning, needy hearts. It comes from someone who has spent time in the Word and has had a personal encounter with God.

Preaching is also an excellent opportunity to enhance Biblical literacy. While, comparatively speaking we may be quite literate, we have lots of room to grow in biblical literacy, which is apparently very low in many evangelical circles.

The purpose of preaching is to confront the hearers with biblical truths that don't change in order to change their hearts. It is to bring hearers face to face with biblical reality. It brings eternal truths to bear on temporal life. It brings people to meet a divine imperative. If at the end of a message our hearers are not challenged with what they need to change, perhaps we should ask, "Have we preached?" I believe that any message that is God-inspired, should bring people to a point of decision, even though it may not include an altar call, as such.

Some speak with less dramatic impact than others do. The important thing is that it reaches the heart. Unless we as preachers have been instructed, we will be handicapped—if not incapable—of effectively instructing others. To go to the Word of God to find a message that we can preach without first being instructed by that message ends up being an

empty experience for ourselves and those who hear us, most times. Let me offer one disqualifier: In spite of our weakness, the Word of God may meet needs in ways that exceed our preparation. God may take what the preacher says to touch one thing in a person's life, and another thing in the next person's life.

I've been amazed at how God has used preachers in the past who later were found to have glaring inconsistencies in their lives. So let's not underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit when His Word is preached. The Apostle Paul admitted, in fact, that it matters less to him how the Word is preached—just so it gets preached. That's not an excuse to get lazy or lame about it. It is to say, fortunately, that there is an overruling power when we preach.

In 1 Timothy 4:12-16, Paul gives specific instruction about preaching. Here Paul was driving home the point to young Timothy about the important part of being instructed by the Scriptures. Preaching is the preferred method that the Bible has prescribed primarily for addressing groups of people. In the Bible, the word "preach," or some form of it, is used some 151 times. Only 12 of those occur in the Old Testament, seven of them in Ecclesiastes. Whether it has something to do with how

the Greek [New Testament] was translated as opposed to the Hebrew [Old Testament], I don't know.

I don't want to discount messages in song, but the Scriptures make it clear that God's primary method is preaching. Here I offer one exhortation: Sometimes we have visiting choruses that come through on a Sunday morning. If the Kansas youth chorus ever offers to sing for you on Sunday morning, do yourself a favor—cut out the Sunday School hour, not the preaching hour. Preaching is prescribed. We are also to admonish each other in songs, but the greatest benefit comes to me when I sing it myself. While I enjoy hearing others sing, sometimes I find it a bit empty, and even performance-oriented to listen to singing.

Many Christians have fallen prey to the entertainment industry. We have been spared some of that. Our people, by and large, have not had their attention spans shortened by mass media. But I wonder sometimes if we don't struggle more with that problem than we realize. As an appreciation for the arts starts to grow in a people, one of the first challenges we face in preaching is to compete with it. I realize that God created the arts, or at least He has created people with exceptional abilities. People can develop great skill in things like

singing. The enemy has often taken that ability and perverted it. My acid test for the arts is this: When the arts glorify the artist more than the Creator, you've crossed a threshold. Preaching, by the way, is not an art. It is a result of serious, dedicated study. After studying for this message, I began to wonder, *Do I know how to preach? Do I really know how to study?*

Some of you who are scholastically inclined, can sit down and study and just love to dig and dig. Some of us struggle more with that. Most of us probably struggle with how we prioritize our time for study. One of the ways to deal with the problem mindset of entertainment is to come to Sunday morning's message well-prepared. The entertainment industry should bring no competition to our preaching. It takes an undivided heart to deliver a message that cuts to the heart and that reaches people.

Is doctrine practical? Yes, it is intensely practical. Too many times, we have come to believe that a doctrinal message and a practical message are somehow opposites. Unless doctrine becomes practical, it is not sound doctrine. What message is more practical than a message on salvation? What meets people's needs better than that?

If we are moved to bring a doctrinal message, let's not get up and

introduce it apologetically. It's not the time to say, "Please, be patient with me as I wade through this thing." The congregation will find out soon enough that it's hard to listen to. When I was learning the Spanish language, I developed a bad habit of saying as I walked into a store, "I don't speak Spanish well." Finally, I caught on how unnecessary that was. They knew that without my telling them. If you prepare your people for a boring message, they will likely expect one. Do yourself a favor: Approach it with the kind of freshness that says, "I'm going to preach you a message today that tells you about how you can change your life," instead of "Sorry, folks, I've got a dry one for you today."

Here are three different types of sermons: 1.) Expository sermon 2.) Topical exposition sermon 3.) Topical sermon.

To put the definition of expository preaching simply, it is a thorough study of the Word, applying it to yourself, then preaching it in such a way that the listeners get the message, and something changes in their hearts.

Topical preaching at its worst is when we choose to give only those Scriptures that go with our beliefs and what supports the conclusions we have come to. Not all topical

preaching is weak, especially topical exposition. Let us find a Scripture and let it speak. Let's be faithful in exposition of God's inspired Word.

Recently I heard a pastor preach who wanted to bring to his people a lesson on how to handle misunderstandings. He went to Joshua 22, where the land of Canaan had been conquered and the soldiers from Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh had gone home and built an altar by Jordan. Those on the other side of Jordan got all nervous about it. They came with their armies, ready to fight them. They did one wise thing: They sent a delegation to find out for sure what that altar meant. I was blessed by the sermon, but I noted one detail at the end of the story that would have "put the frosting on the cake." When Israel's 9^{1/2} tribes understood what the other 2^{1/2} tribes were doing, "they blessed God." That's different from having my brother declaring his position, and hostilities are called off, but I walk away saying, "I wonder, though, is that really true?" If we are not willing to accept their intentions, are we instead trying to support our interpretation of the situation?

One question that comes up is: "How did Jesus preach—topically or expositively?" In the January, 2006, *Informer*, there was an article entitled,

“Did Jesus Preach Only Topically?” I recommend it. The writer asserts that much of Jesus’ teaching was expository. He took Scriptures from the Old Testament, and put them into other words. Most of the Ten Commandments are restated in the Sermon on the Mount. We believe that He preached both expositoryly and topically. Of course, He had resources that exceed ours “by a country mile” by virtue of who He was.

How are we to prepare? How do we choose a sermon topic? It must be bathed in prayer. Allow the Lord to open our hearts to receive the message that He wants to bring to His people. Most of us have no excuse to be short-sighted, because we serve with a team of ministers, and do not preach every week. I concede that we can think we know what we are to preach about, and on fairly short notice, find that God wants something else from us. I leave room for that. However, short-sightedness is the thing that costs me the most when it comes to choosing and understanding what passage I should speak from.

The Holy Spirit can guide us over the “long haul,” not just the short term. Preaching through a book can be a very helpful thing. You might pick a series of messages, such as the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes,

or The Christian Home and the different facets of that. When I do that, I plan ahead further. I keep thinking about it and balance it better.

Specific needs in a congregation can guide us in choosing sermon content. If we try to avoid every reference to needs we know about, we may not get much said. One of the best ways I have found to choose sermon content is my own need. “Preaching from where I am,” is not fun, and demands the kind of honesty that hurts. Our hearers need to know that we are human and that we know it, too.

Be true to the context of a Scripture. If we violate the context, we do the truth a disservice. We may make applications that go beyond the specific context, but let us not establish a major doctrine on such a point. Robinson says, “To understand a paragraph or subsection, we must explain how it develops out of what precedes it and how it relates to what follows.” If we do that, it’s amazing how the Scriptures open up and interpret themselves. The Holy Spirit authored the Bible. He knew what He was doing, and we can depend on it.

Accuracy is important. Robinson says, “Accuracy—not to speak of integrity—demands that we develop every possible skill to keep us from declaring in the name of God what

the Holy Spirit never intended to convey.” Let’s be accurate with what we say, when we quote the Scriptures and when we interpret it. Let us understand, the best we can, what it meant to the initial audience and what it means to us today.

Robinson’s book lists many different study helps that are available. I have learned about lexicons and other study helps which I want to consult more than I have in the past. Understanding grammar and sentence structure can be important in helping us define and refine our positions on important issues facing us.

Preaching is a sacred stewardship that has been committed to us as ministers as a method of making God’s Word known in the earth. You can do with a gift what you choose. In a stewardship, you must give account. God has called us to feed our flocks.

It is easier for me to preach than to prepare. The hard work happens in the study. Preaching is not just lecturing, it is engaging your hearers with the truth of God’s Word, and leading them to interpret in their own hearts what God is saying to them.

I recently made a serious error in counseling a young man. He has many good values, but he finds reason to excuse himself for some of his choices. I made the mistake of throwing this Scripture at him:

Romans 14:23b, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Then I explained it to him. I should have asked him, “What does the Scripture mean when it says, ‘Whatsoever is not of faith is sin’? Instead of that I gave him the answer and I think it basically fell on deaf ears. If I would have left that question unanswered or if I would have let him take that question home with himself, it would have had more of an impact. We must engage our hearers that they answer to God, not to us.

Illustrations can be helpful. Here’s just a warning, though: Don’t always be the hero in your illustrations. I used to work with a man who told many interesting stories about himself. I wished sometimes he were the villain.

Quotations can be very powerful. Even secular sources can underscore truth to a skeptical audience. Here’s an excellent example of that from the Minnesota Crime Commission, commenting about human nature: “Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it—his bottle, his mother’s attention, his playmate’s toy, his uncle’s watch. Deny him these wants, and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness, which would be murderous, were he not so helpless. He is dirty. He has no morals, no

knowledge, no skills. This means that all children, not just certain children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of his infancy, given free reign to his impulsive actions to satisfy his wants, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist.”

Illustrations and quotations can be helpful, but they can also get in our way. They must serve the sermon, not have the sermon be built around them. We must bend ourselves to the Bible’s message; we must not bend

the Bible to our message. Unless the Holy Spirit interprets our speech, our words will fall to the ground. Preach it in the fear of God, not the fear of men. After all, what honors God most, serves men best.



mission awareness

Support Our Troops

Floyd Stoltzfus

You probably often noticed the ribbon-like strips on the rear of vehicles these days that say: “Support Our Troops.” What is the symbol saying?

For those who accept participation in waging war, it often means being willing to bid farewell to loved ones who will be stationed in a turbulent foreign land, and to face death in military action. To such people it implies helping to bear the strain and pressure of living in the frightful, horrible conditions of wartime. It emphasizes giving approval and

encouragement to soldiers facing the heat of mortal battle.

The question may arise, “How shall we as peacemakers of Christ’s heavenly kingdom support these troops?” First of all, we can thank God that Jesus settled the issue of paying our taxes, even if our government uses some of these taxes for defense. The Pharisees had tried to entangle Jesus by asking Him: “Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?” Jesus answered with characteristic wisdom: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto

God the things that are God's (Matt. 22:17, 21).

According to the Scriptures, it is inconsistent for Christians to participate in military service, whether combatant or noncombatant, whether in defense or offense. (See Matthew 5:39-45; John 18: 11, 36; Romans 12:14, 17, 19-21; 1 Peter 3:9.) His is a kingdom whose subjects are observant of all governmental laws and regulations that are not in conflict with scriptural teachings. This is a kingdom whose King, the Lord Jesus, has come, not "to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:56). For these reasons, we cannot: "1) Assist in the financing of war operations by means of bonds or voluntary contributions. 2) Participate knowingly in the manufacture of war munitions and weapons during times of peace or war. 3) Promote propaganda, agitation, or activities that tend to stimulate war hysteria or ill will." (Quotes from the booklet: "Statement of Position on Peace, War, and Social Issues" –Used by permission.)

We further believe that if opportunity would arise to care for the wounded and sick during wartime it would be our Christian duty to give equal treatment to all persons—whether friend or foe. The ultimate purpose in such cases would be to administer spiritual healing and

comfort by witnessing to the marvelous plan of redemption, even the forgiveness of sins through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.

While the Bible commands us: "Show respect for all men—treat them honorably" (1 Peter 2:17a – Amplified Bible), we cannot conscientiously support our troops in the sense requested. You see, soldiers are strictly trained to hate the enemy and when given opportunity, to take human life. Jesus commands us: "Love your enemies..." (Matthew 5:44) and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39).

Is not all human life sacred? We bear the image of God. In 1 Timothy 2:1-4, we are instructed to pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority." It is God's will that "all men" are saved and "come unto the knowledge of the truth." "All men," of course, includes officers of high rank, as well as soldiers of low rank. A problem is created in the fact that the responsibilities of civil rulers include retributive action forbidden by our Lord for his followers.

While it is not our assignment to judge men, we can pray that soldiers would come to the knowledge of the truth and allow the Holy Spirit to teach them through the New Testament that waging war does not belong to the Christian. We should

pray that such would then have the courage to submit their resignation from further military service and be willing joyfully to take up the cross of Jesus Christ.

Support our Missionary Troops

How can we support our “missionary troops”? We must surrender them to the work and station to which God has called them, in spite of dangers. If other families are willing to give their sons and daughters to a war cause, perhaps never to see them again, should not we as members of the heavenly kingdom be willing to surrender our sons and daughters to help poor, wandering sinners find salvation in Christ, even if it means

martyrdom?

Writing letters can be such an encouragement in times of stressful, laborious tasks. Regular mission offerings are biblical and necessary, if the work is to survive and prosper. Will your church consider arranging for a minister to be sent somewhere to visit members of your congregation on missionary assignment each year? Pray for missionaries by name, including the children. Pray regularly, fervently, and specifically. And if God calls you to some specific work, GO! And if not, help others GO, and let GO!



Are You Bored?

Cory Anderson · Harrisonburg, VA

What's in your refrigerator? Mine's boring. I have wrinkled grapes, three flavors of apple cider, two-year-old chocolate frosting, cherry yogurt, lemon juice, an egg, and a slice of pumpkin pie.

Open the fridge. Close the fridge.

My uncle tells me of a song he sang during the summer when school had let out to the tune of “He’s a jolly good fellow” with an alternate refrain, “There’s nothing to do, so I’m hungry.” I sing it, sing it again, plop down on

the sofa, look at Mom’s chore list, groan, hum that tune again, watch dust particles dance in the sunlight, and get back up again. What time is it?

Open the fridge. What’s there now? Oh, grapes, cider, more cider, chocolate frosting, cherry yogurt, lemon juice, an egg, pie—nothing new.

C l o s e t h e f r i d g e .
“MOOOOAAAHM! I’m bored.”

“Have you finished your chores?” Mom asks.

Run away until you can’t hear her any more—out the back door, past the

tire swing, into the woods, over the broken bridge, and onto the mossy rock. Sit and think.

Go home. Browse the dictionary. Ennui. *What's that?*

Ennui: (ahn wee) *n* dissatisfaction and restlessness resulting from boredom or apathy.

Apathy? "Hello, brother, this is a call from the Sunday School superintendent. Can you do devotions this Sunday?"

Run away as far as possible, until you cannot hear him any more. Find your niche in the forest, in the wheat field, behind the barn, far away from the house. Think: *What's wrong with the church today? Frumpy old people. Pick-and-choose standards. Apostate youth. Oh, of course, the church has ennui!*

That's what I mean by ennui, the most common energy behind periodic church duties. *Oh, really? We're all trying here and there in the church. I mean, we do what we can, even if we're not the best we could be. I don't always think of something to say when I have to speak in church, but I do it anyhow. It would be a cultural misdemeanor to turn down the request. I just talk about something from my personal devotions. It's enough to get by.*

We all want the church "to change for the better," "to be a haven for seekers," "to be a fellowship, a brotherhood," and all those lofty-sounding descriptions. But it seems like it's just the same most of the time. It would be nice if things were better. I want them to be better, but I'm just too bored with it all to put my all into it all. I'm dissatisfied, but don't tell anybody, especially, not me.

Let's browse the dictionary again.

Alacrity: (alak ri ti) *n* eager and enthusiastic willingness.

The phone rings: "Hello, brother, this is a call from the Sunday School superintendent. Can you bring us devotions this Sunday?"

"Uh, could you hold on a minute?" Covers mouthpiece with hand. "Yes, yes!" He's finally asked again. "Whee!" Simmer down, uncover mouth piece.

"I'd appreciate the opportunity to help, to serve. I want to do my part."

Somehow, things just got better, because I want to be there, to help, to do what I can. Boredom seems to start at home. Fortunately, enthusiasm can start there too. It all depends on taking responsibility for my interest.



DISCUSSION is an exchange of *knowledge*;

ARGUMENT is an exchange of *ignorance*.

House For Sale By Owner

Melvin L. Yoder, Gambier, OH

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Michael Lutalo of Uganda, Africa, observed that one seldom sees a “House For Sale By Owner” sign in Uganda. There you will see signs proclaiming, “This house is not for sale by owner.” In Uganda, if a house is left vacant, even for a very short time, someone may try to claim it and sell it. If so, they will have a false deed prepared and try to sell the house to some unsuspecting person. Lutalo then drew a personal lesson for us about how we regard our bodies. If we are willing to “sell” our bodies, there are many ready “buyers.”

The fashion world desires our bodies to display their latest fashions. The sports world wants us to display with our clothes the name of some sports hero or event. The jewelry industry is eager for our bodies to display their jewelry. The tattoo industry invites us to make our bodies permanent displays of...whatever. In any of these ways our bodies become, as it were, walking billboards.

As children of God, we are not to sell our bodies to display fashion or indecent semi-nudity as the world around us does. We want our dress, speech, and conduct to convey to the world that our bodies are temples of the living God. (1 Corinthians 6:19) and are not available to be pur-

chased or rented—or even gazed upon. God is not pleased with having us make statements of vanity and worldliness.

Betsy Patterson was once considered the most beautiful woman in America. Toward the end of her career she wrote, “Once I had everything but money, now I have nothing but money. I am tired of reading and all my ways of killing time. I doze away my time. They try to keep me up to the toil of dressing by telling me that I am a beauty. I am tired of life and of having lived.” Such was the confession of a woman who had outward, physical beauty but found neither peace of mind nor inner, spiritual beauty.

Modest church-prescribed dress has in it great wisdom for the flock of God. It builds on the precedent of apostolic decision-making practice in Acts 15. It brings with it the courage of brotherhood resolve. (Acts 15:25-27) As with the case of not eating meat offered to idols, (verses 28, 29), it does not earn one’s salvation, yet it provides blessing as it is practiced in faithfulness to Christ and His Bride. (Acts 16:4, 5).

May we adorn ourselves with the beauty of godly character. Transformed character most consistently adorns “the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Titus 2:10).

[Adapted with permission from *Beside the Still Waters*, May 17, 2006.]



It All Began in the Garden

Mary June Glick

God created a beautiful garden. He filled it with lush, green foliage, beautiful flowers and trees of varied size and description. Can you imagine a perfect rose, climbing bougainvilleas, annuals of every color and design? Animals roamed the garden, the songs of birds filled the air, and butterflies flitted from flower to flower. God even installed a special watering system, a mist that went up from the earth and watered the ground. God saw what He had made and said that it was good.

I believe these animals, birds, fish, insects, and even plants were created to show God's wisdom and to instinctively praise Him. The whole creation brings glory and much joy to the Creator because it works like He meant it to. But I believe that God also desired praise and fellowship by choice and that is why He created man. So this great God took a piece of clay (or dust) from the ground and with His hands He formed a man. He gave this man a body and then He breathed the breath of life into his nostrils and man became a living soul.

Man was given the responsibility to care for the garden. God further gave

man the opportunity to choose to do right by placing within the garden the tree of knowledge. He told the man that he must not eat of that tree.

God also saw that man needed a companion, a helper fitted especially for him. And so God performed the first surgery; He put the man to sleep. God took out of man's side a rib that He had planned for that very purpose and with it He formed a "man", another human being. But He made this creature a little different: He gave her a womb, so He called this "man" "woman," a man with a womb, enabling her to bear new life and to care for it. God also gave her special characteristics and equipped her with all she would need to fulfill her unique responsibilities as a woman. God brought this beautiful creature to Adam and presented her as the gift He had designed especially for him. Adam was very pleased with the gift and named her Eve.

I have been excited recently as I've been reading and studying the ways that the relationship between Christ and the church is a model for the relationship between husband and wife. Two of God's purposes for marriage are propagation and companionship.

Similarly, His plan for the Church is to provide fruitfulness and fellowship.

In the Bible God has given us His design for marriage. When husband and wife both follow this design, they experience blessings and joys which are a foretaste of the heavenly joys reserved for the church. Marriage is an earthly ordinance symbolizing that great wedding supper of Christ and the Church in heaven when earthly marriages will no longer be needed because the ultimate, eternal marriage will be completed.

Jesus showed us humility by submitting to His Heavenly Father. He gave up His own life on the cross. The Church (the Bride) is to be subject to Jesus Christ (the Groom) even as the wife is to be submissive to her husband. Do you desire to be a woman of humility? Then check out your “submission quotient.”

Can we willingly submit ourselves to that which God has placed in authority over us—civil regulations, guidelines of the church, and more personally, one’s husband? Submission and humility go hand in hand. Submission involves unselfish giving of oneself to one’s husband. It is also commitment, whether married or single, to live a life of service to others. The world around us needs to see women demonstrate such submission.

Next month I want to look at areas of submission for wives, and the fulfillment and security it brings to our lives. God’s plans are always intended for our good. He is interested in producing growth and maturity. I believe He has an ultimate purpose for all women that can only be realized as we follow his blueprint.



junior messages

Shine Like a Star

Anita Yoder

Do you brush your teeth? It should be done to keep that nice smile of yours. Keeping things clean keeps things working well. How about our minds? Do they need some brushing? A good way to brush your mind is to go out on a summer night and look up.

God created a perfect system that works perfectly. Many people enjoy gazing at the stars and find delight in their study. You may have learned to name some stars, yet there is more to this experience.

By looking up at the heavens we see God’s greatness and our own


smallness. We can let go of the trivial things that have clouded our thoughts. How small our anxieties seem when compared to the spaces that separate the stars! The distance may be compared to where you are in relation to some place in China.

Another benefit in this nightly brushing is to clean our minds of boredom and sameness. The night sky is full of variety. Each star has its own position and brilliance.

One of the beauties of the sky is that of uniqueness. How would it look if each star were the same size? Like maybe the size of the moon? One star is not a carbon copy of another, just like you are not exactly like

anyone else. There have been many great people who displayed godly character, but each person displayed it in a slightly different way. We are asked to follow Christ and to live by His Spirit and His help. But each of us must do it in our own place, with our own unique gifts and qualities.

In looking up at the sky we find relief in knowing that God has all things in His hands and under His control. We can trust such an awesome God!

So, after this mind-scrubbing, we might be able to shine a little brighter. How about it? Don't forget to brush your teeth; then step outside and brush your mind. 

youth messages

Dear Youth,

What has been happening in your heart, mind, and will this past month? Has the goodness of God been at work in molding your life to become a reflection of His image?

If you are like me, it is no easy thing to allow Him to use the day-to-day experiences as tools to shape us into useful vessels. The frustrations we face from day to day will "stiffen the clay," if we don't know where to take them. Yet as we hold these same frustrations in an open hand, and lift

them up to God, we discover that His yoke indeed is easy and His burden indeed is light.

Never in the history of the world has there been an over abundance of youth who chose to give their inner being to the shaping of the Potter. The Kingdom of Christ could still use a lot more youth who are willing to do this. The Kingdom needs youth who will give their heart to God, and not just their words or their time. Life does not need to make sense before we give our heart to God. Giving our

heart to God can happen now. Youth who give their heart to God DO influence their communities for good. Youth who do not...? Well, they will continue to focus on negatives, get frustrated, and become disillusioned. Maybe one of you readers could write

some more on this subject.

The youth who wrote this month have written a number of perspectives on what kind of heart a person must have if they want to be used mightily for God, even while they are young. —EE

This Month's
QUESTION

Many youth are discouraged with the negatives that they see in their homes and church communities. If youth want to be used by God to influence other people to reflect the character of God, what kind of heart must they develop?

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

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul speaks about the Body and how all the members are needed and how they all fit and work together. In verse 31, he mentions a more excellent way, then he speaks about love in chapter 13. Our heart should sorrow when we see the negatives, but we must focus on love. We may not become bitter and rebellious. The love we need to pass on to others comes from Jesus' love for us. Our hearts need to be soft, pliable and loving in spite of the shortcomings of those around us. Only when we have love in our hearts can we be a positive influence and be used of God in His work.

Conrad Jantzi, Wellesley, ON



Youth must develop a heart that is in tune with the Spirit of God and one that is committed to excellence. As God's Spirit speaks to us, we need to act. He may not always say what we think He will say, and He probably will lead us out of our "comfort zone." However, the fear of God must have preeminence over the fear of man. It's so easy to worry more about what our friends think than what God thinks. We like to go along with the "flow." We are too often content with mediocrity. Instead, we must strive for excellence. As we allow God's Spirit to take us beyond our own strength and abilities, others cannot help but see the difference.

Dwight Yoder, Salisbury, PA

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1 Chronicles 28:9 – “*And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him, He will be found by thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever.*” As I thought about this question, this verse came to my mind and sort of brought my thoughts together.

I think that first and foremost, I must have a personal walk with the Lord. My heart must be in tune with God’s plan and Word and I must KNOW Him. Then I must serve Him with a willing mind ready to do what He might ask. The promise that can be found many places in the Bible is that if I will get to know Jesus on a personal level and seek to know His plan, I must ask Him what He has for me. Then He will show me what He can do through me. But it all starts with a heart that is in tune with God, and one that is continually basking in the water of His Word.

Marcus Shupp, Kell, IL

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“*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*” (Mark 12:30,31). This

is the basis of our Christian life—to be filled with a genuine, sacrificial love for God, which then also flows out to the people around us. This means letting His love affect our daily, practical lives. A life that has a passionate love for God and shows it-self in its interaction with people, will sooner draw people to God than does discussing the negatives or criticizing our fellow believers. (Especially our ministers, who are ordained of God)

Also of great importance, along with a heart of love, is a heart that is humble. If *my people* which are called by my name shall *humble themselves* and pray and *seek my face...*, then will I *hear* from heaven and will *forgive* their sin and will *heal* their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Won’t God keep His promise if we do our part?

Tonya Yoder, Poperinge, Belgium

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Youth who want to impact their churches and communities must develop a servant heart. We need to recognize that to live as Jesus lived, is to live our lives for the benefit of others.

Nelson Beachy, Winfield, PA

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I think it’s sad when someone wants to follow Jesus to his or her fullest capacity and they stick out like a sore thumb in their church family.

We know that some are more spiritually mature than others, yet we all need that fire in us to live for Jesus.

I believe that our influence depends on the true condition of our heart. If our heart is right and we really want to be like Christ, we will show it in how we live. There is really only one thing that matters, and that is, “What does God think of me?”

Our heart must not go after earthly things, but rather the things of God. For example, it’s easy to see if someone is more excited about fishing for amphibians than fishing for men.

We must never be afraid to encourage someone to do what is right, or talk to someone who is involved in something that will hinder his or her Christian growth.

*Casey Gingerich,
Double Head Cabbage, Belize*



Wimps

When we think about the title, “Wimps,” what comes to mind?

- someone spindly, little, timid?
- someone who can’t stand and fight when battles are to be fought?
- someone who is willing to let another person fight for him?
- someone who has no backbone?
- someone often “looked down on” by men who are big, strong and tough?

Nobody likes to be described as a

wimp. A wimp. We men don’t like to be known as wimps! No siree! My friend, let me ask you a question... are you, yes, YOU, a wimp? Are you a wimp? When God asks you to do something tough, what is your response?

When God looks down and looks at YOU, what does He see, a wimp or a Daniel, a wimp or a David? Wimps? Yes, wimps! Are you wimpish when it comes to an opportunity to share the Gospel? Are you wimpish when peer pressure makes you feel like giving in to something you know you shouldn’t? Are you wimpish when it comes to standing alone for God? Are you wimpish when after you read this, you’ll not go out and make a DIFFERENCE wherever you can? Being a wimp in the earthly sense is very minor in comparison to being spiritually wimpish. Being a wimp in the earthly sense only has earthly consequences, while being a wimp spiritually has eternal consequences.

God said, “Occupy till I come.” What did He mean? Occupy the newspaper? Occupy the sports teams? Occupy the latest fashions? What did He mean? Luke 19:13 says, “And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.” Did He mean occupy church benches Sunday to Sunday twiddling our

thumbs? What did He mean?

In the parable the servants were supposed to gain pounds in accordance with the pounds their lord had given them. For what reason and purpose did God put us on the earth? We are supposed to stay on this earth, and plant the seeds of the Gospel in whatever way we can...you don't have to do anything fancy, just whatever He may tell you to do...DO IT! I can't exclaim enough on that point...DO IT! Even when it seems like the hardest thing in the world to do...DO IT!

When God called Abraham to offer Isaac, when did Abraham leave? After he said his good-byes to friends and family, the next week, next month? NO! He left immediately. Now what has that to do with us? Everything. God calls us ALL to follow Him. Let

me ask you another question, does following God seem rather hard sometimes? Yes! At times like these if you feel like giving up and playing the wimp, don't! God is right there beside you ready when you make that stand, that stand in which you're NOT just going to just go with the flow, and do whatever you feel like doing, but when God calls you... GO! Remember when God calls you to do something, He'll give you the strength you need to accomplish that task...all He needs is a, "Here am I, send me."

God calls us all to follow Him. Are you tripping on His heels, are you far behind, or are you following?

Wendell Sommers, LaSource, Haiti

Next Month's
QUESTION

What real life situation comes to your mind when you reflect on statements like these?

"Those who live the life of Jesus are not people who always act like Jesus; rather, they are people who tend to respond to life the way Jesus did when He was here on this earth."

"A person can't expect to act like Jesus in the moment, if he has not first committed himself to living the kind of life that Jesus lived."

Please send your response by the 20th of the month.



THOUGHT GEMS

No dream comes true until you wake up and go to work.

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The most dangerous position in which to sleep
is with your feet on your office desk.

• • • • •

You can judge a man not only by the company he keeps,
but by the jokes he tells.

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Kindness is the ability to love people more than they deserve.

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Remember others' kindnesses; forget your own.

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Knowledge is like a photograph. It can be enlarged,
but if it gets out of focus, everything becomes a blur.

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A person who knows everything has a lot to learn.

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Blessed is the man who can laugh at himself,
for he will never cease to be amused.

• • • • •

Laugh with people—not at them.

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