



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

Galatians 6:14

JUNE 2015

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Look to Jesus

Alaina Lee, Mooringsport, LA

Often in life there are times when we're down,
Discouraged, depressed, and forlorn;
A great load of care burdens every thought,
We're tired and weary and worn.

Not a thing in this world seems to lighten the load
Yet, somehow to add to it more;
Discouragement reigns, and despairing, we cry,
"God, what are You doing this for?"

We try all we can to forget everything,
We long to feel true peace within;
But even though how hard or how often we try,
It comes back to haunt us again.

"God, what are You doing? Why must we endure
Temptations and trials so strong?
Why is this so hard? Have You us forsaken?
Why are all these things going wrong?"

"My child, I *am* with you," our Savior replies.
"Have faith and look, trusting to Me.
I know what is best, and will work this for good,
Even though the end you may not see.

"I do have a reason—it's part of My plan!
I chasten the ones who are Mine!
My child, keep your eyes on the promise above,
This will pass in My timing divine.

"Be strong, and take courage! I will not forsake
The ones who belong unto Me!
Did I not declare in my unchanging Word,
That My children I will never leave?"

Dear Brother, be patient! Cling tight to His hand,
And keep your eyes set on the Lord.
He's true to His word—He will soon bring you through
Much stronger in faith than before.

(Dedicated to all my dear struggling brothers and sisters. May God strengthen you.)



Who Has the Key?

The April 15, 2015, Billboard Evangelism's weekly prayer letter, included the following prayer request: "Willie" (name changed for privacy reasons) and his wife of 23 years have four children. His wife worked away from home and had an affair with another man. It appears that she is sorry for her wrong, but Willie is bitter and unforgiving, seeking to end their marriage. His pastor feels Willie is justified to do so. However, our team member explained from the Scriptures that Willie needs to forgive in order to be forgiven, prayed with him, and gave some suggestions for showing love to his wife. Willie's heart softened some. Pray that his marriage will be redeemed through the power of our risen Savior.

June is the month of Father's Day. The foregoing prayer request brings up various aspects of what keeps the door open to a thriving marriage.

First, we note that "Willie" and his wife presumably decided that they needed a second income. Taking that job may have been justified, but it probably brought new pressures on their marriage. A "keeper at home" (Titus 2:5) can function in that place with great blessing to the family and fulfillment to her, if she sees it that way, but dissatisfaction in marriage takes contentment away. Regardless of how the decision was made for her to work away, with 23 years of marriage and the four children all possibly in

school, a short shift (for instance, at the school cafeteria) during the day would not tax the mother's strength like a full-time job would. Whatever took her out of the home, the way she handled the key to good marriage got her into trouble.

Secondly, we note that she sinned grievously against God and "Willie." How could her problem be "Willie's" problem? Well, the husband holds the key to much of what keeps a wife's heart at home, even when work calls her away. "Willie" may have been ungrateful for her sacrifices in behalf of the family. He may have urged her to take a job outside the home. He may have criticized her more than he thanked her. He may have been

unwilling to make sacrifices for her. In short, he may have neglected to love her as Christ loves the church. (Ephesians 5:25, 33) But, fortunately, Willie is now reaching out to someone who may help him go on from here. Will he find the key to domestic tranquility?

Thirdly, “Willie” discussed this with his pastor, and found that his pastor stands where many preachers stand on such betrayal. He who is to preach the Word of God seems to be fumbling the key in his hand. The exception clause to marriage (“except it be for fornication”) in Matthew 19:9, stands out because no other New Testament Scripture offers an exception to lifelong commitment. When we consider that the Gospel of Matthew was addressed to Jewish people who considered an engaged couple to be married, according to Matthew 1:18-20, we can understand why an engaged couple is given that option, but why a couple, once married, is not. 1 Corinthians 7 gives directions for a failing marriage, but offers no sanction for another marriage while the first partner is living.

Fourthly, she seems to be sorry for her sin. She finds herself at “Willie’s” mercy and he is bitter and unforgiving. “Willie” holds a key to happiness for both of them. Let us hope he stops and thinks how imperfect he himself is. Perhaps he finds that he has neglected

his relationship with Christ—and with his wife. He may find that when he looks squarely at their situation, he would do well to cry out with the penitent publican in Luke 18:13, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” The telephone counselor wisely pointed out that if he is unwilling to forgive, he destroys a bridge over which he must one day pass. Let us hope “Willie” sees that even though what his wife did is terrible, she could actually be receiving more grace from God than he is in refusing to grant her forgiveness. As long as “Willie” feels that his bitterness and unforgiveness are justified, he will not use the key in his hand to bring restoration. Until he becomes willing to let go of this wrong, he places himself in a prison of gloom.

Fifthly, this wife needs the key called “Patience.” She must give her husband time to process her wrongdoing. What she did is very evil and apparently very painful to her husband. Unless she sees and feels his grief, she fails him. Their situation is much like the sins we all have committed against God. As long as we make light of sin, thinking that Jesus is so willing to forgive that it must not be a big deal, we make light of our death-deserving actions and attitudes. Furthermore, we are heading for spiritual defeat.

Getting out of the prison of guilt

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul

sets forth truths applicable to this situation. Notice the list of offenders about which he writes, **“Know ye not the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”**

Clearly, the door to the kingdom of God is shut against those who sin with impudence. But we also know that the key to freedom is given to those who are genuinely penitent. What makes the difference is experiencing real *sorrow for* and *turning from sin*. So while it may seem to those who are asked to forgive that they are in a position to punish the wickedness of fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and extortioners, they *do not* hold that key. God holds the key with this pronouncement, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19b). God offers that key to offenders in this list but they can use it only when they use it with sincere repentance and faith in Christ. Otherwise, sin’s prison stays locked.

In verse 11, the offenders named in the list in verses 9 and 10 are given clear assurance that their past

sins cannot control them without their consent. Paul next wrote, **“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”** What changed? They sincerely repented. That key opened the door to forgiveness from God and to hope for a future with God. No one should hold shut a door in the face of those who truly repent!

So, if we would experience Christ’s presence, power, and joy in our marriages, we must acknowledge that we all stand in need of God’s grace. We must also find it in our hearts to forgive where we have been wronged and call on God for strength to treat our spouse with the honor, loyalty, and respect that we desire from them. Otherwise, we place ourselves behind a locked door with negative attitudes toward those who fail. At the end of life, if they used the key to freedom, it was in spite of our resistance to them. Furthermore, our journey through life will not have had the sunshine of God’s love upon it that the Lord Jesus longed to give to us.

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).



At the annual Calvary Publications Board meeting at Goshen, Indiana, on

April 7, 2015, the board encouraged replacing the ministers' meeting message with other good material. I am happy to oblige, but I had actually been thinking those were well read. Most of the board lacked confidence that these messages are well-read. We are planning soon to add a feature of interest about Christian schools. We

hope we can also publish character sketches of past heroes of the faith. Another detail: I was encouraged to include the name of the wife in an ordination announcement.

“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly” (Hebrews 13:18).

—PLM 

reader response

Re: Comment in Observations, April, page 20.

It says in the April issue (page 20) that the owners of Conestoga Wood Specialties settled for \$570,000 in legal fees in the Supreme Court case.

What does this mean? I thought the Supreme Court had voted earlier that Big Lots Co., Wood Specialties Mennonite would be exempted from the Obamacare thing. Could you write to me and tell me how this is?

Thank you very much.

I'm sending along a self-addressed envelope.

Homer Yoder, Sparta, TN

Response from Observations writer, DLM:

I contacted Conestoga Wood Specialties to find out more about the large sum of money reported by *World* magazine.

The Supreme Court ruled against the U.S. Government who brought suit against Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood Specialties. So the government was required to pay attorney fees and all court costs.

The company did not get any of this money. It went straight to those who had represented them.

Thank you for asking.



Announcement

The Christian Hymnary Publishers, Sarasota, Florida, have been receiving requests to print a large-print edition of The Christian Hymnary hymnbook. A project of this nature would require considerable resources. If anyone is interested in contributing financially to this project, they may contact the publishers by phone (941-373-9351; or by e-mail: songs4nations@verizon.net.



The New Mennonite Attention Span

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Did you know that our new attention span, surprisingly, is up? Not only for young people and children, but also for adults. This prediction defies speculation.

It is commonly believed that the American attention is shrinking, Mennonites included, or so we thought, because special meetings are greeted internally with “ho-hum!” Stories need to be shorter--books likewise. And sermons? Keep it short, Brother. That includes the devotional before Sunday School. That is also why this article is short.

Did you hear about the church that did an exit poll? People in attendance could select one of three choices. The poll revealed that 64% of the people that morning said the pastor spoke too long; 13% felt he didn't speak long enough, and 23% said they didn't know he had spoken at all!

In a time when people read less than formerly, visit less with each other and long stories are taboo, what takes up the slack? The answer creates little alarm and any supposed solution is like small potatoes.

But the smart phones and tablets easily generate l-o-n-g attention

spans. Consider this scene: A couple has traveled 10 hours in a 600-mile trip. These two adults are sitting in the living room to visit with two other “home” couples. The one visitor is on her electronic tablet checking information from her three married children in three other places. The man is on his smart phone periodically relaying his “interesting information” to the other two couples.

Within only several hours of arriving at the relative's house, they needed electronic support. The driver had a whole 10 hours of daylight without electronic input. It seems he could not call it a day without some electronic reference. Is the new smart phone the latest device to provide fodder for living room conversation? In a siblings' three-day get-away, significant blocks of time were spent on their laptops. At various times, most of the twelve adults were browsing and foraging on their laptops, making it the focal point of conversation for long periods of time. What a great way to have a family reunion, right? No way, neither for the have-nots, nor for those with the latest gadgetry. The attention span on the

electronic jungle has vastly increased lately and not only with young people. Meanwhile, “back at the ranch,” the attention span of vital connectedness on things that really matter, keeps getting shorter and shorter.

The Sunday morning service is also affected. The attention span is in a three-way split. There is the individual’s smart phone, the person next to him has a tablet, and up front is the preacher, called of God to communicate God’s message. The smallest piece of the pie goes to the sermon. Cell phones turned on in God’s house are a present-day abomination. Turn them off! Better yet, leave them in the car.

Texting during any part of the service is contemptible. It should never be done within the walls of God’s house, a place dedicated to and sanctified for the praise and worship of the God of heaven. Direct your praise and prayers to God, not to friends and relatives at some distant place, who at the moment should also be in God’s house. Texting is personally distracting and doubly so to the person to whom it is sent. Texting in God’s house is sin and needs to be repented of. Yes, it is that serious! Unless it is checked and put away, it will become worse and will be spiritually detrimental and spread like some virulent disease.

The Mennonite attention span is getting longer on electronic gadgetry

and shorter in social connectedness and individual meditation. Messages are helpful and pictures are wonderful. It can be enriching, time-saving, and beneficial. But it can also be so captivating and overtake one to an enslaving addiction. A guest in our home noted that church libraries are less active because so much is available on line. At that very moment, she was working on her tablet and thus entertaining herself instead of enjoying undivided visitor fellowship. Her husband also, whom God gave to be with her, was likewise on his own screen, chuckling to let us know he had found another juicy morsel.

Here is the burden of this article:

Do not take electronics into God’s house. If you discover your cell phone with you, discreetly turn it off.

Do not sit in someone’s house among your host or other guests working your smart phone, I-pad, tablet, or whatever.

If you must have your cell phone turned on in the presence of others, immediately remove yourself to a private place, so you can talk without disturbing others.

Teach your children and young people proper etiquette in regard to these matters.

Reduce your compulsion to be the first to tell others, or to hear the most recent, juicy news for the “electronic grapevine.”


Some of our children are becoming

screen-addicted. Why do children need immediately to see every picture taken with a camera?

The continuing array of new fingertip electronics is distressing. Distressing because of what our people spend to keep up with the latest. Distressing because of how many of our own are captivated by the pursuit of small talk and big vanities. Distressing because it too often has replaced real and personal fellowship.

Cell phones have greatly added to the talk, talk, talk about people. It is still true, and more applicable than ever, that **small minds talk about**

people, mediocre minds talk about happenings, and great minds talk about ideas.

The Bottom Line is that some of these matters have gone too far afield, and should be repented of. Current fads are subtle and one can easily be overtaken by them. Brotherhood evaluation is needed now more than ever, as the attention span in electronics gets longer and the attention span for spiritual matters gets shorter. “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth” (Romans 14:22). 

Relating to Authority— Bashing or Blessing?

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

About a decade ago, I started to draft an article on this topic hoping to slow the pace of church splits. Recently after listening to the heart cry of a former bishop who had walked around the bishop block a number of times, this unfinished venture of years ago came to my mind. Was it the Lord telling me to salvage this from my unwritten archives?

On numerous occasions I have sat with some of my bishop brothers and their ministry team and listened to complaints brought by laity. While

the ones with the complaints were encouraged to speak “the truth in love” as it relates to what they were feeling, (Ephesians 4:15) some of the charges felt more like a shock wave crashing into one’s spirit. There were charges of partiality, unkindness, shirking duty, and not preaching the Gospel, and the list could go on. In some situations it was the prelude to a division (a church split).

I’ve traveled around the bishop block. This responsibility is being given to a younger generation of

leaders. I 'm a former bishop, but still walking the journey of life. Now that I am keenly aware of tiptoeing on the edge of eternity and having heard the burdens on the hearts of my balding, graying, cane-carrying fellow ministers, I decided to resurrect my concern about bishop bashing, and we include preachers and school teachers in the list.

It's not unusual for a member to push the line on positions the church has taken, especially on issues that are not clearly defined in Scripture with a "thou shalt not." The member may come with a list of reasons why they see the church's position on the issue irrelevant. A young couple may want to include something "different" in their wedding. A young person may want to attend and support a certain seminar. Some members wear attire outside of the position which the church has taken to preserve modesty and nonconformity to the practices of the unsaved world. This list could go on. When discussing such issues with the bishop, he may hesitate to give his blessing. He can't exactly refer to a chapter and verse to give a simple explanation. Deep in his spirit he is not at peace that this is the best for the congregation. In his walk around the bishop block, he has seen a lot of examples where "little issues" lead to more serious struggles. He has observed from history where some things likely will take us. Therefore, he

may settle on the side of safety.

Soon the flood of accusations break loose. "He won't listen to new proposals." "He is not open to change." "His policy is, 'We've always done it that way.'" "He insists on his own way." "He is out of step with the times and the church." "If he can't preach the Gospel of Jesus, we need another preacher."

My personal testimony is that there were times when people wanted change, but in my spirit I believed it to be a little move in the wrong direction. I admit it is difficult at times to adequately explain so that others will understand. So another change surfaces. "After all this is 'our day.'" "We are the church now, and what they did twenty years ago isn't relevant anymore."

In the early years of my ministry, we had George R. Brunk II for a Sunday morning service. I was sitting to his left in the "Amen" corner. At one point, he looked at me and in his forceful prophet's voice reminded me that I must "give an account" to God for my leadership. The seriousness of that charge still lingers in my memory.

That same Scripture passage gives specific commands to the laity. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account for your souls, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews

13:17).

Two words clearly state the members' responsibility—obedience and submission. This is what the New Testament teaches for a smoother functioning of the church. I remember I didn't like that admonition in my early teen years, especially since I knew so much and the bishop seemed to know so little. That seemed to justify a little disobedience and non-submission. (That was another one of those attitudes I needed to correct with repentance.)

The New Testament instructs us that "elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Timothy 5:17). Several unpopular words in this verse are "rule," "honor," and "doctrine. The idea goes abroad that there should not be one who "rules." Everyone should have equal voice. While we Anabaptists embrace the brotherhood concept in pursuing direction for the body, someone must lead in administration and calling for obedience. Someone must give leadership for being an elder that rules well. Since the word from God refers to "elders that rule," the church would do itself a favor by keeping that in focus.

Then there is the commission to give honor—even double honor—to those who labor to teach us the word and doctrine of God. Some seem to ask: "How can a man lead with as many faults as our elder?" "How can

we honor someone who 'doesn't get it' and isn't on the cutting edge of issues?" "How can you honor an elder/minister who doesn't identify with my ideas?" But then, how about these questions: "Could it be that there are times when God is more interested in the laity learning this truth of Scripture than in giving the congregation the kind of elder they like?" "Might it be that God is indicating that when you learn and practice this teaching, then He will pour out His blessing on you in unexpected ways, and until then, it is rough going?"

Perhaps a lesson in respect and honor can be taken from a student in my adult class at summer Bible school some forty years ago. The class contained a wide range of ages and opinions. Included was a very vocal "women's libber." The discussion must have been "wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." One of the wives in the class forcefully popped a defying question, somewhat like the "trap" questions Jesus faced. "Doesn't there come a time and circumstance when she tells him he is wrong?" She gave this scenario: We are planning to go on vacation. The tires on the car are not safe for the trip. He doesn't seem concerned. Isn't that a time to let him know he needs to get new tires or I'm not going? In other words, isn't this a situation where the wife needs to call the shots?

What's the answer to such a pertinent

question in the midst of a women's liberation atmosphere? Here is the response: "Tell your husband you have a concern about the condition of the tires. However, since he is the head of your home and family, tell him, 'I will trust your decision for our safety and we'll all go on vacation.'" Then I added this, "Watch as he goes to the barn and see if he doesn't stoop over by the car and carefully check the tires."

This was a two-week morning Bible school with a closing program on the last Friday evening. The wife must have put some of the lessons learned into practice. The husband attended the evening closing program and thanked me for the positive difference Bible school made in their marriage. Giving her husband respect and honor paved the way for God to do a good work in their lives, and probably enjoy a much better life ahead. When this principle is practiced in church, God can add His life-changing blessings.

In the midst of differing opinions, it would be humbling for both parties if they told their bishop (minister, principal, teacher) that you are under his spiritual leadership. Therefore, since he believes what you want is not in the best interests of spiritual growth and fellowship with the Lord and His people, you will submit to his leadership.

What would that do? It would take the fight out of the situation. It would reduce resistance and allow the Spirit

of God the freedom to do a good work in the heart of both parties involved. God can do wonders when the attitude of submission is present. As the Bible says, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21). It is hard to help those who know so much but do not understand the beauty of submission.

Another word in this test is "doctrine." I have gleaned that the word "doctrine" is not a cherished word in some circles and congregations. You hear things like: "That's all our bishop talks about." "I'm tired of hearing about doctrine." "Why not just preach the love of Jesus, and let doctrine fall into place?"

The love of Jesus is doctrine. So is how to live for Jesus in a crooked and perverse world. The Scripture clearly calls for preaching "sound doctrine." "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). See also Titus 1:9, 1 Tim. 1:10, 6:3; and 2 Tim. 1:13 to see the importance God places on sound doctrine. The truth of Scripture calls for "double honor" for those who labor in "the word and doctrine." Doctrine is important to God. The church would do well to agree with God and give respect, honor, and encouragement to those who expound on it.

Why would a retired bishop raise concerns and call for giving a more earnest heed to these Scriptures? There are several reasons: It can be

a bit awkward for an active minister to expound on these important instructions in the Word. It can easily become an aversion. If he does so, he may hear: "He is setting himself on a pedestal." "He is becoming a like a dictator, a ruler who wants to lord it over the flock!" "He is seeking honor for himself."

I have a concern for the younger generation of leaders. I know that God can use adversity to cause us to more diligently seek Him., "When ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God" (1 Peter 2:20). Nevertheless, I hope they will not need to experience some of the bashing I have witnessed while on active duty in going around the bishop block. I hope for a more scriptural way of expressing concerns and correcting leaders who are thought to be going the wrong way.

Are leaders faultless? No, we are all from the same sinful stock of Adam. One of my egg customers many years ago, when he answered my knock on the door, looked toward his wife and said, "Mama, there is a saved sinner at the door."

God has given us some guidelines in His Word to practice in helping each other in our walk with and service to Christ. Here are several practical suggestions:

- Don't leave a sharp, critical, unsigned note in the teacher or minister's car for him to find after a church service. Be man or woman

enough to own your concern.

- Don't remind the preacher that you see a fault in him, then refuse to tell him what it is, and just tell him to pray about it. How will he know what concerns you? (See Galatians 6:1)

- Don't write a long epistle and read it to the ministers at a meeting, then promptly get up to leave, telling them you'll leave it between them and God. This violates James 1:19,20.

- Don't go home from a member's meeting in a huff and fire off an e-mail about your displeasure with the meeting, while your anger is still warm. (See Ephesians 5:26,27)

- Don't assure the minister of your support for his leadership, then change your mind without giving him a clue, till you publicly reveal it at a member's meeting.

- Don't pull a shocking surprise at a wedding by adding something unexpected and questionable that was not preplanned and approved.

Now for several positive, scriptural approaches:

- If the minister has an offending fault, put forth your humble side and give "a word fitly spoken" that is "like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). If you are concerned in your spirit of a fault, and you want to see him succeed, gently mention it in private. One Sunday I asked for a testimony from an inappropriate person. After the service, a concerned brother kindly put his concern in a

question. Immediately I knew I had crossed the line. I'm grateful for the many words "fitly spoken" to me over the years.

- Take Paul's instruction to Timothy into account. "Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses" (1 Timothy 5:19). If there is a serious accusation against your leader, follow this instruction of making the approach with several others to witness the encounter. Give him the opportunity to also have a witness.

- James gives safe guidance for approaching someone: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:19,20). After the minister has heard your concern, be quick and patient to listen till you understand his viewpoint. If you are making a request and he doesn't immediately embrace it, don't go away in anger declaring that he didn't hear you. Listen till you really heard the heartbeat of his hesitation which may be influenced by prior experience. Ministers listening to the young visionary and those "listening in," this may enhance the work of the church "in this adulterous and sinful generation" (Mark 8:38). If you swiftly deliver your speech of accusation with a touch of anger, don't expect it to work the righteousness of God. A Golden Rule for listening:

Listen unto others as you would have them listen unto you."

The church is walking through turbulent "perilous times" of fierce "despisers of those that are good." (See 2 Timothy 3:1-7) We are in an era of great deception where people are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). The Scriptures are the guide to truth. Adhering to the passages of Scriptures referring to respect and obedience to godly leaders is crucial in getting through today's fog of spiritual deception.

I believe some of our "church splits" could be avoided if we understood and practiced these principles of the Word. I hope the visions that young visionaries have for the church can be tempered by the concerns and cautions of those who have walked the leadership block, and who like Epaphroditis, "came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me" (Philippians 2:19-30). I hope we can blend our goals and wants for the future with those of our leaders who strive to maintain a church that is faithful to the Lord Jesus till He breaks through the clouds to receive His bride.

I hope we will be found faithful in being a church not of this world, proclaiming the redemptive "good news" of Jesus, till He returns and we stand before the judgment seat of Christ. After all, what else matters?



marriages

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

Byler-Mast

Bro. Joseph, son of Ray and Elva Byler, Whiteville, TN, and Sis. Melissa, daughter of David and Lucy Mast, Dickson, TN, at Dickson First Assembly for Lighthouse Mennonite Church on April 3, 2015, by LaVern Eash.

Coblentz-Stoltzfus

Bro. Michael, son of Andy and Clara Mae Coblentz, Owenton, KY, and Sis. Joanne, daughter of Elmer and Liz Stoltzfus, Woodstown, NJ, at West Park Methodist Church for Salem County Mennonite Church on Nov. 22, 2014, by Lee Stoltzfus.

Yoder-Miller

Bro. Aaron, son of Ernest and Mary Yoder, Parsons, KS, and Sis. Megan, daughter of Ronald and Brenda Miller, Oswego, KS, at Christian Church of Oswego for Cornerstone Mennonite Church on April 25, 2015, by Ronald Miller.



cradle roll

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

Beiler, Carlin and Hadassa (King), Catlett, VA, fifth child, third daughter, Kaitlyn Elise, Feb. 24, 2015.

Eash, Donnie and Marlene (Wengerd), Cumberland Furnace, TN, third child and son, Trenton Andre, Feb. 23, 2015.

Jantzi, Darren and April (Overholt), Wellesley, ON, second child and son, Wilson Erik, April 6, 2015.

King, Eldon and Monica (Beachy), Harrison, AR, fourth child, second son, Ethan Myles, April 1, 2015.

Knepp, Phil and Melisa (Grabber), Odon, IN, fourth child, third son, Reggie Lamar, March 6, 2015.

Lehman, Erikson and Marilyn (Kauffman), Weldon, IA, first child and son, Kenton Wade, March 28, 2015.

Miller, Brandon and Rosanna (Stoltzfus), Dundee, OH, first child and daughter, Olivia Joy, March 23, 2015.

Miller, Jeremy and Marla (Bender), Rural Retreat, VA, sixth child, fourth daughter, (one daughter deceased), Kaitlyn Rachelle, April 3, 2015.

Miller, Loren and Amanda (Miller), Eden Valley, MN, fifth child, fourth daughter, Kierra Grace, April 12, 2015.

Miller, Timothy and Deborah (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, first child and son, Jadon Eric, Dec. 10, 2014.

Nisly, Larry and Amy (Yoder), Antrim, OH, sixth child, third son, Ty Robert, April 7, 2015.

Peachey, Philip and Gina (Beiler), Harrison, AR, third child, second daughter, Isabella Hope, March 28, 2015.

Stoltzfus, Kyle Eugene and Anne Renae (Stoltzfus), Coatesville, PA, second child, first son, Benson Micah, April 4, 2015.


Correction: **Yoder**, John and Sharon (Hostetler), Lyndon, KS, first and second children, sons, David Otavio, July 22, 2010 and Kylan Jacob, born June 17, 2011. Received by adoption, Nov. 22, 2014.

Yoder, Roman and Brenda (Miller), Belvidere, TN, sixth child, second son, Ronald Alan, Jan. 12, 2015.

Yutzy, Gideon and Esther (Yoder), Hutchinson, KS, second child and daughter, Charlotte Barbara, April 2, 2015.

Zook, Danny and Karen (Zook), Belleville, PA, third child, second daughter, Ada Marie, Jan. 22, 2015.


Zook, Kenny and Melissa (Peachey), Mifflin, PA, fourth child, second son, Tanner Mark, March 23, 2015.

Note: I have an incomplete birth announcement for the Michael and Rosina Yoder family. Could this announcement be re-submitted with complete details? Thank you! 



ordination

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

Bro. Matthew Ropp, 33, (wife: Sheila, nee Erb) was ordained as deacon for Fellowship Haven Church, Monkton, Ontario, on April 12, 2015. Preordination messages were given by Enos Kurtz, New York. The charge was given by Laverne Ropp, assisted by Rudy Overholt, and Arnold Jantzi. Ronald Jantzi and Darryl Kuepfer shared the lot. 

Eicher, Eugene, 65, of Grabill, IN, died April 12, 2015, at his home after a seven-and-a-half year battle with cancer. He was born in Grabill, May 15, 1949, son of the late Daniel and Marie (Graber) Eicher.

Eugene was a member of Fellowship Haven Church in Woodburn, IN, where he served as bishop for 38 years. He was part owner and operator of the family business, Eicher Excavating. He enjoyed farming and spending time with his family, but his greatest passion was to tell others about Christ.

On July 6, 1968, he was married to Margaret Lengacher, who survives. Also surviving are four children: Debborah (Roman) Miller, Spencerville, IN; Dewayne (Laura) Eicher, Spencerville, IN; Deloris (Jonas) Bontrager, Spencerville, IN; David (Clara) Eicher, Saint Joe, IN; 16 grandchildren; one great grandchild, three brothers and three sisters.

Preceding him in death was a son, Darin Eicher and a sister, Phyllis Eicher.

The funeral was held at The Ekklesia of Harlan on April 16, with Tim Eicher, Howard Eichorn, and Andy Coblentz serving. The committal was conducted by Homer Zook, with burial in Fellowship Haven Cemetery.

Mast, Fannie B. (Yoder), 104, died April 20, 2015, at Corn Heritage Village, Weatherford, OK. She was born Nov. 5, 1910, in rural Thomas, OK, daughter of the late Benedict T. and Mary Ann (Bontrager) Yoder.

She was a member of Zion A.M. Church, Thomas. Fannie enjoyed working alongside her husband on the farm north of Weatherford. She also enjoyed cooking and being with the family.

On Sept. 23, 1943, she was married to John B. Mast. He died Dec. 10, 1997. Survivors include Perry Jay (Mary) Mast, Weatherford; Barbara Ellen (Leroy) Lambright, Topeka, IN; 11 grandchildren, and 17 great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by twin sons, Alvin and Melvin in 1944; daughters: Mary Ann in 1993, and Florence Katherine in 2010, and by four sisters, Malinda, Edna, Clara and Bertha.

The funeral was held on April 24, with Leroy Peachey, Freeman Yoder, and Gary Miller serving. David Yoder conducted the committal in the Zion church cemetery.

Correction obituary, (April, 2015):
Mary B. Miller, age at death was 95, not 93.

Schrock, Wayne L., 78, of Nappanee, IN, died Nov. 6, 2014. He was born April 29, 1936, son of the late Levi J. and Martha (Miller) Schrock.

He was a member of Maple Lawn A. M. Church, Nappanee.

On May 16, 1957, he was married to Elizabeth "Betty" Hochstetler, who survives. Other survivors include three daughters: Lorraine (Jonas) Gingerich, Nappanee; Verda (Joseph) Gingerich, Sarasota, FL; Ruth (Reinhart) Burkholder,

Milford, IN; 13 grandchildren, two great grandchildren; brothers, Mervin (Anna Mary) Schrock, Ernest Lee (Anna Mae) Schrock, both of Goshen; sisters, Anna Marie (the late Ervin) Miller, Millersburg, OH; Verda (Perry) Yoder, Goshen, and Vera Mae (the late Joe) Yoder, Middlebury.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a son, Lyle Dean; brothers, Freeman (infant) and Wilbur.

The funeral was held Nov. 9, at the Maple Lawn Church with Thomas Mast, Gary Burkholder, and Paul Yoder serving, with burial in the church cemetery.

Troyer, Mose A., 85, of Sugarcreek, Ohio, died at his home after a short illness, March 26, 2015. He was born May 23, 1929, in Holmes County, Ohio, son of the late Abe A. and Lizzie Ann (Yoder) Troyer.

He was a member of Maranatha Fellowship Church. He was involved with Water for Life in Haiti. He was a farmer and a truck driver.

On Nov. 15, 1951, he was married to Elva M. Yoder. She preceded him in death on March 14, 2013. Surviving are children: Glenn (Esther) Troyer, James (Ruth) Troyer, and Tena (Marion) Mullet, all of Sugarcreek; Dora (Henry) Beachy, Dundee; and Dean (Susan) Troyer, Millersburg, 18 grandchildren; 36 great grandchildren; brothers, Jonas A (Miriam) Troyer, Wooster; and Wayne A Troyer, Sarasota, FL.

The funeral was held at Maranatha Church on March 29, with Paul Leroy Miller officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.


Correction obituary, (March, 2015):

Emma Wagler, should have included the following line: "She is sadly missed by her brothers, Norman (and Amy) Zehr, Jacob (and Alma) Zehr, and Elmer (and Ethel) Zehr."

Zook, Jonathan S., 44, of Rural Retreat, VA, died on April 5, 2015, after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was born Oct. 15, 1970, son of Wilmer and Esther (Stoltzfus) Zook.

Jonathan was a member of Light of Hope Christian Fellowship. He was a devoted husband and father and will be greatly missed.

On July 6, 1991, he was married to Mary Ann Stoltzfus, who survives. Other survivors are children, Randall (Mary) Zook, Justin, David, Jeremy, and Carlin, all of Rural Retreat, VA; parents, Wilmer and Esther Zook, Rural Retreat; brothers, Matthew (Sheryl) Zook, John Mark (Sue Ann) Zook, Chuckey, TN; Nathaniel (Celena) Zook, Rural Retreat; Anthony (Judith) Zook, Wytheville, VA, but currently serving in Kenya, Africa; sisters: Betty Ann (Ben) Stoltzfus, Statesville, NC; Nancy (Leon) Esh, Wallingford, KY; Barbie (Jeremy) Raber, Chuckey, TN; Miriam (Jason) Sommers, Rural Retreat, and Arla (Noah) Miller, Wytheville, VA and many nieces and nephews.

The funeral was held on April 9, at Light of Hope Christian Fellowship with Millard Yoder, Wayne Yoder and Richie Lauer serving. Burial was in the Light of Hope Church Cemetery. 

A 20/20 spiritual vision. The reason many people wear glasses is because their vision needs some correction. Persons who are neither near or far-sighted usually do not need glasses. An awareness of needs in “Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth” indicate good spiritual vision. In our day, instant communication provides information of serious needs from far away places. Usually these needs are both physical and spiritual. Needs close to home are also worthy of our helpful attention. A willingness to be useful as ambassadors for Christ either locally or in a foreign field indicates good spiritual vision.

To recognize those who have left the comforts of the familiar to be a Christian witness in some foreign culture is very much in order. But, as a local observer recently pointed out, the full-time Christian mother of young children may be a lesser-noticed, but equally important, laborer in the Kingdom of Christ. Further, with the care that disabled seniors require, full-time service takes on various forms.

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It occurs to me that healthy vision is not only geographical, but also time-related. Time divides naturally into three parts—past, present, and future.

We need to pay careful attention to the Old and New Testaments and notice that our gracious God blesses those who honor Him with faithful obedience. God is not only gracious, but also righteous.

His righteous judgment is repeatedly manifested throughout the OT era. That side of God’s character was expressed when our first parents were driven from the the garden. The great flood illustrates God’s judgment on wickedness, but also His mercy to Noah and his family. The same can be said of Sodom and Gomorrah’s destruction when faithful Lot was spared. God’s dramatic rescue of several million people from the slavery of Egypt is another example of His abundant mercy and His righteous judgment.

It is sad that so few of those rescued from Egypt and supernaturally spared from their pursuers at the Red Sea actually made it into the Promised Land. What is the explanation? Hebrews 3:19 says, “they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

It is sobering to notice all that went wrong in a forty-year period. The low point of their unbelief was demonstrated when they assumed that the giants were more than a match for God.

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul refers to

the fact that all of them had a good start, but with many of them God was not well pleased. We are admonished to “not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (verse 6). Paul is very explicit and forthright in mentioning five specific failures and consequent judgments. Why would Paul mention such negative examples? His answer: “These things are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.” He is saying we should take heed. We are human, too. A good start must be followed by a faithful journey, if there is to be a successful finish. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (v. 12).

May these examples protect us from a misguided false sense of security. Reverence and godly fear and humility are needful. But we need not despair. Though the journey is perilous, God is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able to bear” (v. 13). Our yieldedness focused on God’s faithfulness is the formula for victory even in perilous times.



Wisdom and intelligence may be somewhat related, but are certainly not synonymous. Schools have access to IQ (intelligence quotient) test scores. High-scoring students have the potential of making significant contributions in their field of endeavor. This could be expressed in the area of manual skills or perhaps in the

more sophisticated areas of science or technology. Whatever the level of intelligence, it is God-given. It is not a gift to be used selfishly. A wrong response to God’s gift of intelligence is a serious mistake. Intelligence in the absence of wisdom can become a damaging liability. It may assume that superior insights are license for insensitivity toward others. Relational damage can have immediate and long-term effects. It should not and need not happen to Christians. To the extent that wisdom is given its proper place it is altogether preventable. Quite simply, wisdom is the right use of knowledge. “Wisdom from above” (James 3:17,18) is a powerful recipe for good human relations, whatever our IQ level.



Some time ago, a visiting minister at Center Church noticed the presence of quite a number of seniors. He remarked that there would likely to be many funerals in the next 20 years. Since funerals are a very common occurrence, I offer some observations.

- It is a solemn reminder that human life is short, ultimately terminal, whether the departed one is a senior or a much younger person. We are forgetful people and need such reminders.
- It is a memorial service for the departed one. Attendance shows respect for the departed one and support and sympathy for survivors.

•Message bearers face a major challenge to bring messages that are pleasing to the Giver of natural life and eternal salvation.

•The departed one is the reason for the funeral service. It seems appropriate and comforting to mention positive attributes of that person.

•It is not an evangelistic service, but the occasion and the messages should be a solemn reminder to all to always be ready for the final summons.

•Meeting in the presence of the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort should remind us of God's desire to be among and within us not only for this special occasion but always.

—DLM



As a child, I loved to read—and still do, by the way. From those “yesteryears” I don’t remember many story books for children written by or about conservative Anabaptist people. In the last decade or so, that seems to be changing. We can now populate our book shelves with a nice variety of story books for our children with material in which we appreciate both the source and the content.

While I rejoice to see people of “like precious faith” dip their toes into the pool of authors, I wish we had more authors who would churn out study material for theology, philosophy,

apologetics, hermeneutics, and so on. For instance, if you were assigned to teach a topic at your local church winter Bible School on the doctrine of salvation, would you consult any sources outside of the Bible? If so, how would you determine their trustworthiness? I don’t wish to imply that all non-Anabaptist sources are suspect, nor that Anabaptist sources mean that we can deactivate our need to “prove all things.”

My hunch is that the dearth of this type of material originating among our people is due to a variety of factors. I’ll let you ponder the accuracy of my impressions and their “fixability.”

•Publishing books is expensive. If the market doesn’t support a book, the publisher needs to underwrite it in some other way.

•As a people we have emphasized the importance of *being and doing*, rather than *explaining*. For example, it is more important to be saved than to understand and explain how it all works.

•The production of this type of material usually comes as a result of much study. Many of us can point to a disappointing experience with higher education in close family or acquaintances. This gives us reservations about higher education. Certainly, where higher education is desired or needed, it should make us prioritize environments and sources

that reinforce those values that build faithfulness in our families, communities, and congregations. If you suspect that I'm referring to places like Calvary Bible School and Faith Builders, you heard me right.

Several months ago in our living room, I was visiting with a brother who just happens to contribute material for Calvary Messenger. Our conversation turned to writing and a commentary he was writing on the Gospel of John. I'm enthused that he's undertaking this project. I told him that I'd be happy to own and consult a commentary like this. I wouldn't need to apply the same scrutiny to his book as one from a source I don't know. But I wondered to myself, if this book is published, will enough of us buy it to pay for its production?

[Editor's comment: I find the writings of Daniel Kauffman, John C. Wenger, and George Brunk of the 1900's helpful. The 15-volume New Testament commentary by Brethren Revival Fellowship, edited by Harold S. Martin is very good. The recent writings of David Bercot include books of historical and theological depth. Blessings on those who take both scholarly and practical biblical interpretation seriously.]



Mennonite Your Way was established in 1976 with the stated purpose of reviving an old Anabaptist tradition. The current directory lists about

1,700 hosts in 60 countries where Anabaptist and like-minded believers offer to be contacted to provide lodging for similarly minded travelers.

Several incidents come to mind regarding hospitality that make me think we might need a bit of a revival of this tradition.

One young man was on a year-long quest to find a conservative Anabaptist church. He drove about an hour and a half one Sunday morning to attend one such congregation. His heart was warmed as he sat in church thinking that this was what he was looking for. The people were dressed modestly, everything was very orderly and, lo and behold, the message addressed the need for hospitality and welcoming strangers. He hoped the opportunity might come to visit one of their homes where he could talk more about their faith and practice. But alas, nobody invited him. Sometime later, he did find another church closer to home. He visited there and his experience was different. The first Sunday he was invited to stay for a church fellowship meal and on subsequent visits, he ate many Sunday dinners in members' homes. Today he is a member of the second congregation and makes a tremendous contribution there.

One of our communities recently hosted a large event that brought a good many people to the area who needed overnight lodging. Some of

those guests stayed at local hotels. I didn't investigate whether the guests preferred it that way, or if there weren't enough beds offered. During incidental conversation a local person commented about one family who declined to participate in the hosting opportunity. They had four children who each occupied a bedroom, but either the parents or the children decided that they'd prefer not to participate this time. I have no idea what their reasons were.

During discussion regarding an upcoming wedding in one of our communities, one of the persons involved with wedding planning said that they had decided not to appoint a lodging coordinator, because the new way to do it is for people to just go to motels.

Many of our churches have an organized Sunday morning host program, so that no visitors "fall through the cracks." I believe that the intentions behind this idea are very good, but I wonder if in the long run, it might foster an attitude toward hospitality that says, "It's not my turn." Wouldn't it be better for a Sunday morning visitor in church to get half a dozen invitations than only one because it was the host's turn?

In 1 Peter 1: 4:9, Peter commented this way: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." As hosts, let's not wait until it suits perfectly, or we have impeccable accommodations

and food, before we enthusiastically exercise this privilege, even if it might mean rolling out the sleeping bags on the floor for some of the children or serving egg sandwiches for Sunday lunch. The invitation and the welcome are what is most important.



In about 1979, my mother, Mary (Beachy) Miller, wrote the following letter to national syndicated columnist, Ann Landers. Ann never published it in her column, nevertheless friends Calvin and Judy King encouraged me to include it in this column. I think it speaks to one aspect of effective parenting.

Dear Ann:

I read with interest your response to the father who was objecting to his wife's goal that their children learn to eat of everything that is being served at mealtime.

I would like to share something of my experience along this line. I am the mother of 12 children. My husband is not a finicky eater. I too felt that children should learn to eat of everything that's prepared. One of the keys to success in this, I feel, is to start the meal with thankful hearts, by simply acknowledging God as the giver, in prayer. Just seeing mature people enjoying good, wholesome food provides a good example. I insist that each child has a portion, however small, of the different foods served. Eating this food while it is still hot or

cold, as the case may be, helps much to learn to like it, therefore a minimum of dawdling should be permitted. After our tenth child was 11 years old, I felt well rewarded as not one of the them had more than one food dislike. I like to allow that an individual may have a few foods he doesn't care for, but I see no need for a child to come to mealtime and capitalize on the things he doesn't like and feel himself in a special class because of his superior judgment.

We added two sons, aged 8 and 10, by adoption, to our family from Central America. I was aware that this could well be a real test of our "eat everything"

system. I am happy to report that after 18 months, they have come to eat and enjoy most of our foods, and we have learned to eat and enjoy rice and beans and tortillas.

Recently our 18-year-old told me she is glad that we taught her to eat of everything being served. She reported that her friends have expressed amazement that there are so few foods she doesn't like. Isn't this the kind of preparation for future mealtime encounters that every child is entitled to?

Mary Miller

—RJM 

What Can The Righteous Do?

Johnny Miller, Minerva, OH

The Psalmist aptly wrote, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3).

Today the very foundations of our faith and religious freedom are under attack as never before in the history of our nation! What is happening? Why are American teachers afraid to speak of God in their classrooms when in years past the Bible was considered an integral part of American education? Why is school violence escalating across America and mass killings grabbing our news headlines? Hardly

a week passes until we hear of yet another parent who has murdered his or her children and then committed suicide. What has caused immorality to escalate on every hand and vile, blasphemous, and anti-religious speech to become so common among Americans?


What can the righteous do? Billboard Evangelism has given CAM (Christian Aid Ministries) a window to view the shocking decay

of American society. There are so few professing Christians who are truly Christ-like. It is rare to find one who is sound in faith and truly living by New Testament, Kingdom principles.

A serious question then arises: Is there enough godly salt left to preserve our nation? Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).

America and its leadership are at a crossroad with the coming elections. What can the righteous do? Beloved, we can pray as did the saints of old! Our people, we fear, have been far

too complacent, trusting the arm of flesh rather than imploring the God of Heaven. We need repentance! We need renewal! We need revival!

What can the righteous do? If we expect to move America toward God, then we must shake Heaven with our prayers! God’s Word is ever true! Join us in fasting and praying! **If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”** (2 Chronicles 7:14). 

The Maiden and the Miniskirt

Elaine Gingerich, Parry Sound, ON

I was in my teens in the 60’s when the miniskirt ripped apart the fabric of North American modesty, tore the word *shame* from the vocabulary of its women, and seared the conscience of mainstream Christianity. No, I never wore a miniskirt, but I still was affected by it. I was attending a school of nursing at the time and watched the drama unfold in the lives of my fellow students. Some became very daring in their wardrobes. One girl, who was a Christian, questioned me about why I dressed as I did. Then she said, as she tugged at her above-knee hem, that since her skirts were longer than the

most extreme current style, she was being modest.

My parents encouraged me to be conscientious and follow our church guidelines, so I was already accustomed to wearing longer dresses than most women. I had been the first Mennonite to wear a head covering to the local public high school, so I was used to being conspicuous. At the school of nursing I wore my cape dress and veiling for classes. But we were required to wear the student nurse’s uniform while working in the hospital. They were not miniskirts, of course. However, the skirts were still

considerably shorter than my dresses.

I can recall to this day the feelings that stirred within me when I wore the uniform. I was a conscientious Christian girl and timid as well. But when I wore the uniform, I was just simply more aware of my legs. There was an added temptation to wonder if others were noticing and finding me attractive. I had to fight the impulse to flaunt my form. I don't recall struggling with those feelings when I wore longer dresses.

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Now, in 2014, as I watch the hems climb again, I am concerned about the pressure on our young women to fit in, to experiment. So easily the legs can become the focal point of the wardrobe with light-colored hose no longer hidden by long skirts, and with shoes color-coordinated to draw the eye. I know that even sincere Christian women who want to be modest can be tempted in these areas. Just check out photos from the decades after the miniskirt was introduced.

I hurt for Christian girls and young women. Do they recognize the sensations and fleeting thoughts—the impulses that move them? Are they aware of the struggle that men have when they are exposed to so much of the feminine form? If our young women conform to fashion innocently, surely we mothers cannot claim ignorance. Surely, we also carry a burden for the moral purity of our

sons. Are we too timid to instruct and warn our daughters? What if they follow the fads of Christian girls who wear short tight skirts that expose the knees when they sit down? Does this concern us?

The conservative Mennonite church that our family had begun attending when I was 11 years old taught modesty and simplicity in dress. The standard for skirt length was at a minimum midcalf. However, not all young women could resist the pressure to raise the hems until the knees were barely covered. In the traditional Mennonite church my family had attended when I was a child, the hems climbed upward as well to reflect the current fashion. There are sincere Mennonite women of faith who look back on their wedding photos from that time with some discomfort.

I was pleasantly surprised in the past number of years by the trend of longer skirts. When I lengthened mine, I discovered there were a variety of benefits, from increased modesty to warmth in cold weather. But at the time a warning was given. Are you just adopting longer skirts because it is now the fashion? Your true motives will be revealed when the hems rise up and long skirts go out of style. “What will you do then?” was the question we women were asked.

Now is the time for our answer. Only we can know the motives of our hearts, and even then, only as we ask God to

reveal them to us. His Word discerns our thoughts and intents and is alive and powerful to convict where we may be reluctant to examine. The impulses that we can barely understand or interpret, God knows perfectly well since He made us and comprehends us body and soul. His dream is to preserve our purity, to cover our spiritual and physical nakedness, and to present us a spotless, blameless bride to Christ.

Let's keep the word *shame* in our vocabulary. This is not a call for everyone to wear ankle-length dresses.

In fact, the long skirt, too, can be very immodest if formfitting and undergarment-revealing. Instead this is an appeal to each godly sister to stay as far away as possible from the brazen shame epitomized in the miniskirt, and instead choose the shame of the cross. Then, some day, we can be presented fully clothed, in glorious bridal white, to our heavenly Bridegroom.

[Reprinted from Companions, August 31, 2014. Selected by Ken Kauffman, Huntsville, AR. Used by permission.]



True Intelligence

Steven Lee Wiley, Columbia, TN

“Be not wise in your own eyes; reverently fear and worship the Lord and turn away from evil” (Proverbs 3:7 NKJV).

Would you be truly intelligent? Book learning isn't enough. You must also have spiritual knowledge. This includes being able to tell the difference between what is good and what is evil and choosing the good. As you avoid what is sinful and harmful to your soul, giving thanks to God, carefully doing what is good and what benefits your soul and if you give glory to the Lord, then you are truly intelligent.



God put the church into the world; Satan tries to put the world into the church.

Announcement

The 2015 Youth Fellowship Meetings are scheduled for the weekend of July 24-26, 2015

The districts and meeting places are as follows:

Southwest..... Calvary Christian Fellowship Paris, TN
Northwest Believers Fellowship Grove City, MN
North Central Ebenezer A.M..... McConnellsville, OH
Northeast Faith Mission FellowshipFree Union, VA
Southeast Calvary Fellowship Blackville, SC

Let us try for good attendance in each of these places. Let us draw near to God!

Dan Byler, Secretary, Youth Fellowship Committee



mission awareness

All-Nations Bible Translation

Joel Martin, State College, PA

All-Nations Bible Translation has been established to provide an Anabaptist foundation for Bible translation and church planting. The Psalmist declares that when God blesses his people the nations of the earth will be glad and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him. God has blessed us! What are we going to do with that?

Jesus said that the good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the world for a witness unto all

nations and then the end will come. How long will that be? “O let the nations be glad, before the Lord, for He cometh!”

It’s been about 2,000 years since Jesus walked on this earth and yet many people groups remain unreached. About 1,800 people groups exist today without a single verse of Scripture in their heart language.

Many of our missionaries have tended to go to places where the

ground-breaking of pioneer church planting and Bible translation has already been done. [Many times, God has blessed with an abundant harvest in these ripe fields where others have pioneered and planted. Jesus said, “One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours” (John 4:37b, 38). -FS] Certainly we must be willing to reap the corners of the fields. But what about the places where Christ has not yet been named—places without a single verse of Scripture in their own language?

Jesus invites us to lift up our eyes and behold the fields that are white unto harvest. So where might these untouched fields be? The Apostle Paul stated before the end of his life that he had striven to preach the Gospel where Christ had not been named (Rom. 15:20). This vision captures one of the goals of All-Nations Bible Translation. Do you think the Lord may be calling you to partner with us in this unfinished task?

There are many ways to get involved! Bible translation and pioneer church planting are challenging tasks and will require numerous people filling different roles. Prayer support, logistic support, and financial support are only a few of the ways

for others to serve.

Goals of All-Nations Bible Translation

- Provide translators in training with direction and resources for training.
- Provide all team members with monetary, technical, and logistical support.
- Provide quality Bible translations through careful preparation of translators, specialized workshops, and thorough examination of completed translation work.
- Connect the translator with a specific church or mission sending agency who will in turn provide direction and oversight for the church plant.
- Establish a church plant simultaneous with the Bible translation effort. The translation process shall be viewed as a means to this end of discipleship and church planting.

History of ABT

Originally those interested in this vision requested to meet with Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) to discuss the possibility of starting a Bible translation organization. Although CAM noted that Bible translation was not what they were called to do, they stated that they feel it needs to be done and encouraged us to pursue it. Currently, a member

of CAM's executive committee sits on ABT's advisory board. We are very thankful for the interest and assistance they have given us in the development of this new mission.

Currently at ABT


ABT has about 20 members in training. It takes three to four years to complete the training necessary to become a Bible translator. Our vision is to send out teams who will work together at the task of Bible translation and church planting. The task of learning the native language and culture, translating the Scriptures, and planting an indigenous church will be a long-term assignment.

Already ABT team members have helped to explore the needs of people groups in Mexico, Colombia, Indonesia, China, and Papua New Guinea. The three locations we are considering most seriously are Mexico, Colombia, and Papua New Guinea (PNG). Lord willing, we

hope to have team members finish training and head to all three of these countries within the next year and a half. ABT's first team members will be leaving for Mixtec Indian village in southern Mexico this summer, 2015.

Future of ABT

What will the future hold for All-Nations Bible translations? Only God knows. We live in a changing world of uncertain times. Though unrest looms on the political horizon in many countries, we still have a window of opportunity and freedom here in the West. Many language groups remain where a great harvest is still waiting to be gathered in. "Let the people praise thee, O God,...O let the nations be glad!" May God bless you for your interest in this work.

[From ABT Update, Issue 25, May, 2015. Used by permission. Address of All-Nations Bible Translation, All-Nations Lane, State College, PA 16801. Phone: 717-831-8228.] 



Children are in good hands when parents give them to the Lord.

Remembering Dad

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

The Bible commands us to honor our Father. It does not say to honor him if he is perfect or always meets our expectations. Respect and submission are required as long as we live under our father's roof and authority. We as married women transfer that submission and respect to our husbands. However, honor should last forever.

My father died nearly 30 years ago, but I continue to honor him by living according to what he taught me and by embracing his faith. I have mostly good memories of a caring, loving father. No, he was not perfect. He did not verbally express his love, especially in our younger years. He was not a harsh parent, however, we were taught to obey and did not question his authority. He taught us a good work ethic. He took us to church, read the Bible, and prayed with us.

As the youngest of the family, my memories are probably different from my older siblings. He took time for me. I remember going with him to the

stockyards to buy cattle, with my hand clasped securely in his. I still treasure small gifts he brought home for me. He was not a perfect parent, however, we knew he loved us not so much by words but because he provided and cared for his family. My favorite memory of my father in his later years is of seeing him sitting at the kitchen table with his Bible in front of him. He left a beautiful legacy for his family. I am also blessed to be married to a godly husband for 51 years.

Even as I write, I realize there will be some women reading these words with a heavy heart because they did not grow up with a godly father, who may have professed godliness to others, but not in his home. Perhaps your father was abusive or unfaithful to his family. You may not have felt loved and accepted. You can still honor his role as your father, because the Bible commands it. You do not need to respect his actions, but respect him as a person. If he is still alive, convey your love and extend your forgiveness to him. Forgiveness frees you from bitterness and helps

you be the person God wants you to be. Remember that ultimately God is your father; His love is never conditional. If you have come to him in faith and repentance, He accepts you as His daughter.

Let me hasten to mention that not all fathers are birth fathers. A father is a person who loves and cares for you regardless if he had part in your birth. I think of fathers by adoption who brought you into the family, gave you a name and cared for you, not *as if* you were his own, but because *you are* his own. A step-father may have come into your life not by your choice, however, he chose to love your mother and deserves your respect. A spiritual father is one who nurtures you in your faith and understanding of God's will for your life. We need more spiritual fathers.

Now for some practical suggestions to show love to Dad on Father's Day. Gifts and cards are nice, however, if you can't think of anything Dad needs or wants, there are other ways of showing your love.

Write a personal note, telling him that you love and appreciate him. Be specific and share personal


experiences that have meant much to you.

Invite your parents over for dinner. Grilling and eating outdoors is fun. They may enjoy a picnic at a park or a lake.

Give Dad the gift of work. Help him in the garden or yard. Perhaps there is a work project waiting to be done, like cutting wood for next winter. Give him the gift of time.

Plan a special day with just you and Dad. That will vary according to his interests and hobbies. It may be fishing; for others, it could be attending a missions conference or a concert. Be creative, but do something you know he would enjoy.

Perhaps one of the best gifts you can give him is simply to listen to him. Ask him questions about his childhood. Reminisce with him about the past. Ask his advice and counsel about the future. You will help him feel loved and needed.

Just a reminder to wives—encourage your children to respect, love and honor their father. They will learn much by observing your example in your relationship with your husband and their dad. 

***A Christian without a church is like a
bee without a hive.***

Troublesome or Kind?

Mary Ellen Beachy

What lives in a small, dark, moist cave and doesn't see the light unless that cave door opens?

- The Bible calls this thing an unruly evil.
- It has deadly poison.
- The Bible also says that death and life are in its power.
- Without this thing you could not eat.
- Each person has one; you can even stick it out and wiggle it.

The tongue is amazing!

It helps you taste and enjoy food.

It even helps you in chewing and swallowing food.

It plays an important part in forming the sounds of words; try talking without moving your tongue.

It helps keep your mouth clean.

It is on average, four inches long.

Sticking your tongue out at people is considered rude, however, in Tibet, it is considered a greeting.

A person's tongue can even put out a fire and settle fights.

In addition,

Chameleons, frogs, and anteaters have interesting sticky tongues that

help them capture insects for food. I once saw a fat toad catching tiny ants. Its long tongue flew in and out of its mouth very fast. It looked hilarious!

Have you observed hummingbirds use their long, thin tongues? They use them to suck up sweet nectar.

Dogs and cats use their tongues to lap up milk and water and to clean their fur.

Once a peanut butter pie landed upside down on our carpet. We called our big German Shepherd dog inside; he greatly enjoyed licking the peanut butter out of the carpet with his long, red tongue.

Animals use their tongues to clean their fur. Dogs express affection by giving you a nice slobbery lick with their wet tongues.

If you grew up on a farm, you likely noticed that cows clean their noses with their long, rough tongues.

What about you?

What kind of tongue do you have? How do you use it?

Some people are known to have a kind tongue, others are known for their sharp, troublesome tongue.

Some people have a loud tongue, while others have learned to speak kindly.

A soft answer, the Bible says, can turn away wrath. Giving a soft answer can help make peace.

James 3:8 says the tongue can no man tame, yet is it a hopeless thing if you have a sharp tongue? Nothing is too hard for God.

The tongue is powerful. It is a fire, a world of iniquity.

Think about these practical steps to take to help tame your slippery tongue:

Give your heart to God; ask Him to cleanse you from sin.

Pray; ask God to control your tongue; ask Him to help you have a kind tongue.

Fill your mind with God's word, as well as other edifying books. What you put into your mind comes out through your tongue.

When you err and speak with a sharp tongue, ask forgiveness of those you hurt.

Ask family and friends to pray for you and your tongue problems.

Take heart, there is hope for your tongue. With God all things are possible.

The Bible has many verses about the tongue. Read 1 Peter 3:10; Psalm 120:1,2; Proverbs 15:1,2 and 10:19. Proverbs 6: 16-19 lists six things God hates. Three of those things are tongue troubles!

Watch out!

Your tongue reveals what your heart is full of. When your tongue is not controlled by God's Spirit, it is sparked by the influence of the evil one.

God is the only one who can tame our unruly tongues and help us speak words that are kind and good.

Helen Tullock always remembered her father's words. She said, "Although my father died many years ago, his wise counsel remains fresh on my mind. He strongly believed that the unwise use of people's tongues often cause problems that affected families, communities, and many other areas of life. He often said, 'Be careful what you say; If you are not, you can talk up all sorts of troubles.' I haven't always followed Dad's advice, for I am a person with strong opinions on almost everything. But when I notice that I'm getting argumentative, I suddenly hear my dad's quiet voice, saying, 'You can talk up trouble.'"

Troublesome, mean tongues make everyone who hears them sad.

It is a pleasant thing to live with people who have kind tongues. Tongues that are quick to say, "I love you," "I am sorry," "Thank you," or "What can I do to help you?" Those are the tongues we love to live with.

May your words make someone happy today.



Giving God the Gifts that He Likes

Ernest Eby, State College, PA

I have two young daughters that love picking flowers for their mother. I love seeing them explore the great outdoors and then watch as they stop to pick some violets, a few dandelions, and several sprigs of Queen Anne's lace.

Sometimes the stems get bent and sometimes there are barely any stems at all, but that doesn't bother my wife at all. She accepts their gifts with delight, fills a small bowl with water and places their gift on the kitchen table for everybody to enjoy.

I also like to bless my wife with flowers. Often the gift has been roses, with red being the most frequent color. I knew that as long as I chose red roses, my gift would be received with pleasure and gratitude.

Several years ago, I woke my four-year-old daughter from her nap and informed her that I brought something for Mommy that she would want to see. When she and I arrived in the kitchen she burst into tears and sobbingly explained,

"But red is the color you got her the last time!" I wasn't prepared for this response and it took some conversation to understand why my gift was quite pleasing to one and not to another.

This interchange got me thinking and so I decided to take my wife and daughters to a florist shop. I had them show me the kinds of flowers and colors of flowers that they really like. Now when I go looking for flowers, I have more variety to choose from and a much better idea of their likes and dislikes.

There are several lessons we can learn from these stories.

Firstly, mature people recognize the heart behind a gift and receive the gift with gratefulness regardless of whether it is something they like or want. They realize that accepting a gift with gratefulness is good for the soul of the giver as well as for the soul of the receiver. Parents who love their children receive their children's gifts with delight regardless of whether

they like the gift.

Secondly, adults don't expect the same quality of gift from a child or youth that they expect from a forty year old. If I brought my wife some wild flowers with bent stems or no stems at all, my wife would receive them with gratefulness, yet she would wonder what happened to me. She knows that I am capable of bringing long-stemmed flowers in perfect condition. To offer her anything less would indicate that I didn't care much about the gift I was bringing her. She would know that I was not offering her the best that I could.

Thirdly, people who are underdeveloped in gift-giving tend to give gifts that *they personally* want to give to others. Or they may give the kind of gifts they would want others to give to them. They don't give a lot of thought to what gifts the recipient might want to receive. This kind of gift-giving is perfectly acceptable when the gifts come from children. Children are not expected to understand the desires and interests of others. However, part of their overall social development is learning to think through the eyes and minds of others. We want children to learn how to please those around them and not just please themselves.

Fourthly, it is through relationship

that we learn what other people like. The better we get to know a person, the more we understand their likes and dislikes. Conversation is a key ingredient in learning what people like and dislike. Without conversation, we might never know what brings others the most delight. This is especially true with gift giving since most people try to hide their feelings if they receive a gift they don't like.

Is there a spiritual parallel to these lessons?

I believe there is. God accepts gifts from children. He accepts gifts from those new in the faith. He accepts gifts from adults, even if they have not learned what He likes best. Along the way He tries to help us understand what it is that He really likes from His people. He wishes we would converse with Him and want to know what gifts He really likes. He wants us to grow out of our childish, self-centered gift-giving habits and do our best to bring gifts to Him that bring Him pleasure.

Consider King David and his desire to build God a house of cedar. David thought about his own house built of cedar and compared this with the house of God that was made from animal skins. He decided it was time to build God a house made of cedar. God responded, "Wheresoever I have

walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying Why have ye not built me an house of cedar?" God did not feel the same way as David about the value of cedar houses. Besides, God viewed David as a man who had shed much blood and because of this He didn't view David as the man who should build his temple. However, God does want to accept the gifts His children offer Him and so He promised David that his son would be given the privilege of building The Most High a house of cedar.

Many places in the Bible God gives us glimpses of His values and gives examples of the gifts that bring Him the most pleasure.

The Prophet Samuel tried teaching King Saul about the gifts that God likes best when he said, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

David seemed to get one of these glimpses in Psalm 51. "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken spirit and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Hosea writes something similar, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

One day Jesus was conversing with a scribe. The scribe said, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus then commended the scribe for his insight and said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

In our present society, many Christians would want us to believe that *any kind of gift we offer* to the Lord is an acceptable offering. Christians are led to believe that whatever kind of music or art a person enjoys is a perfectly acceptable gift to offer the Lord. Whatever type of ministry to God and others that a person wants to get involved in is considered a perfectly acceptable gift to bring to God. After all, "It is the heart that counts."

There is some truth in this. God does often accept gifts from people if it is done with a good heart. And, who wants a gift that does not come from a heart of love? A new believer


with a fresh love for God may sing a style of music that Satan inspired and yet God accepts the gift because of the person's naivete. A person may found a ministry on some unscriptural premises and yet God blesses the ministry initially because it is offered from a good heart. If we don't yet know what God really likes, and we offer Him something He doesn't really like, He does notice the goodness of our heart. If a person is new in the faith, God may accept a song or piece of art that He doesn't really like, in the same way we might accept a song or a drawing from a young child.

However, this is no excuse for offering God "flowers with bent stems" if we could offer Him something better. Just because God accepts the singing of a believer who has little knowledge of Christian music does not mean that Christians should give up their God-honoring music styles for something that is less God-honoring. Just because God chooses to bless someone whose doctrine is not all straight does not mean we should adopt his doctrine.

As we get to know God through His Word and through our relationship with Him, we understand His heart, His likes, and His dislikes. Sometimes older siblings can help younger siblings understand what pleases

their parents. The same can be true in the church. Older people who have walked with God can help those who are new in the faith to understand what is pleasing to God.

An older man or woman who has walked with God may have some insights into the heart and mind of God. But if they have not availed themselves of the wisdom of faithful followers of Jesus through the centuries, their understanding of what pleases God will be quite limited. The most trustworthy way of understanding what is pleasing to God is to consider the cumulative wisdom of multiple generations who have been walking with God.

If this challenge looks big, take heart. God will guide those who love Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. If your gift is not pleasing to Him, He will eventually let you know. Go ahead and offer the Lord what you think will please Him and don't be too disappointed if He tells you that this is not the gift He was looking for from you. Be flexible. Be willing to align your ideas with His desires. A person who is teachable all throughout life will grow in wisdom and favor with God and man. My prayer is that you will grow deeper in your knowledge of God and in your relationship with Him. 

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THOUGHT GEMS

Gems from the pen of Bill Miller, Summer Shade, KY:

God does not send us through deep waters to drown us but to
cleanse us.

.....

God uses life's reverses to move us forward.

.....

Give God what is right, not what is left.

.....

In youth the absence of pleasure is pain; in old age, the absence
of pain is pleasure.

.....

To stay young in spirit, keep taking on new thoughts and
throwing off old habits.

.....

He overcomes a stout enemy who overcomes his own anger.

.....

Living water is not drawn from a wishing well.

.....

Are you known for what you have or what you are?