



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

Galatians 6:14

AUGUST 2015

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## Is the King's Banner Still Standing?

*Craig Eicher, Butler, IN*

In olden times, when kings still fought on the battlefield,  
They fought alongside their men; they were the ones never to yield.  
With names like Napoleon, Julius Caesar, and Alexander the Great,  
Of their fearlessness and prowess, there was no room for debate!

In the heat of the battle, when fear wasted men, there was a figurehead.  
While the king's banner stood waving, there was not fear but courage instead!  
And many a soldier found renewed hope when with chattering teeth,  
He looked up to see a royal charger go into the fray. It was his commander-in-chief!

God's army is no different; He spared not His only begotten Son,  
The Christ Who sought us and loved us and taught us how it's done!  
But in the absence of His bodily presence, we need men and women today,  
Whose lives provide inspiration through suffering; God planned it that way!

No matter how lowly your post, someone is watching you,  
Wondering why you did this or that, or how you managed to pull through!  
Point men to the cross, where a beacon light of hope shines on.  
Never focus upon that thorn in the flesh, or some hideous demon spawn!

Choose the hard road that leads to victory and courage before flight,  
Though your dreams all lie shattered and tonight is that fateful night,  
When all that you've fought and all that you've feared  
Join forces to destroy you on your own battlefield!

Only God knows who you'll reach when you say, "I serve a cause greater than myself!"  
Many have lost the will to fight, they may perish without your help!  
Raise the King's banner ever higher; another soldier in despair may be going down.  
Your brave example could make all the difference; it could turn his life around!

*(This poem was written for and is dedicated to Mary Knapp [a young lady who attended our church] whose steadfast courage in life and death modeled some valuable lessons. Mary lost her battle with cancer in 2014, at age 28. She was a winner through her incredible faith in Jesus Christ! Her example to me was to trust instead of being bitter, or constantly asking, "Why?" Mary held the King's banner high throughout her three-year ordeal. She was a real inspiration to me—and many others. -CE)*



## Let the People Praise Thee

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was a pastor's son. As a young man, he mentioned to his father that he thought the music of their day (largely chanted versions of the Psalms) was rather dull. Isaac told his father, "When we sing strictly the Psalms, we never sing praise to Jesus."

Without alarm or rebuke, his father said, "Son, why don't you mend the matter?" (meaning, "Why don't you write some better hymns?") And in the years that followed, that is just what Isaac did! Today more than 500 hymns are attributed to this man who is often called "The Father of English Hymnody."

Were Isaac's efforts always well-received? No, he faced many reluctant and resistant opinions. I find Watts' songs inspiring, glorifying the Lord Jesus and extolling God in praise and worship.

The new *Hymns of the Church*, compiled by John D. Martin, has 45 selections written by Isaac Watts.

Other writers in this new hymnal include Lowell Mason with 41 selections; Charles Wesley with

33; Fanny Crosby with 26; John J. Overholt with 17; Catherine Winkworth with 16; William James Kirkpatrick with 15; William Howard Doane with 14; Frances Ridley Havergal with 13; Philip Doddridge with 12; Philip P. Bliss (who probably would have written many more had not his life been cut short in a fatal train crash at 38 years of age) with 10; and last, but not least, John D. Martin (the compiler of this new hymnal of more than 1,000 numbers) with 27 of his own compositions!

Usually poets who wrote verse that would become hymns also wrote poems which were not set to music.

I praise God for the compositions of the recent John Overholt and contemporary John D. Martin. We realize that most of the writers listed above lived a good many years ago. We might ask, *Why are not more God-honoring hymns being written today? Is it because that in the West today, we live lives of comparative ease? Are we not seeing "the Lord high and lifted up" like Isaiah did?*

## **Start Where You Are and Use What You Have**

Writers of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with good, biblical content have abilities given to them by God, but they've also cooperated with the Creator of beauty in developing them. Jesus said, "For unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48b). Writing verse that sets well to music is something we cannot all do well. But we praise God for those who can. Always let us remember that what we aspire to do is to be done for God's glory.

If writing poems that set well to music is not our gifting, it need not bother us any more than it should have bothered me that I (with a lame leg) could not win foot races in my childhood. Being competitive, I wished I could win. But being realistic, I usually had to give others that privilege. We need not dejectedly say things like, "I must not amount to much because I'm not able to..." (whatever we wish we could do). We can work against ourselves by making most things we do a competition, or by crawling into a protective shell of laziness or even by blaming others for our failures. What is at stake here is accepting our gifting and being

willing to develop it.

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus told of three men charged with being stewards of varied investments given to them. The first one was given five talents; the second one was given two, and the third one was given one. The first two did well with their endowments and doubled what they were given. The man with one talent, however, found fault with what he was given. He buried his investment because he judged it unworthy of his best effort. In his opinion, his master was greedy and unfair, who sought simply to reap the rewards of his employees' efforts. Furthermore, the lazy man said he was afraid, so he buried his gift. He tried to pass off his irresponsibility by blaming others for his failures. Not surprisingly, his master was displeased with his reasoning and ordered just punishment for him.

### **Inspiring Music**

Let us take heed and consider gratefully what God has done and is doing by giving to the church the gifts of poetry and song. Sometimes it is others with specific musical gifting who set those poems to music. At other times, the writer of verse also writes the music. Either way, the church is enriched by it.

As I recall it, Marvin Miller told me

that during the years of Communist rule in Russia in the last century, some very beautiful Gospel music was composed. In 1999, while on a tour of Israel, Martha and I had the privilege of hearing some of that music sung by Romanian believers, which was outstandingly melodious and uplifting. Even with only partial explanations of the texts, we found these songs spine-tinglingly beautiful.

I sincerely hope that translations to English of those songs will sometime (the sooner the better) become available.

In all our worship, **“Let the people praise thee, O God, O let them praise thee!”** (From *The Christian Hymnary*, number 65, from Psalm 67:5, text and music by John J. Overholt, 1965.)

-PLM



## *Announcement*

**Muslim Impact Training  
Equipping Conservative Anabaptists to reach Muslims  
September 24-26, 2015  
In Holmes County, Ohio, at Maranatha Fellowship  
Register at [www.gifc.net](http://www.gifc.net) or call 717-884-8771**

**Jay Stoltzfus, Coordinator**

***Does it occur to teens who think their  
parents know very little what might be  
their lot some day?***

*(Editor's note: Some months ago, I received a letter from a precious brother behind bars. Because it was more than six pages long, but very neatly and correctly written, I hardly knew how to use it. I have decided to excerpt several of its main points.)*

**D**ear Mr. Miller,  
I hope you don't mind my writing this, but I felt compelled to offer some thoughts. In this place we have access to just about any publication we would like to subscribe to. There is one magazine, *Acts and Facts*, published by Creation Research, I have found very interesting.

I live in a community (not by choice) of men that have perhaps the hardest hearts, as well as heads, and hold to just about any belief system known. Yet, as a Christian, I'm called to respect each man's God-given right to believe whatever he wants to believe. I operate on the premise that it is nothing less than cruel to expect a blind man to see.

As I'm sure you are well aware, Christians often agonize over how it is possible that the truths found in science can harmoniously coexist with the truths found in the Bible. In addition, and even more confusing, are all the mixed messages sent by

Christians over their disagreements with doctrine...We should be more in agreement with Paul, when he said, "What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside..." (1Cor. 5:12, 13, NIV).

We are not to associate with those that once "Knew God" but chose to be willfully disobedient (1 Cor. 5:11; Rom. 16:17; 2 Tim. 3:1-5). But to those who have never known God, we are called upon to help them find their way, not ridicule them for being lost. We need to remember how awful and lonely it was to be walking in darkness, not knowing the way. So our prayer for the atheist should be that he 1) might come to the end of himself, 2) see the hopelessness of his situation, and 3) see Christ as the only way out of it.

I have a very dear old friend who is an atheist and is dying from cancer. I know full well her destination if she does not repent. I must not condemn

her beliefs. My job is to remain available in the event that she would want a Savior (not me, but Christ, of course).

Out of all the publications I have access to, the *Calvary Messenger* blesses me the most. And, as always, my motivation is always to help and never to harm.

Steven Pelley  
B.K.C.C, P.O. Box 430  
Dillwyn, VA 23936-0430

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**Re: Relating to Authority (June, 2015) and The Bottom Line articles:**

I have enjoyed your publication for many years. The June issue was especially inspiring. Bro. Aaron Lapp seems to have his finger on the pulse with “The Bottom Line.”

I am planning my wedding. This is attended by struggles that made the article by Simon Schrock, “Relating to Authority—Bashing or Blessing?” of critical importance. If he knew how much he helped me, I’m sure he’d consider his effort worthwhile.

May God bless you. Whether Beachy or Northeastern Mennonite Conference, we need good publications.

Jered Lepp  
1514 Outlet Rd.  
Penn Yan, NY 14527

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To the editors, June 28<sup>th</sup>

*Calvary Messenger* came in the mail yesterday. Today I had the privilege of reading it from cover to cover (July

issue) and was blessed and blessed and blessed again. The vision of Bro. Ervin Hershberger and many others lives on. We are so blessed to still be able to read *Calvary Messenger* after all these years. I will confess that I do not read every issue as thoroughly as this one, but will try to do better as the content was very edifying and worthwhile. Only one article failed to hold my attention to the end. The content of said article was good though, just perhaps a bit overstated.

I very much agree with our new Youth Editor Gideon Yutzy that the two cardinal virtues of writing and speaking are “be brief and be interesting.” Some of us are better at one and some better at the other. I also enjoyed Tim Miller’s contribution as I do feel personally that we as a constituency need more connection with our historical roots. Editorials are carefully written and well thought through. Observations are my favorite thing to read and are usually where I start. The poetry is also very stimulating.

Thank you for provoking us to love and good works. Thank you for being faithful to your calling month after month. We are encouraged and blessed by the vision and work of each writer and contributor.

Roman Stoltzfoos  
Little Stone Cottage  
Kinzers, PA



# Thoughts on Same-Sex Marriage Ruling

*David Nisly, Catlett, VA*

I was deeply saddened on Friday, June 26, when I heard that the U. S. Supreme Court had rejected the traditional and biblical view of marriage across the country. I cannot say that I was totally surprised. Over the last decade of two, there has been a concerted effort by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) advocates promoting and normalizing this immoral and sinful behavior. As a result, many church denominations have been pressured and are also endorsing this lifestyle.

The potential implications of this landmark decision to Bible-believing Christians are significant. At the same time, the timeless principles of biblical truth remain the same today as they were prior to this ruling.

Marriage was instituted and ordained by God. It was not an invention of man. No human government or supreme court can ever change this reality.

God designed marriage to be between one man and one woman for life. Nothing will ever change

this original design and intent.

The very design of marriage is intended to beautifully reflect and demonstrate the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church.

Any sexual activity or relationship outside God's design of marriage is immoral and sinful. Every sinful relationship is offensive to God.

In many ways, the broader church community shares in the blame of the breakdown of marriage and family values. Much of the so-called "church" has defiled the sanctity of marriage by permitting and encouraging divorce and remarriage. Much of the church has compromised the truth of God's Word. Divorce and remarriage drastically mar the beautiful imagery of marriage in portraying Christ and the church to the unbelieving world and culture around us. If the "church" is unwilling to stand up for the truth of God's Word and the sanctity of marriage, why should we expect the surrounding culture to continue to embrace those things that have

been rejected by the church?

One of the things that is unique with this issue is the way this sinful and immoral lifestyle is celebrated and glamorized. Same-sex marriage was not only legalized, but widespread pride and celebration accompanies it. This is unusual in that many sins are still rejected and looked upon by society in general. Murder is still a criminal offense, subject to lifelong imprisonment or death. Stealing and robbery are not acceptable or tolerated. Even slander is looked down upon and subject to civil (if not criminal) prosecution. Adultery (extra-marital affairs) is broadly looked upon with disapproval and often results in a loss of public trust. At the same time, there is wide-spread celebration and pride in same-sex relationships.

We are led to believe there are only two ways to respond to this ruling: celebration or hate. This myth is perpetuated by characterizations of the political left and the political right. The assumption is that if we are not celebrating this decision, we must be haters. On the other hand, if we don't display a certain level of disdain, we must be celebrating. For the born-again believer, neither of these responses is appropriate.

Christians should not celebrate nor should they be hateful! Instead, a Christlike response of respectfully "speaking the truth in love" is called for. Our responsibility is to faithfully live for King Jesus and His kingdom which is not of this world. We should in no way diminish the truth of the Gospel, but neither should we intentionally antagonize those who do not share our beliefs.

We dare not compromise this truth: Homosexuality is sin. At the same time, we must demonstrate genuine agape love to all people, because each and every one is created in God's image. We also must be clear that the redeeming Gospel of Jesus Christ is available for everyone. Through true repentance and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ, there can be victory over every sin.

God is the final judge of all sin. Each one of us will stand before God one day and give account for every sin that has not been brought under the blood of Jesus. He will judge everyone fairly. He will judge all sin—not just certain sins.

Homosexuality is sin. Dishonoring one's marriage vows is sin. Any form of sexual immorality is sin. God will hold each of us accountable for any unrepented sin; it doesn't

matter whether it is covetousness, stealing, lying, murder, idolatry, unforgiveness, slander, malice, anger, or whatever. All sins are offensive to God!

The ripple effect of the legalization that same-sex marriage will have on churches, Christians, and pastors is unknown. It is safe to say for believers who speak out in truth on these issues life will not become easier and the potential for increased levels of persecution is not out of the question. In the meantime, there are a number of things we can and should do.

First of all, we need to pray! We need to come to God in repentance for any unconfessed and secret sins. We need to pray for revival in the church—the body of Christ. And we need to pray for this nation and its leaders.

Secondly, we need to reaffirm what we believe and why. Increasingly, we will find our beliefs challenged and ridiculed. If we don't know

what and why we believe, we can't expect to stand against opposition.

Thirdly, we need to be prepared to stand for truth—even if it is against popular opinion or even the law of the land. Truth is increasingly opposed and attacked.

Finally, we need to be prepared and willing to suffer for truth. We must not compromise the truth of God's Word because of popular opinion, however, we cannot assume unbelievers will tolerate our stand for truth.

My challenge is to take this opportunity to deepen our commitment to God and the truth of His Word. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we have the opportunity to show Christlike love, speak the truth in love, and to demonstrate the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who attack or oppose us.

*(This was given as a devotional on June 28. Submitted for publication by Simon Schrock.)*



***It is safer to question some of the answers being offered than to know all of the answers.***

## Faithful Men

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

**C**alvary Messenger carries an announcement nearly every month of one or more men being ordained to a servant/leader role in our churches. We can scarcely appreciate enough these willing men who take on the ongoing needs of pastoral care. This places them in the public eye continually.

Paul wrote to Timothy about such men being given double honor. We assume the single honor is a due respect for the office. The double honor might be financial support to help alleviate the physical burdens that come with earning sufficient means to support themselves and their family so they can serve in local opportunities and also those away from home, if the need calls for it.

But there are also many men in the churches who have been in the lot for these ordinations, who were not chosen. They have been a distinct blessing to the brotherhood. They have expressed a willingness to serve in a pastoral role, if God should call

them. They continue to serve and share in many important ways in the church. The burden of this article is written to remember those brothers and to remember them as faithfully as those who were ordained.

I was in the lot four times and ordained at 44. Some of those men (and their wives) with whom I shared the lot have been my best supporters over the years.

Our church at Weavertown has had seven ordinations in the last 55 years. Some of those who had been in the lot were chosen later. Of course, many were not. This count is only for those who served at Weavertown for their lifetime. This does not include those transferred elsewhere for church outreach.

This cluster of years shows that every eight years, on the average, another man is ordained. This does not include ordinations for bishop. Our church seeks to maintain four ordained men to serve on an on-going basis. That would indicate the average

tenure of 32 years per man. But when you include the additional four men who were ordained at Weavertown and sent to outreach churches, then there were 11 ordained in 55 years, which makes an average of one every five years.

As our various congregations grow, the need for additional men (with supportive wives) to serve in a pastoral role will increase accordingly. The same is true for missionaries, of which a few have been commissioned as pastors for their time on the mission field and as teachers in distant Bible schools.

Our churches have much potential for growth. I currently don't know of any unfaithful men in leadership positions, but besides being faithful to men, we also want to do our best for Christ Jesus our Lord. In that consideration, some of us could use a sprinkling of zeal and a dash of fervency—the kind that men have when they talk about whether Chevy or Ford is the best pickup truck.

These men who were in the lot have been willing to serve in the church or in missionary work. Thank God for faithful men! Besides these, there are young men growing in the Lord and in years, so that in time to come there will be additional persons available. Thank God for faithful men—men who are willing to teach and preach

God's Word. Blessed is that church who at any given time, can proceed with a call to ordain church leaders from among those in their midst who are both faithful and able.

It is also in order to remember the unique contribution made by faithful sisters—the wives of these men. Their support and encouragement is a most valuable asset. They also make sacrifices largely unknown to the rest of us. May God's grace be upon them in time, and duly rewarded in eternity.

The children of faithful man could also be noted. Children have contributed immensely to parents as pastors at home and missionaries far away. We have often seen first hand how faithful teenagers have helped with domestic chores and encouraged Dad to go to teach at Calvary Bible School for three or six weeks, or do other church work away from home. Thank God for faithful teenagers. Such who serve with their parents on the mission field are very special people who exemplify a pattern for Christian homes and besides that, serve very ably in witness.

Every day precedes tomorrow. How we are tomorrow has a relationship to each today. Every yesterday has its own link to today. Each day has its own life to live, of course. But every

day is in part a product of yesterday and an introduction to tomorrow.

The generations are like that. Each person is in part a product of his parents and the generation preceding him. He is then, an introduction to the next generation. We connect, we are in a brigade, as it were, connected like the pages in a book, or the paragraphs in a story. Every person is an integrally connected part of the whole.

The influence of faithful men is not measurable. They contribute generously and endlessly. The reward for such is an arrangement by God for an endless habitation in heaven. If you have been in the lot for ordination and have not been

chosen, seek no station on earth, either in your personal life or in the church of Christ. Focus on being faithful in your calling and in life's opportunities. God has no greater work for faithful men than the divine call to be faithful.

**The Bottom Line** is that God will reward one's faithfulness, related to his calling, gifting, and opportunity. Whether widely known or relatively unknown, whether frequently seen or seen by relatively few, God knows and sees each one. This article ends with a prayer to God for all the faithful men and women in the church of Christ to continue giving their best to and for the Master.



## Do I?

*Alfredo Mullet, Lott, TX*

Do I make the Kingdom of God and His righteousness my primary concern, so that I will be materially blessed?  
But what if I am stripped of everything I possess?  
Would I still consider myself a man of true success?

Do I take the biblical command seriously to love my wife, so that she accepts my authority and we have no marital strife?  
But what if she does not submit and our home with contention be rife?  
Would I remain faithful to my vows, or give up on marriage for life?

Do I train my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so that they make me look good by obeying my every word?  
But what if they forsake my ways and reject the truth they have heard?  
Would I continue living a good example even though it seems absurd?

Do I invest my time, talents, and money into God's congregation,  
so then I will be admired and praised for my good reputation?  
But what if after all my efforts I receive no gestures of appreciation?  
Would I keep on serving the church without regard for any promotion?

Do I follow God's principles as formulas to achieve my desired ends,  
and is living by the Bible a guarantee that His blessings on me will descend?  
But what if through adversity I suffer losses no one on earth can mend?  
Would I still bless my Sovereign Lord and on His providence depend?

**Yes, through it all,**

my Satisfaction in life is derived from surrender to God's perfect will.  
Moreover, faithful obedience is my pleasure, for his grace is my thrill.  
My delight is in knowing I have been chosen His work to fulfill.  
The joy of such an implicit faith nothing or no one is able to kill!

I count it a privilege to follow my Lord, irrespective of any blessing,  
for Jesus alone is my reward, therefore in Him I lack nothing.  
Resting assured that whatever happens, He will keep me from falling,  
This alone fills me with a peace superseding human understanding.

I commit myself to obey my God regardless of what it costs me,  
and my primary concern in life is to make my Heavenly Father happy,  
Even though down here my efforts receive no recognition, I do not worry,  
Because I am confident of the eternal recompense reserved for me in glory!

Little did I know years ago when I first penned these poetic lines  
that certain of these conditions would come to test me at times.  
But yet despite all these hardships that have transpired, I find  
This commitment I made back then now gives me peace of mind.

*{As I was meditating on my salvation, quite a while ago, I felt the need to test myself  
as to why I follow Jesus Christ. I had to ask these soul-searching questions so I could  
find soul-settling answers. I send it in the hope that others will also personally test  
themselves by searching their own hearts to discover what truly motivates them to claim  
Christianity. -AM}*



## marriages

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

### King-King

Bro. Merlin Wayne, son of Jake and Rose King, Narvon, PA, and Sis. Susan Marie, daughter of Merv and Ann Ruth King, Port Royal, PA, at the bride's home for Tuscarora Valley chapel, by Claude Miller.

### Ropp-Bontrager

Bro. Michael, son of Lamar and Lois Ropp, Kalona, IA, and Sis. Connie, daughter of Myron and Ilene Bontrager, Arlington, KS, at Arlington A.M. Church, on June 20, 2015, by Arlen Mast.

### Schlabach-Miller

Bro. Kyle, son of Jonas and Wilma Schlabach, Shreve, OH, and Sis. Jolene, daughter of Melvin and Clara Miller, Shreve, OH, at Fairlawn Mennonite Church for Grace Haven Fellowship on June 6, 2015, by David Yoder.

### Yoder-Sommers

Bro. Steven, son of Norman, Jr., and Leona Yoder, Meyersdale, PA, and Sis. Marita, daughter of Willis and Marlene Sommers, Salisbury, PA, at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church for Mountain View Mennonite Church, on May 30, 2015, by Merlin Beachy.

### Yutzzy-Miller

Bro. Justin, son of Marvin and Rhoda Yutzzy, Arlington, KS, and Sis. Jessica, daughter of J. D. and Julia Miller, Fair Play, SC, at the bride's parental home, on June 20, 2015, by J. D. Miller. 



## ordination

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

**Bro. John Gerber**, 35, (wife Tanya, nee Jantzi), of Millbank, ON, was ordained to the office of bishop at Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite Church, Wellesley, ON, on April 19, 2015. Pre-ordination messages were given by Rudy Overholt, Melvern, KS, and Lee Stoltzfus, Gap, PA. The charge was given by Laverne Ropp, assisted by Lee Stoltzfus and Arnold Jantzi, Timothy Gerber was also in the lot. 

## cradle roll

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

**Beiler**, Dustin and KrisAnne (Burkholder), Mt. Pleasant, PA, twins, first and second sons, Collin Bennett and Cordell Grayson, March 10, 2015.

**Bontreger**, James and Pollyanna (Borkholder), Auburn, KY, sixth child, second daughter, Mariah Joy, May 25, 2015.

**Gerber**, Timothy and Maribeth (Wagler), Gadshill, ON, tenth child, sixth daughter, Abigail Ruth, Feb. 20, 2015.

**Graber**, Kenny and Genny (Wagler), Amboy, IN, fourth child, second daughter, Adelle Jean, March 15, 2015.

**Helmuth**, Darrell and Regina (Troyer), Fredonia, KY, second child, first son, Kenton Blake, May 22, 2015. Received for adoption May 28, 2015.

**Kuhns**, Ron and Cindy (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, fourth child, third daughter, Alena Grace, May 26, 2015.

**Mast**, Eric and Ingrid (Troyer), Farmville, VA, second child, first son, Jordan Riley, May 14, 2015. (First child, a daughter, Adrienne Grace, stillborn, Dec., 2013.)

**Mast**, Ken and Mary Jo (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, second child and daughter, Ariana Jewel, April 19, 2015.

**Miller**, Daniel and Rosanna (Yoder), Dundee, OH, third child and son, Jaron David, June 19, 2015.

**Miller**, Evangel and Joanne (Brenneman), Honey Grove, PA, fifth child, third son, (one son deceased), Zephaniah Joel, June 24, 2015.

**Miller**, Joshua and Dorcas (Yutzy), Linn, MO, first child and son, Jace Tyrell, March 14, 2015.

**Miller**. Michael D. and Sharon (Beachy), Millersburg, OH, sixth child, fourth son, Carson Dre`, April 7, 2015.

**Miller**, Reuben and Heidi (Kuhns), Dundee, OH, fourth child, third daughter, Katurah Elly, Feb. 11, 2015.

**Overholt**, Matthias and Sarah (Mohler), Sarasota, FL, fourth child and son, Sterling Jude, June 21, 2015.

**Peachey**, Sam and Loretta (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, first child and daughter, Addison Taylor, Feb. 22, 2015.

**Plank**, John and Jolene (Weaver), Montezuma, GA, fourth child and daughter, Cadence Emily, May 12, 2015.

**Ropp**, Hubert and Joanna (Miller), Centreville, MI, fourth child and daughter, Eden Rosalie, June 8, 2015.

**Ropp**, Michael and Monica (Eash), Romney, WV, third child, second son, Logan Cole, June 4, 2015.

**Schlabach**, Norman and Doreen (Martin), Auburn, KY, third child, first daughter, Whitney Sue, June 9, 2015.

**Schrock**, Daniel and Carol (Peachey), Oakland, MD, first child and daughter,

Lori Irene, March 26, 2015.

**Swartzentruber**, Gary and Lynita (Yoder), Swanton, MD, second child and son, Jadon Lee, June 22, 2015.

**Wagler**, Aaron and Teresa (Wagler), Hartville, OH, (serving in New York City with Choice Books), second child and son, Elliot Marcus, April 27, 2015.

**Yoder**, Michael and Rosina (Zimmerman), Dundee, OH, third child, second son, Derek Matthew, March 6, 2015. 

## obituaries

**Kauffman**, Shalom Ada, four days old, was born June 8, 2015, and died June 12, 2015. She was born at Geisinger-Lewistown Hospital, Lewistown, PA. She died at Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, PA.

Her parents are Loren J. and Jean D. (Peachey) Kauffman.

Paternal grandparents are J. Timothy and Ruth (Peachey) Kauffman, Reedsville, PA. Maternal grandparents are Sam and Barb (King) Peachey, Belleville, PA. Paternal great grandparents are John and Beulah Kauffman, Reedsville, PA, and maternal great grandmother is Fannie Peachey, Belleville.

The funeral was held at Creek-side Pavilion, Reedsville, on June 15, with

Matthew Peachey and Eli B. King, Jr. serving. Burial was in the Locust Grove Cemetery.

**Swartzentruber**, Lena, 80, of Montezuma, GA, died Feb. 1, 2015. She was born August 14, 1934, daughter of the late Noah and Sadie (Schrock) Yoder.

She was a member of Montezuma Mennonite Church.

On Oct. 11, 1955, she was married to Enos Swartzentruber. Survivors include: her husband, Enos Swartzentruber, her children: Esther (Mark) Yoder, Montezuma; Lenora (Lyndon) Hershberger, Russellville, OH; Grace Swartzentruber, Montezuma; 33 grandchildren, 30 great grandchildren;

one sister, Sarah Yoder; two brothers, Allen (Bertha) Yoder, and Noah, Jr. (Anna Mae) Yoder.

She was preceded in death by one daughter-in-law, Ruby Swartzentruber; one grandson, Robert Yoder; three brothers, William, Daniel, and Clarence; five sisters, Esther, Vernie, Freda, Elsie, and Amanda.

The funeral was held on Feb. 4 at Montezuma Mennonite Church with Eli Kauffman, Donny Swartzentruber, and Irvin Yoder serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Yoder, Elizabeth C.**, 75, died at her residence in Middlebury, Indiana, May 20, 2015. She was born Sept. 2, 1939, in Wayne County, Ohio, to the late Crist and Mary (Troyer) Yoder.

She was a member of Fair Haven Amish Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN.

On Jan. 10, 1963, she was married to Daniel A. Yoder, who is deceased. Survivors include four sons: Andrew (Martha) Yoder, Minerva, OH; Moses (Meg) Yoder, Constantine, MI; Jonathan (Anna), Goshen, IN; and Henry (Norma) Yoder, Clarkson, KY; and four daughters: Martha (Elvin) Schrock, Colby, WI; Susie (Walter) Helmuth, Wakarusa, IN; Edna (Wendell) Zimmerman, Goshen, IN; and Delilah Mears, Goshen, IN; 28 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were two grandchildren, three sisters: Amanda, Susie, and Mattie Yoder, eight brothers: Benjamin, Dan, Pete, Levi, Jonathan, Rudy, and Mose Yoder.

The funeral was held on May 23, with Wilbur Yoder and Dale Hochstetler serving. Burial was in Thomas Cemetery, Goshen.



## observations

The city of Hutchinson seems to have an abundance of eating places. Presently there are two new restaurants being built. Eating out is more and more the “in” thing. Jane Wagler manages the local MCC Et Cetera Shop where people donate things to be sold to support MCC. She says that people sometimes bring tableware

in because they no longer use it.

I assume that few of us have a conscience against patronizing a public eating place. But there are at least two good reasons why family mealtimes should not be abandoned: To be seated around the table to enjoy food prepared by the family matron can be an important part of the “tie that binds.” Strong families are a foundation

block of a stable society. Habitual eating out becomes a major expense item. From a Christian perspective, it becomes a stewardship issue.

A recent report shows that the American public now spends a little more in restaurants than in grocery stores.



Drylann Roof drove two hours to Charleston, SC, to an African-American church. He was welcomed to join the group who were having a prayer and Bible study service. The visitor sat with them an hour then expressed his unbridled racial hatred by fatally shooting nine persons, including the lead pastor.

Apparently the gathered believers took Jesus' teaching on forgiveness seriously. Relatives of those who were murdered have publicly offered their forgiveness.

This reminds us of the response of the Amish at Nickle Mines, PA, in 2006, when 10 school girls were shot, and five survived with injuries. Their response of forgiveness was so unusual that it was heard "around the world."

Cal Thomas and Michael Gerson are both writers whose columns regularly appear in *The Hutchinson News*. Both have noted that the response of the survivors was

unusual, but thoroughly Christian. Gerson wrote "These victims and their families have shown what it means to be a follower of Christ."

What a different world this would be if all who call themselves Christian would exercise such "faith which worketh by love."



*World* magazine reports that some mainline churches which need maintenance repairs, are faced with very low attendance. An Episcopal church in Harlem meets in a building built in 1915 with vaulted ceilings and large stained glass windows now needing repairs estimated at one million dollars. Recently there were 42 worshipers present on a Sunday. Almost all were elderly. Three were using canes and one had a walker.

Across the street the minister spoke to an audience of six women in a Presbyterian church.

Such buildings may be located where their location makes them very valuable. They are sometimes sold to a real estate developer who destroys the building to make room for a secular development. Meanwhile, there are some groups who do not own real estate but who hold multiple services in some rented facility. The article speaks of those

groups as being evangelical, rather than mainline.

-DLM

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Some of you recognize the name Pat Buchanan as a conservative presidential candidate from several decades ago. He wrote an opinion piece that appeared in *The Hutchinson News* on May, 2015. It was entitled: “The Decline of Christian America,” in which he cited a Pew Research survey based on data from 2014, which indicated that only 70% of Americans identify themselves as Christian. This compares to 78% in 2007 and 86% in 1990.

Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research, wrote something that I noted in a weekend addition of *USA Today*, in response to the same Pew Research. It was entitled: “Actually, Survey Shows Christianity is Not Dying.” Stetzer cites research that indicates that weekly church attendance as a percentage of the US population is about where it was in 1940. He believes among those who self-identify as Christian, the drop in percentages represents nominal Christians who aren’t serious enough about their faith to attend church regularly. He feels those numbers indicate that Christianity isn’t declining, but rather is being clarified since those who attended

church as children and no longer do so, have become more comfortable self-identifying as non-religious.

Without commenting on the sincerity of these men, I’m guessing that each of them subscribe to a slightly different understanding of what it means to be Christian. I would further propose that my understanding doesn’t quite line up with either of them.

The Hebrew writer commented on the role of faith in this way, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to him must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*” (Heb. 11:6).

1 John 1:9 says, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

Christ is quoted in Luke 9:23, “*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*”

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:20, “*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

While true Christianity doesn’t lend itself to pithy definitions, I’d like to propose that our understanding must include at least the elements

identified in the foregoing Scriptures: An understanding of God that lets Him define Himself and our relationship to Him, repentance and salvation from our sins, following after Christ, and an allegiance to the heavenly kingdom that supersedes all other loyalties.

So, what do we make of Christianity in America? The timeless, authoritative and inspired Scriptures shed light on the situation. 1 Timothy 4 starts out this way, “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times...*,” and follows with a description of ungodliness that sounds pretty contemporary to me.

The Lord isn’t confused about who belongs to Him, and He doesn’t need our help to keep track, but it is important for us to understand how we stand with Him. “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*” (2 Cor. 5:12). The matter of personal and brotherhood faithfulness should register a high level of priority and concern with each one of us.

It is Christ in His people, both individually and corporately, that makes us distinct and flavorful in this world. Jesus’ comments regarding the worthlessness of flavorless salt

should make us vigilant against those influences that dilute our saltiness.



Carey Wallace wrote a piece that appeared in the February 2 issue of *TIME* magazine, entitled: “Why Amish Kids are Happier than Yours... and Probably More Obedient.” The following five points in bold print are the writer’s points, followed by my comments:

**Extended family.** Cousins, uncles, aunts, and grandparents contribute to one’s sense of social awareness and belonging.

**Imperfect Hospitality.** Welcoming unexpected guests conveys the message that our agenda isn’t the only one that matters. Being polite and mannerly and welcoming when one can’t put his best foot forward says we value other people. Self-focus doesn’t make us happy. Imperfect hospitality is others-focused.

**Hands-On Skills.** Hands-on skills contribute to personal confidence.

**Practical Forgiveness.** In a climate of forgiveness, a person understands that messing up isn’t the end of the story. This climate makes room for a people who are imperfect which is tremendously reassuring.

**Creative Boredom.** When Amish children become bored, they need to address the situation with their

own creativity, rather than resorting to electronic distraction. Creativity combats boredom more effectively than does distraction.

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Some years ago a mother who took her daughter for medical treatment was providing family medical history for her medical records. After answering most of the questions regarding cancer, etc., all at once she stopped and exclaimed, “I’m sorry, I guess none of what I just said applies. We adopted this child and know nothing about her medical history.” She had simply forgotten, momentarily, that this child didn’t share her mom and dad’s genes. This heartwarming account is consistent with my understanding of how a family ideally relates to children who join the family in adoption, and how they are blessed if they are loved by the parents just like those born in their home.

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Benjamin L. Corey is a contributing writer for *Patheos*, *Mennonite World Review*, *TIME*, and other periodicals. He wrote a piece entitled: “If America Became a Christian Nation” that appeared in the May 13 issue of *TIME*. He suggests that most people who talk about America being a Christian nation don’t really know

what they are talking about nor would they really like it if America were to become a Christian nation. Corey says that if this were really a Christian nation, America would:

- Need to abolish the second amendment which protects the right to bear arms.
- Replace the Department of Defense with the Department of Enemy Love.
- End capital punishment.
- Focus on eradicating poverty.
- Key in on caring for the sick.
- Be very welcoming to immigrants.
- Do away with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Pay taxes without complaining about it.

He closes the article by pointing out that we shouldn’t nurse a false hope that America is a Christian nation. Rather the Kingdom of God does exist and we can be a part of that.

The gap between how we understand civil government operates and how Christians should live represents our level of non-involvement in the affairs of the state. This gap makes me, a non-voting, resident alien, citizen of the heavenly kingdom, uncomfortable using the pronoun “we” when discussing decisions and actions of our government like the Old Testament prophets did.

-RJM 

# Conservative Anabaptist Education Committee

Gerald Miller, Guys Mills, PA

Last month, the Conservative Anabaptist School Board Institute was introduced and explained to the readership of *Calvary Messenger*. This month, I would like to give context to the birth of a new committee. You will recall that Bro. Jonas Sauder came to the Beachy Ministers' Meetings in 2006 with a proposal. Jonas was looking for a church group that could and would give oversight, direction and authority for a two-day seminar designed specifically for school boards. The Beachy ministers in attendance approved that venture and asked that the Calvary Publication Board would oversee and provide direction for it. Thus, the Conservative Anabaptist School Board Institute (CASBI) was begun.

The Calvary Publications board appointed brothers who would carry out the mission of CASBI, and also provide oversight and accountability for CASBI. That board routinely

presented an annual report at the annual Beachy Ministers' Meeting.

As time went on, the Calvary Publications board increasingly felt too loosely connected to CASBI. As the publishing arm of the constituency, it was not a perfect fit for this board to oversee the work. One board member said he felt like CASBI had become "an orphaned child," rather than a significant part of the board's work. At the request of the publication board, a decision was made at the annual meeting in 2013 in Holmes County, Ohio, to discontinue their responsibility with CASBI and appoint a new committee to specifically oversee CASBI, so it could contribute more to the well-being of our schools.

And so a new work of the constituency was born, the Conservative Anabaptist Education Committee. Its mission is as follows: **The Conservative Anabaptist Education Committee under the**

**direction of the Beachy Constituency is to provide oversight for CASBI, provide educational resources for schools, and develop vision for sustainable and quality Christian education from a conservative Anabaptist worldview.**

Currently serving on this Education Committee are Elmer Glick (Slanesville, WV), Gerald Miller (chairman, Guys Mills, PA), Mark Miller (Newcomerstown, OH), Mark Webb (treasurer, Aroda, VA), and Nathan Yoder (Free Union, VA). The intent is to have three ordained brothers and two lay brothers serve on the committee.

In the past year, the Education Committee reworked the structure of CASBI and made provisions to improve the efficiency of logistics for the hosting community. Mark Webb, now oversees all financial matters of CASBI. In addition, a charter was created and a checking account opened through which to manage finances. At the invitation of Calvary Publications board, the Education Committee also began providing a monthly education column for *Calvary Messenger*.

The Education Committee deeply desires to be a blessing to our constituency, as well as to other brothers and sisters in our conservative Anabaptist circles. By

design, the Education Committee is not tasked with doing “all the work.” Rather, we desire to find people with a vision for Anabaptist education and harness their abilities and vision to bless others. This includes bringing together existing organizations and assigning individuals to accomplish things for the advancement of the Kingdom of God through the work of training our young people for the work of the Lord and the church.

We have one significant project in the incubation stage for which there seems to be a need and vision: an Anabaptist website. The education website would be for the purpose of hosting resources for conservative Anabaptist schools, school boards, administrators, teachers and pastors. We see a great need for a vehicle to connect resources, people and schools. Because this is a very large project, we have formed a separate group to oversee the development of a website. This group is responsible to take steps to make this website a reality.

We want this website to be easily accessible and well-organized, reflecting a vision for Anabaptist education and facilitating higher quality schools. It shall be a means for sharing between teachers and schools. Although we have had significant positive feedback, projects

like this are not easy to develop, nor do they come cheaply. While there are significant start-up costs, ongoing maintenance is a significant expense if a website is to remain valuable, helpful and fresh.

We project a need for \$30,000 for the first year to put the site together, and estimate at least \$20,000 per year after that. We are very grateful to the Lord for providing approximately \$20,000 toward this project already. If you would like to donate to this work, please contact Mark Webb, [markwebb902@gmail.com](mailto:markwebb902@gmail.com)

The Education Committee deeply desires to see our churches and schools working together to train a generation that knows and loves the Lord. We strongly believe that the church has a resource that can become more effective in our schools. The school is a fertile place to extend the hand and the influence of the church. It is not just another mission endeavor. Rather it is an investment in the local church of tomorrow. Let us put our hand to the plow for the sake of our families, schools, and churches of the next fifty years. 

## Musings from Martyrs Mirror

### Tested by Fire, Part 2

*Tim Miller, McKenney, VA*

#### Eelken and Fije

In 1549, about three weeks before Easter, two beloved men, named Fije and Eelken, were apprehended at Boorn, in West Friesland, an area in Northwestern Holland. In the account last month, we noted that Eelken was executed by the sword.

When Fije's sentence was read, he did not listen to it, because of

his great joy; and ignorant of what had happened, or was to happen to him, he ran and leaped, praising and thanking God, saying "This is the only way!"

They led Fije into the boat in which Eelken lay beheaded, and the wheel upon which Eelken was to be placed, and the stake at which Fije was to stand, to be burned. In the boat Fije's hands became loose, but

he sat still, nevertheless. The monks then said, “Bind him again.”

The hangman replied, “You bind him.” But the castellan (governor of a castle district) commanded him to bind Fije again.

Some women who beheld it wept bitterly. but Fije said, “Weep not for me, but for your sins.” He further said to the executioner, “What are you going to do with me?”

“That you will see.”

“Yes, yes,” said Fije, “do what you will; I have committed myself into the hands of my Lord.”

The executioner had forgotten his instruments and ran to the town to get them. In the meantime, the castellan and the two monks had Fije in the confessional, greatly tempting him with bread and wine; but they could not prevail upon him, for Fije did nothing but sing and speak, praising and thanking God.

The executioner then went up to Fije, tore open his shirt, took the cap from his head, and filled it with gunpowder. Standing at the stake at which he was to be strangled, Fije exclaimed, “O Lord, receive Thy servant.”

He was then strangled and burnt, and thus fell asleep in the Lord. The common people cried out saying, “This was a pious Christian; if he is

not a Christian, there is not one in the whole world.” (*Martyrs Mirror*, pp. 484-485)

Only an eternal kingdom view of life on earth can produce such complete and childlike joy at impending death. Just as Jesus, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,” so we can endure any earthly suffering if we see it in the context of an eternal, righteous kingdom. When Fije was offered the bread and wine of the Mass, he refused, saying, “I do not hunger for your bread and wine; for there is food prepared for me in heaven.” That heavenly meal waiting for him was a reality, not imagination, but the perspective of living faith. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

May our own faith have such a view of life—a view that includes eternity and finds its central focus in believing “that he (God) is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Such a faith view fills our hearts with joy, no matter what earthly, temporary suffering we may experience here.

**“That the trial of your faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”** (1Peter 1:7). 

# Taking Up My Cross

*Jordana Graber, age 14, Bastrop, TX*

Whatever you will ask of me,  
I can't refuse your earnest plea.  
You did so much, and so I fall,  
Submitted to your highest call.

I'll live each day in lowly living  
With no great work besides self-giving.  
And do my best to humbly bear  
My cross, when no one seems to care.



# Take Me, Lord

*Elaine Ulrich, age 14, Grandview, TX*

Lord, take my life into Your hands,  
Mold me into Your truth.  
Lead me unto Your righteousness,  
And let me share with happiness,  
Your love to *all* the world.

Your life You gave for all the world.  
Our sins You blotted out with blood.  
Your love has done a lot for me.  
And now I want the world to see  
Your love to *all* the world.



## The Third Kingdom

Bruce Wagler, Cross Hill, SC

*The following article was written as an assignment for Separation and Nonconformity class at Calvary Bible School several years ago. It was recommended by Anthony Miller, the teacher. He obtained permission from the writer for use in this column.*

*In relation to this essay, the Apostle Paul's prayer comes to mind: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness; which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:9-11).*

*Several comments from Nelson's Bible study notes are pertinent: "'Things that are excellent' means 'things that really matter.' This refers to important issues. As the Philippians' love increases in knowledge and discernment (verse 9) they will be able to accurately distinguish the vital and worthwhile things in life from those that are not." We believe a biblically-oriented and Spirit-filled brotherhood helps us rightly discern what is right and what is wrong in issues we face in a materialistic world and then to choose the "excellent" things in life that count for eternity. -FS*

**W**e clearly read in the Scriptures of two kingdoms. What about the third kingdom I hear so much about? I hear it from my neighbors; I hear it from my worldly friends, I even hear of it from church folk.

If this kingdom is so widespread, why have the Scriptures nothing to say of it?

Before we begin to explore this third kingdom, perhaps we should identify the two that we do find in Scripture. Erdman's Bible dictionary

defines the Kingdom of God as “the realm ruled by God.” Incidentally, the Kingdom of Satan would then be “the realm ruled by Satan.”

The third kingdom, however, is much harder to define. It includes a huge range of purposes, practices, and possessions. Most of these things are not good enough to find a home in God’s Kingdom, but are too nice to be placed in Satan’s kingdom. Perhaps the most attractive feature of this kingdom is simply its convenience. First and foremost, it is convenient in the fact that God is not against it. To be sure, we acknowledge that we should not be solely involved in this kingdom. We do need to get involved in the things of God’s kingdom here and there, but neither does God want our lives to be “stuffy” or “unpleasant.” God intended life to be enjoyed and many enjoyable things are to be found in the third kingdom.

Of course, there are many enjoyable things in Satan’s kingdom, as well, but we know better than that! Furthermore, this kingdom is convenient because it is so neutral and relaxed. God tends to be pretty demanding. He often requires things that do not make much sense, and not a few

of these requirements are taxing to our bank accounts and general comfort. However, we also know that following Satan leads to misery and helplessness. Yes, indeed! We should be very thankful for this third kingdom. Without it I am afraid we should have to give up many things that we hold dear.

But wait, something does not add up here. Good and bad are polar opposites, even as darkness and light. When something is not light it is dark. In the same way, something that is not good is bad. The Scriptures say, “Abhor that which is evil and and cleave to that which is good.” Nowhere do we find it saying, stay away from the really bad stuff and make sure you get a fair amount of good worked in.

In today’s world, it can be difficult to discern what is right and what is wrong. How are we to keep ourselves holy when we are constantly bombarded with evil on every side? I do not claim to understand everything that is right or wrong, but I do know of four things that are right.

The first one I mention is reading the Word of God. Another activity, pure and faultless, is prayer. The Bible says, “Pray without ceasing.” The third thing I have in mind is

praising God. We can never praise God too much. He deserves every bit of praise we can give. The fourth, I dare say, is the most important. Indeed, this fourth activity is the first three in a nutshell. It is evangelism. We can never be too involved in evangelism. This should be what a Christian's life revolves around. We have been placed on this earth for no greater purpose. Our world is dying in sin, we have the answer; we know anyone can have the peace and assurance they so desperately crave. Are we sharing what we know?

So, by saying this, am I suggesting that anything we do that is not directly related to one of these is sin and should be avoided at all costs? Of course not! What if I get the notion to get on a sled and slide down a snow-covered hill? I probably won't read my Bible, pray, sing a song, or toss a tract as I go whizzing by! Yet, I am not being inconsistent with what I have outlined above. Besides, we all know that recreation is a necessity. This principle could be applied to our purchases, the clothes we wear, the way we drive, and so on. With the Holy Spirit to guide us, I believe we can know what is wholesome and what is detrimental.

So what of the things we do that are not consistent with

Bible reading, prayer, praise, and evangelism? Say, I really start liking sliding downhill. So I join a bobsled team and begin to practice hard and plan to compete in sledding events soon! It's all I can think about and my daily devotions grow further and further apart and I hardly have enough time to do the things of God. However, there is a solution for this! We'll simply put this to the "What's wrong with it?" test. Let's see, no immodesty, no anti-God policies! It must be good! Is not this how many things find their way into this third kingdom?

It may be working 24/7 to make more money. It may be an obsession with sports; it may be having to have the nicest clothes or the latest gadget. Do these things enhance our service to our Creator? If these things, these practices, these lifestyles of the third kingdom do not bring glory to God, but hamper our own little selfish selves and make us more discontented and greedy, who do you think is being served—God or Satan? I think the answer here is fairly obvious. So, all that being said, don't you think it's plausible that this third kingdom could be a dummy kingdom masterminded by Satan himself?

I'll let you decide.



## A Woman of God

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Elizabeth Elliot was a well-known and much loved author and speaker. She is probably best known for her book, *Through Gates of Splendor*. It is the account of the five missionaries (including her husband Jim Elliot) who gave their lives in 1956 for the cause of Christ in trying to reach the Auca Indians (now known as the Waorani Indians) in Ecuador.

Just last week Elizabeth Elliot herself passed through those Gates of Splendor at age 88. She died as she lived, courageously, even though she suffered from dementia. Her husband, Lars Gren, recalls that when Elizabeth first realized that she was losing her memory, she practiced what she always taught, “With acceptance comes peace.”

She was married only three years when her husband, Jim, was killed. She remained in Ecuador for a time, even spending two years along with

her two-year-old daughter, Valerie, living with the very tribe that had killed her husband.

Elizabeth is recognized for many memorable quotes. Three that especially touched my life are, “**You are loved with an everlasting love, and underneath are the everlasting arms.**” Another is, “**It is not WHO we are but WHOSE we are that really matters,**” and “**Just do the next thing.**” I shall use these three clauses as the springboard for this month’s thoughts.

First of all, it is imperative that we know and understand that God loves us. We teach children to sing the song, “Jesus Loves Me” and I believe this song has comforted many young hearts when they faced difficult situations. It is just as important to understand that God loves me with an everlasting love. I have a sister-in-law who has frequently told me she feels so loved by God. What a beautiful testimony!

Zephaniah 3:17 is one of my favorite verses, **“God rejoices over us with joy, and He also will joy over us with singing.”** At our Sunday morning church service, one of our men had devotions and spoke about God’s love. He illustrated it by taking his young foster son up with him and held his hand. As he looked down on that boy with tenderness, love and compassion, he compared that with the way God looks down at us. It was a beautiful illustration. I am convinced that unless we truly believe that God loves us (me personally), we cannot really experience peace and joy in our lives. God is not wanting to bring harm or difficulty to us unless He can use it for good in our lives. **He loves us with an everlasting love and underneath are the everlasting arms.**

We have probably all struggled at some time in our lives with the desire to know, **who we are or where we fit in and belong. God is more concerned that we understand whose we are.** We belong to God. If we have repented and believe, we are His children. God created us and also redeemed us. He designed us with a plan and a purpose. My background, my birth and parentage, my gifts and

talents are all a part of of His plan. When I refuse to accept the way God made me, where I was born or grew up or even the personality and gifts He has given me, I dishonor Him. Accepting myself is one of the biggest keys to my usefulness in God’s Kingdom. I do not need to worry and fret about what people think of me. If I am misunderstood, I can be sure that God understands. He sees my motives and my heart, and I can find rest and peace in Him.

**Just doing the next thing** is a freeing way to live and work. It relieves the stress and frustration. I can enjoy what I am doing and when I am finished, I just go on to the next thing as my work is accomplished. I can even carry this on to my social life. I can plan one day at a time and not worry and fret about tomorrow. Jesus says, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of its own things.” My spiritual life can even be affected as I respond to my spiritual growth, one step at a time as God brings things to my mind.

I trust God can use each one of our lives to influence and challenge other women, even as the life-giving words of faithful, courageous women like Elizabeth Elliot have encouraged us. 

## Selling Bibles in Kenya

*Markus Ian Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya*

**L**isten, my children, and you shall hear," from a vendor of books in a Kenyan market.

Come along to market and sit beside me. I sell books from Mount Zion Literature. MZL is a company which subsidizes books, meaning that they put the selling price low enough so more people can afford to buy them.

Let's watch the people who go by.

Just up the road from my stand is a cattle market. Many men walk by with cows to sell. Others are taking sheep and goats to market.

Later I see men coming back with cattle they bought. The men crack their whips over the cows, making a loud snap. I smile when I see a cattle man wearing a suit coat and large boots. Piki-pikis (motorcycles) are constantly whizzing by with vendors who are going to set up in the market or shoppers who have come to buy. Occasionally I see different cargoes, such as a big load of eggs or fresh

tomatoes. Just recently, I saw a man riding his motorcycle with three goats tied behind him and a small kid on his lap.

Many people walk to market. Because most of them do not have their own vehicle or piki, they either hire a driver or use their legs.

When people come to look at the books, they are most interested in the Luo Bibles, for this is Luo land. Luo is their first language. Their reactions vary when I tell them the price of the Luo Bible is (about) \$8. They either think my price is too much or else a very good price. From what I hear, if you buy a Luo Bible in a local bookshop, you have to pay about \$12.

Most people wonder if they can bargain over the price, which is common practice in Kenya. When they find out I cannot take, say, \$4 for the book, they tell me they will go look for the money and be back next week. Some people, if they have enough money, will buy a Bible or

another book.

Strange people occasionally stop by. One man came dressed in flowing white robes. He energetically rearranged my books and slapped dust off the books with a scarf he wore. He thought some children, who were milling about the table, should leave. He told them to go, but they did not. Eventually, he picked up a stick and shook it at the children. They moved away a bit, while laughing at him. The man left, but an hour or two later, he came back! This time he was carrying a soda. Raising it high into the air, he remained in the same position for several minutes. Then it was back to rearranging the Bibles and dusting off the books. Eventually, he left again, this time for good. I was glad to see him go.

The lady beside me sells men's dress shirts. Her table is made of wooden sticks and is neat and tidy. If she gets tired of sitting in the sun, she spreads a cloth underneath the stand and lies down. Nearby is a van with cell phones. The back is open. The cell phones are on shelves behind glass.

Many of the vendors sell used clothing. The clothes lying in huge heaps on plastic spread over the ground. If you are looking for a particular piece of clothing, you

simply go and dig through the piles.

I was talking to one of my friends. Another friend (who also had cell phones for sale) came and invited me to sit in his car. He gave me a cup of chai. Later in the day, another vendor wondered if I had ever tried sugar cane. I told him, "Yes, I have." That stuff is delicious, sticky, and sweet. He promptly proceeded to buy me a stick of it and I happily chewed.

Ibrahim is a big, tall man. He entertains me when he stops by. He thinks he knows English very well. What he says is often amusing. I offer him a chair and he sits down. We talk for a while. Many Kenyans seem to have all the time in the world. They do not rush from one thing to another, like Americans do. Ibrahim tells me he wants to learn Germanese. He also talks about spiders making webs—do they apply that idea to network? And who ever thought up the internet? I grin and don't know what to say. One day in the market when some visitors stopped in, Ibrahim welcomed them and his parting words to them were not "Feel at home." Instead, he said, "Feel at market."

Children enjoy coming to the stand. For many minutes, they stand and look at the pictures in the Bible story books. I smile and talk to them. Shyly, they smile back. The bolder ones come up and touch my skin and

feel my hair. One boy tells me my hair is very “*maht*.” (smart, very good.)

At five it is time to pack up and leave. This time I don't have a vehicle. So I call William. He loads my plastic table, chair and a full box of books onto his piki. William gets onto the piki, and I, carrying a full bag of books, get on behind him, wedged between William and the stuff strapped on behind me. We set off slowly, and one time we have

to stop due to the strap holding the load coming loose. After fixing it, we proceed and eventually reach my house safely! He helps me unload and I take everything inside.

So ends another day at market. This evening when you kneel beside your bed to pray, pray for the people in East Africa who buy Bibles and other books. Pray that they would read God's Word and live the truth found therein.



## Refusal of Salvation

*Kristina Miller, 16 years old, Wellman, IA*

A sin-intoxicated earth reels crazily through time,  
Imbued debauchery and greed digesting in her soul.  
Time's passage is an empty move and righteousness a mime,  
Earth's empty citizens' great need is that they be made whole!  
Deranged of Truth, she often scoffs at Truth's redemptive call:  
“I, a broken one, the Healer am; My mercy is not small!  
Do not deprive yourself of Love, when Love atones for all!”  
She chortles cruelly at the pain that she slapped in His face:  
Rejection, heartless, when He died to take the sinner's place.  
In falsehoods her security, she scorns amazing grace:  
“Morality is my defense—I need no advocate!”  
She lies about her sinfulness. Sees not her need as great.

But earth—life's not forever, thus the sinner is death's slave.  
And late she finds—too late she finds, no lies beyond the grave!

*[Author's note: “Perhaps this could be a wake-up call for someone who is spiritually napping.”]*



## The Journey of a Lifetime: You're Invited

*Gideon Yutzy, Hutchinson, KS*

**Y**ou have lost all sense of time. You are rapt, immersed, entranced, oblivious to all else. Use whichever word you wish to describe it, the experience remains the same: you're lost in a book.

Reading may be a discipline. It may require some personal sacrifice. But reading is a privilege, a delight, a spellbinding pleasure that too many people are missing out on.

Thankfully the Digital Age hasn't yet dealt the death knell to reading books. Even so, a recent news story from *The Onion*,<sup>1</sup> a satirical magazine, seems prophetic. The story is fabricated as are most stories from *The Onion*. It depicts a major metropolitan newspaper publishing an article containing only text and no graphics.

*The Onion* goes on to make fun of modern readers as they "gazed helplessly at the frightening chunk of print" that was devoid of any

embedded YouTube videos or graphics whatsoever.

We don't need yet another unpolished rant against the dangers of the Digital Age. But one thing should be established in any current discussion on reading books: readers will have some unique difficulties because of the internet. If we wish to feed our souls through reading, we will need to depart from prevailing norms of internet usage.

Consider the pleasures offered by social media and surfing the web. To be sure, such pleasures are much more immediate than those derived from reading books and, in that respect, books don't hold a candle. But as to which holds the more satisfying pleasure—random, mindless skimming of the internet or the deep, focused reading of books—well, that's another matter, entirely. As Thomas Paine would have said, "That which we obtain too easily, we

esteem too lightly.” Great reward can come only with great sacrifice.

Does this mean, then, that reading is to be a drudgery? Is a soul-nourishing pleasure to come only with deep personal sacrifice?

Perhaps an illustration would be helpful. Think of the recreational activities a typical five-year-old enjoys. Do you suppose she will enjoy playing with her dolls and make-believe kitchen for the rest of her life? And what will have to take place for her to undertake more sophisticated activities such as crocheting or playing a violin?

She will never advance to other activities until she recognizes something, namely how juvenile and insufficient her current activities are. At some point she will need to make herself vulnerable and master, *through personal sacrifice at first*, what she sees others doing.

“When I became a man, I put away childish things.”

This same concept holds true in reading. Few people who have learned to enjoy Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Dallas Willard will read a steady diet of, say bed stand reading by Max Lucado. Of course, one might need to start with Max Lucado before moving to a higher level.

The point is, sometimes your Inner Reader will cry out within

you (I sound like a Quaker, I know): *This kind of book doesn't satisfy anymore.* On one hand, we should not feel guilty for reading a book just because it is scorned by literary critics. If a book feeds our souls, if it brings personal growth, if it opens our world, then we may read it. We *should* read it. There is no point in being in denial about our reading level. The danger lies in ignoring the urges when they bid us read at a higher level.<sup>2</sup>

Reading is a skill, a habit, a reshaping of the brain's pathways. Included in this is not only your taste in reading but also your rate of reading. A reading rate of five hundred words per minute, considered to be the maximum of human potential, is never achieved overnight.<sup>3</sup> Only through exercise will we ever become proficient, widely-read readers.

Perhaps you think I am overestimating the value of books. Allow me to point out several merits of reading.

First, we experience art through books. People talk of escapism as though it were something bad but remember, true art *is* escape, escape into something good. Some of the stories into which we escape will help us to live better personal stories, not worse. Ideally, it is

these stories we will enter—often emerging more complete and healed as we do so.

Second, reading books gives us words, the gift God gave to humans but withheld from all other creatures. Do you wish to communicate with precision, tact, and freshness? You will need words. And words come primarily through reading. Even a well-developed sense of humor comes from a good command of language and is found often in well-read people.

Third to reiterate the introduction to this essay, books pause the restricting dimensions of time and space. One could argue that many sinful pleasures accomplish the same purpose. That's true. But books, the right books, do it in a healing, legitimate way.

For me, two of the finest days of my life took place in February, the dreariest month of the year. It snowed close to a foot and classes at the school where I teach were canceled. My sister-in-law from Poland, who planned to visit us the following week, had ordered a book to our house from Amazon, *A Father's Tale*, by Michael O'Brien. With her permission, I read the book, all 1071 pages, during those two snow days.

If pressed, I wouldn't be able to

recount much from the book. I remember only two things with certainty. First, I caught myself praying for the main character at the end of the first snow day (I'd suspended my reading with him in some dreadful predicament). Second, when the weather cleared and classes resumed, I found myself somehow better-suited for the classroom. Because of the complex characters in the book, I could relate with more confidence to the complex characters in real life.

In the words of Emily Dickinson, "There is not frigate like a book to take us lands away." If you haven't boarded that frigate, do so now. Granted, there is a risk of being blown about by taking the wrong ship. But far greater is the doom of those who opt to stay on shore, forgetting that God guides only moving ships. Far greater is the tragedy of those who forgo life's true riches, free for the taking if they would only open their eyes and read.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Onion*, "Nation Shudders at Large Block of Uninterrupted text," March 9, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Alan Jacobs and his book, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* for this idea.

<sup>3</sup> Stanislas, Dehaene, *Reading in the Brain* (New York.; Viking, 2009)



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## THOUGHT GEMS

A lot of kneeling will keep us in good standing.

•••••

Nothing damages the truth like stretching it does.

•••••

Gratitude is generous; pride is stingy.

•••••

Don't rock the boat of fellowship.

•••••

Smile while you go the extra mile.

•••••

For God's people, worship must come before work.

•••••

Worry is as useful as saving sawdust.

•••••

If one refuses to put his shoulder to the wheel, he may soon find his  
back to the wall.

•••••

Evil words cut more deeply than a sword.

•••••

Talk to others as you would have them talk to you.

•••••

The best bell to call people to church is a good example.

•••••

For the Christian, to trust is to triumph.