



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

Galatians 6:14

APRIL 2016

Meditation	
<i>Faith</i> .....	1
Editorial	
<i>Here Am I; Send Me</i> .....	2
Reader Response.....	5
The Bottom Line	
<i>A Casualty</i> .....	7
Mr. or Mrs. Know-it-all.....	10
Fear Not.....	11
Marriages.....	14
Cradle Roll.....	14
Ordination.....	16
Obituary.....	16
Observations.....	17
Idolatry: Making Sense of an Outmoded Sin.....	21
Musings of a Grandmother.....	25
Mission Awareness	
<i>The Need for Light in Dark Peru</i> .....	27
Helpers at Home	
<i>Springtime for Mothers</i> .....	30
Junior Messages	
<i>Daniel</i> .....	32
Youth Messages	
<i>Holy Dissatisfaction</i> .....	36
Thought Gems.....	back cover

April 2016

Purpose of Calvary Messenger is:

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

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

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**When you move**, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

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Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications, 2673 TR 421, Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$8.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$24.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$7.00 per year to individual addresses. Renewal \$4.25 when you also give a 1-year gift subscription at \$4.25. Second class postage at Sugarcreek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 7498 Woods West Ave., London, OH 43140.

# Faith

Violet Rhodes, Newberry, IN

Faith is the substance  
Of things hoped for,  
The evidence of  
The unopened door.

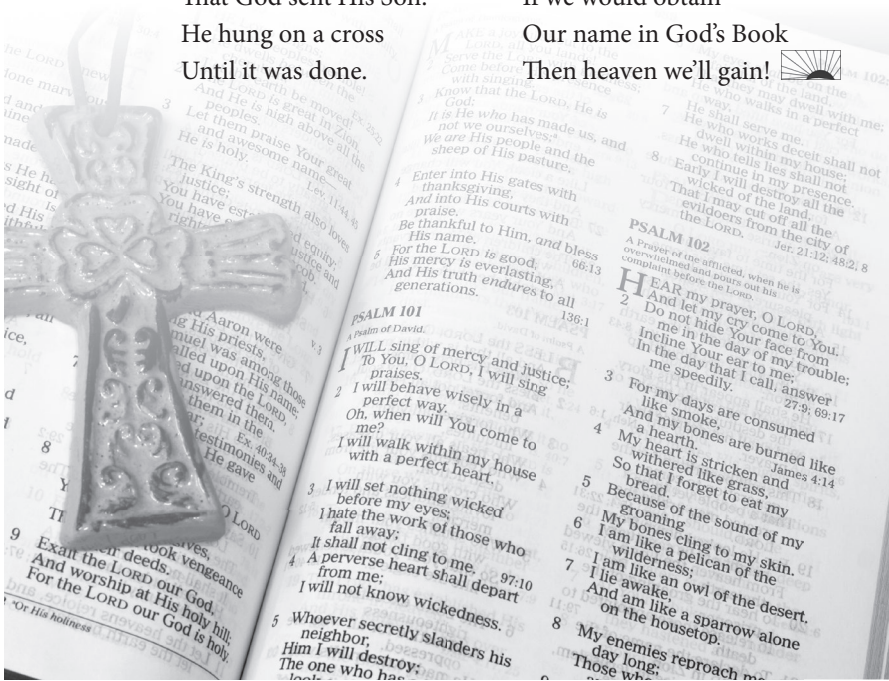
If we have no faith  
There is just no way  
That we can please God  
And always obey.

Through faith we believe  
The world was framed by  
Our Almighty God;  
He made earth and sky.

Now Noah had faith  
And he did believe;  
He made an ark  
For his family.

We also believe  
That God sent His Son.  
He hung on a cross  
Until it was done.

So we must have faith  
If we would obtain  
Our name in God's Book  
Then heaven we'll gain!



## Here Am I; Send Me

(Isaiah 6:1-9a)

*Jesus said, “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35b). How is this vision faring? Should more people be volunteering for Christian service? We know that we can’t all go. Are too many of us, however, settling close to home because it’s more comfortable? Should large settlements spread out more, instead of staying together until splintering, with its inherent loss of testimony, takes its toll? What happens when lots of salt is poured on one spot?*

What Isaiah saw and experienced in the year of King Uzziah’s death was literally earth-shaking. Isaiah was nearly overwhelmed when Jehovah appeared to him in the temple.

Just imagine seeing a form God has chosen for Himself sitting up on an elevated throne, surrounded by seraphs each having six wings, who were surrounded by countless celestial beings which kept repeating the refrain, **“Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts! The whole earth is full of his glory!”**

That’s when God spoke and shook the place as with an earthquake.

So powerful was this shaking that Isaiah said nothing for a time. Added to his experience was thick smoke billowing out in the temple which suggested God’s control of fire, man’s servant that may quickly rage out of man’s control.

After Isaiah began processing what God was saying to him about how needy he was, this man of God found his voice again and said, **“Woe is me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”**

That’s when God commanded a seraph to bring a live coal and put it

on Isaiah's lips. Did it hurt? We don't know. We do know that the heavenly messenger offered this comfort, "**Lo, this has touched your lips, your guilt has been taken away and your sin atoned for.**"

When God spoke again, He asked Isaiah these two probing questions: "**Whom shall I send and who will go for us?**" This is not repetitious. The first question considers whom God would call. The second is about how the person called will respond. These questions, even now many centuries later, are still key questions in the sending of laborers into the harvest of the Kingdom of God!

God was pleased when Isaiah said simply and sincerely, "**Here am I; send me.**"

### **A New Testament situation**

(Acts 1:8 and 8:1)

When Jesus was leaving earth from Mt. Olivet, He gave instructions to His disciples whom He designated as apostles to take the Gospel both nearby and far away. The disciples began well in proclaiming Jesus' message in Jerusalem and yet we might ask: *Did it take persecution—the martyrdom of Stephen—to direct*

*their attention to the regions beyond Jerusalem?* "**And at that time there was great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were scattered abroad throughout the whole region of Judea and Samaria....**" It appears that God used Stephen's death to reawaken vision for outreach beyond Jerusalem.

### **God's search for worshipers and workers**

God looks for men and women who face their own need and allow Jesus to cleanse them and fill them with His Holy Spirit. He looks for willing workers.

It is not enough to simply acknowledge God's holiness. We must also acknowledge our need. As we cry out for His mercy, He sets us on our feet again. But even then He does *not* say, "That's enough; you may sit down from now on and simply take care of yourself."

God has work for us. Let us not nestle down in a recliner in some "safe" place. It may take some time to process what a life-changing encounter with God should mean to us. It may mean that as we "study to show ourselves approved unto God," that we become aware of

opportunities that we had not seen when we first beheld His glory and responded to His welcome invitation, **“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden.”**

As we continue to follow the Lord Jesus, we should ponder that He further said, **“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me...”**

God’s work still needs volunteers. We have enrolled in the Kingdom and that enrollment is the first step in an ambassadorship, a life of promoting the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Just what form this ambassadorship takes can be exciting, but also disappointing. It can take us up over mountains and down through valleys. We must not always expect success. We might as well also expect failure, at times. God has a purpose for all of life’s experiences. He seeks fruit from us and fruitfulness may increase through hardship. He has not promised us a bed of roses. His dealings with us are somewhat like those of a diligent parent who loves his children too much to simply let them have their own way.

God certainly takes no delight in having us criticize and pester

our brothers and sisters in Christ when we should be minding the King’s business. He loves to see us supporting our brothers and sisters who serve Him in situations that demand their best.

We all have hard times, but these times are not as hard as those that come if we dodge the greater challenge of self-denial and labor in the Kingdom of Christ. He gives His peace and rest to those who face the realities of life in Christ.

Let us not despair. Let us go with confidence in God’s goodness. Let us rise and face the battle of life, not the least of which is the battle against our own love for wealth and ease. Let us consider the possibility that God would lead us out of zones of comfort to represent Him in places and capacities that surprise us.

The adventure of faith has far greater rewards than those of taking the path of least resistance. To be obedient means carrying our cross for Christ. Let us not fail Him! Let us humbly tell Jesus, “Here am I; send me.”

*[Scripture quotations are from KJV and NIV.]*

-PLM





**Re: Notes from a Seminar on Music, p. 35, Feb., 2016.**

Gideon,

Thanks for your article on music. I enjoy studying music—styles, effects, and causes, etc. Your article confirmed (what I’ve discovered as well) that music is not an amoral issue. You can ask a person what style of music he listens to or notice what type of hymnal a congregations uses and get a pretty close picture of what their view is on music.

Many of our Anabaptist churches have had the standard of a capella music only. Today we can’t just leave it at that; we need to define it more accurately as we have an influx of CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) permeating Anabaptist circles. The question is raised “How did we get here?” As is the case in most situations there is no “silver bullet” answer, but I think a lot of it comes back to our music education in our schools today.

It seems there is a philosophy afloat in Anabaptist churches that too much music education is a

downfall to one’s spirituality and while I believe that there is an element of truth in that, I think we have fallen into the ditch on the opposite side of the road. We have young people today who don’t have much idea what the components of a good hymn are and therefore cannot wisely discern between good and bad music. My plea is that our schools would focus more on music education so that we can develop men and women for God who know where they stand on the issue of music.

Jerry Rhodes  
Newberry, IN

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**Re: Joy in spite of constant pain, Reader Response, Feb., 2016.**

*[From the editor: I thought it should not be too hard to let someone raise the question of living with constant pain. So I published that brief anonymous item. This was not an offer to write anonymously. The following is a condensation of a lengthy response of someone who seemed to see an opportunity to*

*“speak ‘from behind a bush.’ It was unsigned and had only a postmark to indicate where it was sent from. I must re-emphasize that we request the name and address of writers. I am, however, sharing a few comments from this shy writer who has had much physical pain and obviously wants to encourage others in pain. -PLM]*

I live with pain at times to the point of tears. Sometimes I can mask it so well that people don't know how unwell I really feel and there are better days, too.

God knows how debilitating pain can be. He knows my frame; I am but human! He knows how much effort it takes at times to not be short-tempered with those around me so that they give me space or understand how it feels. He waits with open arms ready for me to spill all my frustration, my inability to handle this pain level, my anger at life being tough and unfair... everything...into His ears taking away the devil's power to keep me bound in it.

Victory is admitting I need Him just to be able to cope with the next hour. It is the beauty of being transparent to my Father

with my tears and trusting Him to understand. Not because I am strong but because He is strong and because pain teaches me to win another day by refusing the trap of believing that God doesn't care or love me or He'd remove all my pain.

So, to you, my fellow soldier, don't give up reaching for joy. Let Him take you as you are. Find rest in His arms and no condemnation for being there and needing Him to pick you up. He understands and you can look forward to the day when pain can hold no more sway over you!

• • • • •

- Listen to CD's of Scripture, sermons, etc.

- Think of and pray for the blessings you have. Each evening, thank God for five things that blessed you that day.

- We can't change the fact that we have pain, but it's up to us if we're in pain and depressed or in pain and cheerful.

- Remember the day is coming when we will “fight life's final war with pain.” (from the song, “Because He Lives”)

*Name given, but requesting anonymity.*





## A Casualty

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

I am a member of the local fire company. I don't go to their meetings and they don't come to my door to get acquainted. Still, I don't forget them and they don't forget me.

You see, I'm a *casual member* of the fire company. Whatever they decide on plans and issues is just fine with me. I can take it or leave it—mostly leave it. Well, except when our neighbor's barn burned somebody really made poor decisions. But that's up to them. And that accident on Route 741 was really mismanaged. My buddies and I had it all figured out over our Saturday-morning breakfast at Duffy's

I am a church member at the local conservative Anabaptist church. I go every Sunday morning—somewhere. I mean, to church, most times. We can also have church when we go up the mountains, or down to the beach. We read at least one whole chapter of the Bible on those frequent occasions.

You see, I am a *casual member* of "their church." They make the decisions as "they" think best. I can take it or leave it. But that last remodel job was quite unnecessary. Oh well, if they pay for it, that's up to them.

Meanwhile, I pay my dues and with that we stay out of each others' hair. Last summer they asked for volunteers to help fix the fence around the cemetery. It just happened to come over the time of our much-needed vacation. But we take our turn to help clean the church and try to be there when it's our turn to be host family.

As a casual church member, I must say I consider myself to have a good average. Even preachers have to go with averages, in which at least half of their sermons will hopefully be good.

Actually, I do not consider myself a casual member of our church. But if I were, the above may be how I would justify myself.

• • • • •

Casual church members are a casualty of modern times. The church doesn't require super members who rate excellent in every category of congregational life. However, God is looking for fruit in His orchard that comes from a high degree of faithfulness according to one's calling and giftedness.

Not all of us have equal opportunity, or resources, or interests. Some variables come with age and experience. Some variables may happen with one's cultural background, or goal-oriented perspective. But no one needs to revert to being merely average through non-participation, nor back to ignorance by refusing to learn, nor backslidden with old habits of self-justification.

Does our Lord have anything to say about "average" being good enough? There was one church group of whom Jesus said that they were a tepid average. They had arrived at their goal of being rich and having storehouses increased with goods. Our Lord said they were lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—just average. They were in—but casual. Church members—but casual. Rich and blessed, but casual. Poor eyesight, poorly dressed, and poorly miserable. Casually lukewarm and lukewarmly casual. (Revelation 3:14-22).

Are all professing Christians like that? No. All churches? No. Are there any solutions? Yes.

1. Return to making the home the number one institution. Begin by doing so, time-wise. There is much going evenings that is either school-related or church-related. The Christian home should be number one, but is struggling to be that because of keen competition from school and church against the home.

2. Dads and moms need to pick up on doing some more creative things with the family. Every family member simply being in his bedroom, office, and laundry room doesn't count. All-family occasions in our nice and ample homes are too few, in which the whole family is doing something together, at least for most of the evening, even just once a month.

3. Have one entire family spend time with another entire family in the church once a month. Have a plan with games, projects, stories, and so on.

4. Encourage school principals and teachers to review with the pastors and a few representative families how to better achieve the should-be goals of the home—a once-a-year review. How have we been doing? What should we give up for each other to arrive at our goals?

5. We don't want to make new


problems. The origin of many church activities began years ago by member initiatives. Schools were started by interested parents. Later programs and activities came about by visionary principals and (in some cases) a minority of parents in which the “blower keeps running, but the fire has gone out.”

How many things are we doing as a school or church that was started by the vision of a bygone generation? If we wish to add a new congregational activity, which current one do we suggest should be discontinued? We have incrementally added many regular things to do over the last 2 ½ generations. This overload has caused some people to drop out.

Danger: When our church’s program becomes “their program,” a casualty is in the making.

Becoming casual begins in the heart, forming in the mind. It may not be safe to talk about it to the leaders. The safest place for the rehash is Saturday morning at Duffy’s, unless someone will bring constructive change to our old habits.

**The Bottom Line** is that these comments may pertain to a minority among us and perhaps not to every congregation. Becoming lukewarm or casual can be caused by too much discouragement or some unbrotherly rebuke, or some other disconnect.

Who is to blame? We aren’t looking so much for where to assign blame as we are to ignite a new flame, and going from the casual-as-usual to the cause-for-renewal, in which weekly analysis at Duffy’s is not needed any more. 

*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God  
with all thine heart, and with all thy  
soul, and with all thy might.*

DEUTERONOMY 6:5



# Mr. or Mrs. Know-it-all

*Larry Gembicki (1954-2015)*

**A**re you a Mr. or Mrs. Know-it-all? Pick a subject, do some studying about the subject, get a degree in the subject, get a doctorate in the subject. Still some will argue with you about the subject of which they know virtually nothing. Is it insecurity that produces know-it-alls or is it something else...maybe pride?

God says it in many places that He will humble the proud but give grace to the humble. May we be humble and realize that some people have areas of expertise and maybe, just maybe, they might know a few things we don't.

Do we want others to think well of us? I'm reminded of Job in the Bible who tried to counsel God. I think in some ways even he was a Mr. Know-it-all. What would make him think that he knew more than God?

We study our Bibles, go to Bible school, read the Bible for years;


we read commentaries, and listen to thousands of sermons. Those of us who have studied much realize that in fact man knows very little. God knows it all. We know in part—a very little part. Knowledge puffs up. Charity edifies.

Yet, novices think they know it all. Some people are just unteachable. They've got to be in charge. They think they know the truth. They are set in their ways. God promises to humble them. Watch them fall. Satan fell. He was the original Mr. Know-it-all. Then came Adam and Eve who thought they knew more than God. They fell.

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time. Don't exalt yourself. Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Think soberly. Become like a child so that you may be great in the kingdom of heaven. Don't be

a Mr. or Mrs. Know-it-all!

*[Some years ago, Bro. Larry Gembicki sent me a collection of his writings, to which I would sometimes refer for material. When I noticed recently that Larry was not listed in the Red Book with the Zion congregation in Middlefield,*

*Ohio, I inquired and was told that he died last fall. Check for his obituary this month. Larry's nonsense writing is clear. This may explain why Bro. Harvey Kaufman's first comment to me then was, "We miss him!" Yes, "he being dead yet speaketh."-PLM]* 

## Fear Not

*Kenneth Ranck, Mt. Crawford, VA*

**W**hat should be the Christian's response to the culture of fear that seems to be gripping our world? Recent terror attacks seem to be the focus of the fear. Some terrorism comes from isolated individuals acting alone, while other acts of terror are carried out by groups with names like ISIS, Al-Qaida, and Boko Haram. Random attacks have happened in seemingly unrelated parts of the world, such as Connecticut; Virginia; northern Nigeria; Paris, France; and San Bernardino, California.

The victims of these attacks are often innocent people. The randomness of the attacks and the vulnerability of the victims have given rise to a sense of paralyzing fear. One is tempted to withdraw from others, label groups of people as unsafe, or seek to protect himself and his loved ones. It seems something must be done, but what?

Fearful responses have always been a part of the human experience. In Exodus 13 the Israelites fled Egypt, led by God and His servant Moses. Then they discovered they were

being pursued by the Egyptian Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and foot soldiers. The Israelites were "terrified" (NIV) because their future was uncertain. The situation was frightening. What would happen to them? But God knew the future, had a plan for deliverance, and was ready to act on their behalf. Moses' answer was, "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (Exodus 14:13).

Three times in Luke 1 and 2, people faced fear. In each case the person reacted in fear to a messenger of God. Zechariah met with the angel of the Lord and was "gripped with fear" (NIV). Mary was "greatly troubled" (NIV) when met by Gabriel. The Bethlehem shepherds were "sore afraid" (KJV) or "terrified" (NIV) when an angel of the Lord appeared to them. In all three instances the angel's message was the same: "Fear not."

These faced quite different situations from the Exodus experience, yet a common theme emerges. Faced with an uncertain

future, the people responded in fear. And in each case they were told not to be fearful because God was there and knew the future and had a plan.

We might say that their situations were different from ours today. The Israelites could see an actual army following them. The threat was visible, while today many are afraid of unseen or unknown enemies. The characters in Luke were afraid of angels, while the scary characters we face are evil.

In spite of these differences, there are similarities between the Bible characters and us today. Like ours today, their futures were uncertain. Our fears are caused by uncertainties and "what ifs?" Yet God called them to forsake fear and trust him. He calls us to do the same.

How should we respond to this culture of fear? Paul told Timothy that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). The Amplified New Testament renders this,



“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity—of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear—but (He has given us a spirit) of power and love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control.”

We must recognize that fears come from the evil one. To give place to fear indicates a lack of trust in God. God knows us and our needs and has promised to provide for all that we need. He knows our futures and will walk with us. God has placed each of us in the world at a special time and place. We are safest when we are in the place to which God has called us. That is reassuring as we send our loved ones into places of service though we may have some apprehensions about their safety. We should have the same mind-set as we live our everyday lives.

We must take proper safety precautions. But the emphasis in our country is to arm yourself. Get a weapon permit. Post guards in your church. Seal the borders. Don't trust that foreign-looking

neighbor.

Wait. Aren't these ideas evidence of trusting in man and not God? These are not things God has called us Christians to do. The old term for nonresistance was defenselessness. Media hype has raised alarms which God wants us to avoid. God has called His people to go out unarmed as sheep in the midst of wolves. Going about our daily lives as friendly, nonresistant, defenseless, nonconformed Christians is what Jesus calls His followers to. We trust in Him, and He cares for us. This is not a promise of absolute protection from danger. But even if we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, God has promised to walk with us.

As a child in summer Bible school class, we learned a number of short verses. One I remember was, “I will trust and not be afraid.” Let us live that out as children of God.

*[From Life Lines, Jan-Feb, 2016. Used by permission.]*



## marriages

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

### Graber-Ropp

Bro. Alvin Clare, son of Clare and Gwendolyn Graber, Wingham, ON, and Sis. Juanita Joy, daughter of Larry and Susan Ropp, Lucknow, ON, at Lucknow Christian Reformed Church for Whitechurch Amish Mennonite Church, on Oct. 3, 2015, by John Gerber.

### Jara-Otto

Bro. Jeremias, son of Justo and Barbara Justo, Paraguay, and Sis. Rosanne, daughter of David and Miriam Otto, Crossville, TN, on Nov. 28, 2015, at First United Methodist Church for Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church, by John Mast.

### Miller-Stoltzfoos


Bro. Jared, son of Marlin and Karen Miller, New Holland, PA, and Sis. Charlene, daughter of Roman and Lucy Stoltzfoos, Kinzers, PA, at Weaverland Mennonite Church for Mine Road A.M. Church, on Feb. 6, 2016, by Alvin Stoltzfus.

### Stutzman-Kauffman

Bro. Paul, son of Emery and Naomi Stutzman, Fredonia, KY, and Sis. LaVerda, daughter of Herman and Christina Kauffman, Fredonia, KY, at

Northside Baptist Church for Fredonia Mennonite Church, Fredonia, KY, on Jan. 1, 2016, by Jim Yoder.

### Yoder-Detweiler

Bro. David Allen, son of Clara Mae and the late Ernest Yoder, Arthur, IL, and Sis. Marlene, daughter of Lester and Lena Detweiler, Sullivan, IL, at Penn Station for Trinity Christian Fellowship, by Wilbur Gingerich. 

## cradle roll

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

**Beachy**, Daniel and Salina (Kanagy), Winfield, PA, seventh child, third son, Dylan Andrew, Dec. 30, 2015.

**Beiler**, Marcus and Joanna (Kurtz), Gordonville, PA, fifth child, third son, Aaron Michael, Feb. 11, 2016.

**Beiler**, Timothy and Vasilica (Bitica), Gordonville, PA, second child and daughter, Hannah Joy, Jan. 16, 2016.

**Chupp**, Levi and Malinda (Graber), Greentown, IN, second child, first daughter, Novalee Faith, Jan. 17, 2016.

**Fisher**, Leroy and Rebekah (Miller), Mifflin, PA, seventh child, fourth son, Damien Elias, born June 11, 2009; received for adoption Sept. 4, 2015.

**Fisher**, Levi and Emalene (Lapp), Lewistown, PA, sixth child (one son in heaven), third daughter, Ashley Cheyanne, Feb. 14, 2016.

**Graber**, Alvie and Rachel (Herschberger), Sullivan, IL, fifth child, fourth daughter, Alayna, Feb. 5, 2016.

**Hochstedler**, Dylan and Theresa (Wray), Kokomo, IN, first child and son, Clayton Reid, Feb. 10, 2016.

**Horst**, Duane and Melisa (Peachey), Arthur, IL, third child, second son, Nicholas Anders, Jan. 8, 2016.

**King**, Lavern and Marlene (Smoker), Belleville, PA, second child, first daughter, Laura Elizabeth, Feb. 18, 2016.

**Martin**, Elam and Barbara (Jantzi), Belgrave, ON, ninth child, fourth daughter, Sheila Barb, Nov. 30, 2015.

**Miller**, Marvin and Jackie (Yoder), Partridge, KS, second child and son, Rowan Cole, Feb. 16, 2016.

**Miller**, Vincent and Juanita (Beachy), Belvidere, TN, third child, first daughter, Kyrrah Nivek, Feb. 9, 2016.

**Stauffer**, Roger Neil and Phyllis (Schmucker), Sturgis, MI, second child and daughter, McKenzie Lorene, Jan. 15, 2016.

**Stoltzfus**, Jared and Carmen (Stoltzfus), Los Angeles, CA, second child and daughter (one daughter deceased), Zoe Jane, Feb. 7, 2016.


**Stoltzfus**, Noah and Rebecca Ann (Lapp), Narvon, PA, fifth child, third daughter, Mariah Kathleen, Jan. 27, 2016.

**Troyer**, Melvin and Laura (Yoder), Ligonier, IN, third child, second son, Cole Liam, Feb. 6, 2016.

**Yoder**, Anthony and Rose (Stoltzfus), Bastrop, TX, sixth child, fifth daughter, Ashlyn Joyce, Feb. 15, 2016.

**Yoder**, Marcus and Regina (Farmwald), Arthur, IL, first child and daughter, Adalin Raine, Dec. 28, 2015.


**Yoder**, Michael and Miriam (Dueck), La Estrella, Costa Rica, eighth child, fifth son, Eric David, Jan. 31, 2016.

**Yoder**, Ralph and Janice (Nissley), Paris, TN, fourth, fifth, and sixth children, Makayla Dawn, born Oct. 19, 2010; twins, Jonathan Liam and Julia Elizabeth, born Dec. 21, 2011; all received for adoption on Feb. 19, 2016. 



## ordination

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

**Bro. Melvin Beiler**, 57, (wife: Verna Stoltzfus), was ordained as bishop at Salem County Mennonite Church, Bridgeton, NJ, on Feb. 21, 2106. Preordination messages were given by Leon Troyer, Worley, ID. The charge was given by Lee Stoltzfus, assisted by Leon Troyer and Dave Stoltzfus. 



## obituary


**Gembicki**, Lawrence T., Jr. “Larry”, 71, of Cleveland, Ohio, died peacefully at his home August 15, 2015. He was born in Garfield Heights, OH, July 6, 1954, to Lawrence T. and Patricia (Carbone) Gembicki.

Larry was a longtime member of Zion Christian Fellowship, Middlefield, OH, and would frequently share his burden for lost souls. He is greatly missed by all.

He attended Free Gospel Bible Institute in Pennsylvania in his younger years and retained his interest in studying the Bible. Larry’s family presented a large amount of Bible Study materials to Zion church after his decease. The church misses Brother

Larry’s spiritual contributions in devotionals he shared and appreciates the Christian writings he left behind that still speak today.

He is survived by his mother, Patricia; brothers, Dave (Christina) and Dennis Gembicki; nephew Philip; nieces Katie and Abbey, and many friends. He was preceded in death by his father, Lawrence.

The funeral was held on August 21 at Zion church on Georgia Road, Middlefield. Serving were Laban Kaufman, Kenneth Kuhns, Ron Copen, Bruce Arthur, and Joe Schmucker at the funeral and burial. Congregational songs were led by Harvey Kaufman. 

*History is sometimes an interesting subject. I recently came across an unexpected tidbit that seemed worthy of mention here.*

A report card of a second grader, born in 1927, from Custer County, Oklahoma (Thomas) school year 1935-36, shows that the student was doing alright with his studies. But what I found especially interesting was the county superintendent's message to the pupil:

1. Be clean in person, dress, habits, thought, and speech.
2. Be dutiful, polite, and respectful to parents and all whom you meet.
3. Be earnest in the time for play, and equally earnest in work.
4. Cultivate promptness, energy, and patient industry. They are worth more to you than money or influence in securing success in life.
5. Keep this report neat and clean. I may wish to examine it when I visit your school."

A note from teacher to parents includes this sentence: "The influence of the home and school must work toward the same end, that of doing the greatest good for each child."

This second-grader was student Clarence Stutzman who is now retired and living in Wooster, Ohio. Clarence was further graded on Arithmetic, Penmanship, Reading, Spelling, Drawing, and Conduct.

This report of 81 years ago, predates many inventions of modern times. One wonders how many of the values that were taught then are still being taught. Good character traits are never outdated.

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Heralds of Hope (HOH) visited this community on the weekend of February 7, and gave a program at Center Church. This ministry was started in 1967 by J. Otis Yoder, who had been a teacher at Eastern Mennonite College. Developments at the college and elsewhere made Brother J. Otis uneasy to continue a close relationship there. He was an able scholar, teacher, and minister who was mission-minded. This was the setting in which Heralds of Hope was born.

Bro. Yoder ministered for many years and died in 2003. HOH is presently being led by a nephew, J. Mark Horst. The air waves have become the means of crossing many political boundaries that are often closed to conventional travel.

The teaching has a two-fold emphasis: evangelism and discipleship. It is noteworthy that the vision of one servant has touched many people in many places and continues to grow after the demise of its founder.

Messages are usually 15 minutes long. Over 368 messages per week are broadcast in 15 languages. There have been responses from 83 countries of the world. The following response is from Nigeria: "I came to know about Christ through your HOH broadcast. My wife and I both accepted Jesus as our Savior, so now we are a Christian family. Thank you very much for helping us."

Who can estimate the number of listeners who hear life-giving messages? Is there another or better way to reach people in many hard-to-reach places? It is happening because of people who are willing to share financial support to the effort. Additional support would allow the program to expand.

Their address: P. O. Box 3,

Breezewood, PA 15533 (Phone: 717-485-4021)

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Is someone wondering if I now favor having radios in our homes? Radio technology is morally and ethically neutral. It will convey whatever is fed to it. It seems right to me that it is being used by HOH to spread the message of eternal salvation to hard-to-reach places. That is very different from assuming that conventional, public radio programming's content supports basic Christian ideals or that it is needed in our homes.

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*Calvary Messenger* began in 1970. Forty-six years later our need for a useful church periodical has not diminished. Those who contribute have a limited way of knowing how widely it is read. Occasionally someone offers a word of appreciation and encouragement.

A minister recently told me that he regularly calls attention to items in CM to his congregation that he wants to be sure they don't miss. I assume this may be an isolated case.

A kind brother recently also wrote that he finds my writing to be tiresome. I am glad that there are others whose contributions should alleviate his tiredness. He is apparently a serious reader of CM. It



takes more courage to offer a word of criticism than affirmation.

Our board is concerned that CM is attractive to the reading constituency. Simply stated, this involves the cover and contents. To redesign the cover looks very doable. The question is: Would that increase reader interest? Are there things about the present cover that discourage exploring content? I assume that the board would be glad to hear any helpful suggestions.

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Mountain Lake, Minnesota, has a familiar ring to persons who take an interest in the larger Mennonite family. Its founding dates back to 1878, when it was founded by Russian Mennonite immigrants. In early years, this General Conference Mennonite church flourished. At one time Sunday morning attendance was between four and five hundred. Special meetings would accommodate crowds of up to 1,000 people.

In 1955-56, an elaborate structure was built to meet their need. It is not apparent to me what all happened since then, but *Mennonite World Review*, 2-29-16, reports that attendance had dropped to 40 and that the Mennonites had their final meeting on December 27, 2015. To maintain the facility was too

burdensome for such a small group of people. The building has been sold to another church group.

The article says that there was some loss of membership because of disagreements, but the biggest factor is that this is an agricultural area with little diversity. It is very common that young people will go to college and then go elsewhere to where more opportunities are available.

While this seems to be an extreme case, the struggle for rural-church survival is widespread. I believe it is also fair to notice that it is not generally true for conservative Anabaptist churches.

To me it seems timely to notice some contributing factors for the rural dilemma.

- Over-rating the importance of higher education. Formal training may be attractive to some young people for good reasons. But it can also be shallow and materialistic. The blessing of children, home-making, and family are not major considerations on the college level.

- Parents who want to provide a college education for their offspring may not be able to afford this for more than two or three children.

As I review the above comments, I see they are a bit fragmented and poorly organized. My concern is simply this: Let us try to see the

big picture and order our lives accordingly.

-DLM

• • • • •

A brother stood up in a Sunday morning church service in Kenya to give his testimony. He testified with thanksgiving for the grace of God. This grace was made available to him in the past week when he was given more change, while making a purchase, than was due him. Rather than keeping the extra change, he returned it. He requested prayers to remain faithful.

In another service that same Sunday morning, at a neighboring locale, an unusual experience presented itself to those who gathered to worship. A live chicken showed up in the offering. Without much fanfare, an impromptu auction took place to convert the gift into cash which was added to the offering. This simple exercise resolved several issues, not the least of which was the transparent manner in which the offering was received and accounted for.

Wherever the Gospel is given the opportunity it demonstrates its power to transform. The culture in Kenya is no exception. Kenyan culture struggles with persistent and pervasive roots of corruption. Let's not sell short the cultural relevance

of the Gospel in any setting.

On our flight into Nairobi I sat across the aisle from a gentleman from Vermont who was traveling to visit his daughter who had moved to Nairobi. She is working for a company who builds and markets bio-fuel cook stoves that are smokeless. My fellow traveler wasn't sure how those stoves are designed so that they are smokeless. He indicated that the company is doing well and meeting a real need.

Economic disparity brings tension to those involved. Erasing the economic disparity sounds appealing in many ways, but even if it would be possible, it wouldn't eliminate all problems and tensions. One of these tensions is knowing how to respond when someone else assumes ownership of something that is yours, otherwise known as "stealing." The Hebrew writer commends the recipients of his letter that they "...accepted joyfully the spoiling of your goods..." Repeated opportunities to grow in that area can be painful and traumatic. Accepting it joyfully is not an automatic response to any of us, I dare say. The Hebrew writer indicates further that we have better and more lasting things in heaven to look forward to.

-RJM



# Idolatry: Making Sense of an Outmoded Sin

Cory Anderson, Millersburg, OH / Kirksville, MO

In the West, idols of stone, wood, and metal are obsolete. Yet their protégé lives. But what are they? What do they look like? Where is idol worship today?

The oft-repeated, contemporary definition of *idolatry* is anything that comes between God and a person, or, something revered, worshipped, or adored other than God. So, in accord, people warn against or confess idolizing vehicles, houses, businesses, and gadgets—basically, anything. The definition is so broad and abstract that it is of little use. That is dangerous if idolatry is indeed a narrowly defined, specific sin that is being overlooked.

Idolatry today is misrepresented because we see the stone, wood, and metal idols of old as nothing more than objects created from earth's elements. Consequently, we figure that today's idols must also be something—anything—tangible. What is missing from modern-day reinterpretations of idolatry is that idols are *human depictions* (or creatures with human-like attributes). They are “images.”

Idols and images represent human likenesses, that is, idols are actually a mirror of what a culture views as the perfect self. Idols are therefore a reminder and focal point of the ideals for which worshippers should strive to achieve perfection. For example, war gods are commonly worshipped in belligerent cultures (e.g. Thor in ancient Scandinavia, Mars in ancient Rome), while goddesses of love and fertility—“mother goddesses” as they are aggregately known—are common among cultures promoting free relations. These gods represent human views of perfection; Thor and Mars are bold and strong, beyond human comparison, while mother goddesses are matchlessly beautiful.

From whence do idols come? Idols come into existence as a culture's aspirations for self-improvement deviate from the Lord's ideals for men. When idolaters call upon their gods, what they are doing is mustering all efforts to realize their god's standard of perfection, which they believe will provide deliverance. But the god's standard of perfection

is only a human standard. The Lord made man in *His image*. Man's state today is fallen from that perfected image. Christ exemplifies the restored perfection of man. Men commit idolatry when they swap out Christ for images of human-derived perfection. Put another way, idolatry is a recasting of God's perfected image of man into a manmade mold.

In today's culture, many depictions of manmade perfection exist. The most pervasive is "the celebrity": gladiators, musicians, actors, politicians, technology innovators, and models, to name a few. And yet, while celebrities themselves worship Western ideals, they are not themselves the idol, not the image. Today's idol worshippers do not bow before flesh-and-blood humans, but rather what ideals of perfection are depicted in the *image* (the idol). Models, singers, gladiators, and politicians come and go, but the image remains. What is worshipped, what is emulated, is the perfected humanness depicted in the image. After several evening visits in person with a celebrity, the average fan will likely tire of them, even becoming annoyed (many celebrities can't stand themselves!). In person, they are just not what they seem to be in the images. But spruced up, smiling, and looking good for the cameras, celebrity idols stand before millions of viewers who sop up ideals of

perfected humanness.

Similarly, religions today with statues do not worship the physical statutes themselves—which can be swapped out when needed—but rather the perfected ideals they present. Hindus bow down to statues, but they are adamant that they are not worshipping the physical statue. The Buddhists, who meditate in temples with Buddha statues, concur: they are not worshipping the statues. The worshippers of Bel, Dagon, Diana, and Ashtoreth likely differed little on this point. And yet, these images—like the images of celebrities—are idols because they depict manmade paths to human perfection. Worship of these alternatives, as represented in images, is idolatry.

Although worship of manmade perfection is the ultimate offense of idolatry, the image is a necessity. Images validate ideals of perfection. While yesteryear's images were statues, today's appear on screens and paper. Western society has not advanced to the point where portraying ideal human states through images is obsolete. Rather, the medium of imagery has changed, from stone statues to photographs and moving pictures.

The ability for humans to create images has surged exponentially. Analog and now digital technology has inundated the globe with

idols. Not only are today's people bombarded with image after image of human perfection—on highway signs and posters, on screens, and in magazines and papers—humans can now drown themselves in self-manufactured images with new consumer technologies. The far-reaching consequence of the digital camera is that it overcame the limits inherent to film cameras and video recorders: 24 shots per roll, two hours of footage per VHS tape, and film developers who see (and censure) photos. The far-reaching consequence of the cell phone camera is that an image can be sent to anyone, setting images instantly before others' eyes. No wonder image nudity is reaching unfathomable levels, if *anyone* can now create and disseminate pictures that have transfixing power over the human psyche.

Just as mere mortals could never attain the perfection of idols past, so are today's images depicting humans in unrealistic conditions. For example, when one's picture is being taken, he makes a pose. A pose is a self-portrayal of an ideal state—a moment—that is unattainable beyond that moment, if even then. When the camera snaps, the model wants to radiate perfection to make the image attractive.

Camera setting options, lighting tricks, and computerized editing

further enhances the unrealistic perfection of images. Even celebrities are incapable of attaining the ideals of their own mediated image. Graphic designers frequently use Photoshop to alter the photographs of models because the models cannot measure up. Add to this the addictive, mind-transfixing nature of glowing digital images flickering at 100 images a second and you have a more commanding idol image than ever before. These modern images—just as lifeless as an artist's completed stone idol—are all the more godlike because of how realistically they are portrayed. In spite of this realism, the viewer is still blocked from interrelating with these images, intensifying the longing for achieving its perfection since its flaws are unknown.

Each culture has its own idols of perfection. America has its fair share; many are characteristic of the independents, the loners, the mavericks, the “cool” and rebellious, and, above all else, the self-made man, whose determination brought fortune-and-fame, from rags to riches, who now has the means to live life for fun and pleasure. The idealized American is young, a hero who heads out West to be his own man, hitting the highway alone, or trying his chances in Hollywood or New York City. The maverick is celebrated because he belongs

to nobody. He has his own code of conduct and law, not bound by rules and regulations, a disregarder of convention, especially gender conventions, like the *cowgirl*. With this idol profile, is it any wonder Americans so thoroughly enjoy making images of themselves? The “selfie” (an impromptu picture of oneself), as well as photos of “me and my friends,” “me and my family,” or “me and my pet,” epitomize the idolatry of self-worship, matching America’s self-determination ideal to a tee.

Idolatry involves more than an image indicative of a perfect human state; it also includes paraphernalia and worship activities. In ancient idol worship, followers were said to have followed “the cult of [god].” Today, movies, celebrities, teams, and such are said to have “cult followings.” The actual worship of an ancient or modern god is not much different (though we believe we are more civilized). Followers emulate an idol’s look, temperament, talk, and mannerisms. They surround themselves with the paraphernalia of idol worship: special garments, special foods and diets, chants, romance, incenses, and, of course, multiple replicas of the image. Idolatry involves behaviors and symbols of loyalty.

Thus, when one says he worships a vehicle, house, business, or gadget,


what he has identified are worship behaviors and paraphernalia associated with a cult, tools to achieve the image’s perfection. To forsake idolatry, one must indeed lay aside the worship, as it underpins cult activity, but one must also reject the images and the perfected state of humanity they represent to be free.

In summary, idolatry is not the worship of inanimate objects; idolatry is to set before our eyes, fixate upon, and strive toward images that depict an ideal state of human existence at the expense of the perfection of Christ. The similarities between idol worship today and of times past include the worship of the perfected human state, the need for an image to depict this state, and the use of idol-specific behaviors and paraphernalia in worship. The main difference is that modern man’s capacity to fashion images alternative to Christ’s perfection has multiplied and enhanced: print images are pervasive; digital screen images are endless.

In conclusion, idolatry is not the only sin we face, but it does make the difference between a path toward or away from God. No wonder it is the subject of the first two of the Ten Commandments, as well as untold admonishments from the Bible. What is alarming is that the availability of idols and their worship has intensified, has become



so common that it has become difficult to recognize idolatry for what it is. With the proliferation of images of America's idols today—both pictures and motion pictures—plain Anabaptist churches have the day-to-day challenge of routing this unwelcome invasion. Idolatry is a predictable outcome for the one who is a consumer in today's image-producing industry, which

anymore is difficult to escape, let alone choose to reject. Victory comes by (1) curtailing our consumption and production of people pictures and videos, especially the digital, screen-based ones, (2) withdrawing from the cult behaviors of America's idols, and (3) strengthening the church as it guides members into the pure image of Christ. 

## Musings of a Grandmother

*Ilva Hertzler, Greenwood, DE*

**O**ur three children are old enough to be out on their own. We don't see them very often anymore because they live at a distance.

I'm in the time of life where I do a lot of reflecting about how things were in our home. I mourn my failures in being the godly mother I wanted to be. I have gone to my children and asked for their forgiveness.

I can't change things that have already happened. However, it's comforting to think of where I did have my priorities right.

- I'm glad that I lived with my children's dad, that I loved him, and was married to him.

- I'm glad God was in our home and that we did our best to follow His way, to live by the Bible teachings.

- I'm glad we took our children to church and helped them memorize Bible verses, to sing hymns, and pray.

- I'm glad that when we had disagreements we tried not to talk about them in front of our children.

- I'm glad we sang together as a family. Sometimes it was hard to work up enthusiasm for it, but we have many happy memories of our times of singing together.

- I'm glad that I read to my children. Often I would read an hour before nap time and an hour before bedtime.

Today they all enjoy reading and I think that has helped them in their schooling.

- I'm glad we kept in touch with their grandparents and the extended family.

- I'm glad we kept our home open to all kinds of visitors. Some of these visitors have had a very positive influence on my children. The cross-cultural setting in which we lived has enriched our home beyond measure.

- I'm glad we kept TV out of our home. I'm thankful we were careful about the music we listened to and the books we read.

- I'm glad there was no smoking, drinking or drug abuse in our home.

**Sounds like a perfect home, doesn't it? Well, it wasn't.**

- I wish I had listened better to my children's feelings and been more honest with my own.

- I wish there had been more talking, more picnics, more laughing, more hugs, and fewer rules.

- I wish I had given my children more responsibilities around the home and taught them more life skills.

- I wish I had been less harsh and more patient in my responses to

them.

- I wish I had learned earlier to deal with and control my anger. I wish I had trusted my heavenly Father more completely for our needs.

Like all families, we needed a Savior. We needed Jesus Christ to direct our strengths and to help us in our weaknesses. Today we are grateful to Him for the help He has given.

I thought this new phase of parenting would be easier than the ones before. It's different now. It's more "hands off," less directive. But it still requires a lot of prayer, planning, self-control, repentance, and tears. We need the Savior now as much as ever.

It's good to know that He is always faithful.

*[David and Ilva Hertzler served with Northern Youth Programs for many years. This selection is from "Today's Native Mother," in Today's Native Father, Issue # 185, Winter, 2016. Published by NYM Ministries, Dryden, ON. This is reprinted in the hope of Titus 2:3-5 that it will bring inspiration from many years of experience to younger mothers of less experience. Used by permission.]*



## The Need for Light in Dark Peru

*Levi Martin*

**T**he prophet, foreseeing Jesus' ministry in Galilee, wrote, "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." Today there are still lands in great darkness.

Peru is a beautiful country of about thirty million inhabitants. It has great extremes in climate, ranging from the arid coastal region along the Pacific Ocean, to the steamy jungles of the Amazon basin, to the frigid highlands of the Andes Mountains. The country has a number of cultures, including the Quechuas in the mountains, the Aymaras near the border of Bolivia, and descendants of European immigrants. Isolated tribes, some of whom have never heard the Gospel, live in the Amazon jungle.

Men have always feared darkness and felt safer in the light. Perhaps that is why many throughout history have worshiped the sun as the supreme deity. The ancient Incas of Peru went to great efforts to build magnificent temples in honor of Inti (the sun), whom they considered supreme.

**A pre-Columbian leader sought the true God.** However, during the height

of the Incan Empire's glory, the great ruler Pachacutec thought seriously about Inti, and concluded there must be a greater God who ruled even over the sun. He turned to an Incan tradition of an uncreated Being more ancient, remote, and supreme than Inti, whom the Incas called Viracocha. Pachacutec attempted to lead his people to worship Viracocha instead of Inti, but his efforts mostly failed.

What Pachacutec needed was a more complete revelation; he needed the Gospel of Jesus. His understanding, although revolutionary, was incomplete. It lacked the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. It is very difficult for a people to change from their traditional gods to a more correct way—the devil sees to that.

**European conquest deepened the darkness.** Not many years after Pachacutec's time, Christopher Columbus discovered America. With the groundwork laid by Pachacutec, this would have been an opportune time to take the Gospel to the Quechua people of the Incan Empire. Instead, the Spanish conquistadors, in their lust for wealth, committed terrible atrocities against the Incas. The priests

who accompanied the conquerors forced a much-adulterated form of Christianity upon them.

This led to even greater confusion and spiritual darkness. Pagan idolatry became more complex, with new deities successfully enveloping the people in deeper bondage. Treachery and debauchery were accepted by many as a normal part of life. Peruvians still distrust and resent foreigners. These factors have created a people seemingly hard to reach with the Gospel.

***Light shines brightest in darkness!***

However, complicated mixtures of paganism and pseudo-Christianity in Peru provide a real spiritual challenge for God's people. Spiritually, Peru is very dark, and darkness does not satisfy; people desperately need light. In such darkness, the true light will shine brightly.

Peru provides an excellent opportunity for believers to present the Gospel and to live it out. When they do that, Christ's light will shine into Peruvians' lives and convince them that He is the only solution for their lost and sinful condition.

***A conservative mission has been formed to take the Gospel to Peru.*** Our family lived in the area near the city of Cuzco for seven years. We started by selling baked goods on the street and distributing Christian literature. Later we purchased a small farm and began selling milk products in the Cuzco market. We held church services in the

town of Izcuchaca. We are not living in Peru currently. We are renting our land to tenants and are facing some difficulties since the former owners are attempting to take the land back.

Since our departure, a mission called Great Commission Ministries has been organized to establish congregations of believers in Peru. The first step is to preach the Gospel and to call individuals to repent and follow Christ. We believe God is calling believers from our conservative churches to consecrate themselves to this work and to follow the New Testament pattern of spreading the Gospel.

Establishing churches in this part of the world appears difficult. The long heritage of darkness has created strongholds that must be overcome in order to be effective. Occult practices, superstitions, and drunkenness are rampant, while human sacrifice is still part of the culture.

The town of Izcuchaca is known for its almost continuous pagan festivals involving devilish processions, drinking, and immorality. Evangelical attempts to establish churches here have had little success. Huarcocondo, a nearby town of about five thousand people, drove out the few professing Christians who lived there.

The people are amazingly open to receiving Gospel literature, but spiritual comprehension is very low. Few have made the necessary sacrifices and commitments needed for following Jesus. The board of Great

Commission Ministries believes that only through intensive and persistent prayer, coupled with holy believers living and teaching among the people, will these satanic strongholds be overcome. As believers live totally under the direction of the Holy Spirit, He can use them to bring others to the conviction essential for conversion.

***The need is great. The workers are few.*** We are searching for families to go and live in Peru as faithful witnesses for Christ. A number of contacts have already been established, and there is a continued interest in worship services in the Anta area. Please pray with us that North American believers will accept God's call to carry the light to these souls living in darkness.

This beautiful land has known almost nothing but darkness. Recent evangelical efforts have done little to alleviate it. We know God wants the glorious light of the Gospel of Jesus to penetrate this land. He wants to transform many people out of darkness into His kingdom of light and glory. He wants them walking in His ways, for His glory.

Will we North American Christians hear the call? Are we effective agents of the Gospel where we are? Are we broken and yielded, living holy lives that reflect God's saving grace? Are we experiencing true repentance, and are we able to guide others into it? Is God able to use us to proclaim the Gospel?

Are we prevailing in prayer? Are our prayers bringing spiritual pressure

on the lost, urging them on toward the One who draws them? Are we committed enough to obeying and trusting God? Can He use us? Could He send us into the darkness of Peru with the Gospel light? Could He use us to build His church there? He could, "for with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

Our Lord Jesus Christ wants to shine forth from lives in Peru. Perhaps He has chosen you for this work. The challenges of Peru are great, but God needs people who know He is greater. He wants us to obey Him in faith, and to shine. He will use those whose greatest desires are to know and serve Him. "The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

**Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest....** Will you, along with the board of Great Commission Ministries, "lift up your eyes, and look on the fields?" The Lord sees not only the field in Peru, but also in a thousand other areas where "the fields are white already to harvest."

Will you not join the Lord's reapers? "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." (John 4:36).

*[From A Light, Vol. 28, No. 4, Christian Light Publications, Harrisonburg, VA. Used by permission.]*



## Springtime for Mothers

*Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC*

**S**pring is like a tonic. It invigorates, energizes and motivates us. It puts a spring in our step and a smile on our faces. Spring involves all our senses. We **smell** the flowers, **listen** to the birds, **taste** the tender lettuce and radishes out of the hot bed, **gaze** at the green grass, and **touch** the soft, woolly lambs. I am writing this article near the end of February. Here in the South, the daffodils are blooming, displaying their impressive yellow garb for everyone to stop and notice, “Spring is on the way!”

How does springtime affect mothers? I hope it revives your spirit, giving you a sense of joy and contentment. I trust you are taking this opportunity to enjoy the great out-of-doors along with family and especially your preschoolers. Help the children find bird nests hidden in the trees or bushes, being careful not to disturb the eggs. Observe the

flowers that are peeking through the ground and enjoy the small hands bringing you bouquets of dandelions, violets, and daffodils. Delight in the scent of freshly-mowed grass and feel the soft turned soil in the garden. Teach your little ones to drop the tiny seeds in the garden rows. If possible, allow the five- and six-year-olds a small plot of soil to plant and tend their own gardens. Young children are so pliable and teachable. Now is the time to instill in them a love for nature, guiding them to the Master Creator.

Springtime brings extra work for mothers. There are flower beds to clean and mulch, garden plots to plant, and yearly house cleaning. If we are not careful and alert, we will look at all the jobs we wish to accomplish and lose the pleasures of springtime. Perhaps our lists are too long. We may try to accomplish too much in one day. At other

times, we may not be as organized as we could be and the day goes by without accomplishing much of anything. Maybe we go away too much or spend too much time on the computer so that we have little to show for at the end of the day. We are all unique; each of us must know our physical and emotional limits and plan our work accordingly. Let me share a few tips to enable you to enjoy your day.

### **Choose to enjoy the beauty of Springtime.**

Take time each day to spend time outdoors, relaxing and observing the beauty of nature. Take your cup of coffee out on the deck and begin your day with God before the children awaken. Maybe later, you can take a walk through the garden or woods with the children. Worship the Creator.

### **Plan your day.**

The best way to accomplish anything is to plan ahead. Do not allow trivial things to disrupt your schedule. I am not referring to your children's needs. Always make room for them in planning your day. If you have small children, don't expect to houseclean your house thoroughly or plant a huge garden. Do only what you know you are able to accomplish at your present stage

of life. Keep your home reasonably clean each day. Involve your older children in your spring work. Teach them to houseclean their own rooms and to help with the garden and yard work.

### **Get organized; conquer clutter.**

Spring is a good time to clean out closets and drawers. Launder your winter clothes and bedding and allocate a specific closet or storage for them. Throw away junk. Give away things you do not need. Get rid of broken toys or toys the children no longer play with. Assign toys, games, and books to a specific basket, shelf, or drawer. Teach the children (by example) to pick up and put away.

### **Plant a garden that meets your needs.**

You may have a large or small garden plot or perhaps it is just a few plants beside the house. Plant what you need or enjoy. If your family uses a lot of tomato products, then plant tomatoes and what you need to go with them, such as peppers, basil, and onions. If you love spending time in your flowers, then plant flowers. Gardening is not a matter of competition, but a means to meet the needs of you and your family.

**Enjoy each moment of springtime.  
It is God's gift of new life; thank Him for it.**





## Daniel

*Markus Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya/Dundee, OH*

Once upon a time  
So very long ago,  
Lived a man named Daniel  
Who was faithful, as we know—

Was in charge of a kingdom  
For Darius, the Mede.  
He's the very one  
Who'd put him in the lead.

Under him were  
A certain group core,  
Of ten dozen men,  
Plus only two more.

The only two more  
Were not top in the realm.  
For the king had put Daniel  
There at the helm.

And so they agreed  
To trap this man.  
They looked and they looked  
To come up with a plan.

This prince of the kingdom  
Truly they tried.  
But sadly for them  
He had nothing to hide.

For Daniel was true,  
He was bold, pure, and just.  
Cuz Daniel loved God—  
For him, 'twas a must!

Finally they found  
One way to trap him.  
This plan that would work  
Was through his religion.

They marched off to the king  
And then they did say,  
"O, King, live forever.  
Live forever and aye!

"We've spoken together,  
A law you must make.  
To give you more sway  
So all power you'll take.

"All folk must bow down  
To you only, O King.  
We know you will like it.  
So please bring your ring!

"Do bring your good ring,  
The one that will seal  
This law that will make  
And quite finish this deal."

The king was impressed,  
He was flattered and pleased.  
So he told, “Thanks, guys!”  
Then his pen he did seize.

This pen was the one  
That he did use  
To write this new law,  
The law he did choose.

So the king went and got  
His so pretty ring.  
He wrote, signed, and sealed,  
With his signet this thing.

Daniel soon heard  
Of the new law begun.  
But forthwith decided:  
“What’s done has been done.

“There’s nothing I’ll change,  
Cuz my heart still belongs  
To the God of Israel,  
Who makes right all our wrongs.”

And as was the true norm,  
Like any other day,  
He went to his window,  
And there he did pray.

He prayed to his God.  
E’en tho he did know  
The law now did say:  
“Thou shalt not do so!”

The princes were hidden  
Down the street from the place.  
They were waiting for Daniel,  
And thinking: *Show your face!*

They weren’t disappointed,  
For Daniel had come  
To his usual window,  
And they thought, “Oh, how dumb!

“Why wouldn’t you go,  
And just hide away.  
So no one could see you,  
In the light of this day?”

Quickly they raced  
On the road to the king.  
Their thoughts—oh, so joyous.  
Their speed—quite stunning.

They ran through the gates,  
Right to the king’s place,  
Each eager to give Darius  
Exact details of the case.

Each caught his own breath.  
And again they did say:  
“O King, live forever.  
Live forever, and aye!

“Remember that law,  
The one you did sign  
With your very own hand,  
Heart, soul, and mind?

“Does it still stand?  
E’en tho it’s so new?”  
“Oh, yes,” said the king.  
“Yes, it still is true!”

Then with ill-concealed glee,  
Did they tell the king.  
Of his favorite, Daniel,  
Who’d stopped obeying.

They told the king how  
Every man saw  
Daniel praying at the window,  
Hence, breaking the law.

The king was so sad  
And then he did say,  
“O, why must I live  
To see this bad day?”

He thought and he thought,  
But no rule could he bend  
To set this man free  
This Daniel, this friend.

His men came that night  
And said, “O our king,  
Remember that law  
Sealed with your very own ring?”

“It’s the law of the Medes  
And the Persians, too.  
They cannot be changed,  
No never, that’s true!”

“You must keep this law,  
Let not Daniel go free.  
For if you do so,  
All folks shall scorn thee!”

At last did the king  
Give up and relent.  
He called to his soldiers.  
Them to Daniel he sent.

His soldiers so big,  
So bustling and strong.  
These men who were cruel,  
Who had known so much wrong.

Daniel was thrown  
Down into the den.  
He was thrown down there,  
By two super strong men.

The king then did cry:  
“O, Daniel, be true!  
The One you do serve  
Just may deliver you.”

A big stone was brought,  
And then placed o’er the den.  
Locked with the king’s seal,  
Plus those of his men.

The king was then worried,  
He paced and he groaned.  
He’d let Daniel down.  
He was sad and he moaned.

That night in his palace,  
No sleep could he find.  
No food did he eat—  
Not one single kind.

But early next morn,  
In fact, WAY too early,  
The king rushed to the den,  
In a great big, fat hurry.

He broke all the seals,  
Got the stone moved away,  
Took one long, deep breath,  
And then did he say:

“O, Daniel, dear Daniel,  
Are you still there?  
I have been worried.  
It’s been a HUGE scare!”

Daniel quickly answered,  
“Oh, my dear king, I’m good.  
God has heard your cry,  
Yes, He understood.

“For His angels have come  
And kept lions at bay.  
The lions could not  
Harm me in any way.”

The king was quite thrilled.  
And then did he shout:  
“Do bring me a rope  
To lift Daniel out!”

His servants came running  
Pell-mell, for you see,  
Betimes the king got  
Just a tad grumpy.

The rope that they brought  
Was used right away.  
To bring Daniel up  
To the light of new day.

The king was delighted,  
He danced and he sang.  
Yes, he was quite thrilled  
To see Daniel again.

But then he remembered  
His men, mean and sly.  
He thought of the way  
They’d tried to make Daniel die.

His face did grow red,  
And he started to shout.  
“Bring those men right here.  
Bring them out! Bring them out!

“Bring me the families:  
Wives and children right here.  
Make haste, oh, make haste!  
Lest they leave as I fear.”

So the servants did rush  
To the homes of those men.  
They found and quick brought them,  
And what happened right then?

These people were thrown  
Down into the den.  
The one filled with lions,  
With twenty and ten.

The lions did rush,  
They jumped, fought and killed.  
And ate all the people,  
With their meat they were filled.

So then a new law  
Was put into place.  
A law that applied  
To each single race.

This law told all folk  
The time had now come,  
To serve the true God;  
The powerful One.

For the most high God  
Was Lord over all.  
He had seen fit  
To save Daniel.

Then the King Darius  
To God the praise gave.  
For Daniel’s God  
From death did him save.



## Holy Dissatisfaction

-Gideon Yutzy

**G**reat is the enemy of good. That's a true proverb. If this column would have to be great, I would despair of writing. If my wife's coffee would have to be great, I wouldn't get up every morning and lovingly make her a good cup of coffee.

Then there's the other proverb people use sometimes: *Good is the enemy of great*. It says the opposite of the first, but I think it's also true. In fact, I have some anecdotal evidence.

I used to drive an Audi. It was a truly great car. But then I moved overseas for several years and I sold the Audi to my brother. When I returned to America, no doubt low on funds, I bought a Mazda. While the Mazda is not a great car, it's just good enough to keep me from buying another Audi. As a result, I am deprived each day of the greatest, most exhilarating driving experience ever, which is driving an Audi.

Thus both sayings are true—in certain contexts.

The second proverb, *good is the enemy of great*, has been on my mind. I've been ruminating on Psalm 84 which says, in short, that God gives his children Audi's, not just Mazda's.

Now before you stop reading, I am not some smarmy health-and-wealth televangelist. Some might teach that

having a Jacuzzi and a Hummer is a sign you're walking in Him because, per Psalm 84, God isn't keeping any good things from you. I don't agree with that interpretation. The Audi's I mentioned are predominantly metaphorical. As Jesus hung on the cross, His smile probably wasn't all that toothy and I doubt Saint Paul's hair was terribly coiffed while he was a prisoner at Mamertine. If you want easy street, look for a religion other than Christianity.

Duly noted. But here is an equally important truth: if you want mediocre gifts, look for a religion other than Christianity. As the Book of James points out, every perfect gift comes down from the Father of Lights. Quite frankly, Jacuzzis and Hummers are the epitome of mediocrity. To pursue them would be to shortchange ourselves of perfect gifts. *Good is the enemy of great*.

The word *theophany* probably doesn't make it onto a list of the 100 most common English words. Its literal meaning, however, is quite simple: *theo-* (God) *-phany* (revealing). A revealing of God—that is what Christians used to consider a perfect gift. In the early 1800's, Saint Seraphim of Sarov spent several decades in solitude because he was obsessed with experiencing God in an intimate way.

For him, one theophany would have made a decade of solitude worth it. Why wasn't he content to experience good gifts by serving his parishioners in relative comfort as a priest? Because good, he knew, is the enemy of great.

I am not giving a wholesale endorsement of the Christian mystics' practice of prolonged solitude. But we should note well, my dear brothers and sisters, such extreme commitment to procure perfect gifts.

Any drive to experience God's perfect gifts should be pursued to the utmost. We must never ignore holy restlessness. Until we find what satisfies, we must not abandon the search.

If the great things of God are eluding us, it's only because we're searching in the wrong places. Remember that the quest for God may take us—is likely to take us—to remote and seldom-travelled places. We must pray for Providence to lead us down the true path, the path that leads, in the words of Walter Bowie, "past all sham of small succeeding, sordid gains that call and woo."

What are those sordid gains that call and woo? They are none other than the momentary applause of the crowds, flippant prayers, and wanton convenience. They are the pursuit of money, the social whirl, and the status quo. In short, they are all the things that *seem* good but actually war against the great.


Amid life's frenzy, this truth remains: if that which we look to for fulfillment does not satisfy, it is mediocre and therefore the enemy of the great. It is mediocre and must be abandoned.

Interactions on social media, we think, will fill our void of loneliness. But does the void ever go away? We think buying new clothes will bring new meaning to our lives. But does it last? We travel in hopes of finding adventure and eat out in order to experience gustatory highs. But does the realization of these activities match—or better still, exceed—our expectations for them?

Evaluate, evaluate. In this spiritual wasteland our sources of satisfaction must be evaluated constantly. To quote an ancient prophet: "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what doesn't satisfy? Listen diligently to me and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance (Isaiah 55:2)."

According to Ravi Zacharias, the loneliest moment in life comes when you experience what you thought would deliver the ultimate, only to find that it lets you down. Compare this state with the satisfaction that awaits those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

The prodigal son tried to fill his hunger with husks intended for swine. That's what it took for him to come to his senses. Then he returned to his father's house of plenty.

Today we have been given an enormous gift. We have been given the chance to leave behind any husks and return with haste to our Father's house of plenty. We have been given the chance to replace the mediocre with the great. Only fools would keep eating their husks. 

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## THOUGHT GEMS

Always drive as if your family were in the approaching car.

.....

The truest expression of Christianity is not a *sigh*, but a *song*.

.....

When weighing the faults of others, keep your thumb off the scale.

.....

God sometimes uses small matches to light great torches.

.....

The heart of education is education of the heart.

.....

We must keep in mind not so much *what* we are as *whose* we are.

.....

The worst outcome of trying times comes when we stop trying.

.....

If we keep our head and heart going in the right direction, our feet will stay on course.

.....

The first screw to come loose in the head is usually the one that controls the tongue.

.....

He who drinks to forget, too often forgets to stop.

.....

Drive carefully; give your vehicle “fender-loving care.”

.....

Let’s get moving; it’s hard to steer a parked car.

.....

True freedom comes from bondage to Christ.

.....

It’s hard to sell a product we do not use or a religion we do not live.