



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2016

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July 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.

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As I Have Lived—So will I die

(Dedicated to Christians who have given the ultimate sacrifice)

Darlene Miller, Linn, MO

How swiftly turns the wheel of time!
A passion in my heart is burning.
While more intense becomes the yearning...
I see I'm slipping past my prime.

How have I lived? What have I done?
Is Jesus seen in all my living?"
As He forgives, am I forgiving?
How many souls for Him have I won?

If I were asked to curse His name,
Or else to die for my believing...
A thousand stripes or more receiving...
Would I be true, or bring him shame?

As I have lived, so will I die
If I have lived with godly passion,
So may I die in self-same fashion,
No fear when death is drawing nigh.

May I like Stephen, saint of old,
One day—if hateful rocks are falling—
Be blessed to hear my Savior calling,
"The gates have opened wide, Behold!"



Anabaptist or Protestant? Does it matter?

Sometimes professing Christians of mainline denominations wonder why conservative Anabaptists don't seem to have much enthusiasm for working closely with them. May I suggest that the following questions could rightly be offered to address such inquiries:

- *Is failure to embrace popular Christianity necessarily judgmental?*

- *Is it feasible to “live and let live” in matters of how one’s fellow man interprets Holy Scripture?*

- *Does charity require that everyone follows a popular creed?*

- *Is arrogance basic to the embrace of conservative Anabaptism?*

Bro. Ervin Yoder, Cottage Grove, TN, recently handed me 16 summary points of distinction between Reformation Protestantism and Early Anabaptism. Its author is one of my favorite church history writers, David Bercot. This month I have chosen the essence of Bro. Bercot’s brief listing with my comments added. I must give credit to David Bercot’s insights for simplicity and clarity.

- Reformation Protestants (RP) emphasized theology. Theology—a study of God. That sounds good. Does it change when we note that Early Anabaptists (EA) emphasized living the Christ-life? This placed greater emphasis on how we walk and relate to others. This also connects with Jesus’ teaching about the two greatest commandments—loving God and our neighbor.

- RP’s sought to develop a systematic theology. This brought interpretations like TULIP*, which summarized John Calvin’s system of belief. It gave some New Testament Scriptures a place of lesser importance than others. EA’s pursued truth in the simple, unadorned text of Scripture. Scripture, they said, generally says what it means and means what it says.

- RP’s treated the books of the New Testament hierarchically. Some NT books were more inspired than others, for example, some said James emphasizes works more than Paul does. EA’s were committed to holding all books of the NT at the same high

level. While some Scripture is less easily understood, especially John's Revelation which speaks of future events and so is more mysterious, they nevertheless accepted it as Scripture—sacred and inspired. But, as Paul observed, “we see through a glass darkly.”

- RP's depended heavily on proof-texts, while EA's looked at the totality of New Testament teachings. EA's did not see the Scriptures as a “flat Bible,” but a progressive revelation (note Hebrews 8:7-10), with the Old Testament being fulfilled in the New Testament. EA's said the Old Testament is very valuable for history (Romans 15:4), but the New Testament gives the final word on doctrine. This is explained in Hebrews 9.

- RP's primary focus was on pseudo-Pauline theology (that is, false interpretations of Paul's teachings). EA's primary focus was on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Even when Jesus' words mark out a path that is difficult, we must not assign them to a future time. Furthermore, Paul's interpretations are consistent with Christ's teachings, if they are properly understood. We must carry our cross daily—in this time and in this place.

- RP's preached a Gospel *about* Jesus, while EA's embraced the Gospel *of* Jesus. This led RP's to

persecute EA's, who suffered bravely, even joyfully, rather than denying Christ or taking revenge on their persecutors.

- RP's took the Ten Commandments as foundational for Christian living. EA's took the Sermon on the Mount as prescriptive for today. Examples of this principle are their view of swearing of oaths, of nonresistance, of moral purity, and of not accumulating wealth. The faithful church must still be prepared to suffer for upholding God's truth.

- RP's promoted the idea of a state church. EA's said that God's people are first citizens of heaven. They are a voluntary group, who choose their cause and band together in brotherhood. This meant they would seek to follow the King whose kingdom is not of this world, and whose servants do not fight.

- RP's taught that we must be born into the church, so they baptized infants. EA's taught that Christian commitment is a personal decision which one cannot make for another. They taught that valid baptism is possible only after childhood innocence is past. Then each one must decide for himself. (Bercot listed these as two items; I combined them.)

- RP's said little about the new birth. EA's emphasized the new birth. The new life must have a starting point.

Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3). As we continue, it is “not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

•RP’s taught “total depravity” (the “T” in TULIP*). This, they said, included infants. EA’s taught that infants are innocent. All humans are fallen, but are not totally depraved. We are able to make good choices, for God gives everyone power of choice. RP’s taught predestination which essentially removed man’s power of choice. EA’s maintained that God has given man a free will. (I also combined these two items.)

•RP’s were willing to combine the church and the state. EA’s taught that Jesus’ kingdom is distinct from earthly kingdoms. Jesus’ subjects must therefore think of themselves first as subjects of the heavenly kingdom, and only secondarily as citizens of an earthly nation. Their unwillingness to lift a sword against an enemy, caused them much suffering, but they found joy in obedience to Jesus, the Captain of salvation.

•RP’s attempted to “Christianize” all of society. In so doing, they needed to “water down” God’s truth

to common denominators. EA’s took seriously the need to separate themselves from unregenerate society. This was a difficult stance to take and some who hung back were known as “half-Anabaptists.”

•Lastly, RP’s persecuted others, even professing Christians. EA’s persecuted no one. They were committed to following Christ. The early Christ followers, the Apostles of our Lord, were also persecuted and martyred, and EA’s expected nothing better. For them, the greatest disgrace was not their own suffering, but that of causing suffering for others.

What About 2016?

While I speak of Reformation Protestants and Early Anabaptists as though their faith descendants today are carbon copies of their faith forbears, I realize this is not true. Today’s Protestants do not necessarily hold to the faith of their fathers. Nor do today’s Anabaptists. Great variety is found among them both. Some faith descendants of RP’s hold to a vital faith in Jesus Christ and have an inspiring openness to growing in the knowledge and grace of Christ. For example (and there are significant other examples), few of them in America would persecute other Christ followers.

The change principle also holds true with today’s Anabaptists. Since I am in the Anabaptist camp, I

believe I must take the challenge seriously of not taking my “faith camp” for granted and thinking that this foundation is all I need. There are several ways of failing: Whenever we EA faith descendants regard our heritage too highly and for exclusiveness, we lose our “saltiness.” I am especially wistful when I note EA’s zeal for evangelism which earned some of them the nickname: “hedge preachers,” then ponder ours. If we hold The Faith in obedience to Christ, we are strengthened against compromise. We must never take our spiritual safety for granted. Like the Ephesians (Revelation 2:1-7), if we leave our first love for and loyalty to Jesus Christ, we step outside the ark of safety in Christ. In many cases, when these key ingredients are abandoned, people go either into secular or religious mainstream.

I mean to embrace New Testament obedience and holiness. I believe that while the faith of our fathers is potentially very costly, it is what the Apostles and the early church believed and how they walked. I further believe that 16th century Anabaptists recovered The Faith and way of life that closely restored “the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3c). Now let us make that real today!

JESUS IS LORD! To Him belongs the highest place in His

church on earth.

* *John Calvin (1509-1564) was an influential Reformation Protestant leader and writer. He is probably best-known for his book, Institutes of Christian Religion (published in 1536) and the five points of Calvinism, identified with the acrostic TULIP, which stands for: T=total depravity; U=unconditional election; L=limited atonement; I=irresistible grace; P=perseverance of the saints. For further thoughts on Calvinism, read John Coblentz’s article, “A Scriptural Response to Calvinism” in Midwest Mennonite Focus, March-April, 2002, which was reprinted in Calvary Messenger, May, 2002.*

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NOTES • You may recall that Gerald Miller hoped to offer further thoughts in “School Matters” on the connection of the church and school this month. He asks our forbearance in finding it not feasible to do so. We look forward to having further content from his pen soon.

• As you can see, the cover design of *Calvary Messenger* has been changed. The Publication Board had a vision to improve the appearance of the cover for some time. The purposes of this periodical, however, remain unchanged. We hope you like the new design. All glory be to God!

-PLM 

Dear editors,
Greetings in Jesus' name.
I always look forward to CM and read it nearly cover to cover.

A hobby of mine is collecting and sharing inspirational and thought-provoking quotes. Thank you for reprinting thought gems on the back cover. My 81-year-old eyes were able to read them in the May issue.

The article, "Christianity, A Personal Thing" was so well written I would suggest having it printed in tract form. If so, I would like to invest in copies.

Knowing Elmer M. Yoder personally, gives more credence to his well-written article, "Battles for Supremacy." (Excellent!)

And I always enjoy Mary June Glick and Mary Ellen Beachy's interesting articles and can relate so well to them.

An "Open letter from a Mother" could have been written by me, were I given the ability to put my heart thoughts in words. It was such a gem. I wish all sons could read it.

Thank you for all the hard work that goes into this publication so we readers can be challenged and encouraged.

A widow in South Georgia,
Ruth Hershberger, Jesup, GA

Re: "Accepting Jesus," and "Battles for Supremacy," May, 2016.

Thank you, Bro. Paul, for allowing CM to be the ministry it is. I am sending this to share my observations and it also informs you that I read CM regularly. I greatly appreciate it. It seems that in the last year there have been many practical articles.

A. W. Tozer, in *The Best of Tozer*, Chapter 21, suggests that "Accepting Jesus" is like Christ is waiting to see if He is acceptable to the individual. Jesus stands aside, hat in hand, awaiting the verdict. And sadly, a few persons I know who have "accepted Him," seem to reflect a bit of that kind of attitude. They seem to have terms of their own that determines the acceptability, with obviously, little intent to change to indicate rebirth. However, Revelation 3:20 does picture Him standing, knocking at the heart's door, for which the authorization to open has to come from the seeking heart inside.

"Accepting" sounds like Jesus having to meet certain terms, before being acceptable. "If I can keep my 'whatevers,' I will accept You," seems to be the attitude. The prodigal did not say, "I'll stay home if I don't have to change my 'rough-neck, celeb-

style' facial and hair arrangement (or "derangement") That's my 'personal, trademark,' you know. That's what I want to be remembered by. I see no need of imitating the ways of your other servants. And I've kinda' learned to like the smell of the pigpen. So don't ask me to wear new, clean clothes. The tatters and smell have become dear to me. Part o' myself, you know."

With no terms of his/her own, a truly broken spirit blends willingly and cheerfully into the atmosphere of the local "Father's house," as he/she is released from the stresses of the pigpen. He wants to help build the Father's house according to the Father's plans.

If we "receive" Him (as He is), it sounds more like a slave's plea for deliverance, at any cost. I agree with Bro. Lapp, that it seems more appropriate to say it as the Bible suggests: "receive Christ."

Hunting in "Battles for Supremacy" also caught my attention. Being neither a hunter, nor a fisherman, my father did nothing to encourage those interests in his sons. But he finally allowed me to have a 410 shotgun. In the mid-40's, game was scarce in our area. But I took that gun and managed to shoot a dove. At other times, I loved to hear those doves' frequent cooing. But I proudly took it home and presented it to the cook, my sister eight years older

than I. She said there was only meat for one person, and that I get to eat it! She fixed it and brought it to the table for me, the mighty hunter. Then she suggested something that changed my thinking rather abruptly. She gently proposed that while I am enjoying this tasty trophy I was so proud of, I might want to think a bit about what its mate is doing. Sadly refraining from cooing, maybe? Since then, my 410 seldom gets used. I do not like to see suffering. I do, however, shoot starlings at the bird feeder, which is healthy for neither the birds nor the feeder.

Years ago, I tended to be a bit critical of the hunters, not about their desire to hunt, but often during hunting season, before and after church services, hunting was a hot topic among some of the brethren. A brother challenged me about my criticism and asked my reason for criticizing hunting, but not fishing. I tried to be humble with my answer. I suggested that he observe several hunters in the Bible, like Nimrod and Esau. Then find and study fishermen and compare their characters. Somehow that answer did not set well with him.

I did very little fishing in my time. It bothered me to put a live worm on the hook. I was told, "Oh, it is cold-blooded and has no feelings." In my ignorance, I couldn't help noticing though, how they

squirmed so desperately throughout the procedure. It did not seem like squirming with pleasure. But I do understand Gen. 9:1-4. So, if you enjoy hunting/fishing, that's perfectly OK with me. I'll still love and respect you. Perhaps I have become overly soft about animals' suffering. But I do not apologize for it.

In a ball game, when a player prays that his side would win, he is also praying that the other side loses. Is that a problem for God? I think He loves the players on each side equally.

I do not believe that dogs go to heaven. And I do believe that too much money is spent on on pets. But in my business, I visit homes of the elderly. Some have a dog for companionship, which they enjoy. And they do benefit by that friendly relationship. But they (and I hope, we) would all agree with Adam that no animal is suitable for "an helpmeet." I am, however, no longer critical of those having a dog to buddy with.

Elmer Schrock
Stuarts Draft, VA



Announcement

Correction Announcement: *The wrong weekend for the annual Youth Christian Fellowship Meetings was published in the June, 2016, issue of Calvary Messenger.*

In some years, July has four weekends, but this year it has five. Both Ken Kanagy (YCFM representative) and I failed to notice that the dates submitted for announcement were not the final weekend, but those of the fifth weekend.

Please be informed that the right weekend, as usual, is the fourth weekend in July. The annual Youth Christian Fellowship Meetings are scheduled for July 22 to 24, 2016.

We apologize for any inconvenience caused by the wrong dates published in June.

Paul L. Miller (620-567-2286)

Ken Kanagy (803-671-0484)



Why Johnny Can't Write

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Thank God Johnny can still read. But who will write something worthwhile for him to take into his hands?

Writing is becoming a lost art. I am past three score years and ten. Penmanship was taught and graded when I went to school. My report card had a place to indicate achievement in penmanship.

Printing is not writing. It is simply printing. Sometime in recent years pupils were taught to print. Now even that is being replaced with computers, smart phones, and mechanical printers. But aside from that, let's consider all hand-written material as writing.

Writing in its various forms is a unique way of expressing ourselves on paper. Writing is expressed similar to speaking. As we think, so we talk. As we talk, so we write. Writing is a polished form of talking.

Many students groan about assignments that involve writing their own thoughts. Talking is

simply rearranging things seen and heard into our own version. Writing is the same way, except that writing requires more thought for its proper arrangement. Even now, I'm struggling a bit "to *say* what I want to *say*." Actually, saying it would be, for me, much easier. What I am "saying" in this article will take more than an hour to write. If I could say it by speaking, I could give it in a matter of minutes. Johnny says, "I would rather just talk."

Life gets so busy, fast-moving and it comes in bunches—plus multiples. We have a bunch of stuff to do today with several more hours of work this evening. The demand on our time is electric, pushing buttons and pulling levers. The clock doesn't stop, nor does the sun stand still. Johnny says, "I am too busy to write."

Through the week, exhaustion accumulates. Saturday afternoon comes when I can finally do some things for myself. It takes all of Sunday afternoon and evening

to exhaust all of the past week's exhaustion! Come Monday morning, and we are once more ready to roll. A big weekend is coming up which will give no slack during the week. Johnny says, "I have no free time to write."

The Lord knows I need more free time to relax. Winter comes and, with it, less time at work. Four days at work now, with several weeks off. There are DVD's to watch, concerts to attend, some travel films at the local high school to take in. And shall we go to Florida, Arizona, or the Bahamas this winter? We really need time to unwind. Johnny doesn't want to admit being too lazy to write. Everyone knows we all need time to unwind.

Conversation takes little thought. Preparing for public speaking takes much more thought, writing for publication takes much, much more. Writing is too much hard work. Johnny says, "Give me some space," a sophisticated way of saying, "Don't push me on this writing thing."

Let's start with Little Johnny. Compiler Joe L. Wheeler writes in *Great Stories Remembered III*, that God created us 100% creative. God created us in His image, right? Wheeler writes that the average two-year-old child is 97 to 100% creative,

but that the average 18-year-old is a mere 2 to 3% creative. What happened?

He says television has taken away creativity. For us, DVD's were a "sanctified" version of TV, with less bad stuff, but also causing some passivity. Joe Wheeler says the imprint is blasted into the child's sub-conscious mind and can last a lifetime. It also creates its own appetite for more.

We teach Little Johnny to talk. He hears from us what is important to say. We teach him to read. He observes from us what is desirable to read. We teach him to write or make lazy excuses why not to write. He discerns from us that writing is not for big people. The generational cycle continues.

Giftedness certainly enters in here. Some seem to have the gift of writing. But gifts don't drop from the sky. Gifts can be developed, at least in part. Some people are too lazy on the one hand, and too busy on the other. We actually become more set in our ways than we often realize.

Writing is not glamorous; there is no audience. It is not engaging, as in conversation. There is no one present for exchange, to agree, to show appreciation or commendation. Conversation gives an immediate sense of connectedness, while

writing does not. Conversation almost immediately gives clues as to what is safe to say, but writing does not.

Writing could be a calling, something intended by God for you. Many, yea, most people are sure it is not their calling. God might say, “I *was* calling you, but you wouldn’t answer your *phone*.”

The Big Four of our wonderful lives engage us perpetually. They are: income generating work, school and homework, family schedules, and church connections—all of which seem to take up 25 hours of a 24-hour day. There is little time to pursue interests in a personally creative way. Daydreaming infringes on the Big Four above. But in the history of mankind, some people’s free time has spawned inventions, art of all kinds, and literary works. For us, we really have enough on which to live, from what people in our past have produced, so that time for meditation and a bit of day dreaming is not needed to fill our lives. We are already full. And that is good. God wants to have a full cup and running over. For most people, running means talk, talk, talk. There would be more people who, besides talking, should be doing some writing. The “I can’t” syndrome could be overcome by trying.

The vibrancy and zest for every generation is promoted by people who will take time to think, take time to prepare for public speaking, and who will, perhaps above all else, take time to write for the present generation and the generations that may follow. It is a heritage that can abide for one’s lifetime and beyond.

Despite more information available than we can digest in a whole lifetime, writing should still be given space as an “in thing.” Writing a daily diary, or a personal journal, are high on my list. Get started. Perhaps you are in your middle years, and so much is missed already that could have been written down. Just begin now. You will be amazed at your own heritage of faith, of participation in family, church, and community, even after only several years of writing

I have kept a diary every year since I was 12 years old. When my first wife, Marian, died, I wrote 38 pages in a journal plus my diary, about her passing and my feelings. After my wife Esther’s husband died, she wrote many things pertinent to that time. She says the help and healing of writing was a tremendous balm. Marian and Esther both wrote daily diaries.

We Germanic people tend to internalize our grief and externalize

our joys. Writing helps me to express thoughts and feelings at arm's length and then use it for my own personal correction, to get myself back on track. Or it may be something that is God's will for promotion in my life to counsel myself to improved nobility.

What applications could be made to the Bible admonition to "Let your moderation be known to all men" (Philippians 4:5)? There are enough people among us who major in their calamities, dripping with pessimism. Few people wish to hear all our griefs, even those who always say, "How are you today, Aaron?"

I remember the time that someone asked me that and I tried to be honest. I expressed sadness and sorrow for the recent news that my wife's cancer was moving again. It had returned which is often not a good sign. The man just continued in his work and without looking at me, said, "Well, everyone needs to die of something some time." He was an older single man, with no idea of marital closeness. Better just write it down than being too honest and specific with people! Writing out your feelings can be a more predictable way of healing. Paper and pen are kind in listening to our grief!

Long pauses in writing are good.

It gives us time to think. Some people can't endure long pauses in conversation. Consequently, we say things which provide for fillers that overstep moderation, at times, also known as speaking without thinking. The mouth keeps moving, but the mind quit thinking or needs an interval of silence to catch up.

In this age of instant communication, multi-tasking, and short attention spans, writing diaries and journals has as much value as ever—maybe even more. We should include letter writing here. Notes, letters, and hand-written cards are more valued than ever, for the sheer absence of it being done by the majority of overly busy people.

The Bottom Line is that there is still hope for Johnny. Mom can instill in him the desire to write. But a not-too-busy dad could do even more, if it had as much priority as that annual deer hunt, or working overtime for a better paycheck, or his daily time involving his Lazy Boy recliner.

And now abideth employment, house keeping, church life, school work, sports, art, music, social interchange, and writing, but the enrichment of them all is enhanced by a measure of writing, for writing spans year and generations, after the senses of sight and sound have faded away.



Walk Close and See More

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his face as pillars of fire” (Revelation 10:1).

John, who saw these things, was once a young boy trained in Jewish tradition. In manhood he became a fisherman. He heard John the Baptist preach and announce, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). With that proclamation, John became a follower of Jesus.

John heard Jesus preach that great Sermon on the Mount. He saw the first of Christ’s miracles in Cana of Galilee. He heard Jesus refer to himself as the “living water,” the “good shepherd,” the “bread of life,” and “the way, the truth, and the life.” He saw the Lord feed five thousand people with five rolls and two little fish. He saw Lazarus raised from the dead.

He watched Jesus being the servant and washing the disciples’ feet. He was present when the soldiers came to arrest him. He witnessed the phony trial, the cruel hatred, and

the condemnation Jesus received. He followed Jesus all the way to the cross. John witnessed Jesus becoming “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8 KJV). John’s own eyes saw the risen Lord with the scars in his hands.

John was a faithful follower and intimate friend of Jesus Christ. When he was abandoned on the Isle Patmos, his close fellowship with Christ did not cease. He walked so closely with Jesus that he “saw” much more of him.

That gives us tremendous encouragement. If we walk in an intimate, obedient, loving relationship with Jesus, he will show us greater things about himself.

Right now, commit yourself to obeying God in the things he shows you, and trust him to show you more of himself.

“Walk while ye have the light, lest the darkness come upon you” (John 12:35KJV).

[From page 128, of Revelation Day by Day, by R. Leslie Holmes and Richard A. Bodey, Eds. Published in 2001 by Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group. Used by permission.]



marriages

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

Correction: Gerber-Ropp

Bro. Alvin, son of Clare and Gwendolyn Gerber, 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.

Martin-Yutzky

Bro. Tim, son of Noah and Edna Martin, Fredericksburg, OH, and Sis. Kelly, daughter of Mark and Kathy Yutzky, Plain City, OH, at United Bethel for Haven Fellowship, on May 7, 2016, by Lonnie Beachy.

Miller-Beachy

Bro. Justin Ray, son of Jonathan and Mary Kathryn Miller, Cottage Grove, TN, and Sis. Heidi Janelle, daughter of Galen and Alta Beachy, Summertown, TN, at Tennessee Valley Community Church for Calvary Christian Fellowship, Paris, TN, on May 27, 2016, by Henry Nissley.

Miller-Eash

Bro. Chris, son of Christy and Carolyn Miller, LaGrange, IN, and Sis. Renee, daughter of Cletus and Sue Eash, Topeka, IN, at Fair Haven A.M. Church, on April 30, by Wilbur Yoder.

Overholt-Garber

Bro. Derek, son of Paul and Darlene Overholt, Charlotte, TN, and Sis. Evalina, daughter of Marion and Dorcas Garber, Commerce, TX, at Crosstrails Cowboy Church for Living Word Believers Church, Commerce, TX, on April 15, 2016, by the bride's father, Marion Garber.


Sommers-Troyer

Bro. Irvin, son of Joseph and Judith Sommers, Burlington Jct., MO, and Sis. Jennifer, daughter of Dale and Cindy Troyer, Pickering, MO, on May 13, 2016, at Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church, by Dale Byler

Swartzentruber-Hacker

Bro. Willis, son of Daniel and Elma Swartzentruber, Oakland, MD, and Sis. Lindsay Ann, daughter of John D. and Carrie B. Hacker, Hawkins, TX, at Valley Bible Church, Westcliffe, CO, on April 16, 2016, by Larry Smith.

Yoder-Miller

Bro. Jared, son of Tim and Lois Yoder, Lewisburg, PA, and Sis. Joanna, daughter of Lavern and Rosemary Miller, Kokomo, IN, on March 19, 2016, at Bethany Fellowship Church by Marvin Beachy. 



cradle roll

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

Coblentz, Leon and Kaylene (Miller), Auburn, KY, third child, first son, Kade Weston, May 19, 2016.

Hostetler, Bruce and Amber (Troyer), London, OH, fourth child, second daughter, Estelle Irene, May 13, 2016.


King, Kevin and Holly (Gingerich), Paradise, PA, second child and son, Zane Ivan, Feb. 16, 2016.

Miller, Caleb and Dorcas (Petre), Somerset, OH, third child and son, Cayson Locke, May 3, 2016.

Miller, Myron and Fern (Beiler), Goshen, IN, fifth child, third son, Asher Lee, May 9, 2016.

Wagler, Dale and Heidi (Wingard), Washington, IN, sixth child, third son, Darin Eugene, April 12, 2016.


Yoder, Albert and Karisa (Stoltzfus), New Holland, PA, second child and daughter, Kaminee Kate, April 19, 2016.

Yoder, Brian and Faith (Yoder), Dundee, OH, first child and daughter, Brianna Faith, May 10, 2016. 



ordination

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

Bro. Titus Troyer, 35, (wife: Kathryn Mast) was chosen through voice of the church and ordained as bishop of Fredonia Mennonite Church, Fredonia, KY, on April 24, 2016. Preordination messages were given by Dean Farmwald, Monticello, KY. The charge was given by Jim Yoder. 

Kauffman, Raymond S., 84, of Bird-in-Hand, PA, died Feb. 1, 2016. He was born at Bird-in-Hand, July 23, 1931, son of the late Christian B. and Suvilla (Smoker) Kauffman.

He was a member of Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church.

On Dec. 16, 1953, he was married to Minerva L. Beiler. She survives. To this union were born seven children: Carl B. (Judy Martin) Kauffman, Bird-in-Hand; Norman (Wanda Chupp) Kauffman, Bird-in-Hand; Pauline Ramos (Loncho), Gordonville; Rachel Stoltzfus (J. B.), Kinzers; Harlan (Esther Eichorn) Kauffman, Burgettstown; Nathan L. (Mary Jane) Kauffman, Bird-in-Hand; Susan Raber (Jonathan), Quaker City, OH; 35 grandchildren, and 11 great grandchildren. Other survivors include four sisters: Lillian Beiler, Verda Glick, Judy Beiler, and Iva Lapp.

Two brothers preceded him in death: Allen and Paul Kauffman.

The funeral was held at Weavertown A.M. Church, with Glenn Miller, John L. Lapp, and David Stoltzfoos serving. John U. Lapp conducted the committal at the Weavertown Church Cemetery.

Stoll, Mark Tristan, 32, died unexpectedly Oct. 7, 2015. He was born Nov. 3, 1982, to Owen and Marie (Yoder) Stoll.

He was a member of Mt. Olive Mennonite Church. Tristan had a natural aptitude for organization and leadership which he used effectively in many capacities of church life. He was loved by all who knew him. Friendly and ready to visit, he seemed always to have a smile. He was a wonderful husband and father who loved spending time with his family. He was employed by a John Deere dealer as a mechanic and thus was well-known by many area farmers.

On Oct. 18, 2003, he was married to Lisa Wagler, who survives. They had three children: Katelyn Elizabeth, 8; Aleigha Claire, 4; and Grant Tristan, 18 months. He is survived by his parents, one brother: Tyson (Amanda) Stoll, Loogootee; and two sisters: Shannon (Eric) Hostetler, Utica, OH; and Sarita (Tim) Graber, Odon.

The funeral was held on Oct. 10 at Mt. Olive Mennonite with Dave Witmer, Clyde Stoll and Mark Yoder serving. Kevin Graber conducted the committal at the Mt. Olive cemetery.

Wittmer, Leo Raymond, 87, of Montgomery, IN, died at his home April 15, 2016. He was born Feb. 19, 1929, to the late Noah and Susan (Stoll) Wittmer.


Raymond was a member of Mt. Olive Mennonite Church. He was blind for 19 years and bedfast for four years.

On Feb. 9, 1957, he was married

to Mary Schrock, who is deceased. He is survived by one son, David (Esther) Wittmer, Montgomery; and two daughters: Karen (Martin) Graber and Shirley (Alvin, Jr.) Wagler, both of Montgomery; 10 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by four

brothers: Ralph, Monroe, Roy, and Paul Wittmer and three sisters: Mary Margaret Wittmer, Rachel Wittmer, and Anna Barbara Wagler.

The funeral was held on April 17, with Clyde Stoll, Loren Graber, Kevin Graber, and Ervin Knepp serving. Burial was in the Mt. Olive cemetery. 

observations

Young *Companions* is published by Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario. The May, 2016, issue has a story that was unusually interesting to me. “A Real Soldier” is the story of an Amish teenager who in 1917, was drafted to become a U. S. Soldier in World War I.

His refusal to wear the military uniform was the first incident in a long series of conflict with the military establishment. Sergeant Croft, considered it an insult to be addressed merely as “sir” because his rank was sergeant. He was antagonistic and overbearing toward the Amish draftee. His manner also made him a non-favorite among the soldiers.

In 1918, a deadly strain of influenza became widespread and was no respecter of military rank. When the sergeant became ill, a volunteer was needed to try to keep him

comfortable. This involved close contact with a potentially deadly contagious illness. The Amish draftee volunteered to accept the challenge. For a time, the patient’s life hung in the balance, but he survived. He then sincerely apologized for the way he had treated the CO who returned good for evil. He told him that he was a better soldier than he himself was.

The story is fairly long, but a very timely reminder of things that are as important now as they were 100 years ago.

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It is a continuing challenge to be in touch with the present in a way that does not misdirect our future. Serious attention to the past should be a helpful safeguard for safety in the future. The present seems to keep us very busy. There is a very real danger that we hardly find time to give serious attention as to where we have been or where we are going.

This brings the danger of arriving at a place where we did not want to be.

Sacred history and contemporary events are a combination that offers an abundance of guidance for safe travel on life's journey. But it is very easy to fail to notice all the free and rich instruction that is available. When I heard that Menno J. Yoder chose the title, "State of the Church" for his retirement message at Mountain View Mennonite, Salisbury, PA, I was interested. It seems that many of us would do well to examine the congregation in which we serve with honest hearts. It is sobering to remember that the church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22), saw themselves quite differently from the way God saw them.

Since this periodical is produced by a certain constituency, it seems to me that to give serious attention to our state or condition is most timely.

The two business sessions at this year's ministers' meetings revealed a very large number of ministries reaching out to a variety of world needs. The Beachy churches are but a branch of a rather large number of groups who consider themselves conservative, but neither old order or mainstream Anabaptist. This is certainly not a license for self-congratulation. Furthermore, the need for self-examination is always

present. This will involve notice of things positive and negative.

Readers should understand that these comments are the perspective of an individual who does not claim to be aware of all aspects of the big picture, but I believe to pay careful attention to present circumstances and of potential outcomes seems very much in order.

We have only one lifetime in which to serve the Lord. I will call attention to some changes that have occurred in my lifetime. The World War II draft and Civilian Public Service was a significant factor in enlarging our awareness of world needs and service opportunities. A few of our number participated in post-war relief service under Mennonite Central Committee.

In 1953 Hillcrest Home became the first Voluntary Service opportunity sponsored by our people. Both Missions Interest Committee and Amish Mennonite Aid had their beginnings during the 1950's. Now, service and mission opportunities are too numerous to count. But those who recruit volunteers would tell us that finding enough volunteers is a constant challenge..

An important development during the last half century is the emergence of our own elementary schools. Dedicated teachers are an important

part of the present and future church. It is wise to remember that to provide appropriate compensation is wise for several reasons. To be a good teacher requires energy and commitment. Adequate compensation should assure more long-term teacher involvement and better schools.

Long-term and short-term service opportunities, both domestic and foreign, are part of the present equation and are a positive part of the combination. It would be wrong to assume that we could not be doing better.

Winter Bible schools have become an important blessing and influence to the many young people who have participated. I would like to think that our VS service units and Bible schools are important in promoting inter-generational stability and service needs awareness. It occurs to me that Penn Valley Christian Retreat has become a blessing to many people with help that was not available to earlier generations.

Service opportunities abound! Congregations often reach out to seniors to help meet local needs. Surely we would agree that we have many reasons to thank the Lord for His manifold goodness.

Beside the Still Waters is a daily devotional booklet. It was started in 1996 and has a present circulation

of 283,000. The contributions are solicited from conservative circles in the wider Anabaptist community. Its reception in the wider circle of Christian believers gives evidence that the truth taught in the Word speak to many people in many places.

I assume that we would agree that the things mentioned above are a real blessing worthy of our profound gratitude to our Lord.

What has not been mentioned is the fact that these are perilous times. It would be a serious mistake to not notice the perils that come to us either as a roaring lion or as an angel of light. Speaking to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20), Paul speaks of grievous wolves that attack from without and others that rise up from within the flock and seek a following by speaking perverse things. Let us be reminded that enemy tactics have not changed. The conflict pronounced between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is still with us.

It is important to remember that neutrality is not an option. We are either on the Lord's side or on the other side. Gradual changes may be subtle, but can be very serious. However, fright and anxiety are not helpful responses. Let us hear the invitation to draw near to God so that He will draw near to us and keep us

safe from the perils of these times.

-DLM

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The slavery of addiction is a problem. Addicted persons find themselves unable to make the decisions they should or wish they could. Freedom can be described as the power to do as we ought. Sad to say, addiction isn't limited to nicotine, alcohol and drugs. Caroline Knorr, parenting editor for *Common Sense Media* outlined several symptoms of addiction. However, she was referring to cellphone addiction and was pointing out warning signs to parents concerned for their children:

- Depression
- Slipping grades in school
- Hostility
- Highly sensitive
- Strong preoccupation with the phone
- Loss of control in activities that they used to enjoy.

As with other addictions, these symptoms subside and behaviors normalize when consumption disappears. Courageous parenting has always been important. Today is no exception.

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Let us remember to pray that God would have His way in the political affairs of this country. Of course, we will want to bear in mind that our

comfort and perspective might not be God's priority. When we request that His will be done, our petitions won't be clouded with selfish interests.

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The vocational interests of our conservative Anabaptist culture used to be dominated by farming. However, we continue to shift away from an agrarian-based economy toward a service-based economy. Parents who raise children on a farm don't need to look for ways to keep their children gainfully occupied and teach responsibility, diligence, and a good work ethic. On a farm, these opportunities are pretty much "baked into" the lifestyle. Maybe somebody would like to write an article for this publication for the benefit of parents struggling with these issues. This could include pointers on how to build and reinforce the aforementioned, timeless values in our posterity in a variety of settings.

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On a recent flight, I had an interesting conversation with a lady who was likely approaching retirement age. She said that she and her husband were not religious people. She was vaguely familiar with the Amish and Mennonites, but seemed keen to clarify her understanding of them, when she found out that I was an Amish-

Mennonite pastor.

One of the things we discussed was the phenomena of celebrity in today's culture. In another era, the famous people were heroes and were looked up to. People were heroes because they did noble deeds. Today, the famous people who are looked up to are celebrities, who are famous quite apart from doing anything noble. They are looked up to because they are famous, and often they feed their fame by conduct that is repulsive.

My seatmate clarified her disgust for one such celebrity, who shall go unnamed here, by saying something like this: "She has the intellect of a dung beetle. She's not capable of

putting words together to express a coherent thought. I just wish she weren't so good-looking. I can't understand how people hang onto her every tweet as if she'd actually be saying something, because it's all nonsense. And this is the type of person that our young girls want to be like when they grow up!"

One indicator of the health of our culture can be revealed by answering this question: "Who are the most admired people?" The answer to that question doesn't provide much encouragement in contemporary society. How about your church, your family, or your heart?

-RJM



Adoption and Orphan Care

Davy Mast, Seneca, SC

According to Show Hope, an organization founded to care for orphans, over eighty-one million Americans have considered adoption. If just one in five hundred of these adults actually adopted, every waiting child in America would have a permanent family. Every year more than 23,000 children age out of foster care, leaving them without families of their own. Why is this subject not given more attention in our churches and why does it seem that non-Christians are more

enthusiastic about adoption than professing Christians? Why are there so many cautions given when parents start considering adoption? Are there things we believe about adoption that are not accurate? What is God's heart in connection with adoption? I believe that God is wanting us as a church and as individuals to become actively involved in providing homes for His children.

Recently, I spent a day with *Strong's Concordance* and read every verse in the Bible that refers to the

fatherless. According to *Strong's* the word *fatherless* appears in the Old Testament forty-two times. The law teaches that His people were to take care of the fatherless, the widows, and the stranger or aliens. Based on Old Testament Scripture, God has a special place in His heart for the less fortunate. On the other hand, the only place the term *fatherless* appears in the New Testament is in James 1:27.

Here are three of my favorite Old Testament references regarding the fatherless:

Psalm 10:16-18 "The Lord is king forever.....Lord, thou has heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

Psalm 68:4-6 "Sing unto the Lord, sing praises to his name, extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH(Lord) and rejoice before him. A father of the fatherless and a judge of widows, is God in his holy habitation. God setteth the *solitary* in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land."

The Hebrew word for *solitary* as it is used in this passage is *yachiyd*, which means "united, sole by implication, beloved, also lonely".

Isaiah 1:17 "Learn to do well; seek

judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

Then we have the New Testament Scripture reference in James 1:27. "Pure religion before God and the Father is this, to *visit* the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world".

The Greek word for *visit* as used in this passage is *episkeptomai* which means "to inspect, (by implication) to select; by extension to go to see, relieve".

Is James just encouraging us to visit orphanages, nursing homes, and widows, or should we be doing more? Based on the Old Testament law and examples in Scriptures, I believe that orphan care should be done by the church and by families. It is easy to say and even believe that we should take care of the fatherless and widows, but it is much harder to take action. We would rather keep orphan care at a distance. It is too messy and disrupts our schedules and life style. Instead of having this nice little Christian family, we are afraid we will be seen as dysfunctional and out of control. It is easier to support and send money to orphanages or other organizations and let them take care of the orphans.

While it would be easy to say all Christians should be involved in orphan care in order to live out "pure

religion,” there are other Scriptures that tell us additional things we should be doing. Jesus said the two greatest commandments are to love God and others, not just orphans and widows. However, in Matthew 25, Jesus says he will judge us based on how we gave food, water, and clothes to the needy and how we visited those in prison. There is no question that God asks His children to be actively involved in caring for the vulnerable.

In his book, *Orphan Justice*, Johnny Carr makes the following statement: “Man made orphanages for children, but God made the family for children.” I agree. Orphanages fill an important role in caring for the fatherless, but they should only be providing temporary care. The goal should be to get these children into homes, not just any homes, but Christian homes. Both orphanages and the foster care program are designed to help and protect vulnerable children. What they do is necessary to orphan and foster care. I believe we, as Christ followers, should then step up and be willing to provide homes for these children.

The only orphanage I have had direct contact with has been the Light of Hope Orphanage in Choix, Sinaloa, Mexico. This orphanage is under DestiNations International and directed by Lenn Miller. Lenn says the following on their web site, and I think he says it well:

“Here’s an analogy that I believe puts it in perspective. What we are doing as an orphanage is like trying to care for fish out of water. Over the years we have tried to improve our care of the fish. Maybe before, they were flopping around on the cement, so we improved our care by moving them onto grass so they wouldn’t damage themselves as badly. Then we figured out that they do even better by pouring water on them and keeping the grass moist. But we’ve still found that they aren’t thriving.

We’re still trying to improve our care, and we should. But I’m convinced that they won’t truly thrive until we find them little ponds. The ponds are homes. Not just any pond will do. They need ponds with the elements that will enable them to thrive. Those would be Godly homes, Christian homes. Many of these children are broken. They don’t need broken homes. They need wholesome homes.”

Our foster care system is trying to take care of the orphans and other abandoned or “at risk” children. While it is easy to criticize Social Services and what they are doing wrong, they are doing a lot of good in protecting children and providing homes for them. However, Social Services is a government organization and they have a different belief system and point of reference than

we have as Christians. This is why we need more Christian families to be involved in foster care.

I believe it is time for us as a church, as followers of Christ, to be willing to risk opening our homes to these children. Imagine how many children could be reached if there would be a waiting list of Christian families ready to adopt as soon as a child is placed into an orphanage or foster care! Adoption and foster care is hard work and the adoption process can be painfully slow and tedious, but if we delay or do nothing, these children continue living without a family.

Here are some questions we hear when we discuss or pursue adoption. These are only a few, but I would like to give some input on how I believe these questions have influenced and kept us from action.

1) *Do you have any idea of what you are getting into?* Maybe we don't know what we are getting into. This is not a decision we should make lightly, but we do this out of obedience and a love for God and His children. We need to count the cost and be prepared to work with hurting children, but if God calls us to adopt or foster, He will also supply our needs.

2) *Why would you adopt when you have your own children?* It is easy for us to see adoption as a second choice. Many couples adopt when they can't have biological children. We applaud

them for adopting, and rightly so, but we start believing that adoption is the last resort or a secondary option. I personally believe that existing families with children are excellent candidates for adoption. What better environment for the abandoned child than an existing family with an established routine, culture, and identity?

3) *I don't think I could handle adopting a child and then watching them rebel and not making a decision for Christ.* I think this idea has paralyzed many of us from seriously considering adoption. The truth is if we don't adopt these children most of them will never have the opportunity to even know of Christ and therefore choose Him as their Savior. God is not asking us to make Christians out of anyone, including our biological children. When you adopt and foster, you are opening your life and heart to pain and possible rejection. But you are also opening your heart and life to so much more. Most adoptive parents I speak to today will verify this.

4) *What if one of our biological children loses out spiritually because of adopting, especially if we adopt an older child?* I believe that is the wrong question. The question should be, "Is God calling us to adopt, and if He is, can we trust Him with our children?" The same thing can be said for those who are called by God to live in the inner city or on the mission field.

5) *Why are so many adoptions not successful?* Let's re-define success. A friend of mine who works with troubled boys defined success this way: "Our job is to show Christ to these boys and if we do that, that is success. Their outcome doesn't determine our success." My prayer for all of our children is that they all become Christians and embrace our beliefs. But their decision alone does not determine success. When fostering and adopting children, we love them as Christ loved us and trust God to help us do it well. We all know this, but it is sometimes hard to separate the outcome from success.

Early in our adoption process we attended an adoption seminar. One of speakers at the seminar was adopted as an older child and is now married with sixteen children, two by birth and fourteen by adoption. One of her teenage daughters was sitting in front of us. She was from Ethiopia and I couldn't help but notice the dyed streaks in her hair. I immediately wanted to put her in the "definitely rebellious and not successful" category. After the talk, I spoke with the daughter and was blessed by her positive attitude and the way she related to both me and her mom. Here was a child who didn't have much chance of a successful and productive life, but someone invested and took the risk of adopting. This girl has now grown

into a respectful and productive individual who belonged. I could not label this as "not successful". This is an example of where I initially allowed my preconceived ideas to judge unfairly.

The Psalmist creates a beautiful picture of family in Psalm 127, when he writes:

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep. Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are the children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

God is the one who designed children to be in families. He designed the father to be the mighty warrior who protects and guides the arrows.

God is still in the business of building homes. Some children are in orphanages or the foster program because their parents died or were killed. Others have been abused or abandoned by those who were supposed to protect them. Some are handicapped and need extra care. Some are HIV positive or have

mental handicaps. These children are the arrows and are waiting for someone to pick them up. If we as Christians don't pick them up and take them into our homes, *someone else will*. Satan has people watching for these vulnerable arrows. He will use child traffickers, prostitution, gangs, drugs, alcohol, and many other tactics to further damage these arrows. God wants us Christians to pick up these arrows and give them homes.

God has called all Christians to be a part of building His kingdom. One of those ways is caring for the fatherless and widows. Is God calling you to be involved in adoption and foster care as a way of building His kingdom? Building His kingdom requires obedience. Obedience

requires faith. Faith begs us to risk and step into the unknown and trust God. As Christians, God has adopted us into His family. God doesn't ask us to do this perfectly and He allows us to make mistakes. And while we wait and do nothing, the homeless are still homeless, and the orphans are still orphans. Is God asking you to step out in faith and risk for "one of these"?

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Redeeming the Time *A God-honoring Courtship*

Jesse Hursh

Early in their courtship, John and Mary had always planned their time together. But as their courtship progressed, just being together seemed more important than planning what they ought to do.

Mary's father occasionally inquired about their plans. He was obviously

most satisfied when John had specific answers to give. John and Mary accepted the challenge to give more forethought to how they would spend their time.

Fathers are rightfully concerned about how courting couples spend their time. Where wholesome activities are missing, temptation

will likely find a place. Well-planned visits include a variety of activities. Observing how your courting partner relates to various circumstances helps you to know who he or she really is.

Plan a spiritual activity for every visit. Devotional time spent together brings a God-consciousness to your developing relationship. Study a passage of Scripture together or share inspiration from your personal devotions. Make devotional time a priority. Attending worship services together is a highlight for spiritual couples. Discuss what you have heard and note how your partner responds to teaching that is especially challenging. These activities give you an important window into one another's spiritual character.

Include family time in your visits. Arrange your schedule to include meals with the family. Observe how your friend relates to his parents and siblings. Does your friend accept your family and their quirks? Interacting with your families is a good way to learn to know each other better. These signals hint how life will be when the newness of courtship wears off.

Find time to be with peers. Mingling with other couples indicates that you are not too full of yourselves. An occasional double date or some other activity with

multiple couples can be pleasant and worthwhile. Taking time to visit with non-courting friends at a worship service or a wedding shows a commendable level of maturity. Time with peers will tell you volumes about your partner's social skills.

Make time to reach out to others. Take opportunities to visit grandparents. Ask another couple to join in singing for some shut-in. Accept some invitations to share a meal with a church family.

Work at projects together. Working together can be an excellent way to learn to know each other better. Doing the dishes, weeding the garden, or helping with the chores can yield clues about work habits or other character traits.

Save some time for one-to-one communication. Meaningful communication is the key to successful courtship. This takes time and effort and develops with the help of multiple visits. Be careful not to let the flurry of wholesome activities crowd out time for effective communication.

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do it all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

[From *The Eastern Mennonite Testimony*, May, 2016. Used by permission.]



CASP – Hutchinson, KS

Diane Schrock, Hutchinson, KS

“With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men” (Eph. 6:7).

Our family spent the month of March serving as houseparents at the CASP (Conservative Anabaptist Service Program) house in Hutchinson. We were asked to share about our experience, so here goes: The house our group stayed in is at 715 East B Street. It is a two-story house that was purchased about five years ago by Interfaith Housing Services (IHS) to be used to house groups doing service to benefit people in need in our city. This house has been refurbished by former groups of Alternative Service Workers (ASW’s) and various locals. It has eight bunks and two bathrooms in the basement, one bedroom and one bathroom on the main floor, three additional bunks upstairs, and three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. It’s a very nice set-up for a group like this!

There were eight young men serving in the third term of CASP this year. The other couple serving in leadership with us were Harry and Susan Yoder from Aroda, Virginia. Harry was crew leader. He and Nelson worked with

and led the young men at work.

The eight young men were a wonderful, hard-working crew, who did a good job of adjusting to the different jobs that they worked on throughout the month. Perhaps we should say they did more than jobs—it was ministry, as they interacted well with the homeowners they helped. A special “Thank you!” to Brandon, Doug, Mitchell, Rylan, Denver, Nelson, Randal, and Daryl (the March ASW’s), for your cheerfulness, willingness to work, adjusting to needs of each different work project, and your testimony to those you came in contact with. It was amazing to see how you came together as a group! It was neat to hear your appreciation for the good food and the clean clothes.

Rising time for the volunteers at CASP is set for 6 A.M.; breakfast at 7, so in between the ASW’s were to have personal devotions and pack their lunches. Susan would be in the kitchen preparing a sumptuous spread, which we laid out for the men: bread, ham, cheese, fruit, chips, cookies, and more, and the men would file through and assemble their lunches.

Morning devotions for us all were

right after breakfast, with Nelson, Harry, and the ASW's taking their turn to lead out. Then, by 8 A.M., they were all out the door and reporting to IHS, leaving us ladies to begin the rest of the work at the base. Duties were divided, but we helped each other. Susan planned the meals and cooked. I took care of the laundry and housecleaning. Our four children along (ranging in age from 13 to 17 years) helped us also with housework after their schoolwork was done.

Our two oldest children, Arlyn and Amy, did our chores at home. They would drive home 15 miles to take care of our beef cows, chickens, and whatever else needed to be done. We could easily send a list home with them to retrieve forgotten items and have them within two hours. Nelson and I seldom went home; we had decided to focus on the work with CASP, although it was an adjustment not to dwell on things we were missing out on.

We greatly enjoyed the month and there was no shortage of work or things to keep us busy. We were blessed to have Harry and Susan to work with!

Laundry had a way of piling up. It seemed that there was always opportunity to have loads of laundry to sort and get into the washer.

We were the third group at the CASP house in the winter of 2016. January and February each had seven ASW's. With our group being the last term for the year, we had the blessing/challenge of going through the freezer and

planning meals according to what was there. We were blessed with leftovers from the previous two terms and Susan did a wonderful job of planning meals frugally and scrumptiously! We were also blessed with food from the Arlington congregation—with all the milk, eggs, corn, green beans, hamburger and sausage being donated. Susan brought along lots of cookies and pie filling! These things made a big difference in our grocery bill. It was an encouragement to feel the support and interest from our three sponsoring churches—Center, Cedar Crest, and Arlington!

The work that was done this month was a bit unusual, but it was certainly appreciated by the homeowners. Workwise, there wasn't one big job, but lots of little jobs. The ASW's would usually work in two groups, with Harry leading one group and Nelson leading the other. Their work ranged from helping with yard clean-up for a blind man, to ridding a widow's backyard of trash after a fire had left a mess that the city ordered to be cleaned up, because the city fire department couldn't maneuver to put the fire out. At the end of the day there, the ASW's had filled three large roll-off dumpsters, working with wheelbarrows, or carrying items by hand to throw into the dumpster.

They also helped for three days at David Yoders, a local Amish family, helping rebuild their house after a fire. Another job was replacing all

the fascia boards on an old, two-story house, using three sets of scaffolding to replace the rotten boards with newly-painted ones. The single, elderly lady was extremely grateful for this! She said she'd looked at the old, rotten boards for 10 years, and here they were replaced in two days! Testimonies like this added blessings to the jobs. Praise the Lord! More than once the ASW's came home with boxes of pastries that were given in appreciation of a job well done.

They also worked on building decks for low-income housing projects and were able to help with repairing the roof for the Hands of Christ ministry cottage.

The work days were from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., then supper at 6—with structured activities in the evenings. A normal week's evening schedule is as follows: Monday—Bible study; Tuesday—a brother from a local church comes in for devotions; Wednesday—attend church at one of the three local, sponsoring churches; Thursday—volleyball with local youth; Friday—family night (write letters, sing, play constructive games); Saturday was a free day; and Sunday morning, church, and Sunday evening—singing with local youth.

Before the term starts in January, the three local churches prepare the CASP house—cleaning throughout, making up the beds, and so on. It's wonderful to know that there are willing hands to help when all three


terms are done (clean the refrigerators and freezer, wash comforters and bedding, and so on).

We appreciate the helping hands and willing hearts! Thank you to each of you, near and far, for your help in this program! **“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him”** (Col. 3:17).

We would encourage our young people to participate in CASP. 1 Peter 2:8 says, **“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”**

We have a debt we owe, whether or not there is another draft. We have many privileges and freedoms here that many people in other countries do not have, such as. To name a few: being allowed to refrain from jury service, and freedom to worship as we believe pleases God. With CASP we can be proactive and offer to do alternative service work, living out in practical ways our convictions as conscientious objectors.

My husband Nelson is on the local CASP board, so it was a good experience for us to be involved in this way. Also serving with Nelson are Phil Yutzy and Oliver Troyer.

We remember that Jesus said, **“My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight....”** 

Mockingbird Imitation

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Many of you have probably read the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It is an old southern classic worth reading. It is a story of racial inequality in the South after the Civil War. The mockingbird as used in this story is symbolic of something harmless, innocent, and to be valued.

The mockingbird is a great imitator. Mockingbirds are common here in the south. I enjoy sitting on the porch listening to this happy little fellow imitating various bird songs. Imitation is doing exactly what God created the mockingbird to do. He is praising the Creator through imitation. There are many positive examples of imitation, such as a child imitating the parent or as we imitate Jesus in our walk and lifestyle. Imitating can be a good thing, but it can also be a negative thing, which we want to explore further.

What was God's original plan for woman? Genesis 2 gives the account of God creating Adam out of dust. God knew that Adam would not be complete in himself, so He took

a rib from Adam's side and made a woman. He gave her to Adam as a helpmeet (other translations say: a helper or one suitable) for him.

God gave woman special characteristics and equipped her with all she would need to fill her unique responsibility. God did not plan for us women to imitate men, or be just like them. God's plan for us is special and unique. God has a special role for us women to follow and only as we follow His blueprint will we experience true joy and contentment.

Jesus was born of a woman. He lifted woman to her rightful place as He traveled the dusty roads of Galilee. Jesus healed women both physically and spiritually. He enjoyed the company and friendship of women. He loved women with a pure godly love. Paul tells us that in Christ we are one; there is no difference in God's plan of redemption between male and female.

Recently our grandson asked me how I feel as a woman about the possibility of a woman taking the role

of president in our country. I think he was a bit surprised at my response and it has given me food for thought. In today's world, women strive for equal positions with men, especially in leadership. Perhaps equality has affected Christian women in more aspects than we realize. We may not realize that we are imitating man or desiring the role God has given to men.


God has given women a design to live in relationship to men. God planned for man to be the protector, the provider, the leader. Man is required to love his special woman (the one fitted for him) and to care for her as Christ loves and cares for the church. Woman, in return, is to willingly accept and respond with respect, submission, and admiration.

As she expresses a thankful and appreciative heart, she finds contentment and joy in her role as woman. As an older woman, I wish I had always responded in this way, however, I know God forgives and He gives us new opportunities. I do acknowledge that there has been much joy in accepting and enjoying my role, which I accept as being in God's order.

Back to the idea of imitation: In what ways do we try to imitate (take on or copy) our husband's role of leadership or even of provider? Do we

promote our ideas and plans as being the best? Do we question his job or ability to provide for the family? I once heard a comment that women are "manipulators." Do we get our own way by manipulation? Do we try to control or influence our husbands in a clever, unfair, or unscrupulous manner, as *manipulation* is defined in the dictionary?

As God-honoring leaders, our husbands will include us in all major decision making, such as where we should live, our financial budget, child discipline, is God calling us to a specific place of service and in many other areas. The final decision lies with the husband. As we accept the decision which has been made, we will find joy, contentment, and happiness. I know this to be true. We have moved frequently because of my husband's call to ministry, and even though it may have seemed hard at the time, I experienced true happiness in each location. God always honors our obedience to His call.

I am simply saying: enjoy your role as woman or a wife according to God's plan. Find comfort in the love and protection of a godly husband. Be willing to follow him wherever God calls. Trust God to provide for you through your husband. Do not try to imitate his role, but accept yours as a gift from the Creator. 

Thieves in the Night

Mary Ellen Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya

Dishon sat on his bed in his one-room house in shocked silence. “We will take your things,” the man with the black mask shouted. “Yes, we will take your things whether you are dead or alive!”

Just an hour earlier, at 9:00, Dishon had finished eating and was ready to study for his medical college exams. Suddenly, he heard knocking at the big, blue gate, the entrance to the Rabour Church yard, where he lived in the caretaker’s house. Dishon walked out in the darkness to see what the man wanted.

“I am from western Kenya and went to Kencho to look for a job.” the man related wearily. “I could not find a job that pays enough, so I decided to go back home. Now I am out of money. I will have to walk to Kisumu. How far is it to Kisumu, anyhow?” He also asked where the police station was and if he could sleep there. Travelers at times were taken in by the Kenyan police.

Dishon thought the stranger looked thin and tired; his legs were dirty as if he truly had walked far. He called a neighbor; the neighbor did not know

the man and commented, “God will bless you if you help him.”

Dishon has a big heart of kindness. He unlocked the gate and invited the man into his house. He told him he will give him food. He got busy heating water, then he stirred the ugali, and cooked omena (tiny fish) with onions and tomatoes. He even fried some greens for his guest.

As Dishon was cooking, the man’s greedy, shiftless eyes were silently appraising his house and furnishings. He was also busily texting. When the food was ready, he handed the man a generous plateful and offered a prayer of thanks to God, and then he prepared hot tea for him.

The food was hungrily devoured. The tea disappeared. That man must not have eaten for a while, Dishon mused. But the man never even said, “Thank you.” Not one word of thanks. He went out and disappeared into the night. Dishon thought he must be using the choo (toilet).

Suddenly the man came back in. Two men with ugly black masks followed him. Dishon could hear more men outside. The men had

pongas (machetes). “We will go with your things. You decide whether you will be dead or alive,” they coldly stated.

Dishon felt the icy fingers of fear grip him. He sat on his bed and silently watched as they ransacked his house. They wheeled his bicycle out the door. Dishon’s heart sank; there went his only means of transportation. How would he get to college now?

They grabbed his school bag off the wall. They were taking his stethoscope and his favorite headlamp—both gifts from friends.

His suitcase of clothes was pulled out from under the his bed; more clothes were stuffed in; his three pairs of shoes were thrown in (the shoes he liked so well which had been given by a close friend). He was left with only the shoes on his feet. They threw in his blue jacket that he liked so much.

They even grabbed his two expensive medical textbooks and asked for food. Dishon just stayed sitting. They took a few leftovers, his sugar, and all the food they could snatch.

Finally, they finished, but before they faded into the darkness, they threw his phone book back in the door and told him he can now call anyone for help.

“My things are gone,” Dishon thought sadly, “My things are gone; I will never see these things again.” He tried to call his friends at the mission,

but the hour was late and their phones were turned off.

He called his neighbor who went with him to the police station to report the theft.

The neighbor said, “You are lucky that you gave that man food; If you had not, they might just have killed you.”

The policemen told him he could get a group of friends and watch for the men by the main road. Dishon did not want to fight. He went home feeling lonely and fearful.

“God gave me all those things,” Dishon mused, “I realized the things I have are not mine.” That same night a faithful tuk tuk driver was murdered. Dishon thought maybe they asked him for money and he would not hand it over. His body was found lying by the road. Shops were broken into where more things were stolen.

“Now it is very hard for me to welcome a stranger into my house,” Dishon shared, “but the Bible says to do good. I have been kindly treated in life. Many people have been kind to me, why should I not be kind to others? God wants to see if I will really trust Him. When things go smoothly, it is easy to forget God. I don’t want to stop doing good. God knows why this happened. God will help me. God kept me safe, even though those armed robbers came at night and took many of my things.”



Lesson Mandatory—Location of Classroom Your Choice

Gideon Yutzy, Hutchinson, KS

A man I will call Samuel visited our church the other Sunday. To our pleasant surprise, he got up to tell us all a story, carrying with him a forest green thermal sleeping bag. Samuel, it seemed, was going to tell his story with flair.

The story took place quite a few years ago, in the days when Jimmy Carter was president or even before that yet. Samuel was finishing up his studies in preparation to be a teacher when the head of a mission board called, inviting him to teach at a remote place in the North. All Samuel knew about the place is that it got really cold there. But he was undeterred. He packed his few meager possessions and embarked.

When he arrived he was welcomed by Festus, the missionary who was to be over him. As it turned out, young Samuel and Festus would

have a great deal of trouble getting along. For starters, Samuel found out from the locals that Festus had not learned the language well. Also, one day Festus's dog came and defecated on his wood supply which Samuel had personally chopped in hopes of surviving his first winter in these frigid hinterlands.

But despite such rocky beginnings, Samuel swallowed his pride and went to Festus one day with a request. (Except that he probably did not swallow that much pride because it came out more like a demand than a request.)

Samuel needed to attend a teacher's conference. Other teachers from the area were going and, if that wasn't reason enough, the head of the mission board had mentioned the conference way back when he first called Samuel. And thus, whether by requesting or demanding or

cajoling, Samuel let it be known to Festus: *I need to attend the teachers' conference. Take me!*

Festus owned a small single-engine airplane. Samuel knew this. That's why Samuel asked Festus to take him to the teachers' conference. Unfortunately, winter was setting in and Festus, a seasoned bush pilot, was reluctant to go. *Should he leave his wife and children behind several days? Is a teachers' conference what this young upstart really needs? He needs something but is it that?*

Eventually though, Festus gave in. Several inches of snow lay on the ground, the weather was frigid and foreboding, but Festus gave in. Up they went. They were airborne.

In their case, being airborne was far from reassuring. Seemingly doomed from the beginning, the flight was marked by snow squalls and extreme turbulence. Soon after takeoff, Festus was forced to land the plane—on a frozen lake, where there was no semblance of shelter. They were stranded and they weren't even halfway to their destination.

Not that being closer would have simplified matters any. Providence had helped them exit the skies alive and, no matter how close they were, they were not about to go up again. At least not that evening anymore.

If the weather improved at all they would try the next day. But for that night, they would just focus on surviving, as two missionaries who possessed not one iota of relational aptitude toward each other.

Inside the marooned Cessna, the thermometer read minus forty degrees Fahrenheit. Between the two of them, one forest green thermal sleeping bag was all Festus and Samuel had for warmth. That's where they would have to sleep. Together.

Halfway through the night, after some fitful snoozing, Festus and Samuel discovered they were both awake and, in all likelihood, would be till dawn. The circumstances simply did not lend themselves to sleeping. They tried making small talk. But then, after an extra-long, extra-awkward pause, Samuel had had enough. Tired of tiptoeing around their relational difficulties, he blurted out the truth. "I don't like you," he said. "I'm ashamed to say it, but I don't like you."

Conversations inside thermal sleeping bags in sub-zero temperatures are not usually characterized by an excess of niceties.

Festus the Missionary was silent for a moment, listening as the conifers whispered Samuel's confession

among themselves. Then, gamely, he spoke his own confession. He spoke it as a missionary should have—as free of reproach as is possible. “It’s been difficult for me to get along with you, too.” His words, though not as blunt as Samuel’s, communicated the same painful message.

Then things improved. It was as though their bumbling words brought about a catharsis. The status of their relationship changed from dysfunctional to healing. Healing slowly, but healing all the same.

The next morning, when the two men were able to take to the skies again, they opted to go home. There was no use in going to the teachers’ conference. Already they would have missed a good part of it.


They landed near the missionary compound. A small entourage of missionaries and locals came up to greet them. Written on each face was one predominant emotion: surprise. Surprise, because Festus and the hotheaded teacher had returned early. Surprise, because a budding and fragrant harmony could be sensed between them. Their surprise was understandable. As of yet, none of them knew what had happened during the night. None of them knew that the Master had showed up to teach two of his

trainees one of the hardest lessons of their lives.

Unless your name is Aesop, spelling out the moral of a story is usually ill-advised. Nonetheless, here is at least one lesson that Samuel’s story contains: people can get along if they are forced to do so.

In a recent column, I encouraged people to leave the greenhouse of an established church community and pioneer some new effort. I limited myself to one thousand words. I doubt I pushed over too many undecided ones.

All the same, you may find yourself among pioneers one day. And when that day comes, rest assured that at least one of your colleagues will rub you the wrong way. Will you have the skills to resolve that conflict? Missionaries repeatedly cite strained relationships with fellow missionaries as their greatest stressor. It will also plague you. Like Samuel with Festus.

Using persistence and grace, we must begin now to seek harmony in the most difficult of our relationships. If we fail to learn in our current classroom, our Patient Teacher may move us to another one. So make ready, that classroom just might be a forest green thermal sleeping bag. 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Open-minded or empty-headed—should it reflect whether you're describing yourself or someone else?

• • • • •

Death for the Christian is not bane but blessing, not tragedy but triumph.

• • • • •

An unfairness tests the Christian's consecration.

• • • • •

Quitters don't win; winners don't quit.

• • • • •

Good advice for those trying to lose weight—"no thyself?"

• • • • •

There may be wrong ways to do a right thing, but there's never a right way to do a wrong thing.

• • • • •

He who pats you on the back may want you to cough up something.

• • • • •

No situation is so bad that a few alcoholic drinks won't make it worse.

• • • • •

Ideas are a lot like children—our own are wonderful.

• • • • •

The fire of God in your heart will melt the lead in your feet.

• • • • •

If there's no sunshine in our religion we shouldn't be surprised if nobody wants it.

• • • • •

Accept God's grace through faith, then prove His grace through good works.

• • • • •

Praise loudly—blame softly.