



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

AUGUST 2016

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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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You Are Not Alone

Danielle Thompson, Danville, OH

My friend, are you feeling that you are alone,
That no one has struggles in life like your own?
Please do not despair, there are people who care,
And someone who'll listen, if only you'll share.


These struggles you're facing are common to man,
Find someone you trust and they'll understand.
You are not alone; you are no exception,
For Jesus faced trials and even rejection.

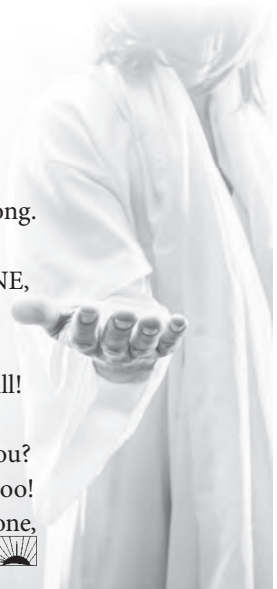
Our Savior was tempted in all points like we,
He knows what it's like, and His blood sets us free.
He knows what you're facing and longs to help you,
So tender and loving, compassionate, true.

Tell HIM all your struggles and He'll understand,
He waits to assist you with His outstretched hand.
Just open your heart, friend, and let in His Light
To brighten the corners that now are as night.

He's shaping your life, and His way is the best.
Submit to His workings, for He'll do the rest.
He wants for you vict'ry, He'll help you along,
Make you more than a conqueror, steadfast and strong.

You'll hear Jesus say, "Child, YOU ARE NOT ALONE,
I'll stay with you, guide you, and call you my own."
Such joy and such peace when you rest in His will.
What a comforting thought—He is here with me still!

Oh friend, don't you see, there've been others like you?
Others have struggled, and they've pulled through too!
With them we shall meet Him and sing 'round the throne,
And there we'll recall, we were NEVER ALONE! 



Donating Blood and Beyond

Some decades ago, Mrs. Mary Nisly, an apparently healthy 65-year-old sister, was not accepted to donate blood to Red Cross. But currently Red Cross accepts the blood of seniors in stable health. I'm 82 and yesterday (June 14), they took a pint of my blood. Before that was done, however, I was repeatedly asked for the same personal information, apparently to see if I'd hesitate. If I hesitated, they could assume that I was giving false responses.

I was also asked many personal questions related to the immoral practices of our time. But those questions do not fit in a family-friendly periodical like *Calvary Messenger*. There's no reason to repeat them here. Nevertheless, Red Cross really needs to know sensitive things for the safety of those needing blood donation. Because of loose-living lifestyles much too common today and the political pressures of the times, I began to wonder if the availability of qualified donors is shrinking.

I was also asked if in recent months I had received a tattoo or if I had any body piercing done. The health worker who conducted the examination process had a clevis-like fixture on her ear almost as big as her ear. She wore quite a few smaller bits of precious metal on her lips and nose. Several tattoos decorated the inside of her forearms.

Where will these efforts to improve the appearance of the human body take American society? No, let me state my question bluntly: *Where will this foolishness go?* Will it go as far as what I read recently in Paul Lee Tan's book, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*? In illustration #1615, he says that in times past in a certain foreign country oversized lips were considered beautiful. There folks thought they could enhance the Creator's design by making the lips of women much larger than natural. As a result of these "improvements," such women could no longer eat solid food and so these "beautified" ones needed to get nourishment from liquid diets. Furthermore, they

could no longer speak clearly. This “beautification” process might take four years of inserting wooden discs, first small ones that got ever larger, so it came with a lot of pain. It defied common sense, but somehow people still endured it.

Beautiful? Sensible? No! But wanting to be noticed makes people do strange things. And we don’t need to go to such extremes to illustrate the lack of good sense in making “improvements.” We don’t even need to go to the “reduced clothing with lots of skin exposed” practices now prevalent, even though many around us choose such undress to cool off during these summer months. Let’s acknowledge that benefits of comfort are also derived from covering up lightly, then allowing nature’s air-cooling system by perspiration to increase comfort.

After I got home from donating blood, I consulted Daniel Kauffman’s classic, *Doctrines of the Bible*. I noted what Bro. Kauffman recommended a century ago as appropriate attire for pilgrims on their way to heaven. His comments on “Bible Teaching on Dress” begin on page 499. In seven sections, he offers his insights with the following opening statements: “1) All Bible teaching against worldly conformity is divine testimony

against conforming to the fashions of the world in dress; 2) The Bible teaches sex distinction in dress; 3) Modest apparel is commanded; 4) Wearing jewelry and costly array are forbidden; 5) Immodest apparel is condemned and forbidden; 6) We are exhorted to unity; 7) We should avoid ‘changeable suits of apparel.’”

Kauffman’s comments are still relevant. His insights of a century ago mark out a path of blessing for today. God’s Word, appropriately received and interpreted—then and now—is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

Several foundational truths are given in God’s Word: *a) God has made us in His image. b) We are stewards of His design for us.* Godly wisdom finds beauty in modesty and simplicity. Clothing that is not extravagant and that conceals well best expresses pilgrim values.

The following passage is but one of a number of New Testament Scriptures that speak with unmistakeable clarity: **“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s”** (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Toward the end of his life, John Wesley (1703-1791) expressed deep regret about Methodism of the late 18th century. He wrote: *I am distressed. I know not what to do. I see what I might have done once. I might have said peremptorily and expressly, "Here I am; I and my Bible. I will not, I dare not vary from this Book either in great things or small. I have no power to dispense with one jot or tittle of what is contained therein. I am determined to be a Bible Christian, not almost, but altogether. Who will meet me on this ground? Join me on this or not at all."* With regard to dress in particular, *I might have been as firm (and now I see it would have been far better,) as either the people called Quakers or the Moravian brethren. I might have said, "This is our manner of dress which we know is both Scriptural and rational. If you join us, you are to dress as we do, but you need not join us unless you please." But alas! The time is now past; and what I can do now, I cannot tell.**

Let us resolve to take personal and brotherhood stands against conformity to high (and low) style. God honors those who honor Him. We don't need to let the world around us squeeze us into its mold. He would give us the power to be spiritual

"thermostats" that exert a positive influence upon society. To be mere "thermometers," that mostly reflect prevailing "temperatures," does not advance God's Kingdom.

As Red Cross wisely decided that healthy old people can donate blood, so may we concede that Spirit-filled old men like 85-year-old John Wesley can give helpful advice. Even when those around us slack off in their resistance of stylish and immodest dress, you and I don't need to do so. With minds informed by God's standards of practical holiness and the Holy Spirit residing within, we can live by something better than going along with the fashion-driven world around us. Instead of asking anxiously: "How can I get people to notice me?" and "What is 'in'?" let us find the blessings of walking eagerly in humble holiness with Jesus. He alone gives **"joy unspeakable and full of glory."** (1 Peter 1:8) Give glory to Jesus! He alone is worthy!

*[From Wesley's sermons, Vol. II, p. 439. Dublin, July 2, 1789.]

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We interrupt Simon Schrock's series from Revelation with experiences at a dinner for cancer survivors.

-PLM



Why Johnny Can't Preach

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

“Why Johnny Can't Preach” brings up some interesting thoughts. To be sure, some Johnnys can preach very well. Church growth among us is real, so there are more preachers with which to compare. The five fellow ministers at our church do very well, and elsewhere there are many others who do commendably well. I would, however, like to offer a few ideas about why some Johnnys can't preach.

The main input to Bible teaching is the weekly (hopefully not *weakly*) Sunday School. The Bible is seldom used. The quarterlies have not only halved the learning experience, in some places it has been quartered (true to its name). The Sunday School quarterly itself is second-handed information, read by the teacher with his comments mostly restating what was already stated, which makes it third-handed for the class.

Family devotions may also be an exercise in what someone else wrote. Here again, what Dad adds may be

third-handed, if his commentary is on someone's else commentary. The family is not directly exposed to the Bible when Dad does this but, of course, the devotional booklet gives full Bible truth. These devotional meditations are written by writers who capsule the verse for the day in a miniature text without the context. This is certainly better than doing nothing like this for the family. It is background learning for Johnny.

Individualized school curriculum, where student learning is from books, going through them at their own pace, get the facts to Johnny, but the dynamics of “real person” teaching in a school group setting, is largely missing. Will Johnny know how to handle public address? Maybe Johnny will get hands-on experience somewhere later. Home schooling, in which students miss out on having a teacher in a group setting, is another possible idea for Johnny's problem.

Johnny has the facts sure enough and it is possible for him to grow up

to be a man in his own right, and at age 18, with school diploma in hand, feel unprepared for church participation. But he can go deer hunting with Dad for some real life stuff. Dad will describe in person various lessons on handling a bow, or how to load a muzzle loader, or what grain bullet to use in a rifle at 110 yards. The son will read the *State Game News* and *Sports Illustrated* and soon become an authority on big game hunting himself. Dad is an accomplished teacher in these important life experiences.

Who has been Johnny's role model as a person by which he can take the Bible in hand and teach it? Maybe some of today's typical Sunday School teachers. In my lifetime, I have visited over 100 Sunday Schools in a wide range of churches. Many of these are not like the Dad in family devotions who says, as Mom hands him *Beside the Still Waters*, "Where are we supposed to be reading today?" Such an approach may cause no ripples and the still waters are still still.

In school Johnny has exposure to a teacher, who daily explains the lesson material. Today's average Johnny too often has not had a powerful and energized male role model. After his ordination, he *must* now preach. His role models

have reached for the Sunday School quarterlies, the families' devotional guide and prepared school lessons with testing sheets. He may do the same unless he has come into direct contact with teachers who open the Bible and teach from it—persons who have personally applied themselves to a study of God's Word for themselves, for the Sunday-School class and for family devotions, and for sermons.

Here is one other thing: We are now almost halfway into the third generation since World War II. That first generation experienced some great revivals, which put holy fire in some pulpits. The next generation also did well, maintaining some of the fire. But our bent today in this third generation is to look for an easier way. We seem to need shortcuts to learning, as we are busier in earthly pursuits. What we have today is partly a result of yesterday's approach and partly today's program entitled: PUSH. Computer programs make sermon preparation quicker and easier. But is it better?

It also does not help that we have two basic approaches to Bible interpretation. Our publishing houses must refrain from Bible specifics about prophecy. Broad-based marketing requires a general and generic view of end-time events.

It is what Johnny has grown up with—a mixture of specifics and generalities, the literal and the allegorical in places other than prophecy. Over the years, Catholics have made much of allegorical interpretation. Protestants have also enjoyed the same as a way to handle some bothersome Bible doctrine. One of our own men said it takes special wisdom to know what parts of the Bible should be “spiritualized” and which to interpret literally. But sometimes personal preference is more readily available than special wisdom.

We have heard sermons with Old Testament passages being “spiritualized” into forced New Testament specifics. And some New Testament specifics being “spiritualized” into general current preferences that allows several options for current Christian living. “Thus saith the Lord” has become an “old-time religion” in some cases.

Meanwhile, Johnny grows up and is ordained. What and how shall he preach? His role models will come to mind. It may be assumed that is the best we can do, and that doing our best is surely good enough, is it not?

Bible schools have been a big help to many people. While three weeks or six weeks are a good start, this is hardly enough to offset third-handed

Bible discussions for the past 10 or 15 years.

Personal application and hard work in study can overcome past handicaps. It isn’t transmitted in the genes, like from father to son. It isn’t done either by environment from the very capable bishop to a newly-ordained minister. Native abilities are surely a good help. Spiritual giftedness is a valuable asset. Keen observation has been a means of improvement for many. However, role models are most easily copied as our natural guides. When we are pushed, we reach for our nearest props to keep us upright. This means that we frequently repeat that by which we were raised. Like one of our older ministers once said, “Sometimes we just need to go with how we were brought up.”

Preaching with unction has always been needed. Preaching with passion happens with the preacher’s view of the urgency concerning the sermon. Unction and passion could bring back real preaching, which is more—much more—than just “sharing.”

Most of our preaching, anymore, is called sharing. Maybe that is why Johnny can’t preach. Preaching is not expected anymore. We pray for the speaker’s “sharing.” He introduces what he wishes to share, and if the sermon is referred to at all, it is in

regard to what he shared. Sharing the sermon is a reduced form of old-fashioned preaching. So if Johnny can't preach, at least he can share.

At a recent annual ministers' meeting one of the speakers made a strong case for bringing us all back to the use of the word "preaching" instead of all this "sharing." Immediately after preaching (and he really did preach it!), the moderator, in wanting to give some appropriate commendation, acknowledged the preacher's "sharing." And as though that were not enough, he again thanked him for his sharing! Oh well, whatever.

The Old Testament prophets went forth with "Thus saith the Lord." They could not turn to chapter and verse, because there were none. The Bible was not yet formed. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. They spoke prophecies unheard of, things without precedent, concepts that peer group skeptics would say were "far out," but God brought them to pass.

After Pentecost, the Apostles of our Lord pointed to some of these prophecies and proclaimed their fulfillment. Besides, they also spoke prophetically of end-time events which also had no actual precedent, and are as yet, unfulfilled. The Bible affirms these events as being given by

the Holy Ghost, both Old and New Testament.

They preached repentance, Jesus' death and especially emphasized Jesus' resurrection. They preached about the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost and the soon return of Jesus Christ. Prior to Pentecost, the Apostles as men *shared* their thoughts. Afterward, they *preached* the Gospel with fervor and with zeal. May all of us Johnnys catch the vast difference between the "easy believism" of *sharing* and the Holy Ghost fire of *preaching*.

A preacher, lamenting the church's difficulty in getting people to come to church, once asked an actor of the stage how they get the crowds. The actor said, "We take fiction and make it appear as truth. You take truth and make it appear like fiction"

The Bottom Line is that there are preachers in our midst, old and young, who have one approach to biblical interpretation. They are in a seeming minority, but they do believe all of God's Word as it is stated. Their first response to any Scripture is personal faith as it reads and wherever it is stated. They do not find it necessary to make exceptions. Their appreciation for the "all things" of God's Word reaches all the way back to God Himself who originally spoke it.



A Plea To The Piled

Andrew Bontrager, Guatemala, C. A.

This writing is intended primarily for the American conservative Anabaptist churches of all constituencies. Luke 4:42, 43: **“And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God ...”**

Since the founding of the colony of Pennsylvania, we Anabaptists have settled and rooted in that part of the country. To date, the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia and Indiana have the greatest concentration of us. Most of us live in rural areas. Much of our outreach focus is on how to reach *my* small community, with the nation and world being an “after-prayer.” Many of us are part of the 2% of Americans that work on a farm. Many groups have very closed, location-specific names, reflecting a particular state or region, further limiting our spread. In my opinion, some church groups act like spiritual fiefs; in their attempts to stay pure, they over-isolate themselves from other Anabaptists and their ideas. I propose these conditions must change if our people hope to make a serious spiritual impact for Christ in our world.

Let Us Consider That:

Very nearly half of Mennonite churches are located in the above-mentioned four

States. Add those in Missouri and the number increases to fifty-four percent. Connecticut, Hawaii, Rhode Island and New Hampshire have zero.

There are three or fewer churches in nearly half of the States.

Twenty percent of all our churches (worldwide) listed are located in Pennsylvania.

Of the 100 largest cities in the USA, where one-fifth of Americans live, very few have a Mennonite church within half an hour. As of 2010, 80% of Americans live in urban areas.

In the United States, thirteen of twenty-four conservative Mennonite groups have location-specific names—Eastern, Atlantic, Northern, etc. Some groups are very small.

There is no conservative Mennonite presence in Mexico City, the largest city in North America.

Pennsylvania could fit into the state of Texas nearly six times and has half the population, yet it has twelve times the number of churches.

Of the thirty other countries we live in, sixteen have two or fewer Conservative Anabaptist congregations.

SUGGESTIONS

Every new outreach or splinter group would be located at least 30 miles from the nearest conservative Anabaptist church, no matter the stripe, with the exception of those churches *near* cities

of over 50,000 people.

Church size would be capped at twenty to twenty-five families.

Every group name that signifies a range of 300 miles or less would be changed. As more and more outreaches begin, they would eventually locate outside their group's stated location and could become embarrassments to them. For example, it would seem very incongruous to have a Holmes County Mennonite church (fictitious) in Idaho. Also, outsiders might feel that this church is off-limits because of the restrictive group name.

With care and prayer, we would move closer to cities. They are full of spiritual opportunities as well as dangers.

We would allow churches from different groups to be separate as they must and to blend when they can in mission and aid programs.

We would be looking not only toward faraway states but also toward faraway nations. Every church with fifteen or more families would send at least one (if there was one qualified) to a foreign work.

WHY SPREAD?

“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:15, 16). Our tendency to clump together and in our fear of the city disregard *all that are in the nation*.

Also, we should consider the quality of the light that we're shining. In many of our communities, *the simple life* and *good cooking* have become big business. I fear that to many, these things are a quaint reminder of early American life and little more. Is this the light Jesus meant when he said, A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid? In any of our churches, can someone point to a current member and say, “This brother was once a cultural tourist”?

It confuses outsiders when there are so many church choices so close together. I know of a case where a seeker family began coming to one of our more conservative churches; they attended for a time. Then, representatives from another church invited the family to their house for a meal. The family discovered that there's another Mennonite church that won't require quite so much of them, and they promptly switched attendance. The church with a wide, exclusive sphere of influence will give clarity to outsiders and to its own youth. Also, youth and seeker nabbing between churches will be more difficult. Then too, when there are fewer choices, church hopping is much harder and the requirement to work through problems is greater.

It's good for youth to be part of a smaller, more exposed church setting. The focus in a large community: “What part of the youth group should I belong to? Is something ‘cool’ with my clique?” The focus in a one-church community: “How can I respond better to questions

about my faith? How can we include everyone in this youth activity? How can we be more transparent with each other?" In a small youth group, everyone knows at least the name of each person.

Revelation 5:9, 7:9 and 14:6 show us that all ethnicities, languages and nations will hear the gospel. Often we hear that Christ could come at any moment. While it's true that any one of us could die from any number of causes momentarily, Jesus' church isn't complete yet. No, it's not time to sit on the mountaintop with arms raised, waiting for the trump. At least a billion people haven't heard the gospel yet. According to All Nations Bible Translation, only 8 percent of languages have the whole Bible; 1800 don't have even one verse in their mother tongue. Some countries have less than 5 percent identifying as Christian. Are we going to leave all this kingdom work to our Protestant friends? Their achievements in evangelism and outreach are impressive. Surely we're glad to learn good things from our friends. I acknowledge that their numbers dwarf ours and that our people were persecuted until they left Europe. However, I believe that in the twelve generations since coming to America, we should have a greater goal than just keeping the world out. **"Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God"** 2 Peter 3:12a). We've already seen that all nations and all languages will hear the Good News. If we are hastening unto the coming of the day of God, we'll be interested in shining His

light both near and far.

Spreading out should expand God's kingdom to other ethnic groups. Minorities in America are truly few in number in our churches. This might be partially explained by the fact that four of five whites live outside the cities and 70 percent of Latinos and Blacks live in the cities and vicinity. Here's a question to consider: When was the last time you spoke to someone of a different skin color? God helping us, as we spread from our large, mainly-white communities, we'll have more opportunities to interact with others who don't look like us.

RATIONALIZATIONS WHY NOT

- "My extended family is here. If I were to move far away, I just couldn't cope." My response: God will give you grace (Hebrews 4:15, 16). Be glad you didn't live 150 years ago when there were no telephone networks. Imagine leaving your home and family for a foreign country, where letters took months to travel from them to you. What we call hardship our forefathers would have called luxury.

- "My father and his father were all born and died here. I must continue the tradition and the family farm." My response: There's another tradition and work we should be more concerned about: being witnesses for Jesus outside Jerusalem. It was started by the apostles.

- "Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) and other of our organizations have most of their support from our large communities. If there were fewer of us

here, where would be their support?” My response: You’re right that moving large numbers out of the communities in a short time would require a great change in the structure of some of these organizations, but I expect the exodus to be slow. Realize that the recommendations in regard to spreading don’t deal with established churches but only newer ones. Slow and gradual change will enable the organizations to decide how to expand in the new framework. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if CAM had small facilities in New York, Houston and San Diego? At present, there aren’t enough churches near these places to support such an expansion.

- “If our groups cooperate together on the mission field, that cooperation might come home to our churches.” My response: Good! With strong leadership, knowledge of historical paths and youth that have solid concerns, I think cooperation will be beneficial to all. I plead, let’s not play the greatness game—which group is more spiritual—as the disciples did in Mark 9:34 and Luke 22:24.

- “The Great Commission was only for the apostles to fulfill. They fulfilled it well. If our churches focus on being distinct from the world where we are, God will somehow take care of the unreached in other countries.” My response: Such a view discounts passages like 2 Peter 3:9, John 11:32, 1 Timothy 2:4, Romans 10:14, 15 and Matthew 24:14. During the Dark Ages, centuries after the apostles’ time, the

world was either Catholic or pagan, with a few pockets of the persecuted faithful. When the Reformation and the Anabaptist movements began, the saints were witnesses of Christ beginning at Switzerland, and spread from there to the Netherlands and other countries.

- “The world outside our large communities is too dangerous to venture with a family. We risk assimilation into the world if we move outside.” My response: Why did our King give us this spiritual armor and weapons? According to 2 Corinthians 10:4 and Ephesians 6:11, they are given to help us fight Satan and his evil. We already have what we need to live in, but not of the world.. Can a soldier be efficient with his equipment if he rarely needs to use it? The Apostle Paul addresses assimilation most famously in Romans 12:1 and 2. (Please note that these verses contain more than seven words). Here, the *commands are* (a) not to conform to this world, (b) sacrifice yourselves and (c) be transformed. Why? The purpose is to “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Nonconformity is important but it’s not an end in itself, nor is it the primary focus of these verses. Other “not this, but rather that” constructions can be seen here: Ephesians 5:15, 17, 18 and Hebrews 13:9. Further regarding assimilation, I quote Robert Friedman in *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries*, published in 1949: “Assimilation to the surrounding world, if any, came not until the 19th century, when what was formerly a

brotherhood turned, little by little, into a denominational type of church.” More recent examples of this can be seen in the 1960’s, when leaving the conference presented a bigger problem than women’s cut hair. From these, is it possible we should re-examine our twenty-four subgroups, and our loyalty to them, rather than fearing outreach? Surely God knows better than we where His kingdom is needed most.


- “Farming is the best possible occupation. The family farm is a refuge from the world’s constant corrupting influence. Abandoning farming is a poor choice for our families.” My response: From the very beginning of the Anabaptist movement there have been tailors, surgeons (Hutterites), millers, weavers, storekeepers, millwrights, carpenters and other professionals of our persuasion. Today the list includes nurses, accountants, salesmen, electricians, plumbers, engineers, graphic artists, editors, computer systems administrators, mechanics, interior decorators and Web designers. God can bless any honest work (Ecclesiastes 5:10, Ephesians 4:28). The industrial and information technology revolutions really happened. We will soon be facing automation and artificial intelligence revolutions. There are unique challenges in each era, but God is not bound by change. Perhaps our best witness to the world is our families. Those that never adapt to the wider world will never live in it. Once again, it’s a matter of exposure.

CONCLUSIONS

I am very blessed to be part of a Christian movement that values God’s Word above man’s reasoning. Thankfully, our faith and practice have improved over the centuries, with brethren and churches seeking God’s face. At least thirty-one countries have a conservative Christian witness. In this article I have tried to show our need of further improvement in several key areas: 1) expansion beyond the traditional home states, 2) naming our groups more consistently with our Savior’s vision and 3) opening ourselves to other than agricultural work. I don’t advocate everyone becoming a city dweller nor everyone abandoning the target areas. The aim of this writing is not to antagonize but rather to stimulate discussion among our people about how best to extend our witness. Then may we sing, with a true heart, *Onward, Christian Soldiers*. I’m young and far from experienced. There are surely better recommendations than those I’ve suggested; we would all be grateful to hear them. May God bless you all.

... to other cities also: for therefore am I sent (Luke 4:44).

.....

{NOTES: My statistical sources include American Farm Bureau: Fast Facts About Agriculture; the 2014 Mennonite directory published by CLP; PBS.org: RACE - The Power of an Illusion: Background Readings and Reuters: More Americans move to cities in past decade — Census.} 

marriages

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

Gingerich-Miller

Bro. Matthew, son of David and the late Rosalind Gingerich, Guys Mills, PA, and Sis. Deborah, daughter of Ken and Linda Miller, Stuarts Draft, VA, on June 11, 2106, by Anthony Gingerich.

Mast-Hershberger

Bro. Sheldon, son of Timothy and Donnell Mast, Queen City, MO, and Sis. Katie, daughter of David and Luann Hershberger, Melvern, KS, at Grace Community Church for Lyndon A.M. Church, on April 9, 2016, by Rudy Overholt.

Miller-Hershberger

Bro. Jethro, son of Kevin and Christina Miller, Scranton, KS, and Sis. Sheri, daughter of David and Luann Hershberger, Melvern, KS, at Grace Community Church for Lyndon A.M. Church on June 3, 2016, by Rudy Overholt.

Miller-Trujillo

Bro. Jared, son of Lavern and Rachel Miller, Middlebury, IN, and Sis. Sara, daughter of Gabriel and Trisha Trujillo, Centerville, PA, at Plainview Gospel Fellowship, on June 11, 2016, by Lavern Miller, father of the groom.

Neuenschwander-Overholt

Bro. Chadwin, son of Stan and

Janice Neuenschwander, Leetonia, OH, and. Lindsay, daughter of Joseph and Ruth Overholt, Minerva, OH, at First Christian Church for Calvary Chapel, on June 11, 2016, by the groom's father, Stan Neuenschwander.

Schlabach-Miller

Bro. Joe, son of Oscar and Mary Sue Schlabach, Cochran, PA, and Sis. Naomi, daughter of Ervin and Ruth Miller, Titusville, PA, at Plainview Gospel Fellowship, Guys Mills, PA, on June 18, 2016, by Ervin Miller, father of the bride.


Stoltzfus-Hochstetler

Bro. Kendric Ernest, son of Ernest and Sharon Stoltzfus, Perry, NY, and Sis. Heather Dawn, daughter of Eldon and Lois Hochstetler, Aroda, VA, at Bible Holiness Church in Elkton, VA, for Gospel Light Mennonite Church, Gordonsville, VA, on June 18, 2016, by Ernest Stoltzfus, father of groom.

Stoltzfus-Overholt

Bro. John, son of Lester and Hannah Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, PA, and Sis. Lois, daughter of William and Lydia Overholt, Montezuma, GA, on Feb. 27, 2016, at Montezuma Mennonite Church, Montezuma, GA, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Wengerd-Peachey

Bro. Christopher, son of Daniel and Dorothy Wengerd, Greensburg, KY, and Sis. Sharla, daughter of Paul and Geneva Peachey, Greensburg, KY, at Campbellsville Baptist Church for Summersville Mennonite Church, on May 27, 2016, by James Hershberger. 

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Jaron and Vivian (Beachy), Laurelville, OH, second child and daughter, Gwen Elizabeth, June 2, 2016.

Bontrager, Lyle and Shirley (Ropp), Syracuse, IN, third child and daughter, Danielle Layne, June 15, 2016.

Brenneman, Joseph and Michelle (Yoder), Aroda, VA, third child, second daughter, Kierra Joy, May 10, 2016.

Coblentz, Firmen and Marlena (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, ninth child, fifth son, Jordan David, June 15, 2016.

Fisher, Nathan and Ruthy (Fisher), E. Waterford, PA, fifth child, third daughter, Anneken Jewel, June 22, 2016.

Graber, Justin and Carolyn (Villalobos), Melvern, KS, fourth child, second daughter, Michaela Nichole, May 3, 2016.

Hege, Joshua and Candace (Yoder), Stanley, VA, first child and daughter, Kierra Louise, June 9, 2016.

Hershberger, Titus and Evie (Swarey), Stuarts Draft, VA, third child and son, Isaiah Luke, June 16, 2016.

Hostetler, Eugene and Norma (Beiler), Auburn, KY, second child, first son, Derek Elijah, June 3, 2016.

Jantzi, Michael Bruce and Twila Carol (Yoder), Kiev, Ukraine, fifth child, third son, Ian Benjamin, May 18, 2016.

Knepp, Kevin and Sharon (Yoder), Oskaloosa, KS, third child, second daughter, Alayna Grace, June 14, 2016.

Knox, Codi and Michelle (Miller), Cable, OH, third child, second son, Kadesh Ransom, Feb. 9, 2016.

Miller, Caleb and Juanita (Yoder), Wooster, OH, second child and daughter, Bethany Grace, June 1, 2016.

Miller, Karlin and Rosemary (Zook), Free Union, VA, fifth child, third daughter, Eliana Faith, June 12, 2016.

Miller, Nathaniel and Rhoda (Troyer), Sugarcreek, OH, sixth child, fourth daughter, Ashley Clara, June 24, 2016.

Overholt, Patrick and Brittany (Burkholder), Warsaw, IN, second child, first son, Demetri Philip, June 15, 2016.

Schrock, Lyndon and Gina (Mast), Montezuma, GA, second child, first daughter, Candace Brielle, May 13, 2016.

Stoltzfoos, Steve and Mary Sue (Stoltzfus), Blain, PA, fourth child, second son, Lucian Jay, April 19, 2016.


Troyer, Stanley and Melissa (Miller), Advance, MO, fourth child, second daughter, Sierra Elizabeth, June 18, 2016.

Weaver, Jonas and Bernice (Yoder), Oskaloosa, KS, second child, first daughter, Brooklyn Danae, June 2, 2016.

Weirich, Caleb and Sheryl (Hochstetler), Aroda, VA, fourth child,

first son, Alex Javon, June 6, 2016.

Yoder, Mark and Ellen (Helmuth), Vanleer, TN, second child and son (first son deceased), Jordan Eli, Oct. 8, 2014. Received by adoption, May 20, 2016.

Yoder, Terry and Rachel (Wagler), Lexington, IN, third child, second son, Kyler Evan, June 15, 2016. 

o b i t u a r i e s

Burkholder, Lillian “Lil” (Zook), 60, of Rochester, IN, died from complications of heart surgery March 31, 2016, at Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH. She was born March 3, 1956, to the late Amos and Linda (Yoder) Zook.

She was a member of Maple Lawn Church, Nappanee, IN. Lil’s motto was “Every day is a gift.”

On Feb. 25, 1978, she was married to Gary Burkholder, who survives. Also surviving are four children: Janita Burkholder, Nappanee; Wade (Charlotte) Burkholder, Hagerstown, MD; Lynda (Jason) Wolfe, Lewsiburg, PA; and Adrian (Rachel) Burkholder, Mentone, IN, seven grandchildren, four sisters and five brothers.

She was preceded in death by a grandson, a sister, and two brothers.

The funeral was held at Nappanee Missionary Church on April 5, with Nate Zook, Thomas Mast, Paul Yoder,

and Delbert Schlabach serving. Burial was in the Maple Lawn Cemetery.

King, Paul M., 45, of Lexington, IN, died June 4, 2016, in a farm accident at his home. He was born Sept. 7, 1970, in Montezuma, GA, son of Glenn and Sara Mae (Hostetler) King. He was a dairy farmer and also owner and operator on Golden Rule Lawn Service.

Paul was a faithful member of Living Waters Mennonite Church in Lexington, where he served on the church school board.

On March 24, 1995, he was married to Christina Mast, and they spent 21 joyful years serving the Lord together. Surviving are his wife, Christina, and five sons, all of Lexington, IN: Caleb Jon, Andrew Lee, Michael Stephen, Timothy Lane, and Luke Nathaniel. Other survivors include his father, Glenn

King, Lexington, IN; four brothers, Eugene (Marie) King, Montezuma, GA; Kenneth (Edith) King, Paris, TN; Dave (Faith) King, Dickson, TN; Leon (Loretta) King, Lexington, IN; four sisters: Susan (Noah) Yoder, Montezuma, GA; Rosemary (Ivan) Yoder, Lexington, IN; Elaine (Thomas) Weaver, Summersville, KY; Marge (Mark) Mast, Dickson, TN, a sister-in-law, Edna King, Hartsville, OH, several aunts and uncles and a host of cousins and nephews and nieces.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Sara Mae King; a brother, Steve King and three nieces, Rhonda and Londa King, and Margaret Yoder.

The funeral was held on June 8, at Living Waters Mennonite Church with Milt Kinsinger, Lonnie Yoder, and Floyd Lengacher serving. David Troyer conducted the committal at Living Waters Mennonite Cemetery.

Lapp, Benjamin F., Jr, 93, of Christiana, PA, died of natural causes on May 23, 2016, at the home of his son, Glenn at Penn Yan, NY. He was born in Lancaster, PA, on Oct. 1, 1922, son of the late Benjamin and Malinda (Glick) Lapp.

Ben was a member of Mine Road A.M. Church. He and his wife owned and operated Lapp's Farm Market in Christiana for many years His positive testimony for Christ had great impact.

On Oct. 23, 1943, he was married

to Mary E. Yoder. She died Jan. 18, 2015. Survivors include children: Velma, wife of Laverne Bontrager, Middlebury, IN; Gloria, wife of Thomas Miller, Christiana, PA; Carol, wife of Steve Stoltzfus, Prattville, AL, Glenn, husband of Naomi Stoltzfus, Penn Yan, NY, and daughter-in-law, Barbara Esh Lapp Yoder, wife of Val Yoder of Thailand (and the late Sanford Lapp), 20 grandchildren, and 54 great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were three children: John Marlin, Anna Faye, and Sanford Lapp, three great grandchildren and 11 siblings.

An evening viewing was held on May 27 at the Mine Road church. The funeral was held on May 28 at Weavertown Church, with Alvin Stoltzfus, Lester Glick, John Glick, and Jason Smoker serving. Interment was in the Weavertown Church cemetery.

Miller, Judith ("Judy"), 94, of Hutchinson, Kansas died at Mennonite Friendship Communities on June 3, 2016. She was born Feb. 4, 1922, at Bremen, Indiana, daughter of the late Levi S. and Sarah (Yoder) Schrock.

She was a member of Center A.M. Church, Hutchinson. She enjoyed cooking, gardening, flowers, and sewing. Her testimony was vibrant and genuine. Her life was full of love and good works, shown especially by her care for their handicapped son.

On Nov. 11, 1948, she was married

to Perry L. Miller. He survives. Also surviving are four sons: Gary Paul (Rosanna Beachy) Miller, Linford James Miller, and Allen Jason Miller, all of Hutchinson; Wilbur Jay (Shirley Martin) Miller, Columbus, OH; brothers Olen and Leo, Kalona, Iowa; and sisters: Sylvia Ropp and Alma (Daniel) Nisly, Kalona, Iowa; nine grandchildren, and 23 great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were brothers: Perry, Elmer, and Edwin Schrock; and a sister, Mary (Schrock) Miller.


The funeral was held on June 8, with David Yoder, Julian Nisly and Dwight Miller serving. LaVerne Miller conducted the committal at West Center Cemetery.

Yoder, Fannie Carol (Yoder), 58, of Montezuma, GA, died April 8, 2016. She was born Oct. 5, 1957, daughter of the late Melvin and Katie (Byler) Yoder.

Katie was a faithful member of Montezuma Mennonite Church.

On Oct. 6, 1977, she was married to Paul E. Yoder. He survives. Also surviving are six children, all with Montezuma address: Brady (Luann) Yoder; Greg (Hannah) Yoder; Shawn Yoder; Gerald (Faith) Yoder; Lynford Yoder; and Veronica Yoder; Two sisters: Verna (Freeman) Wingard; Linda (Larry) Kauffman, both Montezuma; two brothers: Harley (Lisa) Yoder, Montezuma; Olen (Lena) Yoder, Minerva, OH; sisters-in-law: Emma (the late Allen) Yoder, Montezuma; and 10 grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were brothers: Raymond, Melvin Lloyd, Jr., and Allen; and one grandson, Durrel Yoder.

The funeral was held on April 11, 2016, at Montezuma Mennonite Church. Serving were Faron Wingard, Donny Swartzentruber, and Irvin Yoder. Burial was in the church cemetery. 

observations

The *Anabaptist Voice* is a quarterly periodical. The first issue is dated April, May, and June, 2016. The content of this first issue reflects an emphasis of values that could be labeled Conservative Anabaptist. Dean Taylor, whose background includes

U.S. military service, is quoted: "I feel it is time to get back to the genuine roots of Anabaptism. He further cites a quote from Conrad Grebel, 1525: "I believe the Word of God without difficult interpretation...The words of Jesus were meant to be put into practice."

The Anabaptist Voice says: “Our target audience includes all people who strive to follow and obey King Jesus, whether they use the name Anabaptist or not.” Content is an interesting mix of doctrine and practice. A section entitled, “the Practical Side” is to be a regular feature. A family who operates a salsa and jam manufacturing business is regularly inspected by a state inspector. When he found a small number of fruit flies, this became a major concern, potentially causing big product waste and production loss. The Christian proprietor wants to do what is right. What are his options? The article follows with five questions. It seems to me that this sort of practicality does have useful readership potential.

•••••

Leonard Pitts and Cal Thomas are both columnists whose writings regularly appear in our local paper, *The Hutchinson News*. Pitts is an able writer with extensive formal training. His writing often refers to injustices people experience because of their skin color.

Cal Thomas recently addressed the issue from a different perspective. He would like to hear more stories about disadvantaged people who have done well. He feels that such stories could encourage others to make good choices rather than cultivating a “victim” mentality.

He offers a very simple formula that, if followed, would have tremendous economic and social benefits to people of every ethnicity: “There is no secret to becoming successful or at least self-sufficient. Stay in school; avoid drugs and crime. Get married before you have children and work to stay married.”

•••••

The following is excerpted from *Messenger of Truth*, May, 25, 2016. “The School Called Marriage” Marriage is the only school where you get the certificate before you start. It is a school from which you never graduate. Lifetime perfect attendance is required. Both attendees are students. God is the principal. Remember that you and your mate are both students, not graduates. Communicate regularly with your principal. Never lose sight of the manifold blessings to you and many others for a successful journey in the school of marriage.” This message applies to all people around the world.

•••••

Nathan Reed is superintendent of the Fairfield district of western Reno County, KS, schools. His interest in young people is not merely academic. He has made written appeals to parents to make them aware of the danger to their children to have unsupervised access to the internet and cell phones. It would be a mistake to consider this merely an Anabaptist

concern. It is rather, a concern for the safety and well-being of young people that we can ill afford to ignore. Could we all agree that the danger of under-supervision in this area is very real? Exposure to wrong and things can sow seeds of impurity and dwarf wholesome development.

It seems apparent to me that a Christian family who chooses not to have the internet in the home is freeing the children to pursue interests that are friendly to the development of “favor with God and man.”

Since I am mostly out of touch with the electronic world, I have shared the above lines with several others for their credible review. I was told that content is only part of what is objectionable in electronic media. Habitual exposure reprograms thought processes so that the recipient may find it difficult to discern what is real and what is merely virtual. The electronic world is sometimes out of touch with the real world.

As discussion with different individuals continues it seems that additional clarification is in order. Electronic capability is morally and ethically neutral. Email is a harmless convenience. We would surely agree that good decision making should not be impaired by a foreign addictive influence. We owe it to ourselves and our families to know what is harmful and to guard our selves accordingly. I have

been in conversation with the other writer of this column, RJM, inviting him to provide further comments on this issue.

-DLM



I’ve been encouraged to make some additional comments related to the dangers of media exposure. One common idea that we do well to examine is: “the medium is neutral, but the content is what makes something good or bad.” There is a helpful reminder here that we must never overlook, regarding the importance of good content and the need to avoid bad content. However, I find that statement unsatisfactory in explaining the contradiction of “Christian Rock Music.” I submit that it has been misleading to our people when we consider this statement to apply to electronic media.

Shane Hipps says, “In truth the content of a given form of media actually distracts us from detecting the effects of its forms. When we watch TV...we sit hypnotized by the TV show—the content—which has gripped our attention. We are oblivious to the ways the medium, regardless of its content, reduces our capacity for abstract thought, makes us prefer intuition and experience over logic and reasoning, and revives tribal experiences in an individualistic culture.” Note that the objection in this statement has nothing to do with

content.

One of the key points of Hippi's book, *The Hidden Power of the Electronic Culture*, is simply, "The medium is the message" and he devotes a significant portion of his book to explaining this. I'd like to modify his position a bit and would rather say, "The medium is an integral component of the message."

Our brains are constantly being reshaped and remolded by everything in our environment, be it crossword puzzles, group interaction, reading, meditation, motion pictures, recordings both digital or otherwise, phones, needlework, hobbies, the Holy Spirit and everything else we interact with, voluntarily or otherwise. The consideration is not *if* we are being affected, but *how* we are being affected. For example, due to the enormous availability of information at our literal fingertips, people's mental retention of information is reduced. People with internet access don't need to remember things like directions and phone numbers and Scripture references and a host of other things, since the information is instantly accessible at all times. We don't need the ability to read a map if we have GPS. Generally speaking, today's society has become one with a short attention span and poor information retention.

When we understand that we really can't divorce the medium and the

message, and that all media affects us, I believe it shifts the focus and thus invites us to ask better questions. The question won't be, "How can I keep myself from being affected by this?" Rather, it will be, "What kind of person does God want me to become?" We can then make media choices that align with God's purposes. For some, that will mean there are many forms of media we will need to avoid altogether, while others will seek Spirit-controlled measures, including church standards and inner disciplines that both limit unnecessary and negative media exposure and that maximize beneficial media exposure. The uncomfortable truth is that faithfully answering this question can be quite painful, particularly for those whose senses have been dulled by the glitter of this age.

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About a year ago Dustin and Sierra Yoder from Sugarcreek, Ohio, were shocked to learn that the baby they were expecting had Encephalocele, a rare birth defect in which the infant's neural tube doesn't close during pregnancy. In this case, a growth protruded outside the top of the child's skull that included brain tissue. The prognosis was very grim, predicting brain damage, loss of strength, and vision and likely death. They were encouraged to do the merciful thing and choose abortion for the good of all. It proved to be a difficult decision,

but their faith led them to choose to give this child the gift of life.

From Bentley's birth in October, he has shown remarkable vigor and progress. In May of this year, he underwent radical and delicate surgery where the growth on his head was basically amputated and his skull reshaped a bit to accommodate the additional brain tissue that was relocated there from the external growth and to provide for ongoing brain growth and development. He came through the surgery spectacularly and within a few days had returned to his normal self. The doctors are quite hopeful that further brain development and growth will be normal.

Many potential complications remain, but this young child has far, far surpassed medical expectations for his life. The parents made a difficult but God-honoring decision. If the story would have been different, they still made the right choice not to abort.

•••••

Amy Young wrote an essay entitled, "Ten Reasons a Missionary Needs an Identity Rooted in Christ." Some items in this list apply to more than missionaries.

1. Your worth is not in what you do nor in what you're paid.
2. The number of transitions missionaries tend to experience can lead you to unfairly link identity to

a city, an organization, or people groups.

3. Many of the fields and assignments for missionaries have instability built into them.

4. No matter how great your family is, your hometown is, or your internet connection is, being a missionary influences your sense of belonging.

5. It is more discussed than it had been, but because you may be support-based, there is pressure to perform.

6. The results of your work are not always seen.

7. Someone will always have better behaved children, a "more spiritual walk," superior language skills, or a more harrowing medical story.

8. You may be allowed to do things on the field that you are not allowed to do in your passport country (like preach or serve communion) or vice versa.

9. You know Sabbath and other spiritual disciplines are important. (My note here: When our identity is rooted in Christ, these things flow out of that identity, rather than from our performance.)

10. It shows you really believe Jesus when He talked about coming to Him like a child, coming to set the captives free, the importance of being a servant, and the command to not be anxious about anything in our lives.

-RJM 

Cancer Survivor's Dinner

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

For these last several years Polly and I have received very welcome special invitations in the mail. *“Novant Health Cancer Center with the Virginia Cancer Specialist invites you and a guest to attend the annual cancer survivor’s dinner and social. Dinner and entertainment will be provided.”* We have now attended three of these enjoyable events. The invitation is sent to those who are under a doctor’s care and have survived.

Upon arrival we are given a hearty welcome with the assurance of being glad to see us. The welcome included a gift. We are ushered to a neatly arranged table for the evening where we are served with proper dinner etiquette. The other guests around our table are cancer patients accompanied by their companion or special guest. We discuss the type of cancer we are dealing with, the treatment we are receiving, and who our doctor is. The table talk includes family, work and other personal interests. It is a good experience getting acquainted with others who are dealing with similar issues of life and health.

We are served drinks, and a basket of delicious dinner rolls is already available. Then it’s the plate of specially prepared salad. While enjoying getting this kind of special service we chatted with Phil and Dottie. She is the cancer patient and her husband’s hearing ability is similar to mine—a challenge to hear clearly what is going on. While we missed a lot of the “punch line” comments, he joined the applause as if he’d heard the comment. My excuse for not participating in the boisterous clapping is because of the pain to my neuropathic hands. These dinners are a time of sharing our pain with each other.

Then came the main course, grilled chicken breasts with a flavorful sauce, small chunked potatoes of different colors, including sweet potatoes and green beans. Then, finally came, a delicious dessert with more coffee for those who want it. While enjoying this delightful dinner we were treated with a speech by my doctor, Jey Maren, M.D., and other physicians. Having Dr. Aggrasiesh, Certified Radiation Oncologist come by the table and speak has a

special touch of encouragement to it. Then there are Ed and Andi who administered over forty rounds of radiation treatment. We appreciate these dinners and wonder if we will see fellow patients, Dick, or Frank, or others again this year? Is their cancer in remission?

A cancer survivor's dinner! Will I get to see one more next year? Then I think of another dinner. I call this one the "Sinner's Survival Dinner." In a parable Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. The king "sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage."¹

I get the impression from this parable that there is a big celebration in store for "sin survivors." They are the ones who realized that the human race has been diagnosed with the cancer of sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"² The "sin survivors" are the persons who recognized that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." They

are the ones who repented and received God's remedy for sin. It is as someone has stated, "Life is short, death is sure, sin the cause, Christ the cure." Sin survivors have received the cure. Their sins have gone into complete remission through faith in Jesus Christ. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."³

The Apostle John revealed what he heard while banished on the Isle of Patmos. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."⁴

This "dinner" is for those who have already received the gift of God's

grace and salvation. It is for those who have been washed perfectly clean through the atoning blood of Christ, for those adorned with immaculate robes of righteousness and holiness. The highlight will be when the presence of the Doctor of all doctors will move the “sin survivors” to emphatically proclaim, “Alleluia.” Let us rejoice and be glad and give honor to him.

Those at this supper will rejoice and be glad for the awesome privilege of being healed for eternity. There is no question or wondering if you will still be alive for another “survivor’s dinner.” The apostle John made this clear: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”⁵ What rejoicing it will be to be with all the saints who directed you to Doctor Jesus, and all the spiritual aides that cared for you in your recovering journey. What a reunion of joy and rejoicing with all the nurses and technicians who administered spiritual chemo and radiation to help you die to sin and the deceitful snares of this world.

In my journey with cancer there have been a great number of people

who contributed to administering medical aid. Doctors carefully observed the diagnosis from the lab tests and ordered medication. Nurses stuck me with needles to apply the medication. Trained technicians carefully and faithfully applied radiation.

We enjoy attending the cancer survivor’s dinner. We do so with the keen realization that this might be the last one for us. However, “... though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”⁶ As we walk one day at a time in our journey toward the great sin survivor’s dinner, the marriage supper of the Lamb, we walk with the assurance of God’s Word that the forgiven, cleansed, sanctified children of God will gather in the eternal presence of Doctor Jesus. He has provided the cure for the terminal disease of sin.

In the meantime, I want my life to reflect the joyful forgiveness and healing from Jesus.

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(Endnotes)

- 1 Matthew 22:1-4
- 2 Romans 3:23
- 3 1 Corinthians 6:11
- 4 Revelation 19:6-9
- 5 Revelation 21:4
- 6 2 Corinthians 4:16



And You Fathers

Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX

[I was moved by the Reader Response in Sept., 2015, from a sister who was appealing for more teaching on the importance of father-child relationships. As men we need to honestly deal with problems of personal, spiritual, and emotional aspects of resentment and bitterness toward fathers for their speech and behavior that was harsh. If we do not, we will project these attitudes and behaviors onto our posterity. Let us never forget that children are emotionally sensitive in reading their parents. I sincerely hope this writing in honor of Father's Day, will be used of God to promote real, man-of-God repentance. A. M.]

He drops to his knees beside the bed again,
As he has habitually done every night to pray.
Tonight though his heart is heavy with pain,
thinking of his son who is on the Broad Way.

In anguish of soul he intercedes for his boy,
That God would save him before it is too late.
He fears his rebellious son will soon destroy
himself, and while in sin, seal his eternal fate.

In desperation, he makes a deal with his Father,
“If you save my son to accept the Way of Truth,
then I will freely offer him back to You forever,
and if You will, You can take him in his youth!”

Moreover, as he drenches his pillow with tears,
he does an in-depth, soul-searching evaluation.
“What blame do I bear as a father through the years,
that prompted him to take an errant life-direction?”


The Holy Spirit forthrightly speaks to his heart,
reminding him of the grudge toward his father.
The thought of reliving the abuse tears him apart,
for he hoped that with time the hurt would be over.

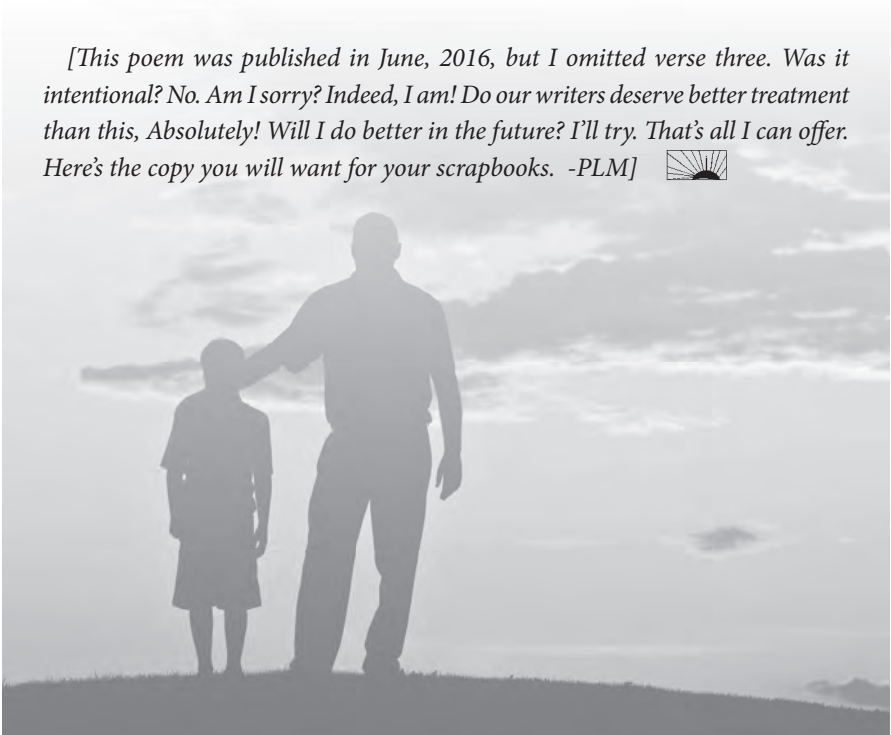
In youth, he committed himself to be a better man,
promising not to hurt his children as his father had.
Surely, with some sheer determination a person can
overcome generational failure by being a good dad!

However, since attitudes cannot remain hidden,
because they permeate through one's humanity,
in one way or another they always affect children,
thus, they become an integral part of one's posterity.

Now, he begins to weep mournful tears again,
as he recognizes his own unforgiving attitude.
His heart and soul is wracked with a deep pain,
and he purposes to repent and do as he should.

He assures his Lord, in the morning he will call
his father and confess for harboring bitterness.
After that, he must make his way down the hall
to his son's room, and ask him for forgiveness!

[This poem was published in June, 2016, but I omitted verse three. Was it intentional? No. Am I sorry? Indeed, I am! Do our writers deserve better treatment than this, Absolutely! Will I do better in the future? I'll try. That's all I can offer. Here's the copy you will want for your scrapbooks. -PLM] 



Reunion de Pastores Centroamericanos

by Floyd Stoltzfus

The Central American Ministers Reunion is an annual event (usually three days in the last full week of February) that we dearly treasure. Marilyn and I traveled by bus (180 miles) from Belize City to Punta Gorda. The driver seemed confident in wheeling the long rig filled with passengers through the mountainous regions of the Hummingbird Highway. As we took the curves I nearly slid off the seat unto the aisle. Speeding the other direction swayed me closer to my lovely wife. This added to a beautiful element of romance especially with the sight of exotic, lacy palm trees gracefully situated among various types of trees and bushes which grow so vigorously in the lush, tropical jungles.

The next morning a group of more than twenty people from several missions in Belize gathered at the immigration office by the seaside in Punta Gorda. There we boarded two boats and travelled across the

Caribbean Sea to Porta Barrios, Guatemala. From there we took taxi vans all the way to San Pedro Sula, the capital of Honduras. Of course, we had to check in at the Guatemala/Honduras border. In San Pedro Sula we again took up our luggage and boarded a big bus and traveled uphill and around curves to the city of Siguatepeque (also in Honduras) which is approximately 4000 feet above sea level.

At the bus depot in Siguatepeque we were welcomed by one of the hosting brothers to take us in a pickup to the meeting site of this minister's fellowship. After a delicious supper, we were taken to our cozy motels. This was a real treat after a big day of wearisome travels and waiting in line at an immigration office, border crossings, and bus depots.

The opening sessions each morning (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) were times of awe and wonder! We worshiped. The topics were centered on Jesus, the Creator; Jesus, the

Savior; and Jesus, the Conquering King, respectively.

Ernest Strubhar from Perkins, Oklahoma, was the main guest speaker. The first morning he spoke on “The Influence of Augustine on the Church”; the second morning on “The Influence of Luther on the Church”; and the third morning on “The Influence of Anabaptism.” These topics were well-documented and scripturally balanced. We were encouraged to emulate the life of Jesus and follow His teachings closely under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit. After each message ample time was given for questions and dialogue.

The time slot arranged for small group sharing and prayer was deeply appreciated. Also in the afternoon there was a session when the brothers and sisters were separated. We were blessed with such practical topics as “Finding Balance Between Church, Family, and Work” and “Training our Families in Moral Values.”

In the evening people congregated from the three mission churches of the hosting community. The large pavilion was more adequate to hold all the people. Most of the topics were spoken in Spanish and interpreted into English in a separate area of the same pavilion. Last year (2015) the Central American Ministers Reunion

was held at Spanish Lookout, Belize. During the course of those meetings four language groups could receive the same message in Spanish, English, Kekchi (Indian), or the deaf.

Various people groups and nationalities were represented: Spanish, Mestizo, Indian, Creole, and German/American, Canadian, and Mexican. Approximately 300 people (including many children) were present on a peak day.

It is a heavenly blessing how a minister’s fellowship can be conducted with a variety of church mission groups. A peaceful, common feature is the women wearing some type of hanging veils, without a structural written statement as such, except on a local level. This practice among many nationals and missionaries is a deep inner conviction based on the principle of headship (I Cor. 11:1-16). Some groups years ago adopted the sizable black veil, but largely, most wear the opaque.

On the registration roster there were names from the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference (they hosted the meetings; Honduras); Mennonite Air Missions (Guatemala); Amish Mennonite Aid (Belize and El Salvador); Kleine Gemeinde (Spanish Lookout, Belize); Iglesia Menonita (Churches representing Publicadora

La Merced in Costa Rica); Waslala Christian Brotherhood (Nicaragua); Mennonite Christian Fellowship (Honduras); Caribbean Light and Truth Mission (Belize); Western Conservative Mennonite Fellowship (Belize); Mennonite Witness to the Americas (Belize); Keystone Mennonite Fellowship (Nicaragua); South Atlantic Mennonite Conference (Puerto Rico); and Midwest Mennonite Fellowship (U.S. and Canada). One young family came from the United States in a motor home. They were travelling through Central America crossing the Panama Canal into Colombia and eventually settling in Chile.

I may have missed a few mission organizations. A listing of various church conferences, fellowship, and groups is nice for identity and organizational procedures. This is also very important during the tax season in reporting to our government. But in a missionary reunion of this nature a person discovers there are Biblical issues that are eternally settled in Heaven and these are matters what we should strive for. Probably in Heaven the above church and mission titles will melt away in the light of our glorious King Jesus Christ. We will give glory to Him who is worthy of all praise, honor, and majesty!



helpers at home

Who Am I?

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Have you ever asked the question, “Who am I?” Women today carry many different titles and descriptions. However, each of us is first and foremost a woman created in God’s design with a plan and purpose. Last month I wrote on the subject of God’s plan for woman in creation and His

purpose in placing woman under submission to man. And God said it is good.

Today, I want to focus on the idea of who I really am personally in God’s plan for me. We are all different: our backgrounds, circumstances, situations will vary. No two people are exactly alike. Can you imagine? God

has a blueprint especially for you. Our personalities, temperaments, character traits will vary. We are each born with special qualities, talents, and personalities that make us uniquely us. We have our own individual story that helps to shape us into the person we are today. However, the way we *respond* to those circumstances in our life has much to do with the person we become. I have seen women who have experienced terrible tragedy in their lives and have become beautiful, godly women. We have probably all seen the opposite—women who have *chosen* to become bitter. Today they are unhappy and miserable.

Who am I? I am a woman, a wife, a mother, mother-in-law, a grandmother and even a great grandmother. There are many other words I could add, such as daughter, friend, neighbor. I enjoy these varied titles. Your list will probably be different. My titles bring much happiness and joy to my life, and at times, also pain and disappointment. For all that, this is not who I really am. The real me is hidden where no one but God and I (and sometimes not even I) can really know.

I believe many Christian women struggle with their identity. All our lives we have tried our best to get the approval of others. As children


we wanted to please our parents, which is good. However, as we got older, we often sought the approval of our peers. We needed to look, act, and think according to what was the “in” thing at the time. Sad to say, this attitude does not end in childhood or youth, but many times it still controls or dominates a woman’s life and thinking, even in her older years.

I do not want to imply that we can just be our individual person, without regard to other people’s needs and feelings. Rather, it will be just the opposite. We can use the talents, the gifts, and the opportunities that God gives us for His glory. As we do this, we will not worry and fret about what someone else may think, or how it may appear. We can live without fear of man. However, we will seek God’s approval. With acceptance of ourselves and who we really are, we have freedom to reach out and bless others without rejection and fear. We are doing and being according to *what* and *who* God plans for us to be.

Personally, I regret that I struggled so much in this area in my younger years. For instance, in the area of writing. I wanted to write but I was afraid of what people would think. Perhaps someone would feel I did not live up to what I wrote or they might think I am proud. I realize now that from childhood, I had a bent toward

expressing my thoughts on paper, yet for a time I hid that inclination because of fear. Maybe today, I am old enough to realize that it really does not matter so much what others think. It does matter what God thinks and who He wants me to be.

My desire is to encourage you to be the woman God wants and planned for you to be. Use that hidden talent for His glory. Speak those words of encouragement

someone needs to hear. Write the blog God is laying on your heart. Make those cookies for your neighbor or better yet, teach your neighbor how to bake or sew. Paint the picture that reflects your love for God's creation. Be a friend to the unlovely. Visit the homeless shelter. Volunteer in a worthwhile place. Develop the talent you know God has given to you. Be the YOU! God planned you to be. 

junior messages

The Lord God Made Them All

Micah Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya

African Elephants

African elephants are the largest land animals in the world. They are absolutely huge beasts. When you are inside a vehicle you get the feeling of being very small and insignificant when one is right beside you.

African elephants are found in almost every African country south of the Sahara Desert, which stretches across northern Africa. These majestic beasts have also been taken to many other countries to be kept in zoos for the enjoyment of people.

At birth an African elephant can

weigh as much as 121kg (266 lbs), more than 25 times the size of a human baby! Imagine a baby, weighing as much as your father! An African male elephant may tip the scales at 6,350kg (14,000 lbs) and stand over 13 feet high. To put this in perspective, one elephant may weigh as much as 10 Honda Civics put together and stand as tall as three of those Honda Civics stacked on top of each other! Truly this is a huge beast that God made for us to enjoy.

In early to mid-1900s these giant creatures were hunted almost to extinction. European hunters seemed

to care about nothing more than their long, ivory tusks. In most cases the carcasses were left to rot or be eaten by predators and scavengers such as lions, cheetahs, and jackals. In 1940, the number of elephants in Africa was nearing the 5 million mark. Today, after years of bounty hunting and illegal poaching, their numbers have dropped to roughly 10% (500,000) of what it was 70 years ago.

Uganda, for example, has 5,000 elephants in its national parks. This is a huge number considering that only 30 years ago in the 80's, the population was roughly 10% of that number with only about 500 elephants remaining. Now, with better funded park rangers who are equipped with high tech equipment such as helicopters, high-powered machine guns, and better vehicles to patrol, the park rangers are able to control the park better. African game parks can protect their large animals if they are given the proper funding and assets to keep them safe.

In Africa, elephants are a major attraction that tourists from all over the world come to see. Experienced tour guides will drive right up to these majestic beasts so that you can get a close look. Having experienced this myself, I can see why people love to watch them.

In game parks elephants typically ignore vehicles full of jabbering, gawking foreigners. They plod along calmly reaching down with their trunks to grab a chunk of grass, shake it to remove the dirt, and chomp it down.

African elephants eat up to 300kg (660lbs.) of forage per day. This need for food keeps them on the move to find lush green grass to satisfy their capacious stomachs. They also drink up to 50 gallons of water each day. This is roughly the amount of water your bathtub holds when it is full! Imagine guzzling that much water each day. Elephants are very inefficient in the amount of food they digest versus how much they excrete. On average, the African elephant releases 55% of its total intake of food, meaning if they eat 300kg of feed per day, they only digest and utilize 135kg (297lbs) of their food each day. That makes quite a pile of manure! If you have ever been to the vast savannas of Africa, you can testify to this by all the piles you see as you drive!

Elephants are also part of the Big Five, which includes lions, rhinos, leopards, water buffaloes, and elephants. Game parks which have the Big Five tend to be popular. Elephants are privileged members of this elite group!

Asian Elephants

Asian elephants live mostly in Nepal, India, and Southeast Asia. These elephants are smaller than their African cousins. Asian elephants are typically two to three meters tall (6.6 to 9.8 ft.) and weigh 2,000 to 3,000kgs (4,400 to 11,000 lbs) when full grown.

An elephant's gestation period is just under 22 months. This is the longest gestational period of any mammal. Babies weigh 91kg (200lbs) at birth.

In the 20th century, Asian elephants were used extensively in the bush to transport goods. These elephants, unlike African elephants, can be domesticated. *Uzis* (elephant trainers) will catch a wild elephant in a trap. After keeping it there for weeks and treating it brutally, the elephants will finally be "broken" and trained to work.

In Burma (now Myanmar) Asian elephants were used in the timber industry to haul logs to rivers to be floated downstream. Elephants would be hitched together to pull in tandem to drag the largest logs to the dry river beds. Elephants were used in the teak industry and could work for up to 35 years. They reach adulthood at age 20. With the amount of feed an elephant eats, baby elephants are a serious investment.

Elephants are fiercely loyal. Once a female elephant went blind. Her

calf took responsibility to care for its impaired mother. The mom would put her trunk on the baby's back who would then lead her mom to water, to find food, or to go back to the *boma* (large enclosure for animals) at night. This mother and "guide dog baby" were seldom found separated.

In closing, you can see how creative God was in giving us these majestic beasts! This mammoth creature is a big asset to the development of Africa, bringing thousands of tourists (and their money) to Africa each year. In Asia, you can even buy rides on the broad back of an elephant or watch elephants skillfully paint a picture and even play soccer.

In places where colonization has taken over elephant habitat, elephants have been known to come and push down houses and stores or whatever is in their path. Take care to not get too close to these huge majestic animals lest they get the notion to remove another human from their world!

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Google.com



A Time to Rebel

Gideon Yutzy, Hutchinson, KS

We need more rebellious young people. That's the gist of Alex and Brett Harris's book, *Do Hard Things*. The twin brothers wrote the book when they were still in their teens (they weren't afraid of doing hard things).

It is time, they say, for young people to rebel against the low expectations general society has for them. They compare the expectations placed on one-year-olds versus those placed on teenagers. One-year-olds must show interest in learning to walk and talk. Otherwise, everyone is alarmed. With today's teenagers, however, it's different. They don't have to learn new skills. They don't have to take on leadership roles. They don't have to wrestle with difficult issues. If today's teens choose not to venture out of their comfort zones, no one will be alarmed.

Rebel against such low expectations, say the Harris brothers. Rebel against many things. *Start a rebellion*, is their catchphrase. What do you think of this concept? Do you consider yourself rebellious? Is being rebellious good or bad?

Consider a few examples from the past.

Chet Johnson was a self-described hippie during the 1960's who didn't have a home or a car. Instead he lived in communes, travelling from one to the next by hitchhiking. Why? Because he didn't want to look, smell, or sound like middle-class conformists. At open air rock concerts, between songs about the pleasures of cannabis and free love, he would rail against them. *They sent their sons to the Vietnam War! They were racist, homophobic, and xenophobic!* Why should he have wanted to be like them?

Chet was fighting against what he saw as the empty, selfish American Dream. Chet was rebelling. Was his kind of rebellion wrong?

A few years before Chet, a man named Mahatma Gandhi was living in India. Gandhi led people in nonviolent behavior intended to disrupt British rule. He organized hunger strikes. He sewed his own clothes because he thought buying clothes would be a concession to British control. And Gandhi was successful. Without using violence, he and his followers alleviated British control in their country. They did it by rebelling. Was it wrong?

Long before Gandhi and the hippies,

God asked King Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites. Saul went in with his men. He destroyed. Only he didn't *utterly* destroy. Some of the loot looked too tempting and he decided to keep it. Soon a venerable prophet showed up at his doorstep with a dire message: *rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft*. Saul had rebelled against Jehovah's military rules, which he deemed too stringent. What made his rebellion so demonic?

Now consider several rebels from today¹.

Buford Kurtz, whose parents are Old Order Amish, is seventeen years old. He has in his possession a sleek new iPhone. With it, he accesses Facebook and posts rants against the Amish church hierarchy, using the pseudonym of Ben King. He also combs his hair differently from the traditional bowl-shaped style the church requires.

According to the dictionary, rebellion is "a fight or struggle against any kind of control." Buford is fighting what he perceives as control from the Old Order church. He's rebelling. Is it wrong?

Or take Marcus Stoltzfus, a nineteen-year-old Beachy Amish young man. Three years ago, upon completing his sophomore year in high school, he decided to drop out. All of his classmates went on to complete their junior and senior years. Marcus did not drop out because of laziness. In fact, the

¹ Some of the characters in this essay are only partially based on real life.

opposite was true—he wasn't feeling challenged at high school. He finished the last two years at home, learning calculus and basic German. He also got a decent grasp on furniture-making as he apprenticed in his father's woodworking shop.

On the evening of their graduation, Marcus's former classmates invited him to their all-night party. He had to decline. His family was hosting someone from Dusseldorf, Germany, that night. Marcus had advertised his family's spacious basement on Airbnb. Among others, this was one perk of Marcus's listing: *Wir sprechen Deutsch*.

Marcus decided his church-sponsored high school was too light on academic rigor and too heavy on shallow teenaged socializing. He quit. He rebelled. Was it right?

All the people from these examples, all people who have ever rebelled, have something in common: they perceive a system of control bearing down on their lives and they want out. Now! No matter what measures have to be taken!

Of course the conformists are ready with their counter questions. *Is all control bad? Aren't we always controlled by someone? How can we ever know if control is bad, so bad that we should rebel against it?*

To make sense of all this, we must begin with two presuppositions. First, everyone is under some form of control. Second, only one system of control is truly good. And, as all serious disciples

of Christ have discovered, that system is the rule of the Kingdom of Our Lord and of His Christ. (And He shall reign forever and ever!)

When we rebel against some form of tyrannical control, we must make sure to replace it with God's control. I doubt whether the soldiers in Vietnam, the ones Chet Johnson rebelled against, were surrendering all parts of their lives to that divine rule. But then it is unclear whether Chet was either, even though he rebelled against their nationalistic, pro-war agenda. Rebellion for the sake of rebellion is never enough.

People often rebel against one force only to conform to another that is equally tyrannical. These vying forces are not of God. Hatred. Self-Exaltation. Hedonism. They are as sinister and enslaving as the forces being rebelled against.

Still the Harris twins are right. Still there is a time to rebel. Space does not allow for a comprehensive discussion on what good rebellion looks like but here are several general truths.


General Truth #1: Good rebellion offends people in every "camp." Take Marcus. As you would expect, his classmates were offended when he quit high school, and the worst of the lot called him a goody-goody. Then, to make matters worse, his teachers became offended; they took Marcus's leaving as a personal affront against their competency in teaching. Later, Marcus's parents were also offended when he threw his smart

phone into the river (after he blew an entire afternoon on mind-numbing—and even lurid—websites).

"How can you work for the family woodworking business if no one can contact you?" they ask. Marcus just smiles and goes on reading Martin Luther's *Here I Stand* in the original German.

General Truth #2: Good rebellion doesn't exalt the rebel. It exalts God. But not only that, it exalts nature. It exalts mathematics and beauty and poetry and storytelling. It exalts all the welcome forces that can get the focus off the egoism and triviality of our finite human agendas.

General Truth #3: Good rebellion replaces what's inferior with something better. Imagine that some problem needs to be solved. Which requires more skill: Coming up with a faulty solution or coming up with no solution at all? Any numskull can criticize what is but only the wise can provide sound ideas for what could be. Put simply, back up your rebellion with a better alternative.

Finally, there is probably something in your current life which you should be rebelling against. According to Ephesians 6, Satan has hijacked (albeit temporarily) the rule of our world. It follows that citizens of God's Kingdom, those under the Rule of the Spirit, will have much to rebel against. Taking a fresh look at our lives, we must identify our own enemies. Then we must go and rebel with all our might. 

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Periodicals

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Poise is the difference between flipping your lid and raising your eyebrows.

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Those who have an optimist's horsepower may need a pessimist's brakes.

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Think of doubt as an invitation to think things over again.

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Let's not be so flexible that we stick our foot in our mouth.

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Some people are so shock-proof that no matter what you do they thought you would.

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If folks had more patience, hospitals would have fewer patients.

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The trouble with too many square meals is that they make you round.

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Take a tip from nature: Your ears cannot be shut but your mouth can.

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Money will buy a fine dog, but only kindness will make him wag his tail.

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Small minds are the first to criticize great ideas.

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Some men can't seem to tell the difference between working up steam and generating fog.

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It's strange how some pay more attention to a neighbor's gaffe than an unpaid bill
of their own.

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Marriage is most successful when both parties think they have better mates
than they deserve.