



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

SEPTEMBER 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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Donna, B. C.

Donna Lowry, Hutchinson, KS

The devil came to Donna,
He told her she was bad,
and then he laughed and whispered,
“You know that you are mad.”


And when she tried to run away,
And cover up her ears,
He only tried the harder,
To trap her in her tears.

He told her that he owned her,
That she belonged to him.
And that her pain and suffering,
Would never see an end.

She tried so hard to fight him,
She wanted to be whole.
But all her strength could not subdue
His need to have control.

And with each day she weakened,
Her spirit slowly dimmed,
She lost her will to carry on,
She lost the fight within.

Now the devil sings his song,
And shouts her name with glee,
“Donna, you are finally mine,
Your soul belongs to me.”

[The struggles Donna describes included sexual abuse. Surely we must take a clear stand against this great evil. Such children are helpless victims. It was only after Donna came to Christ that she began to experience healing. Eventually, after many years, she was enabled to forgive her abuser. May God have mercy on all abuse victims and abuse perpetrators! Only Jesus provides healing for such wounding. May He make us bearers of Jesus' healing power! PLM] 



“Nobody Loves Me!”

Clair Schnupp, Dryden, ON

As I stood by his stretcher in the nurse’s station, I heard Jack hopelessly say, “Nobody loves me.” He continued by saying, “My dad left us when I was two years old. Then Mom gave me to my grandparents. They were old and sickly. When they died, I had nowhere to stay. At a young age, I had to beg for food and sleep wherever I could. Nobody loves me. I don’t belong any place. That’s why I shot myself. I want to die.”

Just then the paramedics came to take Jack to the airport for a “medivac” to the hospital. I felt sorry for Jack as I watched him being taken to the airplane. I wondered how life could have been different for him if his parents had remained together and raised him. I wondered how he could have been affected by healthy emotional connection and the teaching of life skills. Would Jack have been such an angry and depressed teenager? What difference would parental love have made in his life?

Various studies show that youth have more problems with anger, fear, anxiety, depression, and suicide when they are emotionally disconnected from their parents. Many parents

do not realize how much power they have in the lives of their growing children.

Parents need to listen beneath the words to hear from their children. They need to stand firm on their convictions and commitments, but also offer their hearts to open dialogue. Young people who experience this kind of love from their parents will more likely make good choices that result in them becoming emotionally healthy adults.

As Clara and I travel, we often hear the sad themes of dysfunctional and broken families. Too many youth in today’s world grow up without both of their parents because of separation or divorce. This creates frustrated and bitter youth who have no emotional anchor and who do not like themselves. This bitterness often causes them to react to life in destructive ways or to escape by self-destructive behaviors. They will also be more likely to hate God.

When youth grow up without both parents, they often feel that no one loves them or understands them.

They are also often confused about God, life, themselves, morality, and their gender.

How sad that in our society today many are trying to redefine morality, gender, marriage, and family. These redefinitions are so detrimental to the lives of many children, youth, and young adults. My observation is that emotionally absent fathers also add to gender confusion for a growing number of the young members in our society. We see more and more gender confusion expressing itself in various ways. Governments are redefining morality, marriage, and family. Broken families are all too common.

We see an increasing number of women who hate men because of angry, arrogant, abusive, or absent fathers. Many women grew up without experiencing love or nurture from significant men in their lives. Therefore, they hate men. We see an increasing number of women who do not want men in their lives.

Oh God. help us!

God calls Himself Father. The Bible gives us many names for God, and one of those names is “Father.” In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus addressed God as “Our Father in Heaven...” (Matthew 6:9 NKJV). God, our Heavenly Father, has appointed us as men to bless our children with love, lots of time, and sacrificial leadership.

It is significant that the last words that God spoke in the Old Testament were words about fathers and their children:

“And he will turn

The hearts of the fathers to the children,

And the hearts of the children to their fathers,

Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:6).

God chose to show the importance of the father-child relationship as vital to avoid the destruction of society. Fathers are to provide a healthy relationship that will draw their children into respectful adulthood.

The word “curse” in the Hebrew language is one of the harshest words suggesting complete annihilation. Annihilation is a very serious concept. Let us pray that more men will shoulder their God-given responsibilities as leaders in their families, churches, and communities. This is the only hope to break the curse of fatherlessness.

I see the case of *vanishing fathers and mothers* as a very serious problem. Abandonment is a very painful human experience. Every child longs for acceptance and emotional connection from both parents. When acceptance and emotional connection are absent, growing children are predisposed to deep-seated frustration, anger, and hostility that becomes directed toward their fathers and mothers, themselves, their world, their future, and God.

Some of the ways this emotional distance affects children are:

- They lack respect for themselves.
- They don’t know who they really

are.

- They tend to have more sexual problems.

- They tend to have more relational problems.

- They tend not to take proper responsibility for themselves and life in general.

I have always been inspired by the example of Jonathan Edwards, a prominent early American preacher. In spite of his hectic schedule, he always made sure to save one hour at the close of each day to give his wife and children complete attention. His children married happily and did well in life.

In contrast, in post-World War II Germany, the authority structure based on the image of the father in the family suffered serious breakdown. The result was increased anxiety, depression, and destructive behavior.

I want to finish Jack's story. He recovered from his self-inflicted wound. When I met him six months later, I shared with him the story of Joseph who had many troubles in his life. I told Jack how Joseph's mother died when he was young and he was separated from his father for years. I told him of how Joseph spent three years in prison because someone had lied about him. I shared with Jack the importance of accepting what we cannot change and forgiving those who mistreat us. It seemed important for him to come to terms with his past and move on into a new future. I explained how Joseph

kept a good attitude and eventually was released from prison. I also shared how God then used Joseph's difficult past to help many people, including his family.

Later Jack accepted Christ and attended Bible School. Eventually he married and became a father of three lovely children. Later he became a pastor. His life and testimony touched the hearts of many other people during the following years. Jack developed a concern for fathers, mothers, and young people. He has helped other troubled young men find their way.


May we as parents:

- Love our children unconditionally
- Praise them often
- Laugh with them
- Sing with them
- Quote Scripture with them
- Help them understand and live within boundaries

- Provide them freedom to grow

The parents of today will not be around one hundred years from now. Their names might exist in a book of genealogies. Every parent should occasionally ask himself/herself, "How do I want to be remembered after I am gone?"

Let us strive to help more people like Jack find meaning in life through healing from Jesus. The Gospel is still (and will always be) the power of God unto salvation.

[Adapted and used by permission from "Founder Reflections," Northern Youth Programs, July, 2016.] 

Announcements

Calvary Messenger now offers electronic resources through their website. If you are a current Calvary Messenger subscriber you are entitled to electronic access as well. Electronic access gives you an account with calvarymessenger.org where you can login to renew your subscription, change your mailing address, and view all past issues of Calvary Messenger since 2004. Users will also receive monthly updates when that month's edition of Calvary Messenger is available. To receive access to your online account you can do one of two things. You can go to the Calvary Messenger website at www.calvarymessenger.org and click on on "Electronic Access" in the menu bar along the top. Simply fill out and submit the form on that page. You can also send an email to subscription@calvarymessenger.org with your name and mailing address. Once your subscription has been confirmed you will receive an email with instructions to login to your account.



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Explanation about Anabaptist Voice

David L. Miller described a new quarterly publication, *Anabaptist Voice*, in his column in the August issue on page18.

Editor James Landis appreciates what David wrote but asked me to clarify the magazine is free in any quantity.

They prefer bulk mailings to one address.

Here is the contact information:

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-PLM 

Announcement

Muslim Impact Training

September 22-24, 2016

Pike Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, VA

Nearly every day Muslims are in the headlines of the daily news. But who are these people and how can Anabaptists share with them the Gospel of peace? Muslim Impact Training is a platform for inspiring conservative Anabaptists to engage with Muslims at home and abroad. Sessions cover Islamic history, faith, practice, and snapshots of how God is using Anabaptist people among Muslims. Participants will have the option to visit a Muslim community.

Thursday, September 22, 2016

8:00am - Registration
8:30am - Introductions and Prayer
9:00 - Why Muslims?
10:15 - What Muslims Believe and Do
11:30 - Breakout Session:
Culture: Entering the Mind of a Muslim
History: Islamic Beginnings
Apologetics: Is Our Bible Corrupted?
Outreach: Relating to Muslim Students
12:45 pm - Lunch
2:00 pm - Obstacles in Reaching Muslims
3:15 pm - Breakout Session
Culture: Folk Islam: Hidden World of Muslims
History: The Crusades, Colonialism, and Israel
Apologetics: Jesus in Islam and Christianity
Outreach: How to Lead a Bible Study with Muslims
4:30 pm - Small Group Reflections
6:00 pm - **Middle Eastern Meal**
7:15 pm - Testimonies - Rewards and Challenges of Ministry to Muslims

Friday, September 23, 2016


9:00 am - Why Anabaptists?
10:15 am - God's Kingdom First
11:30 am - Breakout Session: Open Doors in the Muslim World
Turkey
Bangladesh
The Middle East
12:45 pm - Lunch
2:00 pm - Simple Tips for Sharing the Gospel - Panel
3:15 pm - Meeting and Befriending Muslims Locally
4:30 pm - Challenges in Making Disciples

Saturday, September 24, 2016

9:00am - Prepare for Visiting a Muslim Community

Costs will be covered by freewill offerings

Register at www.gifc.net or call (717) 884-8771

Speakers Include: Lyndon Overholt, Brent Stoltzfus, Chris Stoltzfus, Mahlon Stoltzfus (Beachy); Donald Eby, Arnold Eby (Pilgrim); Daniel Miller (Southeastern) 

Re: “Anabaptist or Protestant? Does it Matter?” July, 2016

It is good to be reminded of the differences back then. We realize that many things have changed, but this writing helps us sort through what we are working with now. In my work in prisons, I have worked with members of other denominations for whom I have a real appreciation. I have found that many have a corresponding appreciation for us.

In conversation with one such person, I acknowledged that our lifestyle does not bestow salvation. His response was that our standards, nevertheless, include valuable safeguards.

A business friend who is “really on fire for the Lord,” but whose lifestyle is different from mine expressed deep appreciation for my willingness to seriously discuss Scripture with him. He said he doesn’t always find such willingness.

Eli J. Yoder, Hutchinson, KS

• • • • •

Dear Bro. Paul,

I rejoice that there is yet life among us in regard to the teachings of the New Testament as interpreted by the early Anabaptists. The issues

of life are cyclical, that which was experienced in times past, is repeated again and again.

I commend you for carrying references of David Bercot’s writings. His research and publications have revived a very necessary discussion on the meaning of the Kingdom of God and its importance to the Christian life and doctrine. I know Bro. David personally and applaud the acceptance of his work among the Anabaptists and beyond.

The attitudes held by the early Protestants toward Anabaptists are alive and well. We face them again and again. Here is one bumper sticker that is on a vehicle in our area: “If you cannot get behind our troops then get in front of them.”

H. Eldwin Campbell

Providence, NC/ Bridgewater, VA

• • • • •

In case you overlooked reading Brother Paul’s July CM editorial on “RP’s and EA’s,” I urge you to do so before recycling it. It is a very pertinent and important message as we face the troubled waters of 2016 and beyond.

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

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Your editorial on “Anabaptist or Protestant? Does it Matter?” is very interesting, informative and pertinent for such a time as this. We need more articles like this one. Keep up the good work.

Clair Schnupp, Dryden, ON.

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**Re: “Why Johnny Can’t Read,”
June, 2016.**

Bro. Paul,

I so much appreciated Aaron Lapp’s article on reading. I wish every conservative Mennonite would understand the importance of reading as was portrayed in that article. Might we be presently experiencing the consequences of that future because too many of us are distracted by our material pursuits, not enough time to read and our bondage to electronic technology? So much is missed in life, in perspective, and in judgment simply by living in a very small world.

This article ought to be “assigned reading” for all school patrons, board members, and upper grade students in preparation for the coming school year! This assumes that all church leaders have already read the article!

Chester Weaver, LaGrange, IN

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**Re: “It’s Complicated,” January,
2016**

Editor,

I read with very much interest

Doug Kauffman’s views on dating being complicated nowadays. We were not put off in the least by his honest observations and do think we can be careful or the bar can be too high. Some due caution is good, though. I would say to the young men and ladies wanting to get married: That is not a bad thing at all. A lot of wise counsel and prayer is good, too!

Brother Paul, your observations and additions were helpful and should give some good guidance. I think I was in the discussions referred to at Calvary Bible School and it certainly made for interesting material to discuss and think about. These young people were seriously wanting to know what is the best path to take. We encouraged the young ladies to give due consideration to the fellows. And men should man up and be brave enough to begin the conversation, even if they receive a “Thanks, but no, thanks.”

Having five daughters (three married), it seems ideal to me to get the father involved and allow that to become a relationship builder with the young man whether it leads to marriage or not. We parents do need to be careful to not marry them off in our minds right away but allow them to “in all purity” make an effort to discern God’s will about marriage.

I do not think most fathers would mind if the young man was honest in saying, “I have an interest in your daughter and could I spend some time with her without being sure we will marry?” If it is too difficult to talk to Dad, why? In nothing else or any other way would we invest 20+ years in our daughter and then have prince charming come on his prancing steed and leave without some respectful talk with those responsible.

I think Doug was promoting respectful talk, only maybe a little less of the “marrying off right away idea” that can be prevalent. An honest question deserves an honest answer. Thanks, Doug, for asking it!

Roman Stoltzfoos, Kinzers, PA

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**Re: “Why Johnny Can’t Preach,”
August, 2016.**

Paul,

I read this article with keen interest. I have pondered the same question, especially after I was at a recent funeral. The two preachers had an excellent opportunity to preach the Gospel of Christ to many in attendance who probably did not know the true way, and they had a hard time communicating; thus an opportunity was lost.

Maybe Johnny can’t preach because he has not met God like Paul met Him, or how Peter met Him in the Book of Acts. Maybe Johnny is too interested in taking care of business and making money. Maybe Johnny does not enjoy studying the beautiful life-changing Word of God. Maybe Johnny cannot preach because it is not his gift.

Alvin Mast, Millersburg, OH 

the bottom line

Why Johnny Can’t Go

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Johnny isn’t naturally contrary. He’s been saying all along that he’s willing. He has considered going into a five-year missions program, or a 15-month voluntary service opportunity, or a two-week

trip to help clean up after a tornado, or a one-week prison crusade next year.

He actually has plans, but all of them are for later. Each of them were on his mind for a while but got

burned to a crisp on the back burner. Maybe it could happen when his SUV is paid off. Maybe after he is married, they can do it together. Two are better than one—even the Bible says so. It really would not be a good idea to take a baby into mission work. And, you know, the grandparents would be shocked if they took Lucy to El Salvador.

Lucy goes to school. She looks so sweet in her first-grade outfit, complete with her girlish purse. You really don't mean that she should miss all the good stuff to be enjoyed with school friends. Maybe when she is through school, we can go. But by then, Lucy has four brothers and sisters. It would be too much to expect them to sacrifice their great times with the youth group by spending time far away in a foreign country.

Maybe after Lucy and all her siblings are married, we can go. Leaving our empty nest would be much easier. The empty nest? Why—every year there are more grandchildren. By the time our last child is married, there are six “birdies that come to roost” at Grandma's some days of each week. They really can't do without us, you see? We actually have a mission field at home.

And so the story goes!

The people that go into VS are

needed at home. The people that go into mission work are needed at home. Volunteering for clean-up and prison ministry can be done later. But who will go NOW? Must it be those who didn't buy their car on payments, or those who can still make needed payments on the house or business, or those who realize that *now* is the accepted time. Those kind of people get up and go. They realize that in order to serve God later, we must serve Him *now*.

What will happen to the “doing it later” idea? It is true, some must wait until later. But many of the “later” group could be surprised at their own excitement and enrichment by going *now*. God makes a way with “houses and lands and family” when one is intent on answering the call from God to go.

Johnny can't go if the vision is blurred by debts, or short-sighted by family, or is cross-eyed because of life here as he knows it. Strength always rises in tandem with vision. To say, “I don't have the strength for that,” is in essence saying that such a labor is not in my vision for my life.” Jesus says, “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35).

Lift up your eyes and get a vision. It is amazing how God directs people based on their vision. Examples

abound. Sometimes one's calling becomes his vision. Older singles who sincerely planned for a lifetime of singlehood are surprised by God with an offer for marriage. Men who are chosen and ordained to serve the church, who had not anticipated it personally, receive a vision for the work. Missionaries who were asked to serve, who had not personally wished or anticipated the call, are given a vision and the strength to carry it out. There is a way of knowing God's will.

The fact remains both ways. Our vision can be a preparation for God's call. Or, God's call can bring about a vision. The number of churches in the larger conservative Anabaptist tent should make for no lack in recruiting the needed personnel for Christian schools, church institutions, and mission programs.

Sometimes Johnny can't go because his parents won't let him go. Or, perhaps, his children object. At times, Johnny can't go because of business commitments. Or, Preacher Johnny couldn't go because the church didn't give him leave. Let's be careful here! There may be justifiable reasons for this. The brotherhood is an appropriate indicator and is really a needed consideration in decision making. Sometimes those who wish to go are not yet prepared for the

going.

Then there are occasions when it isn't that Johnny *can't* go. There are times when Johnny *won't* go. There was an unnamed Johnny in Jesus' travels. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." The man reacted by saying, "Let me *first* go and bury my father" (Luke 9:59). The "me first" syndrome can be a very large obstacle. "Me first" is not far from everyone of us. Our priorities come up so often as, "Me, myself, and mine." Or as, "Me and my wife, my son, John and his wife; we four and no more!"

Jesus, in His wisdom, was never without an appropriate word, using an apparent dead end as a teaching moment. He responds to this unknown Johnny with, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

Another Johnny at the same time and place gave his reaction, He said, "Lord, let *me first* go and bid them farewell, which are at home in my house." People's "go" often ends up being conditional, delayed into dormancy. "Me first" is natural. Making "Jesus first" in our lives comes closer to the supernatural. "Me first" is the greatest competitor to "Jesus first, yourself last and others in between," as the children's song has it.

It would not be right to say that

everyone's desire to go is a sure indication of God's will. The church brotherhood has more than once asked people not to go, despite their strong desire to do so. Those times should be graciously received. God's timing and will needs to be confirmed.

We appreciate the many, many people, past and present, who have gone in answer to God's call. May they be abundantly blessed. No doubt, there are many, young and old, who are being prepared even now to go. We use the word "go" to represent the entire range of Christian service work. There is enough work for every Tom, Dick and Johnny to be a helper, and to be willing to go, if called.

There is a *missionary go*—like Jonah to Nineveh, or Elijah to Ahab, or Paul to Macedonia, or Peter to Cornelius.

There is an *errand go*—like the maid who spoke to Naaman, or Jesus' disciples to prepare the passover, or as women who responded to the angel who said, "Go, [and] tell his disciples and Peter..."

There is a *warning go*—in the callings that required going, as Moses to Pharaoh, Elijah to Ahab, or Jesus to His disciples, when He said, *Go, and tell that fox...*


There is a *predictive go*, for Jesus said, "I go to my Father" and "I go to

prepare a place for you."

There is a *witnessing go* when Jesus said, "Go, call thy husband," and "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."

There is the *obedience go* in which God said to Abram, *Go* unto a land I will show thee." Jesus gave the story of the Good Samaritan to a slick lawyer, with the punch line, "Go and do thou likewise." Jesus also said, "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam," and "Go and sin no more." The *obedience go* was also obeyed by Joseph, Daniel, and David.

We affirm the *missionary go* of Jesus. "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

The Bottom Line of all seven of the above "go's" are for the church today. Each one is enjoined upon us in which God looks for our participation in some way. The gift of life God gives us is meant for us to be available for His call to "Go!" We participate and share as recipients in His grace and also become willing extensions of it to go when and where He calls and guides. When Johnny truly gets hold of this fact, he says, "I am willing to go." After all, being willing to go can be as important as the going itself. 

The Trodden Bloom

Jordana Graber, Bastrop, TX


While breathing in her maiden vale,
The flower blushed a pretty bloom
And left behind a scented trail
Created from her rainbow plume.

In one short breath, in one quick stamp,
Her petals were crushed upon the lawn
And they lay scattered, cold and damp
With life, it seemed, forever gone.

A cloud of darkness hovered near
And stretched its fingers to the ground.
It caused the blooms to wilt in fear
And hushed the valley's every sound.

A voice then echoed through the still,
It pealed and rang from every hill,
"Your trodden flower is not dead,
Her soul still blooms, alive, instead."

They slowly lifted wilted heads
From drooping on their grassy beds.
For far, far up the mountain's dome
They glimpsed the brilliance of her home.

And in that grassland, they could see
Their flower waving happily.
There she was flourishing once more
But blooming richer than before. 



marriages

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

Beachy-Yoder

Bro. Jason, son of Omer and Dorothy Beachy, Humboldt, IL, and Sis. Carol, daughter of Mervin and Lorene Yoder, Arcola, IL, on May 28, 2016, at Penn Station for Trinity Christian Fellowship, by Wilbur Gingerich.

Beiler-Fisher

Bro. Steven, son of Sam and Sylvia Beiler, Blain, PA, and Sharon, daughter of Levi and Naomi Fisher, Honey Grove, PA, at Cedar Grove Church for Shade Mountain Christian Fellowship Church on May 7, 2016, by Daniel Fisher.

Fehr-Burkholder

Bro. Dietrich, Fehr, Cross Hill, SC, and Sis. Susie (Yoder) Burkholder, Shipshewana, IN, at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Greenwood, SC, for Cross Hill Mennonite on June 18, 2016, by Virgil Kanagy.

Kauffman-Wagler

Bro. Dwayne, son of Herman and Christina Kauffman, Fredonia, KY, and Sis. Marcia, daughter of Leon and Marietta Walger, Fredonia, KY, on May 20, 2016, at Northside Baptist Church for Fredonia Mennonite Church by Titus Troyer.


Pinard-Peight

Bro. Tristan, son of Richard and Barbara Pinard, Huntington, MA, and Sis. Marcena, daughter of Ben and Naomi Peight, Belleville, PA, at Locust Grove Church for Shade Mountain Christian Fellowship Church on May 27, 2016, by Daniel Fisher.

Schrock-Wagler

Bro. Robert Lowell, son of Simon and Ellen Mae Schrock, Mill Hall, PA, and Sis. LeAnna Ruth, daughter of Thomas and Judy Wagler, Hartville, OH, on April 30, 2016, at Bethany Mennonite Church for Pleasant View Church, by the bride's father, Thomas Wagler.

Wagler-Dye

Bro. Joel David, son of James and Ruth Wagler, Hartville, OH, and Sis. Katelyn, daughter of Richard and Jane Dye, Schaefferstown, PA, on June 4, 2016, at Bethany Slavic Church for Little Kutztown Chapel, by David Alspaugh. 



cradle roll

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

Ballentine, Jeffrey and Amy (Kempf), New Concord, OH, first child and daughter, Kaylea Joy, June 10, 2016.

Beachy, Darius and Rosalia (Quevedo), Aroda, VA, third child and daughter, Amara Mireyah, July 5, 2016.

Becher, Keaton and Samantha (Rich), Owenton, KY, first child and daughter, Heidi Ann, March 22, 2016.

Beiler, Glen James and Angela Joy (Ropp), Woodhaven, NY, second child and son, Jaxon Luke, June 29, 2016.

Byler, David and Esther (Hershberger), Hartly, DE, fifth child, fourth daughter, Maria Faith, June 22, 2016.

Coblentz, Kevin and Rebecca (Petersheim), Oakland, MD, third child and daughter, Maria Kate, July 14, 2016.

Eash, Jeremy and Carmen (Swartzentruber), Huntsville, AR, first child and daughter, Cara Brooke, June 15, 2016.

Gerber, Collin and Becky (Ropp), Gadshill, ON, fourth child, second daughter, Maria Rose, May 17, 2016.

Gerber, John and Tanya (Jantzi), Millbank, ON, fifth child, second son, Felix Daniel, May 16, 2016.

Gerber, Joseph and Rhonda (Kuepfer), Linwood, ON, fifth child, third daughter, Angelica Ruth, June 22, 2016.

Helmuth, Joel and Joyce (Miller), Nappanee, IN, third child, first son, Felix Glen, June 20, 2016.

Helmuth, Micah and Natalie (Overholt), Abbeville, SC, sixth child, third daughter, Madeline Claire, June 17, 2016.

Hershberger, James and Irene (Eicher), Millersburg, IN, first child and daughter, Nevaeh Marie, July 9, 2016.

King, James and Melanie Sue (Stoltzfus), Christiana, PA, fourth child and son, Benjamin Amos, June 11, 2016.

Kooistra, Josh and Beth (Yoder), Bloomfield, MO, first child and daughter, Mackenzie Joy, July 22, 2016.

Kuepfer, Ronald and Janelle (Erb), Baden, ON, third child, second daughter, Allison Kate, July 2, 2016.

Lehman, Jaran and Leanna (Stoltzfus), Concord, AR, first child and daughter, Alaina Brooke, June 8, 2016.

Martin, James and Jennifer (Puffer), Itasca, TX, fifth child, third daughter, Jennifer Nicole, June 3, 2016.

Miller, Brandon and Yvette (Otto), LaGrange, IN, fifth child, third son, Patrick Lynn, June 22, 2016.

Miller, Joe and Karinda (Sommers), Taylorsville, NC, third child, second son, Jaxson Cole, July 29, 2016.

Miller, Jonathan and Mary Kathryn (Yoder), Cottage Grove, TN, seventh child (one stillborn), fifth son, Jeremy Dale, July 18, 2016.

Nisly, Wayne and Sharon (Brenneman), Hartselle, AL, ninth child, seventh son, Mathias James, June 30, 2016.

Otto, Merlin and Luetta (Yoder), Humboldt, IL, first child and daughter, Alexis Danielle, July 23, 2016.

Overholt, Adam and Gwen (Brechtbill), Taylorsville, NC, first child and daughter, Allison Hope, June 11, 2016.

Ramirez, Omar and Glenda (Miller), Grandview, TX, second child, first daughter, Allison Joy, April 3, 2016.

Showalter, Joseph and Janine (Ulrich), Grandview, TX, eighth child, fourth daughter, Julia Emmagene, Mar. 10, 2016.

Stoltzfoos, Dwight Edward and Brenda Fay (Petersheim), Kinzers, PA,

sixth child, second son, Ian Dwight, July 20, 2016.

Stoltzfus, Jay Wendell and Kaylene (Bontrager), Millersburg, OH, second child and son, Caleb John, June 18, 2016.

Stoltzfus, Larion and Cheryl (Spicher), Kennedyville, MD, fifth child, second daughter, Allison Brooke, June 24, 2016.

Stoltzfus, Lyndon and Shaina (Byler), Smyrna, DE, first child and daughter, Charlotte Lydia, April 13, 2016.


Stutzman, Joseph and Ethel (Eichorn), Plain City, OH, second child and son, Carter Joseph, July 1, 2016.

Swarey, John Mark and Maria Ann (Miller), Burr Oak, MI, first child and son, Jakob Harrison, July 21, 2016.

Troyer, Nathaniel and Karen (Yoder), Covington, TX, first child and daughter, Stefany JoAnn, May 20, 2016.

Wagler, Alan and Joyce (Jantzi), Millbank, ON, first child and son, Tyrell Alan, April 14, 2016.

Yoder, Lavon and Diane (Wengerd) Jackson, OH, fourth child, third daughter, Kallie Grace, April 4, 2016.

Yoder, Timothy and Margretta (Beachy), Hutchinson, KS, first child and son, Joel Timothy, March 23, 2016. 

A local friend handed me an article that appeared in *The Washington Post*, dated June 6, 2016. A bold headline says, “We Left Upper-Class Suburbia to Become Amish and Learn What Community Really Means.” The article was written by Jeff Smith and Bill Moser. They have recently worked together on a book, entitled, *Becoming Amish*, which came out in early June.

When Bill Moser and his wife, Tricia, were in their late 30’s, they decided to abandon a contemporary lifestyle and unite with some Amish in the vicinity of Everette, Michigan. This and a neighboring church have maintained an Old Order identity. They emphasize sound doctrine and the necessity of the new birth and Christian discipleship. They have a counseling ministry entity that has successfully ministered to persons from ultra-conservative Amish groups.

Horse and buggy transportation and other cultural adjustments were significant. They regard their 11-year sojourn with the Amish with appreciation. They did not feel the disconnect of church and life that they felt when they were part of

general society.

Moser says the Amish are extremely conservative and extremely liberal at the same time. Their conservatism is expressed in their lifestyle. They are firmly against abortion and divorce. But they are liberal in the sense of reaching to help persons in need and eagerly participate in building projects. Their strong sense of community includes an understood accountability and approval of the larger community.

Bill Moser and his wife both attended college. Nearly all of their siblings have college degrees. Plans to join a group where formal schooling stops at eighth grade caused serious tension in their extended family. Moser points out that their children did not stop learning when they left school. They are constant readers and constant learners. He feels that their children are successful in life.

Their appreciation for the Amish experience did not remove all problems. The language barrier was a significant factor. So it was decided to become part of a group that is considered Amish Mennonite.

The oldest son is married and is involved in a successful business. The

second oldest son is also established in a local business. The third oldest is serving in Strong Tower Children's Home in El Salvador. A daughter is a teacher.

A point of emphasis is that much learning can and should happen outside of the classroom and formal schooling.

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I often have the luxury of reading the CM articles before they go to the printer. I found Floyd Stoltzfus's report on the Central American Ministers Meeting especially noteworthy. This annual event drew attendance from at least 11 different groups, mostly from North America. Spanish Lookout, Belize, was also in attendance. Their guest speaker was from North America, an unaffiliated congregation that is clearly conservative Anabaptist.

To me this is an admirable example of different groups with similar ideals, but slightly different identities joining together for fellowship and encouragement. It bears out the fact that the basic issues of evangelism and discipleship are common denominators among conservative Anabaptists.

The importance of separation need not foster an isolationist mentality. Let us remember that kindness and generosity are integral parts of the

Christian's mindset. To participate is to benefit from such experiences, not only in Central America, but in the larger conservative Anabaptist community.

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Stepping Stones to Freedom is located at Belleville, PA. It is a program with a halfway house that reaches out to men recently released from prison. Their vision statement includes this quote: "To successfully transition to a productive, stable Christian life." The program is supported by five area churches, including Valley View and Pleasant View. This development is an outgrowth of prison visitation and Bible Study. At least one of the residents has found the writings of John Coblenz helpful.

The facility can accommodate six residents at a time. There is a live-in house manager to supervise conduct. The program is six months in length.

The halfway house is now in the early stage of operation. Participants are grateful for the Lord's leading and strong community support.

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A mutual friend, Lyle Hostetler, called my attention to an announcement in *The Budget*, July 13. He is dismayed that Amish people would offer public support for a presidential candidate, especially supporting Donald Trump. He also

expressed disappointment that *The Budget* would accept such an ad.

“Amish PAC” apparently paid for the ad. But they are not Amish. They are an organization that appeals to the Amish Community, trying to motivate them to support their interests. In this case, both Pennsylvania and Ohio are considered swing states. Perhaps if Amish people would support Trump at the polls it would make a difference.

I would like to think the present-day political climate would draw us to the prayer closet rather than to the voting booth.

DLM

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A sister in one of our churches recently recounted an interaction that she had at the doctor’s office. One of the lady employees expressed admiration and appreciation for her modest manner of dress. She too desired to dress modestly, but was frustrated that it seemed so difficult to find clothes for purchase that satisfied her understanding of Christian modesty.

Mothers, don’t neglect to teach your young daughters to sew. We all know that sewing your own clothes doesn’t guarantee modesty, but when you sew, you are able to decide how clothes are made. Isn’t that much

better than turning that design over to someone who has a completely different goal for clothes than you do?

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Today my wife and some of our children attended the funeral of a friend who we got to know at the assisted living facility where our congregation sings every month. Eda celebrated her 100th birthday on December 31, 2015. She was a person who demonstrated a lot of courage, clever wit, and an upbeat attitude until she fell ill just a week or so before her passing. Her outlook on life and warm personality were an inspiration to many.

The funeral was unusual for us in that it was the first time we attended a Catholic service of any kind. I appreciated the emphasis on Scripture reading during the service. Maybe we should do more of that. The entire service seemed solemn and orderly. It was interesting to note that the communion they observed was only for Catholics.

However, there were some elements that I found predictably troubling. While various Scriptures were read, I don’t believe there was any explanation given as to the meaning of the Scriptures. I believe that each of the numerous prayers in the service were read from a book and slightly modified for the person

whose funeral we were attending. The doctrine of transubstantiation (the belief that the bread and the wine change into the actual body and blood of Christ) left its tracks all over the communion that they observed. As the priest gave each communicant a wafer, he intoned, "The body of Christ." An assistant in clerical robes stood at each side of the priest as he served communion and held something like a platter under the hands of the persons who were receiving the wafer, so that no part of the body of Christ would fall to the floor. Afterwards, the priest examined each platter for crumbs and wiped it clean. Then he took the tray that had wafers, which had "become the body of Christ" and rinsed it thoroughly with water which he poured into his cup and drank it. I'm not sure what they feel would happen to any crumbs that aren't accounted for.

I actually think that our services are pretty predictable. But compared to this service, we seem pretty spontaneous.

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The year 2012 is the most recent year that statistics are available which indicate what Americans spend for bottled water. That figure comes to 11.8 billion dollars per year. It is estimated that it would cost approximately 10 billion dollars per

year to ensure that all persons on the globe have access to safe water. Gary Miller points this out in his book, *The Other Side of the Wall*.

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Idolatry is sneaky for those of us who don't have statues around the house. Whatever supplants God's rightful place in our lives is idolatrous. People express this in a number of different ways:

- By dedicating time resources that belong to God where they ought not.
- By dedicating financial resources that belong to God where we ought not.
- By assigning loyalty that belongs to God where we ought not.
- By finding identity where we ought not.

As we think about idolatry, let's evaluate our interest in leisure and sports in the light of these questions. Is it okay to ask how comments like these fit in with personal identity, "I'm a Chevy man," or "I'm a Kansas boy," or "I'm a (insert your surname) or "I'm a (name your occupation)? Our primary identity needs to be rooted in being a child of the King! The further away we get from that core value in expressing our identity, the less value it has. Is there some idolatry going on in our hearts that should be addressed?

-RJM 

Adoption—Falsely So Called

Paul L. Miller, Partridge, KS

In July, we were privileged to publish an excellent article, by Davy Mast, entitled “Adoption and Orphan Care.” Bro. Davy went through the Scriptures and showed how the need for orphan care is an age-old one. He showed how adoption brings much better possibilities to the orphaned child than that of being shifted from one foster home to another or of growing up in an orphanage.

Davy’s article actually made me wonder whether Martha and I had many years ago dismissed the idea of adoption too easily by thinking that our quiver with six children was too full for adoption. But now, at past 80 years of age, it is too late for us and we shall not spend time in wistful thought about our earlier dismissal of that possibility.

Our friends, Wolfgang (M. D.) and Lori Miggiani, were told after they had adopted two children (and had three children born to them), that they didn’t qualify for additional adoptions. But God had laid a burden on their hearts for orphans, so they went to another adoption agency and another country, where they found three more arrows for their quiver.

May God bless them for that selfless decision!

We are told that adoption has become quite pricy. Only last week I became aware of a plan whereby a potential mother’s aching empty arms can possibly find a cheaper way of providing a baby when natural conception and birth fail to materialize. It is called artificial implantation of an embryo not their own.

In my youth in the 1940’s and 50’s, I had a keen interest in dairying. After I took up school teaching and no longer milked cows, many things changed for me. But during those years, many things also changed in the dairy industry. Production soared. Men devised ways whereby superior animals could produce many offspring through means that are quite innovative. I found it amazing, but thought of it as fitting the charge God gave to Adam and Eve when He made man and woman in His image. God said, “...let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26).

God, however, has a different code of ethics for humans than He has for His lesser creatures, which are not made in His image. God does not ask that bovines make a lifelong commitment of fidelity before they mate and bear offspring. We *Homo Sapiens*, as biology calls us, occupy a different, more responsible place in God's creation. We must carefully weigh all our choices. Our choices are not so easily defined and dismissed as are those of the animals of the field, the forest and the farmyard.

The implantation of an embryo not the parents' own seems to me to cross the bounds of recognition that God is rightly in control of family increase. Adoption, after all, is usually not undertaken merely to increase family size. It is ideally an act of mercy to give opportunity which otherwise would not exist for the child of misfortune. Artificial implantation of an embryo is different from mercifully adopting an orphan. Artificial implantation raises seed for the adoptive parents' sake, quite unlike providing opportunity for the helpless who suffered the loss of his/her parents through no fault of their own.

Is not mercy on those already born in a different category from having a married couple decide on this


opportunity as a means of selling fertilized embryos for profit?

Is it not also a different matter from having a man scatter his seed outside the sanctity of his marriage commitment? Does it not degrade a woman who is expected to allow her ova to be fertilized by a man other than her husband? While all of these scenarios are understandably dismissed as unimportant by the moral breakdown of our times, I fail to see these options as providing an acceptable adoption.

Before submitting this article for publication, I consulted with those who oversee my work, the Calvary Publications Board. They gave their blessing to it.

To the readers, I ask, Does the innovation of producing superior cattle fulfill the ethical requirements of filling a human quiver? Am I off base in thinking that this method of obtaining a family is fundamentally different from adopting a child who does not have a family he/she belongs to?

I invite your response.

Let us walk humbly with God the Father, our Creator. Let us follow Jesus Christ, the One who purchased our salvation with His own precious blood. Let us heed the Holy Spirit, our Guide through life. We receive direction and strength as we give careful heed to God's will revealed in His Word. 

Write Right, Speak Right

Steve L. Yoder, Nappanee, IN

It would be nice if one knew rightly how to write right, right? It is very difficult get people to write articles. They often know what they want to say, but they do not know how to put it on paper.

Could rules for speaking also apply to writing? Since some of them do apply, that would be a good way of getting started.

Once several younger ministers asked me to listen critically to their spoken messages, then send them a fax telling in detail how they could improve. Since years have passed, I cannot recall my comments. It may however, have gone something like when called upon to preach, be truthful. Some say, "I am so weak, others could do better. I'd rather sit and listen."

Many years ago, with numerous visiting ministers at church, I asked one to preach. He started excusing himself. I immediately turned to another, asking him to speak. Some years later, the first minister told me that was one of the best lessons of his life. He said he never did that again.

Let us consider a few pointers for speaking:

1. Look directly at your audience.

2. After your greeting, do not say, "If you have your Bibles with you, please turn to Matthew 18:15." Don't worry, they will not look for it in their hymnbooks. There are seven filler words (words that have no value). Then say, "I'll begin reading verses 15 to 27."

3. When you come to verse 28, do not say, "I believe I'll stop here." (There you have five filler words.) Just stop. They will hear that you have stopped. I had heard much about the wonderful results of the Billy Graham crusades, so I wondered how he preaches. Then I listened on tape to a message Billy preached. I was surprised. What he preached was so much like a good Beachy evangelist. The main difference was that the multitude of Protestantism has not in recent decades heard such straightforward preaching. But the real clincher was this: he used absolutely no fillers, no extra words, and no unnecessary words. He even avoided bulky details. This applies clearly to writing.

4. I often write, then I read it several times, cutting out unnecessary words and expressions.

5. When writing, make short

sentences. Using 15-18 words is best.

6. Don't try to be funny. Preaching is serious business. The more serious you are, the more it will affect the hearers, generally.

7. Do not make a habit of repeating yourself.

8. Don't say, "Isaiah was ah, ah, Isaiah was a great prophet." (four fillers)

9. Don't look at the clock and say, "I see it is time to close," then go on for another 10 minutes. When you acknowledge that your time is up, you lose your audience.

10. It is better to read up, pray up, speak up, and then shut up!

11. One layman asked another, "What does it mean when our pastor picks up his watch, and looks at it closely, then lays it down again?" The other one said, "It doesn't mean a thing."


The late Ervin Hershberger once said in a talk on public speaking, "When you get up to speak, get on

the subject. Don't take 10 minutes to warm up, like an airplane would. Get on the subject and say what needs to be said. Then don't circle the field 10 minutes before landing. If you're finished, sit down." AND HE DID!

12. When writing, be positive. Don't say, "I'm sorry, I will not be able to bring that load of sand on Saturday as planned. I'll try bringing it on Monday." Rather say, "I'll bring that planned load of sand on Monday. I'm sorry, I cannot bring it on Saturday."

Don't say, "We hardly have the money for it, as gasoline is up to \$3.00 a gallon." Rather say, "With gasoline at \$3.00 a gallon, we still have the money for it."

A local newspaper editor once printed a notice. "Don't be surprised if you find mistakes. We try to please everybody and there is always someone looking for errors."

If you make a mistake, whether in spelling or in grammar, acknowledge it, smile, and keep on going. 

LOE . . .

**BEARETH all things,
BELIEVETH all things,
HOPETH all things,
ENDURETH all things.**

1 CORINTHIANS 13:7

Angels Watching over Me and You

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven” (Revelation 10:1).

A mighty angel that stands up for God’s people. That is indeed a comforting thought. **“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them”** (Psalm 34:7).

I’m reminded of something that happened to me after I had finished the evening shift at Children’s Hospital in Washington, D.C. I started a four-hour drive into the country, where I was staying. In the stillness of the midnight hours, I became sleepy and dozed behind the wheel. Suddenly, I was awakened by a loud, sharp bang.

What was that bang just before I needed to round a curve on the road? Was it a guardian angel? I knew it had to have come from God. Maybe

He sent and an angel in answer to someone’s prayer for me.

I don’t know what God used to cause the noise, but I believe He awakened me from sleep in time to make the curve safely.

This reminded me that God wasn’t finished with me yet. He had something more for me in His plan. I am persuaded that “an angel of God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me” (Acts 27:23).

An angel of God whose you are and whom you serve stands beside you now. You should be encouraged and comforted to know that God’s mighty angels are watching over you.

[From page 129 of Revelation Day by Day, by R; Leslie Holmes and Richard S. Boday, Eds. Published in 2001 by Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group. Used with permission.]



Nurturing a Vision for Christian Service

Gerald Miller, Guys Mills, PA

In the previous column, we looked at a brief history of our Christian schools and reflected on how our schools might be doing. I noted that our vision for Christian schools has apparently waned. How can we recover the energy and vitality needed for passing on our faith to the next generation in such a way that we develop and train young people for humble service in the church? I am increasingly convinced that our vision for our schools has become clouded because of the functional distance of the school and the church. I propose that we return to a significant connection between the church and the school.

Consider the great story of the building of a nation, the nation of Israel. In Genesis 12, Abram was called out by God to be the father of the nation of Israel. Over time, the nation grew and the Children of Israel were divided into tribes or family units, Reuben, Dan, Levi, Issachar, and so on. After many cycles of tragedy and triumph, the Children of Israel were finally permitted to

enter the Promised Land. Before this much-anticipated move, God gave some instructions to His people through Moses.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-7) [NKJV used throughout this article]

Essentially, the instruction to families was to teach their children as they lived life. Life for the Children of Israel was family based within their tribal context.

Consider another great story, the story of building a kingdom, the Kingdom of God. After many years,

the promised and long-awaited Messiah entered the world as a baby. When Jesus stepped into the world, he did so not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it. The Kingdom of God was established! The Sermon on the Mount gives us many examples of what Jesus intended for those who were a part of this new kingdom. *“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all...”* And this: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you...”*

Jesus proclaimed a new kingdom, and simultaneously a new family. Now Jesus taught allegiance to His family of disciples above one’s natural family (or tribe), and used “brother” and “family” to describe followers of The Way. The New Testament era presented a more complete view of the family. Jesus changed the basis of the kingdom from a tribal and family basis to one in which the church was central in the kingdom. Jesus himself asked that followers of the king leave their father, mother, and brother. He did not mean that the family no longer mattered. Rather, he assumed the family was the core unit.

However, the family was not an end in itself, but the family unit was trained toward God for the purpose of worship and work in the kingdom of God through the local body of believers (*“Whoever does the will of my father is my brother and sister.”* Matthew 12:50).

Paul then uses analogies such as the body and a building to refer to the church. These ideas carry significant weight. As believers, we relate to God primarily as a group and corporately, but also individually. When Jesus taught us to pray, he instructed us to begin this way: “Our father...” Our culture has become increasingly me-centric and selfish. Today’s church is increasingly more about the individual than a coming together as many in one, in unity and worship of Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Paul really spends very little time discussing the training and raising of the family. However, larger portions of Scripture discuss life as church members, and most Pauline epistles are written to the church.

The church as the local body of believers is where the kingdom of God finds its expression. The local church is the heart of the kingdom. Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16 that *“...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

Neither the Christian school nor the home school finds its reason


for existence explicitly stated in Scripture in chapter and verse in the New Testament. What we do know through Scripture, which is verified throughout church history is that the Church of Jesus Christ has taken very seriously the training and developing of its children for the perpetuation of the Gospel and the future of the church. History makes it clear that other than the church, the Christian School is the longest running institution of the western world. Our Christian schools are a significant part of the movement of God through the millennia. This is a gift.

If the church is at the heart of the Kingdom of God, what is it to *do*? A key component of church life and living out the gospel is the development, training, and discipleship of young people. The concept of passing on our faith to the next generation is a theme that is repeated frequently in Scripture. Education has been accepted and embraced for millennia in the Christian church as critical to the preparation of young people, and I believe that education is best understood in the context of the church.

There are many ways to “do” education: home education, public education, private education, Christian school education, and more. However, any of these

approaches to education are severely disadvantaged (and worse) when not directly linked to the greater vision and story of the kingdom of God as expressed through the God-ordained and instituted local body of believers, the church.

Rather than the school being a distant arm of the church, is it possible that education ought to be seen as closer to the heart of the church? Maybe it is time for schools to reconsider how we “do” school so that the work of the school meshes with the vision and goals of the church and the kingdom. Maybe it is time for schools to reconsider what it is producing (or not producing) for the church and make adjustments accordingly. And maybe it is time for churches to fully embrace and adopt its school as a significant means of training lovers and worshippers of God who love Him with their whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. These young people would then be equipped to love their neighbor as themselves by serving the church in many capacities such as leading worship, teaching Sunday School, assisting in kids’ clubs, presenting a devotional, and receiving the ability to witness and evangelize in the neighborhood and around the world.

Schools, let’s serve our churches. Churches, let’s adopt our schools as essential to kingdom work. 

Prison ministry can be very intense and tiring, but it is so rewarding. Jesus makes special mention of this ministry that will be eternally rewarded: "I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:36b).

I personally know Agripo. Presently he is writing his story in a book which will be published and made available for the public. His eyes and face glow because of the glory of Jesus in his soul. His testimony (in this tract form) brought tears to my eyes because of God's marvelous grace and mercy. (Used by permission; abridged and edited -FS)

In Prison I Discovered Freedom

by Agripo Ical

I am from Belize. I am serving a life sentence at Belize Central Prison. The following story is my testimony of how God saved my life, how He set me free from all bondages, from the dominion of darkness, and how He transformed my life through His Son, Jesus Christ.

I went to prison at the age of 19 in 2005 and now I am 28 years old (2014). I was facing the world by myself because I had chosen to live life my own way. When I was sentenced for life on April 10, 2007, I said to myself, "This is the end for me!" There was no hope of ever achieving my dreams. I was stressed, depressed, and angry with myself. Life had no meaning for me anymore, and I was ready to give up.

During the first two years in prison

I began to smoke a lot. Then I tried seeking God by praying for my freedom, but there was no sign of release. When my appeal was denied that was the day I said, "There is no God. If there is a God, He would answer my prayer." My soul was in torment. I was unable to sleep and had no peace of mind. Eventually I got on my knees, and I repented of my past. I said, "God forgive me. I need you, because I cannot go on anymore." I started seeking God and attending church in the prison chapel.

After attempting to escape I was caught again and sent to the super-max section of the prison where the inmates are punished by being put into solitary confinement. I was isolated for four months and placed on full sanction.

I was not allowed phone calls, visits, normal food allowance, or a personal hygiene package. I was given two cups of water and four ounces of bread each day to live on. I had to sleep on the floor with no mattress and no sheets. This place was really a mental torture for me.

While isolated I did the only thing that I could do, and that was turn to God for help. That was when I met Jesus. I decided to read my Bible because that was the only book allowed in there. I knew little about God or the Bible. I started reading the Bible like any other book. I had heard about fasting so I began to fast. I really had no idea of what I was doing, but in my mind I was seeking God. I fasted every day for a week and then stayed awake some of the nights. During these times I read and prayed. Strange things began to happen. I would lie down and see things happening as if I was dreaming. I didn't know about dreams and visions from God, but I had several of these experiences. I said to myself, "There is something more to this life than I realized, and I'm going to find out about it."

God dealt with me. He spoke to me through His Word and my life was transformed. I met a man who became my teacher. God showed me that I would be under the pastor's guidance for some time, in order to prepare me for God's purpose for my life.

I trained under this pastor's guidance for five years, during which time I


served as his office assistant. I was also privileged to be able to minister the Word of God to my fellow-inmates. God has opened doors of opportunities and enabled me to be granted certain privileges within the prison. I do barbering in my spare time. God has prospered what I do and has given me favor with the prison guards.

Not only do I have work inside the prison, but God has also blessed me with a lovely family, with three children for whom I am responsible. I help them even though I am in prison, and can assist them financially. God has blessed me with skills to use. I love Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

I want to particularly mention that I am free in Christ Jesus. It is truly awesome and satisfying to live life in the Spirit. There is no greater experience that would compare with the tranquility that arises in my soul because of the peace that God gives. Even though I am still in prison I am free on the inside. Presently I am the chaplain of the prison and serve in full time ministry, ministering the Word of God to my fellow-inmates.

In the Bible we read the stories of Joseph and Daniel when they were in captivity. In each case God brought them to positions of usefulness and prospered them. When you think there is nothing in life for you, don't give up. God has more in store for you. The walls can't hold you from achieving your dreams, your plans, or whatever

you desire in life in accordance with the will of God. Turn your life over to Him; be obedient to His Word; follow His precepts, live for Him, and do all

that pleases Him. A life sentence isn't the end of life. God can do more than you think or imagine through His Son Jesus Christ. Amen. 

Human Nature

Jonathan A. Weaver, McClure, PA

[Editor's comment: Would you like to read an allegory? What if the story gave valuable insights about human nature? Read on.]

In 1825, I killed a man, his wife, their two daughters and their horse. Also, I smashed their wagon into a pile of splinters. But, really, I didn't do it. In 1902, I killed a young lad and I got the blame. But there was no trial because everyone knew I was innocent. In 1913, another man died in my immediate vicinity. In 1983, I killed a teenager who was assaulting my face but I never moved half an inch. In 2001, my name became synonymous with the ugly phrase "three suicides" but I again forcefully declare: I DID NOTHING WRONG! Then in 2013, a child died tragically at my feet.


Then people had enough. Words flew. Meetings were held. Finally a committee was formed to try to decide what to do to me. It was decided that a fence with rules and warnings would be placed around my head. Let me dispense with the particulars, I knew exactly what was coming. I am never, ever wrong.

Do I want to kill people? NO! But I cannot stop myself. In the week after the fence was built and warnings posted, I came very close to again

killing some people but they just didn't come quite close enough. Children dance and clutter around my head like squirrels, running, shouting, playing on their cell phones while I lurk in plain sight only inches away.

Those who are in love like to come to me after dark on their moonlit escapades and whisper about "till death do us part" but never seem to realize how close the saying is to becoming their reality. Adults usually have a little more respect for me, but as I've said, I have also killed adults. But teenagers are the worst. They have no idea how often or how close I come to punishing them for flaunting the laws of physics.

I'm not a philosopher. I never say anything. But I have already taught some hard lessons. But sadly, those who've had the lessons are not alive to benefit from the experience, although there have been those who have learned the easy way by not repeating the dead people's mistakes. But my deadliness is not in me. It's in you.

I should introduce myself. I AM A CLIFF. 

Teach Me to Number My Days

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

There are blessings in growing older. Now, hear me out; I recognize factors in old age: memory loss, increased doctor visits, hearing aids, trifocals, canes, walkers, and even wheel chairs are a few of the necessities that some of us need. In the past months, we have lost numerous friends, several due to cancer, others to heart disease, and also diabetes complications. We are aware of the frailty of our lives. We will not be here in this world forever.

I am reminded of Psalm 90 12, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Another translation says it like this, “That we may gain a wise heart.” It seems to imply the idea that as we accept the fact of our days on earth being numbered, we gain a new concept of the value of life. God will give us wisdom to live the days He has allotted to us.

I have been challenged to enjoy each moment God gives to me. We cannot change the past and we do not know the future, however, the present depends on us. I can choose

my response today. I realize that there are older people who do not have the mental ability to choose, however, if you are reading this, you probably do have this privilege. God calls us to live in the present and to cherish each moment.

As I have been thinking about this subject, phrases of the song, “Let me be a little kinder,” come floating into my mind. Allow me to borrow some of the words from this song and apply them to our lives today.

Let me be a little kinder put me to the test only yesterday. The telephone call has been an almost daily occurrence. I was in the middle of making pie crusts and knew she really did not want anything, so I responded unkindly. As I hung up, the words, “Let me be a little kinder” pricked my conscience. I had failed. *Kinder* carries the meaning of being more generous, friendly, and considerate. Is it possible to be kind to that one woman who tries my patience—the woman who rubs me the wrong way, the woman who demands my time and energy? Can I see her as a woman whom God loves

and created? Has He placed her into my life for a reason?

Can I be a little blinder to the faults of those around me? We older folks are known to be set in our ways. We don't like change and we do not like to be challenged. Instead of criticism, can we learn to praise, to express appreciation even if things are not done exactly the way we think they should be done?

I want to be just a bit more cheery, when my body aches and I am weary. It is easy to go into my own little world and think only about myself. But what a difference if I focus on others and see how I could bless someone else. My problems often become small when I place them in the right perspective.

What if I would strive to be a bit

more braver? How do I respond to the trials of the temptations facing me? Do I give up, become discouraged, depressed and make life difficult for those around me? Or do I face them with courage realizing that God will give me grace for one day at a time?

Could I be a little meeker with my sister who is weaker? What if I would follow the teaching of Jesus where He says, "Do unto others as ye would have them do unto you"? What if I would help my sister, assisting her in her time of need? What if I would encourage the younger women in their roles as mothers and homemakers? What if I could learn to serve just a little bit better, thinking less of myself and more of others?



junior messages

His Broken Bicycle

Mary Ellen Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya

"My bicycle is broken, the metal part is broken," the tall African related. "My bicycle is ruined. Thanks to God my legs are not broken. How can that be? I praise the Lord so much!"

Jacob had tied down a big load of sisal on his sturdy bicycle and calmly pedaled down the road to the market. When he got to the main dirt road

leading to town he looked both ways and went on. Jacob loved to work. He thrived on working hard. His family almost always had food on their table. His grown sons followed their father's example of diligence.

The bike ride to town was enjoyable, but Jacob never got to the market, for suddenly, with no warning a Piki Piki (motorcycle) roared up behind him


and crashed into the unsuspecting bicyclist.

Many Piki Piki drivers in Kenya do not have a driver's license. This man was just learning how to drive. He lost control. The fat lady who rode behind him had a terrible fall. Jacob flew off his bicycle and lay unconscious on the ground. The driver of the Piki Piki took off running. He disappeared in the bushes. He did not wait or want to see how he would be fined or punished for his negligence.

A curious crowd soon gathered. Everyone just looked at the man sprawled so still and lying quietly on the road. Finally someone came along who recognized Jacob Misula. They quickly called his son Eric. Eric was soon there with his Piki Piki. They got Jacob up on the Piki Piki behind his son. Another man went along to keep him from falling off.

Thankfully there was a small hospital close to the area market. Jacob remained unconscious. He was transferred to Yala, where there was a larger hospital.

At eleven that night Jacob woke up. He was confused and surprised to find himself on a hospital bed. His head ached. Later he had x-rays taken. He, his family, and friends were amazed and thanked God that there were no broken bones.

A few weeks later Jacob was well enough to walk to church. That day he gave a long testimony praising and thanking God for saving his life. He said, "My bicycle is broken, the iron is broken, but I am not." He exhorted everyone in church, "Get salvation today, remove all sin. Receive Jesus. Nobody but God can prevent death. Receive God's Word today. Walk with Jesus. God loves us. Take Jesus." 

thinking generation

Gershom—The Anabaptists and “The Turks”

Yann Larrieu, Rathgormack, Ireland

I want to share a burden I have regarding what conservative Anabaptists have to offer those who are regarded as the world's greatest threat to Freedom and Democracy: The Muslims (or

“Turks,” as they are generically called in the *Martyr's Mirror*).

Relief efforts among Syrian refugees is a wonderful thing. Intense discussions with Muslims in the United States can only be

a blessing. Befriending them in whatever situation we are able is the way forward.

My burden, however, is to offer a long-term, collective witness of the Sermon-on-the-Mount Jesus to the Muslim World.

This is the part where you freak out. What I am calling for is to give our Muslim friends what we value the most: the New Life which Christ brings, experienced in brotherhood accountability and following Jesus in radical discipleship as described in Matthew 5-7. I am calling us to go beyond missionary tourism, justifying a foreign vacation by calling it a mission trip. To go beyond the thirst for hero status and to have our sacrificial acts praised. I am calling us to live out what we say we believe in.

As a person who was born and raised in the Middle East and who came to Christ through the Mennonites in my late teens, it is my firm conviction that many non-Anabaptist Christians have brought and can bring Jesus to Muslims. As Anabaptists, however, we have a unique opportunity to show an important facet of Jesus that has rarely been seen in the lands of Islam.

Why do they need us?

First, the radically similar: This hasn't escaped any conservative Anabaptist who has travelled among

the Arabs, but it should be noted that there are some significant similarities between observant Muslims and us. I am mentioning only three concepts:

Modesty:

Wearing clothes that are simple and that conceal the body. The head covering for women is an important distinctive and will increasingly be a mark of separation between us and mainstream Christianity.

Family:

The value we attach to the union of one man, one woman and their children within a wider family composed of grandparents, cousins, uncles and aunts is another similarity. The nuclear family is considered an anomaly. Pure courtship practices are the norm, with heavy involvement from the parents.

Community:

While family is important to Muslims, they, like us, see it as having value only within the larger *Umma* (community). The idea of "one man, one vote" is viewed with suspicion, and it is commonly accepted that it is in the multitude of counsel that wisdom is found. Individualism is seen as a disease. Much emphasis is placed on the experience of the elders who have a say on day-to-day matters.

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Yet we should also acknowledge the radically different. It would be a great

mistake to think that Anabaptists are just Muslim Christians. Our key beliefs are significantly different from Muhammad's message and empire. In a strange sense, this is a great plus as we consider reaching them in that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. We are not competing for power with them and therefore are on a totally different plane in our witness.

Non-resistant, suffering love:

Holy Struggle or Jihad is a key concept of the spiritual and socio/political life of Islam. It involves fasting, prayer and renouncing fleshly desires, but it mostly refers to forcefully implementing the rule of Allah on earth.

To the Anabaptists, Jesus is the conquering Lamb who triumphed over death and hell by freely giving his life over to his enemies on the cross. He exemplified this on a daily basis and thereby showed us the way to resurrection and eternal living. We represent this Suffering Servant and not the Crusading Western Christ that has been such an abhorrent stumbling block to our Muslim neighbours, as our spiritual ancestor Michael Sattler rightly pointed out centuries ago in his trial¹.

Two Kingdoms:

Unlike the founder of Islam, Jesus Christ established a Kingdom that

was not of this world and that didn't use the world's means to attain its ends. He fully expected his followers to be of the same mind. The State and its need for coalitions and law enforcement are not for the Christian. While Empire helped Islam prosper, it has been the greatest detriment to Christianity so far.

While it seems that for some having two kingdoms means serving Christ on Sunday and the Republican Party the rest of the week, this is not a historical Anabaptist understanding of the concept. It will only hinder our long term objective to be a Light to all nations.

Truth telling:

Not swearing oaths and complete honesty constitute a singular difference to Muslim ways of handling the truth. Across the board, Muslim-dominated cultures are dishonest in business and require oath upon oath to confirm a statement.

If under persecution, the Muslim may in good conscience falsely recant and hide his true faith. Jesus says that whoever denies him before men he will deny before the angels. Jesus is the True and Faithful one.



And now let us consider the issue from a different angle: Why do Anabaptists need Muslims? As history has made abundantly clear, Anabaptism flourishes and finds

1 The Martyr's Mirror pp. 417-418.

its meaning under pressure and persecution because of its prophetic witness. We are called to be a separate people and to follow Jesus radically. This fact alone makes it very difficult for the State and for Mainstream Religion to use us effectively. We are Gershom – a strange people in a strange land. Children of Abraham.

We are and will remain a nuisance to the Secular West and we will fare poorly under godless indifference. It is tempting to justify our habits by collaboration with mainline Protestant Evangelicalism, but that has only served to undermine our faith and values. Such compromising is cowardly. We have a faith that can stand the test of opposition and bring answers to a genuine people who seek guidance and truth for themselves and their posterity in the midst of consumerism and decadence.

I have seen much good done by organizations set up by the church to give our youth a safe place to serve people, but isn't something wrong when these para-church organizations are the only exciting channel for outreach and monitoring the assimilation process of our youth into the mainstream? What would happen if church, discipleship, simplicity and non-resistance became a radical—transnational—counterproposal to Islam? In short, what if our “distinctives” were put to good use?

What tools do we have?

1. *Gemeinschaft*:

Church. Community. Jesus said that by our love for each other all would know that the Father sent Him. Therein lies the greatest challenge of life. Let's make sure our allegiance is in the right place.

2. *Gelassenheit*:

Yieldedness. Abandonment. Allowing God to order our lives and to work out his purposes in his own timing through cross-bearing. It is the oil of both brotherhood *and* outreach.

3. *Nachfolge*:

Following after. Discipleship. Seeing and manifesting Jesus Christ as portrayed in the Gospels, expounded in the Epistles, and lived out through the Holy Spirit.

4. *Demut*:

Humility. Simplicity. The posture and orientation that brings grace to life and God's power in the face of opposition from within and without. The focus needed to learn of Jesus in every new situation.

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My wife and I are seeking to move to the Middle East and work with others in church planting efforts and have organized an online prayer group for anyone interested in helping. Those interested are welcome to contact us at yaxapila@gmail.com.



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Maintaining a stable marriage takes common horse sense.

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An egotist often seems to be “me-deep” in conversation.

• • • • •

It is possible to do the right thing for the wrong reason.

• • • • •

The best thing to put off till tomorrow is whatever you should not do at all.

• • • • •

Christ in your heart should be visible in your life.

• • • • •

True repentance not only says “I’m sorry!” It also says, “I’m through going in my own strength.”

• • • • •

Beware of holding your *rights* higher than your *responsibilities*.

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Salvation may come quietly, but we must not remain quiet about it.

• • • • •

Too many people look in the mirror for perfection. We must look up.

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Many debts to our infallible God are payable to fallible man.

• • • • •

A useful life is never entirely peaceful and carefree.

• • • • •

God cares for people through people.

• • • • •

You can choose your sin, but you cannot choose its consequences.

• • • • •

A smile is mightier than a grin.