



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2017

Meditation	
<i>A Favorite Thought</i>	1
Editorial	
<i>Going in the Door</i>	2
The Bottom Line	
<i>God-Centered Worship</i>	4
Nonresistance in Shoe Leather	7
He is Risen	9
Marriages	14
Cradle Roll	14
Ordination	16
Obituaries	16
Observations	18
Don't Waste Your Cancer	22
The Creator Will Deliver on His Promises	25
School Matters	
<i>Are You a Teacher? (part 2)</i>	26
Mission Awareness	
<i>The Beauty of Total Consecration</i>	28
Helpers at Home	
<i>Teaching Manners to our Children</i>	31
Junior Messages	
<i>Short Stories from Africa</i>	33
Thinking Generation	
<i>Christlike Socializing</i>	35
Thought Gems	back cover

Calvary Messenger

July 2017

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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A Favorite Thought


Elaine Ulrich, Grandview, TX

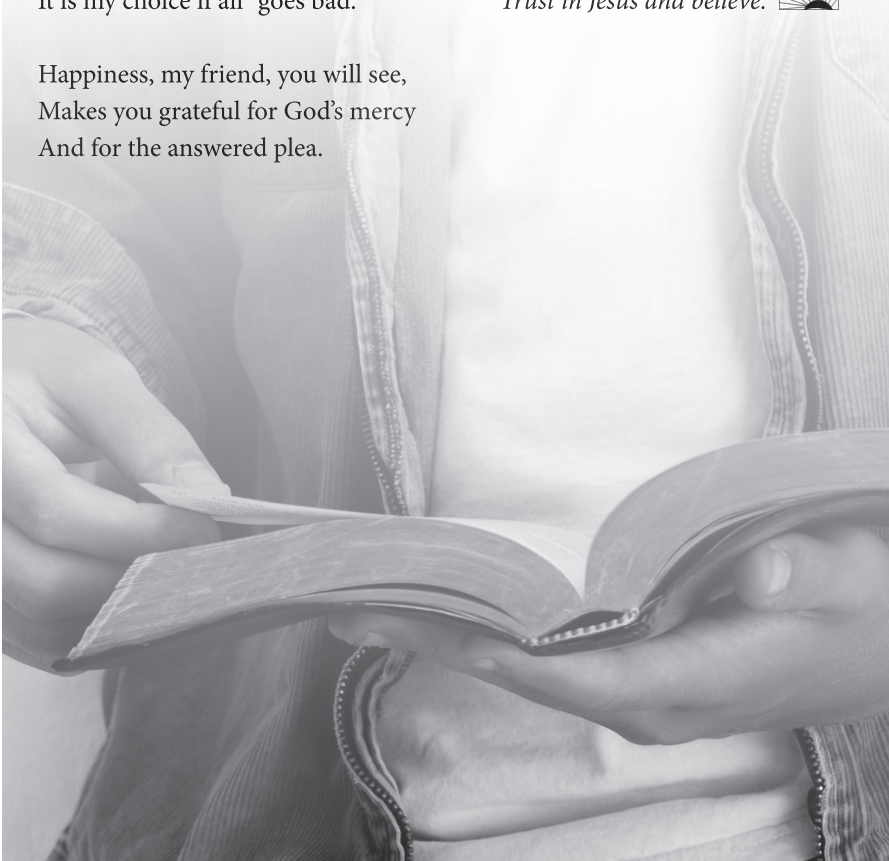
When gratefulness surrounds my soul,
I thank the Lord for His great role
In making my life free and whole.

Though some days are so drab and sad,
And I don't feel at all like being glad.
It is my choice if all "goes bad."

Happiness, my friend, you will see,
Makes you grateful for God's mercy
And for the answered plea.

When depression comes my way,
I go to Him who makes each day
Solely, for some time to pray.

If these lines my memory leave,
To this thought I'll always cleave,
"Trust in Jesus and believe." 



*I'm sorry for this inconvenience, but my email address had to be changed.
It is now: plmiller1934@gmail.com*

Going In The Door

In John 10:1, Jesus stresses the importance of entering the sheepfold by the door. We understand Him to speak of making entrance to the body of Christ, the local church, for surely no one will enter heaven unless he comes in by the door, Jesus Christ.

Jesus gives this gracious invitation to us all to come to Him in Matthew 11:28-30: **“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** So let us come to Him on His terms and we will find rest (“new energy” the sense of Luther’s German); that is how we are raised from our powerlessness—and made truly alive.

Repentance and faith in Jesus Christ bring the new birth. These provide the right way into God’s sheepfold. Jesus emphasized that

there is only one way to heaven: *“You must be born again.”*

There are no exceptions—all of us are sinners by nature and by our own selfish attitudes and missteps that do not please our Maker. “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

But the “no-exceptions” situation also applies to this fact: **everyone on earth is welcome**, regardless of whether he be Jew or Gentile, male or female, pale-faced or dark-skinned, or any other distinction that man may use to classify members of the human race.

But What If?

Unfortunately, some who say they called on Jesus for salvation express disappointment. The following situations may shed light on why some who think they accepted Christ but do not find the yoke “easy” or the burden “light”:

- They may not have entered fully

into the rest of sins forgiven. One indication of this is the habit of enjoyment in speaking about the faults of others. This may reflect that they are unsure that Jesus has forgiven them. If we look anywhere else than to Jesus for joy, we can only expect doubts—not joy. OR...

- They may be holding a grudge against someone. Jesus said it plainly, “If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.” Somehow we must *let go and let God* take over in matters where we feel we were wronged. After all, God takes care of vengeance. He gives no human the power of making the score even. OR...

- They may be walking in their own righteousness instead of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If anyone expects the sacrifices he imposes on himself to bring him God’s approval, he is mistaken. Actually, ‘bodily severity’ has only “the appearance of wisdom through self-chosen spirituality and humility” (transliteration of Colossians 2:23, from Luther’s German). OR...

- They may be resisting God’s chastening hand upon them. Remember, He chastens everyone of us. Like an effective human parent, He does not wait until chastening is requested by the child. It is for

us to accept that God is in control. We must not try to tell Him how to chasten us. It is only when we accept his correction that He gives us his peace. OR ...

- They may assume God got a bargain when He got them. The two men who went to the temple to pray in Luke 18 illustrate this situation. The Pharisee thanked God that he was superior to his peers and made a list for God about all that he was doing for Him. But he trudged home with the load of sin still on his back. The publican was penitently humble and went home with a spring in his step, because he saw himself as God saw him. OR...

- They may assume that material wealth indicates God’s approval. God is merciful, but He does not promise us “health, wealth, and prosperity” if we serve Him. We must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and then the necessary food, clothing, and shelter will be provided. He who had nowhere to lay his head teaches us to be satisfied with “enough.” OR...

- They may dishonor Christ by telling people that there is more than one way to heaven. Such a possibility would remove the urgency of taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, but it disagrees with the words of Jesus, who said, “**I am the way, the**

truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.”

His Easy Yoke

If we come to God on His terms, we’re on the right path. Even so, we will always be in debt to Him. We are needy—and that’s OK. When we are “hitched up” with Him, He is the “Belgian,” and you and I are the “Shetland.” This is not a 50-50 partnership. He knows we are not able to pull as much as He does, but we must not refuse our cross. We must do something, even though it is much less than He does. He, the Almighty One, asks us to do what we can. Because we can pull only a “pony” load, He adjusts the yoke and pulls most of it. He simply asks us to step up and “pull” with Him.

The Good News of the Gospel is

that in spite of our need, Jesus says, “Come!” And that’s not merely OK—that’s wonderful! So let us agree with Him and settle down in His love like a baby nestles down in his mother’s arms. But then, let us also grow up in Christ. Let us eat the meat of mature Christians and “fight the good fight of faith.” There is joy—real joy, wonderful joy—in putting Jesus first, others next and ourselves last.

Coming to God on His terms means that we enter by the door of the sheepfold—Jesus Christ. That door swings open when we repent, exercise faith and joyfully surrender to God.

Beyond that door, He puts us on the path to assurance and victory here—and final glory. Hallelujah!

-PLM



the bottom line

God-Centered Worship

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

The people of Israel were taken captive to Babylon in 605 B.C. (Cruden’s Dictionary of the Bible).

They were in Babylon for 70 years, over two generations. The ones who were faithful to Jehovah God were

rightly concerned about losing their identity. Their freedoms in Babylon allowed time for men to write books of their history. The following ideas are from a book, (with some personal adaptations), co-authored by Bontrager, Hershberger and Sharp

at Hesston College.

As a group, the Jews were known as the people of Israel. But in the dispersion, they sought a personal identity, whereupon an individual Israeli became known as a Jew. The Jew designation was a derivative of their home country of Judah.

“With the loss of temple, land, king, and nation-state, the Jews needed to redefine their identity and faith.” This energized them to put together Old Testament writings into a planned preservation of books (scrolls). Their community shifted from an animal sacrifice and temple worship to a synagogue centered worship. Instead of the yearly feasts, they opted for the weekly Sabbath worship. The main feature was reading from these historical writings (prophets), the Law, and the Psalms.

There were many small synagogues in their widely scattered captivity in Babylon. These needed their own copies for their weekly gatherings. Because of the shift to a book-centered worship, capable men were chosen who could write and make many copies. These men were called scribes. These scribes became an elite class of important people.

New copies needed to be made as old ones wore out, and also as the Jews increased in population and needed to move out, because they

were largely dependent on local agriculture. Thus the scribes, as an aristocratic people, retained their status for 500 years, until the time of Christ.

Religious leadership was reduced for the priests and increased for the scribes. Not everyone could read and write. Therefore, those who could do so were logically depended on to have the needed knowledge. They selected their stories, and later their chosen stories and emphases shaped their lives and the lives of their posterity for generations and centuries to come.

The Pharisees arose as an elevated religious class from the scribes. They dedicated themselves to being the specialists for religious expression. The Pharisees assumed authority in religious matters, and became a self-perpetuating regiment, policing the general Jewish population.

The scribes and Pharisees were a hand-in-glove fit. They could endorse each other and derive their own power in a reciprocal way. Together, they had the good will and support of the populace at large, if indeed when deemed necessary, it was by force. The people rested in the accepted supposition that all of this is in the will of God. They could not afford to incur God's wrath again.

The Apostle Paul came out of

the sect of the Pharisees with high academic honors. He was poised to be one of the bright stars of the night sky that would guide night travelers. Instead, he became a burned out meteor, falling in a moment to the earth. From that prone position on the earth, he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And then he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

And with that his life was changed. Instead of continuing on and rounding up men and women believers and putting them in prison, he went throughout the world, seeking men and women who were in sin's prison, and calling them to freedom in Christ.

In his devotion to God and the church, he wrote fourteen letters to the people of God. (assuming Paul wrote Hebrews). Those important epistles were later compiled into a book, along with other important writings. By that, the New Testament was formed. It was joined to the Old Testament to form our complete Bible.

We do not believe it to be God-honoring nor do we accept the weekly Sunday morning feature of music-centered worship. That causes sermons to be shorter and entertainment longer. Singing can very well augment preaching, but should not take its place or crowd

the sermon to a shorter, tacked on feature. One man recently insisted that twenty minutes is long enough for a good sermon. He was emphatic in saying anything over twenty minutes is filler and fodder. This man loves watching ball games. I'm sure he would be greatly disappointed if ball games would be limited to twenty minutes. I suspect God would also be grieved if preaching His Word would be limited to twenty minutes every Sunday morning.

The scribes and Pharisees were rebuffed a number of times by our Lord. They abused their calling and profession in a man-made religion of law without grace. The writings were valuable, and those who contributed to its preservation should be recognized and appreciated by us. Who wrote the highly valued Dead Sea scrolls? I don't know. But some faithful visionaries must have worked hard to do that.


Archaeologists believe they were written from 200 B.C. to 70 A.D. (Cruden's Dictionary of the Bible).

The preservation of history has a few friends, and yet fewer writers. Our own history will some day be valued. Unless it is written, it can largely be forgotten in three generations. A few more faithful, Spirit-filled, God-directed scribes who are currently in our midst,

could be writing the story of your church. It just might be the will of God to do so in your times, and for your congregation's history. One of the most effective and powerful ways to preserve our history is to have written records. To have that, someone must write it, even as to have fruit from trees, someone must first plant the trees.

The Bottom Line is that our worship is God-centered. God was revealed in the flesh by His Son Jesus Christ. In every worship service, their presence is made a spiritual reality by the Holy Spirit bringing the thoughts of God and of Christ to us.

Our participation in worship is also Book-centered, the Bible, to a certain degree. It is made alive by the Holy Spirit, having revealed the will of God in written form. Our songs are centered on God and Jesus Christ, using revealed concepts from the Bible. Our prayers are to God in Jesus' name, with expressions on how to articulate prayers by using concepts found in God's Word. Our preaching and teaching is from the Bible.

Our conclusion is that worship is to be God-centered, aided by the Holy Spirit, and supported by His Word, in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen. 

Nonresistance in Shoe Leather

Lydia Nissley, Catlett, VA

The barley fields were a lovely green and a promising alfalfa field was growing nicely—a farmer's reward for getting the soil ready and seeding the ground.

But one night Mom heard noises in the fields. What was she hearing? It sounded like chain saws, but out in the fields and at night? She woke son Caleb, and he went out in the dark. He started his pick-up and went to check the "chain-saw" noises.

In the fields were two pick-up

trucks. The young drivers were making circles, spinning mud, and tearing up the hay fields. They immediately scattered.

Caleb tried to get their license plate numbers but the numbers were so mud-splattered they were not really visible.

Later he called the police, who investigated the damage and said there was over \$1,000 worth of ruin done in the fields.

About a week later, Caleb got a call

from law enforcement. The police requested that he come up to the high school and identify a mud-splattered pickup with a red four-wheeler on the back.

“Yes,” Caleb said, “That is the one of the pickups that was in the hay fields.”

The police and Caleb waited until school was dismissed. Then the police met the young man in the office. He asked the young man what he was doing last weekend.

“Nothing in particular,” the young man replied.

“Tell me all about it,” the officer urged. “I know.” He put a pair of handcuffs on the desk.

So the young man told him. He gave him the names of his six friends who were with him and confessed their deeds. The six boys were called to the high school and the officer asked Caleb what he wants done with them.


This act of destruction is a felony. A felony is a crime with over \$1,000 damage. It can result in jail time, in

not being able to get your license, never owning a gun, or having a bank account. Wow! Now what?

Caleb’s reply was that he does not want them jailed or taken to court. He requested that they pay the damage.

Cody, the first young man, made himself responsible. Each boy needed to pay over \$100 and Cody would see to it that it was done. Most of the young men paid, but two did not and Cody made up the difference. Cody is 19 and lives with his mother.

Caleb forgave and practiced non-resistance. Occasionally Caleb calls Cody and asks him to help with a work project like loading square bales from a wagon or a truck. So the young man helps if it suits his schedule.

That’s non-resistance in shoe leather. That’s showing the love of Jesus to someone who’s growing up without a father. That’s returning good for evil. May the number of non-resistant Jesus followers increase. 

*Be the change you want
to see in the world.*

He Is Risen

Reuben Kaufman, Sugarcreek, OH

The four gospels record the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Each one records the event a bit differently. We believe their records were divinely arranged so the four accounts together give a complete word picture of the crucifixion and resurrection. The crucifixion was the greatest “NEGATIVE” and the resurrection was the greatest “POSITIVE” in God’s program of redemption for sinful man. The four gospel accounts are some of the many “infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3) of our Lord’s resurrection.

The resurrection is proof that God has won the battle.

The truth, of course, is that God has never lost a battle.

In the Garden of Eden, God said to Adam if he eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he will surely die. And because of the devil’s cunning deceit, Adam chose to disobey God. Adam’s disobedience brought sin into the world, and death came by sin.

When the angel appeared to

Joseph in a dream, he spoke to Joseph about Mary, his espoused wife. The angel said to Joseph, “*She will bear a son and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*” (Matt. 1:21 ESV). Then in 1 John 3:8 ESV, we read, “*Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared, was to destroy the works of the devil.*” When Jesus was hanging on the cross, just before He gave up His spirit, Jesus said, “*It is finished*” (John 19:30). Jesus as the Son of Man had perfectly and completely fulfilled all the prophecies and finished His work of redemption on earth. The Greek word translated “it is finished” gives the thought of “paid in full.” The Father’s will had been perfectly satisfied.

“*And, behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it*” (Matt. 28:2). Our Lord’s resurrection was God’s

stamp of approval on the work of Jesus Christ as the Son of Man in destroying” *the works of the devil.*” And the angel sitting on the stone was a striking symbol of God’s victory over all the works of the devil.

The resurrection is the affirmation that Jesus is the Son of God.

In Matthew 16, Jesus asked His disciples “*whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God*” (Matt. 16:15b-16). Jesus Himself said, “*I and my Father are one; I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me*” (John 10:30; 14:6). When the elders and chief priests asked if He is the Son of God, He acknowledged that He is. (Luke 22:66-71) In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke we read that a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son.” This occurred at His baptism and on the mount of transfiguration. This was God the Father’s testimony to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. Thus Jesus was “*declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*” (Romans 1:4).

The resurrection authenticated His claim to be a king.

When Pilate asked Jesus if He were a king, He acknowledged that He is a king. After that Pilate referred to Him as King of the Jews. The chief priests said we have no king, but Caesar. But the penitent thief on the cross perceived that Jesus is a king, for he said to Him, “*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto you, today thou shalt be with me in paradise*” (Luke 23:42-43).

The resurrection is the assurance that Satan, sin, and death have been effectively dealt with.

“*Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out; Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me*” (John 12:31; 14:30). “*Who [Jesus] was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification*” (Rom. 4:25). Jesus was not humiliated, but He humbled Himself and willingly gave Himself to die on the cross, that He might fulfill the Father’s will. And by His willing obedience to do the Father’s will and go through death, He destroyed the devil who had the power of death. (Heb. 2:14).

The resurrection is the assurance of the coming judgment.

“And hath given Him (Jesus) authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.” “Because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (John 5:27; Acts 17:31). At the crucifixion the world and its prince were judged and their final defeat prophesied. On the judgment day God will judge the world in righteousness. In that day all permitted evil will cease and all injustice against God’s children will be avenged. God is a just judge and He will judge the whole world in righteousness and avenge all injustices. (Luke 18:1-7; Romans 12:19). Our Lord’s resurrection is the assurance that the judgment day will surely come.

The resurrection is the assurance that Jesus is coming again.

“And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye

shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen.” (Acts 1:10-11; Rev. 1:7). In 1 Thess. 4:14-18 the Bible speaks of both His resurrection and coming again and that we should comfort one another with these words. When Jesus comes again, He will not come as the suffering Savior, but as Judge and King. He will judge the wicked and reward those whose names are in the Lamb’s book of life.

The resurrection is the confirmation of our hope.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost; In hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (Rom. 15:13; Titus 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:3). These Scriptures and many others give us the assurance that our hope in Christ is not in vain. Our God is the God of hope and according to Scripture we are saved by hope. In Christ we have hope of eternal life, for He has abolished death and brought life

and immortality to light through the Gospel. We have the hope of an eternal inheritance reserved in heaven for us. In fact, all the promises of God to us in Christ are “yea and amen.” The resurrection of Christ is the assurance that our hope is a living hope and an anchor for the soul. We should always be ready to give an answer to all who ask about the hope that is ours in Christ.

The resurrection is the proof of the availability of all the grace we need.

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; for by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; And He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me” (John 1:17; Eph. 2:8,9; Tit. 2:11-13; 2 Cor. 12:11-

13). The grace of God has brought us salvation, saving us from sin (slavery). It is also able to transform us so that we may become Christlike in character and conduct. To have the mind of Christ should be the goal of every believer. *“Who [Jesus] was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification”* (Rom. 4:25 ESV).

The power of Christ in the believer’s life.


The resurrection power of Christ brings new spiritual life to us who were dead (cut off from God) in trespasses and sins. The power of Christ “quicken” or gives us a new life in our spirit by the Holy Spirit. *“Even when we were dead in our sins, hath quickened us together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Eph. 2:5, 6). The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. That is, the same kind of love God has. It is the love for God and the things of God: “the axe is laid to the root of the trees.” The heart is regenerated and renewed with a desire to know God. The new life “**in Christ**” brings new thoughts, new desires, new motives, new actions or deeds; the old way of life becomes repulsive. The man “**in Christ**” becomes a new creature and old things pass away.

“In Christ” is the new way, the truth, and the life.

In the epistles we find an oft-repeated concept: **“in Christ.”** The phrases: “In Christ,” “in Him” and “through Him” are found nearly 100 times in the epistles. All the power we need is available to us in Christ. In the Gospel of John, Jesus said, “without me ye can do nothing.” We must be crucified and rise to the new life in Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit a person becomes “born again.” Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, our Lord told His disciples, *“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the POWER at work within us, to Him*

be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Acts 1:8; Eph. 3:20,21 ESV Emphasis added).

We who are born-again believers have within us the same power that raised the crucified Christ from the dead. It’s the power to build the church, keep her from drifting into apostasy and to live the joyful, abundant Christian life. We are living on the resurrection side of the grave. Praise God!

Let us rejoice and raise our hearts, hands, and voices in joyful praise and worship and shout with the Apostle Paul, “Death is swallowed up in victory, O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our risen Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Amen.” 

When we forgive, we give an injustice to God and a door opens to a relationship with God through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

marriages

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

Gingerich-Kauffman

Bro. Caleb, son of James and Rhonda Gingerich, Leesburg, OH, and Sis. Melanie, daughter of Ken and Barb Kauffman, Huntsville, AR, at Robinson Avenue Church of Christ for Lighthouse of Faith, on Jan. 28, 2017, by Dan Byler.


Schrock-Novelo

Bro. Randall, son of Stephen and Marilyn Schrock, Isabella Bank, Belize, and Sis. Judy, daughter of Ernesto and Carmelita Novelo, San Roman, Belize, at Immanuel Mennonite Church, San Roman, Belize, on May 14, 2017, by Tim Miller.

Wingard-Swartzentruber

Bro. Lonnie, son of Faron and Rose Wingard, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Carolyn, daughter of Daniel and Karen Swartzentruber, Huntsville, AR, at Robinson Avenue Church of Christ, for Lighthouse of Faith on May 20, 2017, by Dan Byler.

Yoder-Graber

Bro. Tim, son of Wilmer and Rosemary Yoder, Sullivan, IL, and Sis. Julie, daughter of Naaman and Virginia Graber, Goshen, IN, at Fair Haven Mennonite for Woodlawn Mennonite on April 22, 2017, by Steve Miller. 

cradle roll

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

Albrecht, Adrian and Regina (Byler), Brunner, ON, first child and son, Derek Adrian, May 3, 2017.

Beachy, Darren and Heidi (Salazar), Hutchinson, KS, second child, first son, Tristen Thomas, Feb. 7, 2017.

Beachy, Davon and Joanna (Yoder), Arlington, KS, first child and son, Friedrich Andre`, Jan. 4, 2017.

Beachy, Durlin and Emily (Schlabach), Ruckersville, VA, fourth child, third son, Marcellus R., May 11, 2017.

Beachy, Gene and Kristina (Bontrager), Middlebury, IN, second child and daughter, Kennedy Rylyn Hope, Nov. 11, 2016. Adopted May 16, 2017.

Becher, Keaton and Samantha (Rich), Owenton, KY, second child, first son, Hans Jakob, May 12, 2017.

Beiler, Marvin and Lydianne (Stoltzfus), Dundee, NY, fourth child, third daughter, Erika Raine, March 18, 2017.

Bontrager, Greg and Patricia (Schlabach), Arlington, KS, sixth child, fourth son (one son and one daughter deceased), Vincent Adriel, Jan. 8, 2017.

Eicher, James and Deborah (Stutzman), Millwood, KY, sixth child, fifth daughter, Shauna Faith, Jan. 21, 2017.

Hamilton, Nicholas and Shae (Heft), Harrison, AR, third child, second daughter, Breanna Claire, March 16, 2017.

Heft, Matthew and Meri (Vendley), Harrison, AR, first child and son, Chase Weston, April 20, 2017.

Kauffman, Dallas and Dorcas (Hostetler), Harrison, AR, ninth child, fourth son, Drew Zachary, April 28, 2017.

Kreider, Daniel and Audrey (Kuhns), Charlottesville, VA, first child and daughter, Felicity Spring, May 1, 2017.

Mast, Jonathan Dale and Alexandria (Rich), Caneyville, KY, first child and son, Connor Gregory, March 28, 2017.

Miller, Bob and Mary Beth (Kauffman), Pulaski, TN, second child and daughter, Katrina Hope, April 27, 2017

Miller, Lamar and Michelle (Yoder), Centerville, PA, first child and son, Korbin Lamar, April 14, 2017.

Miller, Melvin and Lisa (Schrock), Huntsville, AR, second child, first daughter, Serena Dawn, Feb. 25, 2017.

Correction: Rissler, Earl and Lisa (Weaver), Lewisburg, PA, sixth child, second son, Eldon, March 7, 2017.

Schmucker, Levi and Angelene (Bontrager), Langdon, KS, sixth child, third daughter (one son deceased), Annie Rose, Jan. 21, 2017.

Sommers, Titus and Rose (Hochstetler), Huntsville, AR, fourth child, third daughter, Nicole Paige, Feb. 22, 2017.

Stutzman, David Eugene and Rebecca (Troyer), Clarkson, KY, seventh child and son, Elmer Jay, Jan. 7, 2017.

Yoder, Jerry and Rose (Miller), Yoder, KS, sixth child, fourth daughter (one son deceased), Hailey Elizabeth, Dec. 16, 2016.


Yoder, Rick and Valetta (Byler), Blackville, SC, second child, first son, Adrian Richard, May 27, 2017.

Yutzy, Merlin and Mary Lou (Glick), Kinzers, PA, fifth living child, third son (one daughter deceased), Nicholas Jed, May 7, 2017.



ordination

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

Bro. Gary Raber, 50, (wife Lois Overholt), of Clarkson, KY, was ordained as bishop at Cedar Springs Amish Mennonite Church, on April 23, 2017. The pre-ordination messages given by Floyd Lengacher, Lexington, IN. The charge was given by Jim Yoder and Titus Troyer. James Mast was also in the lot. 



obituaries

Brenneman, Henry Owen, 67, of Rochelle, VA, died Dec. 24, 2016. He was born in Verginia Beach, VA, on Oct. 15, 1949, son of the late Mark and Vernie (Yoder) Brenneman; The funeral was held at Oak Grove Mennonite Church on Dec. 28, 2016, with burial in the church cemetery.

Henry gave his heart to the Lord in his youth and in his early 20s, he rededicated himself to the Lord in a life-changing way. He was a member and minister of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Aroda, VA.

At age 24, Henry married Bertha Yoder. One month after their wedding, a tornado struck their mobile home and Bertha died. At age 27, he entered service at Mountain View Nursing Home where he met Vera Schrock. They were

married on Oct. 27, 1979. She survives. Also surviving are three sons: Marvin (Lisa Miller), Radiant, VA; Joseph (Michelle Yoder), Rochelle, VA; and Andrew Brenneman, Rochelle, VA; and four daughters: Judith (Conrad) Nisly, Partridge, KS; Rhonda (Trent) Clugston, Radiant, VA; Hannah Brenneman, El Salvador; Rosanna (Justin) Miller, Rochelle, VA, and nine grandchildren.

After their marriage, they went to El Salvador to serve in a children's home. After several months, they moved to Casitas. Some time later, they were encouraged to leave El Salvador because of unrest in the country.

They moved to the foothills of Virginia. God blessed them with a family. Henry built log homes, did excavating, and farmed. He made friends with people

of the community. In 1985, he was ordained to the ministry. His sermons reflected his deep desire that the hearts of others would turn to God in a way that it affected their everyday lives.

Henry was a great father and outdoorsman, taking the family camping, hunting and fishing. In 2003 after some puzzling health issues, Henry was diagnosed with lymphoma. Through that illness, God gave them a clear sense of His presence and healing. In January, 2009, he had a heart attack, from which he recovered.

About 30 years after they left El Salvador, Henry and Vera and their three youngest children went for a term of service to Las Delicias, El Salvador. At age 60, Henry began preaching in Spanish. His gentle calm strength has blessed many people.

Graber, Emma (Miller), 84, of Amboy, IN, died May 15, 2017, at her home surrounded by her family. She was born Feb. 24, 1833, daughter of the late Ezra and Tillie (Gingerich) Miller.

A lady of great faith and integrity of Bethany Fellowship Church, she faithfully supported her husband as leader of the church.

On Nov. 2, 1952, she was married to Ernest Graber. He died June 26, 2008. Survivors include children: Benjamin (Miriam) Graber; Raymond (Laura) Graber; Carl (Linda) Graber; Kenneth (Rita) Graber; Carolyn (Marvin) Beachy; Mary Ellen (Philip) Knepp; Tillie (Mervin) Lichty; Linda (Richard)

Yoder; Elmina (Keith) Hochstedler; Rosanna Graber; daughter-in-law, Waneda Graber; brothers: Eli (Fannie) Miller; Harvey (Shirley) Miller; sisters: Silvia (Ben) Graber and Ruby Carter; 54 grandchildren and 75 great grandchildren

Others preceding her in death were a son, Ronald, two granddaughters and two great grandsons.

The funeral was held on May 21, with Marvin Beachy and Darlton Bontrager serving. Burial was in the Christner Cemetery, Miami County.

Graber, Suetta, 54, of Grabill, IN, died April 29, 2017. She was born in Fort Wayne, IN, on August 4, 1962, to the late Daniel and Marie (Graber) Eicher.

She was a member of Fellowship Haven Church in Woodburn, IN. She was a homemaker who enjoyed sewing and spending time with her children and grandchildren.

On Sept. 13, 1984, she was married to Harvey Graber who survives. Also surviving are their children: Wesley (Alyson); Neil; Melissa; Joshua Graber; and granddaughters, Esther and Eleanor Graber, of Grabill; brothers, Samson (Wilma) Eicher, Butler; Timothy (Judy) Eicher, Grabill; Thomas (Hana) Eicher, Grabill; Janetta (Willard) Hochstetler, Hicksville, OH; Marietta (Melvin) Roes, of Gadshill, Ontario; and a sister-in-law, Margaret Eicher, Grabill.

She was preceded in death by a sister, Phyllis Eicher and a brother, Eugene Eicher.


The funeral was held on May 4, with Roman Miller and Ron Miller serving. Timothy Eicher conducted the committal at the Fellowship Haven Cemetery.

Lanza, Joseph, (known as "Papa Joe)," 94, of Isabella Bank, Belize, died on Feb. 28, 2017, at the home of his daughter, Francisca Madril, where he had been

residing. He was born March 19, 1922.

He was a faithful member of Isabella Harmony Fellowship.

He was married to Ms. Pasquela, who preceded him death.

The funeral was held on March 5, 2017, at the Isabella Church with Brothers Ellis Beachy, Justin Goff, and Stephen Schrock serving. The committal was conducted by Bro. Ellis in the Isabella Cemetery. 

observations

Generally before a product is introduced to the general population, research is done through trials and controlled usage. This is an effort to understand the results of using the product. But some products are considered innocent and harmless enough to not warrant this scrutiny. Usually there is a time lag between the time the general population has access to a product before the results of widespread usage become evident. For example, naturally occurring sugar in our food supply is pleasant and desired. The relative content of sugar in its natural state in food, is one barrier to over consumption. It is hard to overdose on sugar by eating too many apples for instance. But when sugar is extracted from its source, suddenly we possess the ability both to add sugar to food where it wouldn't have been found

otherwise, and to make sweet foods sweeter to suit our taste. Too much sugar in our diets is a major health consideration today. If the health problems associated with over-consumption of processed sugar would have been better understood before its widespread usage, I wonder how this would have affected public policy.

In the May issue of CM, Gideon Yutzy highlighted the toxic effect that smart phones have on users' relational capacity and expression. This underscores the fact that the information and content accessed on our phones are only part of the problem. He pointed out that we are currently in that 'lag time' after widespread use has been adopted, and before its effects are well understood. Most of us aren't very good at backing away from something we have become accustomed to even when

we learn it is more dangerous than we had thought. It's easy for the technological progressives to think that to be "behind the times", rather than "on the cutting edge" with tech usage, is ignorant and irrelevant. Maybe being "behind the times" is quite prudent and forward thinking after all.

With legal recreational cannabis approved in a growing number of states, this has thrust marijuana into the same category for many. Marijuana has been around a long time, but because recreational use was illegal, its long-term effects have not been thoroughly documented or even well understood by many. Time will enable people to better understand the implications of long-term recreational use. But by then it will be too late to avoid reaping the sad harvest of unexpected results for many users.

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The negative effects of second-hand smoke don't equally effect all those exposed. Men tend toward higher body mass index (BMI) ratios and women experience a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, according to a report published by the University of Maryland Medical School. One key detail of this study is that it focused on Amish women. They were particularly well-suited for this study, since very few women smoke but many are subject to

second-hand smoke because of the men who smoke.

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Several months ago, in this column I made some comments encouraging us parents to be serious in how we handle the delicate stewardship of nurturing and training our precious children. A kind reader forwarded me an interesting report from the British Psychological Society. The conclusion of this communication was simply that children do better when their parents praise them. A four week study observed a marked improvement in children's behavior and a reduced level of hyperactivity and inattention when the parents were able to praise their children five times each day.

Maybe we've shied away from praising our children because we don't want them to be proud. It's true that when we compliment a person for something the child had no choice in, like good looks, etc... this does tend to reinforce and build pride. We should avoid that. But, it's ok when genuine affirmation for demonstrating Christlike actions and attitudes makes a person feel good.

Flattery is insincere, inaccurate, excessive or some combination of these. Let's not stoop to flattery in our wish to praise our children. But when a parent notices a positive deed or attitude in a child, something powerful happens if that parent

compliments the child. Sincere affirmation, whether through a hug, a compliment, or something similar, goes a long way in communicating parental approval to a child. Parental approval, in turn, goes a long way toward insulating a child from seeking approval from inappropriate sources. Seeking approval where we shouldn't has led many people where nobody should go. When children experience parental approval for good conduct, it sets the stage for that child to experience the approval of our Heavenly Father when we do His will.

• • • • •

Ongoing developments in this nation's capitol continue to test my resolve not to use this space for political commentary. One bright side of the current state of affairs, is that it should be more clear than ever, that citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom have a much higher calling than to sully themselves with the grime of contemporary politics as we know it. The illustrations supporting this position, from each of the political parties and various branches of government, just keep coming and coming, don't they?

• • • • •

Michael Sharp's parents are from Hesston, Kansas where his father teaches at Hesston College. Michael died in March of this year in the Democratic Republic of Congo at 34 years of age. He, along with five

others were abducted while traveling to a restive area in an attempt to understand and ultimately help to diffuse a rebel uprising. His body and that of another U. N. worker and their translator were discovered on Monday, March 29. Some of our readers are acquaintances of his family and some of you are related to Michael.

In the years that Michael spent in Africa he would dialogue directly with those fighting in armed conflict urging them to return to their homes. He estimated that he and his team had been successful in persuading 1,600 fighters to abandon their arms and return home. The source of funding for his work dried up, when those funds were diverted to Syrian refugees. He was appointed to the U.N. Security Council Group of Experts and was working on assignment with them when he died.

I didn't know Michael, so my impressions are distant. But, a couple of things about this situation stand out to me as worthy of emulation.

Michael was committed to the idea that fighting does not resolve life's difficulties, certainly not lasting resolution.

He dedicated his time and energy to what he understood was much more important than personal security and financial success.

We've all been called to follow Christ. That call merits a faithful

response, regardless what it may cost.

• • • • •

It seems we need periodic reminders that fighting doesn't really solve the major issues. Of course it doesn't sound very sanctified to call our church disagreements 'fighting'. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that it usually isn't very sanctified. An African proverb goes something like this, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." I'd like to go far. That implies that I choose to embrace due process and constructive interchange as we journey together. But these things take time. Taking time often isn't very efficient and seems to slow progress. However, ultimately, the stability of walking together with others headed the same way, is much more sustainable than trying to separate myself and go alone, so I can make better progress.

• • • • •

Independence is understood as being free from the influence, control and guidance of another. We intrinsically understand that this concept runs counter to the idea of Christian brotherhood. Children need to understand that independence at a young age is dangerous and can be fatal. They are protected and nourished as they adhere to the parental advice and counsel they are given. In very important ways, their ability to

survive and grow depends on their dependence-not their independence.

It's true that our church members are not really little children anymore. But, there are lessons we shouldn't overlook about the relationship between our willingness to be guided by others and an independent mindset. In other words, when we are willing to do what we're instructed, we push back against our bent toward independence that erodes both the sense and function of brotherhood in our churches. Sometimes, I wonder if this idea gets lost amidst our emphasis on group discernment. Both are important. Let's not assume they are mutually exclusive.

• • • • •

July 4th is called Independence Day. Many of our places of employment are closed on this national holiday, so a lot of our people travel and enjoy vacations and family times. I wonder sometimes if our celebrations and traditions are more consistent with our heavenly citizenship or our United States of America citizenship. Have you ever wondered if fireworks displays celebrate "bombs bursting in air" and if so, how that squares with a two-kingdom concept and our understanding that God calls us to live in peace with our neighbors and our enemies? God is glorified when our celebrations and traditions call us to remember what is noble, right and praiseworthy.



Don't Waste Your Cancer

John Piper

I write this on the eve of prostate surgery. I believe in God's power to heal—by miracle or by medicine. I believe it is right and good to pray for both kinds of healing. Cancer is not wasted when it is healed by God. He gets the glory and that is why cancer exists. So not to pray for healing may waste your cancer. But healing is not God's plan for everyone. And there are many other ways to waste your cancer. I am praying for myself and for you that we will not waste this pain.

You will waste your cancer if you do not believe it is designed for you by God.

It will not do to say that God only uses our cancer but does not design it. What God permits, He permits for a reason. And that reason is his design. If God foresees molecular developments becoming cancer, He can stop it or not. If He does not, He has a purpose. Since He is infinitely wise, it is right to call this purpose a design. Satan is real and causes many pleasures and pains. But he is not ultimate. So when he strikes Job with boils (Job 2:7), Job attributes it ultimately to God (2:10) and the inspired writer agrees. "They... comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him" (Job

42:11). If you don't believe your cancer is designed by God, you will waste it.

You will waste your cancer if you believe it is a curse and not a gift.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). "There is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel" (Numbers 23:23). "The LORD God is a sun and shield, the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

You will waste your cancer if you seek comfort from your odds rather than from God.

The design of God in your cancer is not to train you in the rationalistic human calculation of odds. The world gets comfort from their odds. Not Christians. Some count their chariots (percentages of survival) and some count their horses (side effects of treatment), but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7). God's design is clear from 2 Corinthians 1:9, "We felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who

raises the dead.” The aim of God in your cancer (among a thousand other good things) is to knock props out from under our hearts so that we rely utterly on Him.

You will waste your cancer if you refuse to think about death.

We will all die, if Jesus postpones his return. Not to think about what it will be like to leave this life and meet God is folly. Ecclesiastes 7:2 says, “It is better to go to the house of mourning [a funeral] than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.” How can you lay it to heart if you won’t think about it? Psalm 90:12 says, “Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Numbering your days means thinking about how few there are and that they will end. How will you get a heart of wisdom if you refuse to think about this? What a waste, if we do not think about death!

You will waste your cancer if you think that “beating” cancer means staying alive rather than cherishing Christ.

Satan’s and God’s designs in your cancer are not the same. Satan designs to destroy your love for Christ. God designs to deepen your love for Christ. Cancer does not win if you die. It wins if you fail to cherish Christ. God’s design is to wean you off the breast of the world and feast you on the sufficiency of Christ. It

is meant to help you say and feel, “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.” And to know that therefore, “To live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Philippians 3:8; 1:21).

You will waste your cancer if you spend too much time reading about cancer and not enough time reading about God.

It is not wrong to know about cancer. Ignorance is not a virtue. But the lure to know more and more coupled with the lack of zeal to know God more and more is symptomatic of unbelief. Cancer is meant to waken us to the reality of God. It is meant to put feeling and force behind the command, “Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD” (Hosea 6:3). It is meant to waken us to the truth of Daniel 11:32, “The people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.” It is meant to make unshakable, indestructible oak trees out of us. “His delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by the streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all he does, he prospers” (Psalm 1:2). What a waste of cancer if we read day and night about cancer and not about God!

You will waste your cancer if you let it drive you into solitude instead of deepening your relationships with manifest affection.

When Epaphroditus brought gifts to Paul sent by the Philippian church he became ill and almost died. Paul tells the Philippians, “He has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill.” (Philippians 2:26,27). What an amazing response! It does not say they were distressed that he was ill, but that he was distressed because they heard that he was ill. That is the kind of heart God is aiming to create with cancer: a deeply affectionate, caring heart for people. Don’t waste your cancer by retreating into yourself.

You will waste your cancer if you grieve as those who have no hope.

Paul used this phrase in relation to those loved ones who had died: “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). There is a grief at death. Even for the believer who dies, there is temporary loss—loss of body, and loss of loved ones here, and loss of earthly ministry. But the grief is different—it is permeated with hope. “We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). Don’t waste your cancer grieving as those who don’t have this hope.

You will waste your cancer if you treat sin as casually as before

Are your besetting sins as attractive as they were before you had cancer? If


so, you are wasting your cancer. Cancer is designed to destroy [reduce- Ed.] the appetite for sin. Pride, greed, lust, hatred, unforgiveness, impatience, laziness, procrastination—all these are the adversaries that cancer is meant to attack. Don’t just think of battling against cancer. All these things are worse enemies than cancer. Don’t waste the power of cancer to crush these foes. Let the presence of eternity make the sins of time look as futile as they really are. “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” (Luke 9):25).

You will waste your cancer if you fail to use it as a means of witness to the truth and glory of Christ.

Christians are never anywhere by divine accident. There are reasons for why we wind up where we do. Consider what Jesus said about painful, unplanned circumstances. “They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness” (Luke 21:12,13). So it is with cancer. This will be an opportunity to bear witness. Christ is infinitely worthy. Here is a golden opportunity to show that He is worth more than life. Don’t waste it.

Remember you are not left alone. You will have the help you need. “My

God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19.

[From www.desiringGod.org.
Submitted by Rod Nisly, Nickerson, KS.
Used by permission of John Piper.] 

The Creator Will Deliver on His Promises

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, “There will be no more delay!” Revelation 10:6


The detailed designation of God as Creator ties together the mystery of God. The same God who created the heavens, the earth, and the sea will bring to pass the prophecy and judgments of this book.

Step outside on a nice spring day. The earth your feet stand on is God’s creation. The radiant sunlight came by his almighty word. The birds singing in the awesome, blooming tree are his handiwork. The bright colors of the daffodils swaying in the breeze speak of his infinite wisdom and power. The air we breathe, the heart pumping blood through our bodies, and the mind that enjoys his works all demonstrate the wonders of his creation. “Great is our Lord and mighty in power” (Ps. 147:5)

The angel’s oath declares that creation’s God is able to deliver on his promises and deliverance. The same mighty power of God that brings judgment to the unrighteous need not be dreaded by the righteous. “The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:18).

We have a God big enough to rule the universe, yet small enough to live within our hearts. The born-again disciple of Jesus Christ can rest with this thought: The almighty God of creation will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom. I can be assured that, with him, I’m in good hands.

“The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life” (Ps. 121:7).

[From page 135 of Revelation Day by Day, edited by R. Leslie Holmes and Richard A. Bodey. Published in 2001 by Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group. Used by permission.] 

Are You a Teacher? *(Part Two)*

Gerald Miller, Guys Mills, PA

In my last column, I offered my personal story of becoming a teacher. I also proposed that the Great Commission of Matthew 28 instructs us that **every** believer is a teacher. Each of us does impart knowledge and skills to others.

As one having a career in education, I regret I did not take the opportunity to prepare to teach prior to beginning in the classroom. My preparation has all happened “along the way.” While there are good reasons this did not happen in my particular journey, it is appropriate for us to consider preparation for the callings that God places on our lives. There are many ways to prepare for the work we are called to, and there are many different ways of developing as the years go by. Just as the seminar for maintaining and repairing combines gave me energy and passion for my work in farming, so have the educational experiences

that I have participated in given me energy and passion for my work as a teacher.

I propose to the readership that no matter what God calls us to, preparing to teach enables us to serve skillfully and effectively in the kingdom of God. Preparation to teach is not only useful for the classroom as a teacher but helpful in **any** vocation chosen. I submit three reasons that this is true.

First, teaching is a highly valuable skill to home, business, and church. For those with younger siblings, the ability to teach gives additional tools in your toolbox for life to work with younger siblings without the high level of frustration that often accompanies helping children understand even basic things. Parenting is full of these moments. “The stove is hot.” “Driving too fast is a risk never worth taking.” Deuteronomy 6 makes it clear that if

we are going to parent, we are going to teach.

In business, teaching is a highly marketable skill, as those with the ability to communicate and teach are sought after in the business world. Whether a person is in sales, in Human Resources, or the owner of a company, you will be teaching. For instance, if you were running an ice cream stand, part of your work is to educate people on why they should eat your ice cream, how the different flavors are made, or how your ice cream was produced with care and certain ingredients which sets it apart from the competition.

In church, if you can teach, you can serve. All of us enjoy hearing well-led discussions, good presentations, and quality song leading. Teaching is a part of delivering a sermon, presenting a devotional, participating in Kid's Clubs, or being on a youth committee or church committee. Too often churches get the leftovers from laity. We tend not to give sacrificially enough to the offices and work of the church. The work of the local church is a primary calling for every believer. Could we see developing our teaching skills as a way to bless and serve the church?

Secondly, teaching is an effective way to make a difference in the life

of a person. If you were to relate to another person an experience that was formative in your life, there is a good chance that one of those stories might include a teacher. A part of teaching in any context is discipleship, that of walking alongside others. I could tell many stories of teachers in critical times of my life, both in school as well as in church.

Thirdly, teaching throws open the door for ministry and service. Teaching is a universal skill (like reading and writing) that is useful in any context. Teaching transcends cultures and is not limited by geography. The principles of teaching are similar in any culture. Think about storytelling. Learning to tell stories is a way to communicate cross-culturally. Teaching English as a Second Language has given explosive opportunities around the globe. In many countries, the ability to teach English is truly the gateway to ministry and the spread of the Gospel. There is a tremendous need for competent and prepared people on the mission field. More than one organization has lamented that they have the funds in hand to support more workers, but can't find willing and skilled workers. Our missions deserve the best our congregations

can offer. What if more of our laity gave themselves to developing their skills as a teacher in order to be used around the world?

Many of us will not teach in a classroom. However, there are good reasons to develop our teaching skills. There is value not only in the end result of increasing our teaching ability, but also in the path of personal development that occurs during the training process. Each of us does well to continually grow, stretch, and develop throughout our lifetime. A specific focus of teaching brings motivation to the hard work and energy required in personal

growth.

The ability to teach is valuable outside of the classroom and school. Developing as a teacher can be accomplished in many different ways, traditional and untraditional. But those who make the investment of intentionally growing in teaching find the value goes far beyond the classroom. Our businesses, homes, and churches are the recipients of growing, training, and developing in this important arena of life as believers. Consider preparation for the cause of the Kingdom that we have been called to: to teach all nations!



mission awareness

The Beauty of Total Consecration

Floyd Stoltzfus, Belize City, Belize

In Leviticus 1, God calls Moses and the children of Israel to Biblical worship. He begins with the specifications of the voluntary burnt offering. If they bring a bullock to the altar outside the tabernacle they are to skin the animal and cut it in pieces. Aaron's sons "shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: And the priests,

Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: But the inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord" (vv. 8-10).

If the burnt offering was from the

sheep or goats much of the same procedure was used: "...the priest shall bring it all and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord" (verse 13b).

If the family was too poor to bring a burnt offering from the cattle, sheep, or goats God accepted an offering of turtledoves or young pigeons. The head was to be nipped or pinched off, the blood was to "be wrung out at the side of the altar: And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, ...And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, ...it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord" (vv. 14-17).

This is an offering of total consecration: "burn all," "bring all," and "wrung out." It is total surrender, nothing held back and nothing taken back. The burnt offering is what God begins with. There is an important reason why God begins with the burnt offering and then the subsequent (four) offerings. God is speaking to the godly, to those who worship Him. There is a beauty in total consecration (which means "to set apart and declare as holy" – Webster's). It reminds us of its familiar New Testament equivalent

in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service."

Biblical mission life and service is giving up, giving in, and giving over to the Lord of the harvest and His church. It means surrender to the Lordship of Christ, a service to the needs of humanity, and a sacrifice that brings deep satisfaction, fulfillment, and joy. It really cannot be considered a sacrifice, compared to what Jesus sacrificed for us. Mission life is a call to die to self. It accompanies a cross of total consecration to carry as Jesus taught us. It is a commitment to follow the Lamb wherever He leads.

In yesteryear, farming involved hard work and time in properly preparing the soil. Modern machinery with the regular steel plow and disc and the more recent chisel plow is still work and expense but the sweat part is mostly a matter of history. Today in sowing the seed of the Kingdom, we still need to prepare the soil and sow like in the times of the Old Testament and during the era of Jesus and the apostles. Now we realize that modern travel and media has sped up the coverage in that more people can hear the Gospel in a much quicker time frame than years ago. However,

soil preparation and sowing still takes patience, prayers, and personal involvement.

Today, like it was in the time of Jesus, it still may take a long time to prepare the soil of hard, stony hearts. This was the experience of William Carey, David Livingstone and many other missionaries who were preparing the soil of people's hearts for years and sowing the seed of God's Word. But there was always a reaping of the harvest.

Jesus grew in favor with God and man. His kind words and deeds brought favor (but not favor to all) with the multitudes. This was soil preparation. He healed blind eyes, made the lame to walk, and caused the deaf and dumb to hear and speak. Jesus fed the multitudes with one boy's lunch and twelve baskets were left over which they gathered so that there was no waste. He brought comfort by His gracious words, spoke forgiveness to the sick man with palsy, and told him (in the presence of the angered scribes) to take up his bed and walk. He brought healing to the diseased woman by the touch of his garment. Three times He raised the dead to life. Jesus cast out countless demons and brought cleansing, hope, and purpose to many who were possessed.

Jesus kept silent when the accusers

bombarded Him with angry words and questions. The most beautiful prayer of total consecration was from the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). He even gave the thief hope and forgiveness: "...Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Jesus' sufferings and death are a fulfillment of the burnt sacrifice. Herein lies the beauty of total consecration.

Jesus arose from the dead with great power. He continued to bring comfort and assurance to His disciples by numerous appearances after the resurrection. He brought restoration to Peter and entrusted him with a great assignment: "...Feed my lambs." And, "...Feed my sheep." Then, "...Feed my sheep." (John 21:15, 16, 17). Peter boldly dedicated himself to this Great Commission on the Day of Pentecost (and the remainder of his pilgrimage) when he preached a powerful message and 3000 were saved and baptized. This is the result of a burnt sacrifice, the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD." This is the beauty of total consecration, nothing held back, nothing taken back!



Teaching Manners to our Children

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Manners are learned. We are not born with good or bad manners. Rather it is something we learn either from our parents or our peers. Therefore it is our responsibility as parents to teach a lifestyle that follows the example of our best teacher and example, Jesus Christ. We live in a busy, hurried world. Simple manners can make our lives run a bit more smoothly. Manners reflect God's love to our society as we show kind, thoughtful and unselfish behavior to others.

Each family unit establishes rules and behavior which are acceptable in their home. Children who grow up in homes where there is no pattern of mannerly behavior will have a difficult time entering into established social acceptance. We can make life easier for our children by displaying good manners in our own homes.

Manners are modeled by adults. It

takes discipline as a parent to teach and display good manners. However, it will pay off with rich rewards as those manners are accepted and practiced by your children. Most of us parents have at some time been embarrassed by our child's lack of manners in a public setting. You will be much more comfortable and relaxed as good manners become a part of your children's lives.

The teaching and learning of good manners begins at home. As I mentioned before, we are not born with good or bad manners. Manners are taught. We begin with the basics which can be learned at a very young age, for example, the simple words: "Please" and "Thank you." I was surprised and happy to observe my granddaughter teaching her little boy before he could talk to use these two words in sign language, "Please" teaches a child not to demand or insist on what they want and "thank you" teaches appreciation for what

they receive. It is a reminder to live unselfishly.

“Excuse me” is used when attempting to get someone’s attention, asking someone to move so that one may pass, or when interrupting another person who is speaking. “I am sorry” is a valuable expression even a very small child can express. Mothers, you have many opportunities to teach your child these words, and do not hesitate to say them when you make a mistake, also.

Make good manners fun. The dinner table is a good time to do this. These areas are important: wash your hands before a meal, eat with your mouth closed, take small bites, pass the food correctly, wait to start eating dessert until all have been served, and never reach across others to grab a dish. You can add others. I have not mentioned some that may be important to you. Children should also learn to help with the cleanup after meals. Teach in a gentle way and a happy atmosphere. Mealtime is a good place to share your day together, but not all should be talking at the same time. Give each child opportunity to talk. Proper table etiquette is a valuable tool to be used when you are in public.

Teach hospitality to guests. We have been blessed with many dinner invitations by our church family. We always enjoy when the children freely share in conversation with us. Teach your children to shake hands with guests or even to welcome them at the door. Children should be allowed to talk, but not dominate a conversation. Children can be an ice-breaker with your guests.

A child must learn to respect people in authority. This includes, first of all, you as a parent. Do not allow even a small child to hit or bad mouth you. Teach your children to respect their teachers and pastors.


Your attitudes will definitely be reflected by your children. Respect the policemen and those who keep order in our country. Do not make jokes about law enforcement. Little ears are hearing and little eyes are watching you and will soon mimic your behavior.

Express respect for God and for God’s house of worship.

- Participation in a church service is a good way to show respect.
- As children grow old enough to understand, teach them to be involved. Hold a songbook and sing along.
- Listen to the message. A pencil

- and tablet will enable them to take simple notes.
- Small children should learn to sit quietly.
 - Minimize the toys and distractions when they are small.
 - Toddlers are happiest with one favorite toy and a book rather than a big selection of toys.
 - Church property should be respected.

- Encourage your child to walk rather than run in the church building.
- Communicate to your child what is expected at church.
- Parents, be sure you know WHERE your child “hangs out” after church.

Good manners are a reflection of our homes; they are also a reflection of our love for God. 

junior messages

Short Stories from Africa

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

A HABIT OF THEFT

A man was in prison for doing many bad things. I don't know what all he had done, but I imagine stealing was something he had been doing.

When he was finally released from prison, he was very happy. Prison is difficult. Prison life is terrible, but unless a man is truly sorry for his sins and asks Jesus to forgive him and help him, he may well end up

back in prison.

This man went to church one Sunday. What a good thing! But even in church the devil tempted him. When the offering plate was passed the money fairly glittered at this poor man. He closed his hand, pretending he had some money to give. He dropped it over the plate and then slyly snatched up some of the offering. Cautiously, he put his hand in his pocket. But someone

was watching him keenly and saw what he did.

The man was put back into prison for taking money out of the church offering.

Children, remember, that even if your parents do not see you, God always does.

FOLLOWING DAD

Parents are the role models their children copy. If you have parents who love the Lord, you have good reasons to be thankful.

A father sent his son out to the cooking fire beside their house to light his cigarette. That boy made sure no one saw him as he smoked a little on his father's cigarette before he took it inside to his dad.

Today that boy is a chain smoker..

FOLLOWING MOTHER

Watch your words.

A mother told her child, "You are useless and have no common sense, just like your father."

In school, the child drew a picture of a family. He drew the dad without a head. The teacher pointed to the woman. "Who is this?" she asked.

"Mother."

"And who is this?"

"Father. Mother says Father has no head."

GOD WILL HELP YOU

Carlos said, "I will tell you how God helped me and saved me one day in Nairobi, in 2007, when elections and terrible clashes were going on. The various tribes fought each other. Many people died. I had a job in the city. One evening some young men stopped me. They robbed me of all the money in my pockets. They told me to kneel. They said, 'Old man. We will kill you right now. How do you want to die?' They asked, 'Do you want us to pour gas on you, and then set you on fire, or should we cut you with a panga (machete)?"

"I never answered them a word. My God is Almighty. Just then an old man came along. I don't know where he came from. He told those wicked boys to leave me alone and that I had done no wrong. Surprisingly, the boys actually left. I got up, so amazed to be alive. But for God, I would not be alive.

"There is a God. I tell you, brothers and sisters, be faithful. God will help you. If you are a Christian and have ears, hear. My faith in God was strengthened. He saved me!"

Isaiah 59:1, **"Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save...."**



Christlike Socializing

Benjamin and Caleb Newton, Parsons, KS

God has given us a desire for relationship, and our relationships are evidence of God's faithful provision in our lives. People enjoy spending time with other people. This is good! However, too often our evaluation of social activities centers around questions such as, "*Do I enjoy myself?*" "*Am I well liked?*" and "*Are my wants being met?*"

Both individually and corporately (as youth groups, voluntary service units, and families), self-centeredness is our default gear. However, this is not how God wants us to operate. If we approach relationships in a self-centered manner, we will find little satisfaction or reward. Philippians 2:3 says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves" (ESV). According to this verse our own enjoyment should not be our sole motivation for

socializing; it's not that our own needs should be out of the picture, but rather that they must be balanced with other priorities. Ultimately, what we seek in socializing should be to serve God, and a primary way we serve God is by serving others. Rather than our arrows pointing selfishly in, we want our arrows to point selflessly out.

Jesus' arrows radiated out. "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He offers us the perfect example of servanthood. From His washing of the disciples' feet to His death on the cross, Jesus lived a life of compassionate service, and we are called to emulate His example. We are called to be servants every place we socialize: family outings, church events, youth group activities, and day-off activities at Voluntary Service units. Jesus served people wherever

He went, and if these are activities we participate in each week, what better places to practice servanthood?

When we take on the mind of Christ in our social interactions, our arrows also radiate out. We recognize the God-imbued value of those around us and view our relationships in the context of eternity. We begin to approach relationships with the other person's benefit in mind. This approach may mean stepping outside our normal group of friends to talk to someone who is being excluded, or it may mean participating, with a smile, in an activity that is not our favorite but is enjoyed by someone else in the group. Both opportunities require humility. Both acts of service are worthwhile.

Pursuing others-focused relationships may also mean taking your little brother for a bike ride despite your growing list of things to do. Or it may mean inviting an elderly neighbor to play board games with you and your spouse, even when you've had a long week. Both investments take effort. Both relationships are eternally valuable.

As the two of us have visited various churches, youth groups, and V.S. units, there have often been individuals who went out of their way to make us feel welcome. Once, when

we were visiting a country where we didn't understand the language, a young man at a volleyball social went out of his way to talk to us in English. What a difference it made in our experience! His focus was not on what we might think of his imperfect English but on doing what he could to make us feel welcome. His act of kindness was small, but it revealed his Christ-like heart.

With an others-focused mindset, our attitudes change. We stop viewing people as means to our entertainment, or as problems, and start viewing them as broken people in need of Christ's love. With that framework, the integration of a newcomer into our social group is not viewed as a threat to the status quo but as an opportunity to make a positive impact on another individual. When our arrows radiate out, we are no longer chained by a need for entertainment or peer affirmation; we are free to purposefully love those around us. As we take on the compassion that Jesus has for people, our eyes are opened to the needs of others and we are empowered to serve with the heart of Christ.

Developing an others-focused mindset is not always easy, but there is hope! The Lord can take our love

for people and continue to shape us, teaching us how to honor Him in our social lives. Here are a few practical tips for developing a mindset of service as you spend time with other people:

Tip #1: Prayerfully ask the question, *“Am I approaching my social interactions with a mindset of service?”* Take time to search your heart and to examine the way you have been approaching your social circles. Pray the words of the hymn: *“Cleanse and refine my thought and affection.”*

Tip #2: Build others-focused relationships. Others-focused relationships prioritize giving rather than receiving. Ask questions such as, *“How can I serve God and others in this relationship?”* *“How can I include those on the margins?”* and *“How can I be an encouragement to my friend or family member?”* In turning our focus from ourselves to others, we find the time we’re investing in relationships is worthwhile.

Tip #3: Lead humbly, by example. Take responsibility for your attitude and the ways you interact with those around you. Ask the Lord to help you be the hands and feet of Christ in your social circle. Remember that, in addition to the impact you’re making now, you are also sowing

seeds that will bear fruit in years to come.

Tip #4: Give out of the abundance of Christ’s riches. Serving others in your social circles is not something you can do by your own strength or willpower. To serve effectively, you must give of that which Christ has given us. It is only by sitting at the feet of Jesus and spending time with the Father that we are able to serve others wholeheartedly.

Spending time with other people is an important part of building and investing in God-honoring relationships. As followers of Christ, we are called to flee from frivolous, self-centered socializing and to pursue purposeful, others-focused socializing. As we are molded into the image of Christ our focus will shift away from ourselves. When we recognize social activities as an opportunity to serve others, we steward well the relationships God has gifted us, heeding His call to serve His most valued creation: people.

Writers for Thinking Generation wish to generate, before all else, greater involvement in God’s Kingdom—especially among today’s Anabaptist young people. Send your feedback or original contribution to gideoniyutzy@gmail.com.



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Only in God's Word do we find rest and safety.

• • • • •

Lack of communication creates false imagination.

• • • • •

When we add to our faith, God multiplies His grace and power.

• • • • •

God deals lovingly with the steadfast and justly with the stubborn.

• • • • •

To every soul a choice is given to respond to the warmth
and life of the Son of God.

• • • • •

Religion that costs nothing is worth that same amount.

• • • • •

Let us search the Scriptures to find out how to be like Jesus.

• • • • •

Contentment is discovering the value of what God has already given us.

• • • • •

Partial obedience is actually disobedience.

• • • • •

To build up your character; take responsibility for your actions.

• • • • •

Trust God's heart!

• • • • •

One may walk over the highest mountain one step at a time.