



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

SEPTEMBER 2017

Meditation

Journeying With Jesus..... 1

Guest Editorial

A Healthy Marriage..... 2

The Bottom Line

Our Fellowship and Communion..... 6

Children..... 10

Waiting... For the Redemption of all Things..... 11

Marriages..... 14

Cradle Roll..... 15

Obituaries..... 17

Observations..... 19

The Question of Recreational Marijuana..... 22

My Eden is Coming..... 27

School Matters

Goals That Make a Difference..... 28

Mission Awareness

Teaching Is a Mission..... 31

Helpers at Home

Practical Homemaking Tips..... 32

Thinking Generation

Remember—or Self-Destruct..... 34

Thought Gems..... back cover

Calvary Messenger

September 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.

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

Board of Directors*(Calvary Publications, Inc.)*

Nathan Yoder, Chairman

Mark Webb, Vice-Chairman

Enos D. Stutzman, Treasurer

Ralph Miller, Secretary

Matthew Raber

Material for *Calvary Messenger*, marriages, births, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles—send to the **Editor**. Other Material—mail to their respective **Editors**.

Subscriptions, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to **Circulation Manager**.

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

Editor: Paul L. Miller
7809 S. Herren Rd., Partridge, KS 67566
Ph/Fax 620-567-2286
plmiller1934@gmail.com

Assistant Editor: Elmer D. Glick
P.O. Box 400, Slanesville, WV 25444
elmerg@frontiernet.net

Contributing Editors:

Simon Schrock, Enos D. Stutzman,
Aaron Lapp, Ronald J. Miller

Missions Editor: Floyd Stoltzfus
186 Skyline Dr., New Holland, PA 17557

Youth Messages Editor: Gideon Yutzy
4114 S. Herren Rd., Hutchinson, KS 67501
gideonyutzy@gmail.com | 620-615-2967

Junior Messages Editor:

Mrs. Mary Ellen Beachy
11095 Pleasant Hill Rd.
Dundee, OH 44624
maryellenbeachy@icloud.com

Helpers at Home Editor:

Mrs. Mary June Glick
1080 Return Church Rd., Seneca, SC 29678

Circulation Manager/Treasurer:

Enos D. Stutzman
7498 Woods West Ave.,
London, OH 43140
614-460-9222
enosmary@gmail.com

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


Journeying With Jesus

Elmer Schrock, Stuarts Draft, VA

Blessed with Jesus, as we travel, through this wilderness of strife;
Full of worldly things to lure us from the godly path of life.
Fill us with your Word to guide us; help us want to do your will.
Looking upward, moving forward, with your grace our hearts to fill.

For your promises we thank You; by your Word we walk with You.
Strength for trials, grace for errors, all things godly to pursue.
Lord, we need all your provisions to stand firm against the foe.
That our lives in loyal service, with love's light will be aglow.

While we're plodding ever onward through this world of sin and woe.
May we show the love of Jesus where we are and as we go.
Thus to live for Christ our Savior brings us peace and deepening joy.
As we travel on life's journey in our blessed Lord's employ.

Looking forward to that moment, from earth's cares to be set free,
Be in glory with our Jesus, all because of Calvary.
Such a prospect gives us courage, looking forward to that goal.
Ever with our Lord and Master. Perfect dwelling for the soul. 



A Healthy Marriage

Arlen Mast, Hutchinson, KS

When two parties make a contract, they sign it, but when entering a covenant, we give our solemn word and, if anything is different, it is more binding than a contract. As we think of the covenant of marriage, let us go to the first two chapters in Genesis. There God *said*, God *created* and God *blessed*. God created man in his own image for the purpose of ruling or having dominion over the rest of creation on earth.

Psalm 8: 3-6 says, “When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.” We see that man was created to have dominion over the rest of creation.

I don’t know how long Adam lived as a single. I think he was a successful single. I also think Adam knew responsibility under God before

he was given responsibility for a woman. I don’t have to tell you that it is frustrating for a woman to come under an irresponsible man.

Genesis 2:18 says, “And the LORD God, said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him.” God wanted to make Adam a suitable helper or a partner. Why did Adam need a partner? There are a variety of ways that man and woman complement each other. I believe that primarily woman was created as an intellectual partner for Adam and not just for sexual balance. God knew exactly what Adam needed, but He wanted Adam to realize his need as well.

God had Adam name the animals and it became clear that there was not found “an help meet for him.” The Garden of Eden must have been an impressive zoo. As Adam named the animals, he saw that they came in pairs: Every Mr. Penguin had a Mrs. Penguin. For every Mr. Antelope, there was a counterpart. Every Papa Bear had a Mama Bear. All the animals came through and yet there was no Mrs. Adam compatible

with Adam. God did not give Adam a partner until he realized that he needed one. We attach more value to something we believe is needed. In marriage, both partners are needed.

When difficulties arise, a couple may say they are no longer compatible. They have nothing in common. Being different is the whole point. God did not make Eve as a clone of Adam, but as a suitable helper for him. The wife provides not just *extra* information, but *essential* information. Blending your strengths is essential to fulfilling God's plan for your lives. Tony Evans said, "Marriage is a covenantal union designed to strengthen the capacity and ability for each partner to rule the sphere where God has placed them."

About four years ago, I bought the used dump truck I've been using ever since. I found it just south of Kansas City. Before I bought it, I noticed that the front tires had some interesting wear marks on the tread. The seller said, "Yeah, that came from having the wrong size tires and from improper inflation." I bought the truck. Driving it home was amazing. At 55 mile per hour, the front wheels bounced and chattered terribly. At 70, things got a lot better. Once I got home, I had new tires put on. Then it seemed all better. The man who sold me the tires thought I should consider getting an alignment. But since I had already spent so much, why spend more for an alignment?

This spring, four years later, I was reminded why I should have gotten an alignment. The tread was funny again and it had flat spots on it that shook the truck. Now what? You guessed it: More new tires. This time I got an alignment with hopes that these will last more than four years.

When we look at our marriages and families, I think we have to admit that there's a lot of wear and tear going on. There are women that feel unloved and neglected. There are children who are forgotten. There are men who feel disrespected. This wear and tear has repercussions that are difficult to completely comprehend.

Many of the negative issues facing society today can be traced back to the breakdown of the family. Because of the redefining and dismantling of the home, harmony has been replaced by conflict and peace has been replaced by pain.

Surely a Christian couple wants their home to be a place of peace and harmony. The good news is: that goal is achievable. As we noted earlier, marriage is a covenant. The same way that cars and trucks need to be aligned, covenants only work when they function in God's ordained order. It is when we disregard this order, that we see signs of wear and tear in the marriage relationship.

I think we would all agree that alignment is important. But what

does it look like? 1 Corinthians 11:3 says, “But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” The Apostle Paul wants us to understand God’s functional alignment. God the Father is over Christ. Christ is over the husband and the husband is over the wife. When we deviate from that order, Satan has opportunity to bring chaos. This is matter of *order*—not *value*. This is not saying that woman has less value than the man. We have equal value but different roles.

How did Satan disrupt the first marriage? He did it by switching the order of the relationship. The serpent didn’t go to Adam. He went to Eve on purpose. He swapped the order of the marriage God had ordained. This put it out of alignment. God had told Adam before Eve was created that he could eat from any tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After God gave this instruction to Adam it was then his job to transfer the information on to Eve, which he did. Then, at some point, the serpent opened a conversation with Eve about the forbidden fruit. You know how the story goes. Let us notice Genesis 3:6, “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and she did eat, and gave also unto

her husband with her, and he did eat.”

We see that Eve made a deliberate decision based on an emotional response. The tree looked attractive and she desired to have of its fruit. Her decision has impacted the whole world—ever since.

But where was Adam in all of this? Fishing by the river? Golfing? Going pawn shopping? No! He was with Eve. Eve had become the spiritual leader of the two and Adam became a passive responder. The roles got reversed and we still deal with the consequences. Whenever a man gives up his spiritual headship and a woman takes over that role, it is a direct invitation for the devil to come into their garden.

We live in a time of flipped roles. We are surrounded by dominant women and passive men who don’t want to follow the mandate of biblical alignment. From my perspective, it is typically on the second level (where the man is to be under the authority of Christ) that the authority structure breaks down. Men complain that the wife will not submit to them. The question that I have for them is, “Are you submitting to Christ?” I realize that the word, *submit*, is not a popular word today. But submission from a biblical perspective is a positive force to accomplish good. It is not a negative force subjecting someone to an inferior status. Many problems in marriage come when men are out of alignment, then try to get their wives

in alignment under them.

A wife looks for spiritual, emotional, and physical security. It is only as her husband aligns himself under Christ and the principles found in God's Word that the husband can provide such security. All of this can be quite overwhelming. Getting married is a big step. The husband is the head of the home. If something goes wrong in the house, it may not be his *fault*, but it surely is his *problem*. It is the husband's responsibility to monitor the climate of the home.

When God made woman, He made her to be a receiver and a responder. I am painting with a broad stroke here and I don't mean it in a negative way. God made woman to be a little softer, a little warmer, and a little more emotional in order for her to respond to a man. Ideally, a husband adjusts the climate in which the wife will want to meet his needs, thus expressing her natural response.

Psalm 128:1-4, describes a family that functions as God intended. If the man fears the Lord and walks with God, he can expect his wife to become a fruitful vine. In the right environment, grapevines don't need coaxing to grow. If the husband places himself under the lordship of Jesus Christ, his wife can flourish and they can anticipate joy as they labor together. To have children seated around the table gives us a picture of domestic tranquility.

For the husband to influence the atmosphere in the home he must be at home enough to help maintain an ideal temperature. He is wise to anticipate his wife's needs and provide for them so she can thrive in her role. 1 Peter 3:7 says, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." On the wedding day, a husband may feel like he knows his wife very well, but after ten years of marriage, he will be much better able to anticipate her needs. The better the climate at home, the higher the level of fulfillment both of them will have.

There may be Ten Commandments of Marriage, but I don't think they include: "Thou shalt have homemade pizza every Saturday night for supper," or "Thou shalt not leave thy dirty socks on the floor." In Ephesians 5: 16-33, Paul summarizes the roles of the marriage covenant as **Love** and **Respect**. It sounds simple, doesn't it?

Today we use the term "love" rather loosely. "I love chocolate cake" or "I love going for a walk in the moonlight." That indicates what we like or enjoy. In Ephesians 5, love refers to something deeper. A definition of love that I like says: **To passionately and righteously pursue the well-being of another.** If what I think is love but doesn't contribute to another's well-being, it


probably isn't love. Loving involves sacrifice. She will feel loved when she sees her husband giving up something important to him for her benefit. Loving is costly. A good marriage will cost the husband time, energy, money, maybe even the achievement of a personal goal. But let me assure you, it is worth it. If the husband invests in love, he will reap good returns.

Ephesians 5 also says that Christ loved the church so that he might *sanctify* her. Sanctify is a theological term meaning to take something from where it is to what it needs to be. Even though the parents do a good job of raising their daughter, God is not finished with perfecting her character. The husband is to be a transforming agent in her life. He does it by "the washing of water by the Word." In other words, he needs to live and teach the truth. Part of loving his wife is being her spiritual authority in their home.

I have been putting a lot of weight on the man's role. But I must say also that a bad wife can ruin a good husband. A husband longs for your respect. How

does a wife respect her husband? One way is to let him know that she will be beside him and will stick up for him. She should thank him for his hard work in providing for your family. She should praise his commitment to provide protection for their home. She should be gracious when he makes a bad decision. She should give her point of view and yet allow him to lead. She should encourage him when he receives a difficult assignment. There are many ways of respecting one's husband. If the husband senses his wife's respect, it energizes him like very few other things will.

My final word to newlyweds is: I am excited for you in the establishment of your new home. Follow in whatever God has for you. Align yourselves with the principles of God's Word and you won't just coast, but you will greatly reduce the wear and tear on your relationship. God bless you!

[Condensed from the sermon at the wedding of Enos King and Lois Yoder on July 8, 2017, by the editor, with permission from Arlen Mast.] 

the bottom line

Our Fellowship and Communion

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Our conservative Anabaptist congregations are in a strategic era of Biblical

witness. We are attracting some non-Mennonites to re-think their faith and commitment to Christ and

God's Word.

One of the visible results is that some of our churches have received a few such into our fellowship. We can say that they have been an asset to our congregation at Weavertown. We could list three categories of visitors.

There are those whom we call tourists. Businesses in the area recommend our congregation as a destination for a one-time worship service. There also are tourists who come to Lancaster County once or several times a year and always are present with us on a Sunday morning. They are usually remembered by some of our members, and are known by at least some of us on a first-name basis.

Then there are a few local non-Anabaptist people who attend nearly every Sunday, coming for our Sunday School and the preaching. We appreciate their presence. They do not come always expecting an invitation to our houses for Sunday dinner. We welcome all of these.

The third group of visitors are those from our Beachy Amish churches who are from distant localities. That happens quite frequently because of our size and because quite a few married people who are members with us have a spouse from another state. Along with that are occasional visitors from a wide spectrum of conservative Anabaptist churches.

There are no real approaches to

any endeavor that do not present a problem or two, large or small. One problem is about what the church should do about non-member visitors on the Sunday in which we have communion. Is the official communion service open to all those who fellowship with us, or only for those who have been officially received as members?

People who have been accustomed to communion being based on fellowship alone, can be of the opinion that their welcomed fellowship for some months now should qualify for sharing also in our communion.

But we see the semi-annual communion as being only for those who have previously entered into covenant with the local body of the church. That covenant receives official status for those who are baptized by the bishop of the church. Or it can be done by a transfer of membership from another congregation. It can also occur when one is attending from a recognized church, has requested membership, and is in a status of being approved as a member at some future time. That proving time, we say, is not only to prove his worthiness to us, but also our worthiness to him. In each instance, people have fulfilled membership credentials, or have made a commitment to do so.

In that respect, we practice what is called a *closed* communion. It it

closed to those who do not yet meet the aforementioned criteria. At the same time, we also practice what is called a *close* communion. The *close* communion is for those who have entered into covenant with us. Sharing in communion, then, arises primarily out of our covenant with the church. The general fellowship is open to all who enter our doors. Those who have entered into covenant with us experience a fuller fellowship, which is celebrated at the communion service.

As our fellowship is open to all, either as a one time visitor, or as a regular worshiper, even so membership in our congregation is open to everyone. Those who enter with us into church covenant and membership can serve on church boards and committees, or speak in public by giving “topics” and serving as teachers. Visitors are permitted to give a public testimony to the church, but not share in the routine operation of the congregation. This likewise involves the selective criteria in regard to who qualifies to share in the close fellowship at the communion service.

There are devoted persons who have shared to this limited extent in some of our churches without becoming one of us as covenant members. They are content to participate and share on that level, and we most certainly welcome

them to continue thus. Requesting membership should be on their initiative. We should not pressure these people to become members.

They are most certainly welcome to be present at our communion service. Like our bishop says to these visitors: They are not in our way by their presence. They can participate in singing, praying, and hearing the preaching of God’s Word. If they have been visiting for some months and have not been present with us over a previous communion time, the pastors should inform them of our policy before the actual communion service. This would spare them and us no small embarrassment should they come forward in the expectation of taking the emblems of communion with us. This is the main burden of this article. There were a few times when those who were not aware of our policy were offended when this announcement of our policy for participation was not given until just prior to the sharing of the communion emblems. While that was a sufficient notice from our side at this situation, they really should have been informed by the greeters of the church or someone designated to make sure they are informed of our practice.

When we happen to be present in a congregation which practices open communion and they state that visitors may also participate,

we do refrain from their kind invitation. We suggest this for the purpose of consistency of practice and our brotherhood's Bible-based conviction. If we are consistent with stated or practiced policy, and do not take the liberty to share in their communion, we are free from the accusation of being judgmental in stipulating that they do not share in our communion.


We do not regard this as a judgment against those who are not covenanted with us, since we do value the presence of all who wish to worship with us. They can enter with us into covenant whenever they desire to do so. Have there been any persons who have done just that? Yes. By it we and they are mutually blessed.

Years ago we occasionally had our communion on a Sunday evening instead of Sunday morning. The church pastors proposed a vote in helping to decide on a regular morning service, or have it regularly on a Sunday evening. The members were split numerically as to their preference. Therefore, we have our fall communion in the evening, during the season when tourist traffic is heavier, and the spring communion on a Sunday morning. That works well for us.

According to Paul's direction about the communion service in I Corinthians 11:17-34, he teaches discernment between eating a

common meal, which is open to all, and the Biblical plan of equal sharing of the communion emblems, with only members of the church. He also singles out those who attended the fellowship of the church who were trying to bring some heresies into the nurture of the church. They apparently were the unworthy persons who should have examined themselves and honestly faced their unworthiness, and refrained from participation. An important value in participation in communion is when we come in the claim of our worthiness in Christ, and are supported in it by the church brothers in our covenant with the congregation.

The Bottom Line is that the communion service is based on our faithfulness to Christ and the Word of God. The person to person fellowship is open to all who wish to be present. The additional fellowship of partaking of the communion emblems is open to those who have entered into covenant as members of the church. This practice is to help maintain the purity of the congregation and retain our focus on our ideals and purposes.

[Editor's comment: We thank Bro. Aaron for giving this report for their congregation which has many tourists. By giving clear directions visitors are not left in doubt. Other situations present different challenges.] 

Children

Henry Tice, Grantsville, MD

“Children are a gift from God” (Ps. 127:3). God gives them to us, little people without any sense of values, no knowledge of good and evil. God wants them back again, loving Him with all their soul, heart, and might. God entrusts parents with diligently teaching and training them. (Deut. 6:4-9)

Having served as a school pastor for some twenty years and preaching on Christian Education once a year at church, I would typically use Deuteronomy 6:4-9 to help me say that Monday-to-Friday school teaching should be in harmony with what is taught in Sunday school and at home.

Thou shalt teach thy children diligently to love God with all their soul, heart, and might—when you sit in your house, when you walk through the day, when you go to bed, and when you get up in the morning, have Christian literature in front of them and reminders of God’s love around the place. This definitely refers to the home. It sounds like the clock ticking. But we ask, Must we not have time for other things?

We teach some by what we say, more by what we do, but most of all by who we are! We teach around the clock, by example and with very little extra effort. We leave our greatest impressions at home, and in public when we are least aware of it.

I recall an account shared by the late Lester Miller when he taught a financial seminar. As I recall it, there was a respected teenager who did not confess Christ until he was 19 years old. What took him so long? He said that when he was a boy, when his father found out that a family of the church had gotten a big John Deere tractor, on the way home from church he said, “There is no reason why we cannot have a bigger tractor than they have.” The next day, he actually went to the John Deere dealer and ordered a new one—one size bigger than the other people had. It seems that it was for no other reason than to have the biggest tractor around. That son was so disgusted that he concluded if that is the way of a Christian, he did not want to be one. Thank God, he did change his mind!

That father was a careless teacher by his example. Colossians 3:21 says “Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged.” Children need to see an example of what they are being taught. Being stricter with the child than they are with themselves can be very frustrating to the child. Matthew 18:6 says, “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Diligent teachers are self-

disciplined and live with their lives hidden with Christ in God. Galatians 2:20 says, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Teach them diligently to love God with all their soul, heart, and strength! Remember, God gave them to us as little babies and wants them back as blood-washed saints in Christ Jesus! By example we teach what we are! Thank God for children to teach!



Waiting... For the Redemption of all Things

Mary Jane Nisley, April 2017

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Romans 8:22–23

On April 8, 2017, my nephew, Jeremy Alan; age 10 (son of Sanford and Jolene Yoder) died in an accident with a Ventrac tractor. If we had the celestial vision to see beyond his sunset our mortal eyes would likely be blinded by the

Splendor of the Eternal *Sonrise* he is experiencing.

However, we earthlings are immediately bombarded with the Whys?... And the What ifs? Questions that have plagued impotent man for millennia.

- Who was responsible?
- Would a loving God orchestrate an accident?
 - Or did He merely allow it?
 - Is God incompetent in the face of a sin-cursed earth?
 - Is there a fiend who has the power to snatch an unfinished tapestry from the Master's Loom?
 - What about abortion? Are the tapestries of all unborn fetuses finished—microscopic masterpieces of exquisite craftsmanship? How about the victims of the Holocaust? Or is murder in a different category?

Questions! Questions! Questions! Verbal shrapnel that splinter our peace. When the dust settles there are still no answers that satisfy our longing to understand tragedy.

In our quest for answers we keep company with Job and his presumptuous friends. Bildad and friends knew the answers. Life worked like an algebraic equation. Right living and good works equaled provision, prosperity, protection, and health. However, God sharply rebuked Bildad and friends, for our inscrutable God refuses to be bound by the science of human logic. In our effort to make sense out of suffering, loss, or pain it is easy to fall into the same trap; reducing an Omnipotent God into $x+y=x^2$.

Job, on the other hand, demanded that God give an account. However,

the Great I AM never did answer Job's questions. For a long time He remained silent. Aloof. A distant spectator. When He finally spoke He quizzed Job; demanding answers, "Where were you when I created the world? Just what is your role in the preservation of the universe?"

Listening to the whirlwind of questions, Job replies, *Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.*

However, the I AM wasn't finished; He continued grilling Job. *Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? Or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put a hook in his nose? Or bore his jaw through with a thorn? Will he make many supplications unto thee? Will he speak soft words to thee?...*

After a deluge of questions, Job repents, his heart prostrate before the I AM. He cries: *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not... I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eyes have seen thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.*

Out of a host of ten-year-olds, why Jeremy Alan? Why does a man who doesn't drink die from cirrhoses

of the liver? Another man who squanders his life smoking cigarettes lives to the ripe age of 103. Innocent children in Yemen are dying of starvation?

Why?

How can a merciful Father allow suffering... Loss... Pain...

A satisfactory answer remains cloaked in mystery.

When Why's like forked lightning splinter our horizon, do we cover our ignorance with metallic platitudes? Demand answers? Demand; an accounting? Do we shrink from trusting a God we can't frame with puny logic or are we willing to cling tenaciously to His Mysterious Silence?

There are times when life seems as risky as a game of chance. Thankfully, neither chance nor fate but rather an all redeeming Father manages the universe. In His mercy He promises to weave the strands of our lives; whether it's the pain darkened woof of suffering or the rainbow-hued warp of blessing into a Masterpiece for his Studio in Heaven. However, redemption is hinged on our response. *To them that love God all things work together for good. (according to some scholars this is the correct order of Romans 8:28a in the Greek)* Will we choose to love Him in the times of darkness? Will we choose to trust the Grand

Weaver with the tapestry of our lives?

Perhaps we should bury our demands with he casket, falteringly echo Job, and bow before our inscrutable God, because... He is. A heart that kneels before the I Am hardly has the temerity to demand answers. Our prayers may feel empty—hollow as a gourd, but our spirits acquiesce. And an acquiescing spirit is a direct flight to the heart of the Father.


Memories linger... Warm. Bittersweet. Tears. And the seventeenth chair will always be empty at family gatherings. Our praise will always be etched with pain; for Jeremy Alan; age 10, has joined the Celestial Choir and is belting out one of his favorite songs:

The Music of Heaven, no mortal can sing it,

*Save He who attunes his poor soul,
At the throne of the Father, to swell
and to ring it,*

*With the angels to make it through
paradise roll.*

—Elisha A. Hoffman

Since our vision is shrouded by mortality, we are wracked with he pain of a Jeremy Alan; age-10-sized hole in our hearts. Redemption is our only Hope. It is the Star that guides through this dark night of grief as we join a travailing creation, waiting... for the redemption of all things. 

marriages

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

Eicher-Miller

Bro. Arlin, son of Sharon and the late Stephen Eicher, Richmond, MO, and Sis. Janette, daughter of Joseph and Norma Miller, Fairview, MO, at First Presbyterian Church, for Center A. M. Church, Hutchinson, KS, on June 3, 2017, by David Yoder.

Graybill-Yoder

Bro. Weston, son of Wilbur and Gladys Graybill, Centerville, PA, and Sis. Esther, daughter of Myron and Vera Yoder, Leon, IA, at Salem Mennonite Church on June 10, 2017, by Monroe Gingerich.

Kensinger-Young

Bro. Josiah, son of Daniel and Louise Kensinger, Mechanicstown, OH, and Sis. Sarah, daughter of Robert and Chantel Young, Perkins, OK, at Hillcrest Baptist Church for Cimarron Christian Brotherhood, on June 3, 2017, by Thad Thayer.

Leinbach-Kauffman

Bro. Willy, son of Lamar and Lucille Leinbach, Myerstown, PA, and Sis. Carla, daughter of Carl and Judy Kauffman, Bird-in-Hand, PA, at Weavertown A.M. Church, on June 24, 2017, by Dave Stoltzfoos.

Miller-Kauffman

Bro. Lyndon, son of Omar and Rose Miller, Leon, IA, and Sis. Katie Jo, daughter of Willard and Dawn Kauffman, Cheyenne, WY, on March 17, 2017, at Cheyenne Christian Fellowship, by Gerald Nolt.

Morinigo-Byler

Bro. Jonas son of Joaquin and Elizabeth Morinigo, Greenville, TN, and Sis. Kerri Elizabeth, daughter of Larry and Violet Byler, Hutchinson, KS, at Center A. M. Church on July 29, 2017, by David Yoder.

Nisly-Shrock

Bro. Virgil Nisly, Narvon, PA. son of J. Samuel and Brenda Nisly, and Sis. Josi Shrock, Leola, PA, daughter of Stanley and Carolyn Shrock, at Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church, on June 3, 2017, by Dave Stoltzfoos.

Stelfox-Troyer

Bro. Javan, son of James and Gladys Stelfox, Spring Grove, PA, and Sis. Victoria, daughter of Kenneth and Sharon Troyer, Waynesboro, VA, at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA, on June 17, 2017, by Bennie Byler.

Yoder-Beiler

Bro. Daniel, son of Jerry and Esther Yoder, Daviess County, IN, and Sis. Karen, daughter of Reuben and Naomi Beiler, Gap, PA, (presently serving in Ukraine), at Martindale Reception Center for Summitview Christian Fellowship on May 27, 2017, by Dave Stoltzfus.

Yoder-Eicher

Bro. Dan, son of Wayne and Emma Yoder, Cynthiana, KY, and Sis. Susan, daughter of Menno and Edith Eicher, Osage, City, KS, at Lyndon Amish Mennonite Church, Lyndon, KS, on March 17, 2017, by Rudy Overholt.


Yoder-Stoltzfus

Bro. James, son of Nathan and Doris Yoder, Free Union, VA, and Sis. Bethany, daughter of Chester and Rebecca Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, PA, at Ephrata Business Center for Summitview Christian Fellowship, June 3, 2017, by Dave Stoltzfus.

Yoder-Yoder

Bro. Robert Yoder (widower), Arthur, IL, and Sis. Clara Mae Yoder (widow), Arthur, IL, at Otto Center for Trinity Christian Fellowship on April 14, 2017, by Wilbur Gingerich.

Yutzy-Stoltzfus

Bro. Joshua, son of Eli and Mary Yutzy, Leon, IA, and Sis. Krystal, daughter of Steve and Beulah Stoltzfus, Perry, NY, at Warsaw, NY. on May 13, 2017, by Marlin Miller. 



cradle roll

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

Beiler, Darren and Diane (Yoder), Plain City, OH, third child, first son, Elliott Scott, June 20, 2017.

Bernik, Andrii and Hannah (Miller), Dover, OH, third child, first daughter, Camilla Jade, April 11, 2017.

Byler, Perry and Lorianne (Albrecht), Atwood, ON, second child, first son, Braden Cole, July 6, 2017.

Chupp, Daniel and Jana (Miller), Atwater, MN, third child and son, James Alvin, July 5, 2017.

Eicher, Brian and Liz (Stoll), Hicksville, OH, second child, first son, Derek James, July 3, 2017.

Eichorn, Randall and Monica (Gingerich), Paraguay/Whiteville, TN, first child and son, Bradley Stephen, June 20, 2017.

Gerber, Michael and Debbie (Stoltzfus), Taylorsville, NC, fourth child, third daughter, Marissa Brooke, June 13, 2017.

Gingerich, Carl and Joy (Kratzer), Mtn. View, AR, seventh child, sixth daughter, Chloe Anne, July 31, 2017.

Goff, Justin and Sarah (Schrock), Scotland Halfmoon, Belize, fourth child, second daughter, Hadassah Melodia, June 26, 2017.

Hamilton, Nathan and Carissa (Edwards), Harrison, AR, fourth child, second son, Henry Beau, June 30, 2017.

Hochstetler, Luke and Martha (Lehman), Goshen, IN, first child and son, Oliver Zayne, July 5, 2017.

Hostetler, Julius and Erma (Kropf), Harrison, AR, fourth child, second son, Malachi Sean, July 3, 2017.

Hottle, Matthew and Aimee (Beachy), Parsons, WV, second child and son, Carter Zion, June 14, 2017.

Jantzi, Conrad and Christine (Schmidt), Wellesley, ON, fourth child, second son, Marcus Joel, July 13, 2017.

Kauffman, Norman and Rose (Raber), Grabill, IN, third child and daughter, Teresa Joy, July 12, 2017.

King, Emanuel and Phoebe (Raber), New Holland, PA, third child, second daughter, Eliana Gail, May 5, 2017.

Lapp, Thaddeus and Edith (Mast), Malta, OH, third child, second son, Derek Charles, July 28, 2017.

Mast, Lyndall and Carla (Byler), Drasco, AR, second child and daughter, Lexi May, May 10m 2017.

Miller, Evangel and JoAnne (Brenneman), Honey Grove, PA, sixth child, third daughter (one son deceased), Heidi Jo, July 10, 2017.

Miller, Mike and Krista (Peachey), Minerva, OH, first child and daughter, Kezia Ruth, May 19, 2017.

Miller, Philip and Joanna (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, fifth child and son, Javin Michael, May 18, 2017.

Overholt, Derek and Evalina (Garber), Commerce, TX, first child and son, Alex Shawn, May 24, 2017.

Swartzentruber, Jason and Rachel (Kauffman), Bittinger, MD, first child and son, Carson John, May 10, 2017.


Swartzentruber, Joshua and Krista (Yoder), Bittinger, MD, second child and son, Gavin Bryce, April 24, 2017.

Troyer, James and Irene (Paniagua), Costa Rica/Whiteville, TN, fourth child, second son, Joseph James, June 21, 2017.

Wagler, Lester and Lois (Overholt), Lyndon, KS, sixth child, third daughter, Ginetta Marianne, March 30, 2017.

Yoder, Michael and Emma (Stoller), Berne, IN, second child, first son, Kanen John, June 21, 2017.

Yoder, Ray and Alina (Miller), Minerva, OH, fifth child and daughter, Makayla Beth, May 16, 2017.

Yoder, Steve and Marita (Sommers), Salisbury, PA, first child and son, Colin James, June 11, 2017. 

obituaries

Diener, Irma (Plank), 84, of Lovington, Illinois, died on May 6, 2017, at St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur, IL. She was born in Kokomo, Indiana, Sept. 16, 1932, daughter of the late George and Fannie (Herschberger) Plank.

She was a member of Trinity Christian Fellowship, Lovington.

On Oct. 22, 1953, she was married to Dannie Diener. He survives. Also surviving are five children: Darrell (Lorraine Helmuth) Diener, Arcola; Eloise (Glen) Gingerich, Arthur; Creta (Wallace) Byler, Huntsville, AR; Edna (Willis) Schrock, Russellville, KY; and Arnold (Teresa Petersheim) Diener, Arthur; 28 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren. Also surviving are two sisters: Ella Stutzman, Humboldt, and Sarah Plank, Wimauma, Florida..

She was preceded in death by three brothers: Dave, Irwin, and John Plank.

The funeral was held on May 9 at Otto Center, in rural Arthur, with burial in the Trinity Christian Fellowship Cemetery.

Kauffman, Edward, 79, of Arthur, IL, died June 14, 2017. He was born in Arthur, IL, Oct. 24, 1937, son of the late Sam and Fannie (Miller) Kauffman.

He was a member of Trinity Christian Fellowship. Some of his past involvements were farming, welding at EZ Trail, running a commercial cleaning business, and operating a bed and breakfast with his wife Anna in Middlebury, IN, for four years. Edward enjoyed working in his shop. He dearly loved his family who dearly loved him.

On March 12, 1912, he was married to Anna Kuhns. She survives. Also surviving are seven children: Glen (Carolyn) Kauffman, Arthur; Gary (Dorothy) Kauffman, Lovington; Dorothy Sommers, Sugarcreek, OH; Jim (Ginny) Kauffman, Phoenix, AZ; Phil (Cindy) Kauffman, Bee Branch, AK; Roger (Jodi) Kauffman, Arthur; and Treva (Kevin) Miller, Goshen, IN; 21 grandchildren, four great grandchildren; one brother, Ray Kauffman, Phoenix, AZ; and two sisters, Ella and Carrie Kauffman, both of Decatur, IL.

He was preceded in death by one son, Mervin, one son-in-law, Jon Sommers, four brothers: Fred, Ervin, Allen, and Levi Kauffman and two sisters: Cora Herschberger and Tillie Herschberger.

The funeral was held on June 18, with burial in the church cemetery.

King, Lovell Enos, 39 of Guys Mills, PA, died at UPMC Shadyside Hospital, Pittsburgh, after a three-month battle with leukemia. Lovell was born at Hutchinson, KS, June 11, 1978, son of Calvin and Judy (Yoder) King.

He was a member of Plainview Gospel Fellowship, Guys Mills.

On August 20, 2016, he was married to Yvonne Rose Yoder, daughter of Ray and Anne Yoder of Guys Mills. She survives.

Lovell started his early education in Kansas and graduated from Hillcrest Christian School, Harrison, Arkansas. Over the years Lovell worked with the family lawn care business, provided care for the elderly and taught school. After moving to Crawford County, Lovell delivered furniture for Home Wood Furniture and helped with maintenance and photography for Creative Resources Industries, Inc.

Lovell enjoyed photography and cooking, especially creating new recipes. He had a fascination with flying and enjoyed flying model airplanes, sharing enthusiasm with children. Relationships were very important to Lovell and he will be remembered for his kindness and care.

In addition to his wife of 10 months, Yvonne, and his parents, he is survived by siblings: Hadassa (Carlin) Beiler, Catlett, VA; Steven (Angela) King, China; Orlando King and Nathaniel King, Harrison, AR, and three nieces and four nephews.

The funeral was held on July 1, with Roy Hershberger, and David Yoder


servicing. John Nisley conducted the committal at the Plainview Gospel Cemetery.

Miller, David A., 77, of Millersburg, Ohio, died June 11, 2017, after years of declining health due to Lewy Body Dementia. He was born Nov. 11, 1939, to the late Atlee E. and Alma (Kurtz) Miller.

He was a member of Bethel Fellowship for 49 years, then joined an outreach church of Bethel, Shalom Christian Fellowship. His life was one of commitment to Christ and was an encouragement and inspiration to many. He enjoyed things of nature, singing and traveling. He was a retired dairy farmer and provided transportation for the Amish community for many years.

On August 24, 1961, he was married to Ruth Kaufman. She survives. Their children surviving are: James (Julia) Miller, Fairplay, SC; Joanna (Allen) Miller, Stuarts Draft, VA; Miriam (Paul) Miller, Sugarcreek, OH; Caroline (Leonard) Mast, Harrison, AR; Michael (Sharon) Miller, Millersburg, OH; Robert (Regina) Miller, Bakersville, OH; Dwight (Karen) Miller, Partridge, KS; Quentin (Kimberly) Miller, Montezuma, GA; 37 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by one son, Mark David, one step grandson, and one great grandson.

The funeral was held at Bethel Fellowship on June 14, with Marlin Miller, Mark Yoder, and Bill Mullet servicing. Burial was in the church cemetery. 

Recent studies continue to explore and illuminate the connection between the violence in football and deteriorating brain function. The evidence is such that some people wonder if football may one day be relegated to the scrap heap of history when its long-term negative effects are more fully understood. I believe there is too much money and idolatry involved for that to happen any time soon.

John Urschel offensive lineman with the NFL Baltimore Ravens recently retired from football at age 26. In addition to being a successful football player, he was an outstanding math student with several advanced degrees. He decided to leave his career in football in order to dedicate his full energies to math. He is a very intelligent person who understands the risks associated with playing football, but he is sympathetic with players who continue to play in spite of the risks. He described his love of football this way, “Playing football provides a specific concoction of feelings unavailable elsewhere — the rush of performing before raucous crowds, the exhilaration of confronting and issuing sanctioned

violence, the camaraderie of doing it with teammates.” On an earlier occasion he explained why he played football, “I play because I love the game. I love hitting people. There’s a rush you get when you go out on the field, lay everything on the line and physically dominate the player across from you. This is a feeling I’m (for lack of a better word) ‘addicted to,’ and I’m hard-pressed to find anywhere else. My teammates, friends and family can attest to this: When I go too long without physical contact I’m not a pleasant person to be around.”

Does this description of football strike you as incongruous with what our Hero Jesus’ taught by word and example of meekness, sacrificial love, humility and love to our enemies? The more I think about it the more striking the contrast becomes. Actually Jesus isn’t just our Hero, but our Savior.

• • • • •

The Mennonite Church USA Convention was held in Orlando, Florida in early July of this year. The participation of gay advocacy groups continue to move from the fringes to the center of these

gatherings. This year the involvement included an invitation to two of these groups, Pink Menno and Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Interests, to participate in the Future Church Summit.

Someone somewhere decided that a helpful way to describe churches who welcome and affirm this deviant practice as “progressive.” Keith Hostetler wrote in a letter to the editor of the *Mennonite World Review*, “Where is the fruit of the progressive movement? The fruit I have seen is the loss of committed members and congregations, decline of support of denominational publications, denominational colleges, denominational missions and decline in youth participating in church sponsored activities. So if we are to judge a tree by its fruit, it is becoming very apparent what fruit the progressive movement bears.”

Mr. Hostetler’s comments are directed toward things he is observing in the broader Mennonite church. I couldn’t skim over his comments without musing about the parallels we might observe of this phenomena in our circles.

• • • • •

“Sail and Sing Cruise” is a cruise experience that is being marketed as a Christian event that is faith building and

spiritually encouraging. Ventriloquist Ryan Bomgardner noticed that a lot of Amish and Mennonites frequented his performances. He also had been performing on various Christian cruises for several years. So, he worked to organize cruise events that combined entertainment, relaxation, and spiritual refreshment. He seeks to involve Mennonite singing groups to perform on these cruises which enhances the appeal to people from plain churches. The first one he organized was in 2012 and there has been one every year since. In June of this year about 650 people took part in the cruise to Alaska, most of which were Amish or Mennonite.

Since I didn’t go on any of these cruises, I must add that I can’t really comment on the validity of the experience as it relates to spiritual value. However, sometimes we are tempted to justify fleshly pursuits under the guise of spiritual edification. If we find ourselves attracted to this type of event, I wonder if we shouldn’t ask ourselves once, twice or maybe more often if this is one example of this justification.

The fact that this type of event seems to be financially viable indicates that plain people have quite a bit of disposable income, which brings with it sobering stewardship considerations.

• • • • •

In the early days of Hutterite education the five subjects taught in their schools were Penmanship, Reading, Memory, Sanitation and Proper Manners. It's interesting how our understandings of basic education have been revised over time.

• • • • •

Words are interesting little things that convey thought, ideas and a wide variety of information. It is interesting that word meanings tend to shift with the passage of time. I'm not sure if definitions shift to match usage or if it's the other way around. But meanings and usage do change. Maybe it's a sign that I'm getting old when I notice words that are used both in conversation and in print media, to exaggerate rather than accurately represent. I'm guessing that using words to exaggerate or emphasize leads to some of this shift in meaning over time. Some of the words I'm thinking are, *stunned*, *shocked*, *literally*, *hilarious*, *hate*, *panic*, *amazing*, *incredible*, *awesome*, *brilliant*, *epic*, *horrified*, etc... For instance, the word *incredible*, actually means "not believable". But it is commonly used to refer to something that is remarkable or extraordinary. This type of usage is now widely accepted as accurate. I'm not trying to be a word policeman here, because

the words I referred to here are likely words that I misuse all the time (oops, there's another example) without even thinking of it. When I do think before I speak or write, I believe that accuracy usually serves us better than exaggeration.

• • • • •

Paul Henry Gingerich was 12 years old when he and his 15-year-old friend shot and killed the friend's step-father in Indiana. They were both tried as adults and both pled guilty to conspiracy to commit murder. This past March Paul was released from prison several weeks after his 19th birthday. He lives with his mother in Fort Wayne. He has gotten a job and is under heavy supervision, including round-the-clock electronic monitoring. His freedom to move about is limited and the conditions for his release include probation until 2030.

This case forces those charged with making and enforcing laws to consider how responsible a 12-year-old is for actions like this. I don't envy them.

• • • • •

This month marks the anniversary of the well-known 9-11 terrorist attacks in 2001. I can remember where I was when I heard the news that forenoon. I heard my elders make similar remarks about how they

heard the news about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The 2001 event sparked a big change in the security measures employed to secure our borders. People still clamor for more secure borders.

Sometimes we hear people advising us to set personal boundaries so other people don't take advantage of us. Some of this thought is quite helpful, but I'm not sure it all is.

I'm trying to figure out how Christ's example of giving himself to others, to spend and be spent figure into the idea of enforcing personal boundaries as a means of self-preservation. I'm beginning to wonder if a more basic consideration for us is to be sure that our energies are being expended doing the Lord's will. Is it possible that focusing on boundaries rather

than faithfulness, on our weakness rather than His provision, might contribute to our problem rather than solving it? I welcome any comments and responses any of you might add to this discussion.

God is love. It makes sense that Christ's followers should exercise love by being the most hospitable people around. Our neighbors aren't only those whose fields and yards border ours. The hospitality that we are called to must influence our attitude toward foreigners as well. I'm troubled when professing Christians adopt the thinking that our security will somehow be improved by reinforcing our borders. Our hope is in Christ, not our borders and boundaries.

-RJM 

The Question of Recreational Marijuana

Lydia Yoder

Colorado is a beautiful state known for its mild climate and soaring mountains. The barren, silent eastern plains dramatically give way to the breathtaking Rocky Mountains as you drive west. Each year, millions of

tourists come from all over the world to enjoy the vast stretches of untamed natural beauty in this diverse state. But in the last few years, the landscape has changed. Almost overnight huge greenhouses have mushroomed out of the desert to

supply a bustling industry. It seems that legal marijuana is settling in to stay. Meanwhile, many Colorado citizens are still wondering, “Should recreational marijuana be legal?”

Legalized marijuana has dramatic effects on personal life. Physical consequences are often the first and most easy to identify. Marijuana is absorbed into the blood very quickly, reaching the heart within seconds. Your brain then releases large amounts of dopamine, which causes the “happy” emotions associated with getting high. Marijuana has also been shown to cause impaired memory formation, severe anxiety, hallucination, panic attacks, impaired muscular coordination, decreased reaction time, impaired speech, and increased heart rate.

The long-term effects of using recreational marijuana are even more sobering. It can weaken the respiratory system in much the same way smoking does, causing chronic bronchitis and reduced oxygen absorption. In fact, studies are showing that marijuana smoke is often more harmful than tobacco smoke, because those using marijuana need to inhale more smoke per breath and hold it for a longer time, increasing the potential for damage.

Marijuana use during pregnancy is associated with a higher risk of miscarriage and stillbirth, and has been tied to developmental and hyper-activity disorders in children. New mothers are highly discouraged from using marijuana while breast-feeding, as the toxins may be transferred to the infant through the milk.

Furthermore, marijuana has often been shown to act as a “gateway drug,” increasing the chances that the user will begin using even stronger, more dangerous drugs, such as heroin or crystal meth. If a person uses any stimulant long enough, the effects will gradually become less and less. When this happens, they will use larger or more potent quantities of the stimulant, or they turn to another stimulant to achieve the “high” they depend on.

The mind is also affected by drug-abuse. Drug abuse can cause memory loss and distort reality. The coveted “high” often involves hyper-active senses and a distorted perception of time. Those using drugs are often the victims of hallucinations and paranoia. Marijuana makes it more difficult to think rationally and solve problems. It lowers inhibitions, causing reckless and often harmful behavior.

Another area influenced by drug use is rarely mentioned: the soul. While the Bible does not specifically mention the use of recreational drugs, it does lay out several principles that we can apply to the issue.

One of the main themes of the book of Proverbs is the contrast between wisdom and foolishness. It has much to say about the effect of alcohol on our words and actions. It doesn't condemn the use of alcohol because of what it is, but because of the way it affects the consumer. We are warned to be extremely cautious in our use of alcohol so it seems logical to conclude that the same principles apply to other substances that have similar effects.

We are also to be good stewards of our time, our money, and our bodies; the use of drugs proves to be a drain on all three of these factors. Marijuana and other drugs are usually expensive and can mean that some necessity is foregone. This becomes especially hurtful when a parent or other provider acquires the drug with money at the expense of food, housing, and other basic needs.

Perhaps the biggest drawback from a spiritual perspective is a drug's tendency to become addictive. We are commanded to love the Lord

with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength (NN, Mark 12:30). An addiction is that which has the power to control us, thereby becoming the object of our worship. Since worshipping anyone or anything other than God is idolatry, we can conclude that drug addiction (or any other addiction) is sin.

Marijuana is very addictive. A report published on *Narconon.org* tells us that out of all marijuana users, one in eleven will become addicted. If use begins in teen years, the chances increase to one in six. (Narconon)

But drug abuse does not affect just the one "doing drugs." Our choices almost always have repercussions for those around us, and the use of drugs can affect entire communities. The first ones to feel these effects are usually the immediate family.

There is increasing evidence of the negative impact on children of regular drug users. Children often suffer from a lack of leadership and provision. They are also more likely to start using drugs themselves. According to a report by Focus on the Family, the reported incidences of young children (age five or younger) being accidentally exposed to marijuana increased 138% from 2013 to 2014. Additionally, 11.2% of

Colorado youth (ages 12 to 17) are regularly using marijuana. This is significantly higher than the national average of 7.2% for the same age group.

Drug abuse also has negative effects for the larger community and society as a whole. One objection to legalizing marijuana in Colorado is that growing marijuana for recreational use requires massive amounts of the precious water supply. According to *theganjier.com*, a website seeking to share professional “expertise, wisdom, and tips to those interested in being part of the new new candida industry,” each one-pound plant needs one gallon of water per day. This becomes alarming when we consider how many hundreds or thousands of plants are being grown in Colorado legally. While many in the agriculture industry pray for adequate winter snowfall to make it through the dry summers, the greenhouse down the road is using copious amounts of the precious liquid each day to nurture these little plants. While many counties and small towns enforce water-use regulations and ranchers fight legal battles over water rights, the new neighbors are quietly pouring it into a crop that brings destruction to many. Greenhouses

are also causing controversy over the staggering energy costs of commercial greenhouses. An article published in *The Denver Post* reported that legal grow sites used as much electricity in 2014 as 35,000 households.

Those in favor of legalizing recreational drugs often cite economic benefits as an advantage to capitalize on. The thought is that, “If people are going to buy it anyway, we might as well profit from it.”

Colorado has seen revenue from legalized marijuana total sales of legal marijuana in 2016 were in the range of one billion dollars, \$200 million of which were tax dollars. But perhaps we are paying for it in different ways. Many citizens feel that public safety is being compromised. Law enforcement has faced challenges with being understaffed and under-trained.

People driving under the influence of marijuana pose some of the same risks that drunk drivers do. The report by Focus on the Family also states that the number of traffic deaths associated with marijuana use increased 92% between 2010 and 2014. This number does not include deaths tied to alcohol’s influence.

Other states are also seeing more illegal activity related to marijuana

use, as a University of Nebraska report suggests. According to *insidesources.com*, the state's "marijuana arrest rate increased by about 11% between 2013 and 2014," costing the state \$10.2 million. It's interesting to note that the counties with the greatest increases were one ones that border Colorado and Interstate 80.

Advocates for the legalized drug movement theorize that legalizing marijuana would reduce the crime rates by eliminating the "black market." Perhaps so, perhaps not. Preliminary reports may show a decline in "drug-related crimes" in the last few years, but there is more to this argument than first meets the eye. Early reports suggest that less marijuana is being smuggled into the United States from Mexico, but they also show a corresponding increase in "harder" illegal drugs being smuggled across the border. More and more Americans are becoming addicted to drugs like marijuana, and eventually become "desensitized" and need something more potent to achieve the same results. While less marijuana is being smuggled into the US, drugs such as heroin and crystal meth are arriving in greater quantities.

Authorities are concerned about the drug cartels moving into

Colorado and growing marijuana, legally and illegally, to be transported elsewhere. Cities such as Pueblo and Trinidad are seeing a rise in gang activity and gang-related violence.

We should also realize that by legalizing marijuana and other drugs, people get the impression that the government is endorsing the use of those substances and therefore it must be a harmless activity. This seems to have the potential of raising crime rates, rather than lowering them.

While there may be some short-term benefits to legalizing marijuana, it seems clear that the risks far outweigh these benefits. How long will it take the people of Colorado and other states to realize that this "experiment" is causing great damage in every area it touches, and call for the overturn of the legislation that brought us this far? But, regardless of what the secular world says is legal or not, will the Christians stand firmly against the recreational use of damaging substances, or will they too be drawn into this infatuation with poison?

[This article was completed as part of the homework assigned for the course Biblical Ethics at Elnora Bible Institute. Printed in FCM Informer, May/June, 2017 Used by permission.]



My Eden is Coming

Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS


Perched in the apple tree, I munch my popcorn. Dickcissel and tufted titmouse pairs call from pasture and lawn while a warm breeze caresses my face. Baby apples dance on nearby twigs, keeping time to the anthem of creation. Green and lush, pasture grasses bow in graceful motion. Berries black and berries blue hang heavy on their branches, each crowding its neighbor. The first Asiatic lily buds are open, huge and blushing. Eden's glory, all around me.

But wait—an ant scurries in my popcorn bowl, clearly out of place. The infant apples are scarred with bug bites and the artwork of the yellow-bellied sapsucker threatens to girdle more limbs of my apple tree. And in the corner of the compost heap, a goodly crop of cheat grass nods agreeably, generously self-seeding so I can plant cheat next year as I side-dress garden crops. The slugs are in my lettuce; the pepper plants yellow with too much rain; alas, the armadillo uproots my herbs, and thistles adorn the strawberry patch. Eden's curse is all around me.

Do you feel it too? Each spring I sing as I plant, filled with hope for timely rains and bountiful harvest, fearing neither hail, drought, nor tornado. Each spring, though our address is Altamont, Kansas, I dream and plant

how to create a slice of paradise. I will create an oasis! Let there be graceful fern and vibrant flower! I will water and fertilize faithfully! Every single summer, my song of hope withers with the fescue as the curse unravels my momentary triumphs.

Hold on—let garden dreams wither on the vine and drop the watering hose. So what if the topsoil be blown to Minnesota? My Eden is coming. The paradise for which I yearn, waking or sleeping, is on its way. All I want and more than I can imagine is offered me in Jesus Christ. Heaven is more than gorgeous surroundings with no evidence of the blight of sin; it is contained in a Person: the bliss of Home within the heart of God. There I will experience untarnished innocence, unblemished beauty, timeless relationship, unhindered fellowship, and unending joy.

For now, mosquitoes sing in my ears and sweat drips from my nose. My friend prays for her embittered son. Our parents age and fade before us. Weakness and sickness plague those I love, and I sense darkness at midday. But with eyes of faith, I see my Eden coming and I can rest as I work. For now, I will plant love and hope in family and brotherhood, confident that God will water my efforts and the harvest will be glorious. 

Goals That Make a Difference

Gerald Miller, Guys Mills, PA

At the time of this writing school boards, principals, and teachers have set their sights on the beginning of a new school year. Parents are watching the back to school sales and students are excited about their new school supplies. Students are quietly letting their teachers know that they are glad school is about to start (even though their reasons may be rather lame, such as getting out of washing as many dishes or doing the laundry for their mother). These several weeks in August leading up to the start of school are laden with excitement, nervousness, angst, and the hope that a new beginning brings.

By the time you read this, school has been humming along. School boards, administrators, and teachers are grateful that the kinks of the new year have been worked out and the routines and rhythms of school life have been established.

What will sustain the happiness

and the joy of the first two months of school? Remember the first day of school and your first grader? For most children, the first grader can't sleep the night before because of the joy and excitement of the "very first day of school." Remember the bowl of cereal that was untouched because he just couldn't eat that first morning? Is there a way to keep the joy and pleasure of learning new things as a first grader all through the year? Is there a way to keep the joy and pleasure of learning new things as a first grader until the child has completed their formal education?

I offer an open letter to some of the "players" in our schools in an effort to help us continue our school year with vision and energy.

Pastors: How you talk about the school matters to your church. When church members know that the school matters to church leadership it increases the energy people have for the school. As you communicate the

value of a Christian education, you make it so much easier for the board, teachers, students, and parents to give themselves to learning that will benefit the kingdom of God both here and for eternity.

School boards: As a school board member, you have a significant role to play that has deep implications. The energy and vision you bring to the school is keenly felt. When you visit the school and are visible occasionally, truly your actions speak loudly as to your commitment to the education of these children. Do students hear you blessing your teachers and principal? Do students know that you care about the school? Does your church feel the impact of the school? Communicate clearly and often with the church and grow the vision for the school. As a school board, you may feel like your contribution isn't all that important. Schools know better. You matter. A lot.

Administrators, principals, and head teachers: As a leader in the school, one of your primary jobs is to grow your school culture into a gift for the community. The culture of the school is a primary indicator of how students will feel at the end of the year when they leave school. I feel blessed when on the last day of school, our students slowly walk to

the busses and vehicles and quietly drive off, as if they are not sure they want the year to end. School leaders who lead with the end in mind are constantly thinking about what they want the outcomes of the school year to be. The little decisions we make in day to day operations make a huge difference, as the school culture is the context in which the learning takes place. Is school a place where there is much joy? Is school a place where there is rigor? We have a great privilege to set the stage for learning through the culture that is cultivated.


Teachers: Teachers have the distinct privilege of spending many hours every day with impressionable young people. Our lives matter. We are called to disciple. The reality of this is simply that we will be imitated. James 3:1 further instructs that "... not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." This verse is not intended to put fear into hearts, but to remind us that we have influence that has eternal implications. Our lesson planning, the relationships that we build, and the environment of the classroom is a tremendous opportunity to show Jesus to our students as we teach.

Students: Students, in 22 years of teaching I have yet to hear a student come back to me after they

had graduated with the words, “I wish I hadn’t worked as hard as I did in school.” Instead, regret is often expressed, but is really only felt after the amazing opportunity to have an education is gone. There are millions of children all over the world that are desperate to get just a small portion of the education you receive (and take for granted). Many children hardly learn to read, making it difficult to live a full life. And you, every day, have the AMAZING opportunity to be taught by Christian teachers in a setting where your best interests are considered. Invest yourself, work really, really hard, and enjoy learning to the fullest!

Parents: As parents, we do not have everything it takes to raise our children. We have gaps, blind spots, and weaknesses. When we send our children to school, we are not “shipping them off” so we can have a

break. Rather, we are partnering with our church and school to enable our child to be trained for the sake of the kingdom. Learning is a tremendous privilege. It is something that our children will do the rest of their lives. I remind us that education that is seen as a necessary evil is not a Christian education. We are called to train our young people. If you are excited about the school and consistently back up the teachers, your children will pick up their cues from you and you will have the greatest chance of enjoying lifelong learners in your family, just as God created them to be.

Together we can make this year full of excitement, joy, rigor, and learning as we train our children for the Lord through schools. It will take all of us pulling the same direction. And all of this we do so that “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.” 



***Let us pray to find
God’s will, not to
get His approval
of our own.***

Teaching Is a Mission

“And he gave some...teachers”

Selected by Floyd Stoltzfus

Two hundred boys were surveyed in the slum section of a large city. “They don’t have a chance,” concluded the analysts evaluating the boys’ possible futures.

Twenty-five years later 180 of those boys were contacted again. All but four were successful businessmen, lawyers, and doctors. Each one, when asked how he succeeded, said, “There was a teacher...”

If that much worldly accomplishment can be attributed to the efforts of one teacher, shouldn’t a Christian teacher be able to influence dozens of boys and girls for God’s kingdom?

Christopher Dock, more than 200 years ago, said education’s purpose is to make us as much like Christ as possible. Though no substitute for parents, teachers can have real impact, reinforcing godly homes, and supplementing weak ones. Educators

know that schoolteachers are not teaching mere facts; they are teaching a way of life that will remain after many facts are forgotten.

Love speaks to every age in every generation. When asked how she had done it, the teacher who spurred those 176 boys to success replied, “It’s really very simple. I loved those boys.”

In Christopher Dock’s day, when school masters centered upon the “3 R’s” rather than on children, Dock’s educational emphasis was refreshingly different. One writer says of him, “We know he possessed ‘an extreme love for children.’ He did not underestimate the power of a warm personal love for each student to melt barriers erected by disobedience. It is evident that Dock loved and was loved by his pupils.”

Seeing a “mission accomplished” is one of the “highs” in every teacher’s experience, but too often there

are “lows”—misunderstanding, criticism, rejection. The teacher who tries to help a student academically and socially, but sees no positive results, may feel discouraged and like a failure.


Sometimes we need reminders; teachers need all the encouragement they can get from school boards and patrons. Holding up the arms of your teachers will help them to help you in the mission of training your children.

God uses teaching, right along with preaching and parenting, to build His kingdom. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” is part of the Great Commission. “And he gave some... teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry,

for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

One former teacher recently commented, “When I think of school boys who are now ministers of the Gospel, faithful pillars in the church, I like to think that school had some influence in the direction their lives have taken.”

How much does teaching accomplish? God gives the increase in His own time and way. And some day our Father who seeth in secret will openly reward teachers for their years of hard work, their prayers, and their faithful examples that helped to shape the lives of children in their care.

[Taken from Christian Light Publications, May-June, 2017. Originally published in A Light, in 2003. Used by permission.] 

helpers at home

Practical Homemaking Tips

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

It is good to have goals and purposes in life. We need to evaluate what we want in our lives and what we don't want. We have ideals by which we want to find perfection and acceptance from others. However, life does not always

happen according to our perfectly outlined plans. There will be God-given responsibilities come into our lives which will demand our time and attention in ways we had not planned. We may find ourselves in situations beyond our control. We

can accept and enjoy these challenges or we can fret and fuss; the choice is ours.

Most women face the question of how to balance the work required in keeping a clean, organized and beautiful home along with nurturing relationships and enjoying life and my family. However, life does not always happen according to our perfectly outlined plans. There will be God-given responsibilities come into our lives which will demand our time and attention in ways we had not planned. We may find ourselves in situations beyond our control. We can accept and enjoy these challenges or we can fret and fuss; the choice is ours.

There are a few basic housekeeping routines that have worked for me in my busy mothering years, and I want to share them with you.

One major answer in the daily routine of housekeeping is to keep it simple. This refers to every area of our life. The more complicated our lives becomes, the more frustrated we become as mothers. So keep it simple.

Begin the day with a plan. What do you want to accomplish today? Naturally, the first requirement is to get out of bed. I encourage you to do this ahead of the children. Establish a regular morning routine. This involves at the very least: some

quiet time, making the bed, taking a shower, and getting dressed and combed. I find if I start the day out right, I can usually handle the rest of the day. Your quiet time and breakfast preparations will vary according to age and needs of your family. Just follow a plan.

Next, you will want to focus on the daily chores, such as kitchen cleanup and laundry. Give the house a quick pick-up and clean-up. You are now ready for your plans for the day. The school children are out the door. Now is the time to plan your supper menu. Get your meat out of the freezer and make any preparations you can, it will make your afternoon much easier.

If you are a mother with toddlers or a new baby this may be all you will get done for the day. That's OK! Enjoy changing diapers, wiping dirty noses, reading stories and rocking babies. Your time will come when you will accomplish other things. Today, your children are your first responsibility. Remember even small children can learn to pick up toys and help around the house. Keep life simple at this important stage in your life.

Housekeeping can be divided into small portions. You have a few extra moments before mealtime, clean out a drawer or wipe up the counters. It is amazing how much can be done with

a few hours. Use extra hours to clean the bathrooms, dust the furniture or whip up a batch of cookies. A few hours here and there accomplishes much work.


Wash the dishes or put them in the dishwasher after the evening meal. Straighten up the kitchen, pick up toys and generally have your house in order before you retire for the night. I used to pack the children's lunches in the evening to make my morning routine a bit easier. Of course, as the children get older they will be able to assist you with the lunches.

When we stick to our basic routines, our homes stays "clean enough" most of the time. Keeping up on things means we rarely feel overwhelmed by all that needs to be done! When our homes are maintained on a daily basis, it is easier to add other tasks now and then. Minimize your online time or going-away times.

Be organized. Life is just so much

easier when everything has a place and everything is in its place. Clean out cupboards and closets and get rid of what you don't use or need. There are many organizations which are glad for good used clothes. Occasionally even give something you like or want to keep. God loves a cheerful giver.

Don't be lazy. God has given you energy and ability to accomplish the work He has given you to do. Don't make excuses to neglect your work. Yes, sometimes we have to push ourselves to work even when we don't feel like it. Breathe a prayer for strength. Do your work cheerfully.

Last but not least. Don't stress too much. Your life is not about a perfect home— it is about a happy family! Focus on what is important. If your work has not gotten done today because you met your families' needs first, you have chosen the better part. God blesses you for it. 

thinking generation

Remember—or Self-Destruct

Gideon Yutzy, Dunmore East, Ireland

I don't need to memorize how many cups are in a gallon.

If I forget the capital of Japan,

I can Google it. Memorizing phone numbers is a waste of brain space. And as for remembering the two-step

formula to convert between Celsius and Fahrenheit? Not a chance.

We have computers to do our memory work—it's one of the perks of being alive in our time. But would it shock us to find out that our descendants will be subbing out much more basic questions to their computers? Questions like: *What is my zip code? How many days was Jesus in the tomb? When is my mom's birthday?*

Okay, so I have no way of knowing this will be the case, and I don't want to sound alarmist. But I think Wendell Berry was on to something when he said the world's next great division will be "between people who wish to live as creatures and people who wish to live as machines." Will that division also run between people who use their memory and those who don't?

Is memory doomed to become, for a broad swath of people, just another obsolete muscle?

Remember my words or perish. In summary this is what God told the Israelites in Deuteronomy 6 as they prepared at long last to enter the Promised Land. If only they had.

So what is remembering? Is it merely an intellectual exercise? Does it just mean storing long sequences of information in our brains? That is certainly important because it keeps

the frontal lobe, hippocampus, and other brain parts active and healthy—and brain health contributes to overall health.

But no, it is more than that. Remembering is an essential part of Christian discipleship, a requirement for participation in God's kingdom. And good though it is to remember Asian capitals and measurement conversions, some aspects of remembering are simply indispensable. Here are three.

1) We must remember our own past experiences. Revisiting the past can be painful. Even the best events of our past are fraught with imperfection, so we tend to avoid learning from our past by riding the merry-go-round of the present. Too seldom do we pause and reflect. Too seldom do we glimpse the rich tapestries God is trying to weave with our lives as a whole.

The University of Virginia conducted a study recently in which the participants were given two choices: 1) sit alone in silence with nothing but their own thoughts or 2) suffer electric shock. Two-thirds of the men and one-fourth of the women chose electric shock. We as people—especially in a distraction-rife time like ours—are not naturally inclined to reflect on the past.

"All of humanity's problems stem

from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone," said Blaise Pascal. Of course Pascal did not mean that we should dwell on past hurts during our times of reflection and solitude, a sure recipe for bitterness and depression. But can we learn to recognize the thread of God's tender leading *amidst* the imperfection?

"My feet almost slipped...for I envied those who were proud," wrote the composer of Psalm 73, reliving the pain of his past. Yet later in the psalm we notice the assurance that prevailed in the end: *God was continually with him. God guided him with wise advice. God had led him to a position of honor.* Remembering had enriched his outlook.

2) We must remember how God worked in other people's lives. It has become cliché: "Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it," but this truth resonates with Christianity. Study Hebrews 11 and see what happens to your perspective as you consider the "great cloud of witnesses" who followed God before us.

"These things happened to them as examples and were written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the ages have come," wrote Paul in 1 Corinthians 10.

Every new generation has an advantage over the one before because

they now have several decades' worth of additional history to learn from. But if we neglect that instruction, *if we neglect to remember*, then we will flounder and drown on the Sea of Life. No matter how much history we have to learn from, it will benefit us nothing if we are passive consumers overly focused on our own times.

3) We must remember the words that nourish us. People cannot shut off their minds. We are always thinking. And if you are a normal person, it is difficult for you to think constantly the thoughts that are "true," "commendable," and "excellent" (Philippians 4).

Note well, though, that the mind thinks on the material to which we expose it. All people spend their days immersed in something tangible—botany, movies, business, sensuality, golf, the political arena—and people's minds will think thoughts surrounding those subjects. In other words, we have considerable control over our thoughts.

If we constantly expose our minds to shallowness, we cannot expect to think deeply. If we constantly expose our minds to materialistic pursuits, we cannot expect to think God's thoughts.

The solution? Memorize. I cannot think of a more expedited way to think good thoughts than

to memorize something wise, something profound. Somehow our minds have a way of absorbing the words we memorize.

Whether it be Scriptures, poems, prayers, excerpts from a Christian classic, or hymns—we absorb more by memorizing. One of the tragedies of modern Christianity is that a colossal reservoir created for memory remains largely unfilled. If Jews or Muslims are serious about their faith, they memorize vast amounts of their sacred texts. Why shouldn't the same be true for Christians?

Think about it: by memorizing one verse per day (well within the grasp of even mediocre memories), we could memorize the first twenty-nine Psalms in one year. And be assured, the rewards exceed the investments. As Psalm 1 promises, the one who meditates on God's law "day and night" will succeed "in everything he attempts"—everything!


Of course it is not enough to merely memorize words. *Use it or lose it*, was the adage we promoted at the English language school where I taught in Poland. Pray the verses. Apply them in real-life situations. Let them change you. Mutter them to yourself like a dog gnaws a bone, to borrow from Eugene Peterson's *Eat This Book*. Learn them well enough to say them as automatically as you

can the Lord's Prayer. Then repeat the process with another choice passage.

And now, let us all take heart: millions have gone before us, and their lives provide ample wisdom and instruction by which we can join their Apostolic Train. "We feebly struggle, they in glory shine; yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine," says the old hymn *With All the Saints*.

We all anticipate the day when we also will "in glory shine." Of course this won't happen if we don't take action and remember. The opposite of *remember*, my polyglot brother-in-law recently pointed out, is *dismember*. In our default setting the wisdom of the past remains severed from us, and we are left profoundly ill-equipped for the pressures of life.

Hopefully though, at least on good days, we *re-member* the wisdom of the past. Hopefully we internalize it and make full use of it—as we should, again and again.

Writers for Thinking Generation wish to generate, above all else, greater involvement in God's Kingdom—especially among today's Anabaptist young people. Did this month's column evoke a response from you? Email the author at gideonutzy@gmail.com 

(USPS 767-160)
Calvary Messenger
2673 Township Rd. 421
Sugarcreek, OH 44681

Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

To mistreat another member of the human race is to offend God.

• • • • •

Tarry at a promise of God until God meets you there.

• • • • •

Gossip can rightly be called ear pollution.

• • • • •

If we do not master our habits, they will master us.

• • • • •

Good humor is to life what shock absorbers are to automobiles.

• • • • •

Miracle drugs are nothing new; Moses had two tablets that,
if applied, would cure most of the world's ills.

• • • • •

Purity in the heart produces power in the life.

• • • • •

A log cabin may hold more happiness than a mansion.

• • • • •

A home is a house with a heart inside.

• • • • •

If we are too big to do little things, we are probably not ready to do big things.

• • • • •

Everyone we meet exceeds us in something.

• • • • •

Love finds a way; indifference finds an excuse.

• • • • •

A lazy person talks mostly about yesterday and tomorrow.