



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

OCTOBER 2017

Meditation	
<i>He Is The Same</i>	1
Editorial	
<i>In Six Days</i>	2
Reader Response.....	6
The Bottom Line	
<i>The Eclipse and the Apocalypse</i>	6
CASP Announcement.....	9
CBS Announcement	10
Segregated Seating.....	10
What is a Father?	12
Too Little.....	13
Marriages.....	14
Cradle Roll.....	14
Ordination.....	17
Obituaries	17
Observations	18
Update from Iraq.....	22
Stopping Evil	24
The Potter's Wheel.....	26
Security	27
Helpers at Home	
<i>Mothering in Today's World</i>	30
Junior Messages	
<i>Does God Care About Beef?</i>	32
Thinking Generation	
<i>Binding the Truth Around Our Necks—Is There a Game Plan?</i>	33
Thought Gems	back cover

Calvary Messenger

October 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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He Is The Same


Mrs. Sadie (Jonas) King, Meadow Bridge, WV

Life is just not the same after loved ones have gone—
Gone to the land of heavenly bliss.
When the table is set and the chairs are all filled,
Not everyone is here—there is so much amiss.
But Jesus is the same!

It's just not the same after my loved ones are gone—
Gone to the place of no tears and no pain.
When the heart longs to tell them of new victories won,
We want to remember that our loss is their gain...
And that Jesus is the same!

He is the Rock in life's privileges and pressures,
He is the Way when life seems like a mirage,
He is the Truth when He seems to haunt me,
He is the Life when my friends pass away.

Jesus is the same in all seasons of life—
Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter.
“Lord, help us to walk on the sunny side of the street
With You each moment, each day, each year.
Rather than stumbling along in the shadows.”

“This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness” (Lam. 3:21-23). 

In Six Days

How the created world (our earth) came into being has often been debated. One theory rests on denial of the work and presence of a Divine Being. This position readily goes to what is commonly called the “old earth” theory of humanistic evolution. It uses terms like “the big bang,” then also “survival of the fittest” and other explanations that do not require the work of a Creator who can speak worlds into existence.

A second theory seems more complex. It is known as theistic evolution and also believes in an old earth. Francis Collins (in Wikipedia) describes theistic evolution as, “The position that evolution is real, but that it was set in motion by God and characterizes it as accepting that evolution occurred as biologists describe it but under the direction of God.” These observations strike me as a step away from simple faith in the Almighty Creator’s work by divine fiat at the beginning of time.

It seems to have special appeal to the doubtful mind. I shall not try to answer the questions that this theory brings with it.

A third theory is that of a “young earth” interpretation. It is based on a simple reading of Genesis 1: **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth....”** Hebrews 11:3 states our interaction with this truth as: **“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”** An associated term from the original languages uses the term *ex nihilo*, which means “out of nothing.” In taking a literal interpretation and explanation, we are not required to explain much. Instead we find enough explanation in simply believing it as God’s Word states it. It seems to me this honors God’s explanations to us and is preferable to exploratory thinking that seems to put forth the idea that God has failed to communicate adequately to us, and that therefore

we should try to explain things to our intellectual satisfaction.

Let me hasten to say, however, that not all inquiry into God's created mysteries is necessarily ill-fated or even ill-intended. It is when we reach conclusions that reduce the need for faith and increase the dependence on human understanding that we invite paradigms that dishonor God.

As I ponder this, I am satisfied to believe that God created the earth with its many forms of life and the wonders in the sky and the sea in just six days. (See Exodus 20:11.)

I praise God for the work of Answers in Genesis (AIG). We toured the Creation Museum (KY) in its first year and hope to visit Ark Encounter when opportunity comes. I am told that certain key AIG teachers have sometimes scorned evolutionists of both persuasions. That is certainly unfortunate. I was made aware of this tendency one time several decades ago, when a young-earth creationist and a humanistic evolutionist debated their respective points of view in nearby Newton, KS. A number of us attended the debate. I think most of us thought the creationist had won the debate—hands down. Senior Brother Alvin C. Yoder (now departed) lamented that debate, quoting the Scripture,

2 Timothy 2:24, **“The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle toward all men, apt to teach, patient.”** Scorn has, I believe, flowed too freely in both directions on these matters.

Defense of the simple, exhilarating belief that God created the earth with the spoken word out of nothing need not (and should not) stoop to ridicule. This belief deserves to be embraced and held forth as part of the Good News. Man's insulting comments do not enhance a simple interpretation and explanation. The Good News of Jesus Christ deserves the high regard of respectful embrace—not scornful or degrading remarks of other interpretations.

Faithful men in the early church assumed that God was the Creator. Note Paul's message in Acts 17:22-31. He spoke of the Supreme Being as, **“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth...that they should seek**

the Lord....”

Paul asserted that God created His world that included man with the highest intellect in His grand design. God desires man’s worship and will not accept any man-devised substitutes. They are but idols that take man’s devotion away from the only One worthy of devotion: the Creator God and his Son, Jesus Christ. Paul also addresses a false premise of evolution, which has (at least in the past) asserted that certain races of men are superior to others. No, God made of one blood all nations of men. Even today, Red Cross pays little attention to the *race* of blood donors. Red Cross, however, notes with interest lifestyle issues like tattoos, body piercing, and morals (especially homosexuality). They also want to know in what countries the donor has traveled.

A second apostolic voice is that of Peter. In his second epistle, he wrote: **“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation, For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old,**

and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished. But the heavens and earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men....” (3:3-7). This Scripture refers to both the Creation and the Flood.

The idea that, “all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” describes *uniformitarianism*, a basic tenet of old-earth theory. Some decades ago, Brother Ezra Peachey told me that nowhere on earth has the geologic stratification that old-earth theory gives us been found. I think this says that The Flood should be taken more seriously than evolutionists generally do. Peter’s words commend themselves to me in that The Flood offers better explanations for many geological phenomena than does evolution.

I have scanned three books that uphold the conclusions that Ezra Peachey expressed. These all go much beyond Bro. Ezra’s comment. These books are *Refuting Evolution*, Jonathan Sarfati, Ph. D., 1999. Moody Books, 129 pages, with 250,000 in print in the sixteenth printing; *Many*

Evidences for the Infallible Christian Faith Proofs, by Henry M. Morris, II, and Henry M. Morris, III, Moody Books, 376 pages, first printed in 1974, with sixteenth printing in 1998; and *The Genesis Flood*, John C. Whitcomb, Th. D., Th. D., and Henry M. Morris, Ph. D., 1961, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 489 pages. I grant that there is also a large printing mass that defends and promotes evolution. My plea is that we stay out of step with their conclusions. I believe that the infinite God we serve has chosen to remain partly hidden from our earthly eyes and that we will one day see much more than the brightest minds can now see.

I suppose that what we now use to describe certain aspects of God's world will some day seem about as profound as that of a six-year-old trying to analyze and solve advanced math. "...now we see through a glass darkly...." (1 Corinthians 13:12a).

Peter refers to the universal flood in Noah's time as evidence that God's mercy does come to an end. Just as God judged the world with water in Noah's time, so He will judge the world at last with fire. Willing ignorance (unbelief) attempts to revise and/or ignore God's calendar of final events.

In conclusion, I find nothing that is compelling in what humanistic evolution offers (and very little in theistic evolution) about origins. I find the simple "In the beginning God created" holding greater feasibility (what could be) and plausibility (what likely was). But those reasons in themselves are not the only reasons for taking God's Word at face value. Beyond the questions that evolution raises, I see a slippery slope of doubt that leads to apostasy. Furthermore, **"We have also a more sure word of prophecy...For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"** (2 Peter 1:21).

I realize that some readers may find these interpretations unsatisfactory. And I may be wrong. I certainly don't want my examination of God's handiwork and my feeble insights to stand higher than what God has said in His Word. Let us apply the words of a well-known hymn to this issue: ***"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said, who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?"*** [Rippon Selection of Hymns, 1787]

-PLM 

reader response

Re: The Bible and Inclusion, August, 2017. I really enjoyed and appreciated the article by Eric Brubaker on inclusion! He brought

clarity and truth to a subject that is often muddled.

Blessings,

Luke Nisly, Oswego, KS



the bottom line

The Eclipse and the Apocalypse

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

The eclipse on August 21, 2017 was a total solar eclipse, when the moon passed between the earth and the sun. A total solar eclipse had not been visible across the entire width of the United States for 99 years.

It is amazing how man's predictions can be so accurate, and for many years in advance. For example, we know that another solar eclipse visible anywhere in the United States will not occur again until 2024.

I was raking hay yesterday afternoon. One man who drove by pointed up, lest I miss something on high in my concentration of looking at the ground while driving my tractor.

It is noteworthy to observe the comparison between man's

predictions and those made by God. It was estimated that many millions of people drove extra miles, some of them traveling great distances, to get a good look. Reports were that in one spot in Kentucky some motels were filled for 200 miles in either direction north and south. Large parking lots filled with upward gazers in RV's and vehicles of all kinds. Concerns were expressed about possible gas shortages in these heavily traveled areas.

Many details of this eclipse were spoken of and followed with great interest by millions of people, beyond those who traveled for a closer look. Meanwhile, back home, many Bibles lay here and there with warnings about a future apocalypse. It is spoken of as a final and last day. God does not put Himself at a disadvantage by not

disclosing when that day will be. His purposes are advanced by saying, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:36).

Not being told the day nor the hour causes neglect and putting off the time to get into a readiness mode by repentance of sin. Our Lord’s delay has resulted in some people doubting it will be in their lifetime, to then just supposing it might never even happen. But the Lord’s words are more sure than those events which have already happened. The Bible says the men who were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration were reliable witnesses of it. That is a fact from history. Peter was there, and he writes in reference to it. “And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (II Peter 1:18,19). These verses tell us that the “more sure word of prophecy” is that which is even more sure than Peter’s historical remembrance of being with Christ on that mount.

The Bible speaks of a final day punctuated by the “change” that will happen at an unannounced

moment (I Corinthians 15:51-54). It additionally says it will be heralded by the Lord descending and the angel sounding the trumpet. At that singular moment “the dead in Christ shall rise first, Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (I Thessalonians 4:16,17). The “change” and the “caught up” are two expressions of the same great event.

All believers will suddenly and miraculously rise, either out of the graves, or those living will be changed into new bodies in a moment. Those unprepared who are not saved will stay behind. The day of the Lord will be preceded with many signs, given with sufficient detail that it should cause us to at least occasionally get excited by such a prospect of divine certainty.

Apocalypse is that which discloses the ultimate destruction of evil and the triumph of the good, either symbolically or in actuality. The Bible declares it to us thus. The end of the world is sure. Even non-believers fear it as coming from a chain reaction of shortages by which the overcrowding of people will cause a strangulation of death world wide. Or else, that too many nervous fingers on nuclear buttons will cause man to self-destruct.

We don't believe either of those will cause the end of the world. They may be a part of the signs of the end, but not the cause of it. The book of Revelation has many prophecies of the end of the world, and so do Jesus' teachings in the Gospels. The apostles' letters also have much to say about the return of Christ and the end of the world. All of this is revealed to us both in general and in divinely chosen details by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says, "And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs (miracles) in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:19-21). The eclipse was a natural phenomenon. This passage speaks of a time when there will be supernatural things happening above the earth, on the earth, and beneath the earth.

Much of fulfilled prophecy has involved one or more miracles of some kind. Miracles are not subject at all to the natural development of earths' cause and effect, else it would not be a miracle. Future prophecies will be fulfilled in God's area of the miraculous.

Jesus said, "And there shall be signs (miracles) in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your head; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:25-28). That redemption, which was said to be a change to a new body, is yet future. (See Romans 8:23).


The effect of this prophesied apocalypse will eclipse the eclipse of August 21, 2017. There is a timelessness about the end of the world and the events that precede it, both the natural and the supernatural. (Haggai 2:6-9).

It has appeared that more people were given to the details of the eclipse than to the apocalypse. Peter was quoted to help us say the apocalypse is more sure than was the eclipse because God has spoken what will take place relative to the end of the world. We have just seen how God's Word is more sure, even in prophecy, than a man's

predictions in math or science, or of history itself.

We might be in danger of raising a generation who is barely conversant on these things because we, as their elders, have turned our Biblical interests to the matters of salvation and missions. Both of those enterprises are good and necessary, but they can lose their potential thrust when we are indifferent about the signs of the times and the end of the world. On every subject in either secular knowledge or Biblical knowledge, interest in it is gauged by how one is given to detail concerning it, either by the use of computers, reference books, seminars, and any kind of specialized classes and

writings and preaching.

The Bottom Line is that our level of revival and evangelism is indexed in a significant way by our acceptance and interest in future things, including Biblical prophecy. It is possible for Christians to make adaptations to future prospects in the secular arena, but fail to do so in the Biblical area. The desire for a higher level of revival is for us to be willingly engaged in being more conversant on future things as spoken to in God's Word. There is a greater need than ever for men of God in our churches to be pointing up to the sky. Some people are inclined to miss it by only looking to the earth and the things of the world. 

Announcement

2018 Conservative Anabaptist Service Programs (CASP)

The dates for the next two terms in Hutchinson, KS, are January 8 through February 2 and Feb. 5 through March 2, 2018. We have all the staff we need, but we are needing eight fellows for each term. We will, of course, still be glad for finances.

We don't have firm dates yet, but are also planning another Wilderness Trail project for the fall of 2018. We will need seven fellows and a crew leader for that project. Contact Ray Yoder (TX) for applications and Dan Byler (AR), for finances.

Tim Miller · McKenney, VA

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E-mail: timmiller@emypeople.net 

Announcement

CALVARY BIBLE SCHOOL CLEANUP

In behalf of the annual Calvary Bible School cleanup we are again soliciting help from folks like you on November 14-15, 2017. This short-term voluntary service opportunity features lots of old-fashioned work for young folks (like recent CBS alumni) and older folks (like less recent “grandparent-type” CBS alumni). It provides ample opportunity for fellowship while working alongside others, punctuated with generous helpings of good, home-cooked food and lodging provided in CBS dorms!

Should you and a number of friends from your church or youth group be willing to volunteer or if you have more questions, please contact Lowell Swatrzentruber at lowswartz@wctel.net or call 864-446-3155.

Thank you very much for your assistance in the past and in the future! 

Segregated Seating

Luke Shertzer, Thompsettown, PA

No doubt, numerous Mennonite practices seem strange to first-time visitors in our public assemblies. For example, why do our men and women sit separate at the church door and find seats on opposite sides of the house? Contemporary churches generally seat families together; some even reserve a specific pew for each family. What is the history of segregated seating? Does

it have a Biblical precedent? What purpose does it serve?

These legitimate questions deserve answers. We can search the Bible without finding a direct command for separate seating in public worship. Jewish historians, however, note that the temple in Jesus' day included a special women's court. They also inform us that the Jews practiced separate seating in their numerous synagogues.

Synagogue worship was the frame of reference for Jewish believers in the early Christian church. They copied that model by seating men and women separately. Conservative Mennonites, as well as some other groups, have preserved this tradition through the centuries.

As we gather for public worship, we do so as the family of God. Jesus taught that spiritual relationships far exceed the value of blood ties (see Matthew 12::48-50). Some of the adults among us are unmarried. Some are widowed, and others come alone because their partners do not share their faith. Separate seating gives these saints a more comfortable sense of being part of God's family.

Segregated seating has spiritual and practical benefits. Our church discipline suggests that mixed seating contributes to moral breakdown. Although the Discipline does not enlarge on that idea, it should be obvious that maintaining healthy social reserve between the genders is much easier with separate seating. Separate seating also contributes to congregational singing by grouping the various singing parts closer together. Separate seating utilizes auditorium space efficiently. Designated family pews result in numerous empty spaces.

Some have advocated that mixed

seating aids parents in managing small children in the worship service. This might help in some instances. More likely, however, those who have difficulty with children's behavior when seated separately would discover that sitting together aggravates the problem.

Our church Discipline makes exception to our regular practice by allowing mixed seating for weddings and funerals. Why should it be allowed then? One reason is that these events are somewhat infrequent. More importantly, weddings and funerals focus especially on events in the lives of one or two families. Sharing in these services as family units is appropriate.

The value of seating becomes most apparent after the practice is abandoned. Congregational singing tends to deteriorate, and pressure begins to increase to have special singing groups and instrumental accompaniment. With mixed seating, kneeling prayer and the ordinance of feet washing may soon seem awkward and could fall into disuse. Segregated seating is a valuable tradition that confers more benefits that at first meets the eye. We do well to preserve it for future generations.

[From The Eastern Mennonite Testimony, Sept., 2017. Used by permission.]



What is a Father?

Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX

A father is a man who is taken for granted when he is at home, but is greatly missed when he is absent. He is expected to fix whatever falls apart and replace the things that do not function anymore. He has to make sure there is money to buy food, pay the utilities and all other household expenses. His wife relies on his emotional fortitude when she is discouraged and his children crave his physical strength when they are afraid. It is assumed that he will hold the family together, while each member is struggling with his or her personal things. The many demands that are placed on him are often unreasonable. It seems he is used as a means to everybody's courage.

Truly, fatherhood is a taxing job for it takes much out of a man, but little thought is usually given to his individual needs. Though he is to be the strong one in his family, he still struggles with his own human weaknesses. For this reason, he must seek the strength and wisdom of his Heavenly Father to see him through his personal battles.

Now just because the burden of being a father is overwhelming, we dare not quit trying and walk

out on the family as so many men do today. No, in spite of us feeling unappreciated, our children need the presence of a masculine figure in their lives. Hence, it is of utmost importance that we spend as much time at home as is possible. Even if everyone else in the family is in his or her own little world, just knowing that father is somewhere within reach at home gives the family a sense of security.

Therefore, fellow fathers, because of these days of gender confusion it is imperative that we become what our Creator designed for us to be as men. There is so much at stake concerning our children's overall well-being that we do not have time to sit around and wait for our family to recognize our value. Surely, if we are faithful as Godly male mentors, the time will come when our adult children will express their gratitude to us. However, even if they never do, God knows the integrity of our hearts and he will most certainly reward our hard work. Since fatherhood has eternal consequences, we can be confident, "That he who has begun a good work in us will carry it out to completion until the Day of Jesus Christ!"



Too Little

Author Unknown

Said a precious little laddie
To his father one bright day,
“May I give myself to Jesus,
Let Him wash my sins away?”


“Oh, my son, but you’re too little,
Wait until you older grow.
Bigger folk, ‘tis true, do need Him,
But little folks are safe, you know.”

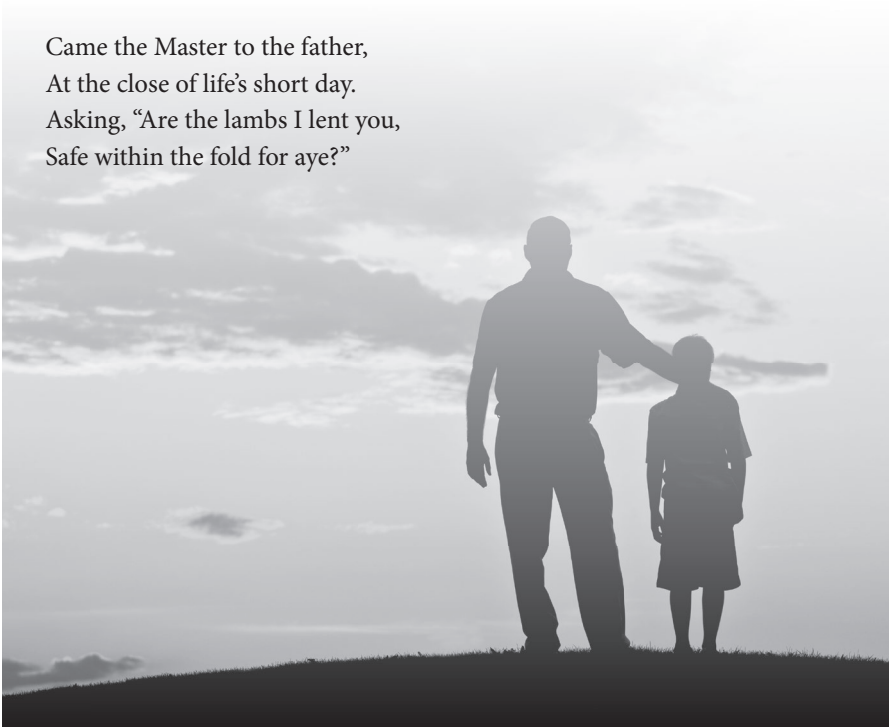
Thus the Spirit, quenched in passing,
Came no more with saving power;
And the heart, once soft for Jesus,
Hardened with each passing hour.

Came the Master to the father,
At the close of life’s short day.
Asking, “Are the lambs I lent you,
Safe within the fold for aye?”

“All, the big ones are, my Father,
But the lambs, I let them go.
For I didn’t think it mattered,
Little ones are safe, you know.”

Oh, my brother! Oh, my sister!
Have you, too, made that mistake?
Little hearts that now are yielding
May be hardened, then—too late.

‘Ere the evil days come nigh them,
“Let the children come to Me
And forbid them not,” said Jesus.
“Of such shall my kingdom be.” 



marriages

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

Byler-Cross

Bro. Kenneth, son of Andy and Donna Byler, Cynthiana, KY, and Sis. Sheri, daughter of Verlin and Naomi Cross, Owenton, KY, at Sand Spring Baptist Church for Owenton Amish Mennonite Church on July 21, 2017, by Joshua Yoder.

Byler-Mast

Bro. Kevin, son of Paul and Rose Byler, Vanleer, TN, and Sis. Veronica, daughter of David J. and Lucy Mast, Dickson, TN, at Salem United Methodist Church for Lighthouse Mennonite Church on June 17, 2017, by Lavern Eash.

Kauffman-Stoll

Bro. Lauren, son of David and Mary Kauffman, Bird-in-Hand, PA, and Sis. Glenda, daughter of Clyde and Mary Stoll, Odon, IN, at Fair Haven Mennonite Church for Mt. Olive Mennonite Church, on June 10, 2017, by David B. Witmer.

Kauffman-Yutzzy

Bro. Doug, son of Ken and Barb Kauffman, Huntsville, AR, and Sis. Rose, daughter of Alvin and Naomi Yutzzy, Huntsville, AR, at Robinson Avenue Church of Christ for Lighthouse of Faith Mennonite Church, on July 29, 2017, by Dan Byler.


Miller-Yoder

Bro. Barnabas, son of Jason and Ruth Miller, Concord, AR, and Sis. Elaine, daughter of Richard and Susan Yoder, Hutchinson, KS, at Floral Baptist Church for Shady Lawn Mennonite by Carl Gingerich on August 5, 2017.

Perdomo-Cal

Bro. Jairo, son of Elin and Marta Perdomo, Isabella Bank, Belize, and Renita, daughter of Tomas and Florentina Cal, Punta Gorda, Belize, at Pine Ridge Missionary Camp, for Zion Mennonite Church, on July 29, 2017, by J. Ellis Beachy.

Yoder-Wagler

Bro. Eldon, son of Clyde and Marilyn Yoder, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Tinslie, daughter of Connie and the late Nathan Wagler, Cross Hill, SC, on August 5, 2017, at Chestnut Ridge Baptist Church, by Virgil Kanagy. 

cradle roll

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

Ballantine, Jeffrey and Amy (Kempf), Now Concord, OH, second child, first son, Jared Scott, August 9, 2017.

Byler, Andre and Janet (Bear), Martinsburg, OH, third child, second son, Cole Alan, March 20, 2017.

Byler, David and Ella (Miller), Lexington, IN, eighth child, fourth son, Jayden Lamar, May 29, 2017.

Eicher, Levi and Lillian (Mast), Russellville, KY, first child and son, Larkin Reed, August 12, 2017.

Eichorn, Ryan and Janice (Stoll), Odon, IN, third child, first daughter, Avery Nicole, Aug. 25, 2017.

Esh, Benji and Charity (King), Charlotte, TN, first child and son, Isaac Benson, May 31, 2017.

Esh, Javan and Nora (Mobley), Charlotte, TN (currently serving at Faith Mission), first child and daughter, Ava Grace, Feb. 24, 2017.

Frey, Sheldon Devon and Amy (Schlabach), Millersburg, IN, fourth child and son, Sheldon Devon, Jr., August 4, 2017.

Gerber, Joseph and Anita (Wagler), Brunner, ON, sixth child, second son, Westen Raymond, July 30, 2017.

Gingerich, Michael and Krista (Yoder), Martinsburg, OH, second child, first daughter, McKenzie Lynne, July 11, 2017.

Glick, Manny and Sarah (Fisher), Morgantown, PA, sixth child, fifth son, Malachi David, April 26, 2017.

Graber, Allen and Rosa (Yoder), Bloomfield, IN, fifth child, third son, Joshua Leon, May 17, 2017.

Helmuth, Tyson and Treva (Herschberger), Lovington, IL, fourth child, second daughter, Karleen Sue, May 20, 2017.

Herschberger, Wilbur and Krissa (Graber), Peru, IN, second child, first son, Grant Alexander, June 9, 2017.

Jara, Jeremias and Rosanna (Otto), Crossville, TN, first child and daughter, Chelsy Rose, Aug. 1, 2017.

Kauffman, Loren and Jean (Peachey), Reedsville, PA, second child and daughter (one daughter deceased), Samara Dorothy, July 1, 2017.

Knepp, Lewis and Kaylene (Miller), Lyons, IN, second child, first son, Alex Eugene, July 16, 2017.

Miller, Steven and Melissa (Yoder), Auburn, KY, ninth child, seventh son, Scott Jerrick, July 29, 2017.

Miller, Tim and Martha (Stoll), Pulaski, TN, third child and daughter, Laurel Faith, August 8, 2017.

Otto, Mark and Robyn (Godwin), Humboldt, IL, first child and son, Xavier Anthony, June 28, 2017.

Petersheim, Timothy and Deanne (Stauffer), Narvon, PA, first child and son, Micha Henry, July 28, 2017.

Petre, Dennis and Donna (Yoder), Moulton, AL, third child, first son, Duane Jethro, Aug. 19, 2017.

Stoltzfus, Sheldon and Veronica (Petersheim), Coatesville, PA, second child and son, Miguel John, June 9, 2017.

Swartzentruber, Gary and Lynita (Yoder), Swanton, MD, third child and son, Allen Blake, July 18, 2017.

Theus, Hervin and Ann (Lehman), Scotland Halfmoon, Belize, first child and daughter, Abby Marie, August 12, 2017.

Tulcey, William and Lucy (Schrock), Scotland Halfmoon, Belize, first child and son, Zadok Samuel, August 3, 2017.

Wagler, Matthew and Emma Jean (Miller), Odon, IN, fifth child, third daughter, Addilyn Kate, July 28, 2017.

Wagler, Wesley and Kendra (Lapp), Montgomery, IN, fourth child, first son, Hudson Jude, Aug. 25, 2017.

Weaver, Micah and Rebecca (Yoder), Owenton, KY, sixth child, fifth daughter, Kayla Arlene, August 16, 2017.

Yoder, Jadon and Bethanie (Hochstetler), Hicksville, OH, fifth child, third son, Seth LaVerne, August 13, 2017.

Yoder, Joash and Loretta (Wagler),

Lexington, IN, fifth child, third daughter, Abigail Faith, June 7, 2017.

Yoder, Joshua and Mary Ann (Yoder), Owenton, KY, eighth child, fourth son, Joel Lovelle, July 22, 2017.

Yoder, LaVon and Angela (Yoder), Salisbury, PA, second child and son, Adrian Bennet, August 3, 2017.

Yoder, Mervin and Ada (Mast), Lexington, IN, seventh child, fourth son, Chadwick Gabriel, June 14, 2017.

Yoder, Roman and Brenda (Miller), Belvidere, TN, seventh child, fifth daughter (one daughter deceased), Amy Diane, August 2, 2017.

Zook, Paul David and Verneda (Petersheim), Kinzers, PA, second child and daughter, Aliya Rachel, June 11, 2017.



ordination

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

Bro. Caleb Weirich, 34, (wife, Sheryl Hochstetler), Aroda, VA, was ordained as minister at Oak Grove Mennonite Church on April 9, 2017. Also in the lot was Mike Yoder (wife, Sarah Shank). The charge was given by Lamar Hochstetler, assisted by Simon Schrock and Tim Miller.



obituaries

Beachy, Luella, 80, of London, Ohio, died peacefully at her home, surrounded by family on August 2, 2017. She was born April 8, 1928, daughter of the late Sam and Lizzie (Raber) Beachy.

She was a member of Bethesda Fellowship. She loved to design and piece quilts and made a quilt for each of her grandchildren. She loved Jesus. In her time of dying, Jesus provided grace and strength for the journey, and she was still praising the Lord.

On Dec. 8, 1949, she was married to Simon Beachy. Their children are Martha (Mrs. Andrew Miller, Jr.), Howard (Sue) Beachy, Jonas (Arlou) Beachy, Alvin (Elsie) Beachy, Ruth Ann (Mrs. Philip Gingerich), and Carolyn (Mrs. Darrell Beiler). Also surviving are 28 grandchildren and 31 great grandchildren. Her sister, Lena (Mrs.

Raymond Yutzy) also survives.

She was preceded in death by a brother, Dan Beachy and two sisters, Lizzie (Mrs. Joe Raber) and Ida (Mrs. Joe J. Beachy), three grandchildren and one great grandchild.

The funeral was held on August 4 at United Bethel Mennonite Church, with burial in Bethesda Fellowship Cemetery.

Miller, Mary A., 93, of East Earl, PA, died April 29, 2017. She was born Jan. 28, 1924, to the late Samuel and Fannie (Miller) Augsburger.

She was a member of Pequea A. M. Church, Narvon, PA.

On Jan. 1, 1947, she was married to William H. Miller. He died April 3, 1973. Children surviving are Thelma Miller, New Holland, PA; Ruth (Norman) Troyer, NY; Anna Mae (Clifford) Sauder,

East Earl, PA; Wilmer (Lois Kurtz) Miller, McClure, PA; Richard (Connie Kurtz) Miller, McClure, PA; and David (Sandy Hilleman) Miller, Hershey, PA; 16 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband and a son, Gordon Miller, husband of Emmy (Fisher) Miller.

The funeral was held on May 3, at Pequea Church with Ben A. Stoltzfus, Leon Hurst, and Mel Zook serving. Interment was in the Pequea A.M. Cemetery.


Zook, Amelia P., 100, formerly of Belleville, PA, got her wish to go home with Jesus on July 15, 2017. at the home of her daughter, Sara, in Meyersdale, PA. She was born July 30, 1916, to the late David and Sadie Peachey Spicher.

She was a member of the Goodwill Mennonite Church, Thompsontown, PA. Amelia opened her home to a number of

foster children over the years.

On Jan. 18, 1940, she was married to Yost M. Zook; he died in 1996. Surviving are children: Sara (Elmer) Yoder, Meyersdale, PA; David (Pauline) Zook, Chesapeake, VA; Leon (Mary) Zook, Virginia Beach, VA; Ruth (Philip) Beachy, Salisbury, PA; Alta Pry, Amsterdam, NY; Paul Zook, Belleville, PA; Leonard (Maxine) Zook, Beavertown, PA; Robert Zook, McCoysville, PA; 20 grandchildren and 46 great grandchildren. She is survived by one brother-in-law, Kore Yoder.

She was preceded in death by a daughter, Katie, a great granddaughter, Natalie Zook and eight brothers and sisters.

A service was held at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Salisbury, PA on July 18 and at Valley View Amish Mennonite Church, Belleville, on July 19, 2017. Interment followed in the Locust Grove Cemetery, Belleville, PA. 

observations

In 1955 the opportunity to serve people displaced by World War II in Berlin, Germany was offered to the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches. After due process and considerable deliberation Amish Mennonite Aid was formed to put “flesh and bones” to this effort. Amish Mennonite Aid’s involvement

in Berlin has ended and some of us might have forgotten about this fascinating chapter in our collective church history. But David and Marie Yoder haven’t forgotten and have done something to help us remember. Both of them served in Berlin. They even got married while there. They have collaborated with Rosetta Byers

to compile and publish the story of Friedensheim. The resulting book has over 60 pages of pictures, stories and historical record. I found the book thoroughly fascinating. You can purchase your own copy of “The Story of Friedensheim in Post-War Berlin” for \$13.95 plus \$3 shipping by contacting them directly at:

David and Marie Yoder
1242 Evergreen Church Road
Stanardsville, VA 22973
434-985-7430



Is curiosity sinful? Not always. But an article that Nathaniel Peters wrote that appeared in *Plough* magazine entitled, “Saving Silence – Unlearning the Sin of Curiosity” helped me to connect some of the dots that form my answer to that question. We correctly understand that curiosity in children is something to be encouraged, developed and celebrated. Curiosity is a very important component in all of development and growth. Curiosity helps a child understand what is edible and what isn’t, what is dangerous and what is trustworthy, and so on.

As we grow into adulthood, we must continue to learn. Peters said, “Our study of our faith and the information proper to our vocations have a gathering effect. They concentrate the mind and,

with effort, create clarity. Curiosity, by contrast, scatters and produces noise, not fruit.” As we mature, the motivation for our learning should transition from primarily being triggered by curiosity to being motivated by a desire to grow in our faith and service to our fellowman.

Our understanding of this concept is mirrored in our approach to education. Children should all have the gift of a basic education that teaches important things about this world. General education is successful when we learn about God’s kingdom and our place in His plan. Much of that happens during childhood, but it should, in some manner, continue as long as we have our mental faculties. As we mature, additional responsibilities compete for our time. So, the majority of our learning will shift from something that is broad and general to something more focused and specific. Depending on the field of service that one is called to, a lot of additional focused study will be necessary. This is why there aren’t many seventh graders who perform hernia surgery.

However, we should remind ourselves that knowledge acquisition for the sake of accumulation is usually counterproductive. Our grasp of basic Truth is more important than

all other knowledge. Paul referred to those that are “...ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth...” as one characteristic of latter-day apostasy. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul reminded them of the emptiness of knowledge by itself when he said “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.” Knowledge acquisition that isn’t guided by the Holy Spirit in us, whether it occurs between the covers of a book, at our keyboard, or in a classroom setting shaped by unregenerate society, that is not friendly to saving faith.

Untrained and unfettered curiosity is problematic for Christians for several reasons. It seems to me curiosity and distraction have a symbiotic relationship—they feed each other. Purposeless learning and distraction sometimes operates under the guise of “research.” But, we accomplish very little and learn very little that is worthwhile in this world while we’re distracted.

People motivated by selfish curiosity pursue knowledge or exclusive information in order to affirm their superiority over others. This appetite for exclusive information feeds on the novelty of knowing what others do not know, and especially learning it before others do. Those who are thus motivated, have little interest in safeguarding exclusive information

but rather reinforcing the image they project to others, that they are the ones with inside connections to special information. People with relational insecurities are particularly susceptible to this.

It only makes sense that in today’s climate of broad accessibility to endless information through the internet and social media, that the unhealthy curiosity has moved from the fringes of our communities to the front and center.

One brother approached his friend for some advice. “My wife and I aren’t being fed at our church like we would like. Do you think we should switch to another church?” His friend replied, “By all means you should make a change if you aren’t being fed. But don’t make the mistake of going to another church. Go to the restaurant of your choice. That is where you go to be fed what you like. Church is where you bring what you have.”

As of this writing, Houston, Texas is experiencing the effects a rainfall event associated with Hurricane Harvey that leaves those reporting on the events grasping for words to describe the magnitude and scope of this event. It really is astonishing. I find it difficult to comprehend 50 inches of rainfall in the space of a few days.

Both the flood in Houston and the flood that Noah and his family survived as described in Genesis were devastating to property and filled the hearts of people with a dreadful awe. The losses of both floods included human life. While I don't wish to minimize the difficulties for the people who live in and near Houston, references to the flood of Hurricane Harvey as one of biblical proportions, doesn't account for the fact that the water of the Great Flood was much, much deeper and extended over the whole globe.

Our awareness of the suffering and needs of those effected provides us with an opportunity to demonstrate God's love to those affected. Lakewood Church, a mega-church in Houston that has seating for almost 17,000 people where Joel Osteen pastors, was roundly criticized for closing its doors during the flood, rather than offering to shelter those displaced by the storm. Dozens of area churches, schools and community centers offered temporary shelter to those displaced, but this church didn't move when the others did. After withering criticism, they opened the church as a shelter about the time that the flood waters began to recede. I can't say if the reasons for the delay were legitimate or not, but

I am reminded that the world seems to take note when those who call themselves Christians don't seem to live what they profess.

• • • • •

Halloween falls on Tuesday this year. In 2016, 171 million persons indicated they planned to celebrate Halloween. They averaged spending almost \$83 per person. With more than 8 billion dollars spent on the event, it's no wonder that retail outlets begin to court sales with Halloween decorations soon after the back-to-school season.

Halloween didn't start out with all the sinister implications it carries nowadays. October 31, like all other days, is a good day to remember our heavenly citizenship, freedom in Christ and our eternal hope. What a contrast from the celebration of fear, darkness and death on this so-called holiday, in which the number one dress-up theme for adults is a witch's costume!

• • • • •

When we moved to this area of Kansas about 14 years ago we felt unsure how our unwillingness to serve on jury duty would be received by those extending the summons. Our congregation discussed ways that we could demonstrate that our objection to serve on a jury was not rooted in an unwillingness to serve

our community. One suggestion that grew out of that discussion was the idea of adopting a portion of local roadway for cleanup. So, if you drive west of Oswego, KS, on K 160 and US 59, you might note a 2 mile stretch that has been “adopted” by Cornerstone Mennonite Church. The highway cleanup program specifies that we cover the area three times each year. They provide us with trash bags that we leave beside the road and orange vests to wear. After we’ve finished, they come and collect what we’ve gathered. We’ve come

across some interesting “trash” over the years, including a \$20 bill and an electronic instrument worth quite a bit of money. After some sleuthing we were able to return it to the railroad company that had lost the device off one of their trucks.

Many in our congregation have been summoned for jury duty in these 14 years. So far nobody has had any difficulty being excused. We are very thankful to the Lord and our civil authorities for the freedom to follow our conscience this way.

-RJM



Update from Iraq

Brandon Miller, LaGrange, IN

Brother Dale Hochstetler and I recently had the opportunity to participate in the work project in Bashiq, Iraq. We are helping to support this project through Plain Compassion Crisis Response. It was a good experience and we were blessed with the work that is going on there. We spent our time installing glass in windows, sitting for tea with the homeowners, and sharing and praying with the other volunteers there.

As I reflect back on my short time in Bashiq, I count it a privilege to have been a representative of Christ in this part of the world. Too often we feel that we are doing God a favor or that He needs us to fulfill His goals when we are in service for Him. God is all powerful and does not need our help for anything that He desires to accomplish. Yet He puts opportunities in our path to see if we are willing to give up our personal goals for a greater purpose.

God could have prevented a single bomb from exploding in Bashiqa and preserved every piece of glass, but He chose not to do that. In the situation following the ISIS occupation God has given us an opportunity to put Him first in our lives. We have the opportunity to be welcomed into many homes in Iraq with open arms as we openly proclaim Jesus Christ. It is not that God needs the feeble work of our hands, but He is giving us an opportunity to show our heart. I feel that God has opened doors and hearts in the Middle East to allow us this opportunity.

The glass we put in may break again in the future, but the hearts reached may be affected for eternity. We have the privilege to walk the war torn streets, pray over the broken homes, and shine hope into a weary land. The repairs that we are doing in the homes are only a way to shine the light of Jesus into the lives of the locals. Just being there to show our love brings a change in the attitudes of those we come in contact with. Despite all the destruction and the thunder of bombs in the background, we were daily greeted by smiles and waves as we made our way through the town. Many times we were asked to take pictures with people we didn't know. Being there in this time of need is what God is calling

us to do to prepare hearts to come to the Lord. We may never know what God is going to do through this work, but I know that He is calling us to labor until His return. As Paul says in the Scriptures, one person plants, someone else waters, but God gives the increase. As long as we are continuing in His will, our work will not be in vain.

As far as the work project is concerned, it was a good experience working with a group of young men that were aware who they are working for. To me it is a great thing to come to a home where all the windows are covered in blue tarps and to leave a few hours later with sun shining brightly into the rooms. We can bring light to a dark world in more ways than one! There are approximately 100 houses done and around 1,000 to go so the opportunity is great to reach many more homes and hearts. Please pray for volunteers to allow this to continue on, but remember that others are praying for workers as well, and maybe it is you that God is calling. May each of us be faithful to God's calling and not allow the cares of the world to choke out the beautiful fruit that God has created you to bring forth.

[From Christian Mission Charities, Inc., newsletter, second quarter, 2017. Used by permission.]



Stopping Evil

Dale Stoltzfus, Lewisburg, PA

The year was 404, A.D. The place: Rome. The emperor: Honorius. A monk had traveled from the east to Rome. He found himself in the Roman stadium. The gladiators were beginning their fights. The monk was appalled by the scene of people killing each other for sport.

According to historian Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria (A.D. 393-457), the monk Telemachus, was more than just appalled. He was spurred to action. He moved down into the arena and tried to stop the gladiators. Some accounts have him shouting, "In the name of Jesus, stop!" The crowd, furious that Telemachus was interrupting their "entertainment," stoned him to death. When the emperor, Honorius, was informed of the acts of Telemachus, he numbered him with the victorious martyrs and ended the gladiatorial fights.

The last known gladiatorial fight in Rome was on January 1, 404. Telemachus got in the way of evil. God used him to stop a heinous practice, but he paid with his life. To Telemachus, being salt and light

carried a huge price tag, but his impact was even more huge.

Recently I heard a message by Brother Val Yoder, entitled: "Get in the Way of Evil." Val says, "We must get in the face of evil with uncarnal weapons. Someone has said that we are going to lose our young people either to apostasy or to martyrdom. Our young people have a God-given passion. Will their feet run to preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings...or will they hug pigskin and run for the end zone?" He says, "The foundational difference between the early Christians and their enemies is that the early Christians did not believe that they needed to survive. They didn't expect to survive. Don't depend on a speck of fairness in the system that will persecute you."

When Elijah was on Mt. Carmel, he willingly got in the way of evil. He was willing to stand up to King Ahab, Queen Jezebel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and other Baal-worshiping Israelites. All he had was an altar, God's direction, a few faithful followers of Jehovah, and God. If he had had only God, that would have been much more than

enough. Elijah had faith in the One with a power much stronger than the forces of evil, formidable though they were. God displayed his power in a very graphic way and evil was exposed. The Israelites bowed and worshiped and declared, “The Lord, He is God!”

After God persuaded him, Moses became willing to go to Pharaoh with Aaron and confront evil. He stood in front of a powerful ruler and gave him the message from the Great I Am. God used Moses to display his power to many nations and to strike the fear of God into their hearts. Heathen people steeped in idolatry were moved to fear God, because one man was willing to leave his comforts and securities to take God’s message to a stubborn, pagan, godless society around him.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam did not even try to stop Eve from committing the sin that ruined humanity. He joined her in committing the sin. Will I as a dad and husband and as a brother in the church do better than Adam did?

God has given us dads the job of guardian, leader, and protector. How much time do we spend praying, submitting to God, and resisting the devil on behalf of our families (James 4:6, 7)? How much do we engage in spiritual warfare for each of our children and for their well-being?

Getting in the way of evil in the lives of people around me may seem glamorous and heroic. People may notice and it may draw persecution. But what about my sinful nature? What about the evil in my heart? What about the ways I have been deceived? What about my blind spots and my sinful motives?

Am I willing to first deal with my sin and allow the Holy Spirit to “get in the way of evil” in my heart? If I can humble myself and pray and seek God’s face and turn from my wicked ways, God can better use me to do the “surgery” to stop the cancerous spread of evil around me and to bring healing (2 Chron. 7:14).

[From The Mid-Atlantic Informer, Vol. 29, Aug/Sept, 2017. Used by permission.]



To love a small sin is a great sin.

The Potter's Wheel

Dwayne Stoltzfus, Millersburg, OH

One day a lump of clay was thrown
Upon the potter's wheel.
Its shape and form was undefined;
It greatly lacked appeal.

But as the potter turned his wheel,
A vision he could see.
He saw beyond the useless lump;
He saw what it could be.

His fingers gently pushed into
The feeble, helpless clay,
It must be soft and pliable;
It must give up its way.

To give it shape while on the wheel,
The clay must suffer pain.
The potter pinches, pulls, and pries—
A vessel to obtain.

He pushes down while pulling out;
Soft pressure he applies.
To his delight, the clay responds;
It quickly starts to rise.

The potter's focus is to first
Create the inner space.
For once the inside is complete,
The outside shows its grace.

The potter's hands are wet, but firm;
The lumps they must reveal.
For imperfections in the clay
Are smoothed out on the wheel.

The vessel now completed stands
So tall and fit for use.
But wait—it is not finished yet;
Its air he must reduce.

The firing of an earthen pot
Removes the gaps of air.
It shrinks the clay with intense heat—
A vessel to prepare.

For vessels to be useful tools,
They must be tried with fire.
A thin, clay vase will stronger be
When flame is turned up higher.

The potter watches carefully
While turning up the heat.
He never knows the end result—
Will it come out complete?

The Bible tells us we're the clay;
The Potter is our Lord.
When we are soft and pliable,
Our spirit is restored.

The Master Potter sees ahead;
He knows what you will face.
He wants to make your lump of clay
Into a useful vase.

So don't resist the fiery trials—
The heat that makes you kneel.
Remember that your Potter Lord
Is sitting at His wheel.

He's sitting at the wheel of life
And looking at your clay.
Will you be soft enough for Him
To shape you just *His* way?

God wants a useful vessel clean—
A vessel fit to pour
His blessings out to those in need.
He has so much in store!

The Master Potter loves you much;
His grace is always real.
As day by day He shapes your clay
Down on the Potter's wheel.

(This poem is not copyrighted. May no one ever do so. It is the author's preference that there be no revisions. May it be used to the glory of God, for the edifying of the brotherhood and the furtherance of the kingdom of God.)



SECURITY

Dale Bowman, Rocky Mount, VA

President Ronald Reagan was elected to the office of President of the Untied States for his first term in the fall of 1980. He defeated Jimmy Carter who was running for his second term. The economy had been in a downturn for some time and the public was ready for a change. Being born in 1911 made him the oldest man to hold this office. He was also the first person

in the office to have been divorced, and the first to have been an actor in Hollywood. He had served two terms as governor of California.

After the election, President Reagan held true to his campaign promises and quickly began major domestic programs that dealt with the economy. He also worked on federal agencies which he felt went too far in regulating business.

The Cold War was still going on at that point and Mr. Reagan met several times with Mikhail Gorbachev, the premier of the Soviet Union, in an effort to halt the nuclear arms race. After many meetings and failure to reach an agreement, President Reagan began organizing a strategic missile plan. It was commonly reported that the President had a briefcase with him always with the electronics needed to initiate a nuclear attack at a moment's notice. This made many Americans feel secure. President Reagan, who was accused of looking at the world through the sights of a rifle, was also considered to be one of the most powerful presidents this nation has known. In a public address, Caspar Weinberger, the Secretary of Defense, was quoted as saying, "Our security lies in the the strength of our defenses."

Today these missiles are aging and collecting dust scattered across the globe and many wonder if they would still work should there be a nuclear attack. "The strength of our defenses" lies aging with the passing of time. If the Lord tarries, they will be covered beneath the sands of time.

Although Mr. Weinberger's plan might be aging, his quote, "Our security lies in the strength of our defenses" may not be aging at the

same speed. We are encouraged to be good soldiers and fight the good fight of faith, putting on the whole armor of God, and to endure hardness as good soldiers. We are further instructed that "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

As a people, we have not trusted in the carnal warfare of this life but our security lies in a different kind of warfare. The apostle Paul often used language of struggles and battle to get his point across. For example, he wrote in his second letter to the Corinthian brethren that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" but spiritual in nature and are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." He indicates that we should not rely on earthly weapons of warfare according to human reasoning, not even using sophisticated philosophical reasoning to advance the Gospel. Imaginations, as he mentions here, appear to be arguments by false brethren. This may be debating with many large words and terms that could be defeated by the simple preaching of the Word. Divine power is required to defeat the fiery darts of the wicked.

Again, Paul wrote to the Ephesians, pleading with them to "be strong

in the Lord, and in the power of his might,” that we “may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” He went on to explain that we don’t wrestle with flesh and blood but rather “against principalities...against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” The apostle Paul pleads with us to put on the whole armor of God to be able to stand in the evil day in which we live, or to serve in the present age. He encourages us to do our best to stand.

The armor that Paul encourages us to use has stood the test of time and brought the Christian through the battle of the ages. Neither does it wear out with constant use but becomes sharper and more fine-tuned with use. Each piece of armor must be put on carefully with prayer and faith. The armor mentioned in Ephesians is having our loins surrounded by the truth, and having “the breastplate of righteousness,” and our “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;” and above all having “the shield of faith,” that we may “be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation.” This is plenty of heavy-duty armor and the only weapon he instructs us to carry is a weapon carried in close combat, the sword, or as he calls it, “the sword of the Spirit,

which is the word of God.” Hebrews explains to us that this weapon is “sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit [the hidden things of God], and and of the joints and marrow [things we discern with our eyes].”

Also the sword of the Spirit is capable of “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself...and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” This weapon isn’t subject to being outdated by something more sophisticated, nor is this armor subject to change with the fashion of more modern warfare. This is all we will need to face the heat of the battle of life. When we have on the full armor of God, the Lord knows how to deliver us out of temptation. How we put on and use this armor, and how we use the sword of the Spirit, will decide whether we will be able to survive when the clouds of smoke from the enemies’ weapons darken the sun from our skies.

That statement holds true for our faith, “Our security lies in the strength of our defenses.” The pen, though silent, is given for our defense.

[Slightly adapted from The Vindicator, Sept., 2017. Used by permission.]



Mothering in Today's World

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Has the role of a mother changed in today's world? I am a mother, grandmother and great grandmother and yes, I have seen changes in the role of mothers since those days when I was a young mother. Technology has certainly brought new challenges to parents, however basically a mother's role has remained the same throughout the years. God entrusted to mothers the responsibility of caring and providing for the physical, spiritual and emotional well being of each young life He has placed into her care. Psalm 127, verse 3 tells us that children are "An heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward." In other words each child (whether by birth or adoption) is a blessing and a gift from God.

Are there guidelines for mothers? What can we do to give our children a happy, secure and disciplined childhood, teaching them the essentials needed to grow into mature responsible God-fearing adults? We will look at a few ways which may enable us to be creative in our own role as a mother.

First and foremost for you is a vital, living relationship with God. Spend time alone with Him daily. Pray for each child, bringing their individual needs to God. Teach your child the importance of a quiet time. There are good devotional books available for young children. Small children can learn to sit quietly as mother shares a tidbit out of the Bible with them. You will have many opportunities throughout your day to express God's love through nature, answered prayer and simple daily living.

Love your child's father. Children will feel secure as they witness a loving respectful relationship between mom and dad. In today's world too many children grow up with a fear of separation and divorce. An occasional night alone with your husband will strengthen your relationship and will not harm your child. Your children should witness affection between you.

Forget about perfection. There are no perfect mothers and your children do not expect you to be perfect. A good Mom does not hesitate to say, "I am sorry". She does not expect her

children to be perfect or try to make them look good so others think well of her. She is honest with herself and with her children. She accepts her child and her husband even when they make mistakes. She loves unconditionally. She allows failures in others and in herself.

A good mother is present. At times, we can become so engrossed in life outside of the home that we fail to actually hear and respond to our family at home. Our children need our presence physically but they also want us to be there for them mentally and emotionally. Make the most of each moment. Snuggle your child as you read to him, listen to his words, and whatever you do, be all there.

Choose your battles carefully. We are prone to focus on the insignificant issues when in actuality there are things that really do not matter. Save your battles for those things that matter. Allow your children to make choices on insignificant matters and focus on those things you cannot afford to lose.

Discipline promptly. This is especially true for young children who must learn that what they did was wrong. Mothers, do not leave the punishment for dad when he comes home (except in major disciplinary matters). Discuss and agree together with your spouse on matters of discipline. Pray with the child and

express love after discipline. Be consistent. Do not threaten your child. Never discipline in public or in front of others even their siblings. A child may be shamed for life because of unacceptable discipline. Never discipline out of anger or pride. Set limits in your home so your child knows what is acceptable or forbidden.

Reach out to others. Your child can be hands and feet for Jesus. Your child can be an answer to prayer for someone who is hurting. It may be a child in school who is different or feels unloved because of its social or biological background. Encourage your child to be friends with him or her. Never allow mocking of any kind within your home. Speak kindly of the homeless person or anyone who looks different from your family either by race, social differences or physical handicap. Look for opportunities to serve others. Do not use labels or derogatory comments about others. Teach empathy and acceptance. Show love as Jesus loved.

Love, Laugh and Live. Life is too short to be wasted. Your family grows up so fast. Enjoy them while they are all at home. Laugh together, play games, take walks, have picnics, enjoy nature, just simply do things together. Love well and live each day to the fullest. Cherish each moment.



Does God Care About Beef?

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

Shopping for groceries at Aldi was enjoyable for Dee. She carefully scanned her list of grocery items. It took so much food at the mission, sometimes one cart was not even enough! She wondered what other people thought when they saw her with two carts piled high with groceries!

As she pushed her cart through the store and looked at the meat in the freezer cases, she felt disheartened, “Hard telling where this beef came from and what all is in it,” she mused as she grabbed packs of ground beef and put them in her cart.

That evening, back in her upstairs room at the mission, Dee thought again about beef, good fresh farm beef. Her mind went back over her life, how she had worked at a butcher shop for twenty-seven years. She had liked her work, had worked hard, and was a friend to those she worked with. A nice side benefit was having farm fresh beef and other good meats—all the time!

She had felt there was more to life than working so hard and laying up

for herself. God led her to New York City. She found fulfillment in serving others for Jesus’ sake, in cooking and reaching out, especially to needy girls.

The days in New York City were so different from the peaceful farming valley days and years with her family. She was now the cook for many groups that came through the mission doors. There were youth who came to help in projects, and many couples who came to be trained for sharing God’s Word and salvation in various places all over the world. Staff families and children needed good food too. Dee cheerfully cooked for all of them.

Still, she wished she had good beef to serve. *Can God care about the meat at a mission when many people in the world don’t even have enough food to eat?* she wondered.

Dee got the idea to write a few things down on paper and bring it to God and see what would happen? Praying for good meat was one of the three or four requests she had. She remembered how God answered one of her requests. She dated that answer,

prayed againand then sort of put it on the back burner... occasionally when she would think about beef, she would again pray about it.

So that's how it was, Dee had a prayer list; asking God for good meat was one of her requests. She did not worry, but when she thought about beef, she prayed.

It is always better to pray than to fret! She thought.

Some nine months later Joel, a fellow worker, came to her and wondered if she would like some meat? "There is a gentleman in Lancaster who has beef, he wondered if we could use any meat at the mission?"

Dee's mouth dropped and her heart leaped. God had heard her prayer.

More recently Dee told me, "For the past three years I have had grass

fed beef in my freezer here in the mission."

How often when Dee is cooking and making dishes with the top-of-the-line beef, she remembers her prayer. It just blesses her over and over to use the meat that God sent and continues to send to them. She loves to share the story of her answer to prayer. She loves to brag on how big God is!

Each of us can thank God and tell others about the wonderful ways our Father answers prayer. Is anything too hard for God? Is anything too small to pray about?

What has God done for you? What special prayer has he answered? Tell a friend about your wonderful God and how He answers prayer today.



thinking generation

Binding the Truth Around Our Necks— Is There a Game Plan?

Gideon Yutzy, Dunmore East, Ireland

Almost a year has passed since an article was published in this column on the subject of fantasy literature. It is safe to say that the article, along with the

somewhat differing perspective published a few issues later, drew more comments than any other subject we have broached here.

In pondering the interactions

surrounding the fantasy articles, I found myself feeling both wistful and comforted. I felt wistful because it is obvious that we as a people could still mature in how we discuss controversial issues. Granted, there have also been many respectful interactions among us, some of which I have witnessed. But there is still room for growth.

Yet I was also comforted. While it's true that some of the interactions may have lacked grace, it's also true that a high emphasis was placed on truth. And promoting truth, as James the Apostle knew, is important if you plan to teach. "You know that we [teachers] will be judged more strictly" (James 3:1).

We should hold our teachers to higher accountability than those of any other station in life—whether doctor, pilot, or whoever. If I am responsible for prescribing the wrong medicine, it's terrible. But if I lead someone down the wrong path spiritually, it's unacceptable. We're talking about eternal destinies here.

So once again, I am all for using extreme care if we have any kind of teaching position. Only the best teaching program will do. It must be a program designed to lead us to Truth with a capitol T—He alone can change deeply fallen

people. That much, I felt confident, everyone in the discussion would agree on.

The Problem

But still, having considered all this, a question persisted. Still there was a feeling in my chest that I just couldn't shake.

Have we, I wondered, because of the Apostle James's dire warning, refrained from teaching altogether? If so we have succumbed to erroneous thinking. As Gerald Miller pointed out in a recent issue of this publication, all Christians must be teachers in some sense (see Matthew 28: 16-20).

Allow me to be blunt: although we as Amish and Mennonites do pretty well at spotting error, we tend to be naïve about the difficulty of establishing a healthy teaching program—a thoughtful plan for leading people to become serious disciples in God's Kingdom. We often find it difficult to decide *what we are for*.

That said, my wife and I practice the Anabaptist tradition of Christianity, and we don't know of any group with a better teaching program. So I am not making potshots at our way of life—I merely want us to consider how we can improve. Also, I am not saying we don't have any strong

points. In fact I wish to begin with those.

The Things That Remain

One major advantage is that we can draw from the wisdom of many previous generations. Most of the good things in our subculture are not because of our own brilliant actions but because of what our ancestors have put into place, things that have been engrained into our warp and woof.

For example, we work hard and don't freeload off the government. I can count on one hand the lazy adult Mennonites I know. That's good, because to teach our children well we must teach them to work. A strong work ethic is quite basic, not only to financial success, but to living well in general. This industriousness, along with many other gifts such as nonresistance and brotherhood, has been handed down from our ancestors. It is hard to overestimate the strength of a solid heritage.

Second, though we may not always interpret them perfectly, we value the Scriptures highly. Again, this is something fundamental for a healthy teaching program, and I'm glad it's one of our emphases. Personally, I have been shaped profoundly by the hundreds of Sunday school lessons I have attended. I feel confident

the Scriptures are read daily in our homes, too, though I haven't taken a poll to confirm it.

A third strength of ours is that divorce is out of the question. The divorce issue for us is like the speed limit along the Oklahoma Turnpike: *No tolerance.* Statistics make it clear that children brought up in a home with two parents who have never divorced hold a colossal advantage over children who weren't.

Again, we could delve into the criticisms against our no-divorce policy, such as, "Mennonite couples know divorce isn't an option, so they don't even try to improve their marriage." Perhaps such critiques contain a grain of truth, but nonetheless our children are far better equipped for life if their parents stay together.

Adding to Our Faith

Having mentioned these strong points, allow me to make a few observations about how we could improve our teaching program. I give them, as far as I know my own heart, out of pure love.

First, we could spend more energy promoting and less energy prohibiting. Let's be clear: It is good to be against divorce and immodest clothing and television and drunkenness. But are we willing to do the hard work

of replacing the evil practices with robust, life-giving practices? Take church standards. They have served us well in many ways. But should they consist solely of prohibitions? Shouldn't they also be full of concrete practices that would form us in our Christian walk?

The minds of our children will not develop in a vacuum. If the parents and other adults in our children's lives do not promote solid activities and values, then Someone or Something else will! It is not enough to say, *This book is bad*; we must also lead them to books that are good. It is not enough to warn them against all the bad music that is out there; we must also lead them to good music—and we must do the hard work of getting them to appreciate good music.

Second, our walk must match our talk. Invariably, this is the hardest part of any teaching program. Unless we keep an accurate view of ourselves by being a person who “peers into the perfect law of liberty and fixes his attention there” (James 1:25), we *will* fail on this one.

Here is a warning: If we preach separation from the pagan culture while practicing materialism, then we should not be surprised when our children grow cold toward God. If we preach acceptance of people different from us while gravitating

toward those who are just like us, we should not be surprised when our children turn out to be exclusive and close-minded. More will be caught than taught.

During my time as a teacher at Pilgrim Christian School in Kansas, I observed the extraordinary respect the children of a certain family had. All I could conclude was that they were freaks of nature. Adolescents aren't supposed to be that respectful! But things became clear once I observed how their father interacted with people: Because the parents put action behind their teaching program, the children learned. And that is the only way children will ever learn.

Third, sometimes we have high expectations for our young people but fail to nurture them toward those expectations. I wish to be clear, high expectations are not the problem. If the parents and leaders of a given community would sit down and decide how they want their children to look when they reach adulthood—that would be wonderful. But they must go on to come up with a plan, a plan that nurtures the children toward their proposed Model Citizen. Using words as our currency, we can nurture each other to grow in Christ by striking a balance

among exhortation, affirmation, confrontation, and coaching.

This nurturing should foster healthy pride for our heritage and way of life. I hope it is not too strongly-stated to say that we must *court* our young people, by modeling a church culture that is more robust and excellent than the dominant culture. Few things win the loyalty of young people as does excellence. And, it is important to remember, excellence transcends all areas of life. We must pursue it, not only in building storage barns, but also in our worship practices, our interpersonal relationships skills, our communication skills, and our schools, to name a few.

Most importantly, this nurturing must include a primary emphasis on a biblically-informed, vibrant relationship with Jesus. We can have in place the best teaching program in the world, but only a passionate love for God will convince a young person to follow the right path.

The Greatest Commandment as Our Basis


Both sides in our fantasy literature discussion had valid arguments. Both sides desired to be vigilant in their teaching programs. And from my unique vantage point, I saw clearly that both sides wanted to shield themselves and their children

from the same “works of the flesh” (Galatians 5: 19).

But no matter what side we take on any issue, merely pointing out dangers can never be enough. We must fill our teaching program with specific healthy practices, not just avoidances. True, God gave us mostly prohibitions in the Ten Commandments. True, prohibitions are important and we must obey them. But God also gave us many commissions and assignments, including the Great Commission and the Creation Mandate.

Let us not forget the greatest commandment ever entrusted to us, given by Jesus Himself: to love God with all our being and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22: 37-40). Whatever we do, we must find ways to live that out—in real time, in real space. We must fill each 24-hour period with specific practices that help us fulfill this commandment.

To paraphrase D.L. Moody: The world has rarely seen what God can do with a community of people fully committed to that kind of teaching program.

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? Send an email to gideonutzy@gmail.com 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

God tells us to burden Him with whatever burdens us.

•••••

If we live primarily for the praise of men, we lose the approval of God.

•••••

It's alright to hold up your head, but don't turn up your nose.

•••••

The devil doesn't care how much good we do, as long as we don't do it today.

•••••

Exaggeration is the use of strong words by the weak.

•••••

He who puts off repentance pawns his soul to the devil.

•••••

Faithful preaching comforts the distressed;
it also distresses those too comfortable.

•••••

There are three very hard things: diamond, steel, and truly knowing oneself.

•••••

Selfishness makes giving a burden; love makes it a delight.

•••••

He who falls in love with himself will have no rivals.

•••••

Success tends to come when we follow the advice we give to others.

•••••

God's assignments are possible by God's enablements.

•••••

Beware of the high cost of low living.