



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JUNE 2018

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Calvary Messenger

June 2018

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.

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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.

This periodical is digitally available at *calvarymessenger.org*

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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.

Because He Loves Me

Nettie Marie Yoder, Harrison, AR

He doesn't need me;
He didn't have to create me,
But He wants me;
And He loves me.

I was in complete darkness,
And He gave me light,
He didn't have to,
But He loves me.


He provided a way for me,
Suffered cruelly for me.
He didn't have to,
But He loves me.

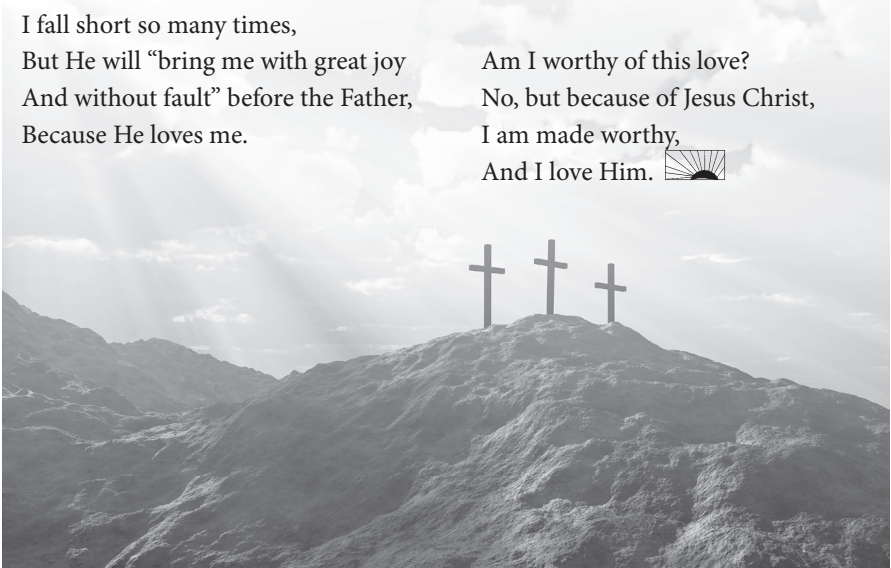
I fall short so many times,
But He will "bring me with great joy
And without fault" before the Father,
Because He loves me.

He could've forsaken the cross,
Let the ruler of the earth win.
But He didn't,
Because He loves me.

I need guidance for this life,
He gave the Holy Spirit and the Word.
He didn't have to,
But He loves me.

He could've placed me here,
Fearful and helpless in this world.
But He didn't. He said, "Fear not—
I have overcome."
Because He loves me.

Am I worthy of this love?
No, but because of Jesus Christ,
I am made worthy,
And I love Him. 



“Hear Ye, Hear Ye!”

Hearing is one of the five senses God gave us. We can hear, but so can many other species of God’s creation. In fact, some animals have much greater hearing acuity than we do. A dog’s hearing is far more sensitive than ours. Dogs can detect high-pitched sounds that are above the limits of human hearing. According to *World Book Encyclopedia*, they hear at great distances and can easily determine the direction of a faint sound.

Bats are the only mammals that fly. They can fly in total darkness. They use their sense of smell and very high-pitched squeaks that they send out as they fly. Bats’ sense of smell is a topic for another time, but their hearing is absolutely phenomenal. They hear high-pitched squeaks that humans cannot hear. These squeaks echo back to them, telling them where to fly to miss obstacles in their complicated flight path. And all of this can be happening in total darkness. But let’s leave for now the hearing sensitivity of dogs and bats.

We humans “hear” messages that no animals can hear. Dogs cannot hear the Holy Spirit inviting them to give their hearts to Jesus or telling them whether something is right or wrong. Bats never feel guilt. Instinct is their only call to action or response. Animals experience no conflict of emotion when they get so hungry that they kill members of their own species to satisfy their hunger. They eat whatever they can get. Their desire for dominance also permits them to fight without qualm of conscience.

While God equipped several creatures with astounding hearing ability, my concern here is not to have us try to match their hearing skills, but I do think we need to sharpen our listening skills by tuning out some things that come to us loud and clear. And like the prophet Elijah, we also need to listen carefully to those messages from God even when He doesn’t shout.

Satan is clever at getting our attention. He got Eve’s attention

by smooth talking and by raising questions about what God had provided for them. Thus he got Eve and Adam to blunder into a bad bargain. And the day of bad bargains is not over.

Watch Out for These Questions—

Why should I have to wait for this?

This question can get us into trouble. At first, we give babies just about everything they ask for, but after awhile new rules must be learned. Patience is one of the most basic concepts that parents must teach their young children. Impatience can make children angry when parents ask them to wait for something. It can get youth to sacrifice moral purity when they are sure they are deeply in love and wonder why a marriage ceremony is necessary, anyhow? It can get people into deep, suffocating debt.

Why should others tell me what to do? The human spirit tends to think of itself more highly than it ought to. An orderly society or a spiritual brotherhood requires structure. Structure rests on orders to be given and orders to be followed. If we expect to do only what we want to, we will surely trample on others' space while they are seeing to their duties. Respect is linked to obedience. Work comes before reward. Duties hinge on responsibility. Privilege is earned.

If these lessons are not embraced, great frustrations in life are sure to come.

Let's Listen When—

It's time to apologize. We naturally find it embarrassing to apologize, but there is perhaps nothing so cleansing to the soul as honest apology. Some of the most miserable people we know are unwilling to apologize. While it would be nice to always be right, to be human is sometimes to fail. Furthermore, sometimes any and all of us are dead wrong.

God reminds us of our need for His wisdom and strength. Have you noticed that God only once gave a man highly elevated intelligence? Have you also noticed how that man handled it? Solomon didn't stay with God's conditions for direction as king. He started out with a humble commitment to look to God for wisdom to perform his duties and to honor God. But at the time of his death, he was worshiping idols. He had violated God's plan for his life—and for God's people. Notice also that God also only ever gave one man such superhuman strength that he could rip out huge city gates that weighed many tons and carry them to a distant hilltop. But the greatest tests of strength Samson faced were not physical tests, but tests of character. He chose to follow his fleshly desires

regardless of the fact that God had given him his superhuman strength to deliver Israel from enemy forces. I do not speak of Solomon and Samson to show that God needed a demonstration that these earthlings could not handle such bestowal, but we need to know that. We are the ones who need to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and not lean to our own intellect or muscle power. These biblical accounts are given “for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

The Spirit says go. Philip in Acts 8 found a sincere seeker on a deserted road. I don’t think I have ever been so dramatically directed, but I believe I have been just as surely tapped on the shoulder, as it were, and reminded of duty. Sometimes we may be too hasty, but more often, I think, we put off what we should think and pray about, seek to discern what to do, then without delay—**do it!** Furthermore, I fear that we still live together in settlements too large while God would be pleased to have us spread out and be salt in the earth. Good

cooks are careful not to put too much salt into one dish. Furthermore, God puts a “GO” in the Gospel.

We’re reminded of kingdom priorities. Thus we shouldn’t make it top priority to make all the money we can. Like Jesus at 12 years of age, we really must be about our Father’s business. We also know that we are not to dishonor those whom God has assigned to keep order in society. We can be politely grateful for those in law enforcement without abandoning kingdom work. Furthermore, let us live so that if everyone were as respectful of the laws of the land as we are, the work of these public servants would be reduced to a mere fraction of what it is now.

There are undoubtedly other areas in which we should listen carefully to what God has said and is saying. The above items are merely examples. Jesus said, “...**that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, HAVING HEARD THE WORD, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience**” (Luke 8:15, emphasis added).

-PLM 



Studying the Bible in a hit-or-miss fashion, gives you more miss than hit.

Single Ladies Seminar

August 3-5, 2018

Sanctified Singleness: Set Apart for Jesus

Daughters of the King—Jen Miller, Plain City, OH

Create in Me a Clean Heart—Valley Mobley, Shippensburg, PA

Gracefully Feminine—Estalee Martin, Plain City, OH

Relating to Men—Erma Beachy, Plain City, OH

Relating to Women—Gloria Stutzman, London, OH

Transforming Relationships—Karen Conley, Lancaster, PA

Registration Deadline: July 20, 2018

To register or for questions about the seminar, please call 614-873-1199 or email info@dlmohio.org

This seminar is sponsored by:

Deeper Life Ministries

5123 Converse Huff Rd

Plain City, OH 43064

614-673-1199

www.dlmohio.org



Notice:

Do you know of someone who would be interested in serving as a medical missionary at an established clinic in Spanish-speaking El Salvador? The clinic is looking for:

Someone to provide primary care. Due to the complexity of the diseases seen at the clinic and because of regulations by the government of El Salvador, the primary caregiver should be a physician. Also, a mid-level provider (physician's assistant or nurse practitioner) is needed to help until the time of transition.

A person whose variety of duties would include assisting with maintaining the medical records in such a facility.

Amish Mennonite Aid normally asks for a two-year commitment. But since these positions involve Spanish proficiency and significant cultural adjustments, it would seem much better for persons filling these roles to think in terms of staying longer than two years.

We understand that the the Lord might lead to refocusing the clinic efforts or even closing the doors depending on how these staff needs are met.

If you, or someone you know could fill these roles, please call Ronald Miller at 620-795-2882 or email him at amasec.tr@gmail.com. We'd love to explore the possibilities further with them.



Thinking About Who We Are

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Those of us who were born in the Beachy Fellowship tend to think basically as do the Amish, but what we do is typically Mennonite. At our beloved Weavertown Church, we have entered well into the fifth generation. Our basic mind set is still with angles that are Amish in essence, but our church program is easily identified as Mennonite in function.

Our Sunday morning services embody with appreciation a semblance that is basically Amish. For example, a selected Scripture is read before the sermon while the congregation stands in reverence. That is *not* a Mennonite break for a necessary walk, or going out to get a drink. No comments are made about that passage either before or after the reading. Very Amish, if you please.

But then the Scripture reading is followed with a prayer by the reader while everyone is still standing. To have a congregation pray without the use of a prayer book and standing rather than kneeling is

quite functional. All very Mennonite, thank you.

That was how we did it for two generations, with Sunday School and preaching every Sunday. Now we have the prayer first, and then the Scripture reading, both of these while standing. It was changed recently to “do” the prayer first, so when people are listening “in,” the Scripture reading is immediately followed by the sermon. The thought is that the recording is put “on line” at the point of the Scripture reading, which flows right into the sermon. We now “live stream” the Sunday morning services for anyone who wishes to both see our speaker and hear him talk at the same time. This can be done either during the services or later. Very “techy,” eh?

Our bishop, Dave Stoltzfoos, had an excellent sermon this past Sunday (2-4-18) that would be worth your time to both see and hear, “The Question of Identity.” He said the Anabaptist movement did in fact move the world with a powerful, God-driven effect that ushered in the

whole new idea of the separation of church and state. It was, mind you, a norm for the world for 1200 or more years, in which the state had the say as to how the church operates, and by whom. That resulted in political stupor and spiritual stagnation and social corruption.

It was also a major contribution from the Anabaptists to champion voluntary church membership. These two concepts became a world encircling benchmark of individual freedom, which spawned other appreciable freedoms.

Bro. Dave's text was from Psalm 78:1-11, which is about the righteous.

They set their hope in God – a devotional faith – confidence.

They remembered the works of God – a sense of history – consciousness

They kept the commandments of God – the will to obey – commitment.

He gave some illustrations of people in the Bible who likely struggled with their identity. For instance, Moses was born Jewish, but was raised Egyptian. Imagine his identity crisis, but eventually, the Bible says, he chose "...rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).

We do not mean to insinuate that everyone has an identity crisis. I never changed my church membership, nor

changed my name through marriage, nor moved off the farm and changed jobs. I also never went to high school or college, where higher education was given a chance to mess up my identity. I'm just an "average Joe," and maybe a tad below that. I can read and understand Luther's German, speak Pennsylvania Dutch and handle the English, too.

But most significant of all, I have had a love for God and the Lord Jesus Christ from my youth. In tandem with that, I have had a passion for the Bible all my years. Knowing *whose* I am is the most powerful way to also know *who* I am.

Consider these thoughts:

- Changing church membership without a clear call from God can cause an identity crisis.

- Changing employment without a clear call from God can make a personal identity crisis.

- Being on a track toward marriage without the leading of God could augur toward a question of "Who am I?"

Whom we serve is a great way to establish *who we are*. In a crisis situation, Paul said, "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, *whose I am, and whom I serve*" (Acts 27:23, emphasis added). That capsulizes much of my thought as to the answer of our identity, about

us being known as to who we are, as being largely based on whom we serve. Serving our own self would result in us being a self-made person, who is serving the big “I.” Here are two ways to discover who we are.

Identify whom we are serving. This has everything to say about *who* we are, and *whose* we are. Main point here.

Then we accept and embrace our master. This will solidify our affection with our aspiration, our efforts with our goals, and our decisions with His call.

The current identity crisis is a more simple choice than we sometimes allow for ourselves. The choice is largely a matter of either self-denial and surrender to Christ, or a self-chosen life style of self-justification in error and rebellion. Living for self complicates for whom we were created and redeemed. Failure to keep covenants relative to church, marriage, and business confuses *who* we were meant to be, as well as *whose* we really are. This is not only by our profession, but in particular identifies us by what we cherish in our hearts. That which is used to justify our choices is declaring our identity most clearly.

The people I know and associate with most closely do not appear to

be in any identity crisis. Their face is set to go forward and upward. Their heart is calm and restful in Christ. Their love for God is evident by their interest in God’s Word. Their affection is arranged to seek the kingdom of Christ, and to seek those things which are above. They contribute to the church by their presence and resources and are available for Christian service where they live.

The grace of God is a major resource for our placement and even for our constitution as a person. Our personhood is intended to be a complement to other people, and to be complemented by them.

Paul said, “By *the grace of God* I am what I am” (I Corinthians 15:10). None of us by and in ourselves is very much at all. One individual is only a crucial person as he relates to his spouse and children, or in the church in several contributing capacities, or in a business in any of several capacities. All of us are replaceable. This is my identity as ordained and arranged by God.

We all are given *grace gifts*, or gifts of the Spirit. These are for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry (serving), for the edifying (building up) of the body of Christ.” The context says that, “unto everyone of us is given grace

according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12 and 7). This is my identity as a person covenanted in the church.

Married couples are given an additional measure of fullness as they blend their lives and personalities in Christ and by that are “heirs together of *the grace of life*” (I Peter 3:7). This is my identity that is shared with my wife, and her identity with me.

We all *grow in that grace* according to our interest in the Lord Jesus Christ and the things of God. This is my soul-satisfying identity in Christ my Savior and Lord.

God made us as individuals so that we can assume a personal identity. But at the same time, He has purposed us to be joined to others by family, neighbors, church, business, and everyone we meet. Even as we travel by car or plane, we share space with others, so we also participate and occupy ourselves in the church.

Selfishness is the main problem in the consideration of an identity crisis. Being that person with cheerfulness whom God intended for me to be goes a long way to accepting myself. Pride of station will cause one to be overly protective of his place and space, and is selfish in its nature and expression.

These things are often more prominent in the years of youth and

young married people. However, if they are not resolved in earlier life, those issues can plague a person for a whole lifetime of wondering who we are without ever being quite sure.

It has caused people to change jobs, to change church membership, to buy a certain vehicle, (as in, shall it be an economical sedan, a classy SUV, or a sporty pickup?) One man said when he became saved as an adult, the Lord prodded him to sell his relatively new house, which was upscale among his people. He said that house was his identity as a man among his peers and was the main item in his life that he assumed gave him status!

The Bottom Line is that the identity crisis comes by the selfishness and resulting confusion we choose and allow in our lives. We are the cause of it, if we are plagued by it. Like the man who sold his house, we can remove our attachment from things and be instead joined in a new way of life to Jesus Christ.

Our chief identity is meant to be in God, having been created by Him. Alongside is our identity as a child of God if we will freely receive His salvation in Christ, and our place in the local church. We were not meant to travel alone, either without God, or without those whom God has placed around us.



Applying Biblical Principles

The Unction of the Church

Broadus Massey

This is in response to the young man who asked the question why the Bible can't be enough, and why an Ordnung or church standards are necessary.

First, a bit of personal background might be in order. I was converted to the Christian faith in 1974 from an entirely secular upbringing; I was twenty at the time. I knew absolutely nothing of the Anabaptists more than what secular histories had to say in Reformation studies. I had to unlearn quite a bit.

In the summer of 1978 I was baptized in the Virginia Conference Mennonite Church. By 1978, the Conference had already permitted cut hair for women (it depended on the local congregation), the wedding band, television, etc. The Conference of old George Brunk, Sr. had "advanced" quite a bit.

But I knew no better, and nothing of "plain groups". I had been impressed with the idea of a nonresistant church and the head covering for women. But within less than a year I was ready to return to the "evangelical" churches. Why? Because the liberal Mennonite church was not liberal

only in lifestyle, but also in doctrine. It was in the process of discarding the foundational doctrines of Christ's atonement for fallen mankind, a literal Creation, a literal virgin birth, a literal resurrection; and yes, the deity of Jesus. I knew this firsthand, and observed the process, as I was attending Eastern Mennonite Seminary during this time, not to become a minister, but to learn more about Anabaptism.

My loyalty was divided: I would need to accept an increasingly pacifistic slant of "nonresistance" and a rejection of the fundamentals of the faith, or leave the Mennonite church. I decided to leave.

But I did not leave. I was introduced to those conservatives who had, over the last fifteen or twenty years, withdrawn from the regular Mennonite church. And then within a short time, I learned of the Beachy churches. I was not initially impressed with the idea of church regulations not specifically found in the Bible. But I was frankly informed by a seminary professor that the only Anabaptists (he was reluctant to concede them that name) who held to the "narrow-minded", and,

“fundamentalist” doctrines of the Christian faith were the Amish and Amish-Mennonites, (Beachy) and those “schismatic” conservatives. He felt that those doctrines, which he labeled as outmoded were very much tied to all other “outmoded” cultural expressions which the General Assembly had by and large discarded.

In short, it was a package deal! In the early spring of 1980 I left the conference and by June of 1980 I applied for membership in an old conservative Beachy church. In a few short years I married my wife and in 1987 we moved our young family to what some have called the Tennessee churches. The rest, is, as they say, history.

But back to the young man’s question—he needs a response. I, too, wrestled with that question. So here is my response and it may sound quite shocking.

First, God never intended that the Holy revealed Scriptures would speak in detail in dealing with every issue that would arise over one or two thousand years, in many, many different cultures. Yes, the Scriptures are sufficient in that they may make one wise to salvation, and give the principles of the Christian life and organization of His church; but God did not intend to spell out in advance every one of the foreseeable problems and circumstances that would arise. He left that to the church;

the visible Body of Christ, to apply those principles when and where needed. For example, God could have added epistles dealing with the rise of European and American democracy, where every citizen is allowed to vote, and where the King, or Caesar is no longer in power. But God did not. Should we then vote? The answer is not in the Bible in so many words. As well, God could have said something of public bathing, television, cocaine, the Internet, and many other issues. He did not.

Instead, He gave us certain, inerrant and for all time, principles. And He gave us the local body of believers. You see, a principle without an application is absurd, just as it would be preposterous to believe that a bridge has collapsed and still drive toward it at breakneck speed. One’s actions with regard to facts and beliefs prove whether one truly accepts the facts in question or not. By the way, would it not be criminally negligent for those who are familiar with that road and bridge, to not at least issue a warning?

Friend, maybe you would agree that to turn the other cheek, but then to retaliate when struck in the abdomen would also be absurd, even if Jesus did not mention the abdomen at all. In fact, Jesus taught clearly that a strictly stick-to-the-letter type of application is legalistic and damnable. Yes, to deny the present church the necessity

of making applications of Scriptural principles is very legalistic.

The Protestant/Evangelical world utterly rejects our view that a Christian should not serve in the military, all because it is not specifically written out in those exact words. Also, what do you think of someone who, while not wearing gold, silver, or precious stones as adornment, wears instead copper, brass, or steel, and pierces his or her nose and lips, and dyes his or her hair green, or orange? How about the man who decides that he would never demand back his coat or cloak, but would then use the law to seek the return of his horse? But that, of course, only from an unbeliever, as the apostle Paul wrote specifically against using the courts against a believer.

Actually, by now we can plainly see that applications will be made. The question then must be what kind of application and by whom? The individual? Or by serious, spiritual-minded, dedicated believers working together?

You may object that the above were absurd attempts to get away from needing to obey Bible principles. True enough, they were, but that is just my point. Any effort to limit the authority or divine unction of the church to make applications for present needs (and to require compliance) leads to legalism.

When faced with a divinely ordained

principle, an application will always be made; either a legalistic one to salve one's conscience and convince oneself that one is spiritually safe (like the Pharisees), or apply it with the intent to go "all the way" with Christ.

And since humility is a mark of a Christian, as well as "minding the same things", counting other's views more highly than our own, and submitting one to another in meekness, it becomes clear that to make application was never intended to be an individual effort. This belongs to the church.

Next I want to deal with what all too often causes individuals to reject the concept of a church Ordnung. Because that root cause is not always found in the motives of such people, the knife used to dissect this is two-edged. Take note.

When a church has a visible standard of practice, it will bear witness in at least three ways: a. Positive; here I mean accurately portraying a New Testament faith; b. Negative; because in spite (an important word here) of its original intent, the membership both tolerates and sad to say, at times encourages behavior or practices that belie its Christian profession. Indeed, all too often these groups seem quite ignorant of the basic doctrines of the Anabaptist faith. And so there can be a mixed witness, both positive and negative.

What makes all the difference here

is what the local congregation is striving for, as there is no group which can lay claim to a perfect witness at all times . Sad to say (and I have conversed with some) there are those who frankly don't care what their overall witness is. I am convinced that until the larger body of plain churches are willing to reckon constructively with groups who don't seem to care, a major stumbling block will remain for earnest young souls raised in our circles. Enough said.

Here I must relate a personal experience of when I worked at a children's home which was staffed and operated by a "conservative" group. I believe it will reveal much. It was 6 AM Monday morning. I had been up all night on "night duty" and was waiting in the kitchen to be relieved. The early workers were filing in.

One young man approached me and pointed to his pants. "Last night our church in Pennsylvania allowed zipper pants." It was, please recall, 6 AM Monday morning . While I was rather numbly trying to figure out how or why he had acquired these new pants at such a short notice, he continued, "We changed because the Amish in our community use tobacco and drink." I was wearing broadfalls; it was my home church's standard for menfolk. And I'm sure I was wearing something else on my expression—disbelief.

What made the encounter so

sickening was that there were by then, several other young people and older married staff listening, and also nodding in agreement with the young man's words. Then I spoke up, "My Mom's father was a drunkard and smoked and never went to church. Can you guess what type of pants he wore?"

They sort of glared at me. Over the past several months, they had let me know they considered me a "culture seeker". I went to my bed.

Now let us reason together. I will let you do the math as to which drunkard/smoker represented the greater number of pants wearers in society, of either style of pants. I will let you do the logic as to whether it is wise to pick a style with the motives that were given. Time proved, sadly, that the individuals involved were also culture seekers; they were seeking the culture I had rejected. They got more than they bargained for.

With this I end my somewhat involved reply. If it gives no further light on the subject, then toss it. But if such should be the case, I don't believe it could be due to an inaccurate observation, but instead, due to an imperfect or faulty relating.

May God bless you as you search.

*[From Young Companion, Feb., 2018.
Used by permission of Bro. Massey.
Submitted for publication by Bro. Tim
Miller, McKenney, VA.]*




marriages

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

Gascho-Shetler

Bro. Steve, son of Ron and Betty Gascho, Troy, PA, and Sis. Kendra, daughter of James and Janet Shetler, Hutchinson, KS, at Cedar Crest A.M. Church March 31, 2018, by Lee Nisly.

Zook-Peachey

Bro. Jesse Andrew, son of Jesse and Laura Zook, Mifflin, PA, and Sis. Marilyn J., daughter of Mervin and Lois Ann Peachey, Belleville, PA, at Valley View A.M. Church, on March 24, 2018, by Eli B. King, Jr. 

cradle roll

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

Coblentz, Josiah and Martha (Peachey), Lincoln, MO, first child and daughter, Ella Ruth, March 16, 2018.

Eicher, Arlin and Janette (Miller), Hutchinson, KS, first child and son, Carter Bryce, April 9, 2018.

Gerber, Peter and Jenia (Muntean), Suceava, Romania, third child, first daughter, Hadassah Joy, March 17, 2018.

Gingerich, Sam and Martha (Shrock), Rose Hill, VA, sixth child, third son, Ryan Ariel, April 5, 2018.

Goff, Keyron and Janelle (Yoder), Scotland Halfmoon, Belize, second child, first son, Braylen Isaiah, April 25, 2018.

Habbegger, Andreas and Rachel (Troyer), Harrison, AR, second child, first daughter, Elliana Sunshine, April 6, 2018.


Iwashige, Shane and Dorcas (Kuepfer), Partridge, KS, fourth child and son, Elliott Wade, April 19, 2018.

Kauffman, Linfred and Rose (Yoder), Falkville, AL, second child, first son, Trevor Lin (stillborn), March 16, 2018.

Nisley, Jacob and Anna (Byler), Meadville, PA, second child and daughter, Willow Jade, April 24, 2018.

Stoltzfus, Justin and Anita (Hostetler), Mechanicsburg, OH, first child and son, Jackson Eli, April 14, 2018.

Stoltzfus, Nathan and Krista (Kauffman), Ephrata, PA, second child, first son, Zachary Cole, April 3, 2018.


Wright, Barrett and Marla (Martin), Orange, VA, first child and son, Fletcher Jack, born April 11, 2018; died April 11, 2018. 

ordinations

May the grace of God be upon our brothers as they minister faithfully. Let us pray for them.

Bro. Scott Burkholder, 37, (wife Suzanne nee Troyer) was ordained as bishop at Clay Street Amish Mennonite Church, Bourbon, IN, on March 4, 2018. Preordination messages were given by Ivan Beachy, Free Union, VA. The charge was given by Scott's father, Wade

Burkholder, assisted by Ivan Beachy and Aaron Yoder. Sharing the lot was David Raber.

Bro. Joey Gingerich, 47, (wife Emma nee Miller), Rose Hill, VA, was chosen by voice of the church as deacon at Maranatha Bible Fellowship on March 11, 2018. Preordination messages were given by Ethan Wagler, Cochran, PA. The charge was given by Raymond Fisher, assisted by John Mast and Leroy Kauffman. 

observations

Brother Dean Lehrke, a brother in our home congregation, has a burden that we not lose sight of the importance and implications of loving our enemies as Christ taught us. One of the important results of this obedience is that we choose to avoid involvement in the military. Sometimes we refer to this concept as “nonresistance.” I was moved by a personal account that Dean shared in a recent Sunday morning devotional. He's consented to share it here in his own words with editorial modifications:

“Back in 1975 when I was 16 years old I went with my father to the Caribbean island nation of Haiti on a work and witness trip sponsored by the Dakota Nazarene Church district. About 15 or so of us Nazarenes mostly from farm backgrounds left an icy cold and snowy February in North Dakota for our first time on a trip in service to Jesus to the poverty-stricken people of one of the poorest countries in the earth. One evening during our stay we were treated to a talk by the director of the Haitian Nazarene

Bible college. Miss Jeanine Van Beek was born in the country of Holland and as a girl had to endure the destruction of WW II firsthand as a frightened innocent victim of a vicious bombing campaign by both the American and German forces. Both sides were exterminating both the inhabitants and the structures of her home village in pursuit of a scorched earth policy in order to leave nothing for the victor after the battle was over. She told us in stark terms how she understood that the Germans were trying to destroy the people and the country of Holland. But why the Americans, their liberators and friends, were trying to do the same was baffling to her and intensely challenged her faith in the inherent good of the liberators of her land.

“Unbeknownst to her that evening my dad began to experience a heavy dread. And after her talk I noted him on the verge of tears and very visibly shaken. I asked him why, and he told me for the first time that it was his battalion’s 240 mm howitzer guns that were trying to destroy her village and since their range was some 14 miles he never got a viewpoint of the receiving end of those giant projectiles of

destruction. Since they were so far behind the front lines they did not see immediately the results of their deadly accuracy in that little Dutch village.

“That was 30 years before, yet that evening the war hit him worse than ever since he was now face to face with one of the victims in flesh and blood that he was trying to kill during a war whose only goal was strategic superiority of territory even when innocent civilian lives were obliterated to accomplish this. My dad experienced no terrible real pains or regrets for what he did between 1942 and 1945 other than a minor injury to his knee playing baseball for which he got a war time disability, and a bronze star award for an incident involving squashing a potential uprising of German prisoners under their keeping before it ever happened! All in all he had no deprivations during his wartime service to his country, but now 30 years later that little Dutch girl snapped him into the reality of the war he was an intricate part of.

“I asked him, ‘Dad are you gonna be okay?’ He said he thought so. I then told him using the most wisdom I could muster up as a very green-behind-the-ears, 16-year-old

North Dakota country boy that he need not feel bad; he was serving his country and just doing what he and millions of others were supposed to be doing during that terrible war.

“Of course, that was an easy thing to say for someone like me who never had to deal with the conviction that somehow in obeying Caesar, a soldier must live on with his conscience as well. I have seen documentaries of other ex-soldiers who had to kill during wartime and all of them say that after the battle is over, you wake up as one who just took a human life and the knowledge that something inside you is no longer the innocent person you had been. Nothing was ever the same even if Caesar said it was okay and you believed that God would automatically forgive you for obeying your rulers. After all in Hebrews 13 it is very clear that we are to obey our rulers since they are placed in authority by God. Hence to disobey Caesar is to automatically disobey God. And so the other side of the coin of Caesar exacts a heavy tribute to pay when dealing with what is his and what is God’s.

“My great uncle Wilhelm did that very thing, he obeyed earthly

rulers to serve God and country but his country was Germany during the first war that was to end all wars: WW1. He was a lancer in the German cavalry and survived the war. His brother Adolf, my grandfather, had a different take on obeying Caesar. Shortly before his 18th birthday in the year 1900 he came to America as an immigrant. It was tricky for him since as a minor he could have been sent back to Germany as a suspected runaway. However he already had family in America so it was more of a friendly summer visit to his two sisters who had already come over. However, he did not return home to Germany that fall since the moment he’d celebrated his 18th birthday he was beholden to begin his military service to his country and he had already decided that he never wanted to serve in the Kaiser’s army. His earthly citizenship wasn’t his highest priority.

“In a similar way to Uncle Adolf, we citizens of Christ’s Kingdom no longer feel quite at home dwelling in a kingdom or country of this earth. but feel more at home with citizens of the kingdom of Jesus which is not of this earth.”

•••••

About 50 years ago, when Jana Nisly was a little girl growing up in the same church that I did, she felt a nudge that she was unable to ignore. At some point she understood this nudge to be God's call for her to become a missionary doctor. When we consider the rigor associated with medical training, the time invested in secular education contexts, and add the gender expectations of our church setting, we conclude that this nudge was quite remarkable. It is true that many individuals have sensed a similar nudge and have embarked on this arduous journey. But the number of those who begin such a journey and the number of those who follow it to the original goal are not the same. For Jana to faithfully follow that call meant that she walked with clarity, conviction and a relentless perseverance that many of us would struggle to parallel.

When she graduated from medical school, the state of Kansas had a program whereby those who practiced in a medically under-served area of the state for the number of years equal to the years of medical school, the state would pay for the medical school. Although she could have opened

a medical practice, she chose to spend those years volunteering with a Methodist mission in Wichita, Kansas. Having completed that duty, she moved to El Salvador and opened a clinic in El Resbaladero, under Amish Mennonite Aid where she has served since. One incentive that doctors who persist through the grist-mill of physician-training look forward to, is that the expected salary will offset some of the sacrifices associated with the preparation. But Jana didn't fit that mold. Since she became a doctor, she has never drawn a doctor's salary, choosing rather to volunteer.

It has now been more than 25 years since Jana moved to El Salvador. Her age is one factor that reminds us all of a question that needs to be answered. The urgency to find an answer is growing. The question is: What will become of the clinic when Jana is no longer able to serve? If Jana steps away from her involvement at age 65 (less than 5 years from now), it is not too soon to begin the transition. If you have suggestions for how this question could be answered, refer to the notification located elsewhere in this publication.

RJM 

The “Me” Gospel

Brandon Yoder, Quenemo, KS

Jesus! Why did He come to earth? If you believe Jesus came to earth to save us from our sin, you are correct. If that is the only thing that comes to your mind, you may need to have your thinking adjusted. The “Me” gospel might be more a part of you than what you think.

The Gospel is good news, or good tidings, of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Gospel message of salvation may be perceived as “man-centered” (the “Me” gospel) which brings proper understanding of salvation vital to victorious Christian living.

Why did Jesus come? Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:15 that “Jesus Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am chief...” However, the shining objective of salvation goes much further than this. To understand salvation, we must understand why man was initially created and what transpired when man fell.

After God had created the world, the stars and planets, and the animal life, He created the crown of His creation—man. Man was unique in that he was created in God’s image.

God wanted someone who would bring Him glory by mirroring His own image. He also wanted someone who would voluntarily worship Him. This was and is the purpose of man. I don’t think I can emphasize enough that God wants to be worshiped, honored and glorified.

Sadly, when man sinned it made it impossible to glorify and worship God the way God intended him to. There was nothing man could do to revert back to his original state of innocence. God, in His love and mercy, reached out to rescue fallen man, yet we notice that even in the plan of salvation one of God’s purposes was that He would be glorified. In Isaiah we read, *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our GOD, to comfort all that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for*

mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:13).

Notice the end of this beautiful messianic prophecy, “that He might be glorified.” That is the ultimate goal of the plan of redemption! Jesus came to bring hope and healing to mankind. In doing so, He brought glory to God. He also made it possible for man to truly glorify God again, both now and in eternity. We must also recognize the resurrection of Christ as the most powerful and glorious event in history! When we look into the plan of salvation, we must stand back in awe and adoration at the greatness of God! It wasn’t a mere patch-up remedy that God concocted when He saw things getting out of hand, but rather, a marvelous plan set in place *before* creation.

I can think of no more articulate way of stating the purpose of salvation than the chorus of the heavenly host at Christ’s birth, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men” (Luke 2:14)! We must remember that God’s original desire for man was that he would glorify and worship Him; salvation is a means

by which man can be regenerated to fulfill that purpose. When we recognize this aspect in conjunction with knowing that Christ came to save man from his hopeless state, then we have a God-centered Gospel.

Unfortunately, the gospel many people believe today is centered around man. They have a self-centered mindset. “God so loved ME that He gave His only begotten Son. Jesus came to save ME from my sins. The Holy Spirit exists for ME. All things work together for good for ME.” Theirs is a “ME” gospel.

We may not think that we are anywhere close to the “ME” gospel, but this warped mentality can be very subtle. Some time ago I heard a sermon in a fairly conservative setting about Jesus, the Living Water. What I gathered as the main thrust of the message was as follows: Are you finding true satisfaction in life? Are you truly finding fulfillment where you’re at? Come to Jesus. He will give you that Living Water. Do you have peace and joy in your heart? Come to be filled with Living Water. The speaker was interesting and the message not unscriptural, nevertheless, I came away slightly uneasy about something. As I analyzed what was said, I concluded

that the reason I felt that way was because the message seemed to be more about meeting my personal agenda than about Jesus, the Living Water.

Protestant theology is a field fertile for the seeds of the “ME” gospel. Their heavy emphasis on faith alone makes it easy to become a Christian for the benefits one receives from it. They don’t need to be committed to practically applying all the teachings of Christ in daily living. A continued walk of holiness is rendered non-essential by the “once saved, always saved” doctrine. Their teaching ends at the cross.

Unlike the Protestants, the early Anabaptists embraced a different theology which believed in a faith which produces works. They believed that Scripture was meant to be practically lived out in everyday life. They were confident that a true believer would deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Christ in newness of life. They weren’t doing it just for the perks they would get out of it. The cost of discipleship was indelibly stamped in their minds. By life or by death, they would glorify God.

Do we know what our personal mentality is about the Gospel? Here are some different thought patterns

that can help us define where we are in this area:

1. When considering issues with church standards and/or areas of personal conviction, the man-centered mind asks, “What’s wrong with it?” the God-centered mind asks, “What is God’s will for my life in this area?”

2. In music selection, or in the same setting as Number One, the man-centered mind asks, “What does it do for me?” And “How does it make me feel?” The God-centered question asks, “Does it honor God?”

3. When going through difficult times, the man-centered mind asks, “Why did God allow this? What am I doing wrong that God let this happen?” The result is bitterness. The God-centered mind acknowledges that God has a purpose for the trials one goes through. Maybe it’s just for the glory of God. That results in brokenness.

4. The man-centered mind fosters cheap grace. The God-centered way is a walk of holiness.

5. The man-centered mind compares itself with others and tries to make allowances or excuses for failures. The God-centered way is a walk of holiness.

6. The man-centered mind focuses particularly on God’s love and mercy.

The God-centered mind unites obedience with love.

7. The man-centered mind seeks health, wealth, and prosperity. The God-centered mind pursues discipleship.

8. The man-centered mind secretly enjoys praise when he or she feels they have done something of merit. The God-centered mind gives God the glory for what He has done.

9. The man-centered mind lacks the fear of God. The God-centered mind maintains a proper fear of God.


10. The man-centered mind is more individualistic and sees church membership of little importance. The God-centered mind sees the church as the precious body of Christ and values being part of a church brotherhood.

11. The man-centered mind sees personal devotions as a time of seeking God primarily for his own personal needs and requests. To the God-centered mind, personal devotions are not only a means of seeking strength and courage for the day, but also a time of simply worshipping God.

A. W. Tozer stated, "A right belief about God will relieve us of ten thousand temporal problems." A proper view of God affects us in more ways than we might realize. It

makes a difference in how we relate to others. It will change what is dear to our hearts. The God-centered mind will look at Scripture in a different light than the man-centered. A right understanding of God and ourselves will bring about an awe and reverence for God and cause us to worship.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14: 6,7). This angel carried the Gospel message, a message in which are a few directives for those who would be a part of God's kingdom. Fear God. Give glory to God. Worship God.

One of the greatest things we can do is simply to worship God. Do we need to wait until we get to church to worship God? Absolutely not! It is good and necessary to gather collectively to worship, but worship of God should be a part of our daily personal experience. When we have a clear understanding of the Gospel, then we are in a position to truly worship God. Glory to His name! 

God's Phone Call

Brenda Weaver, Mifflinburg, PA

Doubts swirled. Around me I saw changes that frightened me. People we'd trusted and respected were changing their minds about values we still viewed as beneficial. I was perplexed and troubled as I watched contention divide our group of believers. Was I only being stubborn? Could I be wrong? Had we been wrong for many years? Where would new paths lead?

"God is not the author of confusion," my husband calmly quoted. Yet I remained confused. Within my soul a longing grew—a longing for confirmation, preferably from an older saint whom I'd trusted in the past. I thought of a few such people but hesitated to call on them. After reading Psalm 142 for the second day in a row, I used its words to bring my soul cry to God. "*God, I pour out my complaint before You. I show You my trouble. When my spirit is overwhelmed within me . . . I cried unto thee, O Lord. Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name.*"

An overcast sky and steady, gray rain obscured light, and my

soul tumbled further into dark forebodings. Mid-morning the phone rang. Between the first and second ring, I called out to God. "Oh, God, please let this be someone to encourage me." When I answered, I immediately recognized the voice of an older man from another state—someone I had not seen or heard from in almost twenty years. He identified himself and was surprised I'd recognized his voice. *Why would he call me?* My thoughts flew back through the years and I remembered his kindly, wise advice to me as he guided me through the publishing of two pamphlets I'd written. He'd been a wise and patient editor.

"I wonder if you know how your pamphlets are moving?" he asked. I was aware they were still being ordered and used, but I told him I knew little of their distribution. His next words washed over me in a succession of confirmations. He told me how he personally was placing them in a local restaurant next to a Choice Books Rack. Recently the restaurant had made some changes and the pamphlets (one about the headship veiling, and one answering

common questions about the Amish and Mennonites) were placed where people waiting in line could view them. In three weeks time, several hundred of them had disappeared from the tract rack, many of them taken, presumably by patrons traveling a nearby interstate highway. “I just felt led to call you...I thought you should know...and we can be praying they will be used to call more people to saving faith.”

I gripped the phone. Through quiet tears I told the saint about my prayer when the phone rang. I told him about my discouragement, how I’d even wondered if it was “worth” writing to affect the lives of others. I told him of my soul cry for encouragement from an older saint. He informed me he would soon turn eighty-three.

This serving senior offered me some minutes of his time (yes, he was still busy doing work for the Lord), and gave me new perspective. I grabbed an empty envelope and a pencil and scrawled his sage advice. As I did, I felt my soul cry answered. The caller took me to applicable Scripture. He guided me in responding with goodwill to those by whom I felt forsaken. He reminded me who the real enemy is—not the people, but the devil, at work to discourage and divide

believers. He affirmed the choices my husband and I were making, and assured me God could bring good things out of our trials.

Humbly I received this editor’s commending of work I’d done many years ago. I praised God, and thanked the faithful saint who’d followed a prompting to make a phone call to me.

My gift of encouragement had come! From Kansas to Pennsylvania. On a rainy, dreary day. From an older, faithful saint to a faltering, perplexed, seeker of truth. In response to a simple, sad, soul cry, born out of Psalm 142.

Awed, I stood on the front porch and gazed in wonder at the silver-clouded sky. And while raindrops fell I whispered, “*Thank You, God, for Your phone call.*”

[Author’s note: I received this phone call some eight years ago and wrote this article a few months later. The caller was David L. Miller, then Associate Editor of Calvary Messenger. I extend my sympathies to his family, as I’ve recently learned of his passing. Another saint home! My late husband and I were blessed to know and visit him and his wife in their Kansas home. I still have the envelope with his words, tucked in a journal from that troubling year. His was a phone call I think I shall never forget.]



Dear Daddy

By a CBS Student

I'm not sure how to say this. I could say I love you, but that doesn't sound right. I mean I do love you, but our relationship isn't all bear hugs and holy kisses, like my CBS teacher said in Ordinances class says it should be. I think he was kidding a little bit. It's just that we're not a very demonstrative people.

But I do love and admire you a lot. You've done a lot for me. There's all those long hours at work. There's all those recent mornings going out to milk those beastly bovines.

There are family vacations, especially the ones where the older children didn't really want to come along, but we had to anyway, and then in the end the trip was almost always fun.

There are the times Mama called you in from work to discipline us children.

There are a lot of other things I admire about you. I admire you for upholding biblical standards, even under pressure from ungodly

people. I admire you for being a conscientious deacon and for doing your best to be an honest steward. I admire you for your convictions, especially where it differs from some of the rest of the church. I admire you for taking part in handling difficult church situations.


I admire your godly life and example to us children.

Thank you for praying for me, for asking how I'm doing with purity and for listening to me when I questioned family standards and other things. Thank you for providing stability in our family. Sure, there were times when you messed up, but you apologized to us children and to Mama, and that means a lot.

Thanks for being my dad.

With love,

Your son

[Submitted by a CBS teacher who asked for no more identification for himself and the student than this.] 

***A Christian is a person who
makes you think of Jesus.***

The Missionary's Family

Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA

Missionary fathers are often diligently engaged in urgent labors of the field.

We are thankful for many missionary children who later in life also decide to be enlisted in Christian service in the homeland or abroad. Some fathers and mothers were doing their homework even in the midst of demanding pressures.

Brother Clair Schnupp gave his story many years ago of how God saved their family from pitfalls. Clair is the founder of Northern Youth Programs, a ministry to the First Nations' People in northwestern Ontario. Clair became very busy flying from one reservation to another ministering to the native people. You see, God called him to be a missionary. But Clara, his wife, and their five daughters (they had no sons) were neglected. They did not always conduct a regular family worship time. Conditions in the home were not good with father being gone so much. Clair was losing his family. God spoke to him.

What changed? Clair devised

Biblical principles in workbooks on godly family living for the First Nations' culture.

Clair and Clara took their family along to various communities in the north. What a thrill it was for

Clair and his daughters when he taught them how to fly the mission airplane. Their family sang at the seminars. Clair taught the family-life principles in many native communities. Many of the First Nations' people were saved (including Clair's family) from the devil's trap of the father's negligence in the home.

As much as possible involve your family in the mission where God has called you. Even the daily prayers during family worship for church members and the lost in the community can be an involvement that will help bind a family together. Fathers let us do our homework but also adjust our schedule to not neglect our involvement in the church and community. I cannot read the following letter without a tearful heart.



A Letter to Dad

Submitted by Floyd Stoltzfus

Dear Dad,
We haven't seen too much of each other lately. I know you've been really busy, working long hours to try to make ends meet. Often I'm still in bed when you leave for work and sometimes you don't come home until after dark. I miss having you come to my bedroom and pray a goodnight prayer.

I tried to talk to you about some things one evening, but you said you were too busy. So I thought I could just write them to you in a letter and then you can read it when you get time.

I really like the new pickup you bought and I know Mom really likes our new house. I was hoping that once you got the new pickup that we could do some camping together as a family. It's been a long time since we did something like that. I don't mean to complain, but I miss being able to spend time with you, Dad.

I don't know if you know it, Dad, but sometimes I find Mom in her room crying as she irons your shirts for work. When I ask her what's wrong, she always hugs me and says,

"You don't understand, son." Maybe you should talk to her about it, Dad. I think maybe she misses not having you around very much, just like I do.

And Dad, do you remember that you promised to take me fishing on my birthday? I was really looking forward to that and then one of the men from work called and invited you to go golfing. And you went. I was mad at you for a whole week because I knew that you weren't looking forward to that time as much as I was. But I forgive you, Dad. Can we set a date when we can go before too long?

And Dad, Gennie's been hanging around with some fellow I don't think you would approve of. She's sixteen you know, and she thinks she's old enough to be making her own decisions, but this doesn't look like a good one to me. I think she is just looking for attention. And Dad, maybe if you'd pay more attention to her she'd forget about this fellow.

One last thing Dad, the boys at school say you don't care about me because you never come to my parent-teacher conferences. Mom

always comes alone. I know it's not true what they say, Dad. I know you love me. But do you think you could come next time just to prove them wrong. I'd really appreciate that.

After you read this, Dad, can you come to my bedroom to talk with me

about it? Maybe we can even pray together before I go to sleep.

I love you, Dad,
Jimmy

[Published in Hope Horizons. Author unknown.]



A Woman After God's Heart

A Single Heart

Sara V. Gingerich, Mountain View, AR

I was born in an Amish home, youngest in a family of five. Like most little girls, I spent happy hours playing “mama” with my dolls. My favorites—products of Mom’s sewing machine—I named Jerry and Magdalena. Long-suffering kittens dressed in doll clothes, gave me lots of practice for future mothering. Wasn’t that the way it worked? Little girls grew up and did what their mothers did. They married. They had children.

Childhood turned into youth. Through my parents and the church I received sufficient teaching to start me on a spiritual path. Where God divinely placed me, Truth sought me.

A void, a longing filled my heart, one only He could fill. I cannot point to an exact time when I gave my heart to the Lord, though I can point back to when I first realized that I cannot be “good” on my own. At the time of my 18th birthday I was baptized in the Old Order Church. My spiritual experiences, while still shallow, were steps in the journey.

At age 50, my mother became totally blind. Grandma lived with us and suffered from dementia. I was needed at home. Friends and siblings married. Dreams of marriage remained only that— dreams.

When I was in my mid-twenties my mother passed away. A year and

a half later, the sister next to me in age and in heart, died in a tragic highway accident along with her infant son. Some years later, within three months' time, my Grandma died, and Dad remarried, and the last of my sisters got married. When both Dad and my sister moved away, loneliness moved in. Through all the grief and losses I began to understand the meaning of "Songs in the Night". Many times loneliness lifted as I forced myself to *sing unto the Lord*.

There was little to hold me back the day I received a call to care for orphans in Costa Rica. My heart leaned toward more meaning and service. This was my first extensive exposure to life outside of the Old Order Amish setting. However, that work soon came to naught, just when I was finding much fulfillment. It meant going back home. My future was shrouded in a mist of uncertainty. Anxious thoughts threatened my wavering faith as the long miles brought me closer home. *Home? Where was home?*

Today I remember not so much the darkness of that time, as the wonderful way God opened doors. Back in Indiana, a friend suggested I apply at Goshen Hospital as nurses' assistant. I confided to her my interest of working in obstetrics, and the day

shift would be nice. (How little did I realize God was giving me a desire for the work for which He was preparing me.) "That's a preferred spot; one you work your way up to," my friend informed me. That same day I was interviewed and hired for the day shift in OB. *Ah Lord, is anything too hard for you?*

That year I transferred my church membership to a Beachy congregation. Excommunication and shunning followed from the church I left, then serious misunderstandings, and more tears. But through the pain, grace abounded.

I left my enjoyable job at the hospital after being asked to serve at Hillcrest Home in Harrison, AR. *Caring for the elderly after I had cared for babies?* However, the years at Hillcrest proved invaluable to my spiritual growth. I worked and lived with youth and leaders of similar convictions. A small accountability group taught me the value of openness. In Harrison I applied for LPN training. I was humbled and grateful for a scholarship from a ladies' group who paid my tuition. Nursing gave me further direction and purpose.

I longed to follow God with my whole heart. As my Christian experience deepened, I took a blank


sheet of paper, signed it and laid it before the Lord. Only He would fill in the blanks about the details of my life. No, singleness was not my first choice. Throughout the years, I would offer this “gift” back to Him again and again. But with acceptance came joy and fulfillment.

I could not have dreamed where His plan would take me. Eventually it led to a small rural clinic in Paraguay, South America, into a new whirl of challenges. We never knew who would walk through the door: sick children, wounds to suture, burn patients, snake bites, and much more. To add to that, quite unexpectedly, I was thrust into a crash course in midwifery. *Me, a sheltered farm girl, a midwife?* The “sheltered farm girl” was privileged to deliver several thousand babies in the 3-year commitment that turned to 15 years.

Back in Indiana, I continued as a staff nurse at a busy birth center, again caring for mothers and infants.

I watched my friends enter into *grand parenting* roles. Although I could not share that joy the Lord crowned me with a wide circle of friends, including children. I loved having guests in my home. Several times I was asked to deliver babies for missionary couples in foreign countries.

As retirement inched closer, the niggling question of my future surfaced from time to time, a question I refused to dwell on. The Lord not only planned my life but also abundantly cared for me these many years. Isaiah 54:5 “Thy Maker is thy husband” was my verse. Life was rich and full. I knew I could safely trust my remaining days to Him.

Post Script: In my sunset years the Lord quite unexpectedly changed the course of my life. Today I am not only the blessed wife of a godly man, but a stepmother and grandmother as well. His story—our story continues. 

Let's let God set our priorities. It's unfortunate when we want what we don't need and then choose what we want.

Angels at the Till

Diane Beachy

This is a story from Ireland. What comes to your mind when you think of Ireland? You might think that Ireland is always a happy place, filled with rainbows and smiling strangers, but it is actually filled with struggles and stress just like anywhere.

My name is Diane, and I work at a small store called Jaybees, similar to what you would know as a gas station. We have three pumps outside where people buy fuel, and inside there is a bakery that greets our customers with all kinds of lovely smells. Every day, they come looking for the classic Irish staples such as Soda Bread, Scones, and Carrot Cakes; and in the summer, lots of people come from far away just to try the delicious ice cream cones!

We have many friends in the community around us, and they never fail to brighten our day with their smiles and kind words. Jaybees is a happy place to work, and many people notice a different atmosphere when they step inside. Jaybees is no

ordinary bakery or petrol station, and neither is the God we strive to honour every day!

One day however, something unusual happened. I was working behind the till, when two young men, armed with knives and disguised with pillowcases, arrived in a blue car and parked outside. When the shop was empty of customers, they took their chance and ran inside, pointing their knives at me!

“Give me all de money! Put it all in de bag!” They were shouting with authority and holding open a pale green shopping bag. How could I disobey? So without a word, I opened my till, took out all the notes I had, and placed them in their bag. “Any cigarettes, no?” I shook my head and bravely smiled up into their pillowcase-covered faces. As quickly as they came, they were gone again, slamming their car doors and peeling rubber onto the road in their hurry to escape.

But we were not the only ones at

the scene. When I look back in my mind's eye on the scene, I can clearly see and feel the presence of six tall angels. Three angels were behind me, arms outstretched to catch me if I fell; and three were standing behind the young men and leaning over the counter, keeping a close eye on their weapons. I was filled with a sense of God's nearness in those short moments, as well as confidence in His almighty purpose. In that instant, I knew that if I was hurt, there would be a reason and God would be somehow glorified.

In the days that followed, I found comfort in the company and help of my friends and neighbours. God had the events of that surprising day arranged, and one of my coworkers was able to come and take over the shop for the rest of the day. After an interview with a Waterford policeman, I was just ready to leave and go home, when Seamus, our local village policeman arrived. He has taken a special interest in us and our shop, and frequently comes to our aid when we need anything. Even though we had never met before, he was able to help me process the trauma of what had just happened. Then I headed to the home of my Irish mom and dad, Wendell and Sheri Hochstetler, who

prayed with me and talked on the phone with my real parents. I was also able to spend some time with my neighbor, Jude, who used her experience as a registered nurse to offer advice and counsel through the confusing emotions that followed. I am thankful to God for allowing the robbery to happen, because it turns out that I made a lot of new friends through this experience!

We don't know very much about the young men who visited us that day, but we trust that God has a deeper plan and reason for allowing this to happen. Hopefully they felt something different about our shop and maybe they even saw the angels as well!

So what will you do the next time you are afraid? You can remember this story about angels and know that God is holding you in the palm of His hand and will always look out for your best interest. And He is right beside you, even when it is dark all around you, and you are scared.

God fulfills His Word! In one of the psalms, He promises this:

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

“I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.’”



Lessons on Thinking Clearly: A True Story

Gideon Yutzy, Dunmore East, Ireland

We were young men. It was winter term at Faith Builders Educational Programs. We found ourselves, those days, burying our noses in the likes of Pilgram Marpeck and G.K. Chesterton even as the snows off of Lake Erie buried our campus.

It was the first few weeks of 2010, a brand new year. Earlier, Captain Sullenberger had landed his plane on the Hudson River, and our chatter would drift to the event now and again, the thought of a hero comforting us amid all the cold weather and other turmoil in the world. In the late evenings we would gather in one of the dorms and eat Swiss cheese and Trail bologna supplied by Chris, who was himself from Trail. We would carve off oblong hunks with a large knife and eat them with our hands, like cavemen.

One evening the conversation drifted into new territory. “Is anyone interested in going to Sarasota, Florida, during the week between winter term and spring semester?” asked Chris from Trail. His dad

owned an apartment in Sarasota.

It was an interesting idea—a trip to the Amish-Mennonite mecca. Granted, there were things about the proposal that didn’t fit our intellectual personas. Adult tricycles? Shuffleboard? And all the volleyball; we had always sneered at volleyball fanatics.

Of course we knew the real problem lay in our funds, or more specifically the lack thereof as we had staked them all on Marpeck and Chesterton. While our lodging would be paid for by Chris’s dad from Trail, Ohio, our problem was going to be getting to Sarasota, Florida; which, I might add, just so happened to lie 1200 miles south of us.

Actually, it was going to be more miles than that because the plan was to go to Sarasota via Cape Canaveral. Exactly one day after winter term was to end the shuttle *Endeavor* was slated to leave earth’s atmosphere and head for the International Space Station. And this, we all agreed, we wanted to see.

At first our chances of finding a

vehicle seemed dismal. But then after several more days passed, new hope was born. Josh N. came into the dorm one evening and told us his father was offering us their family mini-van. Well, after having spent another grueling day with Marpeck and Chesterton, this put us into a celebratory mood indeed. The excited murmurs of wanderlust-stricken young men could be heard late into the night as we stayed up planning an old-fashioned road trip.

On the last evening of winter term, we participated in the normal hubbub that accompanies the end of a term at Bible School. Good-byes were spoken and well-wishes exchanged. As usual, people were a little sad about parting. But in many ways our own adventure was just getting underway with Josh N.'s family van, a sleek silver Chrysler, already backed up to the entrance of the men's dorm. We had begun loading our gear. The departure time was set for 2 a.m.

After minimal sleep, we set out, the five of us: Josh N. who was driving the family van, Chris from Trail, Josh C., Benji, and I. Winding our way along the snowy state highways of northwestern Pennsylvania, we drove toward I-79, then headed south toward Pittsburgh. The snow fell hard from the night sky, but Josh N., being a local, was undeterred by it and he drove the family van well.

Nonetheless the snow set us back.

By the time we reached Pittsburgh, the cushion time we had planned into our itinerary had dwindled significantly. We knew we had to stay focused if we were to make it for the *Endeavor's* launch at 4.39 the next morning.

And then, exiting to bypass Pittsburgh, we noticed several cars stranded on the snowy roads. Perhaps it was due to poor tires, we speculated, or an inexperienced driver. "Whatever the case, we should help them," mumbled Josh N, pulling over, and we all agreed. In the spirit of Captain Sullenberger, we rose to the occasion, emerging from the van to help them back onto the road. Alas, with this gallant act our remaining sliver of cushion time vanished.

The early hours and the physical exertion of pushing cars had made us hungry, but if we were to keep alive any hope of watching the shuttle launch, we knew we had to keep travelling. Chris from Trail took his place behind the wheel to relieve Josh N. We decided, though, that there could be no harm in eating as we drove, and once we had reached cruising speed, we broke out the food—cold pizza wrapped in plastic.

Cold pizza, it so happened, was the only food we had along and we ended up eating it for the duration of our journey. Though not the pinnacle of eating pleasure, it would nonetheless give us some much-needed nutrients. Given our lack of cash, we wouldn't

be buying much food at restaurants or service stations, that much was certain.

Late the previous evening, just hours before departure, Josh C. had paid a visit to the cafeteria to scavenge for food befitting cash-strapped students. There he met the school's much-loved cook, Beatrice King, who was no doubt attending to all the details that accompany the end of winter term. She and Josh C. both thought they were in the cafeteria alone, given the lateness of the hour, but now they stood facing each other, only feet apart. Josh C. had no recourse but to tell Beatrice of his mission. It was at this point that Beatrice, far from judging us, produced the infamous pizza. They chatted amiably as they plastic-wrapped it, Josh C. filling Beatrice in on the details of the road trip.

Now, just miles from the West Virginia border, we were eating it—and talking about Cape Canaveral and the *Endeavor*. Behind the driver's wheel, Chris, who was especially enthused about space travel, increased his speed.

Then somehow, perhaps in travelling from one state to another in relatively quick succession, Chris lost track of the speed limit. Near a small nondescript West Virginia town, a gentleman who introduced himself as Officer Williams pulled us over, setting us back 170 dollars in the form of a speeding ticket. "Chalk it up

to poor luck," we said. "At least we still have a good chance of watching the shuttle launch."

Chris had had enough, so Benji drove while Chris tucked into Beatrice's pizza. We pressed southward. In the driver's seat, Benji hummed cheerfully or listened to podcasts of N.T. Wright. We lost half an hour in heavy afternoon traffic, and breaking free, Benji drove faster. In the back we played Phase 10, discussed Marpeck and Chesterton (not really), or ate cold pizza.

Like Chris, Benji must have failed to pay attention to the speed limit as he drove between states. Like Chris, he was pulled over by a clean-cut, well-mannered Southern police officer. And like Chris, he became further impoverished because of a traffic citation. He even tried to dissuade the officer, speaking bravely and smoothly, an impressive display of oratory, we all had to admit. But it was to no avail. "Hey, it's worked numerous times for my dad," Benji defended himself when we badgered him about it later.

We reached the Florida line, and I drove—within the speed limit; it wasn't as if I didn't have, stamped in my recent memory, any stark reminders of why cash-strapped students shouldn't speed. Besides that it was dark, and the roads were unfamiliar. Josh N. sat up front with me, poring over maps and

navigating the early morning darkness for me. I checked the time. Barring unforeseen circumstances (admittedly not unheard of on this trip), we would be arriving at Cape Canaveral just before the shuttle launched.

In the back of the van, the other young men had settled in to sleep after a third meal of pizza. Josh N., an aesthete, kept the two of us awake with a litany of music from his iPod, most of which was composed well before 2010. Along with the music, my hunger kept me awake. "Imagine the steaks we could have bought with the money from two speeding tickets. More than 300 dollars," I muttered to Josh N.

We arrived at Cape Canaveral, and I parked the van, grateful to have finished my driving stint without any crashes (or speeding tickets). The time was 4 a.m. We roused ourselves and disembarked. I noted that we should have just the right amount of time to find a nice spot to settle into to watch the shuttle launch.

We situated ourselves on some rocks overlooking a body of water between us and the launch pad. Only then did we allow ourselves to enjoy the warm Florida breezes. We contrasted the summery, almost intoxicating local weather conditions with those back in Pennsylvania. Benji set up his tripod and fastened his Canon in preparation to document the first planned event of our road trip. The drama of the trip had caused our anticipation to reach

a climax.

But it was not to be. Josh N.'s phone buzzed. "A text message update from NASA," he said, reading it out loud. "Shuttle launch delayed."

We packed up our gear and returned to the van. What else could we do? Driving to Sarasota, we were cheered only by the thought that things would surely get better from here. We settled into the apartment owned by Chris's dad and began catching up on sleep, with a vengeance. The time came when we should have left for the rescheduled shuttle launch, but no one stirred. Sleeping was a higher priority than watching a shuttle launch. Our journey had exhausted us.

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This is a true story with the details, so far as I can remember, accurate. While it is first of all a funny story and one that has given us great pleasure to recount, I have also found it instructive for life in general, especially as it relates to church life. In what ways?

First, haste makes waste. Our downfall on the road trip was that we didn't take five minutes to stop, clear our minds, and strategize. Likewise, the plans and changes a church makes should be undertaken thoughtfully and circumspectly, drawing on two thousand years of history. And while our tendency will be to study only the examples that confirm our bias, we must learn from all the truths

that emerge from history (see 1 Corinthians 10). As we do this, we will be able to make decisions for our specific time and place with confidence and peace. Of course, our study of history must always be joined with a listening to the Spirit as He speaks to different ones in the church as well as careful attention to Scripture. In the long run, it will be well worth our time.

Second, having done the hard work of surveying our surroundings, there are times when we as churches must go ahead and readjust our course. Some people say a church should never change, that change always makes a church more shallow and trendy. Such positions are well-intentioned, but does change always have to be bad? Furthermore, is such a position realistic? If the church is to be a living organism, must she not reevaluate her condition with each generation? The goal, of course, is not to become more “liberal” or “conservative,” but to align ourselves more closely with Christ’s call for our specific context. As David L. Miller used to say, change always happens in a church. Sadly, for some churches the change comes in by default instead of vision. Why not change in a way that is proactive and appropriate for the situation?¹

If we on the road trip, after our

1 For more on this, read Gary Miller’s recent book: *Church Matters*. Watch for a review of this book in an upcoming *Thinking Generation*.

delay in Pittsburgh, had readjusted our course to allow for the possibility of missing the shuttle launch, we would have enjoyed our trip more. What’s more, being in a better frame of mind, we would have avoided the time spent pulled over beside the road because of speeding tickets and thus would still have arrived before our deadline. It would have been a change worth making.

Third, sometimes the journey is the destination. Often the most powerful way God teaches us is through our mistakes. On the road trip, had we avoided all mistakes, we would not have much of a story. Through failure we: experience the vital act of repenting; find wisdom for solving future problems; and make lifelong memories and relationships through shared struggle.

So whether your journey takes you down an interstate highway or the road called Life, remember the importance of clear thinking. But if you fail to think clearly, as all active people will from time to time, then try to enjoy the cold pizza as best as you can, bearing in mind that it is providing much-needed nutrients.

Writers for Thinking Generation wish to generate, above all else, greater involvement in God’s Kingdom—especially among today’s thoughtful young Anabaptists. Send further correspondence about this article to gideonutzy@gmail.com.



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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Anger is an emotion that makes your mouth work faster than your mind.

• • • • •

A well-rounded character fits with square dealing.

• • • • •

Keep out of your child's life anything that will keep Christ out of his heart.

• • • • •

We can't win respect by demanding it.

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The church needs more standbys than bystanders.

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Telling our conscience excuses is like feeding sleeping pills to the watchdog.

• • • • •

Good advice and good medicine are often more pleasant to give than to receive.

• • • • •

The wise sometimes change their minds; fools—almost never.

• • • • •

We learn to know God best by surrender to Him.

• • • • •

“We are not here to dream and to drift—We have work to do and loads to lift.”

-Longfellow

• • • • •

Compulsive snackers need cookie jars with child-proof covers.