



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

FEBRUARY 2019

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Calvary Messenger

February 2019

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's Lord of All

Lois Troyer, Advance, MO

Every tree within the forest,
Swelling bud or blossom flower,
Lacy snowflakes gently falling
Whisper God's tremendous power.
Tiny seedlings sown in springtime,
Oceans vast or mountains tall
Testify to God's creation
He is God, He's Lord of all.

Dark'ning clouds bring scores of droplets,
Raining down from deep blue sky,
Lightning streaks in jagged splendor,
Thunder claps in bold reply.
Summer changes into autumn,
Fading leaves begin to fall
They declare that God's almighty
He is God, He's Lord of all.

When there's sunshine on the meadow
While there's rain in yonder sky,
He reminds us with a rainbow
That His promise never dies.
Not one single thing escapes Him,
He sees tiny sparrows fall,
Loves to hear His child applaud Him
He is God, He's Lord of all.

Who of us could name or number
Myriads dancing twinkly stars?
Navigate the far-off heavens,
Travel Jupiter or Mars?
God Himself has set their bound'ries,

Will you heed His tender call?
And exclaim along with nature
He is God, He's Lord of all.

All creation bows before Him,
Whether land or sea or sky.
Who would dare to disregard Him?
Who would dare to question why?



When Coverings Do Not Cover

Ervin N. Hershberger (1914-2003)

Editor Calvary Messenger, 1970-1996

“For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered” (1 Cor. 11:6).

What does it mean to be covered? The Greek word here, and in verse 7, is *katakalupto* (#2619 in Strong’s Concordance). *Kalupto* (#2572), without the prefix, is used eight times in the Scriptures. It means “to cover up (literally or figuratively),” usually hiding. (See Matt. 10:26; Luke 8:16; 23:30; 2 Cor. 4:3; James 5:20 and 1 Peter 4:8.) The only place where it does not have the connotation of hiding is in Matthew 8:24, “The ship was covered with waves.”

Katakalupto, however, is unique in that it is used only in connection with the headship veiling in 1 Corinthians 11:6, 7. According to Vine’s Expository dictionary it means “to cover up (*kata*, intensive), in the Middle Voice, to cover oneself.” Strong says it means “to cover wholly,

i.e., to veil” Its purpose is not to hide, but to recognize and symbolize God’s order of headship, as indicated in the stated purpose and order of the creation of woman (Gen. 2:18, 20-24; 1 Cor. 11:8,9).

It is not a protectional covering in the physical sense, such as a weather garb, but it does symbolize, among other things, the social and spiritual protection which God’s headship order provides for women. It is God’s intention that men should exercise Christian courtesy and respect for women, shielding and protecting them from the raw edges of unregenerate society and from the more rugged toils and situations in life. When God sent the armies of Israel to destroy the wicked nations of Canaan, He sent the men, not the women!

God requests that Christian women wear an outward sign of His protective order, a sign which the angels recognize and respect. “Therefore the woman ought to have a *symbol* of authority on her head, because of the angels” (1 Cor. 11:10

NASB). Duly recognizing God's order as He intended, and wearing the symbol as He has commanded, entitles the Christian woman to the protection of God's holy angels, and serves as a "no trespassing" notice to Satan's fallen angels. Furthermore, it authorizes her to engage in an effective ministry of prayer and service in God's kingdom.

"But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn; but if it be [since it is] a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered" (1 Cor. 11:5, 6). The word "uncovered" in verses 5 and 13 from the Greek word *akatakalypto* (#177), is found only in connection with the Biblical injunction forbidding women to be *unveiled*.

Let me quote verbatim, one paragraph by W.E. Vine in explanation of this ordinance: "Whatever the character of the covering, it is to be on her head as a 'a sign of authority' (v. 10), R.V., the meaning of which is indicated in verse three in the matter of headships, and the reason in verses 7-9, and in the phrase "because of the angels,' intimating their witness of and interest in, that which betokens the headship of Christ. The injunctions were neither Jewish, which required men to be

veiled in prayer, nor Greek, by which men and women alike were unveiled. The Apostle's instruction were the 'commandments of the Lord' (14:37) and were for all the churches (vv. 33, 34.)" *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.

To be scriptural, the covering must do two things: First, it must symbolize God's order of headship. To do that, it should be so designed that it will not be mistaken for a dangling ornament or an ornamental doily! Second, it must be designed to cover—the Greek says "to cover wholly." Isn't that rather precise and quite significant? *Kalypto* is intensified by *kata*, implying covering down the side. A decorative doily is more of a mockery than a covering.

A woman's "hair is given her for a covering" (v.15), but that is NOT the *katakalypto* specified in the headship veiling! In this case, the word *peribolaion* (#4018). *Peri* means around; *ballo*, throw: like a mantle or a vesture thrown around the body. The word is found only one other time in the Scriptures. Speaking of the dissolution of the earth and the heavens, it says, "as a vesture (*peribolaion*) shalt thou fold them up..." (Heb. 1:12). This is not to be confused with, nor is it given instead of the *katakalypto*, as some have said. Would you, sisters, who wear abbreviated models, be happy with a patch of hair no larger than

the covering you are wearing?

This writer sincerely believes that at least most of the hair should be covered by whatever pattern of headship veiling that is worn. Anything less falls short of the definition given for *katakalupto*. When the hair in front or below the veiling is more prominent than the veiling, then the veiling is doing less than the word *katakalupto* requires.

I am shocked and alarmed by how our veilings are shrinking in size. On whom does the responsibility rest? God's order of headship, I believe, places the responsibility on the family heads. Fathers, husbands, and fellow ministers, we plead with you not only to strengthen the things that remain, but to *recover the vital ground we have already lost!* I fear it is already later than you think! Watchman of Zion awake!

[From Calvary Messenger, April, 1989]

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[Editor's comments: Ervin Hershberger, valiant soldier of the cross, submitted this plea nearly 30 years ago. We believe his concerns are still valid.

Paul mentioned some of his teaching was by permission, not by commandment (1 Cor. 7:6), but no such disclaimer is present in 1 Cor. 11:1-16. Note also 1 Cor. 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge the

things that I write unto you are the commandments of God." Here's an important question: *What evidence is there that Paul was writing to address a cultural practice? In the opening verses of the first letter to the Corinthians Paul made it clear that he was not only addressing the saints at Corinth but all Christians "...that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

*We sometimes hear the covering referred to as merely a symbol, but we believe it is presented in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 as **a covering that symbolizes something—God's design for the relationship between the genders.** We believe it is not merely a symbol of a covering. We believe that the covering should be more prominent than the hair. We are concerned about the shrinking veiling/covering size that allows for increasing display of the hair and moves the covering back off the top of the head, after which it tends to disappear.*


The good news is that we have also seen where some have embraced this teaching and practice, even though they were not taught it at conversion or in their growing up years.

Back in the 1950s, we heard from "our more progressive faith cousins" that Paul had been merely addressing a cultural practice. Does that then say that Paul was moved to counter prevailing cultural practice, rather than that he was expressing God's

design for men and women? We don't think so. This teaching among our faith cousins seems to have resulted from a lost confidence in the total reliability of Scripture. That change ended this teaching and practice among them and with it went discernible emphasis on modesty in dress.

Since God's commandments are not meant to be grievous, we Christian

men honor our Creator God and our Savior Jesus Christ if we stand by Christian women in this practice. Brothers, if you're unsure, would you please read the foregoing plea again? May it renew your resolve to stand where Brother Ervin Hershberger stood. This could really encourage the sisters to take this stand with joy!

-PLM] 

Announcement

2019 Marriage Enrichment Seminar

To be held at Deeper Life Ministries

March 29-31, 2019

Topics:

God's Purpose for Marriage – Ben Waldner

Servant Leader – Denver Yoder

The Well-Dressed Wife – Ben Waldner

You Want, I Want...Now What? – Dave Snyder

Walking Together through Adversity – TBD

Love Speaks Many Languages – Dave Snyder

Priorities of a Godly Marriage – Denver Yoder

For more information or to register, please call 614-873-1199 or email info@dlmohio.org.

This seminar is sponsored and hosted by:

Deeper Life Ministries, 5123 Converse Huff Rd., Plain City, OH 43064

Phone: 614-973-1199

Email: info@dlmohio.org 

Of Salt and Pepper

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Christians are to be the salt of the earth. The Bible does not say anything about being like pepper.

Salt and pepper shakers can turn out to be a neat conversational collection. Either salt or pepper can be a desired addition to food, although so far in life, I have been satisfied without pepper. If a person's talk is too salty, you can usually at least walk away. Or if he is too much like pepper, one can move to someone not so obnoxious. But when once you put it on your food, you are stuck with it, even if it was too much.

There are more than 14,000 uses for salt. Twenty percent of the salt in the U.S. is used as sodium and chlorine. Only six percent is used for seasoning in our table food. Salt makes up 0.9 percent of our blood and body cells. If all the salt water in the oceans and seas were to dry up, it would leave enough salt to cover all the United States main land and Hawaii with more than one and one half miles of salt! Each gallon of oceanic salt water contains a little more than one fourth pound of salt; thus four gallons would make one pound.

The U.S. produces 40 million tons of salt per year; 13% from the ocean, 28% from mines, 59% from salt wells. Top salt producing states are KS, UT, LA, TX, OH, and MI. The U.S. is second in the world for producing salt, ranking behind only China, which produces 60 million tons annually.

Caesar's soldiers received salt as a part of their pay. It was called the *salarium* (Latin), from which comes our word, salary. Other workers in other times or places received salt as payment for their work, from which comes our age old idea of a slacker at work "not worth his salt." Or when a charge or price is too high, it is too salty, we say.

Pepper comes from the small dried fruit of the pepper plant in East India. From that and other sources we have black pepper as compared to white pepper. Besides, there is red pepper, green pepper and sweet pepper (Webster).

The United States buys 27,000 tons of pepper annually, out of which I use only one or two ounces, hidden in food away from home. The beans on one plant are numerous. Pepper is

considered to be a spice (World Book).

The story that was the seed for this article happened in a Mennonite church in Alabama where an acquaintance of ours is a member. Little “Susie” had permission to sit for a time with grandma, being no small privilege. The preacher lacked having any entertainment that day for the little girl, so Susie’s little fingers toyed with the buckle on grandma’s purse. But grandma was “into” the sermon, being oblivious to Susie’s busy fingers being into grandma’s purse. Susie picks up a strange looking thing, lifts it out, and pushes the button.

Immediately, worshipers in the general area were sneezing, coughing and shedding copious tears. This did not happen because of a powerful sermon by the preacher in which people were under heavy conviction. No, folks, it was pepper spray!

The janitor saw the dilemma and promptly opened several windows. The summer air obligingly came in and wafted across the area and moved the stuff over the center aisle. By that, more people could share in the unexpected experience. A number of people went outside; the pastor hurriedly closed the service. I can suppose that grandma got a “pep talk” from the church people in the fellowship time later.

The Bible addresses salt as a needed ingredient. I had not known or remembered that all meat (foods)

were prescribed by God to be offered with salt. It was a matter of flavoring which was agreeable, not only to man, but also to God. “And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer [allow] the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat [food] offering; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt” (Leviticus 2:13).

Their prayers offered to God in the tabernacle were required to be offered with the incense of a sweet smell. There are nineteen mentions of that or the making of the altar of incense in Exodus chapters 30-40.


What a combination for our God, to liken such a common thing like salt, as that which is accepted of him. There should be sufficient salt in our lives so that in our offerings to Him there is the balance of reasonable flavor. And in our prayers, a sweet life is the essence for offering up sweet incense to the Lord. In service and sacrifice, we desire to have salt in ourselves; in prayer, having a sweet disposition of attitude and countenance is in order.

Always seeking to buy at a lower price, but being high priced for what one is offering to sell, is being “too salty.” Being dour, humorless, and grouchy is tasteless in character, and shows the need of some salt and maybe a dash of pepper. Do you know what is worse than a sour old

pickle? Two of them! Christians who can smile and express at least some Christ-like joy, offer flavor to man and to God.

The Bible says, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know HOW ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6 emphasis added). There are times when the *how* is as important as the

what!

The Bottom Line is that salt does a wonderful work of preserving our souls in Christ. Maybe several shakes of pepper could evoke some additional action called Christian service in some of us. Each in its place, and in proper proportions, could keep us both alive and useful in the kingdom of Christ. 

Book Review

Paul L. Miller, Partridge, KS.


From Contra to Christ, by Pablo Yoder.
Christian Light Publications, 2018. 184 pages.

Recently I was given this book. Once I got started reading it, I found it hard to lay down,. Admittedly, the first part detailing severe military strife was less interesting than the latter part. The first part describes a terrible civil war in Nicaragua between the Contras and the Sandanistas. It was encouraging to note the repeated aversion that the main character, Tomas, had to killing his fellow man.

The latter part of the book presents Tomas’ battle with himself. After a tough military experience, Tomas yielded to alcohol and tobacco addictions, and also to immorality. In spite of his distaste for war, he failed to acknowledge Jesus as the Savior from sin.

I take away from this book several key points:

- War is murder and directly violates loving our neighbor as ourselves.
- Satan gets a serious toehold in addictions. They are no small matter.
- Marriage that begins without a ceremony is fornication. “Shacking up” does not meet God’s approval.
- Jesus said we must enter the door into the sheepfold; that door is the new birth.
- Effective shepherding includes refusing to accept repentance given while under the influence of alcohol.

Read this book for a refreshing look at pastoral love that is fervent and strong enough to confront sin, then is willing to walk alongside the repentant sinner to victory in Christ. 

marriages

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

Anderson-Morinigo

Bro. Donald, son of Steve and Violet Anderson, Aroda, VA, and Sis. Eunice, daughter of Joaquin and Lizzie Morinigo, Greeneville, TN, at Greene County Mennonite Church on Oct. 26, 2018, by Raymond Fisher.

Fisher-Wengerd

Bro. Donny, son of Raymond and Lana Sue Fisher, Limestone, TN, and Sis. Leanna, daughter of Dean and Marianna Wengerd, Chuckey, TN, at First Baptist Church for Greene County Mennonite Church on Oct. 13, 2018, by Raymond Fisher.

Gingerich-Miller

Bro. Jonathan, son of Dan and Wilma Gingerich, Plain City, OH, and Anna Marie, daughter of Noah and Edna Miller, Baltic, OH, at Sharon Mennonite Church for Meadows of Light Church, on Nov. 17, 2018, by Robert Miller.

Hege-Gingerich

Bro. Leonard, son of Conrad and Katrina Hege, Shippensburg, PA, and Lynette, daughter of James and Rhonda Gingerich, Leesburg, OH, at Crossroads Christian Church for Faith and Light Mennonite Church on Oct. 20, 2018, by Duane Troyer.

Hershberger-Schlabach

Bro. Chad, son of Lyndon and Lenora Hershberger, Russellville, OH, and Sis. Lucinda, daughter of Delbert and Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH, at Church of Christ for Still Waters Mennonite Church on Dec. 2, 2018, by David Miller.

King-Eshleman

Bro. Orlando, son of Calvin and Judy King, Harrison, AR, and Sis. Kimberly, daughter of Gerald and Laurette Eshleman, Hephzibah, GA, on Nov. 10, 2018, at First Baptist Church, Waynesboro, GA, for Hephzibah Mennonite Church by Gerald Eshleman.

Miller-Sommers

Bro. Mark, son of Alma and the late Willis Miller, Louisville, OH, and Sis. Brenda, daughter of Paul and Keturah Sommers, Minerva, OH, at Church of God in Christ Mennonite for Christian Fellowship Church on Aug. 4, 2018, by Joel Gingerich.

Schrock-Coblentz

Bro. Ernie, son of Calvin and the late Irene Schrock, Oakland, MD, and Sis. Katrina, daughter of Don and Lorene Coblentz, Antrim, OH, at Stop Nine Church of Christ for Antrim Mennonite Church on Oct. 27, 2018, by Jason Miller.

Stoltzfus-Fisher

Bro. Nathan, son of Chester and Rebecca Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, PA, and

Sis. Rose, daughter of Ruth and the late Leon Fisher, Leicester, NY, on Dec. 1, 2018, at Valley Chapel Methodist Church for Silver Lake Mennonite Church by Floyd King.

Vendley-Graber

Bro. Daniel, son of David and Elizabeth Vendley, Rose Hill, VA, and Sis. Sharon, daughter of Floyd and Esther Graber, Rose Hill, VA, at Praise and Worship Center for Maranatha Bible Fellowship on Nov. 30, 2018, by Raymond Fisher.


Wingard-Beiler

Bro. Tyler, son of Olen and Emily Wingard, Thomas, OK, and Sis. Suzanna, daughter of Omar and Naomi Beiler, Leesburg, OH, at First Baptist Church of Kettering for Faith and Light Mennonite Church on Dec. 1, 2018, by Duane Troyer.

Yoder-Hershberger

Bro. Philip, son of Lavern and Mary Yoder, McConnelsville, OH, and Sis. Krystal, daughter of JR and Rhea Hershberger, Greeneville, TN, at Liberty Baptist Church for Greene County Mennonite Church on Nov. 3, 2018, by Lavern Yoder.

Yoder-Yoder

Bro. Gary, son of Calvin and Naomi Yoder, Danville, AL, and Sis. Rachel, daughter of Floyd and Naomi Yoder, Fresno, OH, at First Baptist Church, West Lafayette, for Meadows of Light Church on June 16, 2018, by Robert Miller. 

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Arlin and Kayla (Wray), Amboy, IN, fifth child, third daughter, Ava Hope, Dec. 7, 2018.

Beachy, Philip and Rosanna (Troyer), Fredonia, KY, serving in Guatemala, fourth child and daughter, Karina Faith, Nov. 14, 2018.

Beachy, Wendell and Judith (Overholt), Stoutsville, OH, fifth child, third daughter, Jacqueline Maria, August 29, 2018.

Helmuth, Victor and Edna (Schwartz), Antrim, OH second child, first daughter, Ava Jade, Nov. 14, 2018.

Gingerich, Joe and Rhoda (Stoltzfus), Dyke, VA, sixth child, third daughter, Anastasia Belle, Dec. 28, 2018.

Graber, Kenny and Ginny (Wagler), Amboy, IN, fifth child, third daughter, Claire Jolie, Nov. 20, 2018.

Kimberlin, Bradley and Regina (Miller), Grandview, TX, third child and son, Liam James, Nov. 23, 2018.

Knepp, Stanley and Shannon (Yoder), Loogootee, IN, seventh child, sixth son, Anthony Shane, August 17, 2018.

Lehman, Jaran and Leanna (Stoltzfus), Concord, AR, second child and daughter, Megan Kate, Nov. 24, 2018.

Miller, Daniel and Anita (Lapp), Antrim, OH, fifth child, third son, Jackson Glenn, Nov. 26, 2018.

Miller, Darryl and Mary (Yoder), McConnelsville, OH, second child, first son, Tyler Durrell, Nov. 17, 2018.

Miller, Freeman III and Lydia (Graber), Oskaloosa, KS, fourth child, third son, Bladen Laird, Sept. 30, 2018.

Miller, Rodney and Regina (Peachey), Rural Retreat, VA, fourth child, third son, David James, Oct. 26, 2018.

Miller, Ryan and Judith (Schlabach), Fresno, OH, first child and daughter, Lynette Grace, Oct. 28, 2018.

Nissley, Dennis and Charity (Bender), Midland, VA, second child and son, Erik Dan, Dec. 22, 2018.

Schmidt, James and Joanne (Gerber), Millbank, ON, second child and son, Logan Cole, Sept. 19, 2018.


Yoder, Cornelius “Corey” and Delores (Shetler), Grandview, TX, sixth child, fifth daughter, Alyson Savannah Chantelle, Nov. 16, 2018.

Yoder, Kevin and Emily (King), Newcomerstown, OH, first child and daughter, Grace Regina, Sept. 18, 2018.

Yoder, Michael “Mike” and Sarah (Shenk), Aroda, VA, fourth child, first daughter, Myra Esther, Dec. 7, 2018.

Yoder, Timothy and Clara (Kuhns), Auburn, KY, third child and son, Truitt Joshua, Dec. 12, 2018.


Zook, Anthony and Ruth (Fisher), Georgetown, OH, second child, first daughter, Emma Grace, Nov. 29, 2018.

Zook, Justin and Jessica (Esh), Rural Retreat, VA, first child and daughter, Zoey Pearl, Nov. 11, 2018. 

ordinations

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

Bro. Darlton Bontrager, 46, (wife, Rose Troyer), of Kokomo, IN, was ordained bishop of Bethany Fellowship on Nov. 18, 2018. Preordination messages were brought by Delmar Bontrager, Wellman, IA. The charge was given by Delmar Bontrager, assisted by Henry Hershberger and Marvin Beachy. Delbert Hershberger was also in the lot.

Bro. Joshua Miller, 32, (wife Marlene Peight), of Holmesville, Ohio, was ordained as deacon on Nov. 18, 2018, for Peniel Fellowship, Holmesville, OH. Preordination messages were given by Andy Miller, Sugarcreek, OH. The charge was given by Nathan Yoder, assisted by Paul Chupp and David Nissley. Sharing the lot were Adrian Weaver and Titus Yoder. 

Lantz, Amos K., 87, of Honey Brook, PA, died of natural causes on Nov. 20, 2018. He was born April 12, 1931, to the late Amos and Anna (Kauffman) Lantz.

He was a member of Mine Road A.M. Church.

On Sept. 16, 1950, he was married to Amanda Petersheim. She survives. Surviving are six children: Sally A. Englerth, Paradise; Anna Mary Beiler, Narvon; Paul Lantz, Lancaster; Wilma Beiler, Gap; Amos Lantz, Jr., Michigan, and Laurie Lantz, at home; 18 grandchildren, 26 great grandchildren, and one sister, Amanda Fisher. .

Preceding him in death were five brothers: Jonathan, Benjamin, Jacob, Elmer, and Reuben Lantz and one sister, Anna Mary Stoltzfus.

The funeral was held at Calvary Mennonite Church on Nov. 26, with John Glick and Marcus Beiler serving. Burial was in the Mine Road A.M. Cemetery.

Schander, Abigail Haven was born on July 25, 2018, at her home in Keene, Texas. Six weeks and six days later, on Sept. 11, 2018, she died peacefully in her parents' arms in the same room. She is survived by her parents, Heinrich and Candace (Martin) Schander, a brother Camden Schander, grandparents John and Patricia Martin and Viktor and Klara Schander, uncles, aunts, and cousins.

Despite her diagnosis of Trisomy 18, she was beautiful, with no outward

abnormalities. In her sweet, frail innocence she revealed to her parents how precious life really is. She was dearly loved and will be deeply missed. They look forward with great anticipation to seeing her again some day. Her short fragile days on earth drew her parents' hearts toward heaven where she sweetly rests in the arms of Jesus.

“For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent [her] to the Lord. As long as [she] lives, [she] is lent to the Lord” (1 Samuel 1:27-28).

“But Jesus said, Let the little children come unto me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14).

The funeral was held on Sept. 13, at Osceola Christian Fellowship, Itasca, TX, with Corey Yoder, Dan Miller and Eugene Ulrich serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Schrock, Elizabeth “Betty” (Hochstetler), 82, of Nappanee, IN, died Oct. 15, 2018. She was born July 25, 1936, in Goshen, IN, daughter of the late Manelius “Neal” and Fannie (Miller) Hochstetler.


She was a faithful member of Maple Lawn A. M. Church, Nappanee.

On May 16, 1957, she was married to Wayne L. Schrock. He preceded her in death on Nov. 6, 2014. Surviving are their children: Lorraine (Jonas) Gingerich,

Nappanee; Verda (Joseph) Gingerich, Sarasota, FL; Ruth (Reinhart) Burkholder, Milford, IN; 13 grandchildren, three great grandchildren; brothers, Glenn (Sally) Hochstetler, Murfreesboro, TN; Mervin (Lulu) Hoschstetler, Franklin, KY; and Ora Jay Hochstetler, Elkhart, IN.

She was preceded in death by a son,

Lyle; brothers, Freeman and Lavern Hochstetler, and sisters, Irene Schrock and Carolyn Yoder.

The funeral was held at Maple Lawn Church on Oct. 18, with Gary Burkholder and Todd Neuschwander serving. Thomas Mast conducted the committal at the church cemetery. 

observations

About 15 to 20 years ago, our home church was grappling with the question of having some of us move elsewhere to establish a church in another locale. For a variety of reasons a few people favored shelving this complicated idea. One of my friends offered this thought in response to that preference, “I’m afraid that if we aren’t willing to wrestle with this idea, we’re likely to start wrestling with each other.”

Among the strengths and weaknesses of the conservative Anabaptist church culture, a well-documented propensity to splinter and divide stains the history we continue to write. Much has been said about the causes and effects of this tendency. A focus in our church communities on “getting ahead,” whether materially, academically, socially, and so on, is quite self-

focused and can foster competition which doesn’t contribute much to harmonious brotherhood. If my understanding of my role as “my brother’s keeper” only means that I am here to keep him in line, I am inwardly focused. When my understanding includes giving and serving, I cultivate an outward focus.

I’d like to propose that when we focus on serving others in a wide variety of local and distant contexts and opportunities, this will have a unifying effect rather than a splintering one. I suppose it’s possible that our focus can be too diverse and actually destabilize our churches, but those situations are more the exception rather than the rule. An outward focus tends to emphasize what we have in common rather than our differences. When our energies are expended in serving we have less energy to devote to bickering and

other divisive endeavors. I think my friend was on to something, don't you?

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In 2016 it was reported that 97% of the land in the USA was considered rural. But only 19.3% of the population lived in rural areas. The remaining 80.7% of the people reside in the 3% of the territory that is urban.

The worldwide urban population surpassed the rural population early this century. Currently, about 55% of the world population lives in urban areas. This percentage is projected to reach 68% by the year 2050.

What do these statistics teach us about the future of food production, of how people will understand food production in the future, about water needs, about growing the Kingdom, or about future infrastructure design? Does it remind us that neither this world nor its inhabitants are designed to function like this forever? Understanding the world as it is, and to whom it belongs and our role as stewards is important background information that informs wise choices. I believe God is honored when his children try to pay attention.

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We planted some grape vines in our southeast Kansas backyard twice

now. The first effort was not very successful. So after several years we started over. We researched what varieties do best in our climate, and what we should provide for the soil in our region, and for those vines, in order to achieve success. I'm sorry to report that the second attempt ended much like the first one. The vines died after several years. Somehow we were unable to adequately provide everything that these vines needed in order to be fruitful.

But along the way we did learn that two things are quite important for good grape production. These are suitable nourishment through fertility, soil PH and adequate water, and skillful pruning. Avoiding either of these two makes a disappointed vine keeper.

As one who is interested in living a fruitful life among a church community of fruitful Christians, I think there are a few lessons I should take note of from the grape vine and its keeper. What stands out to you?

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Recently a brother from another state sat in our living room and told about a health challenge that he navigated several years ago in which routine surgery led to unexpected complications. He navigated a total of nine surgeries in the span of two years and almost died along the way. I was

impressed by his attitude as he told us that part way through the process, he caught on that the complications he experienced were due to physician error. But the brother reminded us that we all make mistakes and we shouldn't expect doctors to be perfect either. Furthermore, he energetically affirmed that while we try to do all the right things and get the best care, it is still the Lord that heals. Amen!

If you believe that health care costs in the USA are very high, a variety of figures from the 2016 calendar year could bolster your claim. Per capita pharmaceutical costs in the US were \$1,443 and per capita overall health care costs were \$9,043. The average cost of a hospital stay averaged about \$10,000.

Some argue that doctors make too much money, or that the pharmaceutical industry is immoral. If that is the case, I will leave it to someone else to make that point. Generally my contribution to this type of discussion is an effort to pull us back from judging motives that we tend to assume but are unable to confirm. But, neither of these ideas is the point of this comment.

I am concerned that our discomfort with the high cost of health care, doesn't lead us to dabble in the works of darkness in our pursuit of answers for our health questions. If the enemy

is involved, the money cost might be low to start with, but there is a higher cost that none of us wishes to pay. Some of these practices are not far back in our collective history. Let's leave them there.

Maybe like me, you could benefit from the reminder that we should steward our health like the gift from God that it is. Like many of God's gifts, some of us receive better health and some less. We are not entitled to receive gifts. If our health is a gift, we should go to reasonable efforts to take good care of it. But these efforts need to be tempered with the awareness that imperfect health is part of the package of living in a fallen world. We believe that God's children will finally get to experience perfect health eternally. But that will need to wait until after our physical health conks out here and ends in death. Nobody seems to get too excited about the idea of dying. But the child of God will experience the ultimate deliverance when he loses his physical health. How paradoxical is that!

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George H. W. Bush, the 41st president of the USA died on November 30, 2018 at age 94. His term as president was from 1989-1993. He was the father of George W. Bush who served as the 43rd

president. They are the second father-son team to each serve as president in the USA. The sixth president John Quincy Adams was the son of the second president, John Adams. Prior to the elder Bush's passing, there were six active and past presidents living at the same time. They are Jimmy Carter, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barak Obama and Donald Trump.

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The following exchange occurred between two little boy cousins who were almost two years old. One's preferred language is Pennsylvania Dutch. The other one speaks mostly English. They were looking at the toys together, and the little Pa. Dutch boy enthusiastically pointed to something and identified the subject with the Dutch word "gahl." The older boy was clearly exasperated by the ignorance of his little cousin, who is three months younger-which is quite a lot when you're that age. He addressed him sternly with an incomplete pronunciation of his name and said "NO! ORSE!" pointing emphatically at the horse.

Their grandparents enjoyed this story quite a bit. If you have questions, ask my wife. We're not sure whether this exchange was evidence of the genetics they got from us, or evidence of what we all inherited from Adam.

Both played a part, I suppose.

What makes this so interesting apart from the personalities of the two little fellows, is how we recognize our own human tendencies in this interchange. Here are several musings I took away from this little cousins' discussion:

Isn't it true that we can all remember times when two persons both correctly knew that they are right, but were convinced that the other person is wrong?

Language can be challenging. Words make a difference.

A person who embraces the privilege of correcting another, is not immune to making a few mistakes in the process.

Even when we disagree, we should still be friends. These little boys like each other a lot.

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In our area we are able to buy regular gas for less than \$2 a gallon. I appreciate that. About 15 years ago, I remember that we were amazed that gas seemed to effortlessly climb above \$1 per gallon. Then we were sobered when it kept going higher and higher than we thought possible. The highest national average per gallon of gas in this country was recorded on July 17, 2008, when it peaked at \$4.11 per gallon. As of this writing it has dipped below

\$2.30. Back in the days of \$4 gas, I remember some dire predictions that by the following summer we should expect to see gas in excess of \$8 per gallon. The reasons seemed pretty solid to me at the time. It still might happen, but it didn't happen then and hasn't happened yet. We

would probably just be better off if we admitted that we don't understand the future well enough to be too confident with our own judgment. Rather than rely on our own savvy, let's invest our trust in the One who knows the future.

-RJM 

Why I Am a Conservative Mennonite

Tim Myers, Keysville, GA

*Based on a sermon given at Hephzibah
Mennonite Church on October 30, 2016.*

If the title were “Why I *Chose To Be* a Conservative Mennonite,” I would probably say, “Because my parents taught me and led me in that direction.” Or maybe, “Because I grew up in that church and thought it was right.”

But why do I choose to continue to be a part of this movement? While past events certainly make it easier to stay where I am, my reasons are much deeper than that. My heart is here and I want to stay here. I find something in the conservative Mennonite movement that is rare in general Christianity.

The conservative movement was born out of a burden among Biblically-minded brethren who could not in good conscience

continue to be organizationally tied to churches that were laying aside the teaching and application of Scripture. Across North America in the mid-twentieth century, churches and groups separated themselves from mainline Mennonite conferences, forming new associations and fellowships and conferences to maintain Biblical churches and Anabaptist distinctives. Many of us may not realize the extent of their painful sacrifices.

One of my goals is to revitalize the vision that began the movement. The differences between mainline Mennonites and conservative Mennonites have grown exponentially since then, underscoring the wisdom of the pioneers who made the difficult

decision to separate. I challenge us to follow their stand for truth rather than drifting along in the wake of mainline groups.

While conservative Anabaptism has much to be appreciated, it is not without problems and imperfections. I also want to encourage us to perfect our application of Biblical principles and to live consistently by them.

We are often perceived as a fringe group with radical ideas that is barely surviving. I challenge that perception. Recent history has shown that churches that maintain conservative positions tend to grow, while churches blown to and fro by the innovations of liberalism tend to lose out.

Here are a few comments by others on the trends within Christianity: Joe Carter, an editor for *The Gospel Coalition*, made this statement: "If we look back 50 years (to 1965) we can see a clear and unequivocal trendline: Liberal denominations have declined sharply while conservative denominations have increased or remained the same." He then quotes a number of supporting statistics.

Chris Backert, in a blog post on *Fresh Expressions*, lists the percentages of membership loss experienced by various mainline Protestant denominations in the last fifty years. The numbers range from

33 to 55 percent. Furthermore, he states that nearly half of all mainline Protestant congregations have memberships where the majority is over sixty-five years old, signaling future decline as aging constituencies pass off the scene.

An article by Steven Nolt published in 1993 presents statistics showing that conservative Anabaptist churches in North America have grown in the previous 15 years by roughly 50 percent. Growth among "mainline" Mennonite churches was in the single digits, with the exception of the Brethren in Christ, which grew 63 percent.

My point is this: accommodation to our culture and to our natural bent is not the answer to maintaining a growing, vibrant church. Churches and families who fail to stand for truth will pay a heavy price in both the spiritual decline of their members and in diminishing membership and support. Discipleship is costly, but a true commitment to Jesus Christ is rewarding. It will attract the honest heart, while accommodation brings little loyalty.

I hope that we understand that the conservative Anabaptist movement is based on more than a few distinctive doctrines. We do have distinctive beliefs compared to broader Christianity today, but our

differences lie on a much broader foundation. In that foundation I see at least four concepts.

1. Conservative Anabaptism views Christ as Lord of all.

We see Christ as divine, as eternal, and as Co-creator with the Father. We see Him as the one who has fulfilled the Jewish Covenant and established the New Covenant with His church. We see Christ as the perfect example. We do not view His teachings as optional, but as incumbent upon every Christian for all time.

We see Christ as our King who is worthy of all glory, honor, and obedience. While many other Christians would agree with these statements, there is something different in our perspective that brings us out at a different place.

2. Conservative Anabaptism believes in the authority of Scripture.

Christ says we will be judged by His words. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

We search for the plain sense of Scripture by seeking to compile all it has to say about a subject. We believe that Scripture is to be understood literally unless it is clearly figurative. The Sermon on

the Mount is certainly not figurative. The parables of Christ are generally figurative, but His interpretations are to be taken literally. We interpret individual Scriptures in a way that is in harmony with the whole. If our interpretation contradicts other passages, we seek for a consistent understanding. We give more weight to clear words than to ambiguous ones.

We make a clear distinction between the Old and New Covenants. While we can learn much from the Old Testament, to apply it directly to the New Testament church can leave us with a contradictory theology.

3. Conservative Anabaptism practices brotherhood in the church.

We are responsible for each other, and support each other materially, spiritually, and socially. Some of the early Anabaptists were asked at baptism if they were willing to devote their possessions, and even their lives, for the brotherhood if there was need.

We practice Matthew 18 to resolve our differences. That implies a willingness to humble ourselves by going to our brother and explaining ourselves in love, and to accept the resolution of the church.

We are accountable to each other. We make applications to Biblical

truth that are binding upon the brotherhood. That may happen in various ways. There needs to be a proper balance in the roles of leadership and laity, involving both. There are conferences and fellowship meetings, members' meetings and brothers' meetings, conferring councils and ministers' meetings, all to promote a faithful application of the Scripture.

4. Conservative Anabaptism practices separation from the world.

In 1943 Harold Bender wrote *The Anabaptist Vision*, a classic defense of our historical beginnings and a challenging evaluation of our beliefs. In commenting about how the New Testament church and the world relate to each other, Bender said this: "An inevitable corollary [consequence] of the concept of the church as a body of committed and practicing Christians pledged to the highest standard of New Testament living was the insistence on the separation of the church from the world, that is nonconformity of the Christian to the worldly way of life. The world would not tolerate the practice of true Christian principles in society, and the church could not tolerate the practice of worldly ways among its membership. Hence, the only way out was separation."

We cannot reduce the tension between the Christian and the world to a few issues like sports and fashion. The church and the world are polar opposites in their perspectives on life, and the disciple of Christ should have a vastly different mindset that will translate into a separated lifestyle.

The Anabaptist Vision is worth reading. It defines Anabaptism with three unique concepts upon which it was founded: discipleship, brotherhood, and love and nonresistance.

Discipleship is the act of following Christ according to Scripture. It includes the concept of a disciplined church, where not only purity of doctrine and life are upheld, but also where all members of the body help and support each other.

Brotherhood is the concept of a people who voluntarily come together to form the church, living together as a community of love--caring, sharing, and serving together.

Love and Nonresistance is the way we relate to all people, especially those antagonistic to us. Jesus gives us no other option.

Do these concepts stir you? Something within the redeemed soul should rise to embrace them, even though the flesh struggles against them. The worldly church views these three concepts quite

differently than we do, and allows contemporary culture to shape it. Let us never be enamored with the winds that track back and forth in Protestantism, luring people away from Christ and Biblical principles. We have something that is worth preserving and propagating.

Sustainable, effective, replicating

The conservative Anabaptist model of church has shown itself to be *sustainable, effective, and replicating*.

Sustainable is a buzzword in agriculture. Some agricultural practices are less sustainable than others; that is, they would eventually make farming difficult or impossible, such as irrigating with water that has a high salt content, eventually leaving the land unproductive.

There are spiritual parallels—practices that destroy the church and leave it unable to function as God designed. To deny the inspiration and authority of Scripture is one example. To label as evil what God calls good, and vice versa, is another.

Effectiveness may be more subjective. Are our programs doing what they are designed to do? Does Sunday school cultivate Bible study? Is preaching transferring the Word of God into our hearts, making us living epistles to others? Are our prayer meetings bastions of worship and petition, and does our giving bring

glory to God?

Replicating means that we are making disciples as Jesus commanded. Are we bringing in new members as well as establishing new congregations? Are our churches building strong believers and godly homes, and calling the lost around us to a commitment to God? Are our children embracing our values and lifestyle? Are we raising wise leaders?

How do conservative churches of today compare to those of past generations? We probably have a mixed report card. We have a stronger stand on alcoholic beverages and other vices. Our doctrinal positions and preaching may be stronger. On the other hand we are more individualistic and prone to church splits, reflecting a weaker perception of the church's authority. Perhaps the challenges we face with contemporary technology are even more difficult than those our fathers faced with the advent of cars and television.

One lesson we seem to have learned relates to organizational size. Although there is a certain critical mass which a brotherhood needs to function well, bigger is not always better. Ten congregations of one hundred people will usually accomplish more than one congregation with a thousand

members. Perhaps twenty with fifty would be even better. We don't have to unite in one conglomerate to succeed. I believe, however, that there is value in several congregations working together.

While we do not need to be organizationally linked to large groups with whom we have little contact, we should be able to work together with others whom share our basic values. There are two extremes in outside relationships: one is to be so afraid of others' influence that there is a circle-the-wagons mentality. The other is to have no boundaries on fellowship, to be wide open to anyone whom considers himself to have a kinship to us. The healthy viewpoint is to have brotherly relationships with those with whom we share doctrinal positions, even though we may have slightly different applications.

As we work together in our local brotherhoods and cooperate with others in the larger movement, we are accomplishing more than simply growing in numbers. Conservative Mennonites have mission programs in many parts of the nation and the world. Christian Aid Ministries is doing about the same amount of disaster relief and aid to the poor of the world as is Mennonite Central Committee, although it is supported

by a smaller group. Conservative Mennonites are providing basic levels of clinical health care in mission settings and even here in the U.S. We have schools for our children, and infrastructure to support them. There are winter Bible schools for our youth, and thriving publishing houses.

I do not say these things to lift us up. It is only by God's grace and God's blessing and God's principles that this is possible. I share these things to encourage us to believe in this movement, to embrace it, to work for it, to cooperate with each other in building it.

Where growth is needed

I hope that I have conveyed an appreciation for our churches. We are not faultless, however, and I would like to underscore four areas that call for our attention.

We need to grow in brotherly living, in which we freely and lovingly share our opinions, and then submit to each other in areas of application. While God does see us as individual children, He largely works with us cooperatively as a family, as a church.

We need to grow in brotherly loving, in which we can accept hard things from each other and respond with grace. We should be known for gentle and caring attitudes. We give each other the benefit of the doubt, freely forgive, and refuse to hold grudges.

We look for the good in one another and embrace it.

We need to grow in having a Christ-like concern for the lost. Jesus gave the Great Commission not just to give us something to do, but to redeem humanity back to Himself. If you have a wayward loved one, or can imagine what it would be like to have one, you can sense something of the heart of God toward His human creation. He longs to restore all people to a relationship with Himself, and expects us to share that burden.

We need to grow in preserving the significance of voluntary

church membership as a steadfast commitment to being a disciple of Christ, free from the control of this world and one's own sinful flesh. It means a complete yielding of oneself, an eagerness to serve God and others, cheerfully submitting ourselves to His kingdom and our local church.

I deeply appreciate the conservative Mennonite church. We need not be ashamed of what it stands for. May we, as God's people, follow God's ways and achieve God's purposes.

*[From Life Lines, July/August, 2018,
Used by permission.]*



A Prayer of True Repentance From Spiritual Complacency

Alfredo Mullet

I went to Church to worship God on Sunday:

· I heard a sermon on forgiveness, but when I walked out the door, I continued to nurse the grudge toward my brother.

· I heard a sermon on respect for authority, but when I walked out the door, I justified my rebellion toward my church and its leaders.

· I heard a sermon on kindness, but when I walked out the door, I did not stop my rudeness toward my family.

· I heard a sermon on honoring one's father and mother, but when I walked out the door, I did not change my attitude of disrespect toward my parents.

· I heard a sermon on contentment, but when I walked out the door, those prior feelings of envy and jealousy arose within me.

· I heard a sermon on Christian duty, but when I walked out the door, I had no intention of getting personally involved with Kingdom work.

· I heard a sermon on self-righteousness, but when I walked out the door, I still looked down on those who I consider to be more sinful than me.

· I heard a sermon on honesty, but when I walked out the door, I chose to excuse my questionable business dealings.

· I heard a sermon on moral purity, but when I walked out the door, I went home and viewed those immorally objectionable on-line sites again.

· I heard a sermon on Judgment Day, but when I walked out the door, I breathed a big sigh of relief. I wanted one more day of selfish living. Tomorrow I will seek Salvation.

How is it possible to sit under Biblical preaching as I have done every Sunday for so many years and remain unmoved and unchanged? Has my heart become so hard and my spirit so cold that I do not even flinch when God's Spirit attempts to convict me of my sins? Oh Lord, please do not cast me away because of my stubbornness. I plead for one more opportunity to repent from my indifference. I am so weary of trying to hide behind this Pharisaical façade. I will make this Sunday a day of true worship in my life by taking your Word to heart. Today will become the end of an old self-justifying lifestyle and the beginning of a new intentional one for me!



mission awareness

The “Ukrainian Amish”

Bruce Jantzi, Shipintsi, Chernovtsi Oblast, Ukraine

Continued from January issue...

After World War II many believers in these villages fell away, which caused the faithful ones much sorrow. By observing this falling away in the generation before them, the Ukrainian Amish today have concluded that without distinct

lines of separation from the world, believers apostatize.

Evan Derkach received a revelation from God in the 1970s showing that they should live simply. When electricity and natural gas lines reached the villages in which they lived, the Ukrainian Amish rejected

the modern conveniences that accompany electricity and gas. Prior to the Lord showing this to Evan, they had had a lifestyle similar to other evangelical believers in the Ukraine and were persecuted as they were.

Though the Ukrainian Amish have no Amish roots, they are called Amish because many of their practices are similar to ultra-conservative practices, or to what is dubbed as an Old Order mentality.

All the men and boys wear caps when they are outdoors. These caps are made of soft fabric; the fabric from the top of the hat reaches to the front of the small bill.

All girls and women wear large, colorful kerchiefs at all times

Even though they now have religious freedom, they continue to hold their baptismal services in secret at night. Only a few are present as witnesses. This was their former practice, so they continue this practice.

They speak Ukrainian, but they have retained an older regional dialect, which can be difficult for other Ukrainians to understand.

All work in their houses and on their little farms must be done without electricity, or motors or engines of any sort. Wood is cut

with hand saws and axes. Gardens are plowed with horses. In larger fields they will hire a tractor. They use kerosene lamps, but recently have switched to battery-operated LED lights. They have no gas stoves, and of course, no refrigeration.

To travel a distance farther than is comfortable with their horses and wagons, they travel by bus, or hire a driver of a van or car.

The men often have jobs on construction sites in neighboring cities. They will hire a vehicle to haul them to work. On the job site they will use electric and other power tools. They are often gone from home Monday through Friday, but are home for the weekend.

They shun electricity, cameras, and telephones. In the past few years we see that a few of the leaders have simple cell phones to be able to communicate without bothering their neighbors.

They do not change to Daylight Savings Time. Moreover, they go by Warsaw time in their homes, because this part of Ukraine was under Polish rule for many decades before World War II. "Our fathers went by Warsaw time, so we do, too," they said. Therefore, in the summer time their clocks show two hours behind what the rest of the clocks in Ukraine show.

In some ways, the Ukrainian Amish are quite different from the Amish of America.

The men are clean shaven

The women wear knee-length skirts, and some school girls wear their skirts even shorter.

The children attend public school. Sometimes children from Ukrainian Amish families make up over half of the class.

They have no buggies, but use only farm wagons to travel.

They have no large tables around which a family can gather for meals. Since they have only small tables to which four or five people can sit, their families eat at various times of the day. They have no concept of the parents and all the children gathering around the table to eat a meal together. However, they do have their times when the father gathers his children together for Bible instruction.

The Ukrainian Amish train their children, in their own words, "with much labor and tears." They wait to see evidence of the new birth before they baptize their youth. Some youth are baptized at age 16, and others are set back for a year or so until the ministers and parents see more fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They teach their youth to have upright

lives. They do not allow their youth to be walking on the streets in the dark. They teach against the sins of backbiting, envy, anger, covetousness, and immorality. A few of their boys dabble with the things of the world, and a few become lost in the world. It is very rare that any of their girls choose the broad way.

Occasionally, we hear accounts of the suffering which the Ukrainian Amish had experienced during the years of Communism. Peter, son of Evan Derkach, was in prison in his youth for refusing to go to the army. The first term was three years, after which he was released. He then was imprisoned another three years for still refusing to go into army service. Some of his brethren went into army service, but refused to carry a gun. Today their young men are able to refuse army service by paying a rather stiff fine through the local hospital.

A certain mother found the Lord and joined the Ukrainian Amish. Her husband was a strong adherent to Communism and tattled on his wife. One afternoon when she came home from working in the fields, she discovered that the police had come and put her older children on a bus to take them to a state boarding school. The government

had stripped her of her motherhood rights since they deemed her unfit to raise her children because of her faith in God. When she pleaded and wept to have her children returned, the police restrained her by twisting her arms behind her back. In front of her eyes, the bus left with her wailing children. On the official documents it was recorded that she was a drunkard, and therefore, her children needed to be raised by the state. The police had not taken her baby boy at that time because he was still being nursed, but sometime later they took him from her as well, ripping him from her arms. The speaker told us that the young brother sitting behind him with his head bowed was that baby boy. Today that baby boy is a minister in the church. The speaker also explained that his own wife is one of the children that was hauled away to the state orphanage that sad day. This mother remained faithful to the Lord, even though her husband forsook her, and her children were forcibly taken from her. After a number of years when Communism fell, the children were returned to the mother.

During one visit we asked a brother, also called Evan, about his health condition. He explained why he has so many health problems.

As a boy, he was severely beaten and kicked every day at school for a time because he refused to wear the red neckerchief of the ‘Young Communists.’ Many days at school he did no lessons at all because of the beatings. At the age of 10 or 12, he was the first child of the Ukrainian Amish people to refuse this neckerchief. Evan told us he refused this symbol of Communism on his own accord. Quite a number of other Ukrainian Amish children then followed suit. Sometimes Evan was restrained in front of the class and a neckerchief forced on him. At a certain celebration in which 1400 people gathered in the central square of the village of Stinka where he lived, he was hauled to the front and ridiculed in front of the crowd for refusing the red necktie.

Maria, a member of the Ukrainian Amish, was a close friend of ours. By strange circumstances, Maria had lived in Toronto for 20 years. Maria’s father, whom she never saw, is buried in Toronto. During World War II he had been part of the Ukrainian national resistance army under the leader Bandero. He slipped out to Canada after the war because the secret police (KGB) were looking for him. After being there for three months, her father died from falling from a ladder at

his place of work while on the night shift. The doctor that attended his death wrote that the head injuries that caused his death were from injuries on his head made with a blunt instrument, not from his fall from the ladder. Maria believes, and has evidence, that the KGB followed her father to Canada and disposed of him there.

When Maria was in her home village in Ukraine a few years ago, she was met by an old woman in her eighties, who used to be Maria's school teacher. She told Maria, "I must speak with you. I cannot sleep day or night. Whenever I close my eyes I see an image of you as the poor, cold, and hungry little girl walking on the street. I was the informer that told the KGB of the whereabouts of your father. Because of me they followed your father. Because of me, you were an orphan who suffered so much. Maria, will you forgive me?" Maria humbly forgave her old school teacher. Maria has since died of cancer, and is buried in her beloved Ukraine in the cemetery at Stinka.


Let me describe one of the services we recently attended on a Sunday evening in Kosmirin. The group from our Mennonite Church in Shipintsi, who had traveled in two vans, was invited into the large meeting room and seated at the front. This large

room, already full with 200 people, had been built onto the actual house where the old prophet, Evan Derkach, had lived. The people in the back were standing to be able to see and hear. The youth in the very back were standing on their bench. Another 50 youth and children were crowding at the doorway and the window. Two little, battery-powered LED lights lit the room, though dimly. We had to hold our Bibles at a certain angle to see well enough to read. Three of us were asked to preach. The preaching was interspersed with singing.

Their lead minister, Vasiliy, preached the fourth message. Vasiliy is 36 years old and has 13 motherless children. Recently his wife had died in childbirth. The baby, which was born by C-section after the mother died, had been doing well, but that day was in the hospital with pneumonia. That night Vasiliy was sitting beside me and leading the service. As he began his sermon, he talked about the death of his wife, and how the Lord bears him up in his sorrow. There were very few dry eyes. He went on and preached a powerful message. At times his voice broke, and all the while he preached I noticed a sparkle of tears in his eyes. As I listened to his message, it became obvious that Jesus was very precious to him.

Minister Volodiya had the fifth and last sermon. His powerful voice easily reached the back of the room. He preached on I Peter 1, focusing first on the blessings we experience when we belong to Christ, but then explaining the difficulties of the thorny path on which a true believer must walk. When he referred to the unsaved ones in their families, many grandmothers wept.

A time of prayer followed, with several leading out. They sang some more. We are intrigued by their singing with its strong alto and its bass which is almost a second melody. Time stretched out. It appeared that we were the only ones who were restless in this four-hour long service. One of our sisters whispered to me,

“You said we would be home by nine o’clock. I need to go home to milk our cow.” They closed the service with prayer, but no one moved to leave. They sang several more songs. Then they asked our sisters to sing English again, since they so enjoy hearing our sisters’ soft, high voices. One of our brothers whispered to our sisters, “If you keep on singing, it will get very late before we get home.” They had another closing prayer, and again dismissed the group. No one moved! A third time Minister Vasilii entreated his flock, “We ask you to leave, since our guests have a long ride home!” Only slowly did the crowd then disperse into the dark night. 

A Woman After God’s Heart

Sunday School Sisters *(part two)*

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



You’ve immersed yourself in the assigned Scripture for a whole week. You are bursting with enthusiasm to share with your sisters about what’s hiding inside these verses. For sure, you want to hear from them about where

their studies have taken them. It’s Sunday, 10:05 AM, ten pairs of eyes focus on you, waiting. Suddenly your enthusiasm evaporates as your heart beats against your rib cage and your mouth turns into a cotton ball.

It can be helpful to remember that

the reality of that last sentence is only a bridge, not your grave. Take a deep breath and remember that God, the Almighty, placed at your hands His own words. It is appropriate to be in awe at this privilege, but not so much in terror of the eyes around you.

As a young man, my late father migrated from a “no Sunday school church” setting to a congregation where he was elected to be the ladies’ Sunday school teacher. He stood to open the class just as he felt himself going under. Easing himself onto the nearby bench before ending in a faint, he was launched into a life of ministry. Knowing him as we did years later, we couldn’t match him up with the tremors of that first assignment. The incident was a bridge, not a grave.

Following is not a scholarly approach or “the only way to do it right” method. This is a suggested plan that can be beneficial and stimulating.

Beginning class time with prayer not only allows you to collect yourself, but more importantly invokes the Spirit and power of God into your circle. You can ask another sister to lead in prayer. Perhaps you want to open this time briefly for requests or praises.

You may begin class by taking turns around the circle, reading the

assigned verses; or ask one good voice to read them all. Regretfully there may be several who haven’t read the Scripture, so this step is needed to familiarize them with the lesson.

Opening with words like: “I really struggled with this lesson; I wasn’t sure what we would talk about; I hope you found something to discuss, because I didn’t,” are words that can discourage participation from your class. If you, the teacher, couldn’t find much to talk about, how will any of them dare inject their thoughts? Contrast that opening with: “I’m looking forward to hearing from you about what God is saying to us in this portion. I’ve been so blessed with these truths and am eager to hear what you found.”

One way to get started is to ask the “What, when, where, how, who” questions to establish the setting or context. (Although, that may not always be applicable.) Asking easy questions at the beginning draws your group out and begins to break down reserve about participation. Let me insert that there is a difference between leading a discussion and lecturing. If your approach is to present a scholarly exposition, lecture on the content, and briefly open at the end for any input, that is not the kind of scenario I am describing here. I am referencing something more

like a softball game where the ball is pitched, batted, fielded, and pitched again, with most persons in the class taking a turn at the ball whether asking or answering or musing, or suggesting. (There are no outs in this game, only runs.)

You can take a verse-by-verse approach to the lesson, or a group of verses at a time. If your sisters are used to talking it won't be hard to open the door a bit and allow them to sail through. But if participation is labored, ease into discussion by asking good, leading questions and wait until someone ventures a thought. Waiting for others' thoughts can feel like a long time when you're the one in charge. Don't be quick to fill in the quiet spaces. Sometimes you can swing the door wide open like this: "What was the deeper meaning to this parable?" Or "Is there something else you would like to discuss?"

Don't be terrorized by "what if they ask a question I can't answer?" Answering the questions is everyone's responsibility. The pitcher doesn't catch all the balls, in fact, he must fire it to the bases for the game to advance. A discussion leader who quickly answers someone's question squashes discussion. After the question has been discussed awhile it is your responsibility to

wind it up. Perhaps you will come back to the original inquirer for her own thoughts. It is up to you to keep discussion from wandering down rabbit trails. Ladies, especially, can get derailed in conversation about feelings, and accounts about pain or offenses. While there is much value in personalizing God's Word, and making every day applications, you, as the leader, have the challenge of knowing when to bring the ball back to the pitcher's mound for the next play.

Keep in mind several summarizing titles or statements that overarch your sections of study. Picture it this way: Toys are scattered all over the living room floor. There are Legos, doll clothes, blocks and books. Those are not all pitched into the same toy box, but divided out into each category. Picture your verses, somewhat strewn about. As you handle them in class you are sorting through them and putting them in their rightful place. Summarizing statements that group thoughts together is something like putting the toys away and placing a lid on it.

If you've been blessed with a participant who tends to dominate the discussion, allow her space, but not all of it. If someone in your class never talks, and you feel comfortable doing so, you may want to ask her

to answer an obvious question for a starter.

If the culture in your class has never been that of easy participation, here is an idea to begin thawing the frozen silence. Announce a week in advance that for something different, at the next class you will go around the circle for every person to share an insight or question resulting from their study. Several good things come out of that: they study beforehand, and it puts everyone on a level playing field.

How many times have we bogged down in the details of a few words in the first verses, only to hear the closing bell and we leave the loaded truths at the end—unexplored? In the back of your brain keep the clock in focus and the overall scope. If the

final verses are key and help to bring things together, try to get there! Some close the class with, “Who would like to give us all something from our lesson to take home with us into the coming week?” Bless the class for their participation and anticipate together where studies will take you in the coming week.

“If you point out these instructions to the...sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished [through study] on the words of the faith and of the good [Christian] doctrine which you have closely followed. But have nothing to do with irreverent folklore and silly myths. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness [keeping yourself spiritually fit].” (I Tim 4:6,7 AMP)



junior messages

The Bay Leaf In My Soup

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

While eating lunch in a Polish restaurant I was surprised to find a whole bay leaf floating in my delicious bowl of Polish soup. It was a satisfying dish, called *zurek*, loaded with cabbage, spices, a hard boiled

egg and sliced sausages. It was served with a thick slab of brown bread.

That very same evening I heard an amazing story from Ukraine about God's power and about bay leaves.

Yuriy was a believer who was strong in faith. Because of his love

for Jesus and willingness to stand for truth he was arrested and put in prison for three years. Before he was arrested he and his young wife Tanya knew that imprisonment was a real possibility for men of God who shared their faith. Tanya kept a bag packed and ready with some clothes and things she knew he would need for the day when prison became a reality. One day at his job the policeman came for Yuriy. He was allowed to go home first. Tanya added some good food to his bag. Would she and her two small sons ever see Yuriy again? When would he get to see their unborn child?

Only God could know.

Even in the horrible prison there were ways for true believers to show love and kindness. As Joseph so many years ago found favor in prison, so Yuriy gained favor among the rough prisoners. He opened his bag and generously sharing the food his wife had packed. The bread and sausages he handed out were a rare and appreciated treat.

One evening it was Yuriy's job to ladle out the thin soup to a tableful of men. At each table there was generally a hardened criminal who expected more soup than the others. In the prison system power and position reigned among the prisoners. He tried his best to be kind

and fair with the portion of soup each man received.

Somehow, one night, there were not enough bowls of soup. One man would have no food. But Yuriy had found a twig of bay leaves that very day. Among the prisoners there was a belief that if a whole bay leaf was found in their bowl of soup, it was a good omen, a sign that they would receive mail. A letter was so cherished and welcomed, an assurance to the men that they were not forgotten, but were loved and remembered.

And so to the man who could receive the last bowl of soup Yuriy gave the choice, do you want the soup, or rather the bunch of bay leaves? The hungry prisoner chose the soup.

Clutching the bay leaves, Yuriy walked to his cell. He was hungry, oh, so hungry, how could he ever sleep?

An astounding surprise was waiting for the lonely, famished prisoner. On his prison cot he was amazed to find letters. God had not forgotten him and had sent mail on the very day when he unselfishly shared the soup and found the bay leaves!


It was amazing, a rich experience. He felt so blest and warmly loved to be remembered by family and other believers. The prisoner who had chosen the soup, now saw Yuriy's letters and wished he had taken the

bay leaves.

Another son was born while Yuriy was in prison. He was named after his father. Yuriy had opportunity to move to America soon after his prison experience. He felt he should stay and do what he could for the Lord in Ukraine, even if it meant more suffering.

A number of years later, the Cravet family felt led to move to America. Yuriy and Tanya have been

faithful and blessed. Even with all the changes and adjustments, their six sons followed their father in his faith and have chosen to be men for God. There is no greater joy for the hearts of parents than to have godly and steadfast children.

God does not forget His children. He shows His love and care in small ways, or big ones. God can use bay leaves and letters. God does not forget his children. 

thinking generation

Do You Belong to an Ethnicity or a Church?

Gideon Yutzy, Co. Waterford, Ireland

The accusation was stripped of niceties. “The only way your churches can stay afloat is by having large families. Few people are joining you from other backgrounds.” The Amish and Mennonites, this unnamed person was saying, are an ethnicity more than they are a vibrant church. What do we make of such a blunt assessment?

An ethnicity, according to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, is a group bound together by common

language, race, cultural origin, and religion. Consider language. Most people in our subculture, the Beachy Amish, speak the Pennsylvania German dialect as well as, of course, English. Race? Unless we were adopted, a vast majority of us are white. Cultural origin? We migrated from central Europe to America sometime in the 18th and 19th centuries and are, many of us, descendants of the same ancestral couple, Jacob and Anna Hochstetler,

well known because of the 1757 massacre in Northkill, Pennsylvania. As for religion, let's just say I have not found many Rastafarians in my lineage.

We seem to tick the boxes. Was our blunt friend correct? Are we an ethnicity?

First, it should be taken into account that many churches are comprised of people with the same background, whether that is a Southern Baptist church in rural Alabama or a Greek Orthodox church in Boston. The 16th century proverb apparently holds true: "Birds of a feather flock together."

Furthermore, we have made honest efforts to increase diversity. The contributions of Christian Aid Ministries, whose work extends from Jordan to Nicaragua and numerous countries between, should be highlighted here, as well as the contributions of various other ministry organizations.

Then also, it is difficult to separate cultural practices from the choices committed Christ-followers would naturally make. Holding worship services in German is a practice we have deemed strictly ethnic and abandoned; other Amish and Mennonite practices, however, have a more universal and legitimate explanation. For instance, some

might call shaped-note, four-part a cappella music an ethnic practice, but unlike German church services, there are good reasons behind this style of music, ethnic though it might be. (It is relatively easy to learn, it promotes the group over the individual, and it is an excellent picture of unity in diversity, etc.)

The question is, how do we know when we are being overly-ethnic? Can we know? Is it worth discussing? If it ain't broke, don't fix it, right?

It is not my desire to stir up the wrong kind of unrest. Far too often, disillusioned Anabaptists have dropped practices they viewed as ethnic only to replace them with a weird mix of other imperfect practices, many of them borrowed from the hyper-individualistic, Hollywood-inspired pop culture.

And clearly, we cannot expect to find a chapter and verse from the Bible to support all our practices.

Yet somehow each of our churches must create a culture where committed people from any background can cast their lot, not a culture informed by the influences of any single ethnicity. Shouldn't a healthy church create its culture by blending the best of all ethnicities represented?

Which current practice, if any, is our equivalent of German worship

services and should be reevaluated? Of course, evaluating a practice or belief does not mean we should change, but unless we allow for the possibility of change, our evaluation will become a mockery. Steadfastly resisting change might allow us to survive as an ethnicity, but hardly to flourish as a church. Rather, every practice and belief must be scrutinized under this question: Does it enable us to live out the heavenly reality that has already begun on this earth, or does it promote human traditions and the spirit of the world (see Colossians 2:8)?

In 2025 we will celebrate the 500-year anniversary of the Anabaptist movement. We may be tempted to think that if a movement has lasted this long we should feel good about ourselves. But how many of us would feel comfortable using the same logic for the Roman Catholic church which has been around far longer than 500 years? Many Anabaptists, past and present, have accused Catholics of dead formalism, and this is understandable. But what will we do to avoid the same trap?

I am pondering, not preaching. I sincerely wonder what we can do to continue a vibrant church culture, passing on the original Anabaptist vision of voluntary, radical discipleship. Steven Brubaker,

administrator of Faith Builders, recently lamented all the young people “hemorrhaging out of our churches.” How sad that so many are leaving a heritage as rich as ours.

Yet the church is not a cloistered ethnic framework around which our children can live comfortable lives, but a call for all people to enter a beautiful, multi-ethnic gathering where “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all” (Colossians 3:11).

In light of that, perhaps we should consider things from the perspective of those who are new to radical Christianity. If I were a brand new Christian coming to your church, would I see the principle behind each practice and belief? Do you have reasonable, non-ethnocentric applications of the New Testament’s teaching on how everyday life should be lived in a Christian community? And frankly it won’t do to say an application exists to teach submission. The true church does not invent opportunities for submission; they occur naturally.

“Conservative Anabaptists are almost the only church group around today still teaching what Christians taught in the beginning.” Those are the words of a highly-respected

Mennonite leader and teacher who spoke to me recently about how he has witnessed other churches neglecting important teachings of Jesus, even ostracizing their members who would dare to embrace them.

“But one of our main shortcomings,” my friend went on to say, “is that we tend to add requirements that aren’t in the Scriptures. We also have not done well in evangelizing.”

My friend’s comments are appropriate to this discussion. Ridding ourselves of unnecessary requirements and evangelizing¹ are crucial steps if we are to be a church and not just an ethnic gathering.

Like the first century churches in Revelation, we must be willing to

1. If we are serious about evangelizing, perhaps the first step is for more of us to leave our rural farming communities and move to urban settings and foreign countries. I am thankful to see a trend in this direction.

assess our current state and rise to the occasion. “As non-resistant bearers of the Truth, we should not sit by as ‘the quiet in the land’ while society around us falls into ruin,” said Ken Miller who recently served two years in prison for being a disciple of Jesus. Anyone who wishes to be a “bearer of the Truth” cannot afford distractions, whether those include the debauchery of pop culture, the deceitfulness of wealth, the overemphasizing of ethno-centric practices, or anything else.

What about the group you fellowship with? Is it an ethnic gathering or a church? What are you doing to make it a church?

Writers for Thinking Generation wish above all to generate involvement in God’s Kingdom—especially among today’s generation of thoughtful young Anabaptists. Address correspondence to gideonyutzy@gmail.com.

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Ability is good, but *stability* is even better.

• • • • •

Adversity is one way to shrink a swollen head.

• • • • •

Anger, like fire, finally dies out, but it leaves a trail of destruction.

• • • • •

No matter what your lot in life, build something on it.

• • • • •

Attitudes are really more important than *aptitudes*.

• • • • •

It doesn't help much for a fellow to sit up and take notice if he stays sitting.

• • • • •

Nobody has a right to do what he pleases unless he pleases to do right.

• • • • •

We tend to believe what sounds easy above what is right.

• • • • •

To err is human; to blame it on someone else is even more human.

• • • • •

There's an important difference between sticking your nose in other people's business and putting your heart in other people's problems.

• • • • •

Sentimentality comes quite easy, but caring is harder because it may require action.

• • • • •

One sure way to make it hard for children is to make it too soft for them.

• • • • •

Sometimes we must change our tune so we can help produce harmony.