



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

APRIL 2019

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Calvary Messenger

April 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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The Gathering of the Ransomed

Author unknown

On that bright and golden morning
When the Son of man shall come,
 And the radiance of His glory we shall see;
When from every clime and nation
He shall call His people home,
 What a gathering of the ransomed that will be!

When the bless'd who sleep in Jesus
At His bidding shall arise
 From the silence of the grave and from the sea;
And with bodies all celestial,
We shall meet them in the skies,
 What a gathering and rejoicing that will be! 

Our High Priest Prays

Warren Wiersbe once outlined essential theological truth this way: “**How do we know Christians go to heaven?**” Here’s his three-fold explanation:

1. **Because of the price Jesus paid** (1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10).

Because of the promise Jesus made (John 14: 1-6).

Because of the prayer Jesus prayed (John 17); [and may I add?] the prayers He is since praying (Romans 8:27 and 34).

It’s been said that a person’s last words are to be taken more seriously than other things he or she said. Whether or not that is so, I offer Jesus’ high-priestly prayer for our meditation. This prayer, uttered just hours before He gave His life, is worthy of our grateful consideration. John 17 gives us important insights into three areas of concern on Jesus’ mind as He wrestled with the prospect of the tortured death He would experience the next day. Here He prayed first about Himself, secondly about His disciples, and finally about those believers who would come in the period of time

ahead before He will return. Let us walk thoughtfully through His prayer and “pluck some of the nutritious fruit hanging from its branches.”

Jesus Prays About Himself

(John 17:1-5)

- Jesus acknowledges that God has given Him authority over every human being, with the assignment of giving eternal life to everyone who comes to God on God’s terms. Eternal life is knowing God by knowing and following Jesus, whom God sent to earth to provide the path to eternal life.

- Jesus expressed confidence that He had glorified God and had already done the work God had assigned to Him on earth. He seemed to pray as though his work were already finished. What about the next day? Would not the next day hold a major part of His assignment on earth?

- What lay ahead the next day required His faithfulness in resignation when men would abuse and torture Him to death. To fulfill that part of God’s plan, He’d steadfastly surrender Himself without malice to man’s malevolent hatred. But even in that, God had

the last word, for it was in Jesus' death that our salvation was made available.

- He asked God to glorify Him and that people would realize why God had sent him to earth. Obviously, He and the Father knew this all along. They were working together on this before He came to earth. This partnership continued throughout Jesus' life and ministry. The list of ways Jesus used to make His purpose clear for coming to earth is an extended one: He used teaching, some of it by categorical statements of objective truth and much of it by parables. He used miracles of healing, of raising the dead, of stilling a storm, of walking on water, of feeding a multitude of 5,000+ with a small lunch, of forgiving sins, for which He was accused of blasphemy. He even washed His imperfect disciples' feet—the list could go on and on.

- Jesus asked God to restore the glory He had before Creation in the time that lay just ahead.

Jesus Prays About His Disciples

(John 17: 6-19)

- Jesus told God that the disciples He had chosen and taught for three years were given to Him by God. He said that these chosen men kept God's Word. They realized that God supplied what Jesus had given to them.

- They were confident that Jesus had come forth from God, that He had been conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary, Jesus' earthly mother. They were convinced that Jesus spoke only God's truth to them.

- Jesus prayed for those who accepted these truths, rather than for those who refused to do so. By implication, He said that He is depending on the believers to take the message to unbelievers. He expected them to give the life-changing messages that Jesus had given, such as, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me..."

- Jesus prayed that God would protect His chosen appointees and that they would not step off the heavenly path. He acknowledged that all who belong to Him belong to God. He asked God to keep them in the love of God, and rejoiced that among those whom He had chosen, none of them had defected except Judas Iscariot, the son of perdition. We note that the perfect Son of God did not force Judas to make right decisions. He gave Judas freedom to decide for himself, disastrously though he chose. When we find those we teach and lead disappointing us, we can take comfort in how Jesus regarded Judas' defection instead of endlessly berating ourselves in self-blame.

- Jesus prayed that His disciples would live lives of joy, which will depend on whether or not they keep the Word of God which Jesus had given to them.

- Jesus' followers should expect rejection—even persecution—like He did. Jesus said that as the Father had sent Him into the world, so He is sending his disciples into the world.

- He prayed for their sanctification as they live by the Word of God. Jesus had said in essence: “Though heaven and earth pass away, God’s Word will stand forever.” He prayed for His disciples’ sanctification. He knew He was sending out fallible people, so He prayed that they would always keep a growing faith and a mind to serve God and others in a loving manner.

Jesus Prays About and For Future Believers

(John 17: 20-26)

- Jesus prayed for everyone who would in the years ahead repent, believe, and follow Jesus as their Lord and Master.

- He prayed that His followers in the future would cultivate love for each other and unity so that the world of unbelievers would believe that God had sent Him into the world. By implication, Jesus is saying that quarreling Christians send a distorted message about “the love that drew salvation’s plan” and “the

grace that brought it down to man.”

- Jesus said that He had given to His disciples the glory God had given Him when God sent Him to earth. What is that glory? It includes the joy Jesus gives. It only follows genuine repentance and faith in the finished work of Christ. It is expressed in devoted discipleship that gratefully and joyfully lives all-out for God’s glory. It is unfeigned love for our fellow pilgrims.

What are we to do with this prayer?

It is clear that the faith of Jesus Christ rests on a solid foundation. But how shall we put it to use? Harold S. Martin offers this insight: “As one reads the Scriptures, it is important to look for practical applications. If there is a *promise*, claim it. If there is a *command*, set out to obey it. If there is a *reprimand*, bow before it. If there is a *challenge*, accept it.”

Let us pay attention to Jesus’ high-priestly prayer. This is Jesus’ longest recorded prayer. Perhaps we could appropriately call this *The Lord’s Prayer* and refer to the one in Matthew 6:9-13 as *The Disciples’ Prayer*. In any case, let us learn how to live from what has often been called *The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus*. It adds important meaning and purpose to your journey and mine!

-PLM 

reader response

Re: Ethnicity or Church?, Feb., p. 34

Dear Gideon of the Thinking Generation,

After reading your article, I was doing some thinking myself. Why can we not have an ethnic church? We of our generation (who also sometimes think) would feel that our ethnicity is scriptural.

What would you propose to replace it with? Just “any church, USA”? What would chapter and verse be to support what all one would encounter in such a setting?

As I was thinking, I did wonder if part of the reason might be to discard our ethnicity as the trend of the Thinking Generation to pitch their tents toward Sodom as Lot did—and as you also advocate. Why? So as to better blend in?

The thinking ones who try to keep on thinking do believe in witnessing to the world, by maintaining a lifestyle of separation from the world, not in becoming like them.

Keep on thinking,

Your Aunt Lisbet from Hutchinson,
Kansas



the bottom line

An Introduction

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

By the help of God and His continual blessing, I was recently enabled to finish a commentary on the whole New Testament. It is positioned to be a set of eighteen books. Currently, I am writing a book on *Creation Principles*, which is a study on fifty-six principles from Genesis, chapters 1-11, Adam to Noah.

While writing about God creating the sun, moon and stars, I realized how academically unprepared I am for that subject. Highly educated persons can write any number of books on that subject. Upon that, the idea came to me to use *An Introduction to Creation Principles* as the title for this proposed book.

All of the entire knowledge of man

could be called “An Introduction.” There is a book called, *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*. I cannot disprove it, so I am willing to accept the compiler’s assessment. There are but few of man’s written works that can truly be called exhaustive. We have *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. It does appear that way to me, yet it is very useful in study—only *exhaustive*, not *exhausting*.

My eighteen commentary books (gradually available over the next several years), can only be said to be an introduction to the New Testament. Why? Because no mortal man is able to exhaust all that could be written on any book of the Bible, or on any subject relative to all of heaven and earth. Therefore, every sermon is really only an introduction to a Bible subject, or on a given passage of the Bible, as in expository preaching. The same could be said about any three-week or six-week course on any subject in a Bible school or college.

Each of the writers of the four gospels only gives us an introduction into the life of Jesus, but a very valuable record it is. The same is true about the composite of all four gospels together. John revealed his limitation in writing when he said, “*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples,*

which are not written in this book” (John 20:30). In the next chapter, he concludes his written record by saying, “*And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen*” (John 21:25).

Just because a professor in a prestigious university knows more on a given subject than his students, does not at all mean that he has exhausted all that could be known in his field of expertise. The sum total of all knowledge is still relative at best; relative to what someone else knows; relative to what some persons later will discover; and only relative to what God knows.

A farmer boy liked going out behind the barn on a warm, clear night and lie on his back for some contemplation. The nights back then were darker, the stars were brighter, and more of them were visible. He would talk, as it were, to the stars, and say: “Twinkle, twinkle, little star / How I wonder what you are, / Up above the world so high, / Like a diamond in the sky. / Twinkle, twinkle, little star, / How I wonder what you are.”

The day came when as a very mature and proper youth, he went to college, majoring in astronomy.

Having graduated with top honors, he went back to visit his folks on that same farm. Evening came, and he thought of the barn, the pasture, and the simple days of his boyhood. He went back to that same pasture, lay on his back to look at the stars, and with great satisfaction, settled his score with the stars. Thinking about how far he had come in life, he said with a note of triumph, “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, now I know just what you are!”

Many moons and years came and went. This young man became an old man. One chore remained to having lived a full life. He went back to the farm of his boyhood and youth. On a star-filled night, he walked with difficulty back to the old pasture. With considerable effort he got down on all fours, rolled over, lay on his back and once more looked up at the stars and said, “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are...” There are times when life can go full circle.

It is appropriate and needful that all of us approach any subject matter with a sanctified modesty. Ignorance is not a virtue; some professed knowledge by some people, can at times be like a mere little bag of burned peanuts, if these people would claim to know it all on any subject.

The Bible is *an introduction* into the knowledge of God, who He is, what He has done, what He has said, and what He said He will do. That wonderful introduction was done by the *divine revelation* of God to man. It began in the mind of God before He made the world, and by His wisdom He foreknew all things. God gives His knowledge and wisdom in that revelation, according to our capacity to believe and receive it, according to the recognition of His truth, and according to the chosen perception of the person of God. Therefore, anything I write is only a small, expanded introduction to the introduction given by God, Who, first of all gave to us the whole Bible!

Prophecy was always given as an introduction to the future, and not a complete picture with all the possible information, and usually not in a full and complete order, time-wise. Concerning future prophecy, we consider all those Scriptures yet to be fulfilled as being an introductory proposition, not full and complete. It has been given as information by revelation unto an introduction to the future. The next phase on God’s time clock is to fulfill what He has spoken.

Our witnessing to the world about Jesus Christ and His salvation is only given as *an introduction* to others of

Him and His grace. We do not know the full extent of His person, power, love, mercy and grace. We have received an expanding introduction to Jesus our Lord, but we can only speak that which we know and believe in our own embrace of truth. We can never speak forth all that could be known in this life. Out of that which we testify to others, we can only give to them our own personal introduction to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. ***“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known”*** [by God] (I Corinthians 13:12).

The Bottom Line is that what we know about God has come to us by revelation from God. Since He is so much greater and higher than we, the full extent of all the disciplines of learning can only be touched on in an introductory sort of way, by even the smartest and most intellectually inclined persons. We are saying that all of the learning of all mankind is only *an introduction* to the full realm of knowledge and wisdom. It seems appropriate that we should approach all our learning with the Christian grace of modesty and humility, along with a full measure of faith. 

Formula Salvation?

H. Stephen Ebersole, Myerstown, PA

Tom and I had never met before, but a rain storm was holding us hostage in an old garage. All I knew was that Tom was only visiting in the community (same as I was), and that he had come from non-Mennonite background. He was now a member in one of the Mennonite churches. Thinking we may as well fill in the time with spiritual discussion I plunged in.

“Tom, why don’t you tell me how you became a Christian?” I asked.

“Well, I was raised in a Christian home, and we always were Christians,” was his response. I waited but it became obvious he had nothing else to share.

I had expected him to tell me of his conversion experience but I suddenly realized he might have thought I was wondering why he was Christian

instead of something like Muslim. So I tried again. “Tell me how God called you, how you made a decision for the Lord,” I said.

“Well, we were home schooled from little up,” he said, “And it seems like I always knew about the Lord. There came a time when we didn’t feel like our group of house churches was strict enough, and then we found the conservative Mennonites and joined them.”

I decided to persist. “Well, when did you realize you were a sinner? That you needed salvation?”

Tom answered that question after a long pause, in fact I wondered if he even was going to answer. But finally he responded quietly, “I guess we’re all sinners.”

Contrast this true story to another that happened to me more recently: Charlie called me again the other evening after a long absence. He was asking for a place to live, or as he said it, “a place to get away from all these crazy people who live here.” He made it sound so bad that I wondered about his safety.

“Charlie,” I asked, “Is everything right with your soul if you would be killed or suddenly died in your situation?” I knew Charlie had practiced a lot of deception in his life, and had often been caught up in the drug and alcohol scene. He had

once lived in one of our Mennonite communities but had destroyed any trust he had through dishonesty and deceit.

“Oh yes, I’m alright with the man upstairs” he said, “We talk every day and even several times a day.”

With his confident testimony I had an instant flash back to Charlie’s account from earlier days of how he had been saved. He had “walked the aisle and prayed the prayer” as a boy and had given his heart to the Lord. He knew from that moment on that whatever happened to him his salvation was secure.

Each of these accounts fill a place in a subject I have been thinking much about lately. We’re going to call it “formula salvation,” because it focuses on fulfilling the New Testament formula or recipe for finding peace with God. In formula salvation, a person is given verses that give conditions for him to meet in order to be saved. When those conditions are met he is then assured of his salvation.

Why we should require, search for, and trust in “formula” salvation.

There are several reasons to believe in formula salvation. *One is the simple fact that God means what He says.* He has no reason to say one thing and mean something else. The Bible asserts, “... Let God be true, but

every man a liar...” (Romans 3:4)

Another reason to trust in formula salvation is that it is not feelings based.

As emotional beings, we run into trouble when we base evaluations on our feelings, because one day our feelings may soar and the next they may tumble.

*Formula salvation is based on facts—good, solid unchangeable verses that have been around for thousands of years and we are assured will last for eternity.*¹

Before Tom was received into church membership, someone should have walked with him through the many verses in the New Testament that call for a personal response and helped Tom see he personally needed to make the choice to repent of his sins², call upon the name of the Lord for salvation³, believe in the

1 “For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” (1 Peter 1:24-25)

2 “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:38)

3 “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

Lord Jesus Christ⁴, confess his sins⁵, confess his belief and trust in Christ for salvation⁶

What is the snare in formula salvation? Did formula salvation bring my friend Charlie to the place where he is at rest living outside a life of discipleship to Christ?

There is a snare when we “cherry pick” special verses (and pass over others). It is very true that some verses promise salvation by simply believing in God’s offer of salvation through faith⁷. But there are other verses which insist salvation comes only by continuing to listen to Jesus’

4 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1)

5 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

6 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

7 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10:27-28)

voice and to continue in obedience to Him until the very end of our lives⁸. Formula salvation is dangerous when we use only some of the ingredients of the formula (or qualifications) and overlook others.

There is a snare when we overlook warnings. The New Testament abounds in warnings about falling away. Space does not permit us to give all these so we give only one. “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much wantonness*, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto

8 “And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” (Matthew 10:22)

them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” (2 Peter 2:18-22)

There is a snare when we misinterpret verses. It is very common for “free grace” people to find a way to make verses take on an entirely different meaning than the common understanding would give it. For example, when David asks in Psalm 51 that God would restore to him the joy of salvation, they will tell you that David only lost his joy through his adultery, he did not lose his salvation⁹. Another is when they make a difference between being saved and being a disciple. They claim the promise of John 3:16 based on the promise of faith alone. When Jesus says unless we forsake all that we have we cannot be His disciple, they falsely claim a believer may be saved without being a disciple¹⁰.

Discipleship salvation. What Tom and Charlie (and all of us for that matter) need to grasp is that salvation is only obtained by carefully gathering all the conditional verses and teachings of the New Testament. This then is built into a way of life of obedience

9 Psalm 51:12

10 Luke 14:25-33

to Christ in daily following Him. Tom needs to realize he cannot be a Christian unless he makes the choice to come to the cross for forgiveness of his sins and chooses to leave his self righteousness behind. What Charlie needs to understand is that a few magic words will not guarantee him salvation in spite of a life of iniquity.

Mennonite formula salvation?

Not long ago I gazed upon the face of an old friend in the casket; one who had been a member of the Mennonite church. Henry was in the order of the church. Had he ever gotten victory over the filthy habits he had picked up in his youth? We never heard him speak of a relationship with the Lord. There were bitter relationship issues in his life. While I didn't know him as a bad sinner, neither did I see the fruit of the Spirit in his life. Henry had a Mennonite formula salvation, but did he have a saving faith in Christ?

So that raises more questions. As conservative Mennonites we have been taught obedience to church applications all our lives. When these applications are based on principles of the New Testament, they are legitimate. But what about if/when they have no New Testament basis? What about when expected practices are looked at as

a formula, a check list?

In some of our churches we are taught the importance in keeping a good relationship with the church. It is emphasized that we show respect for the leaders and for the church rules. But is the keeping of rules sufficient to take us to heaven?

Are we sure we have salvation if we have lost our passion to hear Jesus' voice through Bible reading and prayer and then to follow in His footsteps? To love each other the way He loved His disciples and the way He loves us? To share this salvation with others?

I deeply value Biblical conservative applications to New Testament teachings, yet I also carry a burden that we know what it means when Jesus said, "Follow me." It's the ones who hear Jesus' voice that He has promised will never perish.¹¹

Let us pray for each other in the journey of life. We do not need to achieve worldly success; in fact it's even alright if we are thought of as a failure in the world's eyes. On the salvation issue, let's make sure we have both the formula and the discipleship relationship where it is supposed to be.

[From Pilgrim Witness, December, 2017. Used by permission of Bro. Ebersole.]

11 John 10:28



A Tribute to Sister Mary June Glick

Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX

I was saddened when I read that Sister Mary June was retiring from writing her monthly column, “Helpers at Home” in *Calvary Messenger*. My first contact with her was when I was eight years old, living in Belize. My parents, Andrew and Edith Mullet had adopted me from the Children’s Home (Nueva vida y Esperanza) in El Salvador and she and Brother Melvin had adopted one of my friends from the same orphanage. I fondly remember spending time with her and her family. She had a very kind and gentle motherly manner with which she treated my brother and me.

I know her articles were directed specifically toward women, however, I consider her a spiritual mother. Therefore, I enjoyed reading her monthly column and taking her advice to heart and applying it to my own life experiences whenever and wherever I could practically do so. Although I have not had much face-to-face contact with her over the years since we lived in Belize, yet through her writings I felt very much connected in spirit.

The Bible clearly teaches us to highly esteem and honor those who labor in The Word and Doctrine. This tribute to her (which is long overdue)

is an attempt to accomplish this command. As one who is between the older and younger generations, sometimes it is difficult to see the older ones retire and pass on The Torch to the younger ones. I realize that this transitioning is a normal part of life, and so I respect her for being willing to give up this part of her ministry to fulfill another calling more effectively. I am confident that she retired from writing her column after considering this decision very carefully and prayerfully. No doubt many reasonable factors entered into the picture, such as age, health, family duties, perhaps a local ministry, etc. Indeed, it is a wise person who is able to let go of one stage of life and embrace another with the humble dignity with which she has done it.

I enjoyed and appreciated her sincere, gentle, easy-to-understand, down-to-earth-practical, and wise motherly advice. I do not know about others, but here is one “old boy” who greatly misses her articles. At the same time, I enjoy the new “A Woman After God’s Heart” column. I thank God for those who are willing to grasp and carry the torch passed on to them, and I trust that they will faithfully continue in the same spirit of humble service as our dear sister, Mary June.

And now to you, Sister Mary June, I say, “Thank you for your Godly influence in my life. I am a better person because of knowing you personally and heeding your wisdom and instruction through your writing content and style. God bless you for your many

years of dedicated service to His Kingdom and I pray that He will prosper you with abundant grace, wisdom, strength, and courage as you continue to serve him in the capacity to which he has called you in your later years. I, a spiritual son, love and appreciate you.” 

marriages

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

Miller-Miller

Bro. Mervin, son of Dale and Miriam Miller, Auburn, KY, and Sis. Erika, daughter of Steven and Melissa Miller, Auburn, KY, on Feb. 9, 2019, at Plainview Mennonite Church by Luke Troyer. 

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Benjamin and Dorcas (Yoder), Brinkhaven, OH, third child and daughter, Marsaili Hope, Feb. 15, 2019.

Beachy, Darren and Heidi (Salazar), Hutchinson, KS, third child, second daughter, Veronica Faith, Dec. 14, 2018.

Byler, Joe and Dianne (Overholt), Franklin, KY, fifth child and son, Lincoln Grant, July 23, 2017.

Clemons, Josh and Fanita (Overholt), Aroda, VA, third child, first son, Tyree Jake, Feb. 22, 2019.

Gerber, Brian and Emma (King), Milverton, ON, fifth child and daughter, Dora Elaine, Feb. 12, 2019.

Hochstetler, Tyler and Heather (Riehl), Madison, VA, third child, first son, Chandler Brooks, Feb. 21, 2019.

Hostetler, Julius and Erma (Kropf), Harrison, AR, fifth child, third son, Zion Arrow, stillborn Feb. 5, 2019.

Hottle, Matthew and Aimee (Beachy), Parsons, WV, third child and son, Jase Canaan, Feb. 11, 2019.

Kaufman, Wes and Sara Beth (Coblentz), Dundee, OH, first child, a daughter, Abby Jo, Feb. 12, 2019.

Miller, Douglas and Regina (Groff), Orange, VA, second child and daughter, Victoria Grace, Feb. 12, 2019.

Miller, Ellis and Lynita (Miller), Hutchinson, KS, (now in south Asia),

fifth child, third daughter, Liya Renee`, Feb. 11, 2019.

Miller, Justin and Rosanna (Brenneman), Rochelle, VA, second child, first daughter, Cheyenne Eden, Feb. 4, 2019.

Schrock, Anthony and Rani (Nissley), Millersburg, OH, first child, a daughter, Juniper Day, Jan. 29, 2019.

Swartzentruber, Joshua and Krista (Yoder), Accident, MD, third child and son, Zachary Eric, Jan. 28, 2019.

Yoder, John and Sharon (Hostetler), Oswego, KS, second daughter, Aaliyah Faith, born August 24, 2018. Received by adoption March 1, 2019.

Zook, Andrew and Yvonne (Stoltzfus), Avella, PA, second child and daughter, Jasmine Nicole, Oct. 26, 2018. 

ordinations

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

Bro. Paul Overholt, 58, (wife, Darlene Mast), of Charlotte, TN, was ordained as bishop for Lighthouse Mennonite Church on Dec. 16, 2018. Preordination messages were given by Sim Yoder, Dublin, GA. The charge was given by LaVern Eash, assisted by Sim Yoder and Kevin Yoder. Dave King and Tim Yoder were also in the lot.

Bro. Tim Stoltzfus, 50, (wife Sara Ropp), was ordained as bishop for Desert Rose Christian Fellowship, Sierra Vista, AZ, on Dec. 2, 2019. Preordination messages were brought by Elmer Gingerich. The charge was given by Charles Hamilton, assisted by Elmer Gingerich, Jonathan Stoltzfus, and Elmer Kropf. 

obituaries

McFadzean, Voicenie (Wade), 82, of St. Paul's Bank Village, Belize, died Jan. 31, 2019.

She was a faithful member of Zion Mennonite Church, Double Head Cabbage, since the early 70s.

Her husband, Bro. Oswald survives, as do their eight children.

The funeral and burial were held on Feb. 2, at the McFadzean residence in St. Paul's, with J. Ellis Beachy, Justin Goff and Stephen Schrock serving.

Stoll, Naomi (Wagler), 63, of Torrington, Wyoming, died at her and her husband's home on Jan. 24, 2019, after a struggle with cancer. She was born in Daviess County, Indiana, to Willard and Martha (Knepp) Wagler, on May 15, 1955.

She was a member of Torrington Mennonite Church. Her desire was to see her family and her acquaintances know the Lord Jesus Christ and be faithful to Him until death. She enjoyed her role as

homemaker and the beauty life brings in activities like cooking, gardening, sewing, painting, and doing things for the grandchildren.

On March 20, 1976, she was married to Darrel Stoll. He survives. Also surviving are their five children: Marlin (and Marietta) Stoll, Greensburg, KY; Genevieve (and Forrest) Mast, Torrington, WY; Eldon (and Linda) Stoll, Lexington, IN; Darin Stoll and Lorraine Stoll, Torrington, WY, and 16 grandchildren.

Her parents survive. Also surviving

are siblings: Dale (and Rose) Wagler, Sue (and Ray) Lengacher, Gary (and Diann) Wagler; Darrel (and Lynn) Wagler, Will (and Ann) Wagler, Ellen (Mark, deceased) Graber; Mary (and Raymond) Marner; Travis (and Renee) Wagler, all of Daviess County, IN.

She was preceded in death by a niece, Beth Lengacher and brother-in-law, Mark Graber.

The funeral was held on Jan. 28, with Lowell Miller and Jim Yoder serving; James Hershberger conducted the committal at the church cemetery. 

observations

“Selfies” are not a recent phenomena, but the proliferation of digital photo options packaged in today’s cell phones, along with our collective fascination with posting photos on social media platforms explains partly why these photos of oneself are so common. People with a desire to chronicle the “amazing” details of their lives, often rely on selfies to convey the compelling evidence to whoever sees these photos.

In November of last year, 18-year-old Triston Bailey tried to take a picture of himself from the top of Margaret McDermott Bridge in Dallas, Texas. He ventured too far beyond the barrier and fell more

than 40 feet to the ground, his body leaving an imprint in the earth. He feels very fortunate that he survived to tell the story and is using his resulting notoriety to warn others to be careful. Accurate statistics on how many people die by trying to capture an amazing photo are elusive since those deaths are often attributed to other accidental causes. But the last several years hundreds of people have died in pursuit of an amazing selfie. That’s a high price to pay for a photo of oneself designed to impress people, some of whom we hardly know.

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A team of reporters from *The Houston Chronicle* and *The San Antonio Express-News* recently

published the first part of a three part report about the problem of sexual abuse in Southern Baptist Churches. The report talks about patterns of abuse and how the congregational structure of the Southern Baptist Convention fails to provide the accountability needed to address this blight. The headline read “20 years, 700 victims: Southern Baptist sexual abuse spreads as leaders resist reforms.”

We should be appalled whenever God’s name is tarnished by His children and this certainly qualifies as such. Our response should be a collective lament for those who have suffered abuse by those who should be providing nurture as well as protection from the raw edges of the world and its problems. Furthermore, we have some reason to believe that reports like this highlight only the tip of the iceberg. This is serious.

But I also have another burden. The statistics that are given in the article I read lacked some additional context. In 2017 the Southern Baptist Convention reported a membership of about 15 million people. And so, there were 700 victims among 15 million people in 20 years. If the documentation in the report is accurate, this means that they have confirmed abuse at a ratio of

1 person for every 21,000 members in the convention and about 1 case for every 67 congregations. Let’s remember that mainstream media doesn’t cultivate a priority to present the people of God in a favorable light.

But the danger of diluting these numbers down is that we forget that the incidence is likely higher than what is documented as I mentioned before. It is very sobering that each person who has suffered abuse is not merely a statistic, nor a number, but rather a suffering person. This is serious. One person is one person too many.

The congregational structure of the Southern Baptist Convention makes it difficult for them to respond to these allegations in a united, consistent manner. Are there organizational safeguards that our congregationally-structured Beachy constituency should consider in these perilous times? I don’t have answers—only questions. However, let’s remember that no amount of organizational safeguards can make an unregenerate heart clean. Systems of accountability and transparency are a helpful piece of the puzzle and should be reinforced. But they can never replicate the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts and the cleansing power of Jesus Christ’s shed blood.

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Being “salt and light” in the world means that we have a flavoring and illuminating role in our communities. Some people at Center Church near Hutchinson, Kansas, became concerned about the homeless people in the city and the shelter they need during the coldest months of the year. So, they opened Coffee Corner, where they serve free coffee and other hot drinks from 7 A.M. to 1 P.M. on Monday through Saturday to anyone who drops in. This helps fill in some gaps for those who need to leave homeless shelters in the morning and need a place of shelter for part of the day. It is staffed with volunteers. While food offerings are not a promised part of the program, donors often bring food items including eggs (which are served hard-boiled) and bananas, and citrus fruit to serve to those who come. Nothing that is served is sold so the volunteers do not carry any cash with them while there. This offers a security benefit as well as freedom from the regulatory scrutiny of businesses who sell food. It is expected that they will close their doors in March after the moderating weather lowers the need for shelter. I’ve never been homeless so I can only imagine what a blessing this type of

haven would be for those who find themselves in those circumstances.

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I’ve commented here on the balloon known as the student debt owed to the government. That balloon just keeps growing. The amount that students and former students now owe exceeds \$1.4 trillion dollars! More than 1 million students default on these loans each year. This problem just keeps getting bigger and bigger.

We all understand that poor choices and unforeseen changing circumstances are behind some of this problem. But many people who took out these loans weren’t aware that they were taking out an actual loan. The assistance being offered is sometimes referred to as “aid” or “awards.”

Sheila Bair of Yahoo Finance writes, “Loans are arranged through colleges which send ‘award letters’ to student applicants once they are accepted at a college. These letters are not subject to Truth in Lending regulation and vary widely in explaining how students will need to finance college costs. An analysis of 11,000 award letters by the New America Foundation found that less than one-third clearly distinguished debt from grants and scholarships

that do not have to be repaid. A significant number didn't even use the word *loan*, instead characterizing debt as an *award*. Perhaps this is one reason why an earlier study by Brookings found that 28% of first year student borrowers didn't even know they had federal loans."

So, we can add "lack of lender transparency" to the factors that contribute to the government—and by extension its citizens—holding the bag on these unpaid debts.

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Current law states that all men must register with the Selective Service System by 30 days following their 18th birthday. Restrictions on women serving in the military were lifted in 2015.

The National Coalition for Men filed a lawsuit alleging that the all-male draft was unfair. U. S. District Judge Gray Miller from Texas agreed in his ruling, stating that "If there ever was a time to discuss the place of women in the Armed Services, that time has passed." His ruling was a declaration not an injunction. Practically speaking this means that the court did not specify how Congress should implement these changes.

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This column is being submitted

from Kenya, where my wife and I currently are visiting the missionaries who work under the auspices of Amish Mennonite Aid (AMA). It has been a real blessing to observe how God is working in and through His children in this place and this time to grow His Kingdom. There are many bright spots as well as many challenges. Most of life here for the missionaries is work that is simultaneously difficult, fulfilling, stretching and exhausting.

A particularly difficult situation emerged just two days ago. Wayne Yoder got a call from one of the pastors of the Ahero church. Not all the details of the story are known, but it appears as if someone arrived to rob one of the church brethren, who died as a result of the injuries he sustained during the robbery. A mob soon formed that took justice into their own hands and killed the murderer.

While this isolated incident does not present evident danger to others, it is a sobering reminder that life is quite fleeting and eternity very near. Many of us believe safety is normal. Maybe we need these reminders of our mortality from time to time, to help keep us from being lulled into complacency.

-RJM 

Why Aren't Youth Clubs Yielding Committed Christians?

By Keeshon Washington

What is the Missing Ingredient?

The smell of home-made bread filled my nose as I entered the Shenk Embassy over ten years ago. The father's second oldest son, Austin, had invited me for weekly Bible studies at his house. I was secretly terrified but tried to mask it with a silence that I hoped intimidated him. But 16-year-old Austin didn't even notice; he was just happy to have a chance to tell me about Jesus.

It's not often that a sixteen-year-old disciples an eleven-year-old. Austin was in over his head, as anyone trying to reach my heart would have been at the time. My first impressions of him were not in his favor. To me, he was like all the other white people in my world.

Naturally, my opinion of white people matched the opinion of everyone else around me. I didn't believe good people of his kind existed. White people only ever came around in my neighborhood for four reasons:

1. To sell you something (Take your money)
2. To cut off your electric (Take your stuff)
3. To arrest you (Take you)
4. To preach to you (Take your joy)

I also feared that Austin might be a dangerous person. I grew up believing only white people could be pedophiles. The only reason I got into the car is that I was pretty sure I could handle him if he tried to pull anything on me. In the hood, you see things you never forget. While in his car for what felt like an eternity (it was only for 7 minutes), I had flashbacks of the time I was a little boy and saw a woman gagged in the front seat of a car with a suspicious man driving. She was crying and helpless, and I had no idea what to do. I never found out what happened to her, but things like that made me wonder what Austin's intentions were. What did this weird white teenager want in me? And why was I on my way to his house?

When I stepped through the front door of their home, I saw one of my classmates from Bible school. His sister Autumn smiled at me as she walked by. I had no clue that Austin had siblings, let alone ones I knew. Then his brother Kevin came down the stairs and said “hello.” I knew Kevin because he was one of the guys in charge at Bible School. Before I knew it, Shenks were coming from left and right, sliding down the stair rail, coming from the basement, jumping down the stairs. It felt like I was being surrounded. It was then that it hit me, “This is that weird white family that always shows up two minutes late!” Had I known that is who it was, would I have come in the first place? Probably not.

It wasn't long before we sat down to eat dinner, or what they called supper. I felt like I was in a Disney movie. Everyone had a place to sit, a full set of silverware intentionally positioned, the table was stretched across the whole room, the butter was soft, there were three different kinds of jellies, the bread was freshly baked, and then there was the huge variety of food. I didn't realize until after all the food was passed that my plate was still empty. I was so focused on passing the food the right way that I didn't have time to get my own. Up to that point, I don't believe I had ever,

not even once, eaten around a table as a family. I didn't even know these people, and for that night they treated me like one of them.

Austin spent several days a week with me from then on. He gave me his time and rarely said “no” when I asked to be around him. For Austin, he had my trust fairly soon after my first encounter with him. A sincerity radiated from him that I had never seen in anyone else before. I tell people today that Austin is the reason I didn't spend my teenage years hating white people. He proved that despite cultural and political propaganda, everybody has the potential to be a loving and Christ-like person. Perhaps I could also be a loving person?

I was baptized a couple of years after meeting him and have been a member of the church ever since. Austin and my church family had the missing ingredient in many Mennonite-Teen relationships. I trusted them, and eventually they learned to trust me.

In short, a trusting relationship that disciples or offers discipleship to someone is the most likely pathway to conversion.

Why Is Trust So Important?

Lack of trust prevents young inner-city youth, even youth in other

settings, from moving on to the next step of a faithful relationship. That doesn't assume that there aren't other steps to climb. It would be foolish of me to suggest to you that trust is all you need. They do, in fact, need love and faith to be in relation to Christ and His people. And specifically, in the urban setting, respect is crucial.

Trust is missing in a lot of missions. These young people come from their positions of pain and a lack of love. To think that their trust would be easily won is a fatal mistake. Compared to what it will take to win the trust of some of the young people in our ministries, my story can sound quite simple. I recognize that some of us do not have youth clubs that are centered in urban settings, but hurt people are often held back by the same things. They aren't willing to forgive; they have been permanently traumatized by others; their needs were unmet at a young age; and many other commonalities. No matter where we are serving, we need the trust of those we are hoping to disciple.

Gaining trust can be very difficult, and if it's not very difficult, it should raise some flags. The best relationships are tried by fire. What I call "soft butter relationships" tend to turn out nasty after the honeymoon stages. My relationship

with Austin was mostly positive, but I've had some rocky and difficult relationships with other brothers in my church. Those men are the ones today who know me best, and some of them are family, close friends, and mentors. Aside from the truth of relationships inherently being hard, there are some additional things to consider.

Many people elevate the youth club staff members that are surrounded by children hugging and sitting on their lap as the perfect example to follow. I disagree. Now, I disagree with a qualification. Jesus loved children, and I think that we ought to have these types of relationships with children as well. But sometimes I find it scary that children can know you for twenty minutes and run into your arms in the manner they run into the arms of their father. There are studies that show this is a sign of a lack of affection from the earliest stages of life; the implications are much deeper than the likability of the staff member. The trust I speak of is one that takes years to obtain. Besides, if all we are as Christians is a hug cushion for children to get affection for thirty minutes a week, we aren't even close to being effective in our ministry. Jesus did not enter us just to comfort the weak, he entered us to share His Spirit. We can hug them all

we want, I don't want to discourage that, but we need to aim for trust that is deeply rooted. Eventually, we hope they don't cling to us, but rather to Jesus.

What we really need in our youth clubs is a relationship built on trust. Youth want to know some things about you before they commit to trying to live the way we do.

1. They want to know that you will help them once they commit.
2. They want to know that you are doing it out of love and not out of pity or conceit.
3. They want to know that you won't leave them when things get messy.
4. They want to know that you accept and love them as one of God's children.

I can't describe all it is that young people need from us as Christians, but this is a start. If they can trust that these four things are true in their relationship with you, imagine

how much of a burden can be lifted. The power of trust in the four that are listed here will change the effectiveness of your youth ministry.

May the God of peace and love strengthen you to fulfill His calling. Although we are weak and often break trust with our fallen nature, God justifies and empowers us to fulfill His mission. You will prove yourself untrustworthy several times while you disciple, but if they can see sincerity in your heart, the kind I saw in the men I call my family today, we will see many come to Christ.

[Keeshon Washington teaches at Tidings of Peace Christian School in York, Pennsylvania. He has assisted with local Bible school and discipleship programs including a church run "Big-Brother Program." You can learn more about Tidings of Peace Mennonite church's ministry at TidingsOfPeace.org. Keeshon invites your feedback and questions regarding this article at KeeshonWashington@Gmail.com. From KMF Messenger, March-April, 2019. Used by permission]



A poor man with a sunny disposition will get more out of life than a millionaire grumbler.

Killing Self

Grant Miller, Sugarcreek, OH

I was fighting a battle;
A battle within,
With the sword of the Spirit;
I was sure I would win.

My enemy was evil;
He was vicious and cruel.
But my heart was a place
For only God to rule.

To kill the man
Was my intent;
To cut his throat—
On this, I was bent.

He wore a dark hood,
His face was concealed.
I lunged at his neck—
Backward he reeled.

We clashed our swords
As we leaped to and fro.
Then with all of my strength,
I delivered a blow.

His knees buckled
And with a look of woe,
He collapsed in defeat;
I had conquered my foe!

As he fell to the ground,
I sprang to his side.
Assured that my foe
Had finally died.

I lifted his hood
And beheld with fear,
The same face I saw
Each day in the mirror.

It then became clear
That the man I'd just killed
Was the part of me
That was not Spirit-filled.

I smiled with glee,
When I looked at those eyes.
I was thrilled to see
Sinful nature's demise.

I touched his chest,
And felt for his pulse!
I'd thought he was dead—
My presumption was false!

I wish he'd have died
Right there and right then;
But I've had to fight him
Again and again.

Despite this hard truth
Take heart, my good friend;
And rely on the Lord
Your soul to defend.



The Battle of the Mind

Melvin Burkholder, Cambridge Springs, PA

Behind the curtain that conceals the mind, a battle often rages. It is the war between good and evil, between sound moral judgment and yielding to base sinful desires. This curtain of invisibility can be deceptive. What appears to be peaceful on the outside may only be a camouflage of the battle within.

God and Satan are at war. Every intelligent human being becomes a participant in the conflict. God created our minds with the capability of knowing truth and righteousness. Sin with its deceptive delusion produces a traitor within. It could well be said, “We have found the enemy and it is our selves!” Satan finds an ally in our sinful mind and takes it captive.

The good news is that Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, won the war in His battle with the devil (Revelation 12:7-10). When we surrender our will to Jesus, He gives us victory in our mind to choose the high road of moral judgment and righteous behavior.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, explained it like this, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16).

Sins of the flesh—adultery, fornication, sexual perversion, drug addiction, obsession with material things, and the vanity of of pleasure, originate in the mind. The same is true for sins of the spirit—anger, hatred, jealousy, envy and murder.

Sin begins in the mind and results in deeds of wickedness. Jesus told His disciples that “out of the heart (mind) proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:19). The wise man, Solomon, admonishes us to keep (guard) our heart (mind) with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

A Renewed Mind

In contrast to a sinful mind, resulting in sinful deeds, God desires to give us a renewed mind. “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (ephesians 4:23, 24).

A renewed mind is the result of the new birth. Jesus in His discussion with Nicodemus told him, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Jesus further explained this spiritual birth as being born of water and the Holy Spirit. A renewed mind meditates on the Word

of God and is directed by the Holy Spirit (John 3:1-7).

Receiving a Renewed Mind

Call sin what it is. Don't excuse it with a lesser name like a bad habit, a weakness, a family trait, or a personal struggle. Evil thoughts originate from a sinful mind. Repent; confess them as sin and turn away from them.

Declare war on sinful thoughts and deeds. The Bible tells us to mortify (put to death) the deeds of the fleshly mind (Colossians 3:5). We are also called to cleanse ourselves from filthiness of the flesh and spirit (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Take your need to God's throne of grace (Hebrews 4:15, 16). Confess temptations, your doubts, your fears, and your failures. Seek out good friends who will help you to think right and make wise choices.

Guard the gates of your mind. What you focus on, what you read, and what you listen to has a great effect on your thought processes. Modern technology is geared to captivate the mind. It comes with a high price tag. It can seduce you, control you, and own you. Everything you let in the eye gate and the ear gate becomes fixed in your mind.

Fill your mind with good things. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good

report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). When a cup is full of clean water, we don't hesitate to drink from it. Likewise a mind that is filled with the truth of God will not only refresh your own soul but it will refresh others as well. Read the Bible and other good literature.

"Gird up the loins of your mind." (1 Peter 1:13). Be in control of your thoughts and actions. Get involved in profitable activities. Fellowship with believers who live by godly standards. Communicate about wholesome truth that stimulates profitable meditation and conversation.

Study the mind of Jesus Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). He is wanting and waiting to renew your mind. Follow His example.

If the curtain of your mind were opened, what would others see? Would they see peace, contentment, thankfulness, purity, and godliness? Or would there be the darkness of evil and evil imaginations? Whether the curtain of your mind is open or closed does not really matter, because God sees and knows anyway. Yield your heart (mind) to Him today, and let Him transform it and renew it into His image.

[From a tract (#3460) published by Rod and Staff Publishers, Inc. Crockett, KY. Used by permission.]



An Introduction to the Salt and Light Program

by Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

The following article describes an exciting alternative to simply giving hand-outs. This program used in foreign lands has proven to build dignity, self-worth, and ultimately in many cases has brought glory and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, the Great Provider of every good and perfect gift. I can recommend this program because one of the most difficult challenges for aid organizations is providing lasting solutions for the poor. Poverty continues to grow in the United States and many have become dependent on welfare programs by church and government agencies. We believe it is Scriptural to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and give our time in cleaning up or rebuilding after natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornadoes. The goal of the Christian Aid Ministries SALT and LIGHT Microfinance program is to provide a Christ-centered path out of the cycle of poverty and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Salt and Light

*Submitted by Weston Showalter,
Baltic, Ohio*

A new CAM program to provide Christ-centered financial teaching for the USA.

Does the typical young person in your neighborhood know who Jesus is? Are our neighbors in North America a new “unreached people group”? What would the impact be for the Kingdom of God in America if conservative Anabaptists became intentional about being missionaries right in our own communities as a

part of our daily lives?

For the past ten years, Christian Aid Ministry’s SALT Microfinance Solutions program has been reaching out to people in material poverty. The goal of this program is to provide Christ-centered teaching and to enable people to provide for themselves instead of depending on aid. This program has now grown to over 30,000 people and is operating in 15 foreign countries.

Seeing both the physical and spiritual impact overseas, SALT leadership at CAM has become increasingly burdened about the unreached needy people in our

own communities in the U.S. In December, 2018, the new Salt & Light program was introduced as a Biblical and financial teaching tool for Anabaptist communities to reach out to their neighbors.

Our target audience

Salt & Light is for anyone with a need to learn better skills in managing the finances God has entrusted to them. We want to help those who are disadvantaged, or who cannot use normal banking services and are stuck with things like Payday Loans, Rent-to-Own, and consumer debt. Most people are not aware of the drain these types of services are to their personal finances. In some cases, they are one disaster away from financial ruin.

Our vision

Our vision for Salt and Light is to create a way for Anabaptists to walk alongside their neighbors and build relationships. Through this platform, we hope to pattern what it looks like to walk with Jesus and obey His teachings. To help accomplish this, the Salt & Light course centers around two themes:

- The Bible brings hope for our financial problems
- Joyful Kingdom living comes from obeying Jesus

The first theme points to the fact

that by following Biblical principles, our financial problems in life are addressed in a practical way. The second theme is to call the participant beyond earthly vision and show how true joy comes from being obedient to the teachings of Jesus.

Our goal is to bring long-term change by helping people recognize and use their God-given skills and resources. Once people discover that they have the ability to help themselves, sustainable change begins and the results will linger long after the Salt & Light course is past.

What Does Salt & Light teach?

Based on the overarching SALT principles, the content includes both practical teaching to help people better provide for their families and Biblical truths to point people toward the answer that all people need—Jesus Christ.

Here is a glimpse of some of the things the course includes:

A Bible truth. Each lesson includes a section that focuses on a Scripture or Biblical account.

A real-life story. This section includes group discussion questions to help engage the participants.

Life with Bill & Sara: Bill and Sara face real-life challenges. Group discussion helps participants process what they have observed in Bill and Sara.

Forms to help participants evaluate their personal finances as well as their goals and values. These forms create a systematic way to set goals and track finances.

Bible-based financial teachings on things like tracking income and expenses, identifying talents and resources, and not wasting our resources in frequent small transactions. Participants will learn about home mortgage, car purchasing, consumer debt, and planning for emergencies. They will also discover the Biblical principles of living simply and giving joyfully.

Frequently asked questions

Who leads the Salt & Light course?

Anabaptist churches with a vision for helping their neighbors initiate the course. They explore long-term sustainable solutions for financial needs and build relationships with people to work toward long-term Biblical change. Facilitator(s) from the local Anabaptist church will lead the course.

How long is the course?

It is a 12-week course.

What does the course consist of?

The course consists of slides for the facilitator and a Participant Guide for people from the community. The 12 lessons in the Participant Guide coincide with the slides.

How many participants can attend each course?

It is up to the local church, but 5 to 20 people are the norm. Many times the participants live unstructured lives and by having all participants attend all meetings can be challenging. In some of our field trials, we had people from the local Anabaptist church also take the course as participants but it's important not to outnumber the participants from the local community.

Do facilitators need to take training?

Before purchasing the course material and starting the program in a community, facilitators will need to enroll in a Salt & Light Orientation Seminar. The seminar, which spans over several days, will equip the facilitator and his congregation to use Salt & Light as a way to reach out.

How does a local church get started and where can I purchase the course material?

If you are interested in starting the Salt & Light program, contact the CAM home office by calling 330.893.2428 or emailing saltandlight@camoh.org. *You will receive an information packet introducing the program including an excerpt of the Salt & Light Participant Guide. The information packet includes a "Self-Assessment Questionnaire," which may be useful in helping your congregation to determine if the Salt*

Light program is a good fit for your community.

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If you would like to learn more about Salt & Light, register for an upcoming training seminar.

**Ephrata Business Center,
Ephrata, PA**

Apr. 25, 26, and 27, 2019

(Thurs. evening, Fri., and Sat. morning)

Registration Deadline: April 1

Haven Fellowship, Plain City, OH

Sept. 26, 27 & 28, 2019

(Thurs. evening, Fri., and Sat. morning)

Registration Deadline: Sept. 3

For more information:

Call 330.893.2428 | Email

saltandlight@camoh.org | Visit

www.christianaidministries.org/

salt-light



A Woman After God's Heart

Can Martha Be Mary?

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



Is the Martha/Mary quandary in your life something like navigating the edge of a cliff? Some days you know you're slipping down the Martha side, but other times you think you might climb to be Mary?

Are the two in competition? Is it about simpler meals and longer personal devotions? Can a Mary heart do Martha duties? Will my work get done at Jesus' feet? It can feel like a delicate juggling act. Or what is Jesus really saying?

Now while they were on their way, Jesus entered a village [called Bethany], and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who seated herself at the Lord's feet and was continually listening to His teaching. But Martha was very busy and distracted with all of her serving responsibilities; and she approached Him and said, "Lord, is it of no concern to You that my sister has left me to do the serving alone? Tell her to help me and do her part." But the Lord

replied to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered and anxious about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part [that which is to her advantage], which will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:38-42 AMP)

I could write for a long time about Martha’s *issues* in fussing and stressing as a martyr while her sister seemed inattentive. Maybe Martha was a performance-oriented person who could never be or do quite enough to please her parents. We could also talk about the frustration that comes from serving, serving, serving without taking time to know the Master.

Jesus doesn’t say in so many words what “the good part” is that Mary chose. We identify that by context and what He refers to indirectly.

Here are a few things we *do* know. The Lord had just finished the story of the Good Samaritan, so we know that He esteems service to fellowman. Martha did make a bit of a scene as she asked the Master to make a call on her own sister. I believe Jesus entreated her lovingly and gently by saying her name: Martha, Martha. And then it seems He rebuked her, not for her serving, but for her *frustration*. Does He rebuke her also for not giving priority to her Guest?

He doesn’t chide the serving, but the frustration. Serving frustration can look like this:

I do all the work, and they get all the glory! With little thought I doggedly press on to do the next thing. I tell myself I have no choice. It needs to be done, and no one else will do it. I must do it perfectly, and there are no limits to what I can do. I must and I will please everyone if I set my mind to it. I wipe the sweat on my brow, as I straighten the halo I’ve placed there.

Personally, I’ve been there too often. Taskmaster Martha knows my name. A life defining moment for me was one day when I was frantically preparing for guests, scattering my preschoolers, as it were, alongside. My oldest daughter suddenly blurted: “Mom, I don’t like when we have company!” The poignance of her words still pierce me.

One aspect from the Mary/Martha story that brings clarity is to look at the setting of its day. We see Mary assuming a position usually taken by *men* students of a Rabbi. Martha, on the contrary, is doing what women were supposed to do. The Rabbi Jesus commended Mary and exhorted Martha.

Today I hear the Lord gently inviting us *women* to personal relationship with Him. I sense that

He calls us to rise above frustration, to urgency in our duties, and above concern that I am doing more than my sister. Martha's problem was not Mary. Martha's problem was Martha.

The Master is saying there's something better—something more important. He actually says, "Only one thing." Mary CHOSE it. That good part is our Choice. Frustration comes naturally to our womanhood. This one "good part" lamentably, does not. Devotion to the Master was not a part of Mary's cultural code of ethics or her upbringing; and yet she chose it.

When our relationship with the Master is current, vibrant and all consuming, we can wash dishes, and stir what's on the stove, worshipfully, in His Name! As we become more relaxed and proficient with the serving part of our calling, our gaze is free to meet His and we are humbled with the honor of hosting Him and His friends. With this in mind, I don't consider it irreverent to insert some 1,2,3's, kindly submitted by readers of this column:

Hosting is not a performance; it's an act of love. When I keep this in mind, I'm not stressing about perfection. (Stress comes from trying to impress others.) Instead I'm thinking about my guests and praying for them as I lovingly prepare the food. When they

come, I don't apologize for the dirt or imperfect food; instead I ask questions about their life and express love and care for them. I try to make them feel loved and welcome.

The more you practice this gift of hospitality, the easier it will get and the more you will enjoy it.

In our Anabaptist circles, most of us have ample opportunities to practice our culinary skills. The Bible mentions many food related events. Abraham (or his servants) prepared a meal for unexpected visitors. Imagine butchering an animal after your guests arrive! By comparison, we have many conveniences at our fingertips to provide "spur of the moment" meals. Serving food wasn't wrong for Martha of the New Testament, but being "cumbered about much serving" was the problem. Here are a few tips for the times we find ourselves overwhelmed with food.

Keep it simple. Don't stress. Ample, tasty food, and a warm welcome are noticed more than elaborate decorations and a spic & span house. While we don't encourage sloppiness, people feel more comfortable with a simple meal and a house with a "lived in" look. Use paper supplies. Buy a pie or cake from a local bakery if that fits in your budget and if it simplifies things for you. Even when things are helter-skelter and your house smells like burnt food or the meat is tough,

the guests might not notice unless you point it out. Light a candle and stay calm. If your food looks bad, cover it with cheese or whipped topping, depending what it is.

Have go-to recipes. When we host visitors for Sunday, I use the same menu for the whole year. We rarely host the same guests and it takes stress out of planning. I like to make a dessert that can be made ahead and frozen. It cuts down on last minute preparation. Keep careful notes. Write down what you served, where you found the recipes, the quantity you made, how many people, and how much was left over. It's easier to look back at your notes, than to figure everything out again.

Keep a stocked pantry and freezer. Make a list of essentials for a quick meal. Keep these items on hand, restocking as needed. Most of us do lots of canning. Home canned green beans, applesauce, and peaches can quickly round out any meal.

Plan menus. Planning ahead creates freedom of mind! We've probably all had "What shall I make for supper?" hanging over us all day. Planning makes grocery shopping more efficient. It saves money when you can plan your menus according to sales. Have a weekly leftover day. If possible, assign a meal to your children.

Think of a back-up plan. I always like

to think of plan B in case my original plan goes awry. A malfunctioning oven can be a disaster unless you can open a can of soup. If more guests show up than planned, it helps to have thought through how to stretch the food. It's easier to think ahead of time than on spur of the moment.

Work ahead. Do-ahead tasks include setting the table early or washing the pots and pans. The more you do beforehand the less you'll have to stress about. You will be more relaxed if you're not rushing to get everything ready by a certain time. Housecleaning at the last moment is a recipe for frustration! And if you hit a snag you will have enough time to fix it or modify your plans.

Pray! God still performs miracles, multiplying food and providing in unique ways. Sometimes He answers by giving you an idea of how to solve the problem. At a wedding, the potatoes were still hard and we'd followed instructions and guests were nearly ready to be served. I dashed away briefly to pray, asking God to intervene. The potatoes turned out perfect! God cares about those things!

For the June column, I'd like to bless the fathers in our homes. You are invited to share every-day and creative ways you've found to honor and celebrate Dad.

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Food for the Robbers

Margretta Yoder, Hutchinson, KS

Deep in the mountains of El Salvador, a small medical clinic compassionately serves the Latin people of El Resbaladero and the surrounding villages.

When Dr. Jana and Marietta first dreamed of and then began the clinic in the 1980s, other health care options were hours away. The roads back to the village of El Resbaladero were difficult to travel on and the trip to the nearest large city, only ten miles away, was a jolting ride that could take several hours. Today, the roads are much improved.

Doctor Jana provides for the physical needs of the patients and Marietta tells Bible stories to the people who are waiting as well as providing a listening ear and kind counsel.

One afternoon in 2006, Dr. Jana was working alone in her small clinic. Hearing a noise, she glanced outside. To her alarm and great surprise she saw three masked, armed men filing onto the porch. Acting fast, Doctor Jana slammed and locked the front door and quickly called Marietta, her co-worker. Deafening shots rang out and gunfire burst through the front door.

Marietta alerted the policemen, but

unlike the rapid response we hope for, the police did not show up until a few hours later. However, the police did call for a meeting for seven other families who had similar break-ins in the previous weeks.

Three names kept coming up so the policemen captured one of the men. He confessed his involvement and also revealed who the other men were. No sentences were given, however, as evidence was actually deemed insufficient.

With the men still living nearby, Doctor Jana and Marietta battled with fear. What if they met the men on a deserted road? What if the men came back and tried to rob the clinic again? What if they were lurking around the house waiting to kill the doctor?

Verda Glick, a missionary and friend who had experienced robberies in the past, offered a plan based on their experience: "Fix plates of food for the robber men."

Christmas was just around the corner so Marietta and Jana did just that. They asked their pastor Neto to deliver the plates to the men, explaining that Jana and Marietta weren't angry with them and that a life of crime was not a good life to

live. “Come to church with us,” he welcomed.

The ringleader, who was just a teenager, visited church. That day Marietta greeted him and assured him that she hoped he would continue to seek God.

The fear the women battled, which had been so heavy, lifted. Matthew 5:44 advises us, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.” Taking this active step of doing good not only benefited the robbers but freed Marietta and Jana of the fear that was in their hearts.

Romans 12:21 says, “Be not overcome with evil, but overcome

evil with good.” This advice from God’s Word is applicable today!

The break-in at the clinic was the last one of the series of break-ins that had been happening in the village of El Resbaladero. The three men disbanded. Two of them left the community. The one remained and is a neighbor.

Do God’s commands feel like a burden to you at times? Truly they are for our benefit. As we can see in this incident, taking an active step of doing good, instead of being simply passive and not retaliating proved to be a big blessing for Jana and Marietta. Fear died down as they obeyed God by blessing the robbers. 

thinking generation

Book Review: The New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?

Gideon Yutzy, Co. Waterford, Ireland

“Faith is believing what you know ain’t so,” Mark Twain has one of his school-aged characters say in *Following the Equator*. Classic Mark Twain wryness.

In *The New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable*, F. F. Bruce (1910-1990) begs to differ with such a definition of faith. Bruce believes every Christian should be assured of the historicity (historical authenticity) of Jesus Christ, arguing that the good

news of Jesus is “intimately bound up with the historical order, for it tells how for the world’s redemption God entered history, the eternal came into time.”

Make no mistake, faith is still necessary for belief in Jesus, just as faith is necessary to believe that our five senses are not playing tricks on us. Yet just as there is good reason to believe our eyes are seeing what we perceive them to be seeing, so

also a mountain of overwhelming evidence exists for the historicity of Jesus Christ as He is portrayed in the New Testament. First published in 1943 with numerous editions and translations to follow, F.F. Bruce's monumental book distills that evidence into just 124 pages.

The New Testament Documents is a book every follower of Christ should read and reread. Today, an assurance of Jesus' historicity is especially important given the growing number of vocal atheistic public figures such as Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, and Yuval Noah Harari. ("New Atheist Crusaders," Becky Garrison has called them.) As Acts 1:3 says, "He showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs." But how can those infallible proofs do us any good if we do not familiarize ourselves with them?

Winsomely humble yet intellectually satisfying, Bruce delves right into the objections. As with any controversial subject, apologists can take any of three positions: 1) ignore the objections; 2) address the objections but with simplistic, unsatisfactory answers; or 3) tackle the objections head-on with humble but viable solutions. The last description definitely fits F.F. Bruce's approach.

In one of his strongest arguments, Bruce points to the abundance of early Greek manuscripts of New Testament writings—over 5000 since

AD 350, as well as some papyrus fragments dating considerably earlier. This may not be impressive for the uninformed layperson; would it not be more convincing if we had manuscripts from the time of the apostles? Not in the world of historical documents, it turns out. Consider the example Bruce gives of Julius Caesar's *Gallic War*. Though historians agree on the historicity of *Gallic War*, there are only ten extant manuscripts, the earliest of which is dated 900 years after the original writing!

"The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for the writings of many classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning," writes Bruce. In other words, if there were as many early manuscripts for a secular history as there are for the New Testament, historians would seal the event's authenticity forever, no questions asked.

Granted, the New Testament's claims have far greater implications than does Caesar's *Gallic War*. God, incarnate as a human in real time and space, rose from the dead and promised His followers could anticipate the same. Of course, as all seasoned believers know, receiving this message requires more than a knowledge of the historical data. "A historian may conclude that these things probably did happen and yet

be quite far from the response which the recorder of these events wished to evoke,” wrote Bruce. As 1 Corinthians 2:14 puts it: “The unbeliever does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.” However, when people open their minds to the evidence, they find it to be there in abundance.

Bruce uses three main categories to present that evidence: first, the New Testament’s timeline, geography, and various authorial styles are consistent throughout the texts; second, the New Testament’s dignitaries, place names, and events match those described in contemporary histories. (Bruce even tackles, quite thoroughly, the seemingly anachronistic census in Luke’s Gospel); and third, other writers, including both Jewish writers like Josephus and Gentiles like Suetonius, bear witness to the events of the Gospels and the Book of Acts. (Non-Christian writers of the first century obviously accept as fact the miracles of Jesus, for instance; some attribute them to sorcery but no one denies them.)

But human agency was involved in the writing of the New Testament, someone may object. Some minor details may have been recorded imperfectly. Bruce would probably agree. He does not appear to hold the verbal plenary inerrancy view of Scripture held by some recent fundamentalist Christians. Rather,

his intent is to make a case for a vibrant historical Jesus, and an actual resurrection; the flaming of an eternal Kingdom that found its spark in a real place, real time, and among real people. And the accuracy with which the general framework of these events is recorded in the New Testament, Bruce argues, is more than sufficient.

This review is based on the 1981 sixth edition by Eerdmans Publishing of which used copies can be purchased from online booksellers for under seven dollars, including shipping. *The New Testament Documents* will be a sound investment of time and money for readers from all walks of life, but especially those who have been frustrated by their infantile knowledge of the facts surrounding the historical Jesus.

Like the earliest Christians, we must “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3, NKJV). Like them, we must not shrink from any challenge to the historicity of the message of Jesus’ newly-established kingdom and of the resurrection to come, knowing it is as deserving of our faith as anything in the world.

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 gideonutzy@gmail.com



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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

He who *monopolizes* a conversation *monotonizes* it.

• • • • •

Contentment comes less from more wealth than from fewer wants.

• • • • •

While conversion is a must, it is only the beginning of a faithful Christian life.

• • • • •

The right to criticize rests on a heart to help.

• • • • •

Cruelty springs from bad character.

• • • • •

Doing good turns won't make you dizzy.

• • • • •

Dieters are typically trying to get rid of hazardous waist.

• • • • •

Slow down your eating — haste makes waist!

• • • • •

If you're going in circles, ask Jesus for His compass: GPS: God's Piloting Spirit.

• • • • •

God reserves the right to use people with whom you disagree..

• • • • •

Doubt makes a mountain that only faith in God can conquer.

• • • • •

He who attends to duty is a hero even if he gets no recognition for it.

• • • • •

The aim in education is not simply knowledge,
but something more important: Action.