



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

MAY 2019

Meditation

A Man for God 1

Editorial

Michael Sattler and “Buszfertigkeit” 2

The Bottom Line

The Transition to Inquiry 7

Bunyan Trees and Banana Trees 9

A Big Deal 11

Marriages 14

Cradle Roll 14

Ordinations 16

Obituaries 17

Observations 18

Letters to Prison Inmates 21

Training Future Missionaries 25

Bible School Essays 26

Mission Awareness

The Cross-Cultural Kingdom 30

A Woman After God’s Heart

With Love, On Mother’s Day 33

Thinking Generation

All that is Certain 36

Thought Gems back cover

Calvary Messenger

May 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.

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

Board of Directors

(*Calvary Publications, Inc.*)
 Nathan Yoder, Chairman
 Mark Webb, Vice-Chairman
 Enos D. Stutzman, Treasurer
 Ralph Miller, Secretary
 Matthew Raber

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

Subscriptions, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to **Circulation Manager**. **When you move**, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

This periodical is digitally available at calvarymessenger.org

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

Assistant Editor

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

Missions Editor: Floyd Stoltzfus
 3750 E. Newport Rd.
 Gordonville, PA 17529

Youth Messages Editor: Gideon Yutzky
 Leperstown, Dunmore East,
 Co. Waterford, Ireland X91-R228
 gideonyutzky@gmail.com
 phone: 353894220572

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

Women's Editor:
 Mrs. Susan Schlabach
 7184 W. Henry Rd.
 Ripley, OH 45167
 skschlabach@gmail.com

Circulation Manager/Treasurer:
 Enos D. Stutzman
 7498 Woods West Ave.,
 London, OH 43140
 614-460-9222
 enosnmary@gmail.com

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

A Man for God

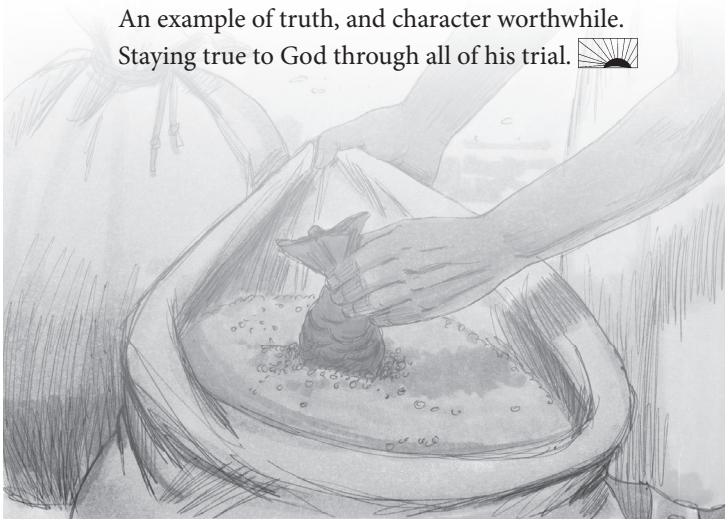
Violet Yoder, Danville, AL

'Way back in days of old,
Is the story of a boy, I am told.
God was looking for a man
One who would serve Him as best he can.

God wanted one that was pure and true,
Who did the things he was told to do.
One who was unselfish and kind, indeed,
A man who helped out those in need.

So God sent him off to school
To shape him into a good and useful tool.
He chiseled and carved and cut off the old,
And gave him grace to forgive though into slavery sold.

God found a man — Joseph was his name.
Amid God's time of work, a better man became.
An example of truth, and character worthwhile.
Staying true to God through all of his trial. ☀️



Michael Sattler and “Buszfertigkeit”

Reforms start when people conclude that things have gone so badly off track that a new beginning must be made. But bumpiness may follow. When scriptural changes do not follow dissatisfaction, what started out as reform can die. In that respect, the early days of the Anabaptist reformation that began in 1525 was no exception. Early on, there were extreme reactions and responses to the churches they left that nearly ended the Anabaptist movement. But there was one man who brought stability. His name? Michael Sattler.

Papal indiscretions were much too common, in spite of the teaching that popes spoke truth without flaw. The sale of indulgences was not scriptural. We cannot excuse the low morals or the widespread hypocrisy among the clergy of that time. We are grateful for the impatience and perseverance of 16th century reformers to return as closely as possible to the faith commitments of the apostles. Where would we be today if they had settled for less?

One Key Teaching

Historians find “Buszfertigkeit” (a term that early Anabaptists are

known for) describing one change in emphasis that our faith forbears brought to the Reformation. Cassell’s German-English dictionary gives for “Buszfertigkeit” these terms: “repentance,” “penitence,” and “contrition” as synonyms that point to its definition. Repentance was also emphasized by other reformers, but they typically taught it differently than our faith forbears did. Repentance was regarded as belonging primarily to the beginning of the Christian life. Early Anabaptist believers were noted to teach also a penitent spirit as a way of life. While I would gladly be mistaken, I think Calvinist teaching today still typically reflects that difference.

We think the reforms of Luther and Zwingli made some needed changes but also think they did not go far enough. We are glad that our faith forbears went further, so that we are heirs of a theology that embraces non-resistance to evil men, and not simply pacifism and justice reform. We appreciate that our faith forbears did not follow John Calvin into complex interpretations of election, to unconditional eternal security, and the total depravity of man.

Recently Chester Weaver, Itasca, Texas, taught in the Shepherd's Institute at Center Church (Hutchinson, Kansas). Chester offered a book newly researched, written and published in one volume, the writings and incidents of the life of the early Anabaptist reformer, Michael Sattler (1490?-1527). *I Appeal to Scripture!* by Andrew V. Ste Marie, Sermon on the Mount Publishing, Manchester, Michigan. 2018, 168 pages.

As I read this book, I am reminded that early reforms were characterized by a variety of views that stopped short of returning to apostolic interpretations of the teachings of Jesus. I believe Michael Sattler's writings come close to apostolic positions. He apparently wrote in large part the seven-article, 1527 Schleithem Confession of Faith. Less than three months later, Michael died a martyr. What I had not realized is that Sattler had also written rather extensively on other matters theological. This book brings together additional writings of Sattler that earlier scholars have found and translated.

Both Zwingli and Calvin wrote refutations of the Schleithem Confession. While I have not found any statements from Zwingli, Calvin wrote that the Schleithem Confession was "unlearnedly and foolishly written." Why would he say that?

Perhaps there were other reasons, but the Schleithem Confession definitely conflicted with points of Calvinism that we meet today.

Apparently, a vigorous style of communication was common in that day, for not only did Calvin criticize Sattler, but Sattler also vigorously expressed his differences with Calvin. An example of this is found in *Instruction for the Christian Life* [Lamp and Light Publishers, 1983]. In the introduction on page 113 to the Schleithem Confession of Faith it is noted that this was probably written by Michael Sattler. Here's that quote, attributed to Sattler: "A very grave scandal has been introduced among us by certain false teachers, such that some have turned from the faith by the way in which they thought to practice and to use the liberty of the Spirit and Christ. But they are mistaken as to the truth and have been given up (for their condemnation), to carnal lust and indulgence. They think that love and faith do and permit all and that nothing can harm or condemn them, because they are believers." Does not this statement reflect Sattler's emphasis on discipleship that flows from "Buszfertigkeit" and his difference with Calvin's teaching?

Michael also stood against certain teachings that applied to the clergy. One such teaching was celibacy of the priests. Michael married Margaretha,

a devout woman. She stood with him and greatly encouraged him. His persecutors hoped that they could persuade Margaretha to recant her husband's views by requiring her to watch Michael's torture that ended in death by burning. But she did not turn back. She clung to the faith of Christ that her husband died for. For this she was drowned a few days after Michael's death. But God was not finished using the faithfulness unto death of Michael and Margaretha Sattler! From Michael's writings came a foundation for Anabaptist teaching.

So where is the balance?

We do not need to beg God to forgive us. It is important to accept that God always keeps His Word; He cannot lie. When we repent and confess our sins, we give recognition to His perfection as we accept His forgiveness. Taking God at His Word forms the basis for assurance of salvation. Jesus said it very clearly: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must be born again." John wrote in his first epistle "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" and, "If we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5: 13, 15).

Accepting God's promises for

forgiveness and salvation, however, is not the same as saying I cannot lose the treasure of eternal life, which John Calvin taught. Is it surprising that when the popular Protestant reformation spread over Europe, a wave of moral looseness in the populace reportedly followed?

Total renunciation of our faith is not required for the need for restoration to God's favor and approval. That's why "Buszfertigkeit" is rightly considered an attitude that is appropriate for the redeemed as a way of walking with the Lord Jesus Christ.

- One "ditch" to avoid is doubting that God forgives our sincere repentance and sorrow for our sins—and our sin nature (1 John 1:9 & 10). By humble, sincere faith we claim the living hope of eternal life. .

- Another "ditch" to avoid is to think that we could never come to the place of requiring restoration to sonship.

The confident hope of heaven has a biblical basis, but we should always be thoughtful and remember that we do not deserve it. Furthermore, we must remember that it is possible to make shipwreck of faith (1 Timothy 1:19) and to have our names blotted out of the book of life after they were recorded in that book (Revelation 3:5).

Let us agree with God on these matters. The Psalmist observed,

“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken and a contrite heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Psalm 34:18). Paul added honesty, reality, and insight by saying, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10: 12).

“Buszfertigkeit” is an attitude. It

describes the first steps of repentance and faith, but this penitent spirit also fits our heavenward journey. This mindset acknowledges our ongoing need of God’s mercy and grace. When we receive it, God seems to say, “This is my son/daughter, in whom I am well pleased!”

-PLM 

Announcements

Single Ladies Seminar • August 2–4, 2019

COMMISSIONED

For what – Elona Martin, Richland Center, WI

Preparing – Lorraine Schrock, Aroda, VA

In Jerusalem – Rhoda Martin, Aroda, VA

In Samaria & Beyond – Beth Gingerich, Plain City, OH

A Missionary Speaks – Miss Nancy, Belle Center, OH

The Message – Jen Miller, Plain City, OH

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

This seminar is sponsored and hosted by:

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

614-873-1199 · www.dmlmohio.org 

We are planning for a CASP project in Minnesota

September 2–27.

We are looking for 7 young men to spend 4 weeks clearing trails in the forests of northern Minnesota. Anyone interested in this project should contact Elmer Stoltzfus at elmerbonita89@gmail.com or 614-306-0913.

–Merv Lapp (717) 203-7575 

2019 Youth Fellowship Meetings Schedule

July 26-28, 2019

Locations for the five regions are as follows:


Southeast..... Cross Hill Mennonite, Cross Hill, SC

Southwest..... Faith Mennonite, Lott, TX

Northeast..... Shekinah Christian Fellowship, Middleburg, PA

North Central..... Melita Fellowship, Martinsburg, OH

Northwest..... Bethany Fellowship, Kokomo, IN

-Tim Miller (574) 238-3730 

Calvary Messenger has been a blessing to literally thousands of people every month for many years. It is the work of many writers and the Lord has blessed the effort. Brother Paul Miller has faithfully served as editor for many years as well. But due to the refusal of time to stop marching on we must find a brother to take his place. This need has moved from “important” to “urgent.”

We are not looking for a man to “write” Calvary Messenger. There is a capable group of faithful contributors who fill their columns on a monthly basis. Word processing technology has streamlined their columns significantly. There is monthly remuneration. Either Paul or I would be happy to discuss further particulars.

We believe the new editor is among us. It does not need to be an ordained brother, although there are advantages to that. Who on your team or in your congregation enjoys reading and has a vision for this ministry? If you feel the Lord nudging you to consider it and are too shy to volunteer you might ask your fellow minister to suggest your name to the publication board.

Nathan Yoder · Ndyoder@Outlook.com · (434) 960-6700 

The Transition to Inquiry

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

It is generally assumed that knowledge is one of the options in life, not really required, except to be able to graduate from the compulsory education requirements of our country. A continual incentive to go on to college and receive qualifying degrees is to get higher salaries year after year in one's lifetime, along with pensions and related retirement benefits.

We cannot assure similar perks and financial upgrades as a way to attract Christian people to put more time and energy into the study of the Word of God. There is spiritual enrichment, to be sure. But the average adult among us is scarcely a sufficient model in pursuing Bible knowledge as a means to attract the next generation to improve over what we have accomplished to this point in time.

A good income, travel, sports, and music all have immediate rewards, along with measurable advancement, either real or assumed. The big four just mentioned were supreme during the last sixty years, but in recent times, electronics and the social

media have seemed to take over one's time, energy, and money.

There is an old fashioned principle that remains solid, upright, resolute, and strong. It is known as the principle of the denial of self. The denial of self makes room for Christ to enter in and occupy as He who "dwelleth" in you. The "eth" is linear, a continuous action, which is a substantial point, but sadly has been lost in modern translations and paraphrased Bibles.

The transition to inquiry surfaced in a book about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, his last name being the title of that 542 page book. He was born in Germany in the early 1900's, to "upper crust," aristocratic, highly educated, professional parents. Education was a family pursuit; he had his master's degree at age 21! By law, he could not enter the professions until he was age 25. To pass the time, he took up a curious study of theology, and soon majored in it at a purely academic level. The book shows how a large segment of true, German believers could not offset the worldly, liberal, false church establishments who held hands with Hitler. The book is

an engaging, time-consuming read. It provides many lessons for the modern churches of today who are being drawn in by the dynamics of church politics, both Republican and Democrat. That union always causes the salt to lose its savor, and the light of Biblical witness to gradually become more and more dim.

Circumstances led Dietrich Bonhoeffer to do a one-year pastorate for a pastor on sabbatical. His sermons started out with a decidedly academic approach. Gradually his letters to the home folks revealed that a transition was taking place in Dietrich. They expressed concern to each other that their son might become converted to Christianity! Which in fact did take place, in a gradual fashion, although not prior to being a pastor in a modern church!

Here is a piece he wrote, as a conservative Christian, to his theological and very liberal brother-in-law: "First of all I will confess quite simply – I believe that the Bible alone is the answer to all our questions, and that we need only to ask repeatably and a little humbly, in order to receive this answer. One cannot simply *read* the Bible, like other books. One must be prepared to *inquire* of it." Amen!

When I first read it, the word "inquire" climbed up the scholastic ladder and waved at me, as I stood studiously below it. Inquire? Oh, but that takes time and effort; it always

has, but even more so now when many of us can Google our way around serious inquiry as a short cut to almost any information!

With a few clicks, we can discover how many miles it is around the world, or in which country there would be the best possibility of finding gold, or where to buy an expensive, pure-bred puppy.

Our various Bible schools must be given credit for their serious and sincere inquiry into the one and only Bible, given by revelation from God, and divinely preserved until our time and place. There are many faithful pastors who make skillful inquiry into the Word of God. Some fathers and mothers do this on their own, no doubt. May their numbers increase, and the God of revelation and wisdom fill them with all joy and peace in believing.

The burden of this article is about Christians making the transition from a casual reading of the Bible as a conscience-soothing duty, to a *more serious inquiry* into the heart of God revealed by His Word.

Dietrich goes on to say that only by our personal inquiry "will it reveal itself. Only if we expect from it the ultimate answer, shall we receive it. That is because the Bible speaks to us. And one cannot simply think about God in one's own strength, one has to think reverently of Him." That assumes that a seeker on that

level will be in prayer more regularly and earnestly. In these modern days, it seems to be less prayer, and more Google!

To inquire more of the divine will in His Word could lead us to inquire more of God Himself in a Father-to-son relationship. Prayer, as a way of *inquiry*, can take even more time than just getting down to study as an academic pursuit or as the exercise of a meditational experience for personal enrichment. At the beginning of this article I mentioned the larger salaries and earthly riches as a magnet to draw people out to higher education. There is included in this writing, the upward draw of another level of higher education offered by God for those who go beyond merely reading the Bible in a casual way, and

regularly step up *to seriously inquire* of God and His Word.

The Bottom Line is that there is still nothing to replace the Bible as the means to *inquire* of God. There are a number of publishing houses that send out catalogs with an ever-increasing number of good, Christian books. That is worthy of our thanks to God, our Creator, Guide, and Sustainer. Somewhere along the way, it is noteworthy to discover by inquiry, that the Bible is in a literary category all its own, which addresses the divinely approved way to approach God, and to live a life of full-orbed constancy with His approval. It comes by way of personal, diligent, and serious INQUIRY!



Banyan Trees and Banana Trees

Paul G. Hiebert, Pasadena, CA

“**N**othing grows under a banyan tree.” This South Indian proverb speaks of leadership styles. The banyan tree is a great tree. It spreads its branches, drops air-roots, develops secondary trunks and covers the land. A full grown banyan may cover more than an acre of land. Birds, animals, and humans find shelter under its shade. But nothing grows under its dense

foliage, and when it dies, the ground beneath lies barren and scorched.

The banana tree is the opposite. Six months after it sprouts, small shoots appear around it. At 12 months a second circle of shoots appear beside the first one, now six months old. At 18 months the main trunk bears bananas which nourish birds, animals and humans, and then it dies. But the first offspring are now

full grown, and in six months they too bear fruit and die. The cycles continue unbroken as new sprouts emerge every six months, grow, give birth to more sprouts, bear fruit and die.

Training followers. Many leaders are like banyan trees. They have great ministries, but when they pass from the scene, there are no leaders to step in their shoes because they have trained followers, not leaders.

It is gratifying to train followers. They are an appreciative audience that makes us feel important. They imitate our ways. They do not challenge our thinking, or go beyond our teaching.

It is easy to train followers. We decide what they should learn, and how they should learn it. We encourage them to raise questions, and we give answers. We teach them to follow our directives and to guess our minds.

There is an immediate success in training followers. We can mobilize many to build our program. This approach is also efficient. It takes time to train followers, and to allow them to learn by making mistakes. But this success is short-range. When we depart, we leave sheep but not shepherds.

As husbands and wives, and as parents, it is easy for us to treat our spouses and children as followers—to demand that they obey us, and

to think and behave as we do. As ministers it is easier to train our parishioners to be followers—to make them dependent upon a professional leadership to carry out the ministries of the church. As missionaries it is easy to treat native converts as followers—to not trust them as long as we are around, and to make certain they carry on the work as we do. In each case, we create dependent people, and kill the leadership potential in others. Such spouses, children, parishioners and natives never grow up. To do so they must rebel against us.

Training leaders. Training leaders is less rewarding for our egos. We must teach people to think and decide on their own, to challenge our beliefs, and to test our decisions. When they take over, they may go beyond us, and take credit for their own growth.

Training leaders is more difficult. We must value their input and encourage a critique of what we say. We must grade them not on how much they agree with us, but how well they think. We do not ask them to guess our minds, and we avoid putting them down, even though their initial responses are naïve and simplistic. We focus on problems they must solve rather than on fixed bodies of information.

Training leaders is less efficient in the short run because it takes time

and effort which could be spent on the task. Decisions must be negotiated, plans constantly changed, and we must adjust our own schedules and goals. But it is more efficient in the long run. Our reward comes when we find ourselves surrounded by young leaders discovering new abilities, assuming new responsibilities, and raring to take over and go beyond us.

Spouses who encourage their husbands and wives to be leaders develop family styles of mutual submission. Parents who build their children as leaders begin early to teach them to think, and to treat them like young adults. Pastors who teach their laity to be leaders encourage Bible studies and lay initiatives in the ministries of the church. Missionaries who train nationals as leaders give them responsibilities early, and support their decisions. All must allow budding leaders the greatest

privilege they allow themselves, namely the right to make mistakes.

Training leaders who train leaders. Training leaders, however, is not enough. Too often we train leaders who, in turn, train followers. We teach them to think ideas, but not to build humans. They learn to use people to build programs, not programs to build people.

It is hardest of all to help young leaders to catch the vision of training leaders and to pass that vision on, but this is essential for a successful family, church, and mission. Paul writes, “and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many reliable witnesses entrust to reliable men who will teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

[From The Christian Leader, Feb. 13, 1990. Submitted for publication by J. Sam Nisly, then Oswego, KS, now Redding, CA.]



A Big Deal

Leon Zook, Virginia Beach, VA

Sadly, she wiped away a lonely tear. Life, which had been so full of promise and joy at one time now seemed so empty. She felt as if half of her were missing. She had her God, who was more important to her than anything else in life, but the pleasant years with her husband brought back such sweet memories.

They had done so much together, hoped together, dreamed together, and raised their children together. But now he was gone. She was a widow.

And she was a poor widow. He had been the breadwinner, and although she had helped in any way she could, their life certainly had not consisted of many material possessions. But

they had shared a strong faith and devotion to God, and that was most important to them. She would remain faithful to her God.

Still, how she wished he were here to go with her to the synagogue and worship with her today. Walking alone, she remembered how they'd had such sweet fellowship on the way, enjoying the beauty of creation, hearing the birds, smelling the flowers. But that was in the past. He was gone. She was alone.

It was customary to tithe at the synagogue, and they had always gladly given what they could. As she walked alone down the familiar street, she wished she had more to give to the offering. But since he was gone, she could barely scrape by on her meager allowance. She had learned to do with even less now that her husband was not here to care for her. Today, she didn't have anything to put into the offering except two mites in her pocket which would have bought a little food for the week.

Her steps slowed. Perhaps she should skip going to the synagogue today. It was disheartening to watch and hear the scribes and Pharisees as they blew their trumpets and made known to the people how much they gave. And then there she was with her pitiful two mites.

People really made a big deal out of the amount of tithe the Jerusalem merchant gave, or the centurion

that built a synagogue for the Jews, although he didn't broadcast it. People were amazed as they heard the sound of the trumpets and watched the contributors smile amid the clinking of the coins as they dropped them into the treasury. They talked about what good things that could be accomplished with the money.

But she couldn't help wondering why there were still so many glaring needs in the community with all the money that was given to the treasury. Why were there still beggars on the street? Why did the lepers still live in such pitiful conditions? Why were there still so many unmet needs? Oh, if only she had more to give to her Lord! How she wished she could please Him with a large gift!

She swallowed hard. Wishing wouldn't change reality. She didn't have money like they did to give, but she would go to the synagogue to worship anyhow. She would, as usual, quietly follow others as they made their offerings and hope no one noticed her humble offering. She knew the Lord could still accomplish great things with what she gave Him. With a song in her heart of praise to her Creator, she approached the synagogue.

There were many people there today, and many were placing their offerings into the treasury amid much fanfare. She said hello to several regular attendees that she knew and

quietly found her place in line.

As she stood waiting, she noticed the newcomer. Near the treasury sat a man who appeared to be a rabbi. Immediately she observed that he had such a kind, loving face. He was surrounded by about a dozen men who appeared to be his students. The students were watching the attendees walk by, and they appeared to be amazed at the large amounts of money so publicly contributed. She cringed at the awestruck expressions on their faces. Would they have to see her? Could she slip by unnoticed?

She followed the line until she came to the chest where offerings were to be made. Quickly, so as not to prolong her moment at the center of attention, she dropped in her two mites, blushed slightly, and hurried away. In spite of herself, she glanced over her shoulder, feeling drawn to that kind face once again. To her surprise, He gave her a most beautiful smile and nod of approval. Then she saw Him smile at his students, point to her and continue speaking to them. What a strange, joyful experience! She could not explain it, but she felt more blessed than she ever had before. Somehow, it no longer mattered that she had but two mites to give. She had received His smile of approval and that was more than enough.

As Jesus' disciples and others observed all those large amounts of money being placed into the public

offering, they thought it was a big deal. But Jesus said it was no big deal—they were just giving a small portion of what they didn't even need! Then, Jesus watched the poor widow drop in her two mites. The disciples thought it was no big deal, because her gift was so small. Jesus said it was a big deal because she had cast in her entire living—she had given everything. What a different viewpoint!

As they exited the temple, the disciples made a big deal about the ornate stones used in the temple. But Jesus said it wasn't a big deal because in a short time not one stone would be left upon the other.

The disciples were shocked by this proclamation and wanted to know when this would take place. This was a big deal. Jesus said it wasn't a big deal when this would happen; instead, the big deal was that the disciples not fall under deception.

Why did Jesus' disciples so often make a big deal out of something He did not? Why did He so often remind them of things He considered important that they completely overlooked? Why did He not consider other things important that they thought were a big deal? Was it not because He had eternal values and they were plagued with temporal values?

Here's the all-important question for you and me: What are our values?



marriages

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

Graber-Gingerich

Bro. Laban, son of Floyd and Esther Graber, Rose Hill, VA, and Sis. Mary Ellen, daughter of Joey and Emma Gingerich, Rose Hill, VA, on Feb. 22, 2019, at Friendship Baptist Church for Maranatha Bible Fellowship, Rose Hill, VA, by Raymond Fisher.


Hooks-Dueck

Bro. Duane, son of Andy and Margaret Hooks, Taylorsville, NC, and Sis. Carlene, daughter of Marvin and Darlene Dueck, Barnwell, SC, on March 8, 2019, at Hagood Baptist Church for Barnwell Mennonite Church by Chad Brubaker.

Correction: Mast-Gingerich

Bro. Ricky, son of David and Gloria Mast, Provo, Utah, and Sis. Kendra, daughter of Wilbur and LeAnn Gingerich, Arthur, IL, at Penn Station for Trinity Christian Fellowship on Oct. 6, 2018, by Wilbur Gingerich.

Miller-Schmucker

Bro. Nathan, son of Marvin and Ruth Miller, Suceava, Romania, and Sis. Nora, daughter of Robert and Elva Schmucker, Shipinski, Ukraine, at Center Church, Hutchinson, KS, on March 9, 2019, by Titus Miller (Nathan's brother) and Mervin Graber, of Oskaloosa, KS. 

cradle roll

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

Coulter, Jared and Eunice (Peachy), Honey Grove, PA, first child, a daughter, Avriel Irene, March 18, 2019.

Danner, Wendall and Esther (Mast), Owenton, KY, fifth child, second daughter, Megan Ruth, March 24, 2019.

Eash, Benji and Charity (King), Charlotte, TN, second child and son, Elliot David, Dec. 17, 2018.

Helmuth, Galen and Edith (Beachy), Huntland, TN, third child and daughter, Elana Claire, Feb. 28, 2019.

Helmuth, Tyson and Treva (Herschberger), Lovington, IL, fifth child, third son, Ethan James, Feb. 13, 2019.

Hostetler, Andrew and Joanna (Mast), Owenton, KY, sixth child, fifth son, Asher Luke, Feb. 6, 2019.

Kanagy, Jeffrey and Rachel (Shank), Blackville, SC, fourth child, third daughter, Gretta Ruth, Feb. 11, 2019.

Lehman, Christopher and Shari (Stoltzfus), Middleburg, PA, third child, first son, Nicholas Scott, Nov. 14, 2018.

Lehman, Clifton and Denzli (Kratzer), Woodward, PA, second child, first son, Winston Theodore, Feb. 26, 2019.

Martin, Shannon and Veronica (Miller), Orange, VA, second child and son, Declan Cole, March 6, 2019.

Mast, Ken and Mary Jo (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, third child and daughter, Jasmine Nicole, Feb. 4, 2019.

Miller, James and Robin (Mast), Goodspring, TN, (Currently in Berezyanka, Ukraine), fifth child, second son, Larson Miles, Feb. 22, 2019.

Miller, Loyal and Arlene (Zook), Partridge, KS, third child and son, Josiah Samuel, March 25, 2019.

Nisly, Virgil and Josi (Shrock), Gordonville, PA, second child, first son, Henry Paul, March 3, 2019.

Nissley, Sanford and Renita (Schrock), Montezuma, GA, third child, first son, Gustavo Lee, Feb. 11, 2019.

Overholt, Adam and Gwen (Brechtbill), Taylorsville, NC, second child, first son, Benson James, Feb 4, 2019.

Schrock, Jonathan and Tammie (Weaver), Freeport, OH, first child, a daughter, Carmella Rose, Feb. 23, 2019.

Shirk, Orion and Lynelle (Horst), Philadelphia, PA, sixth child, fourth son, Obadiah Branch, March 2, 2019.

Stoltzfoos, Dwight Edward and Brenda (Petersheim), Kinzers, PA, seventh and eighth children (twins), a son, Evan Jon, and a daughter, Elayna Hope, Feb. 28, 2019.

Stoltzfoos, Steve and Mary Sue (Beiler), Parkesburg, PA, fifth child, third son, Myron Kade, March 10, 2019.

Stoltzfus, Jay Wendell and Krystal Joy (Lapp), Christiana, PA, first child, a daughter, Mackenzie Grace, Feb. 25, 2019.

Stoltzfus, Shaphan and Barb (Hostetler), Statesville, NC, second child and daughter, Aubrey Nicole, Feb. 15, 2019.

Stoltzfus, Travis and Heather (Lehman), Middleburg, PA, second child and daughter, Saige Avonlea, Feb. 25, 2019.

Wagler, Bryan and Maria (Yoder), Cedar Creek, TX, (serving in Kenya), fourth child and son, Jayson Hanz, March 12, 2019.

Wagler, Tim and Jolene (Weaver), Greensburg, KY, second child and son, Kamryn Trace, Feb. 3, 2019.

Weaver, Jeremy and Jennifer (Miller), Tazewell, VA, fifth child, third daughter, Heidi Joy, March 1, 2019.

Webb, Colton and Erica (Wagler), Cross Hill, SC, first child, a son, Cannon Maxwell, Feb. 14, 2019.


Correction: Yoder, Doyle and Diane (Yoder), Middlebury, IN, first child, a son, Trae Zyaire, Jan. 19, 2019.

Yoder, Jesse and Teresa (Yoder), Owenton, KY, sixth child, third daughter, Lily Belle, Feb. 26, 2019.

Yoder, Lavon and Diane (Wenger), Tazewell, VA, fifth child, second son, Kody Drew, Nov. 24, 2018.

Yoder, Randall and Andrea (Esh), Gordonville, PA, second child and daughter, Avah Zion, March 7, 2019.

Zook, Andrew and Yvonne (Stoltzfus), Aveila, PA, second child and daughter, Jasmine Nicole, Oct. 25, 2018.

Zook, Michael and Cheryl (Miller), Alliance, OH, fourth, fifth, and sixth children, first, second, and third daughters (triplets), Skyla Gracelyn, Hollie Amari, and Abigail Jane, born April 1, 2015. Loved and cared for since birth and adopted on December, 3, 2018. 

ordinations


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

Bro. Andrew Hostetler, 43, (wife, Joanna Mast), of Owenton, KY, was ordained as deacon for Owenton Amish

Mennonite Church on March 17, 2019. Preordination messages were given by Bruce Weaver, Hope, TN. The charge was given by Joshua Yoder, assisted by Gary Raber and Floyd Lengacher. Joseph Mullet was also in the lot.

Bro. Dan Schwartz, 35, (wife, April Yoder), was ordained as deacon for Stillwaters Mennonite Church at Tazewell, VA, on Sept. 2, 2018. Preordination messages were brought by Johnny Miller, Minerva, OH. The charge was given by Paul Weaver, assisted by John Beiler.

Bro. Galen Stutzman, 46, (wife Rhonda Gingerich), of Plain City, Ohio, was called by voice of the church and ordained as minister at Bethesda Fellowship, Plain City, OH, on Feb. 10, 2019. Preordination messages were given by Bobby Miller, Newcomerstown, OH. The charge was given by Elmer Stoltzfus, assisted by Bobby Miller and Perry Troyer.

Bro. Marcus Troyer, 41, (wife, Jolene Gingerich), was called by voice of the church and ordained to the office of deacon for the Fountain of Praise Mennonite congregation at Lincoln, MO, on March 31, 2019. Preordination messages were given by Monroe Gingerich. The charge was given by B. Truman Yoder, assisted by Monroe Gingerich, Delmar Bontrager, and Clarence Yoder, Jr. 

Beachy, Mary Magdalena (Kramer), age 92, of Plain City, Ohio, died surrounded by her family Feb. 22, 2019. She was born to the late Alvin and Katie (Beachy) Kramer on Dec. 26, 1926.

She was a faithful child of God and member of Haven Fellowship Church. In her 70s, Mary learned to crochet. She mastered the art and made a number of afghans for her children and grandchildren. She also enjoyed traveling with widow friends to such places as Israel and sites in the USA.

On Dec. 2, 1948, she was married to Alvin J. Beachy. He died in 1989. To their union were born seven sons and four daughters: Rosanna (Gary) Miller, Hutchinson, KS; Norman (Lois) Beachy, Plain City, OH; David (Rachel) Beachy, Ostrander, OH; Ernest (Bertha) Beachy, Paul (Frieda) Beachy; Mark (Becky) Beachy; Catherine (Harry) Conte; Lloyd (Lucy) Beachy; Glenn Beachy; Susan Beachy, all of Plain City, OH; Verda Swartzentruber, Dalton, OH; 42 grandchildren and 73 great grandchildren.

The funeral was held at United Bethel Mennonite Church on Feb. 24, with Shannon Martin and Nate Yoder serving. Burial was in Haven Fellowship cemetery with Lonnie Beachy serving.

Kanagy, John Timothy, 93, who lived at Woodbury, TN, at the time of his death, died Feb. 22, 2019. He was born in

Belleville, PA, Oct. 26, 1925. son of the late Jacob. E. and Salina (Peachey) Kanagy.

He was a member of Calvary Mennonite Fellowship, Blackville, SC. He worked in construction as a carpenter until he retired.

On Jan. 27, 1948, was married to Esther N. Yoder. She died June 19, 2007. Survivors include children: Virgil (Fannie Mae) Kanagy, Blackville, SC; Martha (Peter) Schwartz, Sarasota, FL; Elsie (Alvin) Beachy, Plain City, OH; Joseph Daniel (Freda) Kanagy, Woodbury, TN; and David Ray (Mary) Kanagy, Williston, SC; 22 grandchildren, 54 great grandchildren, a sister-in-law, Mattie Kanagy, Hartville, OH and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by sisters: Mattie Yoder, Naomi Peachey, and Amelia Kanagy; brothers, Joseph, Kore, David, Jacob, Jonas, Lee, Norman, Ezra, Urie, and Alvin Kanagy.

The funeral was held at Calvary Fellowship Mennonite Fellowship on February 26, with burial in the church cemetery.


Kauffman, Emma Lucille (Miller), age 93, of Plain City died Feb. 21, 2019, at The Convallarium at Indian Run, Dublin, OH. She was born at Plain City, June 9, 1927, to the late Leroy and Elizabeth (Troyer) Miller.

She was a devoted minister's wife and member of Haven Fellowship Church,

Plain City. She enjoyed traveling and meeting new people and had an unusual ability of remembering those she met.

On Nov. 25, 1948, she was married to Raymond Kauffman. He died Dec. 15, 2013. She is survived by six children; Miriam (David) Miller; Ruth (the late Ray) Miller; Eldon Kauffman, Floyd (Linda) Kauffman, Steve (Linda) Kauffman, Rhoda (David) Helmuth,

16 grandchildren, and 73 great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by a daughter, Judy, and granddaughter, Colleen Mackowick.

The funeral was held on Feb. 27, at United Bethel Mennonite Church, with Shannon Martin, Lonnie Beachy, and Nate Yoder serving. Burial was in Haven Fellowship Cemetery, with John D. Hostetler serving in the committal. 

observations

Legal use of cannabis, otherwise known as marijuana, continues to grow in this county. Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia allow for at least medical use of the cannabis drug. Ten of these jurisdictions also permit its legal recreational use.

Since legalization is in relatively early stages, its long term effects are difficult to establish with scientific reliability. But plenty of people have tried. Proponents of cannabis use are very forthright in their presentation of evidence they feel demonstrates that the effect of cannabis use is either not harmful or actually beneficial.

But there are others who point out a variety of factors that paint a more troublesome picture. Cannabis is addictive in about 10% of its users. This percentage doubles if the drug use begins during the teen years. The rate climbs higher as the age of the onset of usage is reduced.

So for persons who begin dabbling in marijuana use in 8th grade, the addiction rate rises to about 30%.

Furthermore, over time most users develop a resistance to the effects of cannabis, resulting in the need to seek a product with higher potency or take more of it to achieve the same result. One study from New Zealand examined the IQ levels of young people before using cannabis and again after 10 and 20 years of regular use. This study suggests that there is significant IQ erosion associated with long-term use.

While those who profit from the cannabis industry paint a rosy picture regarding legalization of this drug, many who work in law enforcement and those in the psychology field, have a different understanding. Amid the murkiness of the situation, I offer a few observations:

Those who support legalization are better organized than those who are

opposed.

It's still too early for us to have observed, so to understand well the long-term impact of legalization, both to individuals and society in general. People choose whether they will use it or not. Paying the cost associated with use is not a matter of choice, regardless when that cost is understood or what it will be. The cost is both personal and societal.

Cannabis is a drug. There's something wrong with pairing the ideas of drug and recreation.

Alcohol is a drug. The problems associated with its recreational use are more clear than cannabis—but parallels exist.

Those who know and experience the joy of the Lord, are not very susceptible to the temptation of recreational drug use.

• • • • •

My wife and I recently returned from attending REACH 2019 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The first REACH event occurred in 2013 and has been scheduled every other year since then. It is truly a remarkable experience to visit this event and be enriched by solid teaching and edifying fellowship. Approximately 50 conservative Anabaptist ministries participated in this event by introducing their work to interested persons either via the displays that were set up for persons to browse or via a breakout session.

There were close to 1500 people registered for Thursday and over 2000 for Friday. It is a moving experience to see what God is doing at home and abroad through people who identify as conservative Anabaptist.

I had many helpful and encouraging interactions, but I remember one in particular. Some of us listened to a panel discussion that considered the ways in which conservative Anabaptists are especially well-suited to working with Muslim seekers particularly in refugee contexts. One of the reasons is the fact that we maintain a distance from the political process and don't vote. The idea of being removed from the political process is difficult for many to comprehend, but when the implications of that stance are understood, the realization is quite refreshing.

As this discussion was unfolding, a brother seated beside me expressed a deep concern whether we are as free from the political process as we used to be and profess to be. He is dismayed at the political views that "our" people express on social media. He wondered how many of our people would stand a test of scrutiny regarding conscientious objection to war, based on readily accessible information on our social media accounts.

Brethren, be very careful what you say. But be even more careful what is

in your heart.

• • • • •

Brother Tim Miller indicated to me that The Peace and Service Committee is suggesting that we consider visiting the following website and share some of our feedback on their questions. The government website is: inspire2serve.gov

Here are some of the questions being asked related to service that invite our response.

Does service have inherent value? If so, what is it?

How does the U.S. increase the desire for Americans, particularly young Americans, to serve?

What are the barriers to participation in military, national or public service?

How can the U.S. increase participation in military, national, and public service by individuals with critical skills to address national security and other public service needs of the nation?

Is the military draft or draft contingency still a necessary component of U.S. national security?

Are modifications to the selective service system needed?

Is a mandatory service requirement for all Americans necessary, valuable, and feasible?

• • • • •

One kind reader pointed out to me an article written by Todd Wagner

entitled “What Churches Get Wrong about the LGBTQ Conversation” that appeared recently in the *Dallas Morning News*. Though I found part of the article mildly provocative, overall I found it very helpful.

He writes, “Historically the church has done a poor job of engaging in this conversation. It either speaks with hypocritical judgment and condemnation, or with a perverted view of compassion by embracing human behavior that compromises human flourishing.”

He goes on to cite four areas that the church has made unscriptural conclusions:

“Making LGBTQ behavior separate and more significant than other sins.”

“Supporting the use of reparative therapy or gay conversion therapy.” He argues that our focus should be directed toward a proper response to temptation, rather than assume that the temptation isn’t real.

“Staying silent in the face of sin.”

“Affirming LGBTQ behavior as compatible with Scripture.”

Amid today’s strident rhetoric both supporting and opposing the LGBTQ agenda, it behooves us as God’s children to understand well what God says in Scripture and to firmly anchor ourselves there. Sometimes we need to be reminded that God loves each of us and calls us to mirror that love. But love does not affirm sin—any sin. These two concepts are

not mutually exclusive. God perfectly demonstrates their full compatibility.

• • • • •

“Church as we know it is over. Here’s what comes next” is the title of an article that one reader sent me. The writer, David Adamson, points out that churches who are serious about reaching people have modified their approach in such a way that emphasizes digital information and experience and reduces emphasis on the physical gathering of God’s people.

I share many of the questions that my brother who showed me this article is asking. How does brotherhood accountability and New Testament brotherhood, mutual accountability work where church is virtual and digital? I can’t remember

where the exact source of this idea is but there’s an echo from historic Anabaptist thought, and practice that says, “No man is in Christ Jesus without his brother.” The gathered body strengthens brotherhood ties.

The Hebrew writer in chapter 10 reminds us of the important role we play in spurring one another on to faithfulness. Verses 23-25 read, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (KJV)

-RJM 

Letters to Prison Inmates

November 26, 2002

Dear friend _____,
Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

This finds me inside at the computer for most of the day. It’s getting to the end of the month again, when the work of getting the next month’s material for publishing is pressing on me. The contributing editors send me their columns in the last week of the month.

We certainly enjoyed meeting you again and seeing _____ as well. She seems like a nice person. You thought that I could marry you and her. That was quite a jolt.

_____, I like you, but I must clear myself to you on this matter. As I understand the Bible, I don’t think God approves marriage to another person while the first partner is still living. Notice these verses: “For the woman which hath an husband is

bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law: so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man” (Romans 7:2,3). “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers,...shall inherit the kingdom of God” (from 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10).

It simply looks to me like the marriage that runs into problems must place it in “Park” and seek to find answers to their problems instead of getting married to someone else. In the case of my friend, his wife simply got tired of him. I don’t blame her. He’s too much like me. But seriously, he’s simply going through life without getting married again. That gets mighty lonely. She didn’t wait for him. She got married to another man. And I’m thinking, “Oh, I’m afraid she won’t make it to heaven.”

I know we’ve never talked much about your ex-wife. I have very little idea about the situation. And I realize we know nothing about ____’s ex-husband. Some of those situations are beyond repair. But if the Bible calls

it adultery, I don’t know how it’s safe to go ahead and get married again. It would be better to just be brave and endure singleness or widowhood, if that’s what it’s called. Of course, I’m not your judge. And God will be perfectly fair with everyone.

I know I’ve been fortunate. Martha still loves me and isn’t wishing to get out of our marriage. That is a real blessing! Were it not for the grace of God, many marriages would fail. A good marriage takes real effort and determination. My father-in-law once said that he thinks that if people would put as much effort into their first marriage as they sometimes put into their second one, the first marriage would have survived. I am opposed to remarriage after divorce also for what it does to children. It can be very painful for them emotionally. They are asked to give their loyalty to one then the other. That’s tough!

Here I close, wishing you God’s blessing! I really want you for a friend.

Sincerely, Paul Miller

[I’m choosing to put this letter that I wrote to an inmate we visited each month some years ago. He asked me to perform a marriage for him and his new girlfriend. I felt I had no other choice but to say what I wrote above. Did I do right? -PLM]



April 16, 2012

Dear friend, _____,
My friend has suggested that I write you a letter. I admit that I don't really know you and I don't actually remember your parents. But I have known your grandfather from his youth. We are about the same age. Also I have known your pastor. I consider them both, though human, men of integrity who want to do what is right.

Since visiting you is not an option, I will try to write some things that may provide some encouragement to you. I understand that you are finding imprisonment very discouraging. I don't blame you. I'm sure I would not like it either.

But let us back up and take an honest look at the big picture. To break into a home during the night with the intent to sexually approach an innocent woman is a serious legal offense. The weapons and ammunition that were found add to the seriousness of the crime. It is no longer just a church or family matter. The state has a well-justified interest in protecting innocent people from harm.

You can easily think back to the time when you were free to come and go at will. That has changed drastically. How much freedom can

be restored is now out of your control. Maybe you are asking, "What can be done?" It is a valid question. We all know that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But God does give people the freedom to choose. He takes the risk of allowing people to make bad choices. We are free to choose, but we are not free to choose the consequences of wrong choices. Your situation is a vivid example of this truth.

We thank God that you were hindered from carrying out your apparent intentions. The legal system has determined that for you to be free is an unacceptable risk. I hope you are able to follow their reasoning.

I can understand that the prospect of long-term confinement is not welcome. Let us think together what can be done. I am confident that your parents tried to bring you up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They wanted you to become a true Christian. But even the best Christian parents cannot choose for their adult children.

I assume that you can remember some very specific attitudes and actions that were a disappointment to your dear parents and the Lord Himself. Of course, we simply cannot undo the past.

Visiting with _____, it is clear that you are sorry for what happened and your present circumstances. But there is a question whether or not you are sorry for the right reasons. You are sorry that you are having to spend time in confinement. God knows whether or not you are truly sorry for how you sinned against Him and the girl's family. The Bible teaches us that there is a right and a wrong repentance. To be sorry for having been found out or having to suffer for our wrongdoing is not godly sorrow or true repentance. The Bible says that this is "worldly sorrow that worketh death. But godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of."

I believe godly sorrow or true repentance realizes that one has sinned against a holy God and in your case also sinned against a Christian family. This is based on II Cor. 7:8-11.

I realize that I've not said anything that would relieve you from confinement, or possibly a long sentence. It is simply out of my field. But I do entreat you to seriously ask God to help you see the seriousness of your sinfulness. The Lord Himself is able to make you free from the burden and guilt of sin. He can penetrate the walls and bars


of prison and make you a truly free person. God loves you; your parents and other family and friends love you. The Psalmist reminds us that a broken and contrite heart God does not despise. Be grateful that God's invitation to grace and freedom is still open. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

Sincerely, David L. Miller
Partridge, KS

P.S. _____, I realize that this letter is very frank and straight forward. It is based on information as reported to me. I apologize if my information is not accurate. But my motive in being so frank is to call attention to the fact that while certain actions can result in prison sentences, eternity deserves far greater consideration.

My prayer is that by the grace of God you will respond so that there need be no regrets in a hundred or a million years from now. Please feel free to write to me, if you care to. I would like to meet you sometime.

-DLM

[In my files I find correspondence written by my deceased brother, David L. Miller, that speaks to life situations. I print it here to provide ideas of how to counsel men or women in difficult situations that we, as "ambassadors for Christ," may encounter. -PLMJ] 

Training Future Missionaries

Howard Bean, Tavistock, ON

How can parents and teachers cooperate in preparing students for possible missionary service? In brief: by sharing common understandings about mission work; by building mission awareness; and by instilling godly attitudes.

First, let me present some ideas and understanding that home and school should share. We should understand that God may call any of His children to serve Him in a different location than the present one – whether in North America or foreign missions. Also, mission work is desirable, honorable, and worthy of our greatest efforts. Thus, schools should be ready to release school personnel, and parents should be willing to see graduating students leave homes for mission work with their blessing.

Another helpful understanding is the realization that God prepares His mission personnel (sometimes in unusual ways) and that both parents and teachers should be Spirit-filled to sense His direction in relating to individual children.

In addition, although parents and educators should point out that being a missionary is important and honorable, a balance should be maintained in that mission work is

not all glamour and glory but also involves blood, sweat, and tears. Parents and teachers should also communicate the concept that God calls everyone to His service which may or may not involve foreign mission work.

What can parents and teachers do to enhance awareness of mission needs and importance.

Read missionary stories. Especially if the stories are of high caliber in literary value and interest, children will identify with the missionary hero and see the desirability of being in God's will.

Adopt a missionary with prayer support, letters, and offerings.

Invite missionaries to speak at school and church. While machetes, snake skins, and other interesting items from a foreign culture may help awaken interest in missions, emphasis should be given to the difference the Gospel makes in the lives of people.

Teach world geography at school. Parents can reinforce a knowledge of countries studied by having a map of the world posted at home. Our daughter, Karen, had a world map on the slanted ceiling above her bed, prompting her to pray for mission endeavors. She became a

medical missionary to El Salvador and Guatemala.

Encourage the sharing of international current events. Some of the news could be gathered from mission newsletters.


Teach a foreign language. Learning any foreign language can make it easier for missionaries if they are later called to serve in a setting using yet another language.

Visit a mission field. Giving teachers a short leave of absence for such purposes can help enrich their teaching. Likewise, teachers can be equally agreeable to children who accompany parents on visits of encouragement to mission fields. Such was the case years ago when my wife and I took our four children to visit a missionary family in Guatemala.

Learn memory verses related to missions.

Prepare students academically for work on the mission field as nurses, mechanics, translators, teachers, etc. People with such vocational skills can be very valuable mission workers.

Let's consider some vital attitudes to encourage students as potential missionaries. Parents and teachers should work together to lead pupils to a submissive attitude as born-again believers. In addition, teaching children to relate well to others both in the home and school is crucial for suitability as a missionary. According to one survey I read, the biggest reason for missionaries not returning to the field is interpersonal problems. Furthermore, both home and school can work together to instill good habits and character traits.

[Reprinted with permission from the September/October, 2018, issue of Midwest Mennonite Focus]. 

Bible School Essays

Bro. Roman Stoltzfoos submits two essays from a class he taught at Calvary Bible School this winter. Read and be blessed:

Dear Dad,
In case a letter from me may surprise you, you don't need to get too worried. It was an assignment given to me here at CBS in my Christian Ordinances class. However, that does not make the following words any less true! I hope

you can sense the sincerity in this **LONG OVER-DUE** letter! I am truly grateful for you and I know I don't express this often enough. Maybe this prompting from my teacher is just what I needed? :) He believes that unless we learn to appreciate what our parents have taught us and can

express that to them their teacher's job is more difficult.

So, first of all, thank you for the way you put effort into having a relationship with me as your daughter. I know it might be tough to relate to me sometimes since I'm not a boy but I can sense that you have made it a goal to have a good relationship with me, nevertheless. It is always hard for me to understand when I hear of girls who don't have a good relationship with their dad, and I am reminded of just how blessed I am to have a dad that loves and cares about me and gives me super-amazing hugs. The kind of hug that holds me tight, and cradles my head to your chest. Those are my favorite! And honestly, it's gonna' take a lot for any other guy to meet up to that! ;)) You can usually tell when I'm about to fall apart and just getting a hug like that from you, and knowing you love me, makes me feel safe and loved and that's special to me.

Thank you for considering my questions important and for not laughing at me, however silly they may seem. You are someone I can trust to answer wisely, and with my good in mind. Thank you especially for giving me honest advice when I was dealing with my coworker and considering quitting my job. I'd probably still be there if it wasn't for you pushing me to tell my boss—in a respectful way—because she deserved it.

One thing I like in you is your leadership. You are an excellent leader, and that's not the easiest job around! I admire the way you lead our family. I see you striving to be a good Daddy to my siblings and me and a good husband for Mom. Knowing there is no "favorite" says and does a lot for our family. Seeing you love and lead Mom the way you do is something that is precious and it's a kind of relationship I want with my husband someday. (If that's God's will, of course?) Also, a few years ago I don't think I would have actually said this but I may have grown up—at least a little. Thank you for hugging and kissing Mom in front of us children. It gives us a picture of what the marriage relationship is to look like and it reaffirms us that you and Mom are still in love.

Thank you for the many good memories of when you let me spend time with you, whether it was sitting beside you in the tree stand on crisp November mornings, and chopping wood with you in both in the heat of summer and the dead cold of winter. Do you remember the time we literally had teeny icicles freezing on our eyelashes and the frozen stiff nose-hairs to boot? Also, I still remember the time we were in the woods on a blitzin' hot summer day and you said (in Dutch, of course) "Well, we get twice the heat out of this wood! Some now, and

some then!” And thank you for letting me ride along with you in the trash truck over the years. Those times are always special to me and I’m looking forward to becoming more involved with that in a few weeks! I have enjoyed spending time with you. Good, quality time, good conversations, and good hugs.

I admire the way you are active in church work- whether that means going to Michigan City, teaching Sunday School, leading songs, or going on Hands of Hope projects. One can simply not pour themselves into things like those and not have a deep personal relationship with God. “...by their fruits ye shall know them.” A strong faith like yours cannot lie dormant! Another thing I like about you is the way you take an interest in what’s happening in the youth guys’ lives. They can sense your caring heart!

I like your good-natured humor. Your laugh is contagious, and your tricks spontaneous. Its only because you have tried them so many times I

can sometimes “smell the rat” before you ever get it accomplished. (Sorry)

Something that I appreciate about you is the way you can whistle almost any tune and how you enjoy singing. I must have inherited those genes, huh? I love when our family sings together and I especially enjoy when we’re singing and you come walking in to where we are and join right in.

I know I have cost you a lot of money over the years—braces, totaling a car, etc., etc., etc. But I never heard you complain. Thank you for taking that in stride!

Most of all, Dad, thank you for being my friend, for pushing me to do hard things, for helping me be myself and for standing beside me when I felt scared, hurt, and lonely. Thank you for being a godly example for me to follow. I can never thank you enough for all you do and have done!

So I’ll sign off with the words “thank you” and “I love you.”

Love, your Daughter 

Dear Mom,
So, first things first, just so you know, this is an assignment I was given here at CBS. However, that does **NOT** in any way make these few words any less true! I hope you can understand that this

is truly heartfelt and yes, **LONG OVER-DUE**, and for that, I do apologize! Maybe I just needed my teacher to give me the idea, huh? :-)
His belief is that in order to do our best at learning about ordinances and to be obedient to Scripture we need

to be thankful for and build on what our parents have taught us.

So, in all seriousness, where do I even start? You are someone that I've been able to count on, not only as Mom, but also as my friend. You have proven this to me countless times and I don't feel like I have always returned that and I just want to say, "I'm sorry." I feel you have especially proven this to me the past six months. Seems there was a lot of drama in my life—figuring out where I stood in my relationships with some of my friends, quitting my job, and getting ready to come to CBS. God knew I needed someone to "hash it over" with, so He gave me a Mom that is an excellent listener. Thank you for being that person for me! Truly listening takes a BIG heart! I am 99.9% sure I would have literally fallen apart without your many hugs, words of affirmation, and all the precious hours of sleep you sacrificed to stay up until I would get home from youth activities to see how my evening went. I don't think you will ever know just how much that meant to me! I think it meant more because you were kind of like an older sibling to me in that sense. I knew you would have my back and would listen to me—no matter what.

Also, thank you so much for that card and bouquet of flowers—that was very sweet of you and it meant

millions because, well, I'm a girl and I like flowers.

And, not only have you cared about/for me in the past 6 months, rather this has been a life-long journey for you. The many sleepless nights—both when I was little or sick, mountains of dirty dishes, seemingly endless piles of laundry, and cleaning up all my messes until you were probably almost blue in the face! I know I haven't thanked you enough! And I know this part of being a mom isn't "fun" but I admire the way you take it in stride. Day after day, year after year, "same old, same old," but you know it needs to be done and so you do it, with hardly ever a complaint! Thank you for helping me to "see" work and to enjoy it. It is something I treasure all the more as I start working in the "real world."

Thank you for the way you love me and all my five crazy, (but precious) siblings! You don't have a "favorite" and I'm so thankful for that. Studying the life of Joseph here has made me realize just how blessed I am when it comes to this! It causes so much family drama and makes life pretty miserable for everyone in that family.

Along with that, thank you so much for the way you stand by and follow Dad's leading in our family! Someday I want to be able to love and respect my husband like you

do! (If that's God's Plan for my life of course?) I know sometimes it can be hard to respect him when he comes home from work so late, but you have done a lot for him by helping him out and working alongside him in the office when you can. I can tell he appreciates it!

Thank you also for hugging and kissing him in front of us children. Yes, if you would have asked my opinion on this a few years ago I would have "grossed out." Fortunately, I grew up (at least a little) and can see the importance of it. That is one way we can see you are still in love with him and it gives us a good picture of what the marriage relationship is supposed to look like.

Thank you for your relationship with Jesus and how that is evident in your daily life. You are one of

my role-models when it comes to putting it to "shoe-leather". I know sometimes "Momming" might seem over-whelming and you probably wonder if your children will ever grow up to be godly young men and women, but we learn a lot just by watching you, and yes, your many prayers on our behalf do make a difference! I just want to thank you for your patience with me and the many prayers you have prayed for me. I am so blessed to have a Mom that loves Jesus!

In conclusion, I know I can't ever thank you enough for all you do and have done for me! You are a true gem of a Mom and I am so blessed. You really do have a heart of gold!

So I'll sign off with the words "thank you", and "I love you"!

Love, your Daughter 

mission awareness

The Cross-Cultural Kingdom

Adaptation without Compromise

John E Glick, Narvon, PA

Before ascending to heaven Jesus gave His apostles a mandate to take the Gospel of salvation to the whole world. His words are recorded in Mt.28:18-20.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching

them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” We call this the great commission, and believe it is still for us today. It authorizes us to take the whole Gospel to the whole world.

While the message of the Gospel has not changed, we recognize that we are living in a changing world. And in this world there is considerable diversity in how people groups think and live. This is called culture. Diversity in culture today likely stems from the confusion of tongues and consequent dispersion at Babel. Because salvation is for all people God’s Kingdom is cross-cultural.

Jesus said taking the Gospel to all the world involves teaching all things that He commanded. Doing this effectively requires some adaptation to culture without compromising on principle. We do not take a different message to other cultures. The Word of God is authoritative for all people. Its doctrines are eternal absolutes that do not change with time, circumstances, or culture. It sets forth unchanging principles whereby we can find direction for our lives.

It is true, however, that principles may need to be applied differently in different settings. An example of this is our traffic laws. The principle behind these laws is safety and order

on our roads. But they are applied differently depending on conditions. Therefore speed limits vary. Even so, living out the principles of God’s Word may look a little different in different cultures. We refer to this as adaptation to the culture.

The Apostle Paul expressed his willingness to adapt in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. To the Jews he became as a Jew, to the weak as weak, and so on. His goal was to win people to Christ. But his adapting never involved lowering the standards for Christian living. It was not compromising, yet he made himself a servant to all. He was willing to limit his liberty in Christ rather than pressing his rights.

Adaptation is about finding a reasonable way to apply a principle in a given culture without becoming weak in the doctrine. Some adaptation is for practical purposes or even out of necessity. I will give a few examples gleaned from our experience in Kenya. There bread is not a staple for the rural people as it is in America. Many of them do not have ovens, but cook over an open fire. A common food for them is the chapati. It is similar to a tortilla, made of flour and cooked in a pan. We found it practical to use the chapati for communion rather than a loaf of bread. It is a practice that is sustainable when the church becomes indigenous. Due to HIV being of epidemic

proportions in Kenya, greeting with the holy kiss is cheek to cheek. The climate there is quite warm. Not all Sunday dress standards that we consider appropriate in America are practical there. However we may not compromise on the principles of modesty and simplicity.

There is also that adaptation in practice and lifestyle that is out of respect. There is more than one right way to do some things. The Kenyan way of receiving guests in their homes is different from what we are used to in America. They usually have prayer before exchanging greetings or asking their guests to be seated. Is that maybe even better than our way? Before leaving, the guest asks permission to do so. It would certainly not be wise for the missionary to resort to our American way of being excused. It would, in fact, be offensive and would hinder the building of relationships. It is important that we not give the impression that our way of doing things is better. Eating their food, learning their language, and doing things their way helps to break down cultural barriers. Building relationships is an important step in showing people the way of Christ.

While adaptation to culture is necessary, we must be careful that it does not become compromise. Much wisdom and discernment is needed to know the difference. Culture must

be evaluated by the Word of God. Many cultures have practices that are based on superstition. Things are done in a certain way to avoid a curse. Certain ceremonies are performed to appease the evil spirits. Witch doctors are resorted to for healing. Such practices must be refuted. The people we work with may be very poor. Stealing and cheating is a big temptation. We may not compromise on integrity. We must teach them a better way. Where polygamy is common and acceptable, we must not accept anything other than “one man, one woman” as the Bible teaches. Compromising may increase our numbers but it will not build a true Christian church. Paul said to the Ephesian elders, “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). In many cultures there is a great need for teaching on true repentance, Biblical marriage, Christian home life, honesty, commitment, forgiveness, and much more. When these principles are embraced and lived out, the result will be a godly lifestyle in any culture. The Apostle Peter said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him” (Acts 10:34, 35).

(From a message preached at the Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church's mission conference)



With Love, On Mother's Day

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



When you're on a difficult uphill climb, it's powerful when someone before you, coming down, pauses to reassure you, "You can do it; it's not too much further; the sight at the top is so worth it; you've come this far."

This month's article comes to you in that tone. If you're a mother of preschoolers, toddlers, babies and more to come, this is my Mother's Day gift to you. Some of us are on our way down. We pause while you're catching your breath, to reassure you that you can do it. The view at the top (and along the way) is so worth it. And even though it seems to you that we've always had gray hair, we have actually survived many years on your side of the climb.

God has been giving me new eyes through which to view babies and toddlers since He is filling my lap with grandbabies. It has been said, "If I had known grandchildren were so much fun, I'd have had them first." Although that is not my mantra, I've been studying what constitutes this grandparent euphoria vs. the tedium

of parenting. And how can I hand a dose of this delight to the tired young mother in the trenches?

Mothering is relentless, daily and nightly. It is exclusive. Some infants will not be quieted by any other. It can feel like entrapment. Needs are piled on top of you with no thought for your own comfort. Solitude, a walk in fresh air, reading, and meditation feel like unattainable luxuries. I still remember this irony while attending an evening service. My restless infant began fussing just as I heard the speaker announce, "This evening's message is for mothers." I was headed to the nursery and didn't surface until the closing hymn. I thought wryly, "I guess the rest of the people know what I should be doing, even if I don't."

You may find yourself in greater or lesser degrees of this scenario. At some time or other, your own body seems to buckle under the weight of sleepless nights, sticky floors, incessant teething, and sibling rivalry. A chiropractor once helpfully stated, "You have the pain of a mother

who lifts a heavy toddler, then turns to lift out of or into the crib. This pain will stay with you for the duration.”

Life comes in seasons. Whether or not you can grasp this truth, try to at least read this with a grain of faith. Providing you survive this season, you will actually some day look back and survey the uphill climb. Ask God for the mental energy for this exercise: In your mind, step out of where you are today and pretend that you are looking back into your life. Think about the small pleasures, the dreams you had for motherhood, the delight of a baby’s clasp around your finger. Study your infant’s sleeping pose. Take minute vacations. I know you don’t have time, but sit for 10 minutes and simply watch your children play. Lock gaze with your four-year-old to flash him the smile of a lifetime. Hand baby to Daddy and take a brisk walk. View personal worship as thought-prayers whispered over the sink, while feeding your newborn, or kneeling at your chair with a restraining arm slung over your two year old. God is reached in the minute sessions. He’s not keeping track of when you last spent an hour with Him. He receives worship in the diaper changes, drool wiping, and the soup stirring.

God condenses your job assignment into this: to love your

husband, to love your children, a keeper at home. (This is not the session on loving your husband, but take note that husband precedes children!) Choose wisely the demands on your time. “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want” is an actual promise that you do not lack what you truly need. Have you allowed an infiltration of demands that don’t fit through the Titus 2:4,5 filter? It is immensely freeing to revolve joyfully in the specific call and season in which God places you. Don’t envy the ladies who get to sing on choir, or go on evangelistic trips—or those who own five different Sunday dresses, or post nice photos. Your nights may be long, but they are not forever. By placing one foot in front of the other often enough, you can actually reach the top.

I remember one day showing off my flower gardens to a mother of twelve. Unapologetically she told me that for now her children are her flowers. She later became my mother-in-law and I still benefit today from the masculine plant she spaded and watered.

If your life would suddenly be snatched from your family, God would step into their lives with grace and in some way provide for their needs. However, if you do not meet their needs because you give priority to frivolous demands, He will *not*

step in and supply their needs. You are chosen for this calling at this time. Only you can fill this place. It is a holy calling. It is a high calling. Embrace it with fierce abandon.

Did you know that God keeps secrets? We stood alongside friends who buried several infants with no promise of any to fill their arms. Today they are richly grandparenting, their baby losses not forgotten, but redeemed. God kept that secret from them all through their losses. Here is one secret He kept from my husband and me: that the harvest far outweighs the season of planting.

While we were planting in our six little ones in 12 years, our lives included much discipline, foreign missions, crying babies, peace-making, and juggling something between joy and insanity. We didn't have a clear view of "later." Sometimes it was all we could do to get a clear view of the stage we were in. Today, as parents of adult children who embrace God's will, there are no words to adequately describe the gratitude, and deep fulfillment. This harvest is the secret God kept from us. It takes our breath away. The grandeur at the top is indescribable.

Mothers, you can do it. Take a break, survey the awesomeness around you, and keep going. You'll be at the top sooner than you think. Someday you'll agree with me.

Ten Years From Now

"Mama, please come and play with me,"

My four-year-old implored.

"This horse and piggy won't stand straight

Here on this curvy board."

"Or we could go out on a walk

Just you, an' Carl, an' me.

You'll hold onto his baby hand

And watch me climb a tree!"

"And we could pack a picnic too

That's EVER so much fun.

I'll go put Snicker in his pen

Until our lunch is done."

The mending pile grabs out at me.

The laundry's not quite through.

The kitchen floor's a sorry sight.

Oh dear, what will I do?

His cowlick teased me painfully

His voice, it lilted so.

His eyes searched mine beseechingly,

"Please, mama, can we go?"

Remembering what I'd often said

That sunny days don't keep

And sonny boys at four years old

Are gone — with hop and leap.

Ten years from now who'll ever know

Did I clean or did I mend?

Is there a chance, a precious chance

That I could be his friend?

His mama now, his couns'lor then,

Fourteen brings woes its own.

Will he be loving God and me

Once he's a man — all grown?

"Come son, let's go and pack our lunch

Get stroller, quilt, and shoes.

I like your cheery plan today.

We have no time to lose!"

— By Susan Schlabach 

All That Is Certain

Gideon Yutzy, Co. Waterford, Ireland

Sometimes I am surprised at how little I know.

I was instructed—zealously catechized, more like—in a Christian home. Besides that, we live in a time heralded as the Information Age. What went wrong? Do I just need to spend more time on Wikipedia?

Years ago, I heard a quip about child training that went something like this: “Before I was married, I had six theories about raising children. Now I have six children and no theories.”

As a father of four gloriously multifaceted daughters, I can identify. And, to tell the truth, I feel as if I have fewer and fewer theories about everything.

Theories about what is most important in life, for instance; theories about happiness; theories about myself; theories about God.

On such foundational points as these, it can feel at times as if I know almost nothing.

But then I consider the Book of Job. *Wisdom is hidden from the eyes of all*

the living. Wisdom is not found in the land of the living.

What? No pat answers?

Or I consider the words of the Trappist monk Basil Pennington. “We don’t have all the answers. There are lots of questions. And it is good to live in the question.” A pat answer, the monk went on to say, does not leave any room for mystery. Our faith, though it is solid, is also full of questions—and therefore full of hope for further revelation.

And I begin to think that maybe, just maybe, my decreased certainty and increased age is perfectly normal and even healthy. “It is better to have a little faith dearly won,” said the Scottish evangelist Henry Drummond, “than perish on the splendid plenty of the richest creeds.”

Paul gave Timothy a list of foundational beliefs, a kind of creed, if you will. But notice how short that creed is. Notice that it contains only six statements: God was manifest in the flesh; justified in the Spirit; seen of angels; preached unto the Gentiles;

believed on in the world; received up into glory (1 Timothy 3:16).

Why is it, then, that subsequent creeds grew steadily longer? The 4th century Apostle's Creed is still limited to around 100 words, but the 1527 *Schleitheim Confession of Faith* has over 3,000. It is noteworthy that the 1632 *Dordrecht Confession of Faith* and the 1963 *Mennonite Confession of Faith* both have more than 5,000 words.

Perhaps as more and more distortions of Jesus' gospel came along, the formal statements of faith also had to grow.

Perhaps. But could another explanation be that we have created an idol of certainty where God envisioned a shrine of mystery?

We say, correctly, that the Bible is our sacred text, our written revelation from God. Unfortunately, thanks to millennia of cumulative misinterpretation, many people assert as non-negotiable a host of stances only vaguely supported by Scripture. In reality, there are many issues on which the Bible gives us clues but no hard, fast answers. Theories of atonement, eschatology, cosmology, and soteriology are all interesting and, I will be the first to say it, worthy of study. But are they worthy of our over-certainty and divisiveness?

Imagine a church that dedicates minimal energy agonizing over speculative issues. Imagine a church that instead pursues the things the New Testament wants us to guard jealously, such as practicing hospitality, sharing our possessions, forgiving those who mistreat us, praying for one another, and pursuing humility. Who wouldn't want to join a church like that!

Isaiah 57:15 tells us the two places where God dwells: in the highest heaven, and in the contrite heart. Regarding doctrinal certitude there is not a mention.

In fact, to complete the journey of faith only three things are really needed: humility, embracing mystery, and gratitude. Humility causes us to acknowledge how little we do know. Embracing mystery makes us aware of how little we *can* know (as St. Augustine said, "If you understand, it is not God.") And finally, we are grateful that God has revealed what we *need* to know, more than enough to equip us for loving Him and our neighbors.

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



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

Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Hitting people on the head is assault, not leadership.

• • • • •

Life is like a grindstone; whether it polishes us
or grinds us down depends on what we are made of.

• • • • •

Both preservation and outreach are essential for a healthy church.

• • • • •

Eternal life does not begin at death, but at the new birth.

• • • • •

Trying to blow out our neighbor's light does not make ours shine brighter.

• • • • •

No one is lonelier than he who loves himself best.

• • • • •

People get lost by trying to find an alternate route for the strait and narrow way.

• • • • •

We are born with a need to be loved and we never outgrow it.

• • • • •

Love will find a way, while indifference will find an excuse.

• • • • •

Like animals, man is a creature of earth; unlike them,
he can become a citizen of heaven.

• • • • •

Anyone can be polite to a man of wealth.

It takes a gentleman to be polite to a poor man.

• • • • •

Maturity begins when concern for others outweighs concern for yourself.

• • • • •

You have not fulfilled every duty unless you have fulfilled that of being pleasant.

• • • • •

One positive proposal usually has more value than 10 negative objections.