



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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2014

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The Rock

Lori Hershberger, Hutchinson, KS

Like the sun that leaves the horizon
And plunges the world into night;
So it seems that my faith has left me
And I am blinded by my sight.
For though I fight and strive to believe,
I only believe what I see;
And fear, not faith, comes welling around
To build up the conflict in me.

So while the night is pressed upon me,
In the dark I learn to trust.
And when my eyes are dim and failing,
I learn that my God is just.
I learn to believe though my eyes cannot see
And my ears are numbed by the hurricane's roar;
And when the wings of faith refuse to hold me,
I learn to creep instead of to soar.

But God in His all merciful love
Has not stilled the storms that assail.
But in His grace has provided a Rock
And though my burdened heart quail.
The Rock is there whether I believe or not;
And to it I ever shall cling.
And this I find is all that I sought,
For the Rock is the Song that Faith will sing!



Making Friends with Money

We know the feeling of having someone charge us too much for something.

Of course, most of us have at some time been victims of poor financial situations of our own making. We learn some of life's lessons the hard way. Someone wisecracked, "There's a sucker born every minute."

We probably all know people who would not think of agreeing to a deal unless the price has been brought as low as possible. They wheedle and grouse, coax and procrastinate until the last possible concession has been extracted, making the cost to them as low as possible. They don't mind if the seller suffers a loss, just so they don't have to part with too much of their precious money. What such a person says to the seller may be quite different from what he tells his friends, "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (Prov. 20:14).

Jesus models a much better way when He is quoted in Luke 16:9, as saying, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." (KJV) Perhaps NIV makes it even clearer: "I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain

friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."

Jesus invites us to make friends with money. I think the following concepts will help us do just that:

- **Money, by itself, is not the problem;** We bring trouble on ourselves because we tend to love money. Money is not the root of all evil—it is the love of money that brings rot into our lives. Our value is not determined by our bank balance. It is shown in what was paid for our redemption. "You are bought with a high price" (1 Cor. 7:23 Luther's rendering)

- **Think of life as a learning experience.** We learn as we go along. Most of us have tried some idea of profit making that didn't work out well. In such cases, the test typically comes before the lesson. Don't despair. Keep trying. Honor God and He will see you through.

- **God does not promise us lots of wealth—just enough.** Our desire for lots of wealth brings us lots of trouble (1 Timothy 6:9). The parable of the rich man in Luke 12:16-21, shows us that he went from using his wealth for his needs and the needs of others, to selfishly making his pile of wealth as

big as he could. When death came he was not ready. Furthermore, he could no longer use his great pile of wealth.

•**Giving is just as important as earning and saving.** God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7). If it hurts when we give, we might try reducing the pain by giving until it stops hurting. Somewhere in this process we learn to let go and face the fact that “our money” isn’t ours anyway. We are only stewards of it. Let us welcome generosity for the joyful abandon that it offers! Let us call it “serving the Lord with gladness!”

•**We honor God by working while giving our worries to God.** When we learn that, we can give our worries to God, we can expect Him to fulfill Jesus’ promise in Matthew 6:33, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” It’s when we claim this promise that we can stop scabbling and scrambling “with all might and main.” We should keep on working, but, at least, we can stop worrying about it.

•**Diligence is a virtue.** “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Eccl. 9:10). God wants us to find fulfillment in life. He who does not provide for the needs of his own household, “has denied the faith and is worse than infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8). Children of the Kingdom must not be so heavenly minded that they neglect earthly responsibilities.

•**We make friends with money by observing the Golden Rule.** That’s not only simply profound; it is also profoundly simple. It works! When making a deal, try to think of what might be going through the other fellow’s mind. Of course, we don’t know, but it helps to try to understand how it might feel to him so we know what to do and say. We can still take a stand where we decide that we should. But we must never enjoy making things hard for the other person.

So the question remains, *How shall we make friends with money?* I have had the satisfaction of doing business with people who modeled the idea expressed in this axiom: “Let us make a deal that is good for both of us.” Business is an excellent place to practice the Golden Rule.

My neighbor of some years ago, Dean Dellenbach, had a reputation of not charging enough for his labor in plumbing. In fact, he quite often had people pay him more than he asked for. One explanation Dean gave for his methods of charging was semi-serious: “I don’t want anyone to look in my casket and say, “There’s that fellow that charged me too much.””

Surely there’s a lot to be emulated in a life that fully trusts God, with a sincere desire to give the neighbor a fair deal and to contribute generously to the cause of Christ. Let the journey of fairness and joy begin. All Aboard!

—PLM 

Re: “Mealtimes That Bless,” Oct. 2013.

It rejoiced our hearts to see this editorial. You referred to your dad. It seemed as though you were talking about my dad, too.


Should “time” and “worldly ways” change good manners and courtesy? Respect for one another and not just thinking of self? We were taught to pass the dishes one to another and not just set them down or push them along. We believe learning patience with one another and to wait one for the other at the table will teach a measure of good behavior for church services, too.

Individualism is rampant today. Are

we planting seeds of this by lack of good table manners or good courtesy elsewhere? Can we not see that more and more disorder will result from lack of good manners at the table? With time, the practice of the family sitting at the table in godly fear and even reverence, could be lost. When everyone eats, more or less as he wills, or on the run, then Satan will have won another battle in the disruption of Christian practices.

I wish you God’s blessing and direction in the ongoing work.

When can we have a re-run of “Mealtimes That Bless”?

Galen S. Yoder, Pelkie, MI 

The Use of the Lot in Ordination

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

The use of the lot in making a choice between two brothers was used by our Lord’s Apostles. It was accomplished in the Upper Room in Jerusalem prior to Pentecost. It was preceded by declaration of Scripture and prayer in their assembly.

Using the lot was a reasonable way to make a choice between two

qualified Christian brothers. The teaching of Christ does not prescribe this way to ordain leaders of the church. It could also be noted that it was before the pouring out of God’s Spirit upon all flesh at Pentecost. On the other hand, the Apostles do not give any word of correction about the use of the lot, nor give any word that it was either used or not used again

in the apostolic era.

The seven deacons chosen in Acts 6, was by *appointment*. We generally refer to them as being ordained, something the text does not say. Matthias was ordained. (Acts 1:22) But the seven deacons were appointed. (Acts 6:3). The difference is minimal. The laying on of hands and prayer by the apostles reasonably assures a solemn charge equivalent to ordination.

The text of Acts 6:1-6, carries the endorsement of apostolic procedure and precedent, with five observations.

It was in the era of the Holy Spirit.

It was in response to the multitude of the disciples.

They were not hand picked by the leadership.

The brotherhood approach was a “together” exercise.

It is possible that it was a process needing some time, because the apostles wanted their time for prayer and preaching.

The results are also noteworthy:

v. 7a It enhanced the word of God and spiritual growth.

v. 7b It was conducive to numerical growth.

v. 7c It was so attractive, “a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith.” They gave up their leadership positions for the more personal experience of brotherhood!

(We Gentile preachers seldom mention this. We tend to see the many Jewish leaders that had stony hearts and closed minds.)

v. 8 It was endorsed by God in that He gave Stephen great faith toward God and great power in wonders and miracles, and in great preaching by which he soon was martyred by the fearsome act of stoning.

Some have suggested that ordaining Matthias was a mistake, that Saul (Paul) was God’s intended man. They cite the fact that Matthias is never mentioned again in Scripture. Well, the other five deacons are likewise not in the later biblical record. Stephen and Philip did some traveling and preaching.

Similarly today, many ordained men are not notable speakers and writers. Now, even as then, all can and do contribute by their faithfulness, being useful and significant by using their gifts of service and ministry. While they have been productively used, they are not widely known.

The use of the lot in the Old Testament

King Saul was impetuous. He was sure sin was lurking in their midst. He called for the use of the lot twice in 1 Samuel 14. His overall impulsiveness could be noted 10 times in this chapter. He called for the use of the lot to establish fact. It

worked.

The Bible says, “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord” (Proverbs 16:23). It can be used to recognize God’s will.

Joshua used the lot to discover who had sinned and thus caused Israel’s terrible defeat at Ai. Joshua and the elders entered into prayer and fasting prior to using the lot. (Judges 7:6-9).

“The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty” (Proverbs 18:18). It is a recognition of man’s dilemma being settled aside from personal choice.

The use of the lot today

By itself alone, voting can cause contentions. Voting can be considered unequal, along with unfair advantage. Voting could be used as a way to choose leadership. But we much prefer the use of the lot.

In one of our churches, a family was asked to go to a place for voluntary service. Some people in this small church said, “We really can’t do without them.” Some thought they should go and some felt it was too much loss to their fellowship.

What did the family themselves say? They said they were equally willing to go or to stay. Someone suggested they would use the lot to decide. At a Wednesday evening Bible study/prayer meeting, they

used the lot in a rather low-key manner.

The lot indicated that they should go. At the meeting, the gathered church was in agreement to use the lot. They studied God’s Word and prayed. The lot gave a peaceable decision. It brought a clear choice by God. It ended protracted discussion of whether they should go or stay and also a probable protracted discussion and speculation about either choice.

I remember some 50 years of ordinations by lot. The loving and mighty hand of God has most times been very evident. To be honest, one must allow that ordination by lot has also brought seeming failure—or at least serious questions. Those could usually be traced to human error outside of either biblical guidelines or church precedent.

Some persons will say, “Why did God choose such a person?” Will anyone ask the more basic question, “Why did a number of people nominate a person they either didn’t know or one who had shortcomings, or was not sufficiently proven, and nominated him anyway?” This doesn’t eliminate the church leaders’ responsibility for interviewing and making due investigation of those nominated. If, when finding serious flaws, some recommend letting such go through the process of drawing

the lot and ordination, deciding thus to leave the choice to God. Removal from nomination is a serious matter, but removal from the office is many times more serious and difficult.

By far, most ordinations known and experienced by this writer were attended by the hand of God reaching down and choosing the man who proved himself as the man for the time and place of his ordination. Actually, it has been amazing to see the powerful grace of God at work, prior to the selection, during the time of the ordination, and later to see the man fulfilling his calling.

Theoretically, the use of the lot should be between persons equally qualified. This is not a matter to be decided by those being nominated. Being qualified by rather clear and specific qualifications in the Bible should be of great interest, and followed by lay members. Church leaders who conduct the interviews are not so much looking at “equally qualified,” but nothing short of “sufficiently qualified.” We are aware of God’s words to the prophet Samuel, “Look not on his countenance (good looks), or on the height of his stature (impressive bearing): because I have refused him. For the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel

16:7).

Excesses of the lot

Sometimes the preceding verse has been given with the assumption that God seeks a weakling, who is poor in reading, ‘riting and ‘rithmetic (the colonial 3 R’s), and who does not take personal grooming seriously. It is true that God can make something out of nothing, but it is also true that God limits Himself to use what we have, are, or bring to Him. The tendencies before ordination have a way of continuing afterward.

Surprise! Hear the Word of the Lord! God directed Samuel to anoint David. The Bible says, “he was ruddy, (attractively tanned, an outdoor man), and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to” (1 Samuel 16:12). The academic preparation of the mind and with one’s priorities right can also be present in a person who is well-groomed and handsome in appearance as was David. His life wasn’t perfect, but he contributed greatly in music, writing, and national leadership as a man of God. He exhibited the marks of humility, as he gave God credit for his successes.

It is important for us to know the person whom we nominate. We shouldn’t assume that because he receives communion, he should be approved for ordination. The

qualifications given by Paul to Timothy and to Titus assume that some could be in the church who do not meet the list of qualifications. We hear it said, “Who could possibly be perfect enough to fulfill *all* these *all* the time?” Perhaps none. Ordained men freely concur.

But if someone flaunts these matters or oversteps in daily life, such an one can be borne in his weaknesses as a brother in the church and still be accepted to share in communion. However, he needs to improve and amend his life before being considered for church leadership. If one sets himself against these specifics given to Timothy and Titus, then it is especially important that he is not allowed to share the lot.

Here are a few time-tested warnings:

Frequent bickering between husband and wife is out of place. Such should not be considered for the ministry. They are already in violation of a foundational covenant, their marriage.

A man who is dogmatic about his views on church administration and Bible doctrine and against the pastoral team is not suited to church leadership.

A man who is greedy and grasping for financial gain and pursues it in unethical ways cannot be expected

to be a worthy servant of the Church. (Many successful businessmen have been likewise successful in church administration and preaching.)

The shepherd principle is sadly lacking in each of these circumstances. The laying on of hands and giving solemn charges does not sanitize these things from the heart of man.

Two men were in the lot. Each represented the two sides of the church. Right after the one was chosen and was given the charge, he was invited to express himself to the congregation. He said, “You know how I have always been and that is how I will continue to be.” The feeling that was provoked by that statement can still be felt today, some 40 years later. It didn’t feel right, sound right, nor could it be carried out right. He was removed from office after only a few years.

Current use of the lot

We have gone from taking the nominations at a Sunday morning service and having the ordination that same evening to having pre-ordination services Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Then we have taken the voice of the church for nominations on Friday evening and interviewed the group nominated on Saturday. The ordination is held the next day, on Sunday evening. Considering the seriousness of he

occasion, events are moving along very rapidly.

There has been some discussion whether three days is enough time for lay men's deliberation for casting their vote. Actually, it usually is just one day, because the typical speaker doesn't get to the pastoral specifics until Thursday evening.

One congregation has opted instead to have the home ministers do the teaching by six Sunday morning sermons on ordination dynamics and pastor qualifications, using assigned topics or a chapter from the Pastoral Epistles. These messages are given several months prior to the scheduled ordination. The nominations are taken after a brief message on the Wednesday evening service three days prior to the Sunday evening ordination. The interviews are done on the intervening weekday evenings. This allows more time to come to an appropriate decision. Hindsight gives this plan a good recommendation for the overall effect of congregational decision making.

A word about the use of terms: This article has used the term lay member voting for nomination. The voting is not actually for one to share in the lot. Those who received the required number of votes for nomination are not in the lot until

after they have been approved in the interview and investigation process. If we give names at the service where voting was done and say, "These men are in the lot," why have interviews following?

If one withdraws himself from nomination or one is advised to withdraw by ministerial counsel, the person is withdrawn from being *nominated*, not *from the lot*. We do not feel this is being overly tedious, nor a mere play on words. Experience has shown this distinction and use of terms to be very important.

We feel it is appropriate for openness with the congregation at every step in the process, including an announcement of who has been nominated at the nomination service. We specifically say to the congregation, that the lot is not formed until such who were nominated have been approved by ministerial counsel based on favorable interviews.

We are not interested in making the ordination procedure either difficult or tedious. Ordinations in our churches have been frequent. It is a time of solemnity, even more so than baptism or marriage. It is a calling with a lifetime of responsibility. It carries a solemn charge of accountability involving possible eternal destiny of souls,

unlike any other calling in life. It is a very emotional experience for those nominated. It is also true for the whole congregation. Will he be an effective speaker? Will he work well with the rest of the ministerial team? Will he represent our congregation favorably out there? Will he....?

The valuable contribution of women

And now a word to the women in the church. A few sisters in the church have felt that they were the reason their husband was not nominated, or not in the lot, or was not chosen. We aren't saying such a thing is not possible, but it does not seem typical. Don't allow your sensitivity to be a cause for self-condemnation.

A man's perfect wife does not qualify him for the ministerial charge. But seldom does a man's wife make him unfit for being a pastor. However, there are a few things a pastor's wife should consider so she will not lessen her husband's effectiveness. Paul to Timothy writes, "Even so must the wives be grave (honorable), not slanderers, sober (disciplined, moderate), faithful in all things" (1 Timothy 2:11). Your *words*, sisters, are near the top of the list for feminine poise. You are measured and evaluated by your *words* and *how you dress*, above all else. Both

are *primary expressions* of who you are and whose you are.

Occasionally, a pastor's wife is so pushy in her speech among women that the sisters in the church resent her continual "important ideas" and her insistent talk as to the only right way to do things. Words are an index of the soul. Jesus simply said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). Words intended for control greatly reduce a woman's contribution to church life.

Summary:

The use of the lot is not a lottery. Once when I was in the lot and there were only two of us, my aunt said, "With just two in the lot, there is a 50-50 chance that you will be chosen." My reply: "God chooses only by 100%." (I was not chosen on that occasion.).

Occasionally an ordination takes place without using the lot, since only one brother received the minimal number of votes for nomination.

Multiple persons nominated should not be thought of as indicating disunity in the church. Much more, it should bless us with the thought of a variety of individuals who would be qualified for the office. Blessed is the church who has fit men for leadership at any given time.

Those not chosen should not feel rejected by God or man. God does

the choosing. We are all chosen of God in Christ. Our significance is in Christ, not in any office or work.

Our approach to considering Bible qualifications, the leading of the Holy Spirit, the nomination process, and the use of the lot, if necessary, is a joyful, peaceful, restful way to accomplish an ordination.

If a person would on his own choose to be ordained, he could by the same token, also choose to discontinue as a pastor for any reason, and at any time, by his own choice.


The qualifications are a standard which men work toward in their lives. Working against those qualifications in word or deed may disqualify one to becoming chosen as a minister, even if he is still a communicant member of the church.

An ordination should be seen as a time of soul searching, of being right with God and men. It could be a revival experience for each church member personally.

An ordination should be seen as a time of special thanksgiving. We should remember to thank God for the church of Christ. We should enter into specific thanksgiving for our own congregation. We give thanks for faithful church members, the families, the children, and young people. We give thanks for the

older members and the aged who have contributed in a great measure through two or three generations of church life. We should thank God for men and women of various church boards and committees. Thank God for diligent and capable Sunday School teachers. Then we also remember to thank God for the men currently leading the flock.

The ordination time period, for the first time it is given as a possibility of our congregation's future, until it is finally accomplished, should be a time of *rest*. We rest in faith toward God and His faithfulness to us. God knows what is best. It is a time of *peace*. Just to know God loves us and will do what is for our good is a peaceable experience. It is a time of *joy*. We rejoice in God's timing, His choices, His sufficient grace.

The Bottom Line is that an ordination should bless the congregation with a heavenly benediction. It brings *rest* in Jesus Christ, *peace* with God and our fellowman, *joy* in partnering with fellow church members, and gives the lovely fruit of *resignation*. By it we join with our entire congregation with the prayer words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Thy kingdom come, They will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Amen, and Amen! 

A Sacred Moment

Simon Schorck, Catlett, VA

An ordination was scheduled for Faith Mission Fellowship. Five brethren were chosen by the congregation to share in the lot. One of the five would be called by God and the Church to become part of the ministry team. Having previous acquaintance with the families of the candidates and good memories of working with Bishop Ivan Beachy in various church activities, I wanted to attend. Marvin and Mildred Yoder's invitation to ride along made it even more appealing to attend.

We arrived early. The usher asked if I was by myself, meaning Polly wasn't along. That was the case. I didn't immediately mention that Uncle Arthur (arthritis) and my constant companion, "Nuppy" (peripheral neuropathy) were with me. He ushered me up the aisle to seat me on an empty chair on the platform with the ministers. Being concerned about mounting the several steps without a balancing cane, I mentioned my concern to the usher. He kindly let me take a chair in the aisle.

Brother Ivan opened the service by quoting Psalm 90:1, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." After some spirited singing, Brother Ken Miller took us to appropriate Scriptures and comments

for the occasion. Then came the sacred moments of arranging five hymn books with one of them containing the call. One minister was called upon to take the five books to the side room and place the note with the call written on it in one of the books. Another minister was then chosen to bring the five books and place them in one stack on the table with the spines facing the congregation. The next move was for someone to arrange the five books on the table. Ivan noticed my presence and asked me to come and place the books—three in the front and two in the back, spine facing the audience. What an awesome task! With a thought prayer to the Lord, and Arthur and Nuppy behaving well enough, I carefully stepped to the table to arrange the five books. With a slight pause for a praying something like, *Lord, this is a sacred moment; direct my hands.* In that instant, with a note of assurance I pushed the top book forward to my left, the second to my right, and the other three in the front row. Maybe it was a touch of imagination, but that first book on the back left really seemed to be special.

Then came the prayerful awaiting the sacred moment. Following the audible prayer, the congregation solemnly sang, "Tread softly, tread softly, He


bids us draw near.” Then, on by one, the brethren picked up a book. One by one, Brother Ivan opened the first four books and handed each one back. He opened the last book held by Steven Byers. There was the call. After the charge was given, Steven committed himself to God, the Church, and the ministry team to be used in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.” As the service progressed, I thought of another truth in Psalms. “For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations” (Ps. 100:5). Ah! The Lord has been our dwelling place in all generations and His truth endures to all future generations. The Psalmist also declares, “We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praise of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done... That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments (Ps. 78:6-7).

Lord, thank You for those in our past who have made You their dwelling place in their generation. Thank You that your truth endures through the foggy generation of deception to all

generations to come. Thank You for these young men who are willing to teach your truth to this generation and the ones yet to be born. Empower them by your Spirit to clearly proclaim the truth of your Word in this “untoward generation” (Acts 2:40). Bless Brother Steven and his four brethren practicing your truth in their generation—each in whatever way You lead them.

We are the Church of Christ. We live in anticipation of the fulfilling of the promise: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him” (Rev. 1:7). In His earthly ministry Jesus left us with a sobering question, “However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8 NAS). I’m convinced that there will be a faithful remnant when Christ returns, whether it is today or years away. I’m thankful for the five men and their wives who are waiting for Christ’s return and are committed to faithfulness in this generation. Can you join them in similar faithfulness as that generation to come, even the children which shall be born, who shall rise to declare the truth of God to their children?

Perhaps you haven’t given much thought to how important it is to be faithful in passing on God’s truth to the generation following. Could this become a sacred moment in your life by making a sincere commitment from your heart to be faithful in declaring God’s truth in your generation? 

marriages

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

King-Stoltzfus

Bro. Shane Eugene, son of Mahlon and Elsie King, New Holland, PA, and Sis. Myrna Renae, daughter of Reuben and Sadie Stoltzfus, Morgantown, PA, at Conestoga Mennonite Church for Summitview Christian Church, New Holland, PA, on April 12, 2014, by Dave Stoltzfus.

Miller-Bernik

Bro. Josh, son of Gerald and Rachel Miller, Millersburg, OH, and Sis. Olya, daughter of Victor and Sharon Bernik, Ukraine, at Sharon Mennonite for Grace Haven Fellowship, Millersburg, OH, on April 12, 2014, by David Yoder.

Miller-Peachey

Bro. Michael, son of James and Rose Miller, Minerva, OH, and Sis. Krista, daughter of David and Ruth Peachey, Reedsville, PA, at Calvary Bible Church, Lewistown, PA for Pleasant View A.M. Church on August 31, 2013, by David Peachey.

Nolt-Stoltzfus

Bro. Brandon, son of Winfred and Jewel Nolt, Lititz, PA, and Sis. Rachele, daughter of Amos and Ann Stoltzfus, Gap, PA, at Ridgeview Mennonite Church for Lincoln Mennonite Church by Duane Weber.

Stoll-Wagler

Bro. Jason, son of Fred and Kathy Stoll, Montgomery, IN, and Sis. Amanda, daughter of Ron and Kathryn Wagler, Cross Hill, SC, at Mt. Zion Baptist Church for Cross Hill Mennonite Church on April 12, 2014, by Virgil Wagler.

Yoder-Ropp

Bro. Jonathon, son of Tim and Verna Yoder, Litchfield, KY, and Sis. Donita, daughter of Laverne and Elaine Ropp, Monkton, ON, at Nazarene church for Fellowship Haven A.M. Church, on April 11, 2014, by Laverne Ropp.

cradle roll

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

Beiler, Vincent and Lydia (Croutch), Lancaster, PA, third child (one dau. deceased), first living dau., Adelyne Grace, Feb. 6, 2014.

Herschberger, Daniel and Ruth (Beiler), Kinzers, PA, third child, second dau., Kendra Grace, March 29, 2014.

Hostetler, Bruce and Amber (Troyer), London, OH, third child, second son, Simon Joel, May 3, 2014.

Hostetler, Jonathan and Linda (Stoltzfus), Plain City, OH, fifth child, third, dau., Natalie Grace, Sept. 24, 2013.

Jantzi, Kenneth and Andrea (Ropp), Poole, ON, third child, second son, Karl Andrew, May 1, 2014.

Knepp, Norman and Debora (Schmidt), Jackson, OH, second child first son, Austin Matthew, March 26, 2014.

Mast, Joseph and Anita (Miller), Crossville, TN, (stationed at El Cerrito, Mexico), third child, second son, Alex Raphael, April 1, 2014.

Miller, Mark and Debra (Coblentz), Newcomerstown, OH, second child, first son, Ben Isaiah, Jan. 20, 2014.

Miller, Nathaniel and Rhoda (Troyer) Sugarcreek, OH, fifth child, third dau., Charity Nicole, April 12, 2014.

Miller, Raymond and Darlene (Wagler), Paris, TN, fifth child, third son, Erick Ray, May 14, 2014.

Otto, Jeremy and Lynette (Gingerich), Crossville, TN, first child and dau., Brianna Lin, April 15, 2014.

Otto, Marcus and Nancy (Miller), Crossville, TN, third child, second dau., Allison Nicole, May 8, 2014.

Raber, Dennis and Elizabeth (Hochstetler), Walhonding, OH, seventh child, fourth son, Timothy, Jan. 30, 2014.

Stoltzfus, Abner and Marlene (Stoltzfus), Berazankya, Ukraine, fifth child and dau., Katelyn Hope, April 23, 2014.

Stoltzfus, Andrew and Keturah (Miller), Advance, MO, first child and son, Chadwick Bruce, May 4, 2014.

Stoltzfus, Lavon and Missy (Troyer), Dundee, OH, third child, second son, Silas Adriel, May 27, 2014.

Stutzman, Joseph and Ethel (Eichorn) Plain City, OH, first child and son, Damin Cole, Jan. 17, 2014.

Wagler, Matt and Erma Jean (Miller), Odon, IN, fourth child, second son, Ashton Dale, May 11, 2014.

Yoder, Aaron and Karla (Miller), Jackson, OH, seventh child, fourth son, Seth, March 18, 2014.

Yoder, Ivan and Cindy (Mast), Sugarcreek, OH, fifth child, fourth dau., Treva, March 29, 2013.

Yoder, Marlin and Anna (Raber), on assignment at Nakuru, Kenya (Bastrop, TX), sixth child, fifth dau., Abigail Kay, April 7, 2014.

Zook, Kevin and Jennifer (Weaver), Burgettstown, PA, first child and son, Garrett Cole, May 20, 2014.



ordinations


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

Bro. Melvin Beiler, 55, was ordained as minister at Salem County Mennonite Church, Bridgeton, NJ, on Feb. 23, 2014. Preordination messages were given by Tim Yoder, Vanleer, TN. The charge was given by Lee Stoltzfus, assisted by Leroy Lapp and Dave Stoltzfus. The lot was shared with Amos Lee Stoltzfus.

Bro. Steven Byers, 35, of Stanardsville, VA, was ordained as minister on May 11, 2014, at Faith Mission Fellowship. The charge was given by Ivan Beachy, assisted by Lamar Hochstetler, Aroda, VA, and Simon Schrock, Stuarts Draft, VA. Others in the lot were Durlin Beachy, Jonathan Martin, Ivan Peachey, and Maynard Swarey.

Bro. Jonathan Hostetler, 38, of Plain City, OH, was ordained as minister at Canaan A.M. Church on Nov. 10, 2013. Preordination messages were given by Ernest Hochstetler, Abbeville, SC. Also in the lot were Carl Miller and Matthew Yutzy.

Bro. Tim R. Miller, 41, of Millersburg, OH, was ordained as minister at Crosspointe Mennonite Church, Baltic, OH, on March 9, 2014. The charge was given by James Beachy, assisted by Paul Leroy Miller and Mark Yoder. Matthew Troyer was also in the lot.

Bro. Dave Lapp, 40, New Holland, PA, was ordained deacon at Summitview Christian Church, New Holland, on March 30, 2014. Pre-ordination messages were given by George Stoltzfus. The charge was given by Dave Stoltzfus, assisted by Leroy Lapp, and Lee Stoltzfus. Abby Fisher, Keith Mast, and John Lapp were also in the lot. 

A mediocre teacher tells.

A good teacher explains.

A superior teacher demonstrates.

A great teacher inspires.

obituary


Gingerich, Lavina (Herschberger), 70, of Mtn. View, Arkansas, died at her home on May 6, 2014. She was born Dec. 13, 1943, at Goshen, Indiana, daughter of the late Eli B. and Katie (Bontrager) Herschberger.

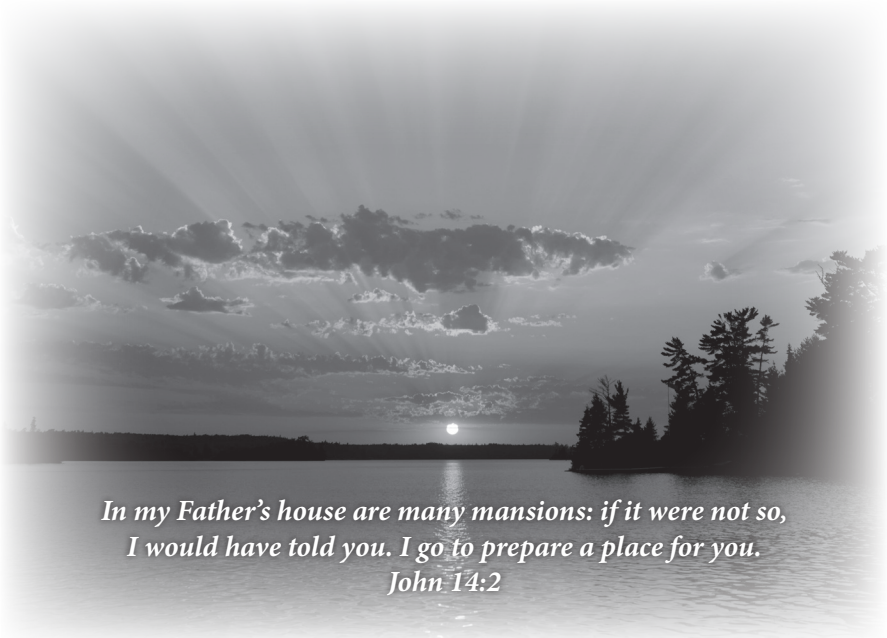
She was a member of Shady Lawn Mennonite Church.

On March 14, 1964, she was married to Elmer Gingerich at the Woodlawn Church in Goshen, Indiana. She was an excellent lifelong homemaker, and mother to her children. Surviving are her husband, Elmer, and their six children: Kristine, Mtn. View, AR; Lisa, married to James Schlabach, Shreve, OH; Rachel, Mtn. View;

Mark, Barnesville, OH; Carl, married to Joy (Kratzer), Mtn. View; Bethany, married to Christopher Eicher, Antrim, OH; and 15 grandchildren. Also surviving are her Herschberger siblings: Esther, married to Elmer Bontrager, Middlebury, IN; Fannie, married to Chris Miller (deceased), Montezuma, GA; Henry, married to Susie (Miller), LaGrange, IN, and Daniel, married to Orpha (Miller).

She was preceded in death by one week, by one brother-in-law.

The funeral was held at Arbanna Baptist Church, Mtn. View on May 9, with local ministers serving. Burial was in the church cemetery. 



*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so,
I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
John 14:2*

The Call That Came

A Tribute to Lavina (Herschberger) Gingerich (1943-2014)

By her children

The call that came around, Mom,
Those words that sent us spinning;
They said you passed away, Mom,
Your time in Heav'n beginning.

Your busy hands are still, Mom,
Those hands that did so much.
The hands that blessed the world, Mom,
We won't forget their touch.

Those hands that wrote us letters, with perfect, fluid writing,
The hands that tended gardens and taught that it's exciting—
With little plots we called our own, our childish hearts delighting.
Hands with knotted fingers worn, from quilting quilts for others,
Hands whose skin would crease when pinched—unlike other mothers.

Your *feet* have ceased their walk, Mom,
From going many places.
You traveled many miles, Mom,
And brightened many faces.

Feet that often traveled bare, or walked in comfy slippers,
Feet that tromped along in boots, to squash blackberry pricklers.
Feet that smashed the cans down flat, to fit more in the trash,
Feet that walked through chicken house, helping earn more cash.

Your *voice* has now been silenced, Mom,
Your last words have been spoken.
The mem'ry of it whispers, Mom.
Although our hearts are broken.

The voice that said, "You play a game, and I will wash the dishes."
The voice that said, "Let's sleep outside!" one of your many wishes.
"A cabin down beside the bluff!" the voice would often hark,
"If we would do a bit of work, we'd have a little park!"
The alto voice which sang so clearly from your Sunday seat.
The voice that never failed to ask us, "What'd you have to eat?"

You were so *creative*, Mom,
That you inspired *us*.
Mem'ries made for us, Mom,
Were made without a fuss.

You always loved to eat outside—the river, park, or yard.
When power would go off at times, you made it fun, not hard.
You liked to go on fishing trips, and watch us from your chair.
On Saturday you let us eat our sack lunch almost anywhere.
You taught us switching rooms and beds, and re-arranging stuff
Was much more fun than letting weekly cleaning be enough!

Your *faith* has not been silenced, Mom,
It will live on and on.
You lived it out in actions, Mom,
It speaks, though you are gone.

You showed us what you held most dear with quiet, simple acts,
By visiting the elderly and letters mailed in stacks!
You took the time to talk to folks who chanced to meet in town,
Your listening ear, your friendly smile could change a worried frown!

You showed us where to take our needs—the place for every care.
New shoes, a cough, a crisis—all were solved with prayer!
You showed us peace in illness with a quiet, simple trust,
Acceptance, though it may be hard, if walk this path you must.

You didn't make much fuss, Mom,
This prob'ly seems too much.
But mem'ries flood our minds, Mom.
More than pen can touch.

The simple always better—wildflower, not a rose,
A bowl of soup or sandwich would be the thing you chose.
Homemade card, or handmade gift, make do with what is here,
Don't spend a bunch of money—you made your wishes clear.

You made mistakes we know, Mom,
You never claimed perfection.
"I'm sorry," was said quickly, Mom,
When things would need correction.

Home will never be the same, without your special touch,
Nor things get done as thoroughly, we surely know that much!
To all of you who lent a hand, and by our sides have sat,
We promise you no Thank You card—you know that Mom did that!



The May, 2014, issue of *The Sword and Trumpet* has an article by the late John C. Wenger, with an introduction by the late Harold S. Bender. Bender was an outstanding historian, scholar, and teacher of his generation. J. C. Wenger is the author of the book, entitled, *Separated Unto God*. This 350-page book is available from Sword and Trumpet for \$12.95. This article was first presented as a series of chapel talks in March, 1943, and later that year was made available in written form.

The article is written from the perspective of a respected church leader who was not only well-versed in the Scriptures, but also very knowledgeable in Anabaptist and non-Anabaptist church history. But his motive is not to display his superior insights, but to appeal to the student population who seem to have been asking some of the questions that we hear coming from young people today. From my perspective it is not apparent that many Mennonite young people in 1943 were receptive to this teaching.

Another article in the same issue, written by Harold S. Martin, is helpful in explaining the basic principles of conformity to the way of Christ in a

social climate that seems indifferent to a way of life that is following a pattern different from the world. I wish that every serious-minded young person in our circles would somehow find time to read these two articles. Again, that is the May issue of *The Sword and Trumpet*.

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We do well to remember that jewelry (the wearing of gold and ornamental fixing of the hair) does not contribute to beauty of character. 1 Cor. 9:19-22 expresses Paul's heartfelt desire to make the Gospel attractive to people with a variety of religious and cultural practices. His feelings are summarized by the expression, "I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some" (22b).

The burden and fervor that Paul felt and lived must not be discredited. Other Scriptures, including some that Paul wrote, add meaning to this passage. Becoming "all things to all men" does not mean practicing sin to rescue persons from sin. It cannot mean that heathen or uncivilized practices may be imitated in order to win people to Christ. We believe that Paul's lifestyle did not compromise Christian principles.

When Jim Elliott, Nate Saint, and others made contact with the Auca Indians in Ecuador in the mid-50's, wearing clothes was not part of these Indians' lifestyle. For those who have since become Christians this has changed. For missionaries to have imitated them would have been unthinkable. Modern western culture includes various artificial fixtures of jewelry, unbecoming hairstyles and inappropriate clothing that are a poor imitation of the adornment of Christian character, "which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:4). There are good reasons why we are called to be separated unto God.

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Richard Shank is a local columnist whose recent column about Ed Hammond's leadership style was noteworthy. Dr. Hammond, 70, is retiring as president of Fort Hays (KS) State University. He began this position in 1987. At that time there were 4200 students. During his tenure, enrollment has increased 300%. Eighty percent in the institution's 112-year history have graduated during the 27 years of Dr. Hammond's presidency.

What is unusual is his modesty in light of this unusual success story. He says, "You are only as good as the people around you." Never mind that he came to work at 5 o'clock A.M., and that he seems to need only

five hours of sleep. He says, "I hope to help make the new president so successful that people will forget me within a couple of years." Richard Shank does not think that will happen. (*The Hutchinson News*, May 22)

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As Timothy circled the minivan and listened to the salesman's pitch, he became more and more certain that this was the van for him. He hadn't really planned on buying that day, but having seen the van on the lot while driving by, he decided to stop and take a look. It seemed that while he listened to the salesman and admired the van that his car aged remarkably in just a few minutes.

Timothy had finished paying for their vehicle several years before and they had intended to save money to buy a replacement. But somehow, this had not happened. Reluctantly, he told the salesman that he did not have money for a down payment. But the salesman was extremely helpful. Almost before Timothy knew what had happened, he was the owner of a new minivan. Well, not the sole owner. It would be five years and 60 payments later before he would have a clear title.

A few days later, he called Gary Miller and told him what he had done. He was discouraged. He remembered how tired he had been

making payments on their other vehicle. And now he had obligated himself again.

This story appears in the book by Gary Miller, entitled, *Kingdom Focused Finances*. It is available from Christian Aid Ministries. Phone: 330-893-4828.

The book has 239 pages. It has six sections and 29 chapters. The chapters are fairly short and are a rich combination of basic doctrine, practical application and human experience. The chapter entitled, “The Vehicle Dilemma” includes figures on early and later depreciation of new vehicles. Gary Miller also reminds us of stewardship implications, selecting vehicles for status and prestige, rather than needed service.

To avoid having to buy a vehicle on payments, Gary and his wife put away a given amount per mile driven every month in order to pay cash when a replacement is needed. Gary and Patty Miller and their family live in the Pacific Northwest. He worked in construction in his early life, but now invests his time and energy in writing and helping find sustainable solutions for the poor. The following brethren give this book a strong endorsement: John D. Martin, David Bercot, Simon Schrock, Ernest Hochstetler, Dennis Kline, and Dean Taylor.

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The word, *Ethics* was not in my vocabulary during my growing up years. But I believe my parents tried hard to teach us to do what is right. This includes situations in which it would be easier or perhaps more lucrative to do otherwise. Merle Burkholder in *Stewardship Connections* (May, 2014), gives two instances that illustrate this very well.

One time he tried to help a friend who had purchased a vehicle from a dealership for \$15,000, (The retail book value was \$8,000), with an annual interest rate of over 30%. The owner of the dealership refused to take the car back or modify the loan. Merle was told it was obvious that he knew nothing about the car business. Merle told him that he is a pastor and he does know about ethics, which told him that what he did may have been profitable, but it was surely wrong.

Another incident illustrates a different side of this important issue: A young couple from this church was looking for a reasonably priced home to buy. They heard of a couple who was planning to sell such a property. On a Friday afternoon they met with the seller and reached a mutually-satisfactory agreement purchase price. Over the weekend, many more people became aware of the possible sale

of the property. The owner received more than 20 calls of interested people. One caller offered \$50,000 more than the agreed-upon price. But the owner informed the couple to their great relief that he was keeping their verbal agreement. Sometimes doing what is right costs money. But to do wrong is always unprofitable.

-DLM



Will Allen is the CEO of Growing Power, an urban farming initiative in Detroit, Michigan. His parents were sharecroppers in South Carolina before moving to Maryland. Will was born in 1949 and grew up in Maryland where he gained a reputation as an outstanding high school basketball player. He played college ball at the University of Miami and professionally in the USA and Europe before retiring from basketball in 1977. In 1993, he left a job with Procter and Gamble and his family moved to Detroit where his wife had grown up. They purchased a failing plant nursery, called Growing Power, and a 100-acre farm outside Detroit that his wife's parents owned.

Believing that it is important for people to have access to wholesome food and its production, he has led the way in production and education and facilitation of urban farming. His endeavors have gained national

notice and recognition, and a variety of national awards for his efforts. In addition to the Detroit city farm, they farm 40 acres outside of Detroit and an outreach program in Chicago operated by his daughter. In addition to food production, Will provides extensive opportunity for people to be involved in plant care, food harvesting, and animal husbandry. At the time of their 20-year anniversary last year, the farm included the following:

- **six traditional greenhouses** growing over 15,000 pots of herbs, salad mix, beet greens, arugula, mustards, seedlings, sunflower and radish sprouts, and a host production of six hydroponic systems growing Tilapia, Perch, a variety of herbs and salad greens, and over 50 bins of red wiggler worms;
- **two aquaponics hoop houses** with two independent fish runs and growing beds for additional salad mix and seedlings;
- **seven hoop houses** growing a mixture of salad greens and mushrooms;
- **a worm depository** hoop house;
- **an apiary** with 14 beehives;
- **three poultry hoop houses** with laying hens and ducks;
- **outdoor pens for livestock** including goats and turkeys;
- **a large plot of land** on which is

the first stage of the organization's sophisticated **composting operation**

- **an anaerobic digester** to produce energy from the farm's food waste;

- **a rainwater catchment system;** and

- **a retail store** to sell produce, meat, worm castings, and compost to the community.

Will Allen is a refreshing example of someone who has used his resources to reach out and benefit others. His approach is one where he helps people help themselves, rather than fostering a welfare mentality. Furthermore, while the idea of urban food production is gaining some traction, his projects provide a living, breathing demonstration of its viability. (This information was gleaned from a combination of personal conversation and several on-line sources.)

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Our fellowship of Beachy churches continues to add congregations here and there. The reasons behind this spawning are varied. Some are motivated by overcrowding, some by a desire to reach out, and still others by ideological differences, and in many cases, a combination of these factors. While discussing the genesis of another "Beachy" congregation, a brother wondered how it would be if we would operate

with the understanding that any new congregation would locate at least 50 miles away from its nearest Beachy church neighbor.

While that expectation wouldn't solve all the problems associated with splits, the "50-mile idea" would potentially help people understand whether the motives for establishing a new congregation are significant enough to make it worthwhile to change our physical address. Hence, it could make people more interested in working through their differences in a brotherly fashion. Let's reject the idea that starting a new church is the "easy way" to resolve our differences.

Someone commented about the high incidence of divorce in America something to this effect, "Either God couldn't save those marriages or He wasn't given a chance." Is there something in that astute observation that we can apply to how we relate to each other on a congregational/brotherhood level?

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In the May column, the last two sentences regarding Creation should have read this way: "Do complicated theories about how all this came about distract us from the simplicity of the message of our faith in our Omnipotent, Sovereign God? If so, let's reject them."

—RJM 

Wayfarers All

Anita Yoder, *Teaching in Poland*

Have you read Hebrews 11?" he asked. We were en route to an airport. I was flying trans-Atlantic, and we were discussing how it is to live in various places wondering where home really is.

"Well, yes, I've read Hebrews 11. Why?"

"The people in those lists were wanderers. They kept moving around, following where God told them to go. They didn't settle." He's a hobo, my friend is. He says so himself. He's restless, never settling for easy living and easy answers.

Since that time I've been thinking about journeying, moving on, leaving Point A for Point B. I am finding that the Bible says a lot about it. It recounts many journeys and walks. It must be that life is a journey, a progression through many points, a way to a destination. This can involve moving physically, tangibly moving from place to place on the globe, but more importantly, it should denote spiritual progress and mileage.

"Journey" has been such an overused buzzword, that I'm tired of

using it. ("This experience? Well... it's been a *journey*," they say.) But it IS reality. God keeps nudging His children further, telling them He will guide them with His eye, urging them to lengthen the cords of their tents, and to listen for His voice telling whether to go to the right or the left.

Traveling always carries with it inherent surprise and sometimes apparent disaster. God is unpredictable and we don't know what will be around the next corner. But we've read the last chapter, and we know that the destination is worth the traveling and travailing. Most importantly, we should know the journey is not about us and our comfort and adventure, but about HIM, and His purposes, which are as vast and deep as Himself.

The Jews are acquainted with traveling and pilgrimages. I love the picture in Psalm 84, They are on a pilgrimage, en route to the City. On the way, they pass through the Valley of Weeping. But in their journey, they turn this valley into a place of springs. What was arid and sad, becomes a place of greenery and songs.

Even if we we are all sojourners, transient, never at the same place for long, we can change the terrain through which we travel. Imagine the possibilities.


What if we would choose to change the landscape at whatever place we are? Maybe God's people could change the world one little piece at a time if their hearts were set on pilgrimage, instead of on settling down.

Changing the area around us should mean more than carrying out a landscaping job in the yard. It should include clearing our hearts and taking away the dry twigs. Repentance cleans our souls and makes them soft and fruitful. Grace beautifies a parched place, giving it lushness and life. I have crossed paths with people who left springs behind them. Others seem resigned to live in a perpetual desert. You know which

are the most pleasant fellow travelers.

Ultimately, though, the trip we're taking is not about finding pleasant people to travel with. It's about going somewhere wonderful. And on the way, the reason for pilgrimage is that we are so incredibly amazed with the wonder of our Guide, who He is, and what He promises us at the end of the journey.,

We are never alone. We are not abandoned in a strange desert. He would never lead us to rugged mountains without giving us a way out. He knows our path and our destination, and there is no guide more worthy of our trust.

So, I'm happy to pack my bags and fly to another country and find a new home. I'm en route to another place, and until then, I'll keep traveling; keep looking for ways to make this place fill with springs. 

Even if we don't get all we want, let us be thankful for God's mercy so that we don't get what we deserve.

The New American Religion: The Rise of Sports and the Decline of the Church

Albert Mohler

Super Bowl XLVIII may have been a bust as a football game, but it was a blockbuster as a cultural event. The telecast of the event attracted a record 111.5 million viewers, making it the most-watched television of all time. The record will most likely be eclipsed by the next Super Bowl, and the trajectory shows no signs of dissipating. America takes its sports seriously and Americans take football with the most seriousness of them all.

In a real sense, big-time sports and religion represent America's new civic religion, and football is its central sacrament.

The relationship between sports and religion has always been close, and it has been awkward. The "muscular Christianity" of a century ago has given way to a more recent phenomenon: the massive growth of involvement in sports at the expense of church activities and involvements. About 15 years ago, the late John Cardinal O'Connor, then the Roman Catholic

Archbishop of New York, lamented the fact that Little League Baseball was taking his altar boys away on Sundays.

"Why is it religion that must always accommodate?" asked the Archbishop. "Why must Little League and soccer league games be scheduled on Sunday mornings? Why create that conflict for kids or for their parents? Sports are generally considered good for kids. Church is good for kids." The archbishop blamed secularization for this invasion of Sunday. "This is the constant erosion, the constant secularization of our culture, that I strongly believe to be a serious mistake."

So the Cardinal took on the Little League and the youth soccer league in New York City. And he lost. Nevertheless, he was right about the problem. The massive rise of sports within the culture is a sign and symptom of the secularization of the larger society.

New evidence for this pattern comes from the academics Chris

Beneke and Arthur Remillard in an essay recently published in *The Washington Post*. Writing with Super Bowl XLVIII in view, Beneke and Remillard note: “American sports fans have forged imperishable bonds with the people, places, and moments that define their teams. You might call this attachment religious. But that would be unfair—to sports.”

In other words, the attachment many Americans now have to sports teams far exceeds attachment to religious faith—*any* religious faith.

The two academics then make their case:

“While teams and fans are building powerful, cohesive communities—think Red Sox Nation or the legions of University of Alabama faithful who greet one another with ‘Roll Tide’—churches are losing followers. According to a 2012 survey by researchers at the University of California at Berkeley and Duke University, 20% of Americans ‘claimed they had no religious tradition preference,’ compared with an unaffiliated population of 8% in 1990. Roughly two out of three Americans, a 2012 Pew report noted, are under the impression that religion is losing influence in the country.”

That impression is growing because it is true to the facts. Religion is losing ground and losing influence in American society. The fastest growing segment of the American public in terms of religious identification is the “nones,” designating those who identify with no religious tradition at all. At the same time, a religious dedication to sports has been growing. While correlation does not prove causation, the links between these two developments are haunting.

Interestingly, Beneke, who teaches history at Bentley University, and Remillard, who teaches religious studies at St. Francis University, document the dramatic increase in the percentage of Americans who consider themselves to be sports fans. Just a half-century ago, only three in ten Americans identified themselves as sports fans. Fast forward to 2012 and the percentage is greater than 60%. At the same time, church attendance and other marks of religious activity (especially the number of hours each week devoted to church activities) have fallen sharply. Beneke and Remillard describe the current picture in vivid terms: “Modern sports stadiums function much like

great cathedrals once did, bringing communities together and focusing their collective energy. This summer, the archdiocese of New York is expected to outline plans to close or merge some of its 368 parishes; 26 catholic schools in the archdiocese have ceased operation. By contrast, the city and the state of New Jersey spent hundreds of millions to build new baseball and football stadiums.”

Cardinal O’Connor would no doubt see the pattern and lament it, but a good many evangelical Christians seem both unmoved and unconcerned. The problem is quite ecumenical in this respect. The youth minister or pastor at your local evangelical church is almost sure to tell you the same story. Team sports activities or other forms of organized athletics have taken many evangelical families away from church activities. Many children and adolescents know very little of church involvements, but they and their parents (and often their grandparents, as well) would not miss a scheduled practice, much less a game or competitive event. The same is increasingly true of spectator sports.

Beneke and Remillard conclude by asserting that “When it comes to the passionate attachments that

sustain interest and devotion, it’s time to acknowledge that sports have gained the edge. And they show no sign of relinquishing the lead.”

In the larger society, this is most certainly the case. This dramatic shift could only come to pass if the larger culture has been largely secularized. In this case, secularization does not necessarily mean the disappearance of religious faith, but merely the demotion of religious involvement and identification to a level lower than those granted to sports.

Americans may not know who their god is, but you can be sure most know who their team is. Super Bowl XLIX is scheduled to be played next year in the cathedral known as the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. Let the pilgrimage begin.

I am always glad to hear from readers. Write me at mail@albertmohler.com.

Chris Beneke and Arthur Remillard, “Is Religion Losing Ground to Sports?,” *The Washington Post*, Friday, January 31, 2104.

[Albert Mohler leads a national Baptist organization. This article was submitted for publication by Chester Weaver, LaGrange, IN. Used by permission.]



Hospital Visitation and More Visitors

Floyd Stoltzfus, Belize

It is time to leave for our weekly hospital visits. We open the gate of the mission property. A tall, young man, probably in his 30's, appears. He begs for money from Miss Nancy, who refuses and sends him to me. "So what do you need money for?" I ask.

"Just a 'lee' \$8 to pay for the passage by bus to Teakettle," (a village some 55 miles southwest) the man states.

I tell him, "Look, I am much older than you are. You should be out there working. You are tall and strong." He keeps on. I know it is not wise to hand out money to a man who carries the marks of a sinful lifestyle indicated in his eyes, his demeanor, and his talk. We take him along in our van several blocks down the road to another house. We offer him Jesus and give him some Gospel tracts.

We arrive at the government hospital 15 minutes later. Then the real visitation begins. When we appear at the front desk, no questions are asked. They know us. The mission personnel have been visiting this hospital for many years.

We pass out Christian literature in English and Spanish in the hallways and nurse's station to secretaries, nurses, security guards, doctors, cleaning ladies, visitors and patients. The people are generally cordial. Hardly anyone refuses Christian literature. Many times it is received with a hearty, "Thank you!"

The patients are the key focus of this ministry. We stop to sing at four different hallways. After three songs in each section, we visit and pass out literature to visitors and to those lying in hospital beds. There is no air conditioning in these wards. Most times the screenless windows are open with a pleasant breeze blowing in. The rooms are generally tidy.


We often pray with people and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with them. It is not uncommon to find one that is ready to receive the Lord Jesus and to get right with God.

Nearly every week we visit young men who have been wounded by gunshot in gang quarrels and fights. Some of these young fellows stay in the hospital for weeks. The country

of Belize (especially Belize City) has a high crime rate. Here are several examples: “Anthony” suffered much from his gunshots. “Marlon” was beaten and wounded. “Cannon,” a youth from Teakettle, was shot. While lying in his hospital bed, he became very interested in studying the Old Testament tabernacle. “Jared” was shot and chained to his wheelchair (or bed) and will be incarcerated when he is released from the hospital. Another youth was shot in the neck, I shared with him how close he may have been to entering eternity and the importance of getting right with God and living for Jesus while he’s young. “Marcus” was also shot and listened intently while hearing some bits and pieces of the Gospel story. We gave him a Spanish Bible. He was tied with a chain to his bed which means he is under arrest and will be going to prison. What a future! “Dehaun” was in a hospital bed for weeks suffering from a gunshot wound in his neck and left leg. He wanted to receive the Lord and become a believer.

Meet “Leon,” a former student of Miss Nancy many years ago at Hattieville. Leon and his wife had a fallout. He called his wife from a graveyard in Belize City and told her he is planning to end it all. His wife quickly called some friends. They rushed to the graveyard and found him. He had taken some

acidic poison, but was still alive. They rushed him to the hospital. Later, he wept and deeply regretted what he had done. His wife came to visit him. On one of our mission hospital visits, Leon seemed ready to become a Christian. He invited the Lord into his heart. He asked for a Bible. Leon is presently living with his mother less than a mile from the Haynes Street mission. He still suffers from the self-imposed episode. We visit him occasionally. It is a wonderful opportunity to sing, read the Bible, and pray with him. We return home tired and hungry, but feel extremely blessed and rewarded.

As we enter the gate, another visitor comes to talk with Miss Nancy. He is here to discuss making arrangements to pay for a loan from her. “Scot” follows Miss Nancy up the stairway. It is dark. Miss Nancy sets her purse down on the concrete slab by her feet while fumbling through her keys to open the door. Slyly, Scot reaches into her open purse and takes her wallet without Miss Nancy seeing it. He tells her he needs first to go and talk with someone, but will be back. However, Nancy’s keen sense of intuition tells her that something is wrong. She checks and finds that her wallet is gone. Scot was probably disappointed that he found only \$15 (\$7.50 US). Scot has not returned since, but Miss Nancy keeps on praying for him. 

Making Memories

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

According to the dictionary, memories are the faculty by which the mind stores and remembers information, or is something remembered from the past. As we grow older those memories from the past become more intense, detailed and precious. I have been reminded so vividly this spring of that truth. Mel and I celebrated our 50th anniversary and we reminisced on God's goodness to us in these years. Our marriage was not without struggles, disappointments and pain, however, it is the happy times we remember most and these fill us with joy.

Lavina Gingerich was a dear friend of mine. Elmer and she also celebrated their 50th anniversary a week after we did. Lavina passed away only a few weeks later. Now her life is only a memory, but it is a memory of a woman who loved the Lord.

Yesterday, we attended the funeral of my big brother, Ben Lapp. It was the first funeral of any of my siblings. Many memories were shared of a man who was a beloved pastor for 57 years. All my life there have been

seven of us. My father often referred to this as God's perfect number; but now there are only six. Ben's life is now a memory, however, it is a memory of a life well lived. I am thankful for many memories of happy family times together.

Making special memories for children is a challenge for parents. Mothers have many opportunities to create activities that are fun-filled.

It is summer time. The children are home from school. We enjoy the warm sunshine, the beauty of the outdoors, the garden and the flowers. It is a time for picnics, suppers on the grill, swimming and playing together in the long summer evenings.

Mothers, take time to enjoy your children this summer and have fun together as a family. Fun can be enjoyment, pleasure or simply happy times together. I am using the word in the context of a Christian family and am not talking of mere entertainment or questionable activities.

Fun can be either planned for or it can be spontaneous. It can happen around the dinner table as the family enjoys a good laugh together. It must not be at the expense of a child's hurt

feelings but out of a genuine love for each other. I want to give a reminder of the importance of sitting around a table together, not that of each person grabbing a plate and rushing off to another activity. It should be a time of sharing happenings from the day, a time for each child to be relaxed, to be noticed, and to be shown respect. It is a good time to teach manners in a kind and loving way. Children should learn to say, "Excuse me," "Thank you, Mom, for the delicious food," "Please, may I be excused?" There are so many teaching moments around the dinner table.

Summer time can also be a time to teach good work habits. It can be easy to let children sleep late; I think that may be okay at times, maybe on specific mornings. However, I believe children are happiest when they have a schedule. Teaching discipline and responsibility will vary with age.

A child needs daily chores. Teach them to find pleasure in a job well done. Occasionally reward them with a special treat, such as an afternoon at the lake, a scavenger hunt in the woods, an old-fashioned hot dog roast, and so on. There are many simple pleasures; make sure your children learn to enjoy the simple things of life. I am concerned with today's value system that children learn from us adults. Too often we are not content with the simple things. Too often, we seek

out amusement, entertainment, extravagant restaurants, and so we lose sight of God's good gifts for us to enjoy.

There are state parks that offer nature trails for hiking, bird watching, picnicking and camping. Your family does not need to travel far from home to enjoy camping. Most of us have campgrounds within a short distance from home. Tents create happy unexpected experiences. Some campgrounds have cabins to rent.

Explore museums in your area, or historical sites, libraries, and even local places such as fish hatcheries, zoos, sea aquariums, and so on. You can give your children assignments on your outings. They could write a journal or make lists of birds and wildlife.

Pick bouquets of flowers and take them to a nursing home, to Grandma or some other person in the community. This is a time to teach your daughter to cook, bake, and process fresh fruits and vegetables. The boys can help in the house, too, if Dad can't work alongside them outdoors.

I hope I have inspired you with the importance of creating lasting, purposeful, motivated memories for your children this summer. It will take planning and determination, but it will be worth the effort in years to come. May God bless you with a happy, fun-filled summer with your children.



Through The Waters

Mary Ellen Beachy

Sunday morning dawned bright and sunny. The grass and the bushes sparkled from the heavy rains of the night before. Tommy Wagler, a missionary pastor, was up “with the birds.” Their church in Kasongo was planning to have baptisms and a communion service that Sunday.

Today was Tommy and Marji’s wedding anniversary. Marji was not feeling well and stayed at home with two of the children. She prepared a special lunch for her dear family.

Tommy and the other three children left early. When they turned onto the brown dirt road leading to Kasongo, he paused. The rice fields shimmered in the silvery water. All the heavy rain during the night had caused a lot of water to run off the Nandi Hills, flooding the flat low lands. The road looked like a large lake for many kilometers ahead.

What should he do? If he turned back he would never make it to church on time. People were walking through this road turned into a lake. Tommy asked people how deep the water really was and got no clear answer. Breathing a prayer, he forged ahead with his sturdy Nissan Patrol.

How could Tommy know where the road was while driving through this new lake? He had to watch carefully to see which way the hood tilted, if it tilted to the right, he would carefully turn left...all the while praying that he would not get off the road into the deep ditch on either side.

Waglers are known to like excitement, but this was getting to be much more dangerous than he had anticipated. Yet now there really was no way to turn back.

The water was gradually rising higher. At times it even surged up over the hood of his patrol. Water was creeping in the floor boards. Tommy pulled his brief case to safety. The children’s shoes were floating in the water.

Sierra, his small dark-haired daughter, was crying in the back seat. “Daddy, I can’t swim; Daddy, I can’t swim. Please, Daddy, let’s go back!”

Then it happened, the engine sputtered and died. As long as he was moving the engine would not flood as easily. Tommy prayed, turned the ignition, and on the third or fourth try, the engine roared back to life. Carefully he steered the patrol

through the waters.

What a huge relief when the vehicle finally started climbing up out of the water to higher ground. They opened their doors and the muddy water ran out.

Their troubles were not over however, for then the engine overheated. This part of the road was nice and level. He would drive till the engine got hot, then he would coast as long as he could. Finally, up ahead, he saw the blessed gates of the Kasongo Church.

It was late, three o'clock in the afternoon when Tommy and the children reached home. Marji was

so grateful they were safe.

They did not have roses, chocolates, and a relaxing anniversary, but she still had her tall, strong husband. She had her five children around her. Her heart overflowed with gratefulness. She had what really mattered—her most precious God-given treasures! How thankful they were for God's hand of protection and His blessing on their lives!

That day the Scripture in Isaiah 43:2a took on new meaning: **“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee....”**



youth messages

Anabaptist History

Joseph Swanson, Rosebud, TX

(High School student)

Studying Anabaptist history has affected my life in a very special way. Being benevolent to people, studying God's Word, and enduring any level of grief take on a whole new light when considered in perspective with the history of the Anabaptists. The way that the Anabaptists acted helps me see how God wants me to behave and think.

The Anabaptist movement was

virtually created and spearheaded by a group of passionate men who followed Christ with great commitment—most of them to their very death. Among these men are Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and George Blaurock. Throughout this writing, these men will be referred to as the “founding fathers.” One particular aspect of these men's lives that I find inspiring is their

persistence in the faith. Ferocious persecution failed to deter these men from doing what they thought was right in the eyes of God. When the government was mercilessly searching for them, they would go directly into the jurisdiction in question and preach the Word to the believers in the area. The passion that the founding fathers had for truth and godliness is also inspiring. It is amazing how God can use people when they are passionate about the really important facets of life.

The zeal the founding fathers had to preach the Word and share it with believers and unbelievers is remarkable. The sheer extent of boldness these men would go to so they could preach and baptize was also challenging. The willingness of these God-fearing men was used by God to bring some to Christ. Encouragement was also heavily embraced by the Anabaptists collectively. I believe that encouragement played a large role in the persistence of many of the Anabaptist churches. The Bible clearly teaches that believers should encourage one another.

Many Anabaptist churches faced persecution. Persecution could range from having to pay high taxes to grotesque death. Many individuals valiantly faced persecution. The

prospect that really stands out to me is how the Anabaptists feared God so much more than men and considered His will to be perfect and final. There is much honor in dying for Christ. The way that the brethren would act in the face of persecution seemed to show such reverence for God and willingness to do His perfect will. Their attitudes toward persecution also reflected the idea that man can only directly affect the physical. The Anabaptists seemed to always have their eyes on the eternal and that is what really matters. This is also an idea that they would remind each other of and it is often mentioned in the Bible.


I believe that Christians should be willing to face persecution. It seems that persecution is much more imminent than we wish or think that it is. Christ taught that Christians would be persecuted and that it is a blessing (Matthew 5). For whatever reason, Christ has put me in a church where there is no physical persecution from the world. I know not whether to count this a blessing or a curse. Nevertheless, should it come, I think that Christians should be prepared and rejoicing for the trial of their faith. For when one suffers for doing right that is acceptable with God. I also believe that persecution is a hallmark of the true church. I get this idea from Christ's teachings

as well as the fact that righteous and wicked people can never truly peacefully co-exist. I consider this axiom both biblical and true. When the righteous and wicked people interact, problems occur. The wicked are intimidated by the righteous. The two should, of course, desire a different course of action. This brings conflict. This is why Lot's righteous soul was vexed from day to day while he lived in Sodom. This creates great tension. This causes the wicked to become agitated. Therefore, they seek a solution. Often, one of the groups compromises and it is most often the righteous. This, however, is most unfortunate. If the righteous persist, then the wicked will take action. They will desperately endeavor to cause the righteous to compromise. Such a situation can even lead to a point where the wicked slay the righteous. That is persecution. It makes perfect sense that persecution glorifies God because the existence of persecution shows some element of the existence of righteousness.

There are most certainly many applications I can make to my life. I can easily see many areas in which improvements can be made. One area I can improve in is the area of dedication. I am not talking about surrender, but dedication. I feel that I am willing to do what I think God

wants me to do, but I think that it would do me well to completely dedicate every action I do to the glory of God. The true Anabaptists, as well as the Waldensians, seemed to be very dedicated people. Completely dedicating all of my decisions to the will of God would also be an area that I could improve in. I always want to do God's will, but I am still working on dedicating every aspect of my decisions completely to Him.

Finally, my willingness to suffer for Christ is a facet of my character that can be improved. Simple actions like preferring others above my self can cause me to suffer to a small degree. Being more respectful to all fellow humans is an action I should take. All humans have a natural instinct to protect themselves. I believe that this is because survival is naturally important to the human mind. This desire should be curbed so as to allow the Christian to serve Christ better. I want to willingly serve my fellow humans and rejoice when persecution arises.

In retrospect, I see that I have learned a lot from studying Anabaptist history. I have a choice to make. I can, with God's grace, strive to improve my life with the new knowledge I have, or I can go on in my life avoiding the conflict. I can quench the Spirit or follow it. 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Worry kills more people than does work, because people tend to worry more than they work.



If we would get something out of worship, we must put something into it.



Passing a driving test does not mean that we should pass everyone we come up to.



Working is a better way of killing time than is loafing.



A pilot's wife has good reasons to like seeing her husband down and out.



To feel "fit as a fiddle," you may need to tone down your middle.



Good for the weatherman—he can often be mistaken, and still keep his job.



Three cases where supply exceeds demand are: taxes, trouble, and advice.



Too many words indicate too little thought.



Our suspicion of others is often aroused by what we know about ourselves.