



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JANUARY 2021

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Calvary Messenger

January 2021

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Editor: Aaron D. Yoder

5188 W. 825 N., Leesburg, IN 46538

Ph: 574-646-2123; Fax: 800-956-7850

calvary.messenger.19@gmail.com**Assistant Editor:** Paul L. Miller

7809 S. Herren Rd., Partridge, KS 67566

Ph: 620-567-2286; Fax: 620-615-7352

plmiller1934@gmail.com**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: Josh Kooistra

2445 Rough & Ready Rd.

New Concord, OH 43762

cm youtheditor@gmail.com**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

Ph: 614-460-9222

enosmary@gmail.com

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My Faith, It Is an Oaken Staff

T.T. Lynch

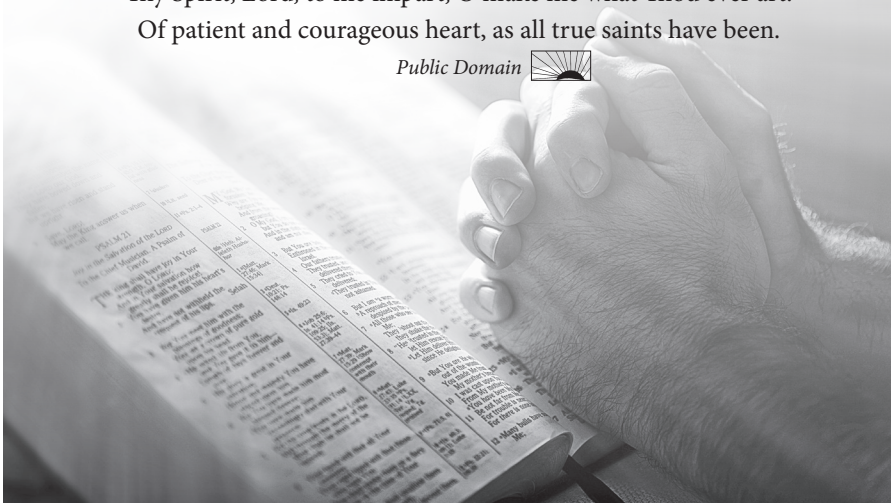
My faith, it is an oaken staff, the trav'ler's well-loved aid;
My faith, it is a weapon stout, the soldier's trusty blade.
I'll travel on, and still be stirred by silent thought or faithful word;
By all my perils undeterred a soldier pilgrim staid.

I have a Captain, and the heart of ev'ry private man
Has drunk in valor from His eyes, since first the fray began.
He is most merciful in fight, and of His scars a single sight
The embers of our failing might into a flame can fan.

I have a Guide, and in His steps when travelers have trod,
Whether beneath was flinty rock or yielding grassy sod,
They cared not, but with force unspent, unmoved by pain, they onward went,
Unstayed by pleasures, still they bent their zealous course to God.

My faith, it is an oaken staff, O let me on it lean;
My faith, it is a trusty sword, may falsehood find it keen.
Thy Spirit, Lord, to me impart, O make me what Thou ever art.
Of patient and courageous heart, as all true saints have been.

Public Domain



An Oaken Staff for the New Year

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:10-13).

This past November, an 81-year-old man and his wife answered a knock on the door at their Niles, IL, home. A man in a reflective vest and mask, posing as a utility worker, said he needed to check their fuse box due to a recent fire in the area. Dan and Barbara were in the basement with the man when Barbara heard creaking floorboards upstairs and realized something wasn't right. She yelled, “Danny! Somebody's in our bedroom!”

Barbara bounded up the steps, followed by her husband and the so-called utility worker. When the couple reached the main floor, they found two other men inside, one holding a pillowcase from their bedroom.

Dan began to chase the three men from their house, and that's

when he grabbed his grandfather's shillelagh—an antique Irish walking stick—propped in the corner of the couple's dining room.

“I was trying to find some type of persuasive weapon,” he said. “So I picked up the Irish shillelagh, and that turned out to be the equalizer because I managed to chase them out of the house.”

Though barefoot, Dan followed the men outside, using the shillelagh to deliver blows to the man with the pillowcase as well as to their vehicle before they fled.

“Hopefully, they got nothing more than a headache, and hopefully they pursue another occupation,” he said.

Note—this story is the object of a spiritual lesson, not a lesson on home defense. Please continue reading.

At a recent church service, I was

paging through our newly acquired *Hymns of the Church* hymnal and was thrilled to find a hymn that I learned long ago. Song #633 is entitled, “My Faith, It Is an Oaken Staff.” As I quickly glanced over the words and hummed the rousing tune in my head, I was encouraged and strengthened. Sometime after that I remembered the news article mentioned above.

While an Irish shillelagh is not necessarily oaken (I believe it is normally a blackthorn branch), I expect it has some of the same characteristics. Any walking stick or staff is normally used to help us in difficult terrain or steep inclines. Obviously, according to this news article and this hymn, a staff has purposes for extra difficult situations as well. It can also be a stout weapon.

We do well to have our faith in hand. Our faith can best be tested and trusted during our daily walk of life. Skill with our staff or sword comes from a close walk with our Captain and knowing His Word. The children of Israel were commanded to have their staff in hand on the night of their deliverance. *“And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD’S Passover”* (Exodus 12:11). They would need it for their

long journey ahead. David carried his staff when he went to fight the giant. It must have been his trusty companion. *“And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine”* (I Samuel 17:40). With faith in our great God, our giants can be conquered!

The year 2020 has been a difficult year to say the least. While we hope the new year will be more normal, we really do not need to have a normal year to serve our Lord. When we can see the road ahead and it appears normal, we often don’t depend on faith and our staff may end up in a corner of the dining room. Despite what lies around the bend, even if it is the valley of death, we can depend on our Guide’s staff for comfort and strength. *“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me”* (Psalm 23:4).

But maybe you find yourself in your basement as a result of a distracting “utility man” amidst the confusion of the pandemic or the national politics. There may be family, work, or church difficulties that keep you awake at night. Be aware of creaking floor boards above

you. Our spiritual enemy can easily use these disturbing times to rob us of our peace and confidence in our Eternal God. It is not too late to go bounding up the stairs to reclaim your spiritual shillelagh or oaken staff and start whaling away at the robbers of our confidence in God. Let's drive

them from our hearts and lean on our oaken staff! "Thy Spirit, Lord, to me impart, O make me what Thou ever art. Of patient and courageous heart, as all true saints have been."

It is also worth your time to learn this great hymn!

-AY 

the bottom line

Another False Alarm

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Our newspaper reported that New York State will not impose a two-week quarantine after all. A senior advisor to the governor had let it be known that New York would put all people, who enter the state, under a quarantine as a supposed way to decrease the spread of COVID-19. The fallout from such a move could have huge implications as a group of fifty states responds to also isolate themselves. If it is practical and beneficial for one, could it not be an advantage for everyone? Or, like children, if you hit me with a mud ball, I will hit you with two of them.

Several days later, the news comes that it will not be done after all. Here is where this bit of political showmanship provides for a God-

centered article. Routine supporters of the governor could make some political hay on this one, having said the governor was right by his "assertions that enforcement was impossible, but saw value in at least raising the alarm." Beside that newspaper paragraph, I wrote, "God is not like that!"

How is God different from such an approach? For a short list, I will give these five ideas; you could possibly add a few more.

1. God knows all things as they are besides knowing all things already in the past as well as all things and their effects in the future. Besides that, God knows all events in their primary causes, and likewise, just as clearly in how they will result in future human responses and reactions.

2. It is of supreme importance to know that God loves us, and we will be benefitted both in time and eternity when we love Him in truth. This simple statement is possibly the most important point on this abbreviated list.

3. God does not state things in prophecy to trigger and foment alarm, either for saints or sinners. God says, “I change not” (Malachi 3:6).

4. God does not make statements, either about the past, present, or future, to raise the fears of mankind and then retract it. God never claims to benefit from mankind by having been given a false report or an illusion or deception in any of His propositions for time or eternity.

5. If God would change His mind and His proposals, even if it would be only on one point, it would undercut and bring into question ALL that which God had ever undertaken to say or do.

Our soul delights itself in the God of all grace, seeing that He and His Son are the “*same yesterday, today, and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8). We are confident that God is entirely trustworthy, being true and faithful to His Word, and follows up with being predictable and loving in all that He proceeds to perform.

These days are filled to overflowing

with the crosscurrents of competition of economics versus the COVID-19 pandemic, as it collides head-on into politics. The claims of the church, based on the Word of God, can give a surer word than can any king or priest, or superior nation, whomever they may be. Unfortunately, that word could at times be based more squarely on the unchanging Word of God.

A Conservative Anabaptist preacher appeals to his people to have thoughts of sympathy for the afflicted. He says that if he can just cause people to have a mental disposition of sorrow for the sick and the widows, he is sure it would help them without any visitation or sharing of need. It is a way of spiritualizing a mental ministry that qualifies as good works, though shrouded in mystery.

Back in 1988, there was a big splash made by a man who distributed a pamphlet, titled, “88 Reasons Why Jesus Will Come Again in 1988.” There was a very sincere church brother who promoted it among us. It was proven to be false. This brother still felt it was a good message, even if it was false, because he claimed some people were saved by it. We vigorously disagree. Claiming good out of error and false teaching is anti-biblical. The Bible says, “*When a prophet speaks in the name of the*

Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass . . . (that) prophet has spoken presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22). Hananiah prophesied good for Israel despite of their sin. Jeremiah said to him, "*Behold I will cast thee off from the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord*" (Jeremiah 28:13-17). And it came to pass.

A Catholic priest implores his people at a funeral for one of their own, to pray for the deceased to help her out of purgatory. He already had spoken of her numerous good works, but then no one knows how much is needed to be delivered, he said. He assured his listeners that there are never too many prayers for these occasions because any prayers that are not needed for this lady can always be used for others who had come up short.

Past-president Obama had stated personal support for the national law that stated a legal marriage is only between one man and one woman as stated by legislative action of the United States. Later, in his second term, when he could not be re-elected, he went public and signed into law the document that legalized same-sex marriage. In his own justification, Obama said, his views on marriage "were evolving." Clever

politics, obviously. Some churches who espouse political ideology over clear Bible doctrine also want some space on that downhill train in their own evolution of error.

Raising a false alarm or a false report is synonymous with sounding the siren that signals the "all clear" to a gullible and ignorant society. God has given us His will by a fully reliable printout, called the Bible, duly witnessed, certified, and accredited. It is proven to be divinely inspired and profitable to all mankind as it is spoken.

Abraham was 75 years old, childless, lived in a tent, wandered about as a nomad, and without any real estate to his name.

God comes to him and promises two very unlikely things, both which are important to every warm-blooded man. In Exodus 12, God promises him families (plural), and "this land," the land of Canaan. Sarah was verified of a long duration to be barren. Abraham was "*as good as dead*" (Hebrews 12:12), which the late Ervin Hershberger spoke of as a phrase to indicate that Abraham was also reproductively barren. This aged couple were as deserving as any who ever lived to have children of their own. Abraham became ninety-nine years old and still had no child or any sign of it, EXCEPT the spoken promise of God!

As a follow-up to that conversation with Abraham, God presented two questions, “*Is any thing too hard for God?*” and soon thereafter, “*Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?*” (Genesis 18:14,17). These are two very pertinent questions for us in our time and place!

“*The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken*” (Genesis 21:1). The miracle son Isaac was born.


God speaks, then He acts. The character of God is revealed as He makes known His attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. This is but one illustration from history in which the prophecy given by God to one individual had important significance for all people in the world for all of time and eternity.

The prophecies from God are no

false alarms, no, not one.

The Bottom Line is that we rejoice in our Creator God and Savior Jesus Who has provided an everlasting good hope for our present and future. We are justified in our assured confidence that our lives are not as dependent on our prayers as they are on God’s purposes and provision for our sakes. We therefore are not ashamed to exert more time and energy in thanking God for His mercies and grace than we might be in asking for more or something other than our lot in life.

With that we begin a new year, and all those who love God in truth can take it from there with an ample measure of peace and joy and confidence in daily portions.

Wishing all people everywhere a blessed year. 

A Word From the Lord

G. Terrill Yoder, New Paris, IN

I have a word from the Lord for you,” is a frequently made statement in far too many Christian circles today. It sounds so personal—that God would actually give a special message to someone who then passes it on to you. But can such pronouncements be trusted?

Are such statements based on objective truth or subjective, man-centered impressions?

The movement not only has the tendency to blaspheme God by attributing words to Him that He has not spoken, but it undermines the true Word of God. When some

of “God’s words” don’t come true, can any of His Word be trusted? The Scripture is indeed inspired by God and is true in every way and any action or statement that undermine that belief is a travesty.

One question that must be explored is whether or not some of God’s words are more accurate and truthful than others. Can an actual “word from the Lord” be almost true? Can it be less accurate if spoken by someone who just doesn’t have enough faith or not enough experience in hearing from God? Does God allow His supposed prophets to be wrong a certain percentage of the time? Many proponents of the modern prophecy movement believe God allows for many missed prophecies. They even give percentages of expected prophecy failures and believe that those improve with faith and experience. The Old Testament prophets were not allowed to be inaccurate. There were no excuses for stating that they were speaking for God, foretelling events, and having those prophecies fail to come true. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 is very clear on this matter.

“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know

the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.”

I wonder if such penalties were in place today if we would see all the supposed “words for the Lord.” Some claim there is a difference on the expectations placed on New Testament prophets versus those of the Old Testament. But there is no evidence to support that claim. Space does not allow us to deal with all of those arguments in this article.

The New Testament also speaks to the issue of false prophets.

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 Peter 2:1-3).

Although this passage speaks to false teachers, the comparison is quite applicable. Notice that they

are speaking their own words and not the words of the Lord. They also make merchandise of others. This is a practice that plays out with many of the false prophets who use their supposed positions to compel unsuspecting and well-meaning Christians to pay for their lavish lifestyles through donations.

This movement is one of the results of the Pentecostal excesses of the last century which has attempted to bring back all the gifts of the early church. They recognize such gifts as apostle, raising people from the dead, prophecy, speaking in tongues (usually gibberish when practiced today), healing on demand, and in some cases, picking up serpents and drinking poison, as proof of authentic, Spirit-filled Christianity. These claims vary among the different denominations and churches within the categories of Pentecostal and Charismatic. There are hundreds of variant groups within these parameters of belief. So, we must be careful not to include all churches within the charismatic persuasion under one broad brush. However, the “prophetic word” claims are found in many of these churches. A careful study of the group’s beginnings and practices will call into question the authenticity of their prophecies and practices. One does not need to be either a cessationist or

continuationist to see the dangers of attributing words to God that He has not spoken.

The idea of twisting and hijacking God’s words to destroy His truth started in the Garden of Eden. When Satan asked, “Hath God said?” he was attempting to diminish what God had spoken. By twisting or adding to God’s Word we allow Satan to continue his ugly schemes. It is truly a practice laden with humanism when people elevate themselves to such statures.

Anyone who claims to have a “word from the Lord” and leads people away from the true Word of God falls under condemnation. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 says that a prophet—even one whose prophecies may come true—who leads people away from God shall be put to death. Putting Scripture in a category of continued revelation leads to a dim view of God’s Word. It will tend to cheapen the true inspired Word and lead people away from believing the truth.

The Bible is complete, and no new revelation is needed to live godly or to follow God’s will. The Holy Spirit inspired the words that we have in the Scripture and He will illuminate the Spirit-controlled Christian’s understanding of the Word. To suggest that the Word is not enough, and that we need new “words from the Lord” today, is contrary to the belief that the Bible is sufficient.

Consider the movements that have started due to someone believing that they have been given new revelations or direct words from God. Joseph Smith claimed to have received revelations from God, an angel, and on golden tablets. He started the heretical false religion known as Mormonism. Islam is a religion based on claims of a prophet who had views and teachings that are diametrically opposed to the Scripture. The list of those who supposedly received new or added revelations from God throughout the church age is long and many have led well-meaning followers into false beliefs and eventually to hell. There have been those from the beginning of the church who have had such destructive ideas. There are current denominations and sects with false teachings that have their roots in the teachings of those who claimed to have new revelations or special messages from God. Some had dreams that they built doctrines upon. They also mix false teachings with their false revelations. Ellen G. White, Mary Baker Eddy, and Charles Taze Russell are some of the more popular names among many.

Notice that the above list includes women. Careful observation will note that many of those who stand up in churches today and claim to have a “word from the Lord” are ladies. Does this follow the scriptural

injunction regarding women not to teach men and to keep silent in the church? God did not use any women to write Scripture and they are not to preach in the church. Why then would God give so many women newly revealed truth for the church and His followers? And yes, if God has given them His direct words it is newly revealed truth. And if not, it is simply subjective ideas that have supposedly come from God and should be labeled as such.

Some claim that giving people a “word from the Lord” is simply giving advice from God. But there is a vast difference between giving godly advice and claiming to have special messages from God. We are admonished to give counsel based on biblical teachings and wisdom. This counsel may include wisdom based on experience and the input from other godly advisors but dare not claim to be words directly given by God. Who of us can say that we have never changed our minds on something that at one time we were convinced we understood? God’s Word has the answers and wisdom for all questions and situations. It is the awesome responsibility of the followers of Christ to discern how to apply those answers to each situation.

We may have been taught that we can be sure the Spirit of God is directing us as long as the instruction or inner “feelings” does

not contradict God's Word. But this too can be deceptive. Yes, the Spirit of God influences and directs the Spirit-controlled Christian. But we must always remember that we have the tendency to choose the "leading of the Spirit" that best fits our directives. When we claim that the Spirit has told us this or that, we must be just as careful that we do not attribute words to the Spirit that He has not spoken or given to us. It is better to say that we believe the Spirit is leading in such a way than to make claims or statements that may be subject to our limited understanding. This is not to diminish the importance of the Spirit-led life. But life in the Spirit relies on the revealed Truth as the dominant structure and guide for life. This should be the basis for decisions in the life of the Christian, and the peace of God will rule in our hearts. The Spirit can and will bring peace and comfort to the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led follower of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Peter understood the subjective tendency within each of us. Peter was directed and inspired by the Holy Spirit to address his own experience compared to the Word of God. In the first chapter of his second epistle he reminds the readers of what he believes they already know. But he wants to remind them of the present truth (v.12). The truth was present at that time and it still is present tense. It was not a past truth

or a future truth—or a truth that needs to be added to as the centuries pass by. In verse 3 we are told that we have been given "*all things that pertain to life and godliness.*" Later in the chapter Peter relates the story of when he and two other disciples were privileged beyond measure to be present at what we call the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. He uses that experience to help prove that the disciples were not following cleverly designed myths but instead the promised Messiah. However, in verse 19 he reminds his readers that there is a more confirmed method of knowing if Jesus is the Messiah. It was the Word of God as given to the Old Testament prophets.

I can't imagine what the transfiguration must have been like. To see Jesus clothed in brilliant white, and shining brightly, must have been a life-altering event. But that was not all that they saw or heard. They saw Jesus speaking with Moses and Elijah, two men who had lived centuries before them. And they recognized them. They also heard the voice of God making a statement and a command regarding His Son. Although this experience helped Peter to believe that Jesus was the Anointed One, it did not trump the Scriptures and prophecies that had been inspired by the Holy Spirit. Peter, who was inspired to write Scripture as well, understood the

difference between experiences and inspiration. We must remember that we have a “*more sure*” Word than any experience that either we or anyone else can have.

When someone claims to have special words from God, a dream, or prophecy, how should we respond? I personally have had several times when I believe that God made things extremely clear to me through the leading of the Holy Spirit. This happened in several ways. But would I ever claim that those experiences are without any human interference in interpretation of their meanings? No. Nor would I claim that they are direct words of God. They were meaningful experiences that helped solidify what I believed God was doing or working out in my life. But they were exactly that—experiences. Experiences that do not attain to the level of the Living Word of God. We must respond to anyone’s claims with a clear understanding of the difference between experiences and God’s spoken Word.

If a person gives a “word from the Lord,” and it does not come true, what is that person? This may seem very harsh, but he or she is not a prophet. Rather, he or she is a liar. Although they may not intentionally be lying, that is what happens. The Bible says that God “*cannot lie*” (Titus 1:2). So, if someone claims to have words from

God, and they are not, who is Truth and who is not? Certainly, God is not a liar nor can He lie. Again, we must be very careful that we do not blaspheme the name of God by attributing words to Him that are not His and make ourselves liars. God commands us that we dare not take His name in vain. Using His name to bolster our own words, ideas, or agendas does just that. It uses God’s name in vain.

Such things should not be happening in any congregation. But when we see them happening in our own circles it should cause a great deal of alarm. It is much better to give godly advice and wisdom than to claim to have words from God. Whether it is a simple statement or a claim in a message—whether in teaching or preaching—we must leave God’s Word as already revealed. We can share our thoughts and interpretations with the understanding that we do not claim to have newly revealed words or truth. The modern prophecy movement dare not influence us. The generations to come must have a clear picture from us as to what is revealed truth and what is not. His Truth will stand forever. All other words will not.

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Grieving 2020

Evangeline Kaufman, Middlefield, OH

Twenty-twenty has been hard.
Super hard.

Hard like political division, broken relationships, isolation, and obviously, a global pandemic.

This year has felt like the Saturday between Jesus's death and resurrection. It has felt hopeless. Heavy and dark. Like how the disciples felt because they didn't know He would rise. Uncomfortable. Long.

We see all the pain around and inside us. Abuse. Suicide. Isolation. Division. Pain. Heavy pain. Dark pain.

We don't want to sit in the darkness of Jesus's tomb and not know the outcome. It's scary. We so often miss the fact that a legitimate part of holiness is hopelessness.

And in that pain, we are free to grieve.

In John 11, Jesus gives Mary and Martha the space to grieve. And He grieves too, even while knowing the outcome. Jesus doesn't disqualify the now of our emotions even in light of the future. He welcomes our emotions because He Himself is emotional. Our emotions, including our grief, are divine, given to us by God as part of our image-bearing identity of His character.

Jesus grieved for His friends. He wept too.

If Jesus made Himself vulnerable enough to grieve for His friends, can't we too?

Can we grieve the lonely isolation people have felt this year? The isolation that led some to suicide, some to addictions, and some away from God. Can we grieve the division? The division that has torn at our churches, our communities, and our families. Can we grieve the uncertainty? The uncertainty that made trust difficult, life unstable, and pain inevitable.

It's been a heavy year. And grieving twenty-twenty isn't cynicism. It's recognizing that it's been hard. It's forsaking denial in a pursuit of the healing power of grief.


Sitting in the tomb feels heavy. The silence is deafening. It's scary.

But it's holy.

The ants in the tomb see, the stone knows, that even in the dark, in the heaviness, in the grief, is a light. Few see it because it's deeper than a physical light. Even in that darkness there's a kind of glory.

Because even there, He is.

And even in twenty-twenty He is. And that is hope. Sunday is coming.

*[Inspiration for this article taken from
A Glorious Dark by AJ Swoboda.]* 

marriages

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

Byler-Wengerd

Bro. Stephen, son of Urie and Martha Byler, Saegertown, PA, and Sis. Krista, daughter of Wilmer and Clarellen Wengerd, Guys Mills, PA, on October 24, 2020, at Plainview Gospel Church by Roy Hershberger.

Graybill-Schmidt

Bro. Nathan, son of Charles and Arlene Graybill, Thompson Town, PA, and Sis. Delores, daughter of David and Norma Schmidt, New Hamburg, ON, on July 25, 2020, at Beavertown God's Missionary Church, Middleburg, PA, for Cocolamus Mennonite Church, Guatemala City, Guatemala, by Gerald High.

Miller-Smucker

Bro. Danny, son of David and Laura Miller, Russellville, KY, and Sis. Katrina, daughter of Dan and Anna Smucker, Gap, PA, on October 10, 2020, at Pequea Amish Mennonite Church for Summitview Christian Fellowship by Dave Stoltzfus.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. Jason, son of Herman Jr. and Mary Miller, Spencer, WI, and Sis. Alice, daughter of Ernie and Martha Yoder, Jamestown, PA, on July 11, 2020, at Clarks Mills United Methodist Church

for Plainview Gospel Church by the father of the groom.

Riehl-Reed

Bro. Jaydon, son of Ken and Vivian Riehl, Dundee, NY, and Sis. Janaya, daughter of Dan and Nancy Reed, Towanda, PA, on September 19, 2020, at an outdoor ceremony at Trush Overlook, Ulster, PA, for Union Valley Mennonite Church by Mel Lapp.

Vasquez-Stoltzfoos

Bro. Christian, son of Christopher and Melissa Vasquez, Myakka City, FL, and Sis. Hadassah, daughter of Roman and Lucy Stoltzfoos, Kinzers, PA, on October 23, 2020, at the bride's home for Mine Road Church by Floyd King.

Yutzzy-Wagler

Bro. Jonathan, son of Eli and Mary Yutzzy, Leon, IA, and Sis. Violet, daughter of John and Susan Wagler, Leon, IA, on October 3, 2020, at Salem Mennonite Church, Leon, IA, by Monroe Gingerich.

Zimmerman-Showalter

Bro. Jared, son of Warren and Linda Zimmerman, Penn Yan, NY, and Sis. Victoria, daughter of Duane and Natalia Showalter, Mt. Solon, VA, on October 24, 2020, at Dayton Mennonite Church for Ottobine Mennonite Church by Mel Lapp.



cradle roll

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

Albrecht, Leslie and Judith (Byler), Poole, ON, second child, first daughter, Karina Judith, October 21, 2020.

Beiler, Jalin and Rosetta (Stoltzfus), Bridgeton, NJ, second child and daughter, Allison Rose, November 7, 2020.

Brenneman, Manuel and Laura (Detweiler), Russellville, KY, third child, second son, Kameron Layne, November 10, 2020.

Chupp, Levi and Mindy (Graber), Greentown, IN, fourth and fifth children (twins), third son, second daughter, Case Lee and Kenna Lielle, November 11, 2020.

Gerber, Collin and Becky (Ropp), Gadshill, ON, sixth child, fourth daughter, Nicole Joy, October 25, 2020.

Joyce, Tim and Ellen (Byler), Fincastle, VA, fourth child, second son, Caden Monroe, November 3, 2020.

Kanagy, Jeffrey and Rachel (Shank), Blackville, SC (serving at Mountain View, Aroda, VA), fifth child, fourth daughter, Ginger Rebecca, November 15, 2020.

Kline, Bryson and Annie (Miller), Millersburg, OH, first child and daughter, Tessa Ann, November 15, 2020.

Lapp, Kendall and Heather (Schrock), Mt. Pleasant, PA, third child, second son, Caspar Quill, November 11, 2020.

Larrieu, Yann and Hannah (Yoder), Kampala, Uganda, second child and son (one deceased), Gabriel Yann, October 23, 2020.

Mast, Lyndall and Carla (Byler), Drasco, AR, third child and daughter, Cassidy Renae, November 16, 2020.

Miller, Andre and Cynthia (Miller), Auburn, KY, first child and son, Jace Andre, November 4, 2020.

Miller, Darin and Margaret (Yoder), Lovington, IL, fourth child, third daughter, Janiyah Faith, October 26, 2020.

Miller, Darryl and Mary (Yoder), McConnellsville, OH, third child, second daughter, Desirae Brielle, November 21, 2020.

Miller, Jared and Jennifer (Yoder), Leon, IA, third child, second daughter, Josie Kathryn, September 17, 2020.

Miller, Justin and Michelle (Yoder), Leon, IA, fourth child and son, Cole Archer, October 3, 2020.

ordinations

Miller, Justin and Rosanna (Brenneman), Rochelle, VA, third child, second daughter, Erin Brook, November 8, 2020.

Schmidt, Timothy and Loretta (Miller), Sardinia, OH, first child and daughter, Sienna Raine, born November 4, 2019. Received for adoption, November 3, 2020.

Troyer, Jonathan and Andrea (Miller), Stuarts Draft, VA, fifth child and son, Stewart James, November 10, 2020.

Troyer, Luke and Mary Ellen (Swarey), Auburn, KY, fourth child, third son, Nathan Ray, November 3, 2020.

Weaver, Quentin and Janice (Shank), Waterford, Ireland, third child and daughter, Charis Loraine, November 25, 2020.

Wingard, LaVern and Carmen, (Eash), Montezuma, GA, second child and son, Camden Reed, June 29, 2020.

Yoder, Adam and Christina (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, second child, first son, Sterling David, August 14, 2020.

Yoder, Bethany, Russellville, OH, first child and daughter, Talia Alisabeth, born June 27, 2018. Received in foster care, April 4, 2019. Adoption completed, November 25, 2020.

Yoder, Mike and Sarah (Shank), Aroda, VA, fifth child, second daughter, November 3, 2020.



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

Bro. Perry Byler, 33, (wife, Lorianne Albrecht), Atwood, ON, was ordained deacon for Fairhaven Amish Mennonite Church, Poole, ON, on November 15, 2020. Preordination messages given by John Byler and John Gerber, ON. The charge was given by Arnold Jantzi, assisted by Larry Ropp and John Byler. Conrad Jantzi shared the lot.


Bro. Jolynn Gingerich, 25, (wife, Kathryn Byler), Mechanicsburg, OH, was ordained minister for Bethesda Fellowship on November 1, 2020. Preordination messages were given by Joel Gingerich. The charge was given by Elmer Stoltzfus, assisted by Joel Gingerich and Robert Beachy. Jonathan Gingerich (Jolynn's father) shared the lot.

Bro. Darrel L. Herschberger, 38, (wife, Maria Yoder), Lovington, IL, was ordained minister for Pleasant View A.M. Church, Arcola, IL, on November 15, 2020. Preordination messages were given by Monroe Gingerich. The charge was given by Matthew Bontrager, assisted by Howard Kuhns and Monroe Gingerich. Duane Horst shared the lot.

Bro. Lorin Hostetler, 36, (wife, Alicia Funk), Rock Stream, NY, was ordained minister for Crystal Valley Mennonite

Church, Dundee, NY, on August 9, 2020. Preordination messages were given by Wayne Lapp. Paul Garber and Chad Stoltzfus shared the lot.

Bro. Héctor Joseph Mejía, 31, (wife, Grace Alfaro), Marsella de Venecia, Costa Rica, was called by the voice of the church and ordained minister for the Christian Brotherhood of Marsella on November 15, 2020. The charge was given by Dale E. Heisey, assisted by Marcos Paniagua.

Bro. James Yoder, 47, (wife, Lucrecia Wagler), Stone Creek, OH, was ordained minister for Salem Amish Mennonite Church on November 15, 2020. Preordination messages were given by Dave Miller, Georgetown, OH. The charge was given by Bobby Miller, assisted by Paul Leroy Miller and James R. Mullet. Conrad Hunsberger and Weston Showalter shared the lot. 

obituaries

Brenneman, Raymond M., 68, Montezuma, GA, passed away September 2, 2020. He was born August 20, 1952, to Mark and Vernie (Yoder) Brenneman in Virginia Beach, VA.

He dedicated his life to Christ in his youth and was a faithful member of the Montezuma Mennonite Church.

He is survived by five siblings: Alvin Carl (Emma), Catlett, VA; Mark Edward (Loretta), Montezuma; Leon, Montezuma; Lowell (JoAnn), Falkville, AL; and Ellen Ruth Brenneman, Danville, AL; two sisters-in-law: Mrs. Philip (Miriam) Brenneman, Millersburg, OH; and Mrs. Henry (Vera) Brenneman, Aroda, VA. He is also survived by 16 nieces and 12 nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Mark and Vernie Brenneman; two brothers: Philip and Henry; a sister,

Lela Brenneman; a stepmother, Elsie (Yoder) Brenneman; and a sister-in-law, Bertha (Yoder) Brenneman.

Funeral services were held on September 6, 2020, at the Montezuma Mennonite Church with Donny Swartzentruber and Donnie Brenneman serving. Faron Wingard conducted the committal service in the Montezuma Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Kauffman, Abner S., 83, left this earth to go home to his Savior on September 22, 2020, while surrounded by his family. He was born in Strasburg, PA, on June 27, 1937.

On December 8, 1960, he married Anna K. Lantz of Reistville, PA. He was a beloved husband and father whose honest walk with God touched many lives and inspired his family to seek truth

and walk in the Spirit. An innovative jack-of-all-trades, he farmed for many years, worked as a manager of Star Silo, and with the help of his wife and family, established Little Barn Bake Shop and later Little Barn Discount Groceries in Bedford, PA. After retirement, he enjoyed raising goats and Black Angus cattle. He was an avid reader, particularly enjoying Jewish history and church history. He was an evangelist at heart. One of his greatest joys was preaching the Word, interspersed with stories of real-life events. He served as a pastor at Christian Light Fellowship in Bedford, PA, for many years. In 2016, he and Anna moved to Myerstown, PA, where he was an active member of Shalom Bible Fellowship in Shartlesville, PA.

Surviving in addition to his wife are children: Michael L. and Lydianne (Coblentz) Kauffman, Mifflinburg; Sarah Ann and Titus Peachey, Harmony, NC; Katherine M. and Jeff Cook, Cooleemee, NC; Ida M. and Les Reinford, Lebanon; Dorcas R. and Mark Troyer, Harmony, NC; Anna Joy and Gary Wurtz, Denver; Violet Kauffman, Mifflinburg; and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by three sons-in-law: David Yoder, Daniel Troyer, and Nathan Kauffman; and a grandson, Adrian Peachey.

The funeral was held at the Ephrata Business Center on September 26, 2020, with John Slaymaker and David Alspaugh serving. Interment was at the Shalom Bible Fellowship Cemetery.

Kauffman, Rachel Dawn, 42, Mill Hall, PA, born August 30, 1978, in Fairfax, VA, to Paul and Naomi (Beachy) Petersheim, entered her eternal rest on November 10, 2020.

In her teens she was baptized upon her confession of faith in Jesus Christ and continued faithfully to the end.

On September 27, 2003, she was united in marriage to Vincent Kauffman. They recently celebrated their seventeenth anniversary.

In addition to her parents, Rachel is survived by her husband, Vincent, four children: Josiah, Clarita, Hans, and Kaitlyn; three brothers: Matthew (Diana), Kalona, IA; Michael (Melissa), Salisbury, PA; and Joshua, Broadway, VA; two sisters: Rebecca (Kevin) Coblentz, and Deborah Petersheim, both of Oakland, MD; and six nephews and six nieces.

Rachel was a devoted wife and mother. She will be remembered as a very caring person and will be deeply missed by a wide circle of friends. She faithfully supported her husband's ministry at the Bald Eagle Boys Camp, and as one camper said, "She was a mom to everyone, and everyone liked her. I am so sorry!"

A memorial service was held on November 14, 2020, at the Blanchard Church of Christ, Blanchard, PA. The funeral was held on November 17, 2020, at Leon Salem Mennonite Church, Leon, IA, with Monroe Gingerich and Virgil Wagler officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Miller, Mahlon L., 90, died September 19, 2020. He was born in rural Hutchinson, KS, on September 1, 1930, to Levi D. and Clara (Nisly) Miller.

He was a member of Cedar Crest A.M. Church, Hutchinson.

On April 5, 1953, he married Fannie Yoder. After 64 years of marriage, she died on October 2, 2017. He was a farmer and dairyman. He enjoyed singing with men's choral groups. Retirement gave him the opportunity to enjoy warm winters in Sarasota, FL.

He is survived by children: Eileen Cottingham (Kirk), Shirley Ropp (Lyndon), Lucy Nisly (Phil), Leonard (Janice), all of Hutchinson; Delmar (Suzanne), Arlington; Kathleen Miller Jobson (Darrell), and Laverne (April), both of Alberta, Canada; Janette Anderson (Stan) of Kingsville, TX; Elaine Yoder (Phil) of Costa Rica; and daughter-in-law, Sherri Miller of Tuttle, OK. Siblings surviving are Willis and Fred, Hutchinson; Paul (Martha), and Emma Troyer (Oliver), both of Partridge; and Mary Beachy (Joseph), Kalona, IA. Also surviving are 40 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his son, Keith; granddaughter Anne Miller, his parents, and siblings: Edwin, Harry, Perry, David, and Daniel Miller and Elizabeth Wagler. His brother, Fred, followed him in death on October 7, 2020.

A graveside service was held at West Center Cemetery on September 21, with Lee Nisly and Donald Miller serving.

Roth, Esther Viola, 96, passed on to her eternal reward on June 26, 2020, at Knollcrest Lodge. She was born April 25, 1924, in Wellesley Township, ON, to the late Samuel and Catherine (Brenneman) Roth.

She was baptized upon the confession of her faith in Jesus Christ and was a member of the Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite congregation.

She will be sadly missed by her sister, Mildred Ruppert, and brother and sister-in-law, Kenneth and Katie Roth. She is lovingly remembered by five nieces and nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews.

Along with her parents, she was predeceased by her husband, Eli, a brother, Nelson Roth, sisters, Edna Miller and Mary Roth, and a brother-in-law, Lorne Ruppert.

The funeral was held July 1, 2020, with Daniel Gerber and John Gerber serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Wingard, Desiree Nevaeh, infant daughter of Sawyer and Sondra Wingard, Montezuma, GA, passed away in her mother's arms on September 4, 2020. She was born on June 23, 2020, in the Americus, GA, hospital.

Unknown to her parents, she had respiratory and cardiac problems which led to a transfer to the respiratory NICU in Albany, GA. She stayed three weeks before she was transported to the Egleston Children's Hospital in Atlanta. There she spent seven and a

half weeks between the NICU and the cardiac unit. There they monitored her heart failure that continued to progress. This was due to a large hole in her heart that caused it to pump three to four times harder than normal. This made it hard for her to gain weight but still didn't stop her from letting us know what she wanted. She was a little, but strong, fighter and was loved by many of the hospital staff. She was happiest when she was cuddled and loved on by her parents and family. She was dearly loved by many.

Desiree means "to desire" and Nevaeh is "heaven" spelled backwards. Little did we know, when we chose this name, how fitting it would be for her.

Desiree is survived by her parents: Sawyer and Sondra Wingard; both sets of grandparents: Jonathan and Connie Yoder and Olen and Emily Wingard; aunts and uncles: Monica, Maranatha, Jenson and Abby Yoder, Tye and Suzanna Wingard, and Dallas Wingard. She was preceded in death by her aunt Stephanie Wingard.

Funeral services were held September 7, 2020, at the Montezuma Mennonite Church with Morris Yoder and Donny Swartzentruber serving. Faron Wingard conducted the committal service in the Montezuma Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Yutzy, Katie J., 85, peacefully passed away October 1, 2020, at her home.

She was born to Joseph and Amelia (Hershberger) Whetstone on April 1, 1935.

On January 9, 1988, she married Jonas Yutzy. They lived in matrimony for 32 years. He preceded her in death on June 7, 2020.

Surviving are children: Linda (Mario) Quevedo, Paraguay, SA; Leanna (Enoch) Eichorn, London; Ida (Laverne) Miller Hicksville; Roman (Debbie) Miller, Spencerville, IN; 20 grandchildren, and 40 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by two brothers: Perry (Mary Esther) Whetstone, Howe, IN; Sam (Josephine) Whetstone, Philadelphia, MO; and nieces and nephews. Also surviving are her three sisters-in-laws, Sarah and Katie Yutzy, Plain City; and Mary (Andy) Miller, Fredrickstown.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her first husband, Clarence L. Miller, who died on August 12, 1978; a son, Emanuel; three sisters: Polly (Toby) Borntreger, Mary (Dan) Eichorn, an infant sister; a grandson, Elson Quevedo, a granddaughter-in-law, Ellen (Yoder) Eichorn; three sisters-in-law: Edna (Dan) Helmuth, Amanda (Ralph) Kramer, Emma Yutzy; and two brothers-in-law: Gideon and Eli Yutzy.

The funeral was held October 5 at United Bethel for Canaan Fellowship with Robert Beachy, Matt Yutzy, and Roger Hostetler serving. Jonathan Hostetler conducted the committal at the church cemetery.



This past year has been rather memorable.

- The year began with the US economy humming along. Problems existed, to be sure, but various economic markers were very favorable.

- Early in the year, reports surfaced about a mysterious illness in China. But that seemed far away to most of us. This nation's collective attention was focused on the impeachment of President Trump. Those advancing the impeachment process and those opposed both seemed to "have bigger fish to fry" than to be concerned by something as remote as illness in China.

- When public perception of the seriousness of COVID-19 led to a nationwide lockdown, of varied proportions, we entered into surreal and uncharted waters for almost all of us.

- The heretofore robust economy faced some serious headwinds. The US turned to a well-worn tactic in order to stimulate the economy—print more money and pass it out to everybody. Some people had more money, but it wasn't worth as much.

- The production of goods and their delivery to the end user suffered

some serious disruption. Toilet paper came to symbolize this difficulty.

- The incidence of COVID-19 seemed pretty academic and theoretical at the beginning. But then some of us started to get sick. Soon people we knew became very, very ill. Then the COVID-19 funerals came. It was a number of months before anybody I knew had died of COVID-19. But as of this writing, I know of three within our extended family who have succumbed, and another cousin is gravely ill. Of course, we've heard of many more who died from complications of the virus.

- Some people who tried to be cautious and take measures to limit the spread of the virus were accused by others of living in fear of physical illness. Others seemed to prioritize keeping the economy going and tried to live as normally as possible. Others saw that response as being motivated by a fear of economic hardship.

- The election cycle in which Joe Biden was voted to serve as the next president of the US was easily the most acrimonious in my memory. And I remember that's what I thought about the 2016 election. As of this writing the electoral college has not held its vote, so the results are

officially pending. Biden continues to appoint people to fill out his cabinet, even while Trump has not officially conceded defeat. Some among his base of supporters feel as if the election was illegitimate in some way.

- Major events in the community of believers were observed starkly differently than what we've grown accustomed to. I'm thinking particularly about weddings and funerals, but to a lesser extent baptisms, communions, family reunions, and even church services.

- For the first time in my life, many of us didn't congregate in church for a period of time to allow the pandemic to settle down. By the time normal activities were resumed, very little appetite existed in the church community and society in general to return to reduced activity, even though it seemed as if someone dropped a brick onto the pandemic accelerator.

- But it seems to me that one of the most sobering characteristics of this year is described by this one word, "division."

I suppose that most of us have observed how ideological differences between individuals are often seen as hostile rather than complementary. This is possibly best illustrated by those who engage in the political process, and particularly the Republicans and the Democrats. I'm saddened by the division and bickering—

and downright hostility—but that's one characteristic of unregenerate humanity that shouldn't really surprise us. But what about us?

Jesus pointed out that one of the proofs of genuine discipleship is our love for one another. I'm profoundly sobered by the evidence that exists that God's children are following a different priority. I'm especially troubled by several ideas that have gained traction and found fertile ground in our circles.

One of those is the view that the government is inherently wrong. Thus we are justified in disregarding directives by appointed and elected officials. We acknowledge that those who serve in civil and governmental capacities are operating by a different set of priorities than the Kingdom of Christ. However, as we evaluate our response to government, I propose that we should begin with what the Scripture says about government. I'm thinking of what Paul wrote to the Romans while in prison for his faith, in the first six verses or so in chapter 13. Let's think about Paul's words in the context of his suffering and the unjust government that served as his reference. Jesus also instructed his followers to respond to intrusive government overreach of a soldier compelling a person to go one mile by saying they should go two. How does going the second mile look when I feel like my rights have been

infringed?

I've wondered how this works when we who profess to stay out of the political process feel free to sort out which government directives are legitimate and binding and which are not. Is it fair to say that when we sit in judgment regarding the legitimacy of government actions that are not matters of faith, that we become political in that sense? I sometimes wonder if we're as separated from that political process as we think we are.

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Mindy Belz writes for *World Magazine*, a Christian magazine founded by her brother-in-law, Joel, in the mid-80s. Her written work has focused on the Middle East. I find some of her comments in May of this year poignant and piercing. She wrote, "For six [years] I've reported on Christians chased from their homes and churches by ISIS, seen their testimony, steadiness, and care for one another. How utterly disheartening to watch the American church come apart in a 10-[week] shutdown. They shall be known by their demand for their rights."

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Lucinda Kinsinger blogs and writes a column for *Anabaptist World* magazine. In one of her submissions this fall she explained why she would not be voting in November's election.

She wrote, "When I was young and

lived at home with my minister dad, the conservative Mennonite church we were a part of engaged in its own version of 'church politics.' This saintly version of our national system cultivated two parties, a liberal and a conservative. The conservative party's main job was to keep the liberal party in check, and the liberal party's main job was to ride the edges, advocate change. Both parties found the other side intensely annoying and their preferences indicative of deep spiritual need."

She continues. "I will always remember something my dad said over that time: 'The mark of carnality is force.' Doesn't matter if my cause is 'spiritual.' Whenever I try to force someone else to conform to my wishes—whether through my own strength, through the church, or through the government—that is carnality. God offers choice. And as inhuman and unsettling as that feels to us, we as Christians are fighting His battle and must fight it His way."

• • • • •

This past year has been a difficult one for many of us. Some of us are feeling a bit battle-weary and tested. The difficulties we've encountered have shone a light on threats to the unity we profess. Let's make 2021 a year of healing and strengthening our ties. But we'll need to be diligent if that is to happen. Let's reject the plan our enemy has to pit us against

each other and turn our attention to and reaffirm our high esteem of Holy Spirit-inspired Scripture.

*If there is a
mastermind behind the
current chaos, it is the
enemy of our souls.*

Scripture teaches us to lift up our heads in anticipation of our soon redemption when we see the end of days approaching. This is different than working in opposition to what will happen.

Scripture teaches us that God will always provide what His children need. This doesn't mean that we won't suffer or die. It simply means that needs more basic than our physical comfort and safety are always met for those who are His, by the One to Whom we belong.

Scripture teaches us that the enemy isn't our Republican neighbor, our Democrat neighbor, the governor, or the president. The enemy isn't anybody in my church either. Our opposition is not flesh and blood. It is spiritual in origin. If there is a mastermind behind the current chaos, it is the enemy of our souls. This will help us from thinking unloving thoughts and making unloving comments about people we don't agree with and to reject wild conspiracy theories. Maybe you'll decide to do this by hosting

a neighborhood barbecue next summer and invite the diversity of your neighborhood to enjoy each other's company.

An appreciation for Scripture will help us to drown out the voices that clamor for our attention, those voices that impart a message that leads us away from what the Scripture indicates. Does what you're reading on social media and mainstream media feed divisions and make you feel like your brother is against you? If so, I think we all know what we ought to do.

The Scripture teaches us that we should seek the good of our brother. That means we will invest our energies in listening to our brother when we differ, that we do not trample the sensibilities of our brother in the name of exercising our rights, and that we seek to build on what we have in common. However, unity and rebuilding will be quite elusive unless all involved commit to the process.

The Scripture teaches us to lay down our lives and take up our cross, not demand our rights.

I invite you all to join me in praying that the church would emerge from 2020 having learned important lessons in genuine Christian love and brotherhood that knit our hearts together. Genuine Christian unity must coalesce around our Savior Jesus Christ, not

any political personality or ideology. That our unity would shout out a fulfillment of Jesus's prayer in how we give evidence of our parentage by displaying an illogical, sacrificial, affectionate, and unselfish love for each other that is so counter intuitive

in today's world that those who look on must conclude, "That is different! These people must be Christians, because people just don't act that way when following their own inclinations."

-RJM 

mission awareness

Bethel Springs to Calvary Bible School

Part 1: Bethel Springs Mission

Elam Stoltzfoos, Kalona, IA

[The following message was given at the annual Beachy Ministers Meeting in Plain City, Ohio, April 2019. The events of the first evening (pictures, special singing, talks, and messages) were focused on the fifty years of God's faithfulness at Calvary Bible School. -FS]

There is a certain nostalgia that resides with many of the folks who have attended Calvary Bible School over the course of the past fifty years. I suppose that most who have travelled the five and one-half miles on Culp Road from Hwy 5 to Calvary Bible School remember their first experience to go "back in." You most likely asked yourself a few questions. How did anybody ever find this place? Or why did anybody find this place?

CBS is indeed tucked back into a little hollow in one of the mountain crevices of the Sylamore Forest. A teacher of earlier years would often

ask the maintenance man to pick up a newspaper. He would say "If indeed, the world ended while we are back in here, it would be nice to know." The idea of feeling cut off from society was keenly felt during those early years.

In Part 1 of this two-part article I will discuss the events that brought the Mennonites to Culp, Arkansas.

In Part 2 I will address why and how the Beachy Church acquired this property. I will also rehearse some of the events, development, and the progression of CBS. I will also include a few of my personal observations.

Maude Dickerson was born in 1897 in Coffeyville, KS. As a young lady she married John Brooke, who soon died of influenza. In 1922 she married Ed Buckingham. He also became sick, and they sought medical help at a Mennonite clinic in La Junta, CO. And there in La Junta her second husband died.

She joined the Mennonites, attended Hesston College, trained at La Junta Clinic, and became a Registered Nurse in 1929 at the age of 31. This twice-widowed young lady had finished her schooling and paid all of her schooling herself. And in August of 1930 she married for the third time, to a widower by the name of John Douglass.

John and Maude had a vision to help the needy. Maude was tough and was ready for a backwoods challenge. She also sought to obey the scripture in Deuteronomy 15:11, *“For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.”*

So in 1932 John and Maude Douglass moved to the little village of Culp, Arkansas. Culp stood at the corner on the Calico Rock side of what is today Calvary Bible School. It was not much of a village. It had a grist mill, with a victuals store, a post office, and just a few dwellings. The surrounding area was considered

the Culp area. The foundation of the front porch to the store and post office is still standing between the current road and the creek.

Culp was not an easy place to move into with the Culp area being a police-free zone. Its people were more than willing to protect themselves within the tenets of the local culture. In the early days a few bullets were hurled toward the Douglasses, but they soon won the hearts of the people. They could have chosen a less hostile place, but their heart for the poor took them there.

The ferry at Chessman crossing was the main way to access the community until the bridge was built at Calico Rock in 1965. In 1932 the nearest doctor was 40 miles away on dirt roads.

Maude was the only RN in Baxter County, in fact the only trained medical person, so naturally, she became the nurse, the doctor, the veterinary, and even the Sunday school teacher. John and Maude would walk for miles every Sunday to conduct several Sunday schools for these mountain folks. Many of the folks were migrant workers which meant the able-bodied would leave for the summer to find work in other communities just to make a living. So, John and Maude taught them better farming practices so they could stay in the area with their families and still have an income.

At first, the Mennonite Board of Missions was a bit cautious to assist in the Culp efforts. But when the Douglasses began to connect with the people and it looked like a viable work, they began to send help to assist them. The mission sent others to assist in the work. Floyd and Beulah Miller, formerly from Iowa, along with others, relocated there, farmed, and lived among the people.

In 1938 a church was built and dedicated. In 1950 its membership peaked at sixty-one. In 1944 a school was started in the church house. Dorothea Martin was the teacher with twenty-four students. Previous to this, the school was conducted in an old chicken house that stood behind the current clinic house.

In 1947 a school house was built. The land was donated by the locals and the labor was mostly donated by both locals and people from other Mennonite communities. In 1951 a clinic was built behind the church building.

In the nineteen years before the clinic was built, Maude assisted with many home births. In those years there was never a death of a mother or a child under her care, no doubt a testament of God's blessing on this couple's labors.

In 1956 her third husband died, and Maude lived as a widow again, this time for thirty years. She lived her remaining years serving the

community in the medical field as long as she was able. She died in 1986 and was buried in the Mennonite Cemetery in Calico Rock.

The medical work was greatly enhanced when Meryl Grasse, along with his new bride, moved to Calico Rock in 1952, a year after the clinic was built. He had worked previously as a medical missionary in Ethiopia and in the Java Island of Indonesia. And like John and Maude he had a pioneering vision. Dr. Grasse's move to Calico Rock was blessed by his home church in Pennsylvania. He arrived with only \$2,000 to his name. He set up a makeshift clinic in Calico Rock and also assisted with the clinic at Bethel Springs.

His brother John was a medical technician and soon joined him. They scraped their own money together—others both donated and loaned money to them—and they built their own clinic. Because the hospital in Melbourne had a problem staying open, they decided to build their own. They made sure theirs stayed open. The Grasse brothers kept assisting the work at Bethel Springs until 1965 when the bridge was built, and it was no longer considered necessary to keep the Bethel Springs Clinic operating.

Over the years, Dr. Grasse took his earnings and put them back into the Calico Rock clinic, slowly building it into a state-of-the-art clinic. By the

year 2011, Dr. Grasse, who was now 88 years old, still averaged 20 patients a day. It is noteworthy that in all his years of service to the Calico Rock community, he never demanded a payment for his services. His staff would send out the bills, and if someone could not pay he would simply forget it.

In time Dr. Grasse was ready to pass the ownership of the Clinic on and was offered a large sum for it, but true to who he was, he refused to sell. Rather, he formed a Trust, a Community Medical Center,

and donated this clinic back to the community, in spite of being offered several million for it.

He too, like Maude Douglass, like Floyd and Beulah Miller, and others, chose to have their bodies return to the dust in Calico Rock, a testament to their lifetime of service to this community. A visit to this gravestone row is a worthy visit. In fact one feels unworthy to stand there, in the presence of the graves of these noteworthy heroes.

(To be continued.)



A Woman After God's Heart

Speak

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



I was raised by a lady who was single and 49 years old when she married my dad. Without much ado, she instilled within us, "IF you get married..." Though in love with her man, she wasn't keen on couples and families sitting together at our church's midweek services. "Because," she said, "the singles are never quite sure where to sit. They feel alone." And so was born within me, a long look at what seemed a viable choice for adulthood. In my youth I idealized the lives of older single women who appeared to be

the epitome of what God looks for in any woman. I pondered it deeply when the preacher said, "Anyone can be married." My role models were usually unmarried.

That's the more personal part of my basis for this article. In addition to that, someone requested that single ladies be addressed in this column. And having joined the married ranks when I was close to thirty, I knew that the article needed to be written by them. I couldn't expect them to send me an article on their own, airing their impulses, longings,

and questions. To that end, some months ago I threw out the bait for whoever wished to respond to a survey from which I would weave their words into something cohesive and readable. They graciously agreed to my plan. Some even elaborated quite extensively. I tapped on a few shoulders in addition to the voluntary responses. I have had the high honor of combing through, separating, merging, and condensing, in an effort to express their hearts. I “talked” with nearly 30 ladies, their ages ranging from late 20s to 70s.

Two ladies who’ve lived on both sides of the equation participated. This is a task I call more holy and sacred than easy and clerical. Instead of giving you sterile survey questions and answers, I try to bring you into the discussion candidly, as if we were all in conversation together.

My goal is that, as women of the Kingdom, we can better understand each other’s needs and thinking patterns for our shared growth and His glory. This is not a pity party or a collection of criticisms, but a session of increased awareness and intentional listening. Hear them, please.

We begin by having them tell about the losses they grieve the most while doing life solo. They bravely dug inside their hearts to tell us.

While different griefs take center stage at different times, what rises

to the top is not having someone to do life with. Simply put, a longing for companionship. For a man who prefers her above the rest, loves her unconditionally, and won’t leave her. A best friend, who delights in doing things together and desires her company. Someone to take care of her, to ask about her day, and balance her ways of thinking, evening out a woman’s emotional quirks. Someone to discuss life with, and for sure, leadership for tough decisions.

Secondly, they have no children who look like them, talk like them, and prefer them. And yet with that loss, there have been no funerals, sympathy cards or understanding comments about the compounded loss in childlessness like we usually extend to those who are barren, or to those who grieve a child’s death. We commiserate with young mothers when they share about sleepless nights and a teething toddler, but when singles share about their difficulties, listeners may detect a problem with discontentment.

Relationships with nephews and nieces, brothers and sisters, are wholesome and a blessing. But singles can’t escape the fact that the true inner circle of a mom, dad, son, and daughter leaves them on the outside. On the plus side, deep relationships with other single friends can be powerfully anchoring in the companionship void.

Doing life alone almost forces them into a masculine identity in that of needing to make a living and establishing a sometimes-questioned independence. They miss having a man to do man-things like change the oil, hang heavy pictures, or move furniture. On days of sewing circle, or sisters' days, many of these ladies are working, punching a time clock.

One states, "On a different note, the greatest deprivation I feel with not being married is the lack of acceptance and fellowship socially and spiritually with folks my age. Singles are common people with universal needs and ache to fellowship with those who inspire them to grow and mature. Our culture tends to rank them with youth (they're unmarried, after all) or even children. The most painful part of being single is being asked to sit somewhere else at a social event to make room for a couple. Couples get choice seating, singles fit in wherever, even if it means sitting with children. When our church ruled, by majority vote, for couples to sit together for the service, it took several weeks of soul searching to understand why the decision was so devastating. We singles have been obliged to leave our places among the sisters to give place to couples. Basically, a loss of identity."

They may grieve the absence of physical touch. The kind that families

hardly think about when they hold hands to pray, cradle a newborn, or tousle a youngster's hair. They crave intimacy and romance. They bury dreams of riding off into the sunset in a getaway car after the wedding reception.

Yet, several ladies stated that they grieve no significant loss in being single. Do we suppose that they have been given the gift of singleness as Paul suggests in I Corinthians 7:7?

In answer to the question whether singleness becomes easier or harder with age, many of the ladies replied: both. Our feminine brains know that easier and harder can take place at the same time.

Easier, they said, in the aspect that decision-making comes more easily, because with time they've learned to navigate alone. Easier, because biological clocks have ticked past potential motherhood, so that loss has died and been buried and is not grieved as poignantly. Easier, in the aspect of feeling more settled, more secure in personal identity. Easier, because of witnessing dysfunctional homes.

As she grows older, there is less pressure and expectation. There are actually a lot of positives about being single and she enjoys flexibility that her married friends do not have. It becomes easier in the sense that her connection with God has matured, increased, and deepened. Trust comes

easier. Her life carries testimonies of ways He's come through for her time after time when happiness and fulfillment seemed impossible. The rich joy of His presence is more real and precious. Time eases the hard places of the calling.

But harder too. Harder, because there is no offspring to care for her as she ages. Her married peers are becoming more settled financially and are easing into the stage of life when travel and ministry with a man go hand in hand. Meanwhile, she may still be renting a doublewide and answering the school board, "Will you teach again?" Or the mission board, year after year.

The question of "who will care for me?" surfaced relentlessly. But hear this one: *"I think a good antidote for those worries is to develop relationships NOW with my nieces and nephews and other younger people, particularly within the church, but otherwise as well. Anyone who cares about people and surrounds themselves with good relationships will never need to be afraid of being alone or lacking proper care."*

With each peer's wedding, the hard reality is that although she was created for marriage and motherhood, the absence of a man continues to gnaw at her. She realizes that what she thought might be a chapter is turning out to be the whole story. She had invested in young students'

lives years ago. Those students have grown families of their own. She is old enough to be their mother.

It's harder when a father or older brother, for example, passes on—the reality of having no one to turn to for advice accentuates her aloneness. Age brings on decreased energy and activity, so there is more time at home alone.

It was suggested that a single lady should become sensitive at recognizing the triggers for "harder." She should be aware of what happens when others share their exciting love stories. Or if she chooses to be a young man's confidante as he gushes about his girl, she must know that while it may take her along in the emotion, she will still only be an onlooker at the end. It is helpful to be aware and reflect where times of weakness take her, as well as learn to recognize the things that are energizing.

I lived, for a time, among older single ladies. A small cartoon was hung *inside* the cupboard door for our private amusement. The caption ran something like this: "Whenever I long for a husband and children, I invite a family with rowdy children, and the feeling goes away."

My group of ladies answered this question next: As you watch your married friends, what helps you to be grateful to remain single?

They spoke of independence,

flexibility, allowance for spontaneity, and less drudgery with repetitive tasks as required of wives and mothers. They also spoke of appreciating a whole night's sleep and not cooking nightly suppers. They get to be the favorite aunt who is freer to invest in all the nieces and nephews without distraction or partiality. They acknowledged the stress they witness that parents face in trying to raise their families for God surrounded by a decaying society.

But the following reasons have me turning my head. There is more time for Kingdom work. More availability to go, stay, work, serve, teach, interact, nurse, pray, minister, and give, give, give. She has the opportunity to travel in an expanded world. One testified that in lieu of biological children, God has given her multiplied family members because she was free to interact very personally with those families who "adopted" her in those mission settings. She continues to maintain those enriching relationships. Much kingdom work has been done by single women, and the landscape in many missions would be greatly altered if only married persons served there.

Single women have more uninterrupted time to spend with God and to pursue an intentionally deep relationship with Him. We spoke earlier of loneliness, but its

counter definition: solitude, is a positive and enlarging gift. One commented that she is grateful that her identity is in Christ, and although developed through deep suffering, there is a sense of completeness. She is not tempted to find her identity in a husband or children. I believe that for every single person I've heard lamenting their aloneness, I've heard a married person lamenting not having enough time for their pursuit of God due to their many husband/children responsibilities. I'm reminded of a widow telling me that she would hesitate to remarry because God had become such an intimate friend to her, and she wouldn't want to risk exchanging that for a husband.

And then, the tragic gratitude in our single women is when they observe infidelity in marriage; strained, disrespectful, and hurtful exchanges between husbands and wives and broken marriage vows. They don't have to live in the same house with one who hurts them.

In future articles we plan to talk about practical ways to reach across the occasional married/single walls. Was singleness in God's original plan? How does God redeem it and give grace? Mothers, teaching their daughters about singleness and marriage. Moving away from home. And more helps for the journey.



Two Close Calls, One Long Day

David Troyer, Millersburg, OH

It was 1982. David and Erma Troyer were on their first trip to Europe. After spending a week in Western Europe visiting various missions involved with distributing Christian literature in Eastern Europe, they repacked their rented VW van, left Vienna, Austria, and headed east.

Although confident they had nothing to hide, they were nevertheless shaky and more than a little nervous as they approached their first communist border about mid-afternoon. After checking their passports, the Hungarian border guard briskly ordered David to step out and open the back door of the van. David tried to swing the door open as casually and carefree as possible, but instantly froze with his heart in his throat. Right there in front of everything else was a box of Bibles!

Earlier, they had loaded a carton of 48 Romanian Bibles at one of the missions, intending to drop them off in Vienna and at the end of the trip bring them back to the USA

for Romanian-speaking people here. What would happen now? Would the trip be over before it got started? Would they be arrested? But God was good! Before David could even collect his thoughts the guard, without touching anything, barked, “Close the door!”

As David shakily crawled behind the wheel again, Erma asked, “David, why are you so pale?”

“We have Bibles in the back!” he whispered urgently. With grateful hearts they silently and prayerfully eased their VW out of that border station and headed towards Budapest. In spite of their unnerving experience, David and Erma were encouraged by the knowledge that even though we at times make foolish mistakes, God is in control. He would take care of them the rest of the journey.

Later that day when they reached Budapest there was no by-pass around the sprawling metropolis. The road dumped them right into the middle of the huge city where they promptly got hopelessly lost. The Hungarian language was totally

foreign and the signs impossible to read. After crossing the Danube River three times, they finally found their way out of the city after darkness had fallen.


Late that night on a dark little road, they stopped and quickly set the box of Bibles off in a field, hoping that the Lord had a special purpose for the Bibles.

Still later that same night, with rain falling across the pitch dark, dreary landscape, David and Erma were lost once more. They pulled to the side of the road to scrutinize their by now well-worn map with a little help from the dim overhead light.

All at once Erma exclaimed, "What

is that bright light coming toward us?!" David took a quick look, immediately put the van in gear, gunned the engine, and sprinted forward. Moments later, a fast train whooshed past right behind them. Although no signs indicated it, they had been parked right on the railroad tracks.

Once again, God had His protecting angels at the right place at the right time. They drove a little farther, then pulled off the road once more and settled down to sleep as best they could in the vehicle for the rest of the night. David knew they had enough excitement for one day.

They thanked their Father for His protection. 

youth messages

A "Couple" Things

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

Court Definition:

Verb: to engage in social relationships and activities usually leading to marriage.¹

As we begin a new year, our minds are drawn to goals for the future, the "what ifs," and for some people, the question of if they will start a

courtship. Let's take a look at some of the steps involved in starting a courtship.

Before you begin a courtship, take time for prayer and fasting about God's will for you and the relationship He may or may not be leading you into. The key word here is **time**. The goal of courtship is to discern if this is the right person to develop a relationship with that will

¹ *Webster's New Explorer College Dictionary*, pg. 19

result in the two individuals being joined for **life**. This is a decision that must not be rushed. If you are still not sure which one of two girls you are interested in, then don't do anything until you are! Take time to ensure that you are spiritually ready for a courtship. You have no business asking permission to begin a relationship with a young lady if you have unresolved issues or are under church discipline. My now father-in-law asked me about my personal purity and thought life when I talked with him about courting his daughter. You never know what a father will ask or require of you, so be ready for anything.

Between discerning God's will and actually beginning a courtship, there is a period of time in which many potential relationships die. Here are some things that all young people should consider. Young men, keep it under your hat! You don't need to tell everyone about your interest in a young lady. Things have a way of getting around which leads me to my next piece of advice. Young men and women both, if you think there may be something developing between two people that you know, **STAY OUT OF IT!** Unless they ask you for advice, don't ask questions, don't tease, and don't interfere. How many potential relationships have

been ruined due to interference by well-meaning friends and relatives? When you expose someone's interest in someone else, it makes things very awkward. Even if nothing was developing, it could damage the chances that anything will. There is no rush to get married. Take the time to enjoy your youth! Take a few years to do some voluntary service (many couples have met while serving together). Don't always have one eye open for "the one." Let God do the directing! Don't feel like you need to stake a claim on someone you are interested in before someone else asks her. Trust that God knows exactly what He is doing—because He does. For both young men and women, don't "build castles." "Building castles" refers to daydreaming and dwelling on thoughts of someone and the future you "might" build together. This is very dangerous because when a person builds an emotional bond with someone or on the idea of a relationship, and it never actually happens, then there will be a lot of things to work through emotionally. They may also do or say things they wouldn't otherwise because the line between "daydream" and reality may get blurry.

The first step in beginning a courtship is obtaining the blessing

of the parents. Firstly, you need your own parents' blessing. Sit down with them and explain your desire and ask for their input. It might even be good to talk with your parents well in advance of when you would like to start a relationship. Ask them if there are areas in your life that you should or could work on. If they ask you to wait, do it. I reached out to a friend of mine who was asked by his parents to wait to begin courtship until he was a full member of the church. This ended up being six months. At the time it felt like forever and to my friend a little unnecessary. Recently, however, he said, "I have never regretted respecting my parents' wishes and waiting until I had their support. I especially appreciated her (the young lady) Dad calling me periodically during that time and encouraging me and building a relationship with me. It meant so much!" Later in our conversation he made this comment. "Respecting our parents' wishes and maintaining a good relationship with them was way more important to her and me than communicating behind their backs and potentially damaging our relationship with our parents. What is six months in the whole scheme of things?" If your parents are no longer living, or you are a first generation "Plain Christian,"

seek out one of your ministers or a trusted brother in the church to give you advice and to hold you accountable.

The next part of this step is to ask the young lady's father/parent for permission. There are several ways to do this: a phone call, a letter, or meeting in person. Meeting in person is one of the most time-honored and respectful ways to ask the permission and blessing of a young lady's father to court his daughter. Exceptions can be made for extremely long distances, but meeting in person if at all possible shows maturity on the part of the young man and respect for the father of the young lady. Men, this step is extremely important. As was mentioned before, a young lady's father may have stipulations for you or may ask you to wait for a period of time before starting to court (assuming she says yes) or even before asking the young lady if she is interested in a relationship. Respect her father's wishes. No matter how hard her dad is to get along with or how unreasonable his requests may seem, you will never regret respecting the wishes of a young lady's father regardless of the result of the courtship.

The second step in beginning a courtship is asking the young lady. Obviously, this can be the most

nerve-wracking step for a young man. For a young man to express his admiration for and desire to pursue a relationship with a young woman, he is making himself vulnerable and opening himself to the possibility of rejection. If they followed the steps outlined earlier, the young man has been thinking and praying about this relationship for a while. Just because he may feel that God is leading him to ask a young lady doesn't mean that it's God's will for her to say yes. Similar to asking a young woman's parents, there are different ways to ask a young woman to consider a relationship. This question is serious and should be treated as such. The mode in which a young man asks a young lady may vary based on how well the two know each other. For someone who is a good friend, asking in person may be the preferred method (it is also my recommended method). Whether the young man chooses to write, call, or meet with her in person, make sure the interaction shows respect for her as a person and whatever answer she may give. It is important not to rush the young lady. Give her the time she needs to make a decision without feeling pressured. Remember, the young man has had all the time he needs to think it through, but this could be the first

time that a relationship with him has ever crossed her mind.

The other half of step two is to get an answer to the question the young man asked. Obviously, getting a yes answer is amazing, but the answer isn't always yes. How does one deal with the emotional trauma associated with being turned down? Part of the reason that rejection may hurt so much could be that the young man has allowed himself to get emotionally attached to a relationship that hasn't materialized. If the answer is no, ask God what He is trying to teach you through the experience. The young lady should never feel guilty into saying yes because she doesn't want to hurt the young man who asked. It is easy to ask God "Why?" Why would He lead you to ask a young lady if she's just going to say no anyway? One young man's testimony was that he had always scoffed when people talked about emotional pain. After he received a no from a young lady, he no longer scoffed. He had experienced it for himself and could now relate to others who had felt rejection and emotional pain.

If a young lady's answer is yes, and the couple is going to embark on this journey together, there are a few things that need to be decided right away. These steps will be considered in the future.



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Think less of the power of things *over* you and more of the power of Christ *in* you.

• • • • •

If we would enlarge upon our blessings as we exaggerate
our troubles, our troubles would be lessened.

• • • • •

In times like these, it helps to remember there have always been times like these.

• • • • •

When troubles call on you, call on God.

• • • • •

When we put our cares in God's hands, He puts His peace into our hearts.

• • • • •

People cannot change truth, but truth can change people.

• • • • •

One thing you can give and still keep is your word.

• • • • •

Life, for most of us, is getting used to the things we hadn't expected.

• • • • •

The most important things in life are not things.

• • • • •

Ignorance is not the problem—it's not knowing we are ignorant that causes difficulty.

• • • • •

Everyone is ignorant—only on different subjects.

• • • • •

Share your joy—it takes two to be glad.

• • • • •

Full trust in the Lord puts anxiety at rest.

• • • • •

Faith never looks to circumstances but treads onward with its steadfast gaze on Christ.

• • • • •

Only those who see the invisible can do the impossible.