



# Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

## FEBRUARY 2021

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Calvary Messenger

February 2021

**Purpose of Calvary Messenger is:****To propagate sound Biblical doctrine;****To stimulate a deeper study of God's Word;****To anchor and fortify the faith of Christians;****To point lost and dying souls to Christ the Savior;****To welcome prodigals back to the fold and family of God;****And to help defeated Christians find victory in Christ Jesus.**

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# Gracious Spirit, Dwell with Me

*Thomas T. Lynch*

Gracious Spirit, dwell with me:  
I myself would gracious be;  
and with words that help and heal  
would Thy life in mine reveal;  
and with actions bold and meek  
would for Christ my Savior speak.

Truthful Spirit, dwell with me:  
I myself would truthful be;  
and with wisdom kind and clear  
let Thy life in mine appear;  
and with actions brotherly  
speak my Lord's sincerity.

Mighty Spirit, dwell with me:  
I myself would mighty be;  
mighty so as to prevail  
where unaided man must fail;  
ever by a mighty hope  
pressing on and bearing up.

Holy Spirit, dwell with me:  
I myself would holy be;  
separate from sin, I would  
choose and cherish all things good,  
and whatever I can be,  
give to Him Who gave me Thee!

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## The Sacred Space

**I**t was the third month after God had miraculously delivered the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt when they came to the wilderness of Sinai. Israel was camped in the vicinity of Mount Sinai. When Moses went up to God, the Lord called unto him out of the mountain. He said, *“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel”* (Exodus 19:4-6). God had a special plan for this congregation—He wanted to make them a special people. He wanted to **dwell among them** and show them His ways.

But the people were frightened by the thunderings, lightnings, the noise of the trumpet, and the smoking mountain. They preferred that Moses speak to them. They feared death if

God would talk directly to them. But this great God desired to live among them.

The Lord told Moses to ask the children of Israel for an offering. But He only wanted offerings from willing hearts. With these willing offerings God wanted them to make Him a sanctuary, *“that I may dwell among them”* (Exodus 25:8b). God found many willing hearts among this great congregation. They brought offerings of every sort for all the objects and parts of the tabernacle of the congregation. They brought offerings every morning until the willing workers of the sanctuary brought this notice to Moses, *“The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make”* (Exodus 36:5). There was more than enough to build this **sacred space** for the Eternal Jehovah.

There were also willing workers who were filled with God’s Spirit to build this dwelling place of Jehovah. *“Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and*

*understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded” (Exodus 36:1). They worked diligently and built the tabernacle exactly as God had commanded Moses. “And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:33-35). God moved in among His people!*

So continued the Holy Presence in the tabernacle and later in the temple. At the dedication of Solomon’s temple the glory of God filled the sanctuary, “so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for **the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD**” (1 Kings 8:11).

Then Jesus came! “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth*” (John 1:14). Jesus was the “*express image*” of His Father. But His Presence was just for a short time that ended in a blood

sacrifice for the sins of mankind. “*Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*” (Matthew 27:50-51). The transition of the sacred space had begun.


After Jesus’s ascension, a group of His followers were gathered together in obedience to their Master’s command. Jesus had told them that the Comforter would come after He returns to His Father. The transition of the sacred space was about to be completed! “*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*” (Acts 2:1). Because of the sin-cleansing power of the Blood of Jesus, that Holy Presence can now reside within the heart of the believer!

With His Presence comes also the strength and power of our Eternal God. “*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the*

*Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead  **dwell in you**, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:10, 11). His Spirit gives us new life!*

The temple where God’s Presence resides is no more an earthly building. God has chosen to fill His followers with His Spirit in the temple of our hearts! His Spirit dwells within us! *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God  **dwelleth in you?**” (I Corinthians 3:16). What a privilege to have that sacred space be within our very own being! But we are not alone and*

independent. We belong to God according to I Corinthians 6:19-20, *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”* What a privilege and responsibility to be a faithful builder of His Body here on earth. *“In whom [Jesus Christ] ye also are builded together for an  **habitation of God through the Spirit**” (Ephesians 2:22). May we keep our temples pure as we glorify God in our bodies!*

–AY 

## the bottom line

### Whatever He Believes

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

**W**e have heard this line a number of times, “Whatever he believes is what I believe.” This line of faulty thinking has not been known to be very common, but often enough for us to be a bit concerned. A high school student spoke those very words about an errant teacher who was not rehired. A layman in another state gave me a book to set

me “straight” on Bible doctrine as his way to say what he believes. A late pastor once said to me, “I never studied future prophecy for myself, but what this writer (he named him) believes, in his way of interpretation, that is what I believe.” Then he also sent me a book which was written by “that man.” These people, in essence are saying, “Never mind what the Bible says; I prefer to believe what

this man teaches.”

One man told me Jesus went to hell after He died on the cross to finish His suffering to “pay” for our sins. Another man claimed the blood Jesus shed for the sins of the world was paid to Satan, not to God, to “pay” for our sins. He quoted a well-known preacher who is held up as a man to invite for special meetings. Another writer also claims that same view in a widely distributed book among us. A brother claims the epistles to be higher in divine authority than the life and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. These exhibits have been spoken by people among us in our time. We consider these to be either heresy or deviant doctrines, contrary to the pure Word of God. These errors have been defended in brotherly conversation among multiple persons who are presently in our fellowships. The implications are of concern to us and can be like leaven in bread. Those concepts and related errors can metastasize like cancer in the body. These claims are not based on their own study of the Bible, but they quote others and say, “What he believes is what I believe.”

That is what Paul addressed in writing to Timothy. He said, “*But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat*

*as doth a canker (cancer) of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some”* (II Timothy 2:16-18). Paul names these publicly and denounces their false teaching. We chose to not name these people publicly but to briefly state these errors. We do not quickly nor without grief demote our own church members for heresy, but that action was taken in several of these situations just mentioned.

Church policy can consider to excommunicate people with heretical views if they do not repent, or the church can proceed with a lesser administrative charge by not permitting them to share in communion. Where heresy is recognized, it should not be allowed to continue in the church. Neither should such persons be allowed to teach in the church, nor in any other way to speak publicly in a church assembly except those heartfelt words of repentance in a needed confession.

Further on in II Timothy 2:23, it is written, “*But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.*” It was happening in the early church and is unfortunately still taking place today. A faulty Bible interpretation, in which they say they

are spiritualizing Scripture, can more easily spawn a deviant application.

We declare that the words of our beloved Paul in II Timothy 2:25, 26 are applicable today, being on target on this topic when He said, *“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”* Paul wrote that in the context of shunning profane and vain babblings.

Blessed is that man and woman who reads the Word of God and embraces it as his very own in faith and practice. The closest we can come to God is by us being in Him, by His Spirit, and He in us. The preposition “in” is one of the most powerful two-letter words in the New Testament! It involves not merely or casually knowing, “like, kind of, you know.” It means we embrace it; we hold on tightly, we love it, and soon come back for more. We become conversant on the Bible, its principles, and doctrine. How can we ever see appreciable congregational growth if there are pastors who say they never studied on one or more major Bible doctrines for themselves from the Bible itself?

Passion in preaching and teaching

comes from a personal study of God’s Word. Reading someone else’s book is as close as we can get to that person unless we meet him in person. We can read an author’s book and say, “What that author believes is what I believe.” But when we read the Bible, we can quote it and say, “What God says is what I believe.” Amen, brother? In very deed, yea and amen!

By God’s all-sufficient grace, I have written the entire commentary of the New Testament, comprising eighteen books. Nine of them are published so far. In my Aaronic salesman style, I will at times carry several of them with me, show them to persons I meet, and ask them which one they wish to buy. Most times people will say, “I am not a reader.” It is not new for even some preachers to respond with those very words as a disclaimer. It would be like a vendor peddling hot dogs and Mountain Dew and the customer saying, “I only eat a little bit of food and on only one day of the week and today is not that day!” Reading the Bible a little one day in the week is not enough for spiritual stamina nor for being engaged with God and drawing nigh unto Him, so that He will draw nigh to us. Reading the Bible and believing it from our hearts is as close to God as we can get. Appealing to God in prayer is one way to draw nigh to God, but



reading and embracing God's Truth for ourselves draws us even closer to God.

My burden in regard to writing my commentaries was to somehow draw our people back to the very text of our Bible. I know most people like to read about one subject or one theme which can be good. But we wish our people could somehow be more interested and conversant on the great themes of God's Word. To deny the specifics of the Word of God will only take a generation or two to also disregard it in general. The early church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:4) did not lose their first love, they left it. Significant Bible doctrine can be casually lost by one generation, and left by the next generation, by merely having a casual faith about it. Various Bible doctrines are treated uncaringly

by a casually declared line that says, "You can take it or leave it." Some leave it by default, merely by failing to have a high regard for the Bible as a whole.

**The Bottom Line** is that in order to be close to God, we must draw close to His Word. The closest we can be to God is to cherish His Word, draw close to it, and embrace it. If God seems far away, who moved? Strange and unbiblical doctrine will put such persons at a distance from God, and increasingly so as they persist in it.

The Bible says, "*Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine*" (I Timothy 4:13). Being weak on certain Bible doctrines cannot be offset by reading any number of other books and declaring a faith on the propositions of that author.



*We may not always  
see eye to eye,  
but we should walk  
hand in hand  
with Jesus*



# Something on My Mind

*Stephen Miller, Fredricktown, OH*

Dear friend, there's something on my  
mind  
That seems to grow with passing time,  
And yet I find it hard to know  
Or comprehend just why it's so,  
Yet history repeats itself  
As if we took it off the shelf.  
For as it was—so now it is,  
And folks repeat the way they live.

The wise old man who spoke the truth,  
And found the studies of the youth  
Reveal that we don't learn at all  
But in the same mistakes do fall;  
And so repeat that which was wrong  
And then indeed it is not long  
Until we reap with bitter tears  
What proved to fail in early years.

Today we find within this land  
A sin that's taking upper hand;  
That's tried and failed and yet I fear  
Sounds good and pleasant to our ear.  
There seems to be—may God forbid,  
A group of folks whose sin is hid;  
A cloak of righteousness do use  
To cover what they really choose;  
To make their goal of life supreme  
Of honor—pride—and self-esteem.  
'Tis sad to say, but yes, it's found  
Within the church, this sin abounds.

But what does tingle in my ear,  
A greater sin by far I fear;  
When churches held in high esteem  
Who choose to think they are supreme,

Yet have no need for truth or right,  
Nor hidden sins are brought to light;  
Will look on others with disdain  
Who do not join their pomp and fame.

And so, my friend, fresh courage take,  
Nor ever do the truth forsake,  
But take the path that's small and straight  
Yet safely leads to heaven's gate.  
All honor give to God alone  
For He indeed is on the throne.  
While churches rise and churches fail,  
His truth at last, it will prevail.  
For God does say and it is so  
And written in His book I know;  
He does not choose the high esteemed  
But looks for those He has redeemed,  
The humble—lowly—pure in heart  
And cleansed from sin, and set apart.  
And though they do not rise in fame  
But only seek to praise His name  
And do His will, and spread His Word  
To places that have never heard.

The Bible says that there will be  
Those saved through all eternity,  
From north and south—from east and  
west,  
Those folks redeemed and truly blest  
Who too will enter heaven's gate  
And of that supper will partake  
From every kindred, tribe, and tongue,  
And when that new song will be sung  
Their voices raise and fill the air,  
I wonder, friend—will YOU be there!



# Relationships

Denver Yoder, Somerset, OH

Someone made an unkind or belittling remark about you, and you have been hurt. Now what? How you handle those remarks or offenses will determine the outcome and largely shape your future attitude toward that person.

When relationships are healthy and upright, we can absorb almost anything. But when relationships are strained and low, it takes very little to rile and resurrect previous hurts and grudges.

When we relate to our good friends, we can digest almost anything. But with those we struggle to appreciate, we often revert to a pious veneer, rather than being honest and revealing our proud hearts, and in humility before God and man seek to restore splintered relationships.

Our relationship with God is generally no better than our relationship with our neighbors and fellow brethren. Such situations can, and will strain our relations to the maximum. If we are personally grounded and settled in truth, we can say along with the apostle Paul; *“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor*

*things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:28-29).

Circumstances have no power over our emotions unless we allow those emotions to take control of our thought patterns and feelings. If we respond to negative situations in kind, the end result will be broken relationships.

Relationships once broken are at best difficult to mend. Some reasons relationships are broken come from confusion, anger, hurts, frustrations, or misunderstandings. The most difficult relationship to restore between two offending parties is when hearts are filled with pious bitterness.

Often relationships are extremely damaged because we are not willing to invest the time and effort to talk things out, listen with empathy to the other person’s feelings, and come to an understanding. Rather than doing so we put on a mask and go about our pious way and hypocritically hide those ugly feelings of ill-will, bitterness, and hate.

Broken trust and a lack of confidentiality is another reason why

many relationships are shattered. It is imperative for authority figures, parents in the home, and ministers in church-related issues to be able to offer and retain trust to those under their care.

Relationships can also be broken because we get so involved and caught up in specific details of a particular situation that we fail to recognize the broader context in which that relationship occurred. We may be ever so thorough in detail but miss the real heart issues.

It is important to be honest in maintaining good healthy relationships. When you become suspicious someone else is holding a grudge against you, or someone comes to you and asks what's bothering you, and you reply, "Oh nothing, everything is fine," most likely neither one is being honest.

Equally important to being honest is the need to be of a sterling character so others can feel free to share their hearts without fear of a reprisal. Honesty is often shot down and termed as bitterness, or bad attitudes. When this is done we stifle trust and crush good relationships, creating an atmosphere where relationships are exceedingly difficult, if not impossible to restore.

Romans 12:18 says, "*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably*

*with all men.*" This verse would indicate that good relationships require effort. It may be the other person will not accept our efforts to restore peace in our relationships even though they bear fault for the breaks in the relationships.

We may be tempted to take control of the situation and force the effort to restore that which was broken. Not all relationships can or will be healed. It may not be within your power to mend what is broken. If the offended or the offender will not accept apologies or be reconciled, there is nothing we can do to change their minds. Pray for them and also ask God to keep your own heart from becoming bitter or resentful.

Relationships could be categorized into three parts: toxic, head-to-head, and heart-to-heart.

### **Toxic Relationships**

I Kings 21. Ahab wanted the vineyard of Naboth. When Naboth refused to comply, Ahab resorted to childish behavior. When his wife, Jezebel, found out why he was pouting, she resorted to hateful words, plotting Naboth's life in murder.

Toxic relationships are much more than just hate-filled words as Jezebel displayed. Toxic relationships can begin without saying a word. They can begin when we hold a grudge, ill will, or an unforgiving attitude

toward someone. James tells us if we have bitterness and envy in our hearts, and fail to recognize or admit it, we are lying against the truth.

Galatians 5:15 warns us to be cautious about toxic relationships. If we bite and devour each other, we will ultimately destroy our own spiritual relationship, not only with God but also with each other. As brothers and sisters in Christ we have an enemy, but the enemy is the devil and not each other.

Toxic, hate-filled words can only come from a heart that is completely devoid of God's love. When we are filled with God's love for our fellow man, there is no room for hate-filled relationships.

### **Head-to-head Relationships**

Consider Saul and the witch at Endor in I Samuel 28. Saul was in desperate straits. Because of disobedience, God had departed from him. He was not able to have a communicating relationship with God. Saul resorted to divinations by calling on a witch who called up sleeping old Samuel. In the end Saul died an awful death, completely cut off of his relationship with God.


Saul only had a head-to-head relationship with the witch and Samuel. They were able to communicate, but Saul could not connect to Samuel's heart. In a head-

to-head relationship, we may be able to co-exist but fail to hear what the other person is saying and allow it to become a reality in our lives. We listen to judge, not to hear the heart-cry. Often these types of relationships exist because we fail to see the value of our brethren in our lives.

### **Heart-to-heart relationships**

II Samuel 12. David as King had sinned grievously by committing adultery and also instigating murder. Nathan the prophet approached David concerning the rich man who stole the poor man's lamb. David, as our natural inclination is, was ready to deal harshly with the rich man.

Nathan replied by saying, "*Thou art the man.*" David's heartfelt response was simply, "*I have sinned.*" This is a real heart-to-heart relationship. When we approach the offender with the attitude of redemption rather than judgment, we establish a basis for a solid Christ-centered relationship.

When we listen to the other person to hear what they are saying rather than to point out their faults, we can establish a basis for effective relationships. We dare never form judgments as we listen. Solid, heart-to-heart relationships are built and maintained only as we are unbiased and enter into the other person's heart with the thought to offer redemption, rather than judgment. 

# Great Apes

*Karen de La Rosa, San Lucas, Guatemala*

**F**u Manchu, an adult male orangutan in the Omaha Zoo in the 1960s, had zoo employees stumped. He repeatedly escaped from his enclosure and would be found in a tree or basking in the sun on a rooftop. How he escaped was a mystery until they discovered that Fu Manchu climbed down air vents to get to a maintenance door, then used a wire that he bent into shape to pick the lock and open the door. He hid the “lock pick” in his mouth between his bottom lip and gums between escape attempts.

Orangutans like Fu Manchu are classified as great apes, along with gorillas and chimpanzees. Despite evolutionary claims that humans are also part of the greater ape family, Bible believers are convinced that God created humans distinct from apes, and refute that humans evolved from apes.

Great apes live in Africa and Asia and may reach the age of 50 years or more. Gorillas are the heaviest of all primates; male gorillas can weigh up to 400 pounds and are known for their strength. Gorillas are

critically endangered, due to habitat destruction, poaching, and diseases such as the Ebola virus which have significantly decreased the gorilla population.

Chimpanzees are noted for their intelligence. They have been observed to make and use tools for cracking nuts, hunting small animals, or probing for insects or honey. Chimpanzee mothers nurture their babies well, caring for them until about six years of age. Chimps enjoy grooming each other, cleaning each other’s hair of dirt, dead skin, and parasites. Grooming is an important social activity among chimps.

Orangutans are currently found only in the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra. These orange-reddish-brown arboreal animals spend most of their time in trees. They are adept nest-builders, making a new nest every evening in about five minutes, choosing branches that they know can support their body weight.

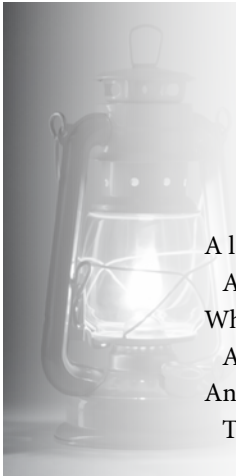
All apes have forms of communication and may use facial expressions, sounds, and gestures to communicate their emotional mood

and intentions.

While apes and humans have some similarities in characteristics, behaviors, and genetics, Genesis 1:27 states that “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Whereas evolutionists assert that the genetic

similarities point to a common ancestor, creationists believe that the similarities point to a common Designer, the Creator of both humans and apes.

*Reprinted from the Midwest Mennonite Focus. Used with permission.*



## The Old Lamp

*Author Unknown*

A lamp once hung in an ancient town  
At the corner of a street,  
Where the wind was keen, and the way was dark,  
And the rain would often beat;  
And all night long, its light would shine  
To guide the travelers' feet.

The lamp was rough and plain and old,  
And the storm had beaten it sore;  
'Twas not a thing one would care to show,  
Whate'er it had been before.  
But no one thought what the lantern was,  
'Twas the light that within it bore.

The lamp is a text for young and old,  
Who seek in a world of pride  
To shine for their Lord and to show Him forth,  
And never their light to hide;  
You are the lantern, a thing of naught,  
But Christ is the Light inside.

*[Public Domain]*



## marriages

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

### Hostetler-Miller

Bro. Darvin John, son of David and Julia Hostetler, Belleville, PA, and Sis. Arlis Joy, daughter of Albert and Anna Miller, Farmville, VA, on May 1, 2020, at the home of the bride.

### Jess-Schrock

Bro. Brandon, son of Kenneth and Sue Ann Jess, Arthur, IL, and Sis. Richelle, daughter of Phaylon and Carolyn Schrock, Middlebury, IN, on September 26, 2020, at Fairhaven Mennonite Church by Phaylon Schrock.

### Kauffman-Hochstetler

Bro. Rylan, son of Harlan and Esther Kauffman, Burgettstown, PA, and Sis. Brianna, daughter of Brad and Grace Hochstetler, Woodburn, IN, on June 6, 2020, at Allen County Christian Fellowship for Fellowship Haven by Wayne Lapp.

### Stoltzfus-King

Bro. Josh, son of Aaron and Anna Stoltzfus, Gap, PA, and Sis. Amanda, daughter of Emanuel and Katie King, Port Royal, PA, on December 5, 2020, at South Juniata Baptist Church for Shade Mountain Christian Fellowship Church by Daniel Fisher.


### Swartzentruber-Troyer

Bro. Dallas, son of Steve and Karen Swartzentruber, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Erica, daughter of Duane and Virginia Troyer, Leesburg, OH, on October 30, 2020, at Sharon Mennonite Church for Faith and Light Mennonite by Duane Troyer.

### Wittmer-Wagler

Bro. Jared, son of Barbara and the late Larry Wittmer, Montgomery, IN, and Sis. Carol, daughter of Sam and Margaret Wagler, Odon, IN, on August 15, 2020, at First Mennonite Church for Mt. Olive Mennonite Church by Dave Wittmer.

### Yoder-Miller

Bro. Kendrick, son of Rudy and Christine Yoder, Goshen, IN, and Sis. Hannah, daughter of Ben and Juanita Miller, Gladys, VA, on November 28, 2020, at Fairhaven Mennonite Church by Dan B. Miller. 

## cradle roll

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

**Burkholder**, Conrad and Sherlyn (Nolt), Derry, PA, first child and daughter, Wynter Peace, December 18, 2020.

**Helmuth**, Ross and Jenise (Wittmer), Loogootee, IN, first child and son, Archer LoWell, October 16, 2020.



**Helmuth**, Tyson and Treva (Herschberger), Lovington, IL, sixth child, third daughter, Mariah Grace, October 19, 2020.

**Hershberger**, Brandon and Hannah (Troyer), Sugarcreek, OH, second child and son, Dakota Brantley, December 13, 2020.

**King**, Jason and Rosalie (Byler), Kinzers, PA, third child and daughter, Charlotte Ann, October 14, 2020.

**Miller**, Lavon and Janine (Boll), Auburn, KY, first child and son, Colton Dale, December 3, 2020.

**Overholt**, Patrick and Brittany (Burkholder), Warsaw, IN, fourth child, second son, Winston Charles, December 31, 2020.

**Perdomo**, Jairo and Renita (Cal), Isabella, Belize, second child, first son, Wilson Elrique, November 6, 2020.

**Rose**, Scott and Judith (Yoder), Hillsboro, TX, second child and daughter, Claudia Elaine, December 3, 2020.

**Schrock**, Jonathan and Tammie (Weaver), Freeport, OH, second child, first son, Wade Emmanuel, December 24, 2020.

**Stoltzfoos**, Dwight and Brenda (Petersheim), Kinzers, PA, ninth child, fourth son, Liam Zander, November 26, 2020.

**Stoltzfus**, Arlin and Charissa (Barkman), Atglen, PA, third child and daughter, Alexis Faith, December 21, 2020.

**Stoltzfus**, Wendell and Krystal (Lapp), Christiana, PA, second child and daughter, Adelyn Kate, December 21, 2020.

**Swartzentruber**, Jason and Rachel (Kauffman), Swanton, MD, third child, first daughter, Meghan Jo, December 23, 2020.

**Troyer**, Nathaniel and Karen (Yoder), Covington, TX, third child, second daughter, Michelle Grace, August 31, 2020.

**Wright**, Barrett and Marla (Martin), Orange, VA, third child and son, Dakota Foster, December 23, 2020.

**Yoder**, James and Bethany (Stoltzfus), Honeybrook, PA, second child, first son, Preston Vance, November 18, 2020.

**Yoder**, Sanford and Loretta (Hochstetler), Itasca, TX, second child and daughter, Alaia Brooke, November 11, 2020.

**Yutzy**, Alvin, Jr. and Rhoda (Hochstetler), Huntsville, AR, fourth child, second daughter, Callie Harper, December 5, 2020.

**Zook**, Mike and Emily (Schrock), Fresno, OH, third child and son, Nicholas Graham, December 10, 2020.



## ordinations

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

**Bro. Bradley Gerber**, 36, (wife, Margaret Gerber), was ordained minister for Fairhaven A. M. Church's outreach church in Perth, ON, on December 13, 2020. Preordination messages given by Larry Ropp and John Byler. The charge was given by Arnold Jantzi, assisted by John Byler and John Gerber. Darren Jantzi shared the lot.

**Bro. Dave Miller**, 41, (wife, Joveda Hochstetler), Jetersville, VA, was called through the church and ordained deacon for Farmville Christian Fellowship, Farmville, VA, on September 27, 2020. Preordination messages were given by Earl Peachey. The charge was given by Eli Troyer, assisted by Tim Miller and Bennie Byler.

**Bro. Loren Troyer**, 45, (wife, Carolyn Overholt), Sissonville, WV, was ordained bishop for Ripley Christian Brotherhood on June 2, 2019. The charge was given by Paul Weaver, assisted by Rudy Overholt and Paul Overholt.



## obituaries

**Beachy**, Henry R., 71, Huntland, TN, passed away surrounded by family on October 29, 2020, at St. Thomas Rutherford Hospital due to complications from COVID-19. He was born March 16, 1949, in Stuarts Draft, VA, to Rufus and Amelia Beachy. They preceded him in death, along with his stepmother, Fern.

He was united in marriage to Clara T. Miller on May 15, 1976, and they enjoyed 44 precious years together.

Henry loved the Lord and his church at Belvidere Mennonite where he was a faithful member. He actively filled many roles over the years and will be greatly missed. He was a gifted farm equipment and diesel mechanic; operating his own business, Beachy's Repair, in Huntland

and respectfully served the community by his life of faith, purpose, and integrity. The family, church, and local community intensely grieve his departure.

Surviving are his beloved wife, Clara, and six children: Alfred (Juanita), Huntland; Grace (Milan) Wagler, Cottage Grove; Leon (Edith), Fredonia, KY; Edith (Galen) Helmuth, Huntland; Juanita (Vincent) Miller, El Salvador; Elaine, of the home; and 25 grandchildren. The family cherishes the legacy he leaves behind. Also surviving are five brothers: Edward (Louise), PA; Alton (Lovina), OH; Simon (Loretta), TX; Marvin (Orpha), KY; Rufus Jr. (Saloma), VA; and many nieces and nephews.

The funeral was held on November 2,

2020, at the Belvidere Mennonite Church with Stephen Beachy officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

**Hochstetler**, Agnes, 91, Goshen, IN, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on October 23, 2020, at Greencroft Health Care Center.

She was born on January 5, 1929, in Mylo, ND, to Levi and Lizzy (Graber) Bontrager. On October 4, 1949, in Middlebury, she married Laban Hochstetler. He survives.

Survivors in addition to her husband are four daughters: Joanna (Oren) Yoder, Partridge, KS; Judy (Willard) Martin, Goshen; Elsie (Jason) Schrock, Halsey, OR; Mary Gingerich, Plain City, OH; three sons: Edwin, Goshen; Nathan (Jan), Sioux Lookout, ON; John (Denise), Middlebury; 29 grandchildren; 43 great-grandchildren; a sister, Lucille (Paul) Schrock, Goshen; and sister-in-law, Mary Bontrager, Goshen.

She was preceded in death by her parents, two sons: Wilbur Hochstetler and Mark Sweeney; two grandchildren: Jaron Martin and Andrew Yoder; three great-grandchildren; a brother, Alvin Bontrager; four sisters: Gladys Gingerich, Mary Slabaugh, Lavina Bontrager, Viola Bontrager; and two sons-in-law: Mark Gingerich and Lowell Mast.

Agnes was a homemaker and had been an active member of Fairhaven Mennonite Church. She was happiest when she was serving others, especially serving the handicapped through Project Promise where she volunteered for 35

years. She also volunteered by grading Bible study courses for Gospel Echoes and with her husband volunteered as cooks at Camp Andrews for 11 summers. She enjoyed piecing quilts and comforters for her children and grandchildren.

Due to the national pandemic, the family held private services, conducted by son-in-law Jason Schrock and son Nathan Hochstetler. Burial was at Miller Cemetery, Goshen.

**Sommers**, Paul David, 77, Minerva, OH, passed peacefully to his eternal home on November 11, 2020, surrounded by his family after a time of declining health. He was born May 11, 1943, to the late Henry and Clara (Slabaugh) Sommers in Uniontown, OH.

Paul was a faithful member of Christian Fellowship Church, Minerva, OH, giving countless hours as a janitor, trustee, and elder. He enjoyed fine woodworking and was employed by Hartville Kitchen for many years. He was a kind man of few words, loved for his compassion, meekness, and integrity.

In addition to his wife Keturah of 56 years, he will be missed by his children: Brenda (Mark) Miller, Homeworth; David (Yvonne) Sommers, Oswego, KS; Ruth Ann (Jonny) Shenk, Utica; James (Kristy) Sommers, Sarasota, FL; Dorcas (Joel) Gingerich, Minerva; Leah (Vernon Jr.) Miller, Seneca, SC; and 20 grandchildren. He is also survived by two sisters: Catherine Unruh Troyer, and Mary Ellen Coblentz; three sisters-

in-law: Judy Sommers Overholt, Mabel Sommers, and Betty Sommers.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by three grandchildren, two angel babies, brothers: John, Andrew, Willis, Walter, Wallace, Ben, a stillborn brother; and sisters: Irma and Lydia.

The funeral was held at Christian Fellowship Church with burial in the church cemetery.

**Yoder**, Elmer Menno, 82, Meyersdale, PA, passed away peacefully from natural causes in his home surrounded by his family. He was born August 16, 1938, to Walter and Annie Yoder.

Elmer is survived by his wife of 54 years, Sara (Zook) Yoder; two daughters: Carol J. (Kenneth) Tice, Salisbury; Christina R. Yoder, Meyersdale; seven grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, two sisters: Viola (Noah) Petersheim, Warrenton, VA; Loretta Yoder, Meyersdale; sister-in-law, Martha Yoder, Catlett, VA; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Homer P. Yoder.

Elmer accepted Jesus as his Savior in his youth and was a faithful member of Mountain View Mennonite Church where he was known as the “Smartie man” by the children at church. Even the adults would receive Smarties when they shook hands with him. He was a dairy farmer and enjoyed his Guernsey cows and Allis Chalmers tractors. After he sold the farm, he was a taxi driver for the Amish community.

Elmer was a gentle and easy-going

man who loved his family deeply, and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Funeral services were held December 24 with Merle Beachy and Junior Beachy officiating. Terry Yoder performed the committal. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Yoder**, Louise K. (Otto), 78, Cottage Grove TN, passed away on November 27, 2020, at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Evansville, IN, from COVID-19 complications. She was born August 12, 1942, in Hartville, OH, to Samuel and Katie Otto.

She married Ervin W. Yoder on June 23, 1962. He survives. To this union were born five sons: Samuel (Mary Ann), Hillsboro, IN; Michael (Virginia), Cottage Grove; Mark (Dorothea), Goshen, IN; Jason, Cottage Grove; Kevin (Faledra), Harrison, AR; and two daughters: Brenda (Duane) Yoder, Carrier Mills, IL; and Mary Kathryn (Jonathan) Miller, Cottage Grove.

She was preceded in death by her parents and three grandchildren: Jeffery Miller, Keith Yoder, and Sheila Yoder.


Funeral services were conducted at Bethel Mennonite Church, Paris, TN, on December 2, 2020, by Lester Otto and Clifford Hostetler. Interment was at Calvary Christian Fellowship Cemetery. Committal services were conducted by Leon Wagler.

**Yoder**, Robert Carson, experienced the joys of heaven before his birth on

October 8, 2020, in Wichita, KS. Before his parents, John and Sharon Yoder, and five siblings: David Otavio, Lori Mae, Kylan Jacob, Darrell John, and Aaliyah Faith had a chance to hold him, Robert was already safe with Jesus.

His grandparents, David and Faith Yoder and Jesse and Lillian Hostetler,

along with many uncles, aunts, and cousins, also miss the joy of having known him.

Graveside services were held at Cornerstone Mennonite Church Cemetery on October 11, 2020, with Stan Nisly and Eugene Yoder serving. 

## observations

**D**uring a recent conversation with a brother, he asked me a question. I'll call him Zeke.

Just a bit of background might be in order first. Zeke belongs to a family who has experienced a good bit of disappointment with plain churches. Those disappointments cover a range of things that they have both personally experienced and observed from a distance. I would further suggest that it is probably right to note that in this case some of the disappointments likely originate in the churches they reference and some in their own lives. It's often that way.

This particular brother currently belongs to a church brotherhood that unapologetically identifies as conservative Anabaptist. The diversity apparent in Zeke's family leads to some lively family discussions from time to time about matters of faith and practice. Zeke told me that

some of his family have observed that many of the institutional ills of evangelical Christianity are expressed by leaders who are primarily concerned with preserving the structure and reputation of their churches. They do so, both by catering to the wishes of their people and through authoritarian control. Furthermore, some in Zeke's family feel as if these same dynamics are at work among conservative Anabaptist congregations. Zeke's question to me was, "Is this how your church and fellowship of churches operate?"

I simply didn't know what to say. I did say that I don't see much evidence of this in the circles that I'm familiar with, but it's possible that things exist that I'm unaware of. Zeke went on to say that his studied observation, in an effort to understand this concern, doesn't support this conclusion. But he wondered what I am seeing.

While I don't particularly relish

questions that implicate unfavorable things about me and my people, we can benefit from these observations if we accompany our response with a bit of mental and Spirit-led inventory assessment regarding our contribution to these impressions. What would you have told Zeke?



During the winter solstice on December 21, 2020, the two largest planets in our solar system, Jupiter and Saturn, were aligned in space in such a way that when observers on earth looked, it appeared as if the two were merging. Of course, they were still hundreds of millions of miles apart, but they were unusually aligned in our field of vision.

The next time this phenomena will be observable, should the Lord tarry, will be in 2080, with the next occurrence after that being in the year 2400. The only reason these things can be predicted with such confidence is that a Master Designer has “set things in order” with astonishing precision. Praise Him!



Jessica Mast’s young life was snuffed out at the tender age of four, just a few days before Christmas. Her parents and two neighbors were all arrested and are being held without bail in connection to this little girl’s death. The reported facts surrounding the murder are difficult to comprehend.

Discussion of the details don’t really belong in this publication. Jessica’s two younger siblings are currently wards of the state.

It is my understanding that none of those charged currently belong to any Anabaptist church. The most recent church they had connections with had taken action to remove them due to choices they had made some months or years prior. I commend the church for taking action they felt appropriate and scriptural in response to sinful and unchristian behavior and choices. The purpose of these comments is not to draw attention to the persons nor churches involved, so I’m choosing not to name them. There’s a pretty good chance many of you know the situation I’m referring to, and if you don’t, you can learn more details from someone besides me.

I know very little about the four persons currently jailed in connection with little Jessica’s murder. But I know enough to understand that there is likely a good bit of overlap in the upbringing they experienced and my own. One of the words that describe my response to this story is “shaken.” How does a person who has had the opportunity to learn of Jesus Christ and profess Him as Savior get to the point that these people did? How!?

We do well to take this opportunity

to be reminded that in our churches, our homes, and our personal lives, we need to address sin as we become aware of it. The church that these persons were a part of earlier did so. Sadly, it seems as if those charged with crimes did not.

Choices we make are not only a result of who we are, but they help shape and determine who we will become. I wonder what the four who are in prison now would do if they were offered the opportunity to rewind their lives several years and reevaluate the choices they've made in light of what they know now. I'm reminded of the words of the poet who said something along these lines:

*Sin will take you further than you want to go,*

*It will keep you longer than you want to stay,*

*It will cost you more than you want to pay.*

We need to be serious about accepting personal responsibility for our actions and choices. The enemy of our souls is always eager to influence us in whatever ways he is able, and we are vulnerable. But what is the enemy's role when we do wrong?

There are some who feel that when a person sins or does something wrong it is due to the work of some demonic force. So the way to deal

with things that don't belong in our lives is to address the demonic entity that is behind the wrong. When this philosophy is carried to an extreme, dealing with sin is reduced to casting out or renouncing the offending demon. It appears as if this way of thinking was embraced in some measure by the four persons charged in connection with Jessica's death.

I propose that we recognize sin and wrongdoing as personal choices and address them by repentance. When we choose God's way, the influence of the enemy is weakened.

Lastly, deception often renders a person incapable of understanding things as they really are. This awareness should keep us humble and compassionate towards those under the sway of deception.

However, both deception and demonic influence are not things that plague us unless we make choices that lead us in that direction. I won't say conclusively that there might not be rare exceptions, but we don't become deceived or demon-possessed without making some wrong choices somewhere, somehow. I'm not suggesting that those who are thus afflicted wish to be in that situation. I'm simply saying that this is one result of an escalation of wrong choices. We've all made wrong choices at some point in our lives. That's why an awareness

of the importance of our choices and accompanying humility are so important for us today.

• • • • •

A week or so ago, my wife, Brenda, was doing a bit of shopping at our local Walmart. While in the store she was approached by a friendly law officer. Brenda was a bit puzzled why he would seek her out, but her questions were soon answered. He asked if she would like a dollar. Of course she was happy to receive a dollar. He pulled out a wad of dollar bills and handed her one. It was folded with a card stapled to it with this message:

“Thanks for being a life saver and wearing a mask!

City of Parsons and your Parsons Police Department. [www.parsonspd.com](http://www.parsonspd.com)”

He went on to say that they wish to express appreciation for those who are complying with the local mask mandate.


Those who are in charge with promoting compliance with local laws have more than one method at their disposal to incentivize compliance. One method is to penalize non-compliance. Another is to reward compliance. This certainly was an interesting example of law officers attempting to reinforce the importance of compliance through a combination of reward reinforced

by friendly personal contact and clear messaging.

• • • • •

Sometimes I wonder what law officers really think about what is going on these days. This past year was marked by huge protests that went on for months and months. These protests sought to draw attention to a variety of injustices. Sometimes these protests devolved into lawless violence and destruction of property.

I, among many others, shook my head at the lack of respect for property and law and order that seemed rampant. Donald Trump, who was then President, sought to present himself as one who champions law and order. Those sympathetic to this message seemed especially pleased by this appeal to lawfulness and respect for human life and property. I’m not sure, but I’m guessing that many law officers appreciated this show of support.

But as I think about the message that this friendly police officer handed to my wife, I have a few questions. If he believes that wearing masks saves lives, do you suppose he wonders why the very same people who are so concerned about public safety and law and order when we talk about the protests, blatantly disregard a public policy like mask-wearing whose stated intent 



# The Ideal Missionary

*William Gregory-Smith, Waterford, Ireland*

**H**ow should missionaries relate to local people? Should locals be treated differently from other missionaries? Should missionaries try to integrate into the local culture as much as possible? How should the interaction be done?

This is something that I have struggled with a lot and am looking for an answer or a possible change. We will be looking at several perspectives on this issue. With views from Romania, America, the UK, and Ireland, I hope to give you a balanced perspective.

## **What is the ideal relationship between locals and missionaries?**

On this topic I had several perspectives.

Ryan Witmer, who has been a missionary in England for over eight years, says, “It is the duty of missionaries to adapt to the local culture as much as possible, so they can relate to the locals on a ‘kindred spirits’ level, or in other words, relate as the Lord instructs us to as brothers in Christ. Sometimes a student/teacher relationship is necessary, but as much as possible, it should be a

student/student relationship.”

Another response I had was from Glen Lund who has been a long-term missionary in Zambia, Malawi, and Uganda. He writes of “Working together in harmonious partnership for the gospel. Clothed with the character and wisdom of Christ. Filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit without pride, envy, boasting, or selfish ambition. Exercising their spiritual gifts according to the measure of grace given to them, spurring one another on to love and good deeds.”

But from a slightly different perspective, Jan Kleczkowski, a missionary for two years with the organization CWC, reminded us that although Paul said that there was no difference between Jews or Greeks, he still wanted to have his Jewish brother with him in his time of need. By this he implied that although we can have an ideal for missionary-to-local relationships, there are still cultural and ethnic limitations.

Another memorable quote in relation to this topic from Daniel Krunakaren, who has worked with Layman’s Missionary Fellowship for

many years, was, “You can’t catch flies with vinegar. You catch flies with honey.” This could be interpreted in many ways, but one of the best is that missionaries should give the best that they have to their work in the mission.

So to recapitulate on the general consensus, the ideal relationship is brother-to-brother, but due to human limitations this is not always possible.

### **Should local people be allowed to take up work in the mission?**

Every single one of the seven people asked in the survey answered positively.

Here are a few quotes: “Ministry is based on the local people; the objective of mission involves local people. They should help minister in the churches, but only after they have given their lives to Christ. Also, use material to get through to the spiritual.”

And again, “In general, yes, since in most cases the locals are the point of the mission. This gives the locals a ‘real world’ look at Christian people. This has many pitfalls, but it seems to be worth the risk since, again, the locals are the point of the mission.”

So as stated at the top, the universal feeling for this is that locals should take up work in missions.

### **Should missionaries be allowed to spend a short length of time on the mission field?**

This question got some varied and interesting results.

Here is our friend Ryan’s perspective. “As long as possible. I believe that missionaries do the locals an injustice by coming for six months or even two-year stints. This ties in with the relational issue because a relationship cultivated over six months will never be the same as a ten-year relationship.”

Mark Dzuiba, a translator of *The Seed of Truth* magazine from Romania observed, “Yes and no. For the sales personnel, bakers, secretaries, etc., I would say about one-two years can be a good option. For short projects like splitting wood, packaging seeds, and rebuilding projects, two-three months can work great. For church-building projects, the commitment should be for life for leaders of the church unless God calls them elsewhere. For other mission directors or leaders the commitment should be long term.”

Ernest Longenecker said, “I don’t think a two-year minimum is unreasonable except possibly for someone who doesn’t have much contact with the locals. There is the possible danger of people coming

to depend on one or two leaders so much that the leaders become the message rather than the bearers of the message.” Ernest has had a lot of contact with missionaries, and his children have worked (and work) in teaching and other international and local mission work.

As a summary for this thought, it seems that the length of time of the stay depends on the role of the missionary.

As a synopsis for this essay, it would be good to say that all these thoughts are ideals and something to be attained. This does not always happen but is definitely something to be achieved. For my own part, I would say that for the stability of the church, it is better to have long-term

missionaries. As far as relationship status, I would echo Mark Dziuba in saying, “Family relationships! We are the body of Christ. Members one to another or brothers and sisters in Christ.” In relation to the work of locals in the mission, I would say that if there are locals who are faithfully attending the church, then it would be more important for them to be in the positions of authority in the mission than the foreign missionaries. The reason I state this is because the place of the mission is in the local’s home, whereas for the most part it will not be the missionary’s home. This will create a stable foundation for the mission.

*[Written for a school assignment.]*



## mission awareness

# Bethel Springs to Calvary Bible School (Part 2)

*Elam Stoltzfoos, Kalona, IA*

**I**n 1965 a bridge was built across the White River at Calico Rock. This bridge provided better access to Calico Rock for the people of Culp. Because of this access, both the medical clinic and the school

at Bethel Springs were closed. The church at Culp continued on. The clinic building was useful for hosting events, but the school building needed a tenant.

It was during this time that the

Beachy people were thinking and talking about having their own Bible School. Most of their youth attended Messiah Bible School at Carbon Hill, OH. And some of the teachers at Carbon Hill were also Beachy men. But where to start such a school was the unanswered question.

In the spring of 1968 Willie Wagler from Kansas visited Mountain View, AR. He was visiting with Elmer Gingerich and Abe Schwartz who both lived in Mountain View at the time. They were discussing the idea of the Beachy group wishing to operate their own Bible School. As they were visiting, Abe gave thought to the empty Bethel Springs School in Culp, so they planned to see it. After visiting the property they thought it a worthy idea to present to the Beachy churches. A board was formed, and a deal was worked out with the Mennonite Board of Missions. The Beachy people rented the facilities for the first few years until it was purchased by the constituency in 1972. It was somewhat unclear whose land it was because some of the locals thought it was their donation, so it should be theirs to sell. But when it was agreed upon that it was to be a donation from one group to the next, the locals were no longer interested, and the pathway was successfully

paved for the transfer. However, one dollar was paid for it in order to simplify the land transaction.

The early facilities were sparse. Grasse Cabin was home to anywhere from 15-22 boys, all sharing one shower and bathroom. The bunks were stacked three high. The Brown Cabin housed 12 boys, and the old clinic house could hold up to another 24 students. The girls' quarters were on the third floor of the main building. It had a restroom but lacked showers. So a little trailer, equipped with four tub-showers, was parked on the west side of the school and served as a shower house for the girls. The laundry consisted of two wringer washers in the basement of the clinic, and a dryer in the garage of the clinic.

In 1976 a dormitory was built for the boys. An apartment was built upstairs at the one end for housing couples. In 1978, 18 feet was added to the boys' dorm, and in 2000 a new wing was added, and the entire dormitory area was remodeled.

In 1984 a two-story, eight-bedroom building, named Pine Haven, was built for staff housing. And in 1997 when the new ladies' dormitory was built, the third floor was converted into staff housing and one additional classroom.

There were always challenges

to be faced. During the first year there was no water from the well for fifteen days. Fortunately, with a creek running through the property, water could be had, but it took lots of work. Electricity outages were all too common. Long outages caused burst water pipes, cold living quarters, and many other challenges. So eventually a generator was installed.

For years all the staff and students shared one telephone line. In the 1990s a fax line was added, plus a third line dedicated to the staff and teachers. Today, with cell phones, those lines are mostly available for use at any time. Plus, with an internet connection, a newspaper is rarely seen, and Amazon delivers lots of goods to 6466 CR 73.

Teaching methods have also seen changes as the years passed by. Chalk boards were the primary method for teachers to post their main points. Later, transparency projectors seemed to be an upgrade to the chalk board, but in time they were discarded for the PowerPoint presentation. And now all rooms are equipped with both projectors and reader projectors. Through all of this, the chalk boards have remained on the walls as if watching the changes. And now some teachers are discovering that the chalk boards are

indeed a good way to communicate as they foster a bit more student interaction.

Today's students are more informed, largely because of information being so readily available. The students of yesteryear seemed to view their teachers more as an information source. And the teachers relied more heavily on the lecture style to communicate information. But today's students want their teachers to guide them in learning, more in the model of journeying with them in discovery. They need to be guided in wrestling with the myriad of information that is available to them. And, as always, the teacher needs to insist that the Word of God is the central, guiding factor in our lives.

The roster of teachers also continues to change. Most of today's teachers are former students of CBS, which helps their teaching preparation. Most of the current teachers are on campus with their families, whereas the teachers of the early years would often be there for the duration of the term without their families. Of course, the presence of families means that the sound of children reverberates at CBS, mixing an interesting blend of campus life with family life, both for the better and worse. Long-time teachers

now experience the joy of teaching alongside former students, and in 2019 a new first happened in that a third-generation teacher taught there.

The challenge upon us now is how we lead another generation onward. Permit me to share a few of my heart's visions.

Firstly, let us give respect, and not forget the legacy of the Mennonite efforts in Culp. There are nearly ninety years of Anabaptist history at this mountain hollow in Culp, Arkansas. The people of the area have high respect for the Mennonites' efforts in serving their community, and as a rule have been appreciative of the presence of CBS. The locals hold the early Mennonite pioneers in high esteem, and so should we.


Secondly, let us keep learning how to serve the next generation better. We will never reach them without walking with them in their pathways. Our young people want a relationship with their leaders. They want their teachers to understand where they are in life. It is a mistake to only train them for the future. While that is supremely important, we must recognize that our youth are a vital part of both the ministry and operation of the church of

today.

Thirdly, it is my desire that our younger generation would understand and value the Anabaptist tradition that has long been a part of their heritage. They will not understand that unless their teachers and elders understand what it means to be "Anabaptist." Our Anabaptist tradition is biblical; in fact, it is apostolic.

And finally, it is my wish that they would learn to know Christ so well that they would intuitively do the will of the Father. And that they would follow the pattern of serving; serving while working, like Maude Douglass, Floyd Miller, Dr Grasse, and many others.

*"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1,2).*

Our young people are not merely the church of tomorrow, they are more than that. They are a powerful force of the church of today. 

## Singles Speak II

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



*In last month's column we explored a few questions that were channeled through a small army of single ladies. They spoke about losses and gains they find in singleness and whether doing life solo becomes harder or easier with time. In this column I bring them all together again, and we offer suggestions on how to merge our single/married lives in meaningful ways. We also talk about how mothers can best prepare their daughters for singleness or marriage. We hope to continue Singles Speak at least one more time next month. God bless you for your interest.*

*[Correction: Last month's title should have been "Singles Speak I." AY]*

**H**olly and Gloria were lifelong friends. Gloria happily served as Holly's bridesmaid, but both knew a fundamental change was coming into their lives. Today, Gloria works 40+ hours per week as a secretary while Holly mothers three little ones. The dissimilarity in scheduled free time is huge. Evenings belong to a daddy with his family. In another house, Gloria tries to fit all the house, yard, and other work into evening and Saturday hours. Friendship and fellowship are only possible with time spent together, so how can this work?

Ladies who are doing life alone give

these practical ideas for nurturing relationships across the divide. Plan for early morning coffee together. Take a day or lunch off. Be intentional about planning for time together and plan ahead. Couples may need to give an evening. Meal invitations go both directions, but I suggest that Sunday noon can feel especially solitary with only one at the table. If we're willing to be vulnerable, a single might even drop in uninvited! Lest we feel like we need to group them and only invite singles, they are also okay with being the only single among marrieds. Dare I suggest that husbands might facilitate an occasional evening away

for their wives? Perhaps their single friend could reciprocate with the gift of babysitting and offer them a date night in return. Singles who answer to an employer and a work calendar can find it challenging to respond to last-minute plans, especially when there is food preparation involved.

Know your singles' ages. Shooing them off to sit with the youth at the picnic table while married couples (younger than they, perhaps) sit elsewhere with other marrieds, is a sure way to make them feel like misfits. They actually enjoy sitting with their married peers. The same applies for seating in our churches. Several indicated that they feel great pleasure when a young mother hands them a child or infant to sit with them during services.

Someone stated, "I'm loneliest in a large group." Think funerals, reunions, weddings. Invite a single to go through the food line with your family and sit with you. Adopt her as an aunt to your children. Don't just ask for her help with the five bushels of green beans if you can't also invite her along on your camping trip, bringing a friend if she wishes.

My friends indicated that men's conversations sometimes hold more interest for them than those of the married ladies. How else will they learn about politics, church matters,

and simply how to process work and life? "It is an incredible gift to us to be valued as a sister in Christ by your husband. The church should find a way to inform of and elicit feedback from single women about church matters that may be discussed at men's meetings or matters in which it is expected that husbands inform their wives."

"I've noticed how dynamics change when couples sit together for church services. The ladies come and go as wives, loved, protected, provided for, and valued. When seating is segregated, they come and go more like sisters who struggle, who need God, who find in Him refuge, comfort, and security, making us more like the spiritual family we are. We singles can relate [to those emotions]."

Because the day-to-day lifestyles between a married and a single woman look like polar opposites, we must search for the commonalities among ourselves. Could we sometimes talk more about what is going on in our hearts and less about how we spend our days? Someone stated, "grouping people's supposed interests by marital status is an odd categorization method." They are, after all, normal adult women, not girls. We are all more alike than we are different. Study groups by email,



WhatsApp groups, phone calls, or prayer/accountability groups are splendid ways of connecting as spiritual sisters on common ground.

Someone commented that it can be nearly impossible for a woman to support herself and make house payments on a minimum wage. When job opportunities are held to a lower pay scale, perhaps the church might consider financially aiding single women in the same way that widows are often supported.

What's a single lady to do with the incessant "honey-do list" without a honey to do it? Most of us feel incompetent when it comes to home maintenance or auto mechanics tasks. A man who offers his services from time to time can almost magically turn her insufficiencies into a huge blessing.

Single ladies don't all fit into a single box. (Do the married?) Some are fine with tactful mention on singlehood in a wedding service, while others, quite resoundingly, are not! Their opinions are as diverse as they are, for that matter. Or in grappling with this question: would you like to serve on food committees, help clean the church house, and participate in scheduled tasks? Some give a resounding "Yes, we long to be needed! We don't feel favored when we're excused." And others

hesitate. Hear their words, "We want to be needed in the church. We need to be needed. Ask us to serve on committees, ask us to clean church, ask us to bring food for fellowship dinner. Probably the main reason we act like we don't want to be asked is simply because we are afraid of not being enough. But we really do want to be builders in the church. We just don't always know what our place should look like."

I strongly suggest that we owe each other the gift of candid communication about what works in every situation. It becomes powerful when we communicate to them about their wholeness, their beauty, the power of their service, their depth of surrender, their motherliness, and their nurturing presence. An occasional sermon on single life can serve as an awareness reminder as well as encouragement.


How can mothers best prepare their daughters for singleness or marriage? While a mother is obviously within a marriage and desires the same for her daughters, her own understanding of the issue is foundational. If she esteems a girl's worth on whether she's landed a husband, it will likely culminate in a daughter's struggle to accept singleness. And if a mother's own self-worth is based on her daughter's marriageability, woe is us!

Our daughters “learn marriage” from us, their mothers. It is imperative for us to portray it beautifully, and to show them God’s plan in how to relate well to a husband and children. But that is only part of preparation for life. It must not be the only life model we hold out to our growing daughters. Marriage is not the path to wholeness and security. Haven’t we married ladies also learned that our husbands can never be big enough to bring us wholeness? Whether married or single, our true identity and perfect wholeness can only be found in our Heavenly Bridegroom. That precedes any other calling in life. That is, to love Him with heart, soul, mind, and strength. Then, and only then, are we best suited to exercise the gifts He gives us. Blessed is the mother who believes and lives this first of all, for then she can impart truth to her daughter.

What are some everyday ways this may look like? We invite single friends to our homes often, and we never refer to them in a derogatory or pitying old maid sense. Their calling is not deficient or of less value. We esteem voluntary service. We hold a zero-tolerance policy for teasing about the opposite gender. Early on, we don’t hold out an expectant “when you begin dating.” We don’t throw a subtle indication that if you perform

this way or that, achieve this life skill or that, look this way or that, a man will come knocking or you become marriage worthy. Encourage their femininity and nip any inappropriate boldness early on. Marriage should never be implied as a reward for good behavior.

We don’t put life on hold until we get married. Counter self-pity with intentional living, approaching life with a mindset of growth, embracing hard things, working through conflict, and critical thinking. Make goals of spiritual maturity, a Biblical worldview, how to handle money well, with varied life skills and a large range of interests. It’s about a healthy way to live; about becoming a good marriage partner or a fulfilled single person.

Hear your daughter’s feelings. Communicate honestly about her desires and what she is struggling with. Instead of instructing her with “you shouldn’t feel that way,” help her find God’s truth in response to Satan’s lies. Help her find God as her Lover at a young age. Crushes on boys may be a reality early on, and that is an excellent time to direct them to truth. These struggles are ways God invites us to His loving sufficiency and to find our inherent value in Him. The teen years are not too early to learn how to rest in God and to find that He alone establishes our worth. 

## Power in Prayer

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

**P**RAY. We need to pray. God cares about each of us. He knows about small details in our days. When we share answers to prayer, it encourages and builds our faith and the faith of our friends and children.

In the book, *Light from Heaven*, seven-year-old Joseph Armstrong found refuge in prayer beside an old pile of lumber behind the barn. His father was an unkind and ungodly man, but his gentle godly mother had taught him how to pray. One day when his parents were gone on a long trip without him, he was sad and lonely, so he took his troubles to God in prayer. Little Joseph, who had to work too hard for his age and received beatings and harsh words from his dad, thought no one but God saw him as he knelt beside the wood pile and poured out his heart to God.

God heard Joseph's prayers. God spared his mother's life when she was in ill health. And although they prayed, his father continued to be unkind to both of them.

Years later, Joseph learned that their rough hired hand had seen him pray.

The small boy kneeling in prayer had spoken to that man's heart.

How old are you? Have you learned to take your troubles to God in prayer? Here are three short stories about prayer.

### STORY ONE:

"I lost my Birkenstock sandals," a friend told Markus. "I guess I will just have to shell out the money and buy another pair."

Markus asked her, "Have you prayed to God to help you find them?"

She wondered if lost sandals were too small to pray about? But she did pray and asked God to help her find the lost sandals. That same evening she was amazed to find her favorite sandals in one of their vehicles.

### STORY TWO:

My son went to an auction on a cold wintery day. After parking and locking his car, he went to the office and got a bidding number. He reached into his coat pocket for his car keys. The pocket was empty. He went back to his car. His heart sank to find it locked.

What should he do? He breathed a prayer asking God, Who knows

all things, to help him find his keys.

A man sitting in a red truck nearby saw Markus as he searched the ground for the keys. He rolled down his window and told him, "I found a set of keys on the ground behind my truck and was planning to turn them in at the office. Here they are."

My son thanked the man and rejoiced over this quick answer to prayer.

### STORY THREE:

Clara enjoyed her work at Faith Mission Home. She taught mentally handicapped girls. She wanted to give the girls life skills and was consistent in teaching them how to crochet, embroider, and even to sew their own dresses.

Susie was a very active girl with many questions, "Why am I here? Does God know where I am? Does anyone love me?" Susie was sitting on the couch embroidering one day. Happily, she sewed, but then she needed her scissors, and she could not find them anywhere.

She went to Clara and informed her, "I cannot find my scissors anywhere." Clara helped her search for the scissors, but they were nowhere to be found.

"Let's go pray," Clara said, "God knows where the scissors are, and God cares about you, Susie." They went back to Susie's bedroom and together knelt by her bed. Clara prayed, "Oh Lord, you know all

things, please show us where the scissors are hiding." While they were praying, the thought flashed in Clara's mind, "Go, put your hand down beside the couch cushion."

"Susie," Clara said, "I think God showed me where the scissors are. Come, let's go look." She took Susie's hand and went out to the couch. Clara reached down beside the cushions, her hand felt the steel, and out came the scissors. Susie's mouth dropped open. Right there they praised God for showing them where the scissors were.

God is so great. He rules the universe. He knows all things and sees all the poverty in the world. He is aware of all the people who are lonely. He sees the ill, the hungry, the starving, and the refugees. God is never taken by surprise. How can it be that God is interested and even cares about mundane and small details in our days when the world is full of weighty and horrible problems? I do not understand, but I know my Father cares.

We need to pray. God always hears. He does not always answer quickly or directly, but He hears every prayer. God cares about the heart of each one. Every child is special to God. Model prayer for your children. PRAY.

*(Read Light From Heaven, by Christmas Carol Kauffman, out loud to your children.)*



## A ‘Couple’ Things (Part 2)

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

[See last month’s issue for Part 1]

### Definition of “Court”:

*Verb:* to engage in social relationships and activities usually leading to marriage.<sup>1</sup>

If a young lady’s answer is yes, and the now couple is going to embark on this journey together, there are a few things that need to be decided right away.

If and when a young man receives a yes to his courtship proposal, step three is to sit down with your significant other and decide where you are drawing the line. Young men, this is where you need to step up and show your maturity. If you care enough about the other person in the relationship, you will set a standard together to ensure that neither of you is ever in a compromising position. Don’t wait until things are getting out of hand to stop and decide where the line is. Chances are you won’t take the time to stop and you’ll regret it for a very long time. “Hugging and other forms of nonsexual touching cause your brain to release oxytocin, known

as the ‘bonding hormone.’ This stimulates the release of other feel-good hormones, such as dopamine and serotonin while reducing stress hormones...”<sup>2</sup> Keeping your hands off will help you to make the best decisions and get to know your significant other better without oxytocin influencing your decision making.

Now that you have completed the steps in starting a courtship, there are a few things that should be addressed. One of the greatest misconceptions about courtship among our people today is that a courtship that doesn’t end in marriage is always a failed courtship. This is simply not true. Part of courtship is the couple deciding if they are right for each other and if they feel God leading them to marriage. If a couple decides that they are not right for each other and as adults they go their separate ways, then the courtship was a success. Staying in a relationship out of guilt, pity, or fear of what others

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1 Webster’s New Explorer College Dictionary, pg. 19

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2 [www.dignityhealth.org](http://www.dignityhealth.org) > articles > Facts about touch

might say is no way to live, neither is it fair to the other person in the relationship. Be honest. Honesty may not always be pleasant, and may cause some pain, but burying misgivings or hoping you can change something about someone after marriage is setting yourself up for heartache. Have you ever read a book by Christmas Carol Kauffman? The girls who married men with bad morals thinking they could change them had very hard lives. Building trust is very important for a courtship since it allows you to let your guard down and share on a deeper level.

Technology has had a massive impact on courtship today and not necessarily in a positive way. Not only is communication almost instantaneous, but there are also multiple modes of communication. Your significant other can be Snapped, Whapped, Zoomed, Facetimed, texted, and DM'd to name a few ways. Although this instant communication can have its benefits, you need to be careful that you don't cheapen that communication. If you think something and immediately message your significant other without thinking it through first, you might send something you regret. If you wouldn't say it face to face, don't hide behind your screen and say it. When was the last time you

as a couple wrote letters? It wasn't that long ago that the mail delivery was a highlight for couples. I looked forward to and still treasure the notes that my girlfriend sent and gave me. *"Never underestimate the power of the written word."* – Brandt Landon.


It can be easy for relationships with family and friends to be neglected while a couple is courting. Some couples unwittingly alienate their friends and family. I have personally seen friend and family relationships almost destroyed because the couple is so engrossed with each other that they have no time for anyone else. I recently heard firsthand how a young man took his girlfriend's brother out for supper in order to maintain the relationship the two had before he started dating his friend's sister. The brother shared this story at their wedding and mentioned how much it meant to him and how far it went toward keeping their friendship strong. As a couple, go out of your way to do things for other people, and not just yourselves. Once a couple is married, it becomes increasingly clear how important those relationships are. Don't ruin them.

I was encouraged to address in more detail some activities that couples can do together. I reached out to a few couples and asked for some input.

Here are a few of their ideas. The first one I cannot stress enough. Spend time with family! It is important to build those relationships, and it's also important to see how your significant other responds to their family. How he treats his mom or how she treats her dad may very well be how you are treated someday. Spend time together working, whether it is with family or a work project with your youth group. One couple mentioned that courtship is a time of transition from the idea of being individuals to being a unit. Practice being a unit by helping others. Several couples mentioned that they enjoyed splitting wood for people. It may not be romantic, but it may show you a different side of the person you are courting. Another couple went as far as to say it's good to see each other in more than your Sunday clothes. Eating is something we spend a fair amount of time doing together. Don't just always go out to eat—pack a picnic and go on a hike. Maybe go to a lake and ride bike on the trails around it or go canoeing or kayaking. Take supper to a young couple who could use a break. Have you considered helping out or even just visiting an older couple in your church or your grandparents? They have so much wisdom, and they love spending time and sharing stories and advice with you. Ask them how

their courtship went. You might be surprised!

Be careful with your words. Love is a precious thing. Don't take it lightly or use the word unless you really mean it. Someone once told me not to tell my girlfriend "I love you" unless I was ready to back it up with a marriage proposal. That may seem a bit extreme but if used too frequently the true meaning of the word may get lost. So many people say they love but turn around and do and say the opposite. If you would like to study more what love is, read 1 Corinthians 13. Love involves commitment and sacrifice. If you don't have that level of care for the other person, then don't make them think that you do by telling them that you love them.

If God leads you into a courtship, take the time to get to know the person on a deep level. When you are 80 years old, who do you want to be sitting next to on the porch drinking iced tea with? Are they going to challenge you to continue growing in the Lord and support you in your home? Are they going to stand by you whether you have \$20 or \$200,000? Are they already showing the traits of being a good father or mother? Marriage is a bond till death. Approach courtship with that in mind. 

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## THOUGHT GEMS

If you think the world is all wrong, remember it contains people like you.

• • • • •

Jesus is God spelling Himself out in language that all men can understand.

• • • • •

It takes more grace to live for God than it would to die for Him.

• • • • •

Courtesy should be in the curriculum of every Christian.

• • • • •

Nothing quiets criticism like involvement.

• • • • •

The person who is always finding fault seldom finds anything else.

• • • • •

It takes a long time to feather a nest when you are on a wild goose chase.

• • • • •

If Christ resides in your heart, let Him reside in your home.

• • • • •

When we die with Christ on the cross, He comes to live in us by His Spirit.

• • • • •

The shadows are behind you if you walk toward the light.

• • • • •

God will give us all the direction we need for our lives if we will just listen to Him.

• • • • •

If God controls the inner man, the world cannot control the outer man.

• • • • •

A positive conviction without accurate information is a dangerous thing.