



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2021

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Calvary Messenger

July 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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Drinking from My Saucer

I've never made a fortune and it's probably too late now,
 But I don't worry about that much 'cause I'm happy anyhow.
 And as I go along life's way I'm reaping better than I sowed.
 I'm drinking from my saucer 'cause my cup has overflowed.

I haven't got a lot of riches and sometimes the going's tough,
 But I've got loved ones around me and that makes me rich enough.
 I thank God for His blessings and the mercies He's bestowed.
 I'm drinking from my saucer 'cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong—my faith wore somewhat thin,
 But all at once the dark clouds broke, and the sun peeped through again.
 So, Lord, help me not to gripe about the tough rows that I've hoed.
 I'm drinking from my saucer 'cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage when the way grows steep and rough,
 I'll not ask for other blessings 'cause I'm already blessed enough.
 And may I never be too busy to help others bear their loads,
 Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer 'cause my cup has overflowed.

John Paul Moore

[www.turnbacktogo.com/poem-drinking-from-my-saucer.

Used with permission.] 

“And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee:
 for my strength is made perfect in weakness.**

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities,
 that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

II CORINTHIANS 12:9

On Keeping Sound Doctrine

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

Decades ago a good friend and brother in the state of Maine sent me a handwritten note referring to a Scripture that I clipped and slid under the glass on my desk. Now after these many years, I consider that Scripture being paramount in keeping sound doctrine. The elderly Mennonite pastor in D.C. where I attended during the early years of being in the area frequently stressed Titus 2:1, *“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.”* He drilled into our minds that maintaining “sound doctrine” is of utmost importance for the believer. Living in obedience to Bible teaching was strongly emphasized in the church during my younger days. Through this I developed convictions on the importance of maintaining Biblical sound doctrine. In 1984 I was invited to serve with the executive board of the Fellowship of Concerned Mennonites. This entire board was voicing grave concern about the Mennonite Church drifting away from “sound doctrine.” My then younger mind was reminded of what

Jesus said, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). This includes all the Scripture *“given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (II Timothy 3:16).

In reviewing years that passed by quickly, I think of so many others who heard a similar plea to maintain “sound doctrine” but have willingly chosen to go another way. Many have departed from the clear teachings of Jesus and the New Testament writers. They have ceased practicing doctrines (teachings) of the Bible and replaced them with the practices and fads of this present world. They have switched to blending into the culture of the unrepentant, self-exalting world. Then in the midst of this, even boasting about having “such peace” in their divorce and “remarriage” situation. One lady expressed that it is so much easier to witness since discarding the covering and uncut hair. For some this has drifted into the waters of questioning the validity of the entire Bible to be the inspired Word from God, or declaring that

certain passages are not meant for our present-day culture. From there they go to accepting and legitimizing behavior that God calls an abomination. Like “...*children tossed to and fro...with every wind of doctrine*” (Ephesians 4:14). Scripture is being fulfilled, “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine*” (II Timothy 4:3). That time is now. In the effort to hold fast and speak the things that become sound doctrine, believers have divided into many splits and splinters. Some see themselves as being the true church of Jesus Christ, keeping fellowship with others at arm’s length. This developed into a divisive spirit that destroys encouraging one another through fellowship in Christ. This has become discouraging and confusing to many believers, especially the young who are seeking the way of Truth. Which of these splinters are the true followers of Jesus Christ?

The gifted prophet (Romans 12:6) lets his deep-felt concern be heard. The melancholy countenance on his face reveals his grave concern of drifting from sound doctrine. The person gifted in showing mercy (Romans 12:8) reacts with a cheery voice, “All he preaches is doctrine.” Others add fuel to the comment, “He just preaches on keeping the standards. What we need is the grace

of God.” While the prophet rightfully pleads for sound doctrine, mercy counters it with “*for by grace are ye saved through faith . . . not of works, lest any man should boast*” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Yes, we are saved by faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. However, years ago a student in my Vacation Bible School class pointed out, “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*” (Ephesians 2:10 ESV).

I’ve heard these forcefully-expressed arguments time after time. Many believers are aware of the desperation of maintaining sound doctrine. The plea seems to fall by the wayside on stony and thorny ground (Luke 8:5-7). My spirit aches on behalf of those who have departed from true faith in Jesus Christ.

I have experienced numerous visits and contacts from folks who attempted to convert me to the “true church” of Christ and their doctrine. There were intentional visits to get me on the right path. I’ve observed those who go from one church group to another in search of the “just right” one, or a more spiritual church.

Through all of this, I have now concluded there is often a missing ingredient in all the shuffling. This brings to mind the hand-written

Scripture under the glass on my old desk that I consider paramount in keeping sound doctrine. In many of these challenges and discussions, the heart of this Scripture has been a scarce ingredient. The note simply states, “Simon, may the joy of the Lord be your strength.” Nehemiah wrote, *“for the joy of the Lord is your strength”* (8:10). In many of these discussions there was not a cup “full and running over,” bubbling with the *“joy of the Lord.”*

Are you concerned about believers keeping sound doctrine, or with a friend who is in doctrinal error? Are you disturbed with the lack of spiritual quality in the church, or dissatisfied with recent positions the church has taken? Do you frequently meet strangers who say they are Christians, but you don't know what doctrines they follow? Your sincere testimony of the joy of the Lord in your life will be the strength in further discussions of concerns or ongoing conversations. It's the foundational doctrine to build upon. You may be surprised at the fellowship in the Lord this may lead to.

Are you a bit perturbed that the phone salesman insists you try his

product? How about the religious marketer that knocks on your door and you feel like “telling him off?” Have you boasted about your ability to get rid of them with your stern remarks? Try explaining that his product doesn't blend with your joy in the Lord, therefore you decline his offer. Or the religion being promoted does not match the joy in the Lord you have in your heart. You may be surprised at the results of such a positive testimony. A senior friend in New Mexico sent me a poem entitled, “Drinking From My Saucer.” Several verses seem fitting here. “And as I go along life's way, I'm reaping better than I sowed, I'm drinking from my saucer 'cause my cup has overflowed. And may I never be too busy to help others bear their loads, then I'll keep drinking from my saucer 'cause my cup has overflowed.”

“Lord, help me walk joyfully with You today with the freedom in Christ; separate from the system of this present world. May Your joy inspire me to speak the things which become sound doctrine. Make Your joy in my heart bubble over and touch the lives of others.”

The joy of the Lord is your strength!



Many of the debts we owe to *God* are payable to man.

Announcement

Single Ladies Seminar

August 6-8, 2021

Theme: **T.H.R.I.V.E.**

Single women can sometimes feel that they don't belong or are useless. As single women, we want to be a thriving part of the body of Christ – useful for His kingdom.

Topics include:

The Will of God—Loraine Schrock, Aroda, VA

Handling Finances—Karla Good, Logan, OH

Relating to the Church—TBA

Indignities with Dignity— Rosemary Troyer, Plain City, OH

Victorious Amidst Desires—Bettina Yoder, Honey Brook, PA

Excellent in Spirit—TBA

Hosted and Sponsored by:

Deeper Life Ministries

5123 Converse Huff Rd.

Plain City, OH 43064

Pre-seminar registration required. If you are planning to attend the seminar, please contact Deeper Life Ministries by July 16 at 614-873-1199 or info@dmlmohio.org to register.

the bottom line

Voluntary Service and Homesickness

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

My free lancing for “The Bottom Line” has a net which I use at various places. Recently, in my extensive files (I have six file drawers that are full of information), I was going through my folder on “Joy.” My sieve retained

a paper from my serving at a Winter Bible School at Faith Mission Home 31 years ago.

As a part of my presentation to the voluntary service (VS) workers and other attendees, I cast forth a survey among them. Their assignment was

to write on a plain sheet of paper their three main problem areas in interpersonal relationships, which was my assigned subject.

They handed in their identified weaknesses in relating to others, which I then tabulated in private. Here are the results, the first time in which it is made public.

- Anger 3
- Assurance 1
- Self-acceptance 7
- Accepting others 5
- Open communication 6
- Discouragement 2
- Fear of failure 1
- Family relationships 3
- Jealousy 7
- Unforgiveness 2
- Partiality 1
- Security 2
- Homesickness 1
- Poor use of time 1
- Critical attitudes 24
- Submission 4
- Pride 3
- Listening to others 1
- Sympathy 1
- Impatience 9
- Lack of trust 1
- Selfishness 3

The VS workers are now 31 years older. I wonder how many of them remember the three things they volunteered about themselves, and how well they have done since! They

might be up to their armpits in a mid-life crisis of some kind.

It was amazing to see 24 vibrant, eager, capable, earnest, and willing-to-serve VSers secretly admit to having critical attitudes. Well, to be sure, I have a few of that kind sticking in myself at times! Now when we add the five mentions of not accepting others any too well, we arrive at a total of 30 mentions. Remember, each person submitted three mentions.

Here is my point: when we wish to help our young men and women prepare for the rigors of a year or more in VS, we quite confidently and knowingly share with them about how rough homesickness and discouragement will be out there. They will be far away from Mom and Dad and their wonderful siblings. We just know and wax quite prophetic when we share with them about how homesickness will be; it is a deep pit. And oh, the awful discouragement! How it will trip them up so that they will fall down the stairs on a pile! And we look so sad as we preemptively share with them.

We go ahead and have a dedication prayer at church and send them on their way. Meanwhile, the 97 mentions have given only two mentions of discouragement and one of homesickness! So much for know-

it-all Ferdinand and all his superior, from-the-top-down persons who are among us to give this free advice.

These people in VS will be in close proximity to quite a few others who will provide for many friends, and maybe a few unhandy enemies. Jesus had one in 12 who was a turncoat, traitor, and betrayer. Jesus handled it well. We can and should depend on Him for wisdom, grace, and mercy since He found His own way in having *“loved them unto the end”* (John 13:1).

When we go back and add jealousy, unforgiveness, anger, impatience, and open communication to this list, we can tie up almost the whole bundle and label it interpersonal relationships and stamp on its exterior “URGENT.” Maybe Jesus will come by overnight and work a miracle for us all. Or maybe we will begin reading the instructions He left in His classic Sermon on the Mount, beginning with *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 5:3). That whole sermon should be read once more by those who struggle with interpersonal relationships.

The various subjects Jesus touched on in that Sermon could be like pills in our spiritual medicine cabinet. The bottle on “Forgiveness” says to take one pill daily as a maintenance

program, but take an additional two or three as needed for severe headaches. Indigestion happens when we are falsely accused, so we are instructed by the label on the bottle of “Love” to take two tablespoons as we swallow our pride and then take our gift to God to be offered at the altar.

There we will find a spiritual remedy for our spiritual problems. And besides, a good spiritual diet in God’s Word goes a long way in keeping us spiritually healthy.

One of the major ways for young people to arrive prepared at the station of voluntary service is for moms and dads to model good attitudes at home. It has been observed that some volunteers arrive at their station of service with too much undesirable baggage. When such unpack, certain undesirable traits begin to show up that we call problems in interpersonal relationships. Most young people can handle the discouragement and homesickness issues. We parents should give a bit of time and energy to reducing the critical attitude problem in our own homes. If it is out of control, corrective steps should/must be taken for not merely reducing the problem, but in all seriousness, seeking a resolution to such a problem. That problem only tends of itself to become worse, not

better. Resolution for the same should also be sought before marriage by all means. Amen!

A few persons, even parents in the church at home, may decide that the best way to handle this problem is to just not care what happens. Being neutral does not take care of relational problem issues. Jesus said one cannot be neutral. The love/hate relationship issue will need to go one way or the other. *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other”* (Matthew 6:24). Being neutral never works!

Following Jesus as a disciple means we follow Him. We can only follow Him as we follow His teachings. A meaningful discipleship plan should include reading at least one of the four gospels at the beginning of each of the four seasons of the year. (I will give you a practical Bible-study plan in next month’s *Calvary Messenger*.)

The Bottom Line is that our human instincts must somewhere, somehow, not so much be curbed, but rather be properly and biblically directed. Self-denial is not a restrictive fence; it is a path to the Cross of Christ and beyond to wherever He may lead.



Steward or Owner?

Lyle Musser

Wise stewardship is using the God-given resources to do God’s will in His world and among His people. A steward jumps out of bed each morning, puts on his work clothes and asks, “How can I faithfully manage the resources God has given me today? How can I use my Master’s resources to prosper His business today?”

Stewardship is a broad topic that touches nearly all of our everyday activities. It includes our use of finances, the way we manage our time, employ our unique skills, and relate to the people around us.

Stewardship attitudes are expressed in daily life and action. The 21st-century Christian living in North America is confronted daily with lies and cultural pressures to abandon the simple God-honoring principles that have guided God’s people for many generations. We will look at God’s directives concerning Biblical stewardship, along with its negative counterpart expressed in the culture around us.

Open-Hand Stewardship vs. Tight-Grip Ownership. The primary stewardship attitude could be described as grateful stewardship

versus selfish ownership. The steward takes the stance that “everything I have is a gift from God” whereas the owner takes the position that “everything I have is mine, and I deserve it because I earned it.” Psalm 24:1 says: *“The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.”*

We tend to think of ownership and stewardship as being closely related. We think that when we take ownership of something, we become a steward of that thing on God’s behalf. According to Psalm 24:1, there is only one owner – God. To be an owner, we must rival God. Stewardship and ownership are competing attitudes in the hearts of people. Owners reach out with a grasping hand to take things they can call their own. Stewards reach out with an open hand to see what gifts God will place in it.

Contentment or Covetousness.

The content steward recognizes that everything he holds has been provided by the gracious hand of God, so he holds his resources with an open hand. The covetous person has an owner mentality as he tightly grips “his” resources as the product of “his” hands. Though he claims to hold his resources, in reality his resources hold him.

Contentment provides an

environment in which relationships take precedence over acquiring things. Covetousness, on the other hand, puts the acquisition of things ahead of relationships, making it a common cause of conflicts related to finances. Nearly all of us can think of disgraceful situations where a covetous, owner attitude drove wedges between close friends or family as the inheritance was disbursed or an item of value was passed on to the next generation. This should not happen among saints.¹ The content steward finds joy in being productive with the goal of providing for himself and others.² The covetous owner is driven by endless desire to have just a little more for self.³

Thankful or Complaining.

Thanksgiving is the logical

1 Ephesians 5:3 “...or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.”

2 Ephesians 4:28 “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”

3 1 Timothy 6:10 “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

response of a content steward because he finds joy in what God has provided. Complaining is the logical response of a covetous owner because he is never satisfied with the amount or quality of “his” things. The irony of the covetous owner attitude is expressed in Ecclesiastes 5:10: “*He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.*” This dissatisfaction manifests itself in complaining, while the content steward gives thanks, which is the appropriate response when receiving a gift.

Temperance or Excess.

A lifestyle of temperance is manifest by restraint, self-control, trusting the Lord, and living within one’s means. Joyful acceptance coupled with good discipline is evident even when there is abundance. Human nature is prone to extremes rather than good balance. “(God) *giveth us richly all things to enjoy,*”⁴ but it’s not possible for us to experience and enjoy all of God’s good things. Times of abundance should highlight the goodness of God rather than be viewed as a license to high living.

Christians in abundant times live in the quandary between joyfully receiving the good gifts of God

and the temptation to overindulge in those same good gifts. A lack of temperance leads to a lifestyle of excess in which consumption, leisure, and entertainment become priorities. There is only one prayer recorded in Proverbs – a prayer that we could avoid extremes: “*Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain*” (Proverbs 30:7–9). This prayer recognizes two extremes: poverty and unrestrained wealth. It asks for “enough,” similar to the Lord’s Prayer when we ask for daily bread. This prayer belongs on notecards by the sink and in bookmarks in our Bibles because we are wealthy and full, and in that state, the natural thing to do is deny our Lord. We must beware.

Humility or Pride.

Our God is a “*consuming fire,*” yet we are told to “*draw nigh to God.*”⁵ The only logical response to these commands is to come before Him in reverence, humility, and godly fear. When believers gather in a spirit of humility, it produces a brotherhood

4 I Timothy 6:17b

5 See Hebrews 12:29 and James 4:8.

in which mutual submission, exhortation, and accountability are highly valued.

The humble steward knows that one day he will stand before God to give account of his stewardship. This promotes a godly fear that welcomes accountability from the brotherhood to keep his stewardship in proper perspective. The humble, accountable steward can stand before God with much more confidence when he has the voice of the brotherhood confirming his testimony.

Trust in God is foundational to humble Christian living. Scripture warns that wealth can lead to self-trust and pride.⁶ Rather than using wealth to humbly serve in the pattern of Christ, the proud use wealth to serve, insure, and secure self. Pride shuns accountability and grows irritated by simple living. One day the proud owner will stand before God alone without the confirming voice of his brotherhood. This sobering

⁶ I Timothy 6:17 “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.”

reality should open our hearts to wise counsel from caring brothers who can walk together in our stewardship challenges.

Anabaptist groups have historically been known as plain, simple, and humble people, but the growing wealth in our communities over the last century is challenging these qualities like never before. Church leaders in our communities are called on frequently to assist with relational problems related to money, not because money is the problem but because stems of pride, entitlement, and high living easily grow out of full pocketbooks and overgrow a plain, simple, and humble lifestyle modeled by our Master.

A great challenge in our day is to create avenues of accountability where brothers and sisters can challenge and encourage each other to simple living and a single-hearted contentment that comes from following Christ. Do our people have the humility to invite this accountability as a blessing of brotherhood, or will our people continue to stumble and fall over the independence and pride of wealth?

WHAT WOULD I HAVE TODAY IF GOD REMOVED

His gifts THAT I FAILED TO *thank Him* FOR YESTERDAY?

Brotherhood or Independence.

Brotherhood, humility, and service walk hand in hand in the family of God. Mutual submission and accountability lead to care and concern expressed in mutual aid as needs arise. On the other hand, pride and independence walk hand in hand in the lives of those who trust in self and in riches. Independence is expressed by an attitude that says, "I take care of myself, so why can't you take care of yourself?" This spirit immunizes a person from the blessings of love and care shared in the mutually dependent brotherhood.

We should shudder in fear that God would describe us as the Laodicean church who "had it all together" as they proclaimed, "*I am rich*" while God said, "*you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked.*"⁷ Abundance of things does not make a church rich; rather, it makes brotherhood more challenging.

Simplicity or Complexity.

Sin leads to confusion and complexity. A look at our world today confirms this truth. The godly want to see their sin forgiven and worldliness

expelled from their lives. They value a lifestyle of joyful simplicity that enables them to conscientiously navigate through this world. II Corinthians 1:12 uses the words simplicity and godly sincerity.⁸ The word "simplicity" in this verse refers to a sincerity that is not self-seeking. This single-hearted devotion to Christ clears the confusion and causes the Christian to walk with clarity in a complex world. It motivates the disciple of Christ to forsake worldly status and pleasures as he travels through this world as a pilgrim and stranger seeking a better country.

Simplicity should characterize all areas of our lives, but simplicity in stewardship becomes extra difficult when we can afford, and thereby wrongly justify, all kinds of baggage that a true pilgrim would never carry. Jesus expects us to deny ourselves the worldly pleasure around us in order to follow Him. Too often, we scoff simplicity and find ourselves disillusioned and confused in a complex world, as we run after its glitz and pleasure.

Are you a steward? The evidence will be found in your contentment,

7 Revelation 3:17 "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

8 II Corinthians 1:12 "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."

thanksgiving, moderation, humility, love for the brotherhood, and lifestyle of simplicity. Are you an owner? The evidence will be found in your covetousness, complaining, excess, pride, independence, and complexity in lifestyle.

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Do It Now

It seems we have so little time
To do the kindly things;
Before we realize the truth,
We find that time has wings.

We plan to give a word of cheer
To one who needs a friend;
We plan to see someone who's ill,
Who may be near the end.

And there's a letter we should write
To someone who is sad;
Our words may be just what they need
To cheer and make them glad.

It's easy to procrastinate
And leave such tasks undone,
But such a course will bring regrets
When life's short race is run.

There is a cure for all these ills;
Just three words tell us how
To bring a speedy, perfect cure;
They're simply, "Do it now."

Author Unknown
[Submitted by Paul L. Miller]



marriages

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

Martin-Eash

Bro. Colin, son of Wendell and Maria Martin, Chambersburg, PA, and Sis. Glorianna, daughter of Jonnie and Freda Eash, Plain City, OH, on May 22, 2021, at Grace Evangelical Church for Bethesda Fellowship by Elmer Stoltzfus.

Miller-Esh

Bro. Andrew, son of Richard and Mary Miller, Woodstown, NJ, and Sis. Rosina, daughter of John and Linda Esh, Woodstown, NJ, on May 22, 2021, at Immanuel Church for Salem County Mennonite Church by Lee Stoltzfus.

Miller-Miller

Bro. Justin, son of Mose and Rachel Miller, Crossville, TN, and Sis. Krystal, daughter of Richard and Mary Miller, Woodstown, NJ, on April 17, 2021, at Immanuel Church for Salem County Mennonite Church by Melvin Beiler.

Nissley-Burkholder

Bro. Keith Durrell, son of Tim and Kathy Nissley, Madison, VA, and Sis. Caren Joy, daughter of the late Ivan Burkholder and Esther (Burkholder) Souder, Milton, PA, on April 24, 2021, at Community Baptist Church for East District Mennonite Church by John Weaver.



cradle roll

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

Beachy, Davon and Joanna (Yoder), Arlington, KS, third child, first daughter, Adeline Peace, April 16, 2021.

Beachy, Jason and Carol (Yoder), Lovington, IL, second child, first son, Cole Alexander, May 14, 2021.

Beachy, John Wesley and Malissa (Schrock), Wytheville, VA, third child, second daughter, Caralee Grace, April 19, 2021.

Chupp, Andrew and Michelle (Landis), Eden Valley, MN, fourth living child, second daughter, Charlotte Renae, May 10, 2021.

Coblentz, Jonathan and Sara (Wagler), Chaffee, MO, sixth child, second daughter, Abigail Rose, September 4, 2020.

Eichorn, Thad and Cherie (Gingerich), Plain City, OH, first child and daughter, Gennavieve Louell, May 16, 2021.

Fisher, Elvin and Saralynn (Esh), Honey Grove, PA, presently serving in La Belleza, Paraguay, seventh child, third daughter, Emily Grace, May 4, 2021.

Funk, Nicholas and Lynita (Beiler), Wytheville, VA, first child and daughter, Nevaeh Hope, April 26, 2021.

Gingerich, Kendall and Sharon (Stoltzfus), Advance, MO, third child and son, Nicholas Creed, April 28, 2021.

Hilty, Lucas and Anne (Yoder), Guys Mills, PA, fourth child and son, Robert Christopher, May 15, 2021.

Jess, John and Ida (Miller), Arthur, IL, third child and daughter, Ashlyn Grace, April 6, 2021.

Herschberger, Philip and Michelle (Jess), Tuscola, IL, second child and son, Jariah Greyson, April 30, 2021.

Jackson, Evan and Clarissa (Beachy), Abbeville, SC, first child and son, Eric Matthew, May 12, 2021.

King, Jonathan and Melissa (Mast), Coatesville, PA, first child and son, Hudson Grant, January 4, 2021.

Miller, Allen and Fannie (Overholt), Hutchinson, KS, fourth child, first daughter, Michaela Wynne, March 21, 2021.

Miller, Chris and Renee (Eash), Shipshewana, IN, third child, second daughter, Olivia Grace, April 28, 2021.

Miller, Karl and Durella (Rohrer), Grove City, MN, third child and son, Tylan Jase, May 5, 2021.

Schlabach, Marcus and Alyssa (Miller), Beach City, OH, first child and son, Kyler Adam, May 20, 2021.

Stoltzfus, Andrew and Keturah (Miller), Advance, MO, fourth child, second daughter, Jenika Shae, February 15, 2021.

Stoltzfus, Daryl and Megan (Troyer), Advance, MO, fifth child, second daughter, Kaelin Aubrey, March 2, 2021.

Stutzman, Matthew and Mindy (Yoder), Bloomfield, MO, fourth child, third son, Ryan Zachary, May 3, 2021.

Wingard, Tyler and Suzanna (Beiler), Montezuma, GA, first child and daughter, Kirza Rane, March 17, 2021.

Yoder, Brian and Faith (Yoder), Dundee, OH, third child and daughter, Lyla RoseAnn, April 19, 2021.

Yoder, Joash and Loretta (Wengerd), Hanover, IN, fifth child, second son, Judson Carter, March 27, 2021.

Yoder, Morris and Beth (Martin), Montezuma, GA, fifth child, first daughter, Geneva Beth, January 22, 2021.

Yoder, Richard and Mary (Stoltzfus), Abbeville, SC, third child, first daughter, Gracelyn RYanne, April 30, 2021.

Yoder, Steven and Marita (Sommers), Salisbury, PA, third child, first daughter, Nicole Faith, May 18, 2021.

Yoder, Tom and Diana (Funk), Free Union, VA, fourth child and daughter, Gladys Isla, May 3, 2021.



ordination

May the grace of God be upon our brother as he ministers faithfully. Let us pray for him.

Bro. Phineas Kauffman, 50, (wife, Martha Beiler), Wytheville, VA, was ordained minister for Light of Hope Mennonite Church, Wytheville, VA, on May 9, 2021. Preordination messages were shared by Ivan Stoltzfus, Middleburg, PA. The charge was given by Wayne Yoder, assisted by John Beiler and Dave Beiler. Joe Allen Yoder and Justin Zook shared the lot.



obituaries

King, Glenn, 93, passed away peacefully April 20, 2021, at his home in Lexington, IN, surrounded by his family. He was born on June 21, 1927, in Uniontown, OH, to the late John and Mary (Overholt) King.

Glenn was a member of Living Waters Mennonite Church in Lexington, IN. He was married to the late Sara (Hostetler) King on May 24, 1953.

In addition to his parents and wife, he was predeceased by his sons, Steven and Paul King; siblings: Leon, Leona Mick, Arlene Miller; and grandchildren, Margaret Yoder and (twins) Ronda and Londa King.

He is survived by his children: Susan (Noah) Yoder, Eugene (Marie), both of Montezuma, GA; Rosemary (Ivan) Yoder, Lexington; Kenneth (Edith), Cottage Grove, TN; Dave (Faith), Cumberland

Furnace, TN; Elaine (Thomas) Weaver, Greensburg, KY; Margaret (Mark) Mast, Vanleer, TN; Leon (Loretta), Lexington; daughters-in-law: Edna (Elmer) Yoder, Hartville, OH; Christina King, Vanleer, TN; 57 grandchildren and 81 great-grandchildren.

A funeral service was held on April 25, 2021, at Living Waters Mennonite Church with Floyd Lengacher serving.

Miller, Kenneth Eugene, 55, Plain City, OH, passed away February 11, 2021, at his residence. He was born with Down syndrome and is greatly missed by his dad, stepmother, and siblings. He was born November 9, 1965, in Warrenton, VA, to Sylvan N. and Ida (Yutzzy) Miller.

He is survived by his father, Sylvan N. Miller, stepmother, Betty Ann (Yutzzy) Miller; siblings: Vera Ann (Jerry) Eash,

Simms, MT; Freeman (Maudene) Miller, Farmington, MO; Catherine (David) Schrock, Whiteville, TN; Steven (Marlene) Miller, Culpeper, VA; Joanna (Wilmer) Yutzy, Linneus, MO; Marlin (Hannah) Miller, Clark, MO; and 40 nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Ida (Yutzy) Miller; stepmother, Laura (Yutzy) Miller; brother, Jonathan Miller, and a niece, Brenda Schrock.

A service was held at Canaan Fellowship Church, Plain City, OH, on February 14, 2021. Another service was held February 17, 2021, at Locust Creek A. M. Church, Linneus, MO, officiated by Dale Byler with burial following.

Nisly, Elizabeth (Yutzy), 87, passed away April 26, 2021, at her home in rural Hutchinson, KS. She was born October 23, 1933, in Hutchinson, KS, to the late Eli N. and Fanny (Miller) Yutzy.

Elizabeth married William Edward Nisly on April 29, 1956, and they shared 64 years of marriage before his death on August 5, 2020. Together they raised five children. Elizabeth was a lifelong homemaker and an active member of Cedar Crest Amish Mennonite Church and the surrounding community. Elizabeth's life mission was to glorify God in service to those around her, and she remained committed to that goal until her death. She had a special gift for hospitality and regularly welcomed others into her home for a meal and fellowship.

Elizabeth is survived by her five children: Loretta (Arlis) Helmuth, Kalona,

IA; Rosalie Nisly, Hutchinson; Darrell (Kathryn), Sioux Narrows, Ontario; Joanna (John) Riehl, and Eugene (Sharon), both of Hutchinson; 15 grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, a sister, Laura Yutzy, and sister-in-law, Alta Yutzy.

Besides her husband, she was preceded in death by her brothers: Herman, John, and Raymond Yutzy; sisters: Fern Beachy and Emma Nisly; two granddaughters: Victorious Sunshine and Rhiannon Elizabeth Nisly; sisters-in-law: Mary Yutzy and Sylvia Yutzy; and two brothers-in-law: Harley Nisly and Rufus Beachy.

The funeral service was on April 29, 2021, at Cedar Crest Church. Serving were Lee Nisly and Paul Miller. Donald Miller conducted the committal at West Center Cemetery.

Nisly, Harvey D., 88, died April 20, 2021, at his home in rural Hutchinson, KS. He was born on March 29, 1933, in Hutchinson, to the late Daniel and Lizzie (Borntreger) Nisly.

Harvey was God's faithful servant for many years. He was heavily involved with prison ministry and other outreach organizations that would lead people to Jesus. Harvey was a devoted father and husband who loved Jesus above all else. He was determined to show God's love to his children and grandchildren, prayed for their salvation, and led by example. Harvey enjoyed cooking meals for people in need and often invited people over for dinner and supper. He had a servant's heart and enjoyed blessing others with

the gifts that God had given him. Harvey was a dairy farmer and continued his own garden for many years after he stopped farming. He was especially known for his tomatoes. Harvey was a member of Center Amish Mennonite Church.

On March 12, 1954, he married Edna W. Miller in Hutchinson. They shared 52 years of marriage before she passed away on February 26, 2007.

Harvey is survived by his children: Sharon (Larry) Thacker, Hutchinson; Emma Nisly, Cass Lake, MN; Clayton (Jennifer), Abbyville; 12 grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and sister, Anna Coblentz, Missouri.

Besides his parents and wife, he was preceded in death by his brothers: Perry, Mahlon, Sam, and Roman; and sisters: Fannie Helmuth, Clara, Barbara, and Mandy Nisly.

Funeral was on April 24, 2021, at Center Church. Serving were Dwight Miller, LaVerne Miller, and Julian Nisly.

Arlyn Nisly conducted the committal at West Center Cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Kendrian and Kyrell, premature twins, were born March 3, 2021, to Mike and Anita Stoltzfus in Tipitapa, Nicaragua.

Kyrell lived for one day before going to be with Jesus. His burial was on March 6, 2021, at Guanacastillo Mennonite Church, Masaya, Nicaragua. David Friesen and Grandpa Melvin Beiler officiated in the service.

Kendrian went to be with Jesus March 13. His burial was on March 16, 2021, at Guanacastillo Mennonite Church, Masaya, Nicaragua. David Friesen and Jacinto Yoder officiated in the service.

They are deeply missed by their parents, Mike and Anita Stoltzfus and brother Adrick. Grandparents, Melvin and Verna Beiler and Simon and Joyce Stoltzfus grieve the loss of their grandsons.



observations

Many hands make light work. I imagine this phrase might have been running through the minds of some folks who gathered the evening of May 3 this year at the Jay Yoder residence, a Labette County, Kansas Amish family. The project at hand was moving a 30 x 50 foot shed with side walls 12 feet high to a new location about 500 feet away. The structure's interior was duly braced

for this undertaking. About 50 to 60 men were strategically positioned inside and outside the structure and a skid-steer loader provided some assistance. With a lot of manpower and coordination, plus help from the loader, they got the shed moved without major incident. Afterwards they all enjoyed a hog roast. They were able to host the Sunday church service in the newly relocated shed the following Sunday.

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Between May and October of 2003, six families moved from the Center A.M. Church near Hutchinson, Kansas, to our area to establish this congregation. The first three years we took turns hosting the Sunday and midweek services in our homes.

In June of 2006 we moved into the church house that had been the Second Baptist Church in the little town of Oswego. The church building had fallen into disuse and hence disrepair. We purchased the facility and contents for \$4,500. This seems like a bargain, and indeed it was, but it took another \$50-60,000 and considerable sweat equity to get it into usable condition. We enjoyed that little church house from 2006 to the present and made a lot of memories there.

One of the downsides of the growth of this congregation is that we no longer fit well into the space that this church house offered. So, we needed to do something else. A facility committee was installed, and plans were made to build a new meeting house. May 30 of the current year marked the date of our first service in the new facility in the country near Oswego. This is almost exactly 15 years from the first service in the Oswego facility. The church house in Oswego has been sold to another Baptist church that was seeking a solution to

their needs for a church house.

I have a few unorganized thoughts prompted by our local situation:

1. I wasn't prepared for the positive comments our congregation received from the community when we renovated and gave a new lease on life for the church house we used in Oswego for 15 years. It seemed to mean a lot to the local folks that someone put to good use a church house that was decaying rapidly. I was surprised by how appreciative folks were of this development.

2. There is something about experiencing the cramped conditions of the former building that makes us more ready to pry loose from a facility that holds a variety of sentimental values for the congregation.

3. Have any of you ever built a new building and been surprised at how little it cost? This wasn't our story. Our committee did very well in trying to anticipate the financial implications of this project. But estimating building costs feels like a moving target these days. We're grateful for the Lord's provision and the good efforts of those giving leadership to the effort.

Our building project reminds us that building something that we think will work well now and in the future requires a significant financial investment. We trust God will be

glorified by the result in a variety of ways.

4. Working together in many ways, including financial contributions and the investment of energy and manual and vocational skills, all contribute to the end result. Where investment and “buy in” occurs, ownership and identity with the end product is fostered. This applies to both church buildings and to building the Church.

5. When all work toward a common goal, a surprising amount of work can be accomplished. Many hands make light work!

6. I didn’t bring developed building skills or honed architectural insights to our construction effort. My experience illustrates that we can all contribute in some way, even those who don’t really know what they are doing, as long as we follow the directions of those who do know and those leading out. Construction sites are but one example among many where this dynamic can be observed.



Recently we visited a thrift store in Cañon City, Colorado. The proceeds from this store help fund the work of New Horizons Ministries. Volunteers help offset costs. I was impressed in several ways.

I was impressed again how a retail establishment like this can operate where almost the entire selection

of merchandise is comprised of things that others have discarded or donated. I say “almost” because this particular store had a small snack food and bulk food section that was a bit different from any thrift store I’d been in before. This speaks to the affluence and the generosity of American society. I’ll let you figure out which of these two is more prominent. But both elements exist.

I was also reminded about how ingrained the ideas of thrift, frugality, and loving a bargain are part of my native cultural fabric. I suspect that most of the readers of this column identify with me in that regard in greater or lesser measure.

The women I grew up with and around were the ones who were primarily occupied with making sure that all in the home had adequate clothes for their needs and that the house had sufficient supplies and furnishings to serve the family well. So, it’s not a surprise that women are often labeled shoppers. This legitimate label brings with it a few negative implications as well. Shopping is good when legitimate needs are met.

Inasmuch as women are expected to shop, I propose it is okay if they enjoy what they are supposed to do. But we don’t have to think very far to understand how unrestrained

enjoyment of shopping is problematic. In addition to the legitimate benefits of second-hand shopping, bargains at garage sales and supporting a worthy cause at a fundraising thrift store can make the shopper feel better about spending what isn't really defensible on its own merits.



I've been doing some thinking the last while about fund-raising activities and auctions. As a young lad, we often went to the local state fairgrounds for the annual MCC Relief Sale. Some folks referred to it as the Kansas Mennonite Fair. It began on Friday and finished on Saturday. I took special note of the dairy heifer sale. Various dairy heifers were donated and auctioned off. There are thousands of Mennonites in Kansas, so that was one of the larger, in terms of attendance and revenue generated, of the MCC sales in the USA. But since we moved, it is no longer local for us. I haven't been there for decades.

In the last 20-30 years, I've learned about other Anabaptist organizations within our conservative Anabaptist groups that have used this model as a way to generate funds. There is much that is good about this sort of event. The activity itself is a pleasant format in which folks mingle together in a friendly atmosphere. Because these

events tend to attract people that might not contribute to the cause or ministry otherwise, this is one way to pull dollars in from elsewhere. The blend of high-quality crafted items, intricate quilt art, popular ethnic food, as well as working together and coordination is right in our cultural wheelhouse. One of the overarching themes of this sort of event is that all the money generated "goes to a good cause." So, there is a lot of good that comes from these events.

We do well when our financial giving to the work of the Lord honors the New Testament principles of giving generously, regularly, sacrificially, and anonymously. It seems to me that benefit sales provide a better opportunity for us to give generously than some of the other items on this short inexhaustive list.

To be fair, much of what happens at these events does not need to run counter to Jesus's exhortation to not give in a "showy" manner. But it is also fair to admit that sometimes these events can be structured in such a way that provides visibility for those who desire that their generosity be noticed by others.



There may be a few of you wishing for an update regarding the cardinal from last month's column. He hasn't killed himself yet. But he's still

working on eradicating his own image which he apparently regards as a defiant foe that fearlessly taunts him from the other side of our window panes. As I wrote this, I just heard a thump as he bounced off our

window yet again. His diligence has waned some the last while. Life is easier and more trouble-free for him when he isn't fixated on his distorted misconception of reality.

—RJM 

I Am the Bread of Life

Earl Koch, New Hamburg, ON

Fresh bread! Who isn't hungry when the aroma of freshly-baked bread enters our nostrils? Bread (food) is of great importance in the Middle East where Jesus lived, and, of course, in our culture. Think of all the occasions where food is present, and so many places to purchase or eat.

But bread is for much more than nourishment for the body! Bread is a means of providing fellowship. That's how hospitality is shown. Abraham served the Lord and two angels fresh bread and veal meat, giving honor and fellowship. Bread is a means of celebration. In Luke 15 we see the father served a feast with a fatted calf to celebrate the coming home of his prodigal son. Bread is a means of providing for pleasure. Solomon's palace table was always supplied with a great variety of fancy foods for his household, his officials, and his guests.

We serve food on many occasions: dinner guests, fellowship meals at church, family gatherings and

reunions, wedding feasts, and banquets for various events. And we can eat at so many places—fast food establishments such as McDonald's, Tim Hortons, etc. as well as fine restaurants and everything in between!

No wonder Jesus uses the metaphor of bread to teach spiritual lessons. Physical bread for nourishment is good and necessary. But eventually there comes a time when no food can sustain us. The body weakens, gives in to disease, and despite all our efforts and the best of medical interventions, it dies.

Jesus made a great claim. *"I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger...he that believeth on me hath everlasting life"* (John 6:35, 47).

Jesus doesn't simply offer the bread—He Himself is the Bread! Believing and trusting in Jesus isn't just a way of living, or a way of doing or not doing certain things. It is a way of being and relating to God and others that is good for time and for eternity. Anyone else who would

make such a claim as Jesus did, we would consider egotistic, crazy or deluded—but the Son of God is all He claimed to be.

We have many hungers besides that of bread: The hunger for truth. The hunger for love. The hunger for knowledge. The hunger to belong. The hunger for justice. The hunger of the imagination. The hunger for significance, and many others.

Some of these we are able to (at least partly) meet with our abilities and resources. Education and research may supply knowledge. Romance may give a sense of love and belonging. Accomplishments may give a feeling of significance. Wealth brings some of these within reach. But nothing fulfils the supreme hunger for meaning, purpose, and transcendence until we feed on the Bread of Life that Jesus offers. Some of Jesus's listeners referred to the manna that Moses gave, calling it bread from heaven. What a tremendous provision that was—daily food for 40 years in all their travels! But Jesus said the True Bread

from heaven is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (John 6:31-33).

How do we eat this bread? In the Jewish Passover feast, participants actually ate the lamb. In the Lord's Supper believers eat the bread, which symbolizes our receiving Jesus. What does that mean?

We believe Jesus is the Son of God. We believe He is God Incarnate—God in a human body. We believe He was sinless and perfectly did the will of His Father. We accept His death and resurrection as effective for us. We put our whole trust in Him and follow Him. We deny ourselves and love Him supremely. We renounce sin, the flesh, and the devil. We receive His sayings as the words of eternal life.

And He invites us into His fellowship. He makes us into new creatures. He supplies all our needs. And He will raise us up at the last day. He gives us eternal life. Are you feasting on the Bread of Life? 

[Reprinted from the January-February 2021 issue of the Midwest Mennonite Focus. Used by permission.]

The Early Anabaptist View of Scripture (and Its Influence on the Modern Conservative Mennonite Church)

Jeremiah Fox

From the beginning, the early Anabaptists diverged from Luther and later Zwingli and

Calvin in their view of the role of Scripture. Luther viewed Scripture as a set of premises that one needed

to accept. Calvin also adopted this position, and Zwingli eventually arrived there, mainly with the influence of his town council.

Early Anabaptists adopted a decidedly different position: “For the doctrines and precepts of the Lord are given in order to be fulfilled and put in practice.”¹ They believed the church was not only to accept the precepts of Scripture but as a community seek to implement the Bible as it is written.

One of the distinctives of our movement is the fact that we do not require our ministers to have formal training. In most mainline and evangelical settings, four years of college and three years of seminary are generally the norm. This position does have a considerable impact on how Scripture informs the believer. It requires no specialized training to understand and implement the Word of God as written. It takes significant expertise to explain it away.

During the early years of the Swiss Brethren movement, the message of baptism on the profession of faith in Christ was preached in St. Gallen by Conrad Grebel and others. Since they were preaching on street corners and frequently in secret, their message

necessarily had to be short. When Zwingli sent preachers from Zurich to “refute” Grebel’s message, the response from the crowd was, “You can have Zwingli’s word. We want the Word of God!”² When it takes this much effort to explain away what could be explained by anyone in a simple reading of the New Testament, you do not have a faith that seeks to implement the Word of God as written. Rather, it seeks to avoid doing so.

As a personal case in point, I was in high school during the late Vietnam War era and came to faith in Christ during my senior year of high school. Because I knew the draft was a real possibility, I studied the New Testament, which was quite new to me at the time. I came to a position which, although imperfect, was nonresistance. Some of those around me were more than a bit upset that I arrived at this position but had to resort to complex methodology to explain it away. Their reasoning made no sense to me, even as a new believer. In retrospect, I have concluded that I had simply not been educated “properly” to explain away the Scripture.

The methodology used, in this

1 Harder, Leland *The Sources of Swiss Anabaptism*, Herald Press, Scottsdale, PA, 1985, Pg. 380.

2 Ruth, *John Conrad Grebel, Son of Zurich*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene Oregon, 1975, Pg. 120.

case, pushes the teachings of Jesus into some future time, called dispensationalism. Understanding how it works requires an entire seminary course. It places the Gospels into a future age where Jesus rules and reigns upon the earth, creating a kingdom of justice and peace. The net result of this view gives the Pauline epistles the predominant role in the life of the church while the Gospels are pushed into a secondary, unimportant role. While they are to be believed, they are not to be implemented yet.

An astute observer will see similar methodology used to explain away the head covering. The first response you will get will generally be, “it’s not for today.” If pressed as to how other parts of the same epistle are applicable, you will usually get a response that the head covering was a part of the culture. Therefore, they were asked to observe it as part of the predominant culture. Since our culture does not observe it, Christians need not either. The following is a current example:

Therefore, Paul’s argument from creation, which demonstrates that men and women are distinct, cannot be culturally relegated. The application of this principle (i.e., head coverings), then, can and does change with culture. In contrast, the argument from

*creation in 1 Timothy 2 applies directly to Paul’s prohibition; and, therefore, is not culturally conditioned.*³

The problem is that most of the New Testament is counter to the dictates of culture. If you ask one of those who object to this practice if they believe 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, they will invariably say that they do. Asking if they will implement it will get a different response. In this case, their culturally driven method of understanding the Scripture has several consequences. If one applies this rubric consistently, other passages can be misapplied in much the same manner.

The LGBT movement uses the same methodology to understand Romans 1:26-27. They will say that Paul is specifically condemning Roman practices that occurred in the temples in Rome, and that it could not refer to anything that arises today. In other words, because our culture is different and considers these practices condemned in Romans 1:26-27 to be acceptable, so should we.

Ultimately, according to this school of thought, there is no end to what you can deem acceptable. Instead of applying the word of God, the

3 Merkle, Benjamin, “Should Women Wear Head Coverings.” The Gospel Coalition, August 26, 2015, retrieved 10/22/19.

dictates of dominant culture become the source of “revelation.”

Once you apply the lens of culture to understanding Scripture, you can be assured that implementation will soon be low on the agenda. Scripture

runs contrary to culture in any age and ours more than most. If there was ever a time to practice the doctrine and precepts of the Lord, it is now.

[From the KMF Messenger, Jan.-Feb. 2020 issue. Used by permission.] 

mission awareness

God’s Recipe for a Blessed Marriage (Part 2)

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

In Part One of this article we discovered two valuable ingredients in Ephesians 5:22-33 for a blessed marriage, particularly in facing unique pressures on the mission field. The Apostle Paul correlates the establishment of the husbands and wives in marriage to the beauty of Christ and His church. He commands wives to submit to their husbands as the church is subject to Christ. But then the Apostle also sets forth a high standard for the husbands. Three times he instructs husbands to sacrificially love their wives even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Wiersbe has an excellent word of advice in his commentary: “*The love of the husband for his wife ought to be cleansing her (and him) so that both*

are becoming more like Christ. Even their physical relationship should be so controlled by God that it becomes a means of spiritual enrichment as well as personal enjoyment. The husband is not to use his wife for his own pleasure, but rather is to show the kind of love that is mutually rewarding and sanctifying.”

In the book of Ruth we discover a refreshing, charming love story. It took place during the Judges, a dark period of Israel’s history when “*every man did that which was right in his own eyes*” (17:6b; 21:25b). There are seven cycles recorded. There was often a period of rest and prosperity. Then the people slid down the tube of regression—apostasy, idolatry, Israel compromised their faith in God; then retribution—God sent

oppressors to bring them back; next there was repentance. People called on God for mercy. God raised up judges to rescue them from their enemies. Oh, praise God, there was revival and there was rest again. We call this not a merry-go-round, but a “sorry-go-round.”

The purpose of the book of Ruth is to show how a Gentile woman found her way into the royal lineage of Christ the Messiah. It is given to show how God’s laws did work in Old Testament times. It produced character of faith and noble conduct, as well as a beautiful home life. The book of Ruth is a breath of fresh air. It is an oasis in a desert! Following are four components to mix together in the recipe for a blessed home life.

1. A consciousness of God’s presence

Despite the idolatry and lawlessness during these times, this family maintained a God-consciousness. See Ruth 1:6-9, 13, 16, 17, 20, 21. However, Elimelech and Naomi’s sojourning into Moab is a picture of a Christian wandering into the world. It portrays the emptiness and fruitlessness of such a venture. People wandering (perhaps even leaving the church and never getting settled in another congregation) do not know where they will end with no secure future. This path is often mixed

with a sadness and loneliness. God’s blessing to Israel was obedience to His Word within the promised land. God’s blessing to the children of God is obedience in His Word and to be united to the church.

2. A commitment to God and His people

What a vow Ruth made! “...*Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me*” (1:16, 17). Ruth is saying “no” to her idols and to the world. She is embracing God’s covenant and all the promises and privileges of Israel’s economy.

3. A communication prompted by God

When Ruth and Naomi entered the land of Israel, Ruth made the first move. It was her idea to go and glean during the barley harvest. “*And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter*” (2:2). While they were still in Moab, there was sweet, considerate communication in this home. Mr. Miller in the

book, *The Home Beautiful*, states: “Nothing in home life needs to be more carefully watched and more diligently cultivated than the conversation. No bitter word should ever be spoken. The language of husband and wife should always be tender. Chiding and faultfinding should never be permitted. The warmth and tenderness of their hearts should flow out in every word and action.”

4. A courtesy appreciated by God

“And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee” (2:4). This is interesting! How many of us greet each other with these godly expressions when we meet each other in our places of employment? At my job it is very important to say “good morning” to each other and by using the other person’s first name. It is such an encouraging way to begin the day and makes you feel worth something.

Boaz paid special attention to this energetic stranger and told her: “...Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens” (2:8). He instructed the young men to not touch her (verse 9); not to reproach her (verse 15); nor to rebuke her (verse 16). Ruth saw the need to work now! The grain must be gathered while it is ripe. The harvest

will soon be over. Someone has said, “Diligence is an honest calling, is pleasing to God, and no hindrance to a holy life.” On the mission field we must work while it is day. Jesus said, “The night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4b).

Boaz spoke kind, comforting words to Ruth: “The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust” (2:12). He instructed her to drink from the vessels “of that which the young men have drawn” (2:9). Boaz even invited her to sit with the reapers and eat dinner with them (2:14). The offering of a drink was a kind act of eastern hospitality, saying, “You are welcome—there is peaceful reception.” But to invite for dinner was a step further. It meant to make a covenant of peace.

The world will take notice if there is deep love between husband and wife. Peter instructs us to dwell with our wives “according to knowledge” (I Peter. 3:7). This phrase can be amplified by living with her according to decency, respect, consideration, affection, and kindness. And if you need more to think about, read and meditate on I Corinthians 13. Love stands the highest, reaches around the widest, is rooted the deepest, and lasts the longest.



Everyone Needs a Little

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



I paused to listen more attentively to a middle-aged customer who was responding to my routine, “How’re you today, ma’am?”

She beamed enthusiastically, “I am doing absolutely wonderful! My doctor just pronounced me cancer free! I have a new lease on life. Ma’am,” she lowered her voice to engage me personally, “everyone needs a little cancer in their lives.”

A short time after this fleeting encounter, my husband and I jerked to attention when a specialist spoke to us in a no-nonsense kind of way, “We’re going to move you along in the system as if it were cancer. We can deal better with a lesser analysis down the road than to wish we would have been more intentional, if or when we find that your tumor is malignant.”

One time years ago, in the seconds when our minivan did multiple acrobatic-like revolutions upon being rear-ended by a speeding automobile, I processed mentally, “So, this is how it feels to be in an accident.” Now, sitting in the gynecologist’s consultation room,

I identified that same sensation. Having a strong cancer history in my family, I’d always imagined that someday I’d become part of that record myself. “So, this is how it feels to face cancer.”

In the following days we felt like we were picking ourselves up from the dirt, dusting our knees, and assessing the damages from the blow we’d just received. My knee-jerk response was to question God’s love, His attentiveness, and His sovereignty. The waves were splashing into our small boat while it seemed He lay asleep. After all, God knew that my “grandmothering” days had just begun. Our youngest children were now adults, and my husband and I were beginning to revel in the experiences of mission-related travel and involvement. Didn’t it matter to God that we were involved in good things?

I grabbed my Bible in desperation, looking for words like:

“God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

“O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me,

O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long? Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief... for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping. The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer” (Psalm 6).

I felt vindicated in Job who said, “*Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him*” (Job 13:15 NKJV). But I understood the second part better than the first.

Another very significant change began to evolve during this time. We had gone to our family, friends, and church with our vulnerable neediness, and their intercession became a tangible lifeline. The first desperate cries of forsakenness mellowed into a quieter listening for a still, small voice. In nighttime silence, He held my attention. Facing my mortality turned into a life-changing process. After our first demands of “*carest Thou not that we perish?*,” we began to hear His

“*peace be still,*” and “*why are you so fearful?*” Our support group was like the men who carried the paralytic up to the roof and lowered him to the feet of Jesus. I felt like his forgiven sins were the greater healing, and suddenly I got it. I saw my grasping, claspings, and clamoring demand for life, and it scared me more than a potential cancer prognosis. I longed for unreserved surrender. I wanted to say with Paul that to live is Christ and to die is gain.

When I was anointed with oil by our pastors, I told them that I wasn’t sure which would be the greater miracle—physical healing, or “*not my will, but Thine*” brokenness. But I knew the spiritual healing was the one I couldn’t live without.

We pondered whether we should consider the tumor innocent until proven guilty? Or did God want us to gird ourselves *early in the morning with firewood, rope, the knife, and Isaac, and trudge up Mt. Moriah?* After all, neither did Abraham know about the final resolution.

And, as always, the memory of my own young mother who sewed the dress for her own burial, who told us goodbye by name, speaking of her imminent death, I knew the Mt. Moriah route needed to be the candid path I would take with my family. She had showed us how to live and die.

In summary, in the next 20 days God taught us the following important lessons:

1. Surrender is not only about embracing the outcome or the results. It is about embracing the wait *before* the outcome. It is the trip to Mt. Moriah. It is to watch with Him one hour in Gethsemane. We love to say we are resurrected with Christ. Do we get there by skirting the garden? Anyone who has walked with cancer knows that uncertainty and suspense are most of the journey.

2. A foundational change dawns into the struggle when we realize we are not on opposite sides from God. He is not the perpetrator even as we are not the victims. He is not an idle spectator on the sidelines of our drama. He did not create cancer. He grieves with us. He is our Refuge and His arms are under us. He bottles our tears.

3. God invites us to show the world the difference between idolatry and God-worship. In idol worship the idol is revered for what the idol can do for the worshiper. In God-worship, God is revered for Who He is. God gives the enemy permission to wreak havoc because He wants to show the world that His people love Him because of Who He is and not just for what they can get out of

Him.¹ Our response to suffering is to make God look good. Job illustrates that for us.

4. His lovingkindness is better than life (Psalm 63:3); that's why we praise Him. This aspect of God becomes more precious than life itself. I discovered that frequently God's lovingkindness is referred to as a morning grace, and His faithfulness rules at night. His attributes cover us day and night.

5. There are sorrows and separations among God's people that are much more grievous and harder to speak of and to bear than terminal illnesses. Dying in Christ is not the ultimate grief.

In a physical sense God showed us that there are vast blessings in:

1. Electronic communications for updated reports, prayer requests, text messages of support in thought, love expressed, and prayer.

2. God's people still take time for face-to-face visits and hands-on prayer huddles, especially in times of crises.

3. Postal service is alive and well and efficient for tangible, old-fashioned, life-giving letters and get-well cards.

4. Physical downtime can be permeated with a keen sense of God

¹ thoughts from a message by Arthur Nisly, "Sinful Man," 2021 Beachy Ministers' Meetings

drawing near because we are less active and more restful. His words become personal and sweeter than honey. In fact, they become our spiritual life and breath.

• • • • •

Unknown to us, my doctor suggested to his assistant just prior to surgery, "This doesn't look good." That only serves to glorify the fact that on that Tuesday afternoon in April he was able to pronounce to my family, "Pathology shows the tumor is benign!" A ram was found in the thicket.

Our hearts break for those of you whose pronouncement has been,

"Pathology shows a malignancy." We commend you to the arms of our loving Father as you experience His lovingkindness. He's not idly spectating on the sidelines and invites you to lean hard into Him. He holds you and weeps with you.

For us, it feels like God asked us to travel from A to B. When we arrived at B, He said, "You can go back to A for now. And if you're called on a similar journey another day, the road will be more familiar, and you'll know from experience that I am with you all the way."

Everyone needs a little cancer.



junior messages

Beaten Down By Poverty (Part I)

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

Wherever we live, we can be kind and friendly to people. When we lived in Kenya, I had the opportunity to make many new friends. Jane was a youth I learned to love, and I enjoyed being with her so much.

The first time I met Jane was at a Bible Study way back in the hills at Eunice's neat "dalla" (homestead). I thought their place was so pretty with the tidy thatch-roof houses and big trees. The first I saw Jane was when she

sat in the doorway of one of the huts that day. She was a young lady from that area who was expecting a baby.

Little George was born in December. I met Jane again three weeks later when we visited her aunt. When we stepped into their hut, we all stood and Mark prayed. That is the custom in Kenya among the Luo tribe. You must pray when you enter a home.

Jane was friendly and spoke English. It was great to converse with someone who knew English

well. Jane, only eighteen, had lived with her family in Kisumu and came to stay with her aunt in the country to have her baby.

I loved holding the cute little baby. Jane was holding her tiny baby and feeding him milk with a spoon. The milk dribbled around his mouth. I could not understand how he could get enough nourishment and encouraged her to nurse her baby.

Over the next months I had numerous contacts with Jane. Sometimes we asked her to be our interpreter when we were visiting in that area. She was such a pleasant young lady. I loved her little boy too. One day while visiting together at an elderly lady's house, she set chubby George in an African handwoven basket. What a cute picture he was! Jane and I both enjoyed singing. She had learned many English hymns and choruses in school. We sang in English, and she taught me songs in their Luo language.

The weather was pleasant and not so hot on a day I went with Mark to visit friends. Mark stopped at a family nearby while I walked to Jane's house on the dirt road, dodging puddles and trying to avoid the mud. I knew Jane had been sick, and she still was. Her throat was raw and aching. Small George was ill too. He was lying listlessly on the couch. It looked like

he had malaria. I asked, "Why are you not going to the doctor, Jane?"

She replied, "I do not have any pesos (money). I will go tomorrow."

I prayed for them in that small dirt-floor hut. "God, be with Jane and George. Help them and please touch and heal them. May they feel Your love and goodness. In Jesus's name, Amen."

How could I just pray and turn away? I gave her a small amount of shillings. It didn't take much money to go see a doctor. Earlier, I had felt led to give her a mosquito net. Later, Jane told me, "Some children were playing with a candle, my bed mat started to melt, and the net burned."

Jane and her aunt were very poor. Yet whenever we visited, they shared what they could: hot chai, white bread, ground nuts (peanuts), or whatever food they had in the house.

Horrible Burns

On a warm, humid African afternoon, I walked over the dirt path to visit Jane and her little George again. I wanted to ask Jane to come over to her neighbors' house and interpret for us. George was now nearly one year old and was such a sweet little fellow. I loved George and his mother. I called a greeting and went into the hut. Jane was sitting on the sofa, passively, silently holding her small son. I was startled

and shocked to see the side of his face and his ear were badly burned. The burned skin was white and blotched, so starkly contrasting his natural color.

George had just starting walking, and his toddling steps were unsteady. Last evening Jane had been heating the frying pan on the “jiko” (small charcoal burner) on the floor of the hut. She was making “chapoties” (similar to tortillas) and stepped outside briefly. In that moment curious George had toddled over to the hot frying pan and slipped. His small face hit the side of the pan and was badly burned. Jane heard his screams and rushed back inside.

She had nothing to put on his burn. Nothing at all. She thought of a bottle of peroxide I had given her and poured that on. She did not take him to the doctor. She had no money. Oh, the desperation and hopelessness of poverty. Apparently her aunt and neighbors had nothing either. Or was there no one who was kind-hearted enough to help?

I could hardly fathom how they could just sit there. That situation made me feel so bad. We told them we will send them money by Impeso (a transfer of money by phone), so she could take George to a hospital tomorrow.

Burns are way too common in

Kenya with the women cooking over hot fires on the ground during the day, and in the evening they often cook on the floor of their hut. My head was rattled and sad that day. It is not easy to be wealthy, white people amongst the stark African poverty and know what the best way is to show love and care.

Isaiah 53 tells me that Jesus bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. The burden of Africa is too heavy for me. I must give it all to Jesus—again and again.

Many times I would bring books to share with Jane. I hoped these books would touch her heart and make her feel loved and see her need of God. Jane loved to read, but many African households have no books at all. Books are prized and very special.

On hot days we would sit outside under a large mango tree in their yard and sing. Singing was a wonderful way to praise God together. George clapped his tiny hands when we sang.

It was a happy day for me when Jane said she wants to give her heart to Jesus. We prayed together. I told her there is rejoicing in heaven today. I loved holding little George in church or whenever I could. He was now a fat little toddler.

I didn't know that the day would come when Jane and her small son would disappear.



You Can't Outgive God

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

The other evening while reading a bedtime Bible story to my children, I was struck with a simple truth. The story is recounted in Matthew 16 and Mark 9. I'm referring to the little lad who shared his lunch with Jesus. After a day of sitting and listening to Jesus teach, a crowd of what may have been well over 5,000 people needed to eat. A young boy in the crowd was willing to share his lunch with Jesus, and He multiplied it beyond his wildest imaginations. What an amazing experience to witness Jesus take a little bit of food, provide for over 5,000 people, and have a lot more left over than what He started with! Can you imagine the conversations that those present had over the next few days? What simple principle can we glean from this story? We can't outgive God.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "*Since you get more joy out of giving joy to others, you should put a good deal of thought into the happiness that you are able to give.*" Consider all of the ways we give in our everyday lives.

Time is often one of the hardest

things to give, whether it is time for personal devotions and communion with Him or time to help others and do God's business rather than things for ourselves. I know a few different people who asked God to help them wake up early to spend time in worship. He did it! One of them said that he made that "deal" with God but didn't hold up his end of the bargain, and God soon quit waking him early. In my personal experience, if I don't make the time to spend with God, I feel like there aren't enough hours in a day. When I make that time, I feel like I get extra time, and I get more done in less time.

Finances is another way in which we can give to God. It is very difficult for some people to give financially. Excuses are made for not having enough money or not trusting that the money will be put to its intended use. Yes, we need to be careful to whom we give money, but if we use that as an excuse to never give, then we are the ones missing out on a blessing. When we bless others, we almost always receive the greater blessing. Feeling skeptical? Try it

and see. Whether it is helping on a work project, helping someone move, paying someone's bill, filling a need for a church function, or some other similar action. God sees, and He keeps a record. When we feel the Spirit prompting us to give, we should do so and let God orchestrate the outcome. When we hold our things in a closed fist, they can't get out but more can't get in either. When we hold our things in an open hand, they will leave, but we can also receive more as well.

In thinking of close-fisted versus open-handed, an account was shared with me of a man who went to a foreign mission, and before he left he was given money to help some of the poor people. When he got there, he gave the money to the unit leader and asked that the money be put in the safe for that purpose. When a terrific opportunity arose to help, he chose not to do so and at the end of his visit he asked for the money back because he felt he was poor and deserved the money since he hadn't been working during that time.

In comparison, I interviewed a distant relative about his experience with not being able to outgive God. Rob and Dori Horstman and their three young sons lived on a farm in Iowa. "Next time you're up this way, stop in and I'll show you our Blessing

Book," Rob told me. As a testimony to God's faithfulness, Rob and Dori started a Blessing Book and kept track of everything that people gave and the support they received.

In 2008, Rob felt the call to go into the ministry. He decided to go to seminary full time. This would require him to quit his job which meant that the family would be without a solid income for the next three years. Rob told me that he and his wife had a theme verse. "*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it*" (Malachi 3:10).

"This is so vivid in my mind. It was August 2008," Rob told me as he related his story. The first week after he quit his job, the day when he usually would have received a paycheck, he received a check in the mail for almost the exact amount from someone in the community with a note saying that they were praying for them. That was just a start. Food, gas cards, money, and many other blessings in different forms came their way over the next three years. Even without Rob bringing in an income, as a family

they felt that they should still be tithing. “Tithing is so important,” Rob told me. Later he added, “Don’t ever doubt God. He will do exactly what He said He would do.” It wasn’t always easy, and sometimes they weren’t sure how they were going to make ends meet if they tithed, but when you give your life, your finances, and your future to God, He can do the unthinkable.¹

R.G. LeTourneau was another man who tried to outgive God. In 1919 at the age of 32, he felt the tug to be doing more for Christ. R.G. thought that anyone who was wholly committed to Christ needed to become a pastor or missionary in order to truly fulfill the great commission. He met with his pastor for advice and after spending time in prayer together, his pastor spoke four words that were a revelation and guided him the rest of his life, “God needs businessmen too.” From that day forward he considered his business to be a partnership with God. Ironically, eight years later he was still \$100,000 in debt and close to losing it all. But R.G. continued to give to the church even when his accountant said there was no possible way. Things turned around, and

¹ Rob Horstman is a pastor at First Reformed Church in Inwood, IA. Any questions regarding the interview can be directed to the Youth Editor.

about 10 years later his net profit had increased to over \$1.4 million (over \$25 million now). As he succeeded financially, he increased his giving to the point where he was giving 90% of his income to the Lord’s work. LeTourneau once said “*I shovel out the money, and God shovels it back, but God has a bigger shovel.*”²

We will never find out in this life the blessings that the little boy who shared his lunch reaped as a result of his sharing heart. We have the opportunity, however, to follow his example and have a giving heart. Whether we are giving our time, our finances, or some other way, no matter how hard we try, we can’t outgive God.

“Only by giving are you able to receive more than you already have.”

Jim Rohn



² <http://1mvfonline.org/the-man-who-gave-90-percent/>, <http://www.giantsforgod.com/rg-letourneau/>



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If truth stands in your way, you're headed in the wrong direction.

• • • • •

If you won't admit you've been wrong, you love yourself more than truth.

• • • • •

It's not the load that breaks you down; it is the way you carry it.

• • • • •

When God puts His children in the furnace, He goes with them.

• • • • •

Often the narrower the mind, the wider the mouth.

• • • • •

Only as we go God's way can we know God's will.

• • • • •

Following Jesus implies doing business on Jesus's principles.

• • • • •

The more arguments you win, the fewer friends you will have.

• • • • •

Whatever we possess becomes of double value
when we share it with others.

• • • • •

Anytime the future looks gray, I have an attic full of yesterdays.

• • • • •

The future belongs to those who prepare for it.