



# Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

## SEPTEMBER 2021

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Calvary Messenger

September 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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**Editor:** Aaron D. Yoder

5188 W. 825 N., Leesburg, IN 46538

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

[calvary.messenger.19@gmail.com](mailto:calvary.messenger.19@gmail.com)**Assistant Editor:** Paul L. Miller

7809 S. Herren Rd., Partridge, KS 67566

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

[plmiller1934@gmail.com](mailto:plmiller1934@gmail.com)**Contributing Editors:**

Simon Schrock, Enos D. Stutzman,

Aaron Lapp, Ronald J. Miller

**Missions Editor:** Floyd Stoltzfus

3750 E. Newport Rd.

Gordonville, PA 17529

**Youth Messages Editor:** Josh Kooistra

2445 Rough &amp; Ready Rd.

New Concord, OH 43762

[cm youtheditor@gmail.com](mailto:cm youtheditor@gmail.com)**Junior Messages Editor:**

Mrs. Mary Ellen Beachy

11095 Pleasant Hill Rd.

Dundee, OH 44624

[maryellenbeachy@icloud.com](mailto:maryellenbeachy@icloud.com)**Women's Editor:**

Mrs. Susan Schlabach

7184 W. Henry Rd., Ripley, OH 45167

[skschlabach@gmail.com](mailto:skschlabach@gmail.com)**Circulation Manager/Treasurer:**

Enos D. Stutzman

7498 Woods West Ave.,

London, OH 43140

Ph: 614-460-9222

[enosmary@gmail.com](mailto:enosmary@gmail.com)

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## Unto the Hills

Unto the hills around do I lift up  
My longing eyes;  
O whence for me shall my salvation come,  
From whence arise?  
From God the Lord doth come my certain aid,  
From God the Lord Who heaven and earth hath made.

He will not suffer that thy foot be moved:  
Safe shalt thou be.  
No careless slumber shall His eyelids close,  
Who keepeth thee.  
Behold our God the Lord, He slumbereth ne'er,  
Who keepeth Israel in His holy care.

Jehovah is Himself thy Keeper true,  
Thy changeless shade;  
Jehovah thy Defense on thy right hand  
Himself hath made.  
And thee no sun by day shall ever smite;  
No moon shall harm thee in the silent night.

From every evil shall He keep thy soul,  
From every sin;  
Jehovah shall preserve thy going out,  
Thy coming in.  
Above thee watching, He whom we adore  
Shall keep thee henceforth, yea, forevermore.

*John D. S. Campbell*

*Public Domain*



## Soaring On Eagles' Wings

**A**t various craggy cliffs around the world, people have long imagined and tried to jump into the air and soar like birds with various contraptions strapped to their bodies. Many have fallen to their deaths. Only in the relatively recent past has man been able to consistently overcome gravity and safely land on the ground with the aid of a glider or parachute. Their inspiration was often the free-soaring birds that were soaring in the rising air. While there are many birds that soar, the eagle is one of the most well-known birds of all time. Isaiah talked about “*mounting up with wings as eagles*” in Isaiah 40:31 for those who trust the *Creator of the ends of the earth* for strength. Here are a few spiritual lessons from soaring birds and gliding machines.

Since we cannot read the minds of soaring birds, I have gathered much of this information from the Soaring Society of America. *“To fly as the hawk and eagle has been mankind’s dream for centuries. Modern sailplanes make soaring flight possible, and with them humans can*

*fly higher, faster, and farther than the greatest of birds, using only an invisible force of nature to stay aloft.”*<sup>1</sup>

A sailplane is not pushed off cliffs, but it leaves the surface of the earth by means of a towplane that tows it from the ground into the sky where it is released to glide and soar by finding the same invisible forces of nature that birds use, the sun and wind.

God gave Christians the ability to rise above the earth on the power of salvation in Christ. He is our towplane Who gets us aloft in the freedom from sin and this world. It is also by His strength and wisdom that we are able to stay aloft despite the spiritual law of gravity that is always pulling us back to sin. So how do eagles and gliders overcome the law of gravity?

### **Lift sources**

The earth gives atmospheric lift when the sun warms the air next to it. Bubbles of warm, rising air form into columns called thermals. Rocky terrain, dark plowed fields, and asphalt parking lots provide excellent sources of lift, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ssa.org/what-is-soaring/](http://www.ssa.org/what-is-soaring/)

open countryside and desert lands. Sailplanes have ridden thermals up to altitudes of 25,000 feet.

The wind also provides lift when it blows against a mountain or cliff. The airflow is deflected upward and can rise hundreds of feet above the top of the ridge. Flights of more than 1,000 miles have been made using the ridge lift along mountain chains.

### **Look for the eagles**

Sailplane pilots often look for soaring birds to show them the best lift sources. An experienced pilot is able to observe the landscape and find these places himself.

Christians of all ages should look for spiritual eagles and experienced pilots who are not only maintaining their spiritual altitude, but are obviously rising above this world's downward pull. Despite the negative news in the world around us, there are praise-the-Lord moments when we read or hear of people radiating the power of the Son! We can learn from their lives and *"mount up on wings like eagles."*

Seasoned spiritual pilots do not avoid winds of affliction. But they do know the importance of staying on the "uplift" side of the mountains. Did the psalmist know about the lift source of hills when he said, *"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help*

*cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber"* (Psalm 121:1-3)? He likely saw eagles soaring on the slopes, and he definitely knew Jehovah.

My wife and I have been following the saga of a premature baby born to a young couple in Cross Hill, SC. Just yesterday, after six weeks of a struggle with life, life seeped away. Our hearts go out to them and we lift them up to Jehovah God. Even after 35 years of flying along a similar course, tears of grief flood our eyes. We have not always flown on the "lift" side of the mountains and came dangerously close to being sucked into the Slough of Despond<sup>2</sup> (there are no rising thermals from marshes and swamps). But it was only after lifting our eyes in faith to the hills that our flight averted a deadly crash.

Whether you are merrily soaring upward on a rising thermal or are being sucked back to earth due to spiritual gravity, remember that our *"help cometh from the LORD!"* And let's radiate God's Son-light to help others find new heights in their flight to glory. Let's lift the young couple from Cross Hill, SC, Bruce and Sheila Wagler, to our Father!

AY 

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2 The Pilgrim's Progress

## Announcement

### Faithful Women Seminar 2021

**Theme: Diapers, Attitudes, and Me**

Saturday, October 2, 2021

Walking With God - Lily Bear, Elida, OH

The Littles - Sylvia Yoder, Somerset, OH

Teens and Young Adults - TBA

In Community - Faye Shaum, Orrville, OH

For more information or to register, please call 614-873-1199  
or email [info@dalmohio.org](mailto:info@dalmohio.org)

*This seminar is sponsored and hosted by:*

*Deeper Life Ministries*

*5123 Converse Huff Rd.*

*Plain City, OH 43064*



## Announcement

### Faithful Men Seminar 2021

**Theme: Restoring the Heart of Anabaptism**

Saturday, November 13, 2021

What Have We Lost? - Tom Johnson, Plain City, OH

Establishing a Clear Vision - Dave Snyder, Plain City, OH

Loving Like the Master - Dave Snyder, Plain City, OH

Equipping for Service - Ben Waldner, Plain City, OH

For more information or to register, please call 614-873-1199  
or email [info@dalmohio.org](mailto:info@dalmohio.org)

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## It Is What It Is

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

I saw a man sitting in his 15-passenger van with this message on the driver's side rear window. (Later, I wished I could interview him on his interpretation.) Message: "It is what it is." Was it about the national election months ago when Mr. Trump was defeated, or about the world-wide pandemic of this notorious COVID-19 virus, or maybe his wife burned his toast? First off, it sounded like the juice of sour grapes coming from a community pessimist. But do you know what? It is what it is.

It seemed to me to be about as vain, vague, and unnecessary as what some people carry on their T-shirts. To be sure, there are better ways to be a witness in our world. Some messages are more of a distraction than an attraction, especially on those T-shirts, and elsewhere, at times.

"It is what it is" was original with someone, of course, but at the same time, vacillated between the dead pan of "duh," and a profound sense of the obvious. It is just another example of not being wrong, and at the same time having said nothing of value or importance. It is like what has been

said of a fool who has nothing worth saying, but then says it anyhow.

Or could we turn this trite saying over, and perhaps take out some good from it after all? Let's say someone dies from an accident. The man had a wife with dependent children. We, and especially they, will need to accept the tragedy and adapt as best we/they can. Those more directly affected could possibly say, "If only . . ." and cite three possible scenarios in which the accident would not have happened. The next morning, the sad fact of the accident remains, and those directly involved need to deal with its reality.

"It is what it is" has one side that is an alarmist's pessimism. The other side can have a realist's acceptance of the unchanging circumstances. The realist can then find the grace from God to accept the sad and undesired accident, and resolve to trust God in a new way for each day as it comes. We know that pouting and worry cannot change the past, for after all, it is what it is.

We have friends who have received the dreaded report from medical

tests, confirming the invasion of cancer in the body. (My wife, Marian, died of cancer 14 years ago). It may be that a tree fell in an unexpected way, and by it, someone was killed. Or a fire was caused by an unfortunate mistake, whereby the family's house was completely destroyed. You could name many instances of misfortunes that caused great losses. The same idea pertains to our day-to-day small losses.

The Amish have, of long time, had a saying, "Sell is yusht naw davake ess isht iss." (That is now just the way that it is). There is something good about that line of reasoning. It can be a needed thrust of resignation and contentment. Resignation to the circumstances of life is not the move of one who is trapped in a dead end of some kind. Contentment is not the last gasp of one who supposes he is a goner. Resignation to the apparent will of God, and the strength of an undefeated faith, can say with our loving Savior, "Not my will, but thine be done." Contentment, though the burdens are so great and seemingly too great to bear, can still cry out, "O Lord God, my Father, glorify thy name!"

Jesus can sympathize with us in our times of need, even our greatest need ever. When Jesus was speaking to His disciples about His approaching

suffering and death, He said, "*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.*"

I can imagine Jesus paused a bit, then looked up to the heavens, and said, "*Father, glorify thy name.*" God responded affirmatively; some said it thundered, others said an angel must have spoken to Him (John 12:23-33).

We have also the special help granted to us by the Holy Spirit, Who is promised to us as a heaven-sent Comforter and Helper in prayer. You, no doubt, have experienced times when you just could not pray. It is in those times when the Spirit intercedes for us in an amazingly effective way. Why, or how? Jesus searches our hearts, and in the periphery of that whole dynamic, He also knows the mind of the Spirit and the will of God. We can trust Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God to know, comprehend, and understand our earthly dilemma and can bring about a measure of help (Romans 8:22-39).

Yet we must be realistic. We are not yet in heaven. This earth will cause us distress and possibly even some difficult suffering. There may be a few who are blessed with a seeming miracle of some kind. Most of us, though, will need to make a firm resolve to wait on God in the circumstances of our losses, fears, or



sufferings. The whole duration of our lives can be mostly free of sorrow and grief, but all of us likely have or will pass through some valleys of hard times—maybe a few crises—and some deep distresses of soul or spirit.

“It is what it is” can be a pessimist’s fatalistic assessment of never getting any good breaks in life. His comments accordingly have more than a hint about blaming God in his heart for his rough times. The other side of the coin is one who is broken in his will as he resigns to the will of the kind and loving Father in heaven. That resignation develops a peaceable contentment, buoyed by

his personal faith. We do not have space to develop this concept, but it is biblically true, that faith in God is a needed decision in all of life. Biblically-provided living is not from a personal decision for hope; hope can only be truly claimed as a result of our faith. I repeat, hope is not a decision; it is the result of our faith.

**The Bottom Line** is that we will not contest the statement, “It is what it is.” The disposition and direction of our lives will give the interpretation of whether it makes us sad, or even mad, or whether by faith it provides grace in our place.



## Come, See My Zeal for the Lord!

*Mike Atnip, Bernville, PA*



*God is not a lazy Being, and so He appreciated Jehu’s zeal; so much so that He promised Jehu four generations of kings for executing judgment against the wickedness of Ahab. In his typical fervent style, Jehu had done a full work of annihilating the descendancy of that wicked king.*

*Zeal is not charity, neither is it holiness unto the Lord. As we go through this life, let us be sure that we take time to know God and His heart. May our reforms be thorough, based upon a love for God and truth.*

**H**ad Jehu been a man of 21st-century America, he would drive a 4x4 with the biggest engine available under the hood. He needs power to get him going, and that right fast. Stop signs would be a frustration, and by habit he would squeal his tires upon departure from any given point.

It is not that Jehu was a show-off. He simply had things to do, places to go, and people to see. He had no time for piddling. After all, he was Jehu—zeal incarnated.

Jehus are exciting people to be around. Things happen around Jehus. Drowsiness and puttering are evil, and half-heartedness gets a disgusting scowl every time it meets Jehu. There is a job to do, and it needs full attention until executed. So Jehu fires up the 4x4 and peels away. He'll return with a roar when the job is done—thoroughly done.

### **“Be Zealous” is a Bible Command**

God is not a lazy Being, and so He appreciated Jehu's zeal; so much so that He promised Jehu four generations of kings for executing judgment against the wickedness of Ahab. In his typical fervent style, Jehu had done a full work of annihilating the descendancy of that wicked king. Both the king of Israel and the king of Judah had fallen before

him, as well as the sensuous Jezebel. When it came time to deal with the followers of Baal, he slyly had them gather into the slaughterhouse and, with his exacting passion, made sure not a single one escaped. In his enthusiasm, he turned the house of Baal into a public sewer.

“Come see my zeal for the Lord,” he had told one of his friends. I do not get the picture that Jehu was bragging. He simply was excited to be doing what he understood was the will of God, and was eager to share his own zest. After all, enthusiasm is contagious. Those infected will not stand it to let others be mere bystanders.

### **The Little Red Light**

In watching the life of Jehu, one word suddenly jolts us to the reality that zeal in and of itself is not totally satisfying to God. We find that word in II Kings 10:29: *“Howbeit.”*

Like the flashing of a red light in the dash of a vehicle, we are warned that not all is well “under the hood.” We may be cruising blissfully along at 70 miles per hour on a beautiful sunny day, but that little light forewarns us that we best stop and check things out before proceeding any further.

Ahhh, but we have places to go, things to do, and people to see. We have no time to stop for a silly little light in the dash!

And so Jehu speed along...until in the end they realize that it is too late to add more oil to the engine. With a clunk and a bang, they suddenly come to the stark realization that all the ambition in the world cannot keep an oil-less engine running.

In Jehu's case it was two golden calves that "made his engine blow." For all his accomplishments, his life record indicates that he failed to heed the "low oil pressure" light. And that fateful mistake is forever recorded for us to learn from.

### **What Can We Learn From This?**

First, zeal is good, but zeal is not love. Had Jehu loved God as much as he was zealous for Him, his reforms would have been broader. He would have, perhaps, spent more time in getting to know the full will of God. As it was, he did indeed carry out, and zealously carry out, a part of God's will. But because he was zealous for God instead of longing to know God in a personal loving relationship, it is written that "*Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart.*"

What? Zealous Jehu accused of not being wholehearted?

Yes!

You see, God appreciates zeal. But His desire is that our zeal springs

from love, not ambition. Paul was "constrained by love," not zeal.

### **Jehu - The Missionary**

Many people are zealous for God, ready to depart unto the ends of the earth to preach to the heathen. They devour mission books and magazines. They practice self-denial to prepare themselves for the arduous demands of frontier life. They study hard to learn the language of "their people."

But there remain some golden calves in their lives. And this lack of breadth reveals itself.

I am reminded of an instance in a foreign land where a conversation was going concerning a group of unevangelized primitive people about two ridges over from the home base. This little group of people supposedly had never heard the Gospel. I can still hear the words of one young man, "Now that is what stirs my heart! The people who never heard before! I get excited about that!" He was ready to hoist a backpack and head out.

But this "Jehu" had some calves in his life. While he got excited about the group of ignorant souls two valleys to the east, his daily walk in the neighborhood he lived in did not manifest a passion for lost souls. Jehu! Zealous Jehu on the mission field!

## **Jehu - The Reformer**

With a commendable zeal, these Jehus set themselves to destroy anything and everything associated with, say, Roman Catholicism. Fat books are written about Mariology and the falsehood of transubstantiation. Tracts are passed out at Catholic seminaries and at the front door of convents. Websites are published with links to any and all information available about the apostasy of the Roman Church.

This is Jehu in the temple of Baal. Not a dash of Baal worship survives his reform. "Howbeit..."

Uh-oh...

Two golden calves... Maybe those calves represent, in the life of the church reformer mentioned above, negligence of practicing the principle of nonresistance, and being covetous. Maybe they represent some other aspects of God's heart, in other reformers.

## **Jehu - The Evangelist**

Jehus are great people to have around in evangelistic efforts. They will boldly stand on the housetops wearing sandwich boards and preaching hellfire and damnation upon all who will not believe. With an ardor that ignites the interest of passing folk, they thunder out the message of righteousness and holiness

and judgment to come. People stop to listen to Jehu's preaching; his very fervency demands it. People also respond to his "altar calls" at tent meetings.

But Jehus rarely make good pastors. They cannot sit still enough to listen to a hurting heart for two hours. And so Jehu the evangelist is best backed up by a support team of men with the gift of shepherding. In his zest for truth, Jehu is prone to forget mercy.

## **Zeal is Good, But...**

Zeal is not charity, neither is it holiness unto the Lord. As we go through this life, let us be sure that we take time to know God and His heart. May our reforms be thorough, based upon a love for God and truth. May love for souls be the fuel that thrusts us into foreign mission fields.

Zeal can get us a long way in many churches. It may put you behind the pulpit. It may put you on a mission field. It may get you a following. After all, it is a lot more exciting to ride "furiously" along in Jehu's chariot than to watch sheep nibble grass. At the end of the day, Jehu may well have to wash blood and guts off of his chariot. And they may well be the blood and guts, mind you, of a notoriously famous queen!

## “Howbeit”

“Howbeit”—what does that word represent in your life? Zeal without knowledge? Unbridled ambition? Unbalanced reformations? Ministering truth without love? Love without truth?

Be zealous! This is a Bible command. Just make sure “howbeit” does not appear at the end of the biography that God writes about you!

*Public Domain*



# The Importance of the Christian Tradition and Theology

*Stephen Russell, Guys Mills, PA*

**W**e live in a world of fragmentation and hyper-individualism.

All the ancient paths and truths are being called into question; actually, they are being denied. The movers and shakers of our contemporary world are consciously trying to erect a new morality based on personal subjective truth and desire in order to replace the traditional morality that was based on God’s revelation, the accumulated wisdom of mankind, and the natural law. For a contemporary believer our present situation can seem dark and sometimes he may be tempted to

despair, but it need not be so. We Christians need to keep our focus on God and how He has worked in the past in this world. This will encourage us to expect God to bring new life out of spiritual death.

Since Creation God has been forming His people, His own possession. He gave us all we needed to flourish in a newly created world that was “very good” so that we could mature fully into what it meant to be in God’s image. Unfortunately, we listened to Satan’s lie, that first lie about secret knowledge that we thought offered us more than God’s truth did. The resulting fall

necessitated the ultimate act of love as the Father sent His Son to redeem us from death that we had brought upon ourselves.

The story that followed is one of infinite patience and the willingness on God's part to do whatever it took to bring us into the fullness of God's image. In our brokenness we humans resisted God at nearly every step. Yet God persevered, giving us a fresh start after the Flood and then providing a new way of relating to us by forming a nation out of Abraham's family. The nation Israel sometimes shone out the light of God into the world. Even more often they neglected the task God had given them. Eventually Israel was wounded by God through the Exile so that she could be healed by God in the dispersion throughout the nations and in the return of some Jews to the Promised Land. Those faithful Jews in the dispersion prepared the way of the Messiah by shining the light of God's Word into the pagan world. Those in the Promised Land prepared the way of the Messiah by their lives and the renewed Temple worship.

Then, two thousand years ago, "*when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law.*" At just the right time, when

God had prepared the world by establishing the stable rule of the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean basin, by providing a nearly universal language that was capable of clarity and precision in thinking about spiritual matters, and by revealing His truth in the Hebrew Scriptures, the long-awaited Redeemer and King came into the world. He came into a world that was yearning for relief and release. Both the pagans and the Jews longed for a clear path to purpose and meaning in a world that felt empty to many.

God in Jesus came into the world, challenging the fallen approaches to life of hatred, suspicion, distrust, and violence. Jesus revealed God's face to mankind. Jesus gave mankind a way ahead to become the perfect image of God. The path He gave mankind was the very path He had trod. He lived a life of obedience to the Father, love of others, patience before a world in turmoil, and a willingness to sacrifice to bring God's will to fruition. This one Who was truly man as man was meant to be brought reconciliation between God and man through His death on the cross and His resurrection and also gave us our model for the perfect human life. However, just as man resisted God and His plan early on, so too, even after the coming

of Jesus, many lost their way and corruption came into the church of God. In the early church many tried to combine the Gospel story with their pagan world view by denying the Word come in the flesh or the triune Godhead. For the second time Satan tried to introduce a destructive lie of secret knowledge into the life of God's people. Not faith, but special knowledge available only to certain people brought salvation, according to the Gnostics. But God continued to work patiently with the church, and men and women loyal to the message of the Gospel were able to demonstrate clearly Who God and Jesus are and how they acted in history to save mankind. It was not secret knowledge but committed faith that saved us. The church produced creeds that preserved the teaching of the Trinity and of the God-man, Jesus, and how God worked in Him to save us.

But Satan did not stop trying to destroy God's work in the world. As the church felt more secure in her position, fervency in faith declined. Being a Christian became, not a commitment, but an inevitable part of living in Europe. Whereas Satan's earlier attack on the faith had aimed at destroying the willingness to stand against the culture, now Satan used the apparently Christian culture to

undermine what ought to have been a countercultural faith. Everyone was a baptized Christian, many fewer were truly Christians through a sound commitment to Jesus.

Then, 500 years ago as God's Word became more easily accessible to all through translation, the printing press, and active Gospel preaching by those who recognized the need, new life entered the church during the Reformation. Those who thought themselves Christians because they had been baptized as infants were now challenged to see that each one had to choose for himself whether he would turn to God through Jesus and worship Him. It may be difficult for us to conceive how hard such a call was in the setting they lived in then. But just as in the beginning of the Christian era when each person had to decide for himself whom he would worship and dedicate his life to, 500 years ago the call went out clearly again, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Our forefathers led in the call for clear conversion and commitment to Jesus back then, and many of them lost their lives as they witnessed to their faith in Jesus and their love for God.

Now, 500 years after that revival of faith we find ourselves once again in a world of declining faith and commitment. There is less certainty

about just what the faith entails. We are, like some of those in the early church, deeply influenced by the world views of those around us. A focus on hyper-individualism and self-actualization has seeped into the church from the world around us. Instead of holding to the communion of the saints and to the faith once delivered to the saints, many of us go for a “cafeteria-style” Christianity where we individually pick and choose what we will believe and how we will live. Satan is again assaulting the church with the lie of secret, individual knowledge. Sometimes this special knowledge is a revelation that only some have access to. Sometimes it is the belief that the solution to today’s problems lies, not in the church, but in the social and political movements instigated by Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin, Freud, Foucault, and other materialistic movers and shakers in the modern world. They are the new Gnostics, and like the early church, we must learn to recognize the danger they pose to our faith and the best way to answer their challenges.

Often these new Gnostics, like the old ones, use nice, familiar-sounding words that may lull us to sleep so that we do not see the threat to our faith. This is where an awareness of our tradition, history, and theology may

play a foundational role in stabilizing our faith and in reaching out to those who do not share our basic doctrines by formulating clear, precise ways to tell our story and to answer the questions and objections that modern unbelievers have. Rather than reinventing the wheel, so to speak, we can benefit from the ideas and struggles of those who have gone before us and dealt with the same or similar issues.

For this, we should know the Christian tradition in the broad sense. When thinking about our own part of the Christian tradition, we have a pearl of great price which we sometimes do not recognize but which many Christians out there are looking for. Our Anabaptist forefathers rediscovered aspects of the early Christian belief and practice that had been lost or shoved into the monasteries. The need for an adult, conscious commitment of faith in Jesus to form a true, believers’ church, and the resultant life of separation or holiness that expresses itself in nonconformity (faith), nonaccumulation (hope), and nonresistance (love) is foundational to a healthy church and desperately needs to be heard today. May God give us the vision to see these truths and the courage to express them to others.





## marriages

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

### Gentile-Freeman

Bro. Jonathan, son of Alan and Yvonne Gentile, Leoma, TN, and Sis. Melody, daughter of Homer and Martha Freeman, Leoma, TN, on July 9, 2021, at Copperas Branch Baptist Church for Goodspring Mennonite Church by Perry Miller.

### Kauffman-Mast

Bro. Mark, son of Willis and Marion Kauffman, Goodspring, TN, and Sis. Janae, daughter of Jay and Sarah Mast, Goodspring, TN, on June 5, 2021, at Mars Hill Baptist Church for Goodspring Mennonite Church by Perry Miller.

### Lapp-Mast

Bro. Timothy, son of Ivan and Katie Mae Lapp, Tyrone, PA, and Sis. Lindsey, daughter of Mike and Ruth Anne Mast, Auburn, KY, on June 25, 2021, at Plainview Mennonite Church by Ivan Lapp.

### Miller-Miller

Bro. Ryan, son of Perry and Shirley Miller, Plummer, ID, and Sis. Karen, daughter of David Lynn and Katie Anna Miller, Wellman, IA, on May 29, 2021, at Fairview Church for New Hope Mennonite Church by Gabriel Beachy.



### Rodenhuis-Troyer

Bro. Willem, son of Willem and Carolyn Rodenhuis, Brownsville, OR, and Sis. Sharon, daughter of Joe and Naomi Troyer, Millersburg, OH, on May 29, 2021, at Legacy Christian School for Grace Haven Fellowship by David Yoder.

### Schrock-Weaver

Bro. Noah, son of Melvin and Ina Schrock, Blackville, SC, and Sis. Kristin, daughter of James and Amanda Weaver, Lore City, OH, on June 12, 2021, at the Weaver Family Farm for Antrim Mennonite Church by Jason Miller.

### Strite-Miller

Bro. Zachary, son of John and Becky Strite, Smithdale, MS, and Sis. Hadassah, daughter of David and Esther Miller, Lexington, IN, on June 4, 2021, at Hanover Baptist Church for Living Waters Mennonite Church by Floyd Lengacher.



## cradle roll

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

**Beachy**, Peter, Jr. and Melody (Sommers), Salisbury, PA, sixth child, second son, Josiah Conner, July 3, 2021.

**Byers**, Phil and Mary Ann (Weaver), Pulaski, TN, fourth child, third daughter, Jesslyn Mae, July 25, 2021.

**Coblentz**, Glenn and Abigail (Brumbaugh), Geneva, IN, ninth child, seventh daughter, Tessa Caroline, June 25, 2021.

**Helmuth**, Galen and Edith (Beachy),  
Huntland, TN, fourth child, first son,  
Lincoln Grant, July 6, 2021.

**Jantzi**, Conrad and Christine  
(Schmidt), Wellesley, ON, fifth child,  
third daughter, Chloe Grace, July 11,  
2021.

**Kauffman**, Joe and Linda (Raber),  
Etna Green, IN, second child, first  
daughter, Mia Brooklyn, July 26, 2021.

**Kauffman**, Josh and Katie (Raber),  
Tippecanoe, IN, second child, first  
daughter, Kylie Rayne, July 12, 2021.

**Miller**, Conrad and Kanita (Yoder),  
Newcomerstown, OH, first child and  
son, Brandon Paul, July 22, 2021.

**Miller**, Lyndon and Katie Jo  
(Kauffman), Leon, IA, first child and  
daughter, Samantha Jo, March 6, 2021.

**Miller**, Myron and Gena (Beachy),  
Kalona, IA, first child and son, Nathan  
Gabriel, April 24, 2021.

**Miller**, Vernon and Melody (Mast),  
Lawrenceburg, TN, third child, second  
son, Grant Marshall, July 3, 2021.

**Miller**, Vincent and Juanita (Beachy),  
Belvidere, TN, presently serving in El  
Salvador, fifth child, second daughter,  
Aliya Sage, July 3, 2021.

**Shrock**, Karl and Darla (Ulrich),  
Covington, TX, sixth child, second son,  
Dallas Lee, June 6, 2021.

**Troyer**, Duane and Melody (Gingerich),  
Leon, IA, third child, first daughter,  
Cherith Kathryn, April 29, 2021.

**Ulrich**, Ivan and Jessica (Yoder),  
Keene, TX, second child, first daughter,  
Caroline Bella, May 5, 2021.

**Ulrich**, Marcus and Nita (Mast),  
Covington, TX, second child and  
daughter, Ariana Shante, June 12, 2021.

**Yoder**, James and Heidi (Mast),  
Hutchinson, KS, first child and  
son, Ezra Sol, July 29, 2021.

**Yoder**, Joshua and Darlene  
(Albertson), Liberty Center, IN, second  
child and son, Hudson George, May 14,  
2021.



## ordination

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

**Bro. Leon Coblentz**, 41, (wife,  
Kaylene Miller), Auburn, KY, was called  
by the voice of the church and ordained  
minister for Plainview Mennonite  
Church on April 25, 2021. Preordination  
messages were given by Dwight Yoder.  
The charge was given by Luke Troyer,  
assisted by Paul Overholt and Dwight  
Yoder.



**Lapp**, Amanda E., 79, of Quaker City, OH, passed away on April 11, 2021, at her home. She was born August 29, 1941, in Nappanee, IN, to the late Eli and Catherine (Coblentz) Borkholder.

Amanda was a faithful member of the Heritage Mennonite Church in New Concord, OH. She lived most of her married life in Antrim, OH. She was a caring wife, mother, grandmother, and friend to many.

She is survived by her husband of 58 years, Mervin Lapp, children: Laura Jean (Ivan) Miller, Linn, MO; LaMar (Faith), Quaker City; Arlen Eli (Lourdes), Cayo, Belize; Ruth Marie (Dave) Lapp, New Holland, PA; Edward Alva (Rita), Quaker City; 24 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and Eldon (Terri) Borkholder, Nappanee, IN.

She was preceded in death by brothers: Daniel, Joseph, John Henry, Jacob, Menno, and Raymond; sisters: Anna, Sara, Emma, Ada, and Clara.

The funeral was held April 16, 2021, at 59715 West Road, New Concord, OH, for Heritage Mennonite Church, officiated by Jonathan Raber. Interment was in Heritage Mennonite Cemetery.

**Miller**, Frieda K., 54, Malta, OH, passed away July 1, 2021, at the Ohio State University Hospital in Columbus. She was born March 31, 1967, in Ephrata, PA, to the late Aaron S. and Mary (King) Beiler.

Frieda was a homemaker and member of the Ebenezer Mennonite Church.

She is survived by her husband of 29 years, Titus Miller; a daughter, Bethany Miller, Malta; four sons: Wendall (Carla), Caldwell; Javon (Genevieve), McConnellsville; Kenneth, and Austin, both of Malta; three grandchildren: Jamison Miller, Arianna Miller, and Theodore Miller. Also surviving are two sisters: Miriam Miller, KY; Martha Kauffman, VA; five brothers: Melvin, NJ; Daniel, PA, Jonas, OH, David, PA, and John, VA.

The funeral service was held July 5, 2021, at Ebenezer Mennonite Church with Jonathan Raber officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.

**Miller**, John Paul, 74, Decatur, IA, passed away on May 15, 2021, at his home. He was born May 11, 1947, to the late John and Martha Miller in Lancaster, PA.

He accepted Christ and was baptized as a youth and was a member of Weavertown Church in PA. After moving to IA, he joined Leon Salem and was a faithful member until his death.

On December 27, 1968, he was united in marriage to Edna Mae Yutzy of Leon, IA. They lived in Decatur County all of their married life.

Paul was an EMT at Decatur County Hospital for 18 years and then enjoyed driving an eighteen wheeler as his health

allowed. He was a faithful and devoted husband, father, and grandpa.

Paul is survived by his wife, Edna, three children: Vivian Kay (Ken) Riehl, Dundee, NY; Vesta Renae (Lavon) Bontrager, Kalona; Verlin Ray (Sharon) Miller, Decatur; 13 grandchildren: Jaydon (Janaya), Vanessa, Kendall, Kevin, Javon, and Vonda Riehl; Tiffany, Cameron, Nicky, and Kierra Bontrager; Derek, Karson, and Alexa Miller; brother, Ken (Juanita), Sarasota, FL; sister, Louise (Ed) Beachy, Honey Brook, PA; nieces and nephews: Kervin, Daryl, Jennifer, Julie, Jessica, and Christopher Beachy, and Scott and Eric Miller.

The funeral was held at the Salem Mennonite Church, May 19, 2021, with interment following at the church cemetery.

**Stoltzfus**, Miriam M., 93, died April 15, 2021, at the Quarryville Presbyterian Home. Born in New Holland, she was the daughter of the late Stephen A. and Mary B. (Glick) Lantz. On November 22, 1951, she married Jonathan D. Stoltzfus.

Miriam was a homemaker and a member of the Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church. She loved her family and enjoyed quilting and bird watching.

Surviving besides her husband are six sons: Amos W. (Marianne), Lancaster; Edwin L., Ronks; David P. (Karen), Whittier, NC; Jonathan D. Jr. (Lydia), New Holland; Alpheus J. (Kathryn), Nashville, TN; Vernon R. (Kimberly), Strasburg; four daughters: Rebecca Ann (Galen) Miller, Bourbon, IN; Elma Grace

Stoltzfus, Ronks; Esther Marie (Wayne) Wagler, Washington, IN; Linda Beth (Sanford) Weaver, New Holland; 37 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren; and two sisters: Sadie Stoltzfus, Leola; and Naomi (Bob) Sebourn, Sarasota, FL.

She was preceded in death by a daughter, Mary Louise Stoltzfus, grandsons, Jonathan Stoltzfus III, and Joshua Stoltzfus, and by siblings: Elam, Alpheus, Phares, Levi, Omar, and Reuben Lantz, Lydia Glick, Susie Beiler, Barbara Fisher, Rebecca Miller, and Katie Lantz.

The funeral service was held April 17, 2021, at the Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church, with Norman Kauffman, Glen Miller, and Nathan Bange serving. Interment followed at the church cemetery.

**Stoltzfus**, Sarah K., 86, of Leola, PA, passed away May 17, 2021. She was born September 25, 1934, to the late Samuel M. and Rebecca (King) Fisher.

On November 13, 1956, she married John F. Stoltzfus. They were blessed with 64 years of marriage. John lovingly provided care for her when she needed special care in the last five years of her life because of dementia.

She was a faithful wife and beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother who enjoyed her family. She made beautiful quilts for her family. Sarah was a member of West Haven Amish Mennonite Church.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her children: Becky (Mel) Beiler, Gordonville; Marti (Dave) Beiler,

and Sam (Bev), both of Leola; nine grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and five siblings.

She was preceded in death by a sister, sister-in-law, and a great-granddaughter.

The funeral service was held at West Haven Amish Mennonite Church on May 20, 2021, with Lee Stoltzfus and Ivan Stoltzfus serving. Interment was at the church cemetery.

**Yoder**, Bertha, 79, Stark City, MO, passed away peacefully at her home on June 16, 2021. She was born October 14, 1941, in Kempsville, VA, to the late Jonas and Anna (Miller) Swartzentruber.


On August 14, 1961, Bertha married Allen Yoder. They were married for 59 years.

Bertha's life reflected her love for her Lord! She loved her family and the church dearly.

Surviving are her husband, Allen,

eleven children: Arlen (Jenny), Stark City; Mervin (Viola), Maryville; Clayton (Christina), Maryville; Lorraine Yoder, Stark City; Ivan (Dianna), Temple, TX; Eunice (Lupe) Reyes, and Jason (Priscilla), both of Stark City; Sara (Daniel) Rissler, Rutherford, TX; Calvin (Rhoda); Bertha Ann (Tristan) Byler; Joanna Yoder, all of Stark City; two brothers, Daniel (Marie) Swartzentruber, Montezuma, GA; Merlin Swartzentruber, Abbeville, SC; one sister, Catherine Troyer, Farmville, VA; 50 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were one grandchild, Phillip Yoder, five brothers, and one sister.

The funeral service was held June 19, 2021, at Fairview Mennonite Church with David Byler, Vernon Nissley, Daniel Schrock, and Steve Swartzentruber serving. Burial followed at the Fairview Christian Fellowship Cemetery. 

## observations

When the area was secured in the evening of the uprising at the nation's capital on January 6, a lot of debris and trash were left behind. Andrew Harnick, an Associated Press photographer, recorded an image of a solitary individual in a blue suit on his knees cleaning up plastic bottles and other rubbish in the rotunda. The image garnered a lot of attention.

But because he was wearing a mask he wasn't quickly identified and was referred to as "the man in the blue suit." In due time he was identified and it turns out he was a father of three and five-year-old boys. When questioned about the picture, he stated that he was responding to a need. He wants his sons to grow up thinking that when something is broken we should do what we can to mend it.

His name is Andy Kim, and he is a U.S. Representative from New Jersey.

The events of January 6 seemed to touch a sensitive but different nerve for many folks in the USA. Some were sensitive to what transpired because they identified the ruckus as legitimate and needed. Others were sensitive because it felt to them like a disregard for due process. Both sides talked about democracy being seriously threatened. Both sides were unsettled. But many pointed out that the image of this gentleman on his knees putting things in order was a reassuring detail following a time of unfamiliar uncertainty. The Smithsonian Institute reached out to Rep. Kim and requested his suit. He admits to having a lot of negative emotions associated with the events of that day and with the suit, but is pleased if his anonymous, yet noble, act symbolized by this suit can be inspirational for others.

As one who wishes his life would be characterized as one who restores and cleans up, rather than one who creates rubbish and chaos, I regard this man's example as inspirational.



In a 2019 Mothers' Day column for the *Carroll County Comet*, Susan Holsinger quoted an account written by Craig A. Smith. It should be mentioned that versions of this

account have been widely circulated. But I've not verified its authenticity. Some folks say they've tried to trace it down and been stymied in being able to verify it as fact. So, for what it's worth, here is the story:

"The scene is a courtroom trial in South Africa. A frail black woman stands slowly to her feet. She is more than 70 years old. Facing her from across the room are several security police officers.

One of them, Mr. Van der Broek, has just been tried and found guilty in the murders of many people, including the woman's son and the woman's husband.

Mr. Van der Broek had come to the woman's home one night, brutally took her only son, shot him at point-blank range while she watched, and then burned the young man's body while he and his officers partied nearby.

Several years later Mr. Van der Broek and his cohorts returned. This time they took away her husband. For months she heard nothing of his whereabouts. She did not know if he was alive or dead. Then almost two years after her husband's disappearance, Mr. Van der Broek came back to fetch her. How vividly she remembered that night. She was taken to a riverbank. To her surprise she was shown her husband. To her

dismay she saw he was bound and badly beaten.

She rejoiced to see he was still strong in spirit as he lay on a pile of wood. She watched in horror as Mr. Van der Broek and his fellow officers poured gasoline over his entire body. The last words she heard from her dear husband's lips as they set him aflame were, "Father, forgive them..."

Now this dear wife and mother is standing in the courtroom listening to the confessions of Mr. Van der Broek, the man who had committed horrible atrocities against other human beings. Suddenly a member of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission turns to her and asks, "So what do you want? How should justice be done to this man who has so brutally destroyed your family?"

Calmly and confidently the dear old woman replied, "I want three things. First of all I want to be taken to the place where my husband's body was burned so that I can gather up the dust and give his remains a decent burial."

She pauses, and then continues. "My husband and son were my only family. I want, secondly, therefore, for Mr. Van der Broek to become my son. I would like for him to come twice a month to the ghetto and spend a day with me so I can pour out on him whatever love I still have remaining in me."

"Finally," she says, "I would like

Mr. Van der Broek to know I offer him my forgiveness because I have been forgiven. Jesus Christ died to forgive. The wish of my husband was to forgive. So I would kindly ask someone to come to my side and lead me across the courtroom so I can take Mr. Van der Broek in my arms, embrace him, and let him know he is truly forgiven."

As the court assistants come to lead the elderly woman across the room, Mr. Van der Broek falls over in a dead faint, overwhelmed by what he has just heard.

As he struggles for consciousness, those in the courtroom, family, friends, neighbors—all victims of decades of oppression and injustice—begin to sing, softly but assuredly, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me."

Whether this story is true or not, the injustices described in this account were all too typical for many during that time in South Africa's history. One incident of this nature is way too many. A response of person-to-person forgiveness in the face of this astonishing violation flows from reservoirs of God's infinite grace, through channels opened by a redeemed heart that has been forgiven. I have no desire to explore the "limits" of man's ability to access divine forgiveness or infinite grace.

But if I were called upon to do so, I desire to be one who would respond as Christ would respond.

But I'm fooling myself if I expect to be able to respond favorably to a major offense in the future if I'm unable to respond with humble forgiveness and generous grace to the small irritations and offenses that clutter my todays.

• • • • •

The physical world is an amazingly intricate and intertwined collection of systems. On the one hand we have the immense expanse of outer space. Man has invented complicated and powerful tools to help see details in outer space that escape the naked eye. In the solar system, to which planet Earth belongs, various planets whirl around the sun in a truly remarkable pattern of predictability. We on earth are situated at an optimal distance from the sun, making our orb a friendly place for human life. But our vantage point requires us to focus our attention way out there to contemplate the enormity of outer space.

Outer space seems incredibly large to earthlings like me. But with specialized instruments, man has been able to zoom into matter in such a way that allows us to observe things that aren't apparent to the naked eye. Things we regard as solid are actually composed of molecules

and atoms that are too small to see individually. There is a lot of space around and in these molecules and atoms, but they are moving so quickly it seems to us as though the matter is solid—though it isn't. Some amazing similarities exist in the magnetic pull and orbits in creation both in things too far away and things too small to see with the naked eye. They all point to the fact that all we know and see has been created by an all-powerful God.

Various life systems in the air, soil, and water also interact in ways that both mirror and support other systems. What an intricate and intertwined creation we are blessed to be a part of! It's all been designed by an all-powerful Creator. God is honored when our observations of the results of His creative genius draw us to Himself in delighted gratitude. I submit that an entirely appropriate response to our growing understanding of the marvels of creation is a grateful, growing stewardship of the same. We might not all prioritize the same things as we seek to respond in faithful stewardship. But when we agree together that faithful stewardship is fitting, it raises the prospect of beneficial discussion about how that stewardship should look. Praise the Lord for His goodness to men!

RJM 



# Book Review

James D. Hershberger, *Stuarts Draft, VA*



Title: *On Juneteenth*

Author: Annette Gordon-Reed (Pulitzer Prize winner)

Publisher: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2021; 148 pp.

Ever since I was refused service at a wayside restaurant simply because I was riding in a car with an African American, I have been increasingly interested in Black lives and literature. Discover this book written by a Harvard University professor that reads like a delightful storybook with its fascinating facts even with its carefully documented research.

Did you know that when President Thomas Jefferson freed five of his enslaved people in his will he had to petition the State of Virginia to allow them to live in Virginia? According to Virginia law, an enslaved person who did not get permission to remain in Virginia within a year after emancipation could be sold back into slavery.

Jubilant slaves in Texas discovered they were free on June 19, 1865. That's when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to enslaved Black people in Galveston, Texas. This

was more than two-and-a-half years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves. Also consider the Declaration of Independence, "...that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness..." unless you are a certain skin color and enslaved!

*On Juneteenth* is a fascinating book well worth your trip to the library. Expect to learn important American history as told by a Pulitzer prize-winning historian. It has special significance to us as we seek to be nonracist and who celebrate the fact that God has created only one race—the human race. This book is highly recommended. If your local library doesn't have it on the shelf, they will likely be happy to make the purchase at your request as our local library did.



*Freedom* starts by kneeling at the *cross*.

# Father In Heaven, We Thank Thee

For flowers that bloom about our feet,  
For tender grass so fresh, so sweet,  
For song of bird and hum of bee,  
For all things fair we hear or see,  
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!

For blue of stream and blue of sky,  
For pleasant shade of branches high,  
For fragrant air and cooling breeze,  
For beauty of the blooming trees,  
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!

For mother-love and father-care,  
For brothers strong and sisters fair,  
For love at home and care each day,  
For guidance lest we go astray,  
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!

For this new morning and its light,  
For rest and shelter of the night,  
For health and food, for love and friends,  
For ev'rything His goodness sends,  
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!

*Ralph W. Emerson*  
*Public Domain*



**mission awareness**

## Teaching Pastors In Haiti

*Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA*

**S**everal months ago Marilyn and I invested 26 days in the needy country of Haiti. Our son, Curtis, and his wife, Cheryl, and their two younger children have been serving in that country

from October 2020 to August 2021. Curtis served as director of the Biblical Discipleship Center under Christian Aid Ministries. Under normal conditions the BDC is open for pastors to attend a three-week session. These sessions are usually held every month (except August and December) with one or two weeks in between. The men travel to the CAM base from various parts of the country. Some even travel part of Sunday night through treacherous conditions to be able to attend the first session either on Monday morning or afternoon. Pastors find out about the Biblical Discipleship program by word-of-mouth. They need to register in advance. This is usually done by phone.

On the 17-acre compound of CAM's base is a warehouse to store school supplies, medicines of various sorts, and food boxes. In this building are a number of offices where personnel plan for the distributions of these various items. There is also a large room where the local employees (usually around 20) and missionaries gather each morning, Monday through Friday, for a 30-minute devotional that includes singing, a devotional topic, and prayer to our Heavenly Father. Afterwards, they shake hands with each other and say a warm Creole

greeting: "bonjour—Good morning" or "Bonye beni ou—God bless you."

From there they scatter throughout the compound; women to the kitchen preparing the noon meal while others are assigned laundry and cleaning jobs. Men work outside on various projects, caring for the grounds, planting trees, picking fruit, mowing the yard, and on and on. Some will drive the trucks along with Duane, our grandson, director of the medical program, to the various clinics in Haiti. This often involves two to four days of dangerous, challenging travel. Others will accompany Sam Stoltzfus, the director of the school program, with school supplies and food for needy Christian schools. Do not forget Wesley Yoder in the mechanic shop, maintaining and repairing vehicles. Kay goes along with a few local people to buy food at the market. Now that is an educational experience that takes much patience and wisdom in dealing with the sellers bargaining for a modest price and keeping your head together in being fair to all. Kay does not get bored with the wide variety in her job description. CAM could hardly do without Matthew and Rachel Miller. Matthew gives valuable expertise in the finances of the mission. Ryan and Melody Korver are the newest couple on the

team serving in the school program. We appreciated Barry and Julia Grant and family. Barry is the director of the CAM programs in Haiti. Barry serves with vision and a biblical purpose, giving clear direction to all under the auspices of the CAM board.

Another “hands on” program under CAM is the Work-for-Wages project. This gives opportunity for jobless men to earn some hard cash by building concrete streets in the local town or working on repair jobs. They are supplied with stone, sand, and cement along with mixers and tools. I wish you could see a photo of the deep ravine that rains have caused close to a church building where Barry and his team conduct preaching services periodically. No, a photo does not reveal the conditions of the terrain and the people’s houses. The rains were causing the ravine to inch its way closer and closer to the church and threatening a lot of houses. Under the Work-for-Wages program, local men assembled wire cages and filled these with rocks to build a retaining wall and back-filled it with about forty truckloads of rocks and dirt to keep the ground from eroding away. Lots of sweat and toil accompanied this big project. The men labored proficiently and were paid adequately according to Haitian

standards. More importantly, these laboring men, gray-haired folks, and many children hear the gospel of Jesus Christ at this church. They are clearly warned of the reaping of sinful life styles and warmly invited to follow Jesus.

Now, back again at the CAM base in the well-lighted classroom where pastors, Sunday school teachers, or superintendents are seated with a Bible, textbook, and pen. There is a period of singing that caused me to shed some tears. A prayer is offered on our knees. (We can always learn something from other cultures. These dear Haitians taught me to be more fervent and effectual in my prayers.) After prayer they check their homework assignment. A new day of teaching begins. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday are full days of teaching with three one-hour class periods in the forenoon and one in the afternoon. Ample time is given for questions and open discussion. On Friday morning they take a test and then travel home for the weekend to return again on Monday.

Bible doctrine on various subjects of the Christian faith are written and taught from a biblical Anabaptist viewpoint. There are six courses of Bible study, each bound in notebook form with an abundance of reading material on the subject for that

lesson. There are also questions for homework for the students to fill in after class time. These series of Bible teachings were compiled and comprised by Christian Aid Ministries some years ago.


Series I begins with laying a biblical foundation of the doctrine of God, Creation, the Fall of Man, and the Flood. A study of Old Testament Bible characters is an encouragement for us as fallen creatures to live above sin and grow in grace through the power of the Holy Spirit. A thorough study of Jesus Christ and His teachings is offered.

Curtis and I had the privilege of teaching Series V with the 42 lessons. These included the marvelous Assurance of Salvation which God provides through Jesus Christ and His Word. The subjects of the Two-Kingdom Concept and Separation of Church and State were thoroughly covered. Along with this comes the great theme of Nonresistance and loving our enemies. These subjects generated good discussions and exercised some deep thoughts and questions. The practical subject of God's blueprint for a holy marriage and building godly homes was presented. The Christian Ordinances were covered along with Worship and the Purposes of the Church.

The subject which often brings the greatest discussions is Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage which many of the Haitian pastors in our group were biblically sound on. Handling Money and Biblical Stewardship were practical subjects that gave them lots to think about.

The Judgment of God and Hell are subjects that are deeply embedded and clearly expressed in Scripture. These teachings cause us to fear the Lord and praise Him with all our hearts for the marvelous plan of redemption, but it leaves us with a note of sadness for lost souls all around us. We enjoyed teaching about the Signs of the End Times and closed our three-week session on the doctrine of Heaven.

Every three-week period the director offers a time of confession. In years gone by, some have become born again at the BDC. Others confessed, with deep humility, hidden sins and expressed a desire to walk closer to Jesus Christ. Many expressed a desire to preach these Biblical lessons to the people in their home churches. Only God knows the harvest of His Word taught with prayer and tears.

There are more countries where the Biblical Discipleship program is offered. Pray for this ministry. 

## Only God (Part 1)

Heidi Zook, St. Margaret, Belize



*(I had the privilege of visiting Heidi in her home in Belize. During our visit, the following story rose to the top of our conversation. Immediately, I thought of you readers, noting an opportunity for God to be honored. The following account was given to me by Heidi Zook, little Zion's mother. Susan Schlabach)*

**Z**ion awoke on Sunday morning, December 13, 2020, eager for the day and running like usual. Although he'd had a slight fever during the night with teething symptoms, by morning he was his normal lively self. At eleven months of age, he had easily become the family sweetheart. That afternoon I asked my daughter Amber to give him his bottle. Only minutes later she flew into the kitchen, yelling, "Mom, Zion is NOT acting right!"

Immediately, I saw that indeed, something was very wrong. He was limp, and his eyes were glazed. He breathed shallowly and was unresponsive. I grabbed him, ordering Amber to get my husband, Dwayne. Dwayne was milking, but he immediately picked up on the emergency. In seconds, he was up the hill and on the porch. Our family began to pray aloud over Zion, urging him to respond. He didn't even flinch

when we poured cold water over his head. Crying, we begged the Lord to save his little life.

What should we do next? Dwayne called Horace Kropf, our dear pastor friend, alerting him to the emergency while we raced to the Dangriga hospital. Oh, the frustrating speed bumps when time is of the essence! And would our van hold out? Only last week Dwayne had repaired the serpentine belt twice, only to have it rip twice. Finally, he'd had the mechanic make an adjustment. For sure, it would need a touch from God. Zion's shallow breathing continued. He blinked occasionally, and the begging look in his eyes almost drove me crazy.

Twenty minutes later we barged in through the hospital's emergency door, finding no one. We tried a second closed door, startling a nurse. She quickly led us to a hospital bed with the word TRAUMA above it.

As I laid Zion down, he instantly turned blue. The nurse hollered, “He’s crashed!” Looking at us, she said, “Go! You may not be in here with us! Your baby crashed. Just pray!”

Helplessly, Dwayne and I stepped to the side, crying and holding onto each other. How could this be happening to our little guy with the blue eyes and the blond curls—our pride and joy? The one who loved people and wanted to shake everyone’s hand! The one who had been running around with his older brothers just that morning and who had been hollering for more food at the lunch table!

Doctors and nurses ran past. Whenever we asked a passing nurse about Zion, they hemmed and hawed, refusing to make eye contact. They said we’d have to wait for the doctor. During this time, they ran a COVID-19 test. He would need chest X-rays as well, and then be transported to Belize City since their own equipment wasn’t good enough. We glimpsed him as he was wheeled into the X-ray room, the doctor walking beside him, pumping the airbag. Our arms ached to hold him.

During this time, the news spread about Zion, and people began to pray. Churches started prayer chains.

Then came the shocking announcement: “Your baby has COVID-19. He will need to go to

Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital in Belize City and be quarantined. You will not be allowed to accompany him.” The pronouncement and separation felt like a death sentence.

“Please, can you retest him? We don’t believe he has the virus! None of the family is sick. Please test him again!” we begged.

“We don’t retest the positive tests,” asserted the doctor, standing before us, arms crossed, calloused and uncaring. “We retest negative results only. And those fresh colds your children had last week were not fresh colds. All your family has the virus! There is nothing like a fresh cold anymore! You will all need to be tested!”

“Are you sure those rapid tests can be trusted?” we asked, grappling for anything to keep our baby from having to be quarantined at KMHM.

“Those tests never lie,” she replied curtly. “If they say positive then the person is positive. It is just like a pregnancy test. There are no false positives.”

“Can I please just take my baby home with me?” I begged, knowing full well what the answer would be. My whole being was fighting to do anything to keep him from going to KMHM.

“Lady!” the doctor exclaimed looking horrified, “we cannot allow

you to do that! If you take that baby home, he will die! That is out of the question! He needs to go to Belize City!”

“I know,” I said crying. “It’s just that I can’t handle the thought of him going to KMH. He will probably die there as well!” (KMH is a government-run hospital in Belize City with rudimentary facilities). “Miss,” I said, “do you not have any children? Do you not have a mother’s heart?”

She firmly replied, “Lady! I have a two-year-old and a four-year-old. Don’t ask if I don’t care! They do not give us the proper protective gear, and I am risking my life to save your baby! I didn’t know your baby had COVID-19, and I was touching him. Now there is the possibility of me carrying it home to my girls.” (Later, I felt badly for asking her that question and was able to apologize before leaving the hospital.)

“Are there no other options?” we begged.

“Belize Health Care (a privately owned hospital) takes COVID-19 patients, but they charge \$10,000 before entry and \$10,000 per day after that.”

We didn’t have that kind of money available, so KMH it must be.

She left us standing there, drained emotionally. How would we survive this separation? We begged our

families to pray for a miracle. We asked nurses close by if they believed the COVID-19 rapid tests are accurate. They looked around furtively, murmuring, “The doctor says they are.”

Finally, Zion was ready for transport. Next, we would wait on an ambulance. He was heavily sedated and in critical condition they said. Meanwhile, a kind older nurse gave us permission to be with him. He was hooked to a monitor and a breathing machine. He had a wide gauze wrapped around him, and the same kind nurse told me that she was scared he would get cold and so she wrapped him up the best she could. God bless her! His little feet felt like ice cubes in my hands. It was a holy moment as we committed him once again into the hands of our Father Who loves our son even more than we do. We asked the Lord to go before us and to give us favor in the doctor’s eyes. We savored every minute with him.

Once when Dwayne stepped outside to make a phone call, and I was alone with Zion, I suddenly saw he was trying to wake up. He was gagging from the tube in his throat. I quickly called for a nurse and they added more sedation through his IV which put him back to sleep.

Because of him having COVID-19, special staff was needed for the



transport. They came in fully suited, looking like astronauts. I tried to imagine how hot they were!

As I stepped out to the waiting ambulance, I saw our pastor and friends, Brother Laban and Sister Zelah, waiting with Dwayne. Their presence was a blessing. We watched them load Zion, and Brother Laban prayed with us. He told us that some people offered money for admission to the private hospital and wondered how we would feel about that. That was music to our ears! I told him that I wouldn't mind going to KMHM so much if I could be with him. Leaving him there by himself was more than I could bear.

It was time for me to get into the front seat of the ambulance beside the driver. My phone was nearly dead, so I asked him if he would mind stopping at our driveway so I could get my charger since the road to Belize City went right past our driveway. He graciously complied. (Horace and family had gone to be with the children as soon as they heard what was going on. It was a huge relief to know that they were not alone.) I texted Horace, asking him to have our son meet us with my charger. When our driveway came into view, I not only saw our son Jedidiah, but all our children and their friends. What a blessing to this mama's heart! Later,

neighbors who saw the ambulance speed past admitted that they'd cried, not expecting to see Zion alive again.

I asked the driver, "What would you do if this was your child?"

He replied, "My child would have to go to KMHM because I can't afford a private hospital. But if you have any way to keep him out of that hospital, do it! You do not want him there if at all possible."

I asked him what he thought of the rapid test results.

"I don't believe those tests are accurate. I don't think your baby has the virus. If I would take a test right now it would probably say I am positive for COVID-19. Those tests can't be trusted. Get them to retest your baby." He encouraged me and urged me to be firm upon reaching the hospital.

From Dangriga to Belize City is a two-hour drive, although Alfred, the driver, said he drives it in an hour and forty minutes. Half way there, my phone showed a 0% charge. My phone, an older model, doesn't always hold a charge well, but it had never been functional on 0%. Prayers about my phone were being answered. About that time Dwayne called and said that there is a clinic in Spanish Lookout that accepts COVID-19 patients, and that arrangements had been made

for Zion to go there. I was to tell the ambulance driver to turn around and meet the Spanish Lookout ambulance at the roundabout in Belmopan. What exciting news! But this completely threw the driver for a loop. He said he is not allowed to do that. He called the hospital, and they said, "Absolutely not!" We needed to first complete the transportation to KHMH and then fight it from there.

So, we continued on to Belize City, my phone still on 0%. Next, Laban called and said that after reaching KHMH, Zion would be moved to Belize Health Care instead. They would get the money there as quickly as possible. He stressed again the importance of being very firm with the doctors. "DO NOT let them admit Zion into KHMH!" My phone was still on 0%. As Laban was

ending his call, another call came from Maison Frost from Double Head asking what is going on. I told him quickly, and he also stressed several times that I must not let Zion be admitted into KHMH. Both warnings from Laban and Maison were what I needed at that moment, and I was especially grateful for their advice later.

Then my phone died. I had told Mr. Alfred that my phone was miraculously running on 0%. Relieved, we discovered that I was able to use his charger. Thank you, God!

Finally, we reached KHMH. What would we encounter? I felt vulnerable without my husband, but I keenly sensed the peace of God surrounding me.

*(to be continued)*



## junior messages

### Rescuing Baby Turtles

*Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH*

In March of this year Jason and Nancy and their four children were all packed and ready to leave for a much-anticipated vacation to a coastal town near Mombasa, Kenya. (Mombasa is along the Indian Ocean.) There are quaint cottages to rent in this lovely area with its beaches

full of white sand. The surf, sand, and the vast ocean are awesome.

But the vacation was not to be. The coronavirus had reached its long dark fingers all the way to Kenya. The government responded with strict lockdowns; no travel after dark was permitted. No church services of

large gatherings were allowed. After the Kenyan school term ended, the President issued a lockdown for five counties, including where Jason and Nancy lived in Nakuru.

They heard about the lockdown on a Friday evening, just hours before they were planning to leave for Mombasa. Their bags were packed to go, and all the family was excited.

What a letdown this lockdown was. There was nothing to do but unpack and try to adjust to circumstances beyond their control. Nancy related, "We let ourselves be sad, and yes, there were tears. After supper that evening we pulled out the treats we had been saving for vacation, snacks, and new-for-us books from the States."

Four months later this family finally got to go on their vacation. Little did they know that God had a sweet surprise in store.

Their vacation was brightened by reaching out and doing a literature distribution of Christian literature at a church on Sunday. The people were so thrilled with the gift of a Bible or Bible story book. Jason and Nancy's children were happily handing out Bibles.

On the beach one day Jason met an elderly man who was a self-appointed guard for sea turtles. This gentleman pays local residents to patrol the

beach during nesting season to protect the turtles from poachers. They watch when the turtles come out of the ocean and mark the exact spot where they lay their eggs and stand guard. Jason asked the man to message him if a turtle comes up on the beach to lay her eggs.

The next night Jason got a message that a sea turtle had come up. The place where their family stayed was on a cliff above the ocean. There were steps cut down to the shore with a gate at the bottom. They asked the night guard to open the gate for them. He protested, telling them the beach was a dangerous place, but he did open the gate and even went with them on the short walk to the ocean.

The children were all excited to go out. The skies were bright, star-studded, and clear. It was beautiful and surreal to be on the white sands of the beach at night. Up ahead they saw lights where people were watching a large turtle.

Jason's daughter Mia said, "The sea turtle was one of our highlights. The turtle was huge!" Its shell alone was three feet long. We were watching her dig her nest with her strong flippers, and the sand was flying, when we heard a commotion behind us. There was a nest of baby sea turtles hatching! The people who were on the beach knew that if the hatchlings try to get

to the ocean alone, many of them will get caught and eaten by crabs.

There were hundreds of hungry crabs on the beach in the dark, racing back and forth. "Go, run, save the baby turtles before the crabs get them," the man hollered. Everyone rushed to save the babies. It was a team with a purpose. They shone flashlights and cell phones and scooped up the baby turtles into the one bucket the man had.

Jenna related, "The baby turtles are so cute, a dark gray and only about three and a half inches long. Their shells feel like cartilage and their flippers are squishy. Their mouths can pinch hard! I know because one bit me. The crabs dig the eyes out of the baby turtles and drag them down their crab holes to have a feast."

After rescuing the baby turtles they remembered the mama turtle digging a nest for her eggs. They raced back to watch. She was done laying eggs and was covering the hole. The sand was flying wildly. Though they weren't really close, they still got some sand in their eyes. When she was done she slowly ambled back down to the sea.

"She looked nearly like a baby scooting," Mia shared, "when she got into the water she swam away fast."

Sighting sea turtles and rescuing the baby turtles was a fun blessing for the family who waited for their

vacation. Who knows, when you have a big disappointment, eventually God may have a special surprise in store.

Amazing fun facts of sea turtles:

- jelly fish are a favorite food

- they can hold their breath for five hours underwater

- they may live for more than 100 years

- out of 1,000 hatchlings, only one is estimated to survive to adulthood

- adult female turtles lay thousands of eggs over their lifetime

- they cannot pull their heads into their shells

- full-grown green turtles weigh from 300-400 pounds

- the huge leatherback turtle weighs more than 1,000 pounds

- the female turtle returns to the same beach to lay her eggs

Crabs, raccoons, boars, birds, coyotes, and sharks like to feast on sea turtles. Hungry people slaughter them for their eggs and meat. Plastic bags and other trash in the ocean may cause their death when they try to eat them.

Sea turtles are protected by the Endangered Species Act. It is a good thing that turtles are valued today, right? But if you were very poor, desperately hungry, and your children were crying for food, would you go search for sea turtles and their eggs to feed your family?



## Clique or Friends?

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

**H**ave you ever considered how your relationships affect those around you? About a year ago, a young gentleman reached out and asked me to consider addressing the topic of cliques among our people. This gentleman was referring mainly to cliques among youth and young adults, but the sad truth is that cliques have the tendency to permeate all levels and age groups of people. I have witnessed firsthand the damage that it has done in relationships from the young to the old.

What is a clique? **Clique** – noun: a narrow exclusive circle or group of persons, especially one held together by common interests, views, or purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Note a key word in the preceding definition—exclusive. Sometimes a few good friends are labeled a clique when that is not their intention. Here are a few major difference between a clique and a close friendship. Cliques are exclusive, as our definition pointed out. They are a tight group

of individuals who are anti-social to those not in their group. To be in their group you must conform to a certain standard established by the leadership of the group, whether written or implied. On the other hand, friendships are open. They have no standard, are accepting of all, and although similarities are cherished, differences are part of what make a friendship special and are respected instead of ostracized.

What drives us to have cliques? Perhaps our actions are fueled by a desire to belong and be appreciated and included? That desire can cause us to do lots of things. It has been said “We buy things we don’t need with money we don’t have to impress people we don’t like.”<sup>3</sup> That statement may be truer than we’d like to admit.

Although cliques have a negative connotation, some people will argue that they have their benefits. A secular article I found (that unfortunately is no longer available where I found it) said this, “*Cliques are effective positively because they help teens figure out who they are. Usually around this age teens are trying to find themselves*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/clique>

and want to fit in somewhere. Once they join a clique, not only have they found themselves, but they also found peers who are similar to them in many ways and might also have the same goals in life. Since the peers in your clique have the same goals, they will be able to give you more support than someone who does not strive for that same dream.”<sup>2</sup> The first problem with this argument is that its focus is teenagers in a secular setting. Most of us have grown up in a totally different culture, and as a result we look at life through a different “lens.” That leads to the second problem. It is not taking the fellowship of the saints into consideration. When we apply the teachings of Jesus in regard to the Golden Rule, loving our neighbor, and showing kindness, it leaves little to no room for cliques. Romans 12:16 says, “*Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*”

Cliques are a problem in society as a whole. Songs, books, and movies have all been made addressing the problem of cliques in the public school system. Secular society hasn’t figured out a solution for the scourge of cliques. The aforementioned article had this to say to balance its earlier

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2 article no longer available  
theroaronline.com

statement. “*Even though cliques can help you find yourself, cliques can also tear you down. Being in a clique, you rarely let new people join. This can affect your ability to change. You will not be able to adapt to change easily, or you will not be very good at making new friends and being around new people. They are also negative because cliques can affect your self-confidence.*”<sup>3</sup> This would indicate that being a part of a clique could socially and emotionally handicap a person. A person who is in a clique and then moves away or becomes separated from his group, loses his identity. This can lead to withdrawal, and the gulf between the old normal and the new normal becomes much wider than it originally should have been. They can soon be in the same position as the people they excluded before.

Cliques build walls, hinder unity, and do not promote family cohesion. As young people, we struggle with our identity and social standing anyway. I’ve seen first-hand the confusion that cliques can cause in a person’s relationship with their family. Cliques can cause the people in them to rely on each other emotionally and push their family away. Instead of seeking help or

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advice from family members or other trusted individuals in authority, they feel the need to contact their “group” and get their input and support. This breaks down trust and proper communication in the home, it sets a bad example for younger siblings, and burdens parents with the individual’s disconnection from the family unit.

In principle, we Christians shouldn’t need to worry about excluding others or having our social and emotional maturity negatively impacted by a group of people in our lives because we are supposed to find our identity in Christ. Choosing to find our identity and personal fulfillment in Christ Jesus rather than in the approval of others will help keep our social priorities straight.

Romans 12:3-5 says, *“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”*

Consider the long-term effects that being involved in a clique can have on us. If what we do is driven by our need for the approval and acceptance of others in our clique, what happens when we leave that setting and go somewhere else? Whether it’s at work, church, or school, how is one to function normally when our social and emotional maturity is tied up in a small group of people, and they are no longer there? How do we build healthy relationships in our youth group when we exclude others and distance ourselves? Doesn’t our behavior influence whether or not someone would consider us for a life partner? Is it even possible to be in a clique and develop a healthy relationship with a significant other?

Society hasn’t found a solution to this problem. How can we avoid it? Should we just go out of our way to make friends and involve others? Maybe we could just try really hard not to be cliquish? The true solution is to address the root of the problem. As mentioned earlier, finding our identity in Christ Jesus and being a part of a body of believers is the foundation to maturing spiritually and emotionally as an individual and a member of the Body of Christ. 

*When you reach for the stars,  
you never get a handful of mud.*

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## THOUGHT GEMS

Those who would build high must remain low.

• • • • •

The branches that bear the most fruit hang the lowest.

• • • • •

Common honesty should be more common.

• • • • •

The *stops* of a good man are ordered of the Lord as well as the *steps*.

• • • • •

It is better to ask the Lord to direct your paths  
than to correct your mistakes.

• • • • •

Christianity is not a way out—it is a way through.

• • • • •

You cannot break God's promises by leaning on them.

• • • • •

The God Who knows our load limit graciously limits our load.

• • • • •

Talk it over with the great Physician—no appointment necessary.

• • • • •

The eagle that soars in the upper air  
does not worry itself as to how it is to cross rivers.

• • • • •

Your faithfulness is the yardstick of your faith.