



# Calvary

## MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

### MARCH 2022

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Calvary Messenger

March 2022

**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.**

Calvary Publications, Inc., is a non-profit organization, incorporated in the State of Ohio, for the purpose of sponsoring, publishing, and distributing Christian literature. The board is elected, one member annually, by the ministers of the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches, at their annual spring meeting.

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Material for *Calvary Messenger*, marriages, births, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles—send to the *Editor*. Other material—mail to their respective *Editors*.

**Subscriptions**, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to *Circulation Manager*.

**When you move**, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

This periodical is digitally available at [calvarymessenger.org](http://calvarymessenger.org).

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Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$11.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$33.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$10.00 per year to individual addresses. With a renewal at \$11.50 for 1 year, you may use a 1-year gift subscription free. Second class postage at Sugarcreek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 7498 Woods West Ave., London, OH 43140.

## Wilt Thou Run?


“Wilt thou also run away?”  
The Savior said to me.  
He reached out with His nail-scarred hand  
And waited lovingly.

I gazed into the nail prints,  
As I heard His gentle plea.  
I thought about His bleeding side,  
That was driven through for me.

“Wilt thou also run away?”  
He said again to me.  
I took His nail-scarred hand and said,  
“What have I, Lord, but Thee?”

‘Tis true that doubts assail me now,  
As I ponder those that flee.  
And yet I know within my heart,  
“There’s nothing, Lord, but Thee.”

*Michelle Richard Kropf*  
1956-2017

*“...Lord, to whom shall we go?  
Thou hast the words of eternal life.”  
(John 6:68)* 

## The Parable of the Trees

And it came to pass in the great land between the seas, a pestilence arose out of the east and moved toward the setting sun. It was carried about by two very tiny wings and killed a great number of certain trees. This it did by means of boring into its skin so that the life ceased to flow upward from its roots.

And so it was that near the abode of a certain scribe, this pestilence killed a great tree. So this scribe and his elder son obtained a great dragon\* that could reach up to the top of this dead tree and cut off all of its boughs.

Now the scribe chose to store the wood to bring heat to his shop during cold weather. He sought to divide it into small pieces to burn in his stove. This he did with his cleaving ax.

And it was so, that the trees that were affected by this pestilence were mostly straight-grained and easily divided. Upon a very cold day, the scribe divided the wood into smaller pieces. And while much of the wood was easily divided, especially in the coldness of the day, certain pieces were not to be divided despite many fierce blows with the cleaving ax. And the scribe noted that the most

difficult pieces were where a bough had grown from the tree. This union caused the fibers of the wood to become intertwined and held each other together.

And since the wood had been sawn asunder for a time, the scribe discovered clefts beginning to form. To these he diligently hurled his cleaving ax, so that he might find a way to bring a division to these large pieces of wood. So he was able to find a natural aid in dividing this wood.

However, one of the best ways he found to divide the great pieces was to bring mighty blows around the outside circle of the wood. Here he was able to whittle away, piece by piece, upon these great pieces. He continued with determination and sought out the weakest areas to render the whole into small pieces that he might easily carry away and burn in his stove.

And while the thoughts were continuing in the scribe's mind, there came a day when the brothers were called together to help one of their own. This brother had a large tree, already cut down, but it was not cut into pieces. So some of the brothers

caused this tree to be sawn asunder, and other brothers came with great cleaving machines. There was great determination to cause this tree to be completely divided into small pieces so as to be offered to the brother's outdoor stove. So the same parable came to be in another tree.

But the brother's tree was not one of straight stature or of straight grain. Neither had it fallen prey to the pestilence from the east borne on two tiny wings. It was not a tall tree rising high into the heavens. But it had many boughs coming out from many sides. This tree brought shade from the sun for those resting beneath its boughs. And the fowls of the air could find many places to build their nests and raise their young.

So the brothers, young and old, fell upon this tree, and with great noise and travail worked until it was sawn asunder. But the cleaving thereof into smaller pieces was with great difficulty. Yea, even with three powerful cleaving machines, some of these pieces brought defeat unto the most hardy of the young men. For this tree was not straight-grained as the one near the scribe's abode, but all of its being was intertwined, down to its heart, so as to cause certain pieces to be cast aside. And these were rendered to be divided, not with a cleaving machine, but sawn asunder,

and that with great travail.

And you may ask, "What is the meaning of this parable? And who is determined to bring blows of a cleaving ax upon a large piece of wood? And pray tell, who is the wood and the tree from whence this wood is cut?"

The tree is the church, the Body of Christ. There are great and tall trees that rise high and reach to the heavens. These trees lift up their arms and hands to the God of Heaven in worship and praise to Him. They have straight grain and are beautiful to behold. These grow tall and straight in the shelter of many other great and tall trees that protect them from the storms that blow upon the earth. These great and tall trees produce beautiful and straight-grained wood from whence fine furniture is made. But these great and tall trees have not many boughs.

The boughs are the church members. The boughs reach out from the tree upon the face of the earth. And "*the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.*" The boughs receive their strength from the Heart of the tree and bring much fruit. And their Father in the heavens sees and is glad.

And so it is, as the boughs grow,

become strong, and seek to serve their Father by serving their fellow man, without care whether their bough is stronger than the boughs on the rest of the tree, that they cause the tree, the church, to be held together with a powerful bond. For they do not see themselves as one member, but as one body, the Body of Christ. *“For the body is not one member, but many.”*

The cleaving ax is wielded by the evil one, who looks with great delight at clefts that form within the wood. These clefts may be natural clefts of families or close friends. But when great trials and pestilences come upon the body, opinions and preferences can bind together even the most unlikely members so that they pull apart from others within the body to cause clefts. The evil one will fall upon these with determined blows and bring divisions within the body.

And there may be within even the most active churches, certain members who circle around the

body and do not become as one body. These may fall prey to the evil one who looks with determination to separate them from the Body of Christ. So also, great coldness and pestilences bring a weakness upon the Body of Christ.

*“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”* (Romans 12:3-5).

*“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ”* (I Corinthians 12:12).

May your tree be strong, full of fruit-bearing boughs, and honor our Head, even Christ.

\*a machine with a long neck

-AY 

*The man who  
looks up to God  
rarely looks down on people.*

## *Announcement*

### **REACH 2022**

**March 24-25, 2022**

REACH brings together conservative Anabaptist ministries and Kingdom workers from all walks of life. Join us for this two-day program that includes 97 breakout sessions to support and equip people in ministry and all those with a desire for service. Over 50 participating ministries share their vision in focus sessions and displays. General sessions tie the event together with sermons, singing, and prayer. All are welcome!

**Location:** Calvary Church, 1051 Landis Valley Road, Lancaster, PA 17601

**Read more information and register:** [fbep.org/reach-2022](https://fbep.org/reach-2022)

## **the bottom line**

### **The Culture of Sadness**

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

**P**essimism is like a fog that hangs over us when we emerge from the darkness of being sad from a long night of gloom. The half-light of twilight remains all day. The sun is up but obscured by the clouds of doubt, and beneath that lies the fog of pesky despair. Oh, the sun breaks through at times, but not enough heat units arrive on the human stalk to produce any real Spirit fruit.

That long night lasted for three whole months for me last year—it was my lost summer from mid-June to the end of September. I was admitted to five different hospitals, had been given anesthesia six times, had three ambulance transports (longest was two hours), and was placed into CT scanners and under x-ray machines too numerous to count. At one low point I thought I could die.

Symptoms: off and on fevers, nausea and vomiting, lack of appetite and weight loss, physical and mental weakness, and loss of purpose and desire. But you know what, it wasn't me, it was my gall bladder. Over these 80 years it shrank to the size of two peanuts and attached itself to my liver at two places. Hence the sending me by ambulance several times to a hospital with a higher level of expertise, and being there, at one for 10 days, 600 miles from home.

The surgery on my liver caused a large abscess to develop, only discovered six weeks later during which time I was sick, weak, and sad. I scarcely felt like eating, reading, or writing. I did not write in my diary for most of a month, something I did not skip for 70 years.

We who are systemically sad may not always know why. There are likely numerous factors. Any single one of them might be too puny to speak of, but combined with any number of other seemingly small situations, congeal to form the cloud, and may also cause the fog at times. Regrettably, it slowly develops into a mean kind of culture. Formerly, I was a preacher with more answers than questions, but as a stricken patient lying in a hospital for 10 days, I had more questions than answers.

The root word of culture is cult.

A cult is about people who have a narrowed way of thinking, or it may even be a closed way of thinking. All people groups operate within their own peculiar range of thinking. Worldliness derives from a man-centered approach to life. Unbelievers select their seeds (the thoughts of their hearts), plant them in crooked rows, cultivate them (see the root word "cult" in cultivate?), and harvest their crop. It is their culture.

We have agriculture, the art of preparing the soil, planting seeds, and the cultivation of fields and gardens to produce a crop. It is the culture of farming and household gardening, known as agronomy. Our lives are like that. Our thoughts, words, and actions are the seeds we sow. As we personally justify those seeds planted, we are cultivating them and preparing for a crop. A culture forms around that.

I was sick but not only in my body. My mind and heart were not responding very well to my own writings in my New Testament commentary series. In my grief, I cultivated self-pity, doubts concerning prayer, and wondering where the reward is for trying to hang on to faith. Trying to understand only added another layer of grief and despair to my situation. Questioning



the reward of faith in God was a stumbling block set in my path by Satan. I knew it, but I needed more than just knowing it.

As of this writing (10-11-21), I have been working for two weeks, but am still not back to normal living. There were seven weeks of daily infusions through a PICC line to my blood veins, besides oral medication, to address the two dangerous infections in my blood. Besides, a drain tube from my liver was needed for its excretions. All of that is in the past, but I still need to cultivate a glad heart, a positive spirit, and a hopeful demeanor. There were many days in which my mind full well knew I should do a better job of cultivating a grateful spirit. However, my heart became accustomed to meditation on my losses of various kinds: financial, family, travel, church, writing, farm work, and eating. That cultivation turned up a crop of sadness. I can see how long-term sickness, either of the physical body or the soul (mind, emotions, and will) could cultivate a culture of being pessimistic, cynical, and scorning. I knew the better way, and I knew that I knew, yet how will I do? Those who are sick or injured have some tough choices, whether to be sad and complaining, or resigned and hopeful. They will be encouraged as we affirm their right choices. This

is real life and a tough discipline besides. Personal decisions are hard to bear, and even harder, at times, to choose.


The culture of sadness is very real for some people in our midst. Do not say you understand their plight when you never went through their dilemma. Rather, admit that you do not understand how it must feel, or even hurt within, and wish them help and grace from God. Never allow one single visit or encounter to cover it from henceforth. Keep some intended contacts with them; they need many frequent, short visits. Conservative people are too often a “once-and-done” kind of people.

Over the years, many people would make mention of the hurting people in our churches. The insinuation typically is that it is the fault of the church leaders, and they are not concerning themselves about all these people. Oftentimes, that accusation is not fair, because the lay members know certain situations of which the church leaders know nothing. It could be possible, or even likely, that those who make remarks about all these hurting people are the very ones who are hurting.

We are in a position to know that frequently when an obviously hurting person is asked about some evident sadness, the person will push

back by saying, “It is not much,” or, “It is nothing,” or, “I can handle it myself.” I know, for I have had hurt feelings that I also would have been too embarrassed to tell anyone else. So, yes, we do have hurting people in our churches. But, no, they often cannot be easily addressed. Maybe by this little discussion, some of us could give a little more thought about what I could/should do for those who suffer hard knocks in life.

**The Bottom Line** is that this culture of sadness extends beyond those who have physical sickness, limitation, or disability. The heart can also be sick, and we try to cover it up with more work, pleasure, travel,

foolish spending, or just be a social drop-out and slouch into pessimism and bitterness. A preacher could pick up on this theme about sadness and preach on these several themes in the Old Testament from Proverbs 12:13. *“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.”* Amen! And Proverbs 4:23, *“Keep [protect—German] thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”* We all could plant our seeds in straight rows of love, joy, and peace, and employ a year-round cultivation of gladness, for God said when a good answer comes from Him, *“it is a tree of life.”* 

## Weight Loss

Vincent “John” Waldron MD, Gladys, VA

**T**here are around 70 million Americans who are considered obese. Obesity is not a derogatory term, but simply the term that doctors use to indicate people whose Body Mass Index (BMI) is over 30. (The BMI is calculated based on height and weight.)

No one wants to be overweight. Americans spend an estimated 33 billion dollars annually on weight loss products and yet their weights remain uncontrolled.

In a recent issue we went over some myths about weight loss. This time we will focus more on important things we can do to help control our weight and to discipline our appetites.

### **Know Yourself**

The first step of weight loss is doing an honest inventory of yourself. When do you eat? What foods/meals do you struggle with? How many calories are in each meal and snack you eat?

*“The heart is deceitful above all*

*things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* (Jeremiah 17:9). There is a real tendency for us to underestimate how much we eat, the size of our portions, and how often we snack. The key here is to write down everything we eat for a few days. If it goes into our mouths, it needs an entry in a food journal.

Making a list of these things will let us know what our weaknesses are. It is important to remember that it isn't enough to write down just what things we eat but also the portion size. There is quite a difference between the caloric content of a half cup of mashed potatoes (107 calories) and a cup and a half of mashed potatoes with five tablespoons of gravy (400 calories).

### **Shop with a Purpose**

You shouldn't go grocery shopping when you are hungry.

Once we've identified the edibles that are our weaknesses, it is important that we don't buy those things. If we struggle with cookies or potato chips, it is better to not buy them in the first place than it is to get a package of them and hope that we have the self-control not to eat them all after we bring them home.

*"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able;*

*but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"* (I Corinthians 10:13). Many verses in the Bible put more focus on us fleeing temptation instead of overcoming it.

### **Make Yourself Accountable**

*"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up"* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

Too often when we are struggling with something, we try to fight the battle by ourselves. Gaining control of our appetites is best accomplished with help from other brothers and sisters in the Lord.

It helps to have someone else you can discuss your plans with. If it is an exercise regimen or a diet plan, we all do better when we are travelling the same journey as someone else. Whether it is encouragement or prodding to do better, we need someone who will help us on our way.

### **Don't Drink Calories**

We all need to drink. Drinking an excessive amount of water won't make you lose weight, unless it is replacing drinks that have calories.

Black coffee, unsweetened tea, and water are all good choices that naturally have no calories. Artificial

sweeteners are options for people who desire some sweetening in their drinks. However, as time goes by, we find more things that aren't healthy about artificial sweeteners, but they certainly are low calorie.

### **Avoid Eating in the Evenings**

There are a number of problems with eating in the evenings. First of all, the quality of the food tends to drop with evening snacking. Most of us don't sit down with a bag of carrot sticks or celery, but rather we reach for snacks that aren't as healthy.

A second issue is that our metabolism slows down when we are sleeping. This is a good thing, because it leads to restful sleep, but if we eat too close to bedtime, our body is not going to digest that food very well, and it will end up being put into fat stores rather than being burned for energy.

### **Cut Out Sugar and Refined Grains**

Everybody eats carbohydrates (sugar), but the type of carbohydrate does make a big difference how our body deals with them. White flour and granulated sugar are heavily refined, so much so that they have little nutritional value other than the calories that they hold.

When we eat refined grains and sugars, our bodies release large amounts of insulin to take care of

them. We have sugar spikes, followed by low sugars, then we feel hungry again quite quickly. This leads us to begin the cycle all over again.

Eating grains that are not refined, like whole wheat flour, gives our bodies something that is digested more slowly and in a healthier manner. Cutting back on processed products will not only get off this roller coaster ride of sugar spikes and sugar lows but will also make us feel better in the long run.

### **Choose a Diet**

There are a lot of different options out there when it comes to diets. There are Keto Diets (low carbohydrate), low calorie, plus many others. Most diets will work, but they can be quite difficult to endure, since they require the person following them to eat a very limited number of foods. A number of studies have looked at low fat and low carbohydrate diets and found that they perform similarly in terms of weight loss.<sup>1</sup>

From a medical standpoint, the key is to choose a diet plan that we can stick with for more than a week or two. Too often, diets are short-term fixes for long-term problems.

It is crucial as well to consider our personal struggles and weaknesses. It

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1. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2673150>

is even helpful to consider underlying health issues. Someone with heart issues needs to be careful of the salt they take in, while someone with diabetes should choose a diet that is low in carbohydrate intake.

### **Think about Fasting**

Fasting is something that has been a Christian discipline for many years. *“moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance...”* (Matthew 6:16-18). Jesus had an expectation that His followers would fast. The word used here is “when” not “if.” Clearly there was an expectation from Jesus that they would have times of abstinence from eating.

Jesus responded to a question about why His disciples weren’t fasting: *“...Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days”* (Luke 5:34-35). Even though His followers did not fast while He was on earth, they certainly did following His ascension.

It is important to remember that fasting is not about impressing other people (this seemed to be a big reason why the Pharisees fasted). It is also not intended to be a magic potion that makes our Heavenly Father listen to our prayers and do what we ask.

### **Spiritual Benefits of Fasting**

There are benefits to times of abstinence from food. Some of these are physical (we’ll touch on them later), but Scripture tells us that there are spiritual benefits, particularly when fasting is combined with prayer.

To begin with, fasting is a time when we learn to deny ourselves our desires. Jesus said *“...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”* (Luke 9:23). Our desire for God must be greater than our desire for anything else—even more than our need for food. Fasting is a way of focusing our hearts on what is truly important.

The words of Job, *“...I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food”* (Job 23:12), speaks of just this attitude.

Another thing that fasting leads us to is appreciating our blessings more. We’ve all probably heard the adage—*“Hunger is the best seasoning.”*

Our society is blessed with an abundance of food as well as many material things. Fasting for a period of time will lead us to appreciate that abundance rather than take it for granted. Times of feasting are of greater enjoyment if we also have times of fasting.

Fasting also seems to bring some

special power for Christians. In Mark 9:28, 29 the disciples asked Jesus, “*Why could not we cast him [the evil spirit] out?*” (Mark 9:28). His response was that “... *This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting*” (Mark 9:29).

God’s power does not wax and wane. It is always strong to save. But somehow, when we deny ourselves, it gives the Spirit a more free course to work His perfect will in our lives. Maybe the reason that God’s Spirit does not move in the American church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the way we would like is simply that His people don’t deny themselves and focus on their Lord enough.

I am sure there are many other reasons to think about fasting. The early church had times of feasting and times of fasting. We should as well.

### **Physical Benefits of Fasting**

There are a number of benefits to what researchers call “Intermittent Fasting.” Even if there was no spiritual benefit to fasting, it still would be worth considering. Typically, when researchers look at it, they have people fast for 24 hours at least one day a week. The studies show a number of things that improve with fasting.

### **Weight Loss**

First, when people fast on a regular basis they find that they are able to control their weight more easily.

Many studies show significant weight loss for people who fast on a regular basis.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, this is not going to be true if fasting is only done once or twice a year, but it does seem to help when done regularly.

### **Blood Pressure Reduction**

Another thing that we see with intermittent fasting is blood pressure reductions. A study showed a reduction in systolic blood pressure of about seven points for people who were doing regular fasting.<sup>3</sup>

### **Healthy Cholesterol**

It also seems that fasting done regularly reduces the levels of fats in our blood stream—both cholesterol and triglycerides. Over time, this, combined with reductions in blood pressure should lead to reduction in vascular disease, such as strokes and heart attacks.

### **Healthier Insulin Levels**

Fasting also seems to help significantly with insulin resistance. This is one of the core issues with adult-onset diabetes. Studies show that when people fast regularly, their insulin levels drop.<sup>4</sup> Reduction of insulin resistance and insulin levels

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2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4516560/>

3. <https://content.iospress.com/articles/nutrition-and-healthy-aging/nha170036>

4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6521152>

could slow someone's progress to developing diabetes or help those who have diabetes to get control with less medication.

### **Better Sleep Patterns**

One final benefit seems to be better sleep patterns. People who fast in the evenings seem to sleep better than those who eat a big evening meal.<sup>5</sup>

Fasting isn't the solution for all of our health problems, but it certainly does have significant health benefits.

### **Intermittent Fasting in Practice**

There are a number of different fasting plans that are popular. One is simply to alternate normal eating days and "fasting" days.

A fasting day is typically not a total fast, but a day where the number of calories are limited to 25 percent of what is normally required to maintain weight (typically around 400-500 calories).

Another option is a 5:2 plan where there are two days of fasting per week and five normal eating days.

One final thing, which isn't really fasting, is time-restricted eating. In this timed eating, people only eat or drink calories for an eight-hour window each day. People will only drink water, black coffee, or unsweetened tea for the time from 6

p.m. to 10 a.m. and they can then eat between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

### **Conclusion**

There are many different diet plans from which we can choose. It is important to choose a plan that we can stick with for the long run. I like the term "lifestyle changes" rather than "diet" because most people treat diets as a short-term fix. It is more important to decide on a pattern of eating and stick with that.

Even more importantly, we need to commit to denying ourselves and focusing ourselves on God. Regardless of our weight, we need to have a God-controlled life. Regular fasting can (and should) be a part of that. Taking time away from food and filling it with prayer will lead us to a closer walk with God and opens the door to His Spirit moving in our lives, which is what we really need most of all.

*[Reprinted from Volume 25, Issue 3, Fall 2021, of The Heartbeat of the Remnant. Used with permission.]*



# *Feed your faith*

AND YOUR DOUBTS

WILL STARVE

TO DEATH.

5. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6292409>

## marriages

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

### **Mejía-Schrock**

Bro. Claudio Arnulfo, son of José Inocente (Chente) and Mary Jane Mejía, La Merced de Santa Isabel de Río Cuarto, Costa Rica, and Sis. Lorena, daughter of Paul and Socorro Schrock, La Mizpa de Santa Isabel de Río Cuarto, Costa Rica, on November 13, 2021, at La Marina de San Carlos, Costa Rica.

### **Miller-Miller**

Bro. Kyle, son of Perry and Shirley Miller, Plummer, ID, and Sis. Kara, daughter of Jerry and LeAnna Miller, Ligonier, IN, on December 11, 2021, at Fair Haven Mennonite Church by Wilbur Yoder.

### **Miller-Miller**

Bro. Matthew, son of Marion and Katie Miller, Coshocton, OH, and Sis. Michelle, daughter of Howard and Catherine Miller, Bloomfield, MO, on December 10, 2021, at First United Methodist Church by Ethan Stutzman.

### **Nisley-Byler**

Bro. Brian, son of David and Katie Nisley, Cochranton, PA, and Sis. Sara, daughter of Daniel and Christina Byler, Cochranton, PA, on January 29, 2022, at Plainview Gospel Church by Roy Hershberger.

### **Nissley-Stoltzfus**

Bro. Harlan, son of Eddie and Loretta Nissley, Hiddenite, NC, and Sis. Sara, daughter of Simon and Joyce Stoltzfus, Taylorsville, NC, on October 23, 2021, at First United Methodist Church for Dayspring Christian Fellowship by Ken Kanagy.

### **Sommers-Schrock**

Bro. Logan, son of Paul and Faith Sommers, Bangor, CA, and Sister Carla, daughter of Eli and Carol Schrock, Huntsville, AR, on January 22, 2022, at First Assembly of God for Lighthouse of Faith by Dan Byler.

### **Wenger-Peachey**

Bro. Dallas, son of Nick and Wanita Wenger, Torrington, WY, and Sis. Jennifer, daughter of Paul and Geneva Peachey, Greensburg, KY, on April 30, 2021, at Summersville Mennonite Church for Crowley's Ridge Mennonite Church by Marcus Lengacher.

### **Yoder-Brechbill**

Bro. Scotland, son of Mark and Martha Yoder, Whiteville, TN, and Sis. Jacquelyn, daughter of Donald and Mary Ann Brechbill, Chambersburg, PA, on October 15, 2021, at Grandpoint Church for Whiteville Mennonite Church by Melvin Bricker.





### **Yoder-Plank**

Bro. Freeman, son of John Jr. and the late Bertha Yoder, Arlington, KS, and Sis. Lorene Plank, daughter of Fern and the late Roman Yoder, Montezuma, GA, on December 11, 2021, at Montezuma Mennonite Church by Donny Swartzentruber.

### **Zook-Schrock**

Bro. David, son of Chester and Julia Zook, Milroy, PA, and Sis. Ellen, daughter of Harvey and Leanna Schrock, Strasburg, OH, on December 18, 2021, at Maranatha Church for Light of Life Church by Harvey Schrock.



## **cradle roll**

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

**Beiler**, Glen and Angela (Ropp), Brooklyn, NY, fourth child, first daughter, Brielle Sylvia, January 7, 2022.

**Clugston**, Trent and Rhonda (Brenneman), Fincastle, VA, fourth child, second son, Montgomery William, December 18, 2021.

**Detweiler**, Aaron and Marilyn (Graber), Greensburg, KY, second child, first son, Zachary Wyatt, July 12, 2021.

**Gerber**, Alvin and Juanita (Ropp), Bluevale, ON, third and fourth children and sons, Andrew Clare and Adrian Larry, October 26, 2021.

**Gerber**, Jonathan and Joanne (Lebold), Lucknow, ON, second child and son, Jason Raymond, November 5, 2021.

**Hershberger**, Chad and Lucinda (Schlabach), Georgetown, OH, second child, first daughter, Heidi Suzanne, January 31, 2022.

**Hershberger**, Paul and Cynthia (Miller), Partridge, KS, tenth child, second son, Walter David, December 21, 2021.

**Hochstetler**, Lonnie and Ruth (Lapp), Huntsville, AR, fifth child, second daughter, Adelyn Grace, January 5, 2022.

**Jewel**, Seth and Melody (Martin), Wesley, AR, third child, second daughter, Adeline Kate, January 6, 2022.

**Knepp**, Randall and Emily (Graber), Odon, IN, third child, second daughter, Stella Rose, November 28, 2021.

**Lebold**, Joshua and Debbie (Ropp), Lucknow, ON, third child, second son, Conrad Lavon, January 6, 2022.

**Mast**, Benjamin and Lori (Kropf), Torrington, WY, sixth child, fourth son, Dakota Wade, December 26, 2021.

**Mast**, Quinton and Crystal (King), Torrington, WY, fifth child, third son, Brenton David, October 16, 2021.

**Miller**, Ben and Martha Sue (Mast), Harrison, AR, fifth child, second daughter, Martina Leann, October 23, 2021.

**Miller**, Brandon and Yvette (Otto), LaGrange, IN, eighth child, fourth daughter, Caroline Rachyl, December 30, 2021.

**Miller**, Ezra and Martha Joy (Bates), Pulaski, TN, third child and daughter, Aubrey Shiloh, January 13, 2022.

**Miller**, Jolan and Regina (Schlabach), Newcomerstown, OH, third child and son, Ethan Carter, December 19, 2021.

**Miller**, Philip and Sherilyn (Beachy), Greensburg, KY, second child, first son, Jayden Ray, April 21, 2021.

**Miller**, Randy and Carrie (Lavy), Harrison, AR, tenth child, seventh son, Thaxton Jesse Lane, October 24, 2021.

**Peachey**, Josh and Bethany (Yoder), Greensburg, KY, first child and daughter, Kelli Jo, September 21, 2021.

**Peachey**, Justus and Veronica (Overholt), Franklin, KY, first child and son, Shane Durrell, December 23, 2021.

**Plank**, Dennis and Rose (Otto), Arthur, IL, sixth child, second daughter, Serena Joy, born July 29, 2021, received by adoption December 16, 2021.

**Quevedo**, Vinson and Amy (Byler), Wesley, AR, third child and son, Leonardo Mario, January 11, 2022.

**Swartzentruber**, Kendall and Tina (Graber), Abbeville, SC, third child, second son, Arthur Jack, December 17, 2021.


**Yoder**, Allen and Kayla (Yoder), Baltic, OH, second child, first son, Travis David, January 3, 2022.

**Yoder**, Jeremy and Linda (Beachy), Masaya, Nicaragua, third child and son, Adrick Cordell, December 13, 2021.

**Yoder**, Kevin D. and Emily (King), Fresno, OH, third child, second son, Michael Eric, November 27, 2021.

**Yoder**, Ray and Rosa (Stoltzfus), Advance, MO, fourth child, second daughter, Sabrina Grace, December 10, 2021.

**Yoder**, Sylvan and Amy (Miller), Veteran, WY, third child, second daughter, Kayla Brooke, July 29, 2021.

**Yoder**, Tyler and Joella (Yoder), Owenton, KY, second child and daughter, Aubrey Jade, October 11, 2021. 



## ordinations

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

**Bro. Jeremy Weaver**, 34, (wife, Jennifer Miller), Tazewell, VA, was called by the voice of the church and ordained bishop at Still Waters Mennonite Church of Tazewell on October 31, 2021. The charge was given by Paul Weaver, assisted by Andy Byler and Loren Troyer.



**Bro. Michael "Mike" Yoder**, 35, (wife, Sarah Shank), Aroda, VA, was ordained minister for Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Aroda, VA, on January 9, 2022. Preordination messages were brought by Philip Beachy. The charge was given by Lamar Hochstetler, assisted by Jonathan Martin and Simon Schrock. Justin Miller shared the lot.



## obituaries

**Byler**, Simon W., 84, of Catlett, VA, departed his earthly body peacefully on December 25, 2021, at Noble Senior Living in Culpeper. Born July 28, 1937, in Dover, DE, he was the son of William and Lydia (Bender) Byler.

At nine years of age Simon and his family moved to a farm in Catlett where he grew up. He was a long-time active member of Faith Christian Fellowship. On December 11, 1960, he married Cora Ann Gingerich, who survives.

Also surviving are a daughter, Delores (Thomas) Hostetler, Plain City, OH; four sons: Galen, Dry Ridge, KY; Harold (Tammy), Sherrill's Ford, NC; Jay (Brenda), Catlett; Jerry, Catlett; seven grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and a sister, Martha Yoder, Culpeper.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Alvi; sisters: Anna Mary, Saloma, Irene, Cora, Rhoda; infant brother and sister, and a great-

granddaughter.

The funeral was held December 31, 2021, at Dayspring Mennonite Church, with David Nisly and Nathan Beachy serving. The burial followed at Faith Christian Fellowship Cemetery.

**Detweiler**, Katie L., 91, of Belleville, PA, died December 26, 2021. She was born March 15, 1930, in Allensville, PA, to the late Joseph A. and Barbara (Byler) Zook. On November 16, 1950, she married David H. Detweiler.

Katie was a member of Valley View A.M. Church. She loved her church family and still drove to church, arriving early. She enjoyed working outside in her yard and flower gardens.

She is survived by her children: Samuel (Salome), McVeytown; Barbara (Mark) Swarey, Mifflinburg; Joseph (Leatha), Winfield; Sara Anna (David) Sharp, Belleville; and David Jr. (Ruth),

Greenwood, SC. Also surviving are brothers: Ben, Belleville; Joseph, Newmanstown; 35 grandchildren, 72 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

She was predeceased by her husband, brother, Jonathan, and sister, Lydia Byler.

The funeral was held December 29, 2021, at Valley View Church with Maynard Swarey, Matthew Peachey, and Jesse Zook serving. Interment followed at Locust Grove Cemetery conducted by Eli B. King Jr.

**Glick**, Melvin Lantz, 79, of Seneca, SC, died on December 22, 2021, of natural causes after a brief illness. Melvin was born in Lancaster County, PA, the eldest son of Stephen and Lydia Glick.

From these humble beginnings as the son of Amish dairy farmers, Melvin went on to spend 10 years of his life as a missionary in Belize and helped pastor Beachy Amish churches in New York, Virginia, and South Carolina. He also served on various mission boards. In 1964 he married Mary June Glick, and together for the next 57 years they raised a family that today includes four children, 15 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

The four surviving children include Myron (Joyce), Michael (Joyce), Maurice (Lupita), and Melanie Farnham. Melvin has three surviving siblings including Fannie (Elmer) Stoltzfus, Elmer (Dorothy) Glick, and Verna (Clair) Beiler.

Preceding him in death include

his parents, a son, Mark Anthony, a granddaughter, Ashley Marie, and two siblings: Anna Mary (Alvin) Blank, and Sam.

Though he only attended school through the eighth grade, Melvin was a voracious reader and a self-taught man. He was a beloved husband, father, and grandfather who loved working outdoors, building things, and helping others.

The funeral service was held December 27, 2021, at Cold Springs Mennonite Church with burial following in the church cemetery.

**Hochstetler**, Norman Samuel was stillborn to Norman Jr. and Norene Hochstetler of Lingle, WY, on November 17, 2021.

He will be missed by his parents, siblings: Leland, Wendall, Lyndon, Wyman, Bethany, Keturah, Heather, and Bradley; paternal grandmother, Inez Hochstetler; maternal grandmother, Orpha Miller; many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by paternal grandfather, Norman Hochstetler, Sr., maternal grandfather, Samuel Miller, and two stillborn cousins.

**Hostetler**, Elam K., 90, of Belleville, PA, died December 7, 2021, in Belleville. He was born November 23, 1931, in Belleville, to the late Noah D. and Mattie (King) Hostetler. On October 26, 1960, he married Savilla Yoder.

Elam was a member of Valley View

A.M. Church. He enjoyed spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren, and singing with the Big Valley Men's Chorus. Elam was a dairy farmer and later worked at A. J. Peacheys.

He is survived by his children: Lena (Gary) Stuter, Milroy; Steven (Rose), Chestertown, MD; John (Twila), Belleville; Martha Hostetler, Belleville; and David (Karla), Middleburg. Also surviving are sisters-in-law: Dorothy Yoder, Naomi (Louis) Yoder, Mary Yoder, Nancy Beachy; brothers-in-law: Kore (Susanna) Yoder, Raymond (Anne) Yoder; eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Elam was predeceased by all of his immediate family: Ada, Nancy, Lizzie (Kore) Kauffman, Ben (Ada), Alvin (Ruth Ann), and Sollie (Anna).

The funeral was held at Valley View Church on December 10, 2021, conducted by Matthew Peachey, Loren Yoder, and Jesse Zook. The interment followed at Locust Grove Cemetery with Eli King serving.

**Miller**, Alma, 91, of Minerva, OH, entered the glories of Heaven on January 14, 2022, surrounded by her loving family. She was born June 20, 1930, in Hartville, OH, to the late Levi D. and Mary (Sommers) Schlabach.

Alma was united in marriage to Willis Miller on October 25, 1953. Willis was ordained to the ministry in 1959, and Alma faithfully supported him in his calling. They hosted many guests in their home, many of whom enjoyed

her delicious meals. Her creative touch resulted in many beautiful doilies, afghans, and embroidered works of art. She completed numerous Word Search books and put together many puzzles. She delighted in playing Rummikub with young and old alike, playing several rounds with great-grandchildren only weeks before her death. Her love for the Lord and reliance on Him were evident in her life. Her example of a godly character is very precious to her children. Family held a special place in her heart. It was always a highlight for her when the family gathered home.

She is survived by seven children: David (Judy), Minerva; Martha (Gerald) Byers, Chambersburg, PA; Mark (Brenda), Homeworth; Ruth Green, East Rochester; Thomas (Dawn), Minerva; Naomi (Manfred) McGrath, Taylorsville, NC; Priscilla (Joseph) Gingerich, East Rochester; 23 grandchildren, and 44 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Willis; daughter-in-law, Faith Miller; grandson, Levi; great-grandson, Elijah; sisters: Lucille Schlabach, Edna Troyer; and brothers: Lewis, and Earl Schlabach.

The funeral was held January 17, 2022, at Christian Fellowship Church with Joel Gingerich, Johnny Miller, and Ray Yoder officiating. Burial followed at the Christian Fellowship Cemetery.

**Petersheim**, Noah J., 83, of Warrenton, VA, passed away peacefully December 23, 2021, at Haymarket Medical Center.

Born on June 14, 1938, in Somerset, PA, to the late Jonas and Lydia (Zook) Petersheim. Noah was the loving husband of Viola (Yoder) with whom he celebrated 62 years of marriage in October.

Noah accepted Christ early in his life. He was an active member of Faith Christian Fellowship where he served as youth counselor for 25 years. He also served on the food committee and was in charge of the sound and recording for many years. His faith and love for Christ were important to him and directed his life. He was a very tenderhearted man who expressed his faith in many practical ways to those around him. He always had a kind word, a helping hand, and encouragement to those who struggled. Everyone who came to visit would be offered food and coffee. Noah enjoyed traveling, photography, coffee, and trying new kinds of food. He was fascinated with new power tools and found fulfillment in helping fix things for others.

He moved to Virginia in 1959 to fulfill his military obligation as a conscientious objector, serving as an oxygen technician at Children's Hospital in Washington, DC. He then worked as a builder and sound technician for Son Recordings. He also worked at Choice Books where he just celebrated his 53rd anniversary last month. He most recently started a part-time job at Home Depot which he really enjoyed.

Noah will be lovingly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Viola;

daughter, Erma Jean (Mel) Zook, Elverson, PA; son, Larry (Lorene), Catlett; six grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, as well as many "adopted" grandchildren who knew him as "Grandpa Pete."

The funeral was held December 29, 2021, with Ivan Schrock, Dale Keffer, and Bob Yoder serving.

**Schrock**, Melvin, of Barnwell, SC, died on his 75th birthday, December 30, 2021. He was born in Middlebury, IN. He was a son of Menno J. and Mary (Miller) Schrock. On June 4, 1988, he married Ina Sue Raber.

He was preceded in death by his parents and oldest sister, Marilyn (Andy) Miller.

He is survived by his wife, Ina; son, Noah (Kristin); three brothers and eight sisters: Marion (Fannie), Marjorie (Dennis) Stoll, Marvin, Mervin, Marietta (Floyd) Lengacher, Merlene (Larry) Wingard, Mildred (Robert) Carroll, Martha (David) Miller, Marita (Vernon) Huyard, Miriam Schrock, Madonna (Sheldon) Schrock, and brother-in-law, Andy (Edith) Miller.

Melvin attended Calvary Fellowship Mennonite Church. He loved the Lord and loved to read and study the Scriptures and share what he learned. He was known for his kindness and willingness to lend a helping hand and go the second mile. He had a heart for the misunderstood. He worked as a registered nurse for 38 years and was loved by his patients. He enjoyed

tinkering around his home with his chickens and grape vines, and building things. He cared deeply for his wife, son, and new daughter-in-law.

The funeral service was held January 3, 2022, at the Barnwell Mennonite School. The burial followed at the Calvary Fellowship Mennonite Cemetery.

**Schrock**, Miriam, 88, of Grantsville, MD, died December 31, 2021, at her residence. Born March 31, 1933, in Salisbury, PA, she was the daughter of the late Noah M. and Elizabeth (Tice) Beachy.

Miriam was a member of the Mountain View Mennonite Church. She was active with the Sewing Circle and enjoyed sewing comforters and quilt tops. As a young girl, she aspired to have 12 children. God graciously granted her that desire. She served her family with grace and dignity, making a lasting impact with her gracious spirit. During the nearly two years that she required 24-hour care, she didn't complain when each of her seven daughters had "different styles" of caring for her. She was a bright spot for the Hospice employees who shared in her care.

Miriam is survived by four sons: Martin (Joyce); Millard (Diane), both of Grantsville; Mayard (Trish), Cumberland; Melvin "Cork" (Lorie), Accident; seven daughters: Vera (Bruce) Martin, Meyersdale, PA; Delores (Michael) Yoder, Grantsville; Gloria (Kenneth) Swartzentruber, Salisbury, PA; Loretta (Gerald) Tice; Lila (Merlin) Beachy, both

of Grantsville; Julia (Bradley) Yoder, Springs, PA; Rebecca (David) Kauffman, Bittinger, MD; three sisters: Alma Beachy, Alice Tice, and Ruth Miller, all of Grantsville; 39 grandchildren, and 35 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Olen; daughter, Geneva Joy; brothers: Ernest and Elmer Beachy; sisters: Grace Beachy, and Rachel Beachy.

The funeral service was held January 4, 2022, at Mountain View Mennonite Church with Kevin Coblantz, Peter Beachy, Jr., and Terry Yoder serving. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

**Yoder**, Martha, 47, of Jamestown, PA, passed on to her heavenly home January 10, 2022. She was born August 20, 1974, to Henry and Rhoda (Swartzentruber) Brenneman and married Ernie Yoder on May 18, 1993.

Martha enjoyed taking care of her flowers. She also loved playing Scrabble with her family.

She is survived by her husband, Ernie; children: Edith (James), Michael (Melissa), Alice (Jason), Gina (Layne), Melissa, and Martin; grandsons: Dakota and Mason; mother, Rhoda Brenneman; a twin sister, Miriam, and her family.

She was preceded in death by her father, Henry Brenneman.

The funeral service was held January 13, 2022, at Plainview Gospel Church with Roy Hershberger, Martin Schlabach, and Lucas Hilty serving. Burial followed at the Plainview Gospel Church Cemetery.



## I've Found Today

I've shut the door on Yesterday,  
Its sorrows and mistakes;  
I've locked within its gloomy walls  
Past failures and heartaches.  
And now I throw the key away  
To seek another room,  
And furnish it with hope and smiles  
And every springtime bloom.

No thought shall enter this abode  
That has a hint of pain,  
And worry, malice, and distrust  
Shall never therein reign.  
I've shut the door on Yesterday  
And threw the key away.  
The Future holds no doubt for me,  
Since I have found Today.

*Author unknown* 



In response to the comments in last month's column regarding prenatal fetal testing, one of the readers of this column forwarded me a link to an article published in the *New York Times* on January 3, 2022, by Nicole Wetsman entitled, "No, Not Those Inaccurate Blood Tests."

Noninvasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT) tends to be pretty reliable for some common disorders. However, the logistics of developing tests that detect very rare disorders is inherently very difficult. This results in far too many false positives. For instance, Cri-du-chat syndrome occurs approximately once every 15,000 or so births. So a test that attempts to identify every case of that disorder has resulted in tests where a positive result is erroneous about 80% of the time according to the research cited in this article. I agree with the brother who pointed me to this article who finds this sobering.

Prenatal testing can help parents anticipate and in some cases treat or prevent certain conditions. However, as I said previously, let's not underestimate God's grace to carry us through situations we have not anticipated. Foreknowledge is sometimes overrated.

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The following parable does not describe any specific event that I am aware of. Any resemblance that any of these characters have to people with that name is purely incidental.

Teacher Sue took her scholars to the school gym for recess. Since it was cold and rainy outdoors, dodge ball was the game of choice for that day. Soon the gym rang out with shouts of triumph, groans of failure, and plenty of laughter. The objective of creating physical activity that contrasted with the academic endeavors of the morning was being thoroughly and delightfully met. But the joy of the moment was soon blunted by three of the participants.

Alex seemed to think that the crowd was too boisterous and was surprised that people were trying to actually hit one another with the ball. He decided to retire to the sidelines rather than participate in this activity that left him with serious questions regarding the propriety of the activity. He didn't feel he should help if some of the participants were misbehaving, according to his perceptions.

Bobby favored a rule that prohibits throwing the ball overhanded. But the

group had decided to allow throwing underhanded or overhanded, according to the thrower's preference. Bobby disagreed, got himself another ball, and stood on the outer ring zinging his well-aimed, underhanded throws at anybody he could find, but especially at those he knew were in favor of allowing any sort of throw. Confusion took over with two balls flying around because Bobby felt it was necessary to play by his preferred set of rules.

Carl got hit with one of the balls, but he wasn't sure if it was the extra ball that Bobby had started to throw around or the original ball. Adding to his confusion was the fact that he didn't enjoy getting hit by the ball and being disqualified. He had an emotional meltdown and threw a temper tantrum.

What began as a wholesome and effective recess had devolved into chaos and confusion. Each of these three boys played a role in the problem. Alex was pretty sure that it would be much better to withdraw himself from the game than be involved with classmates who were doing something he found objectionable. Bobby was confident that it would be much better if all played by the rules he preferred. Carl had a bad attitude and threw a fit. It was very disappointing to the

children having a good time during recess when the activity was hijacked and ultimately suspended because of three petulant boys.

Recess is one thing. It's quite another thing when variations of this scene make "recess" unworkable for "teachers" and "schools" in a variety of settings and life circumstances.

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Our church youth group recently took an evening meal to a homeless shelter in the region and served those who were accessing the services this shelter provides. In discussion with several of the youth and those in charge of this effort, I have a few musings.

Several families with children were among the 60 or so who were served supper. One family had been struggling financially when their house burned down, and they were left homeless. Some of those who initiated conversation with those eating supper, commented that taking the initiative crowded their comfort zone boundaries pretty far.

I admit that I feel like my sheltered upbringing has left me with a default set of expectations that contribute to how my comfort zone is shaped in relating to folks at a homeless shelter. For instance, I tend to think that people who plan well and are responsible and belong to a caring

church fellowship shouldn't end up at a homeless shelter. These thoughts might all be true, or they might not. When confronted with someone begging or homeless, my first thought is often that I don't want to facilitate wrong choices. But I admit that I seldom get beyond that first line of thought. I also find it very difficult to reconcile that with how we see Christ interacting with the "down and out" folks in His daily round of activities. This is more of a confession of attitudes and primary responses than a defense of the same.

It is my desire, by God's grace and His help, to reorient my thinking in interactions I have with this sort of people. I would like my thoughts to realign along these lines. I wish to remember that my church heritage and network of support is a supremely rich blessing. Receipt of this blessing implies a stewardship rather than bestowing an entitlement. I wish to grant people in difficult circumstances the benefit of the doubt and assume that they do not prefer the situation they are in. I wish also to find ways to convey respect and dignity in these interactions rather than a patronizing and condescending approach. I will try to remember that, "But for the grace of God, there go I." I'll also try to remember that maybe there

is something I can learn from this interaction, rather than assuming that the benefit runs in only one direction.

I acknowledge that reorienting one's mindset doesn't answer all the questions. But representing Christ to a fallen and needy world is both a precious and sobering responsibility. Right responses begin with right thinking. At least it's a start.

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One brother in our church has made a yearly trek to Fort Worth, Texas, for the last number of years with others going to volunteer for a weekend at a ministry to the homeless called, "Beautiful Feet." I appreciate his desire to make a difference in the lives of those he's had the opportunity to interact with. Sharing the gospel message is always a blessing. But he also reports that sometimes it is the faith of the homeless that serves as an inspiration to those who engage them in this ministry.

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The *Washington Post* in a recent article indicated that in 2021 the average residential monthly rent in the USA rose to \$1,877 per month! This figure represents a year-over-year increase of 14%. But some metro areas have experienced a rise of 40% in rent prices. My surprise at these numbers is another evidence

that I live in rural middle-America. These numbers seem to be double or triple what typical houses rent for in this region.

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Housing cost is but one of the economic metrics used to measure inflation. Current inflation rates are worrisome to the American consumer and to the politicians and policymakers who tend to get the blame for unfavorable economic conditions.

I'm not an economist. I might be wrong, but generally speaking, it seems to me that politicians vying for votes tend to make unrealistic economic promises. The general

public, in turn, gives disproportionate credit and blame to the politicians they like and dislike in keeping with their biases. Whatever good intentions that politicians might nurse to make the economy favorable tend to wilt in the face of opposition and factors they have no ability to control.

It is legitimate for God's children to cultivate some interest in these things. But in the grand scheme of things, it isn't proper for us to invest "anxious thought" here. Those of us who are God's children have bigger fish to fry. We have eternal matters to see to and to invest our energies in.

-RJM 

**mission awareness**

# What Is Happening at the Ireland Mission?

*Wendell Hochstetler, Abbeville, SC*

*There is a needy mission field across the Atlantic Ocean in the country of Ireland. The Ireland mission began in 1992 and transferred under the auspices of Mission Interest Committee in 1995. Wendell and Sheri Hochstetler and family served there six years. Wendell has given us a very good overview of this ministry which seeks to be as self-supporting as possible and above all else to let the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ*

*shine forth. Nine families and 15 single staff are presently involved in the work. This includes the personnel serving at the Comeragh Wilderness Boys Camp. - FS*

**I**magine with me a few Chinese families moving into the heart of the Amish Mennonite community in Lancaster, PA. Their plan is to start an outreach to the community people and show them a

better way of life. Now, what do you suppose that community of Amish Mennonites would say? Would there not be some speculation and maybe even some stories going around about these Chinese families?

I can only imagine what the Irish people, with their deep-rooted Catholic beliefs, wondered as they witnessed the first Amish Mennonite families move into the Dunmore East community of Ireland. Who are these strange Americans coming with their distinctive dress and different way of life?

Today, nearly 30 years after the first Amish Mennonite family moved into the Dunmore East community, many of the local people are still deeply rooted in their culture and Catholic beliefs.

So, what good is it that we continue to invest our time and energy in Ireland? After 30 years and only a small number of members in the church from the local community, we can become discouraged. But let's look at what has happened in these past 30 years and realize why we continue to invest our time and energy into the lives of the Irish people.

I vividly remember talking one afternoon with a Christian father who brought his family from England to Ireland for a family conference we

were hosting. He told me with deep passion that we should focus on shining our light to the lost vessels at sea and not focus so much on the lighthouse itself and all the vessels that are safely anchored. He shared with me that the work in Ireland has been a huge light that has helped keep many families and youth from shipwreck. Maybe most of these vessels never docked at Dunmore East, but they had seen the light and it was a great help in giving them clear direction for the rest of their lives.

Here are ways that the work in Ireland has blessed hundreds of lives in the years of the mission there. Because of a business visa we have been granted, we are able to operate a small filling station and store for the local community. The store offers fresh baked goods and grocery items, along with inspirational books and Bibles. This store allows us to bless and encourage hundreds of people every day. The atmosphere and friendly personnel bring people in, and many experience a light that helps them on their journey.

Another way of reaching out into the local community is the Christian school which is operated by Dunmore East Christian Fellowship. The school is primarily for the children from the families who attend the church but is not limited to this. Over the years we

have had quite a number of children from local families who wanted an alternative to the public schools. Life-changing friendships have been created through the ministry of Dunmore East Christian School.

Once a year we host a Family Conference for families and youth. This is always a highlight for the local church as well as for the attendees. Most years there are around 150 attendees and these come from as many as 16 to 18 different nationalities. All of these are Christians or seekers looking for a light to help them on their voyage in life.

Once a year we offer a 10-day Youth Bible Camp for youth, ages 16 and up. This generally brings in around 24 students, and once again from all over Europe. To see these youth mingle with the church youth and learn together is a great blessing. Classes are taught and youth hear the clear teachings of Christ. These youth leave with a light that will never go out even though we may never see them again.

A harvest dinner is served annually in November for the local community neighbors. This allows us to serve them a wonderful evening meal along with a short program given by the local church youth. Just visiting and socializing with the neighbors brings a friendship that lasts for years to come.

Comeragh Wilderness Boys Camp is an outreach from the local church as well. This is a place where troubled young lads come to spend time away from their normal environment. The lads spend some days and nights in the forest with staff who share with them the love of Jesus. Interacting with them and working with them means so much to these who have very few friends. We also have a day program at Camp for local public schools that sends students to interact in group activities and team work.

Ideal Woodcrafts is another opportunity to be a beacon of light through this avenue of business. We provide outdoor furniture, garden/storage sheds, fencing, decking, and many custom jobs. This allows us to get into the homes and lives of the local people and give them a glimpse of the greatest Carpenter ever.

On a normal Sunday morning we can usually expect one or more visitors, either local or someone traveling through the area. This does not include eight families of non-Anabaptist background who attend regularly. Not all these are members but are faithful attendees. Many people find our church and community on the internet and come because they are seeking something that may satisfy them. We pray that as

they come and leave our doors they will leave with an awareness of Jesus Christ and be able to better navigate their journey in life.

So, as I reflect on our presence in Ireland over the past 30 years, I am encouraged to continue supporting the work and pray that many more

souls will see the Light that shines brightly at Dunmore East Christian Fellowship.

Is your light shining where God has placed you right now? Are you guiding others along their journey? Are you aware of your mission?



## A Woman After God's Heart

# The Liberation of Godly Women

*Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH*



**L**iberation? Are we trapped and need to be freed? Can *Women's Lib* be sanctified?

Not surprisingly, a mind-not-after-Christ has looked on the lot of us godly women and viewed us as trapped—stuck under restrictions. Trapped in a difficult marriage. Trapped under legislative guidelines. Trapped behind boring clothing styles. These three are only examples of our love, our priorities, and our identity.

When God created us ladies, He finalized His work with an affirming “there, I bless that” before moving on. That perfection blessing includes the one man/one woman arrangement. But it doesn't elaborate on all the times the husband doesn't meet her

expectations, misunderstands her, or stumbles all over her. It doesn't give her a back door out of a difficult relationship. The Creator simply blessed the original design.

So it is that within the confines (or freedom?) of that original blessed design that we have all kinds of liberating actions to pursue. Because we live within the trust of our sometimes-blundering husbands we can do plenty of blundering ourselves and know that they won't be secretively looking around for Plan B. There is unspeakable freedom in sloughing through the hard work of loving well without being plagued by the distrust and unease where divorce is an option. After an especially hard season of misunderstanding and

difficult communication, we don't dread picking up that note left on the dresser, announcing that he's done and packing up to leave for always. The notes you and I pick up are notes of trying again/making up, notes of "I'm sorry, can we talk?" We are incredibly privileged to be *trapped* in our marriages. The freedom of a *one man/one woman for life* marriage!



Are we trapped under personal guidelines and accountability? Or is that called *freedom* when we're under the controls of that little 3"x6" tyrant that would manipulate us and jangle and chirp at us all through our days? Who or what gets our undivided attention from the first hours of the day to the last? Is it those people with whom we share our physical space, or is it those *distant yet desired* acquaintances we rarely see?

One small exercise that has helped me decide how powerfully I am manipulated by the little tech-tyrant was first illustrated to me by an older brother. He apologized for meeting us just a few minutes late. He had missed seeing our text since his personal guidelines didn't allow him to check his phone before reading Scripture first thing in the morning.

Each morning as we groggily eject from our beds, folds of darkness give way to folds of light in our

consciousness. We reach over to unplug IT from its nighttime charging, its cheery light begging to be acknowledged. What's the weather? Did she respond to my message? Today is Molly's birthday! Has my son arrived yet? Will I be babysitting today? What time did we agree to meet? Oh great, UPS is delivering my package today! I need to place that order today to make the sale! And it's not like I care that much about what Biden might be up to today, but what *is* the latest on the vaccine mandate? Many minutes later, Scripture-time feels a little tiresome and bland.

Every day presents us with the questions: Who am I? Who am I becoming? Why am I here? Each morning Scripture gives the same reassuring answer. God says, "You are My child, and you are becoming like Me." We don't become like Him by staring at messages or tasks or emails or notifications. We find our foundation by looking into the Word. Like Peter said to his Master, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life*" (John 6:68). As we cultivate the habit of *Scripture-before-phone* we begin to look at the right place to learn who we are. We find our names written on its pages. We find that we are loved by the Creator of the universe. Therein lies



our freedom to do with the minutes of the day what He asks of us as opposed to all the other influences that want to identify us otherwise and grab our attention. In fact, as we fall in love with the Author of Scripture and hang onto His words, technology's attraction strangely wanes.

In the book *The Common Rule, Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction*, by Justin Whitmel Earley, a number of checkpoints are outlined to help us determine our level of freedom with our technological tools. Tests like: Turn off the notifications; Scripture in the morning before phone; one hour daily with phone off, and more.

So, whether it's technology accountability or rules for personal time management, are we free to step aside from the jostling of competing voices to become consumed with the One Voice that truly matters?

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Do the dress guidelines from our church's handbook cramp our style and impede our personal expression of beauty and poise? Wouldn't true freedom allow us to fit in and look like everyone else? True freedom wouldn't single us out so much, making us look odd or peculiar.

In fact, true freedom has a much grander purpose than that. It

happens that the worldly agenda for dress is truly odd and sometimes bizarre. I remember standing in a busy subway junction of a major city one day, musing that I appeared quite conventional when for many around me, *queer* wasn't an adequate description. Green hair, chains, loops, and outlandish attire all swirled into an image of humankind trying to be alike by being different.

A modest, attractive, unassuming appearance invites appreciative glances from a world tired of the artificial. It brings worried persons to us, asking, "Will you pray for my...?" It frees us from an evil man's hungry gaze. It invites trust when someone at an airport asks us to watch their bags. It keeps us from trailing into questionable surroundings out of curiosity. Sometimes it even facilitates financial transactions! It classifies us with godly identity, which can be powerfully freeing and safekeeping at times; for sure, more often than we know. It frees us from loose individualism and replaces it with a sense of belonging and community.

I would not exchange my freedoms as God's woman in my loves, loyalties, and identity for any *trappings* the world has to offer. I'll admit that these freedoms become more treasured the older I get. Physical maturity

seems to speed up the appreciation. However, in defense of the ageless quality of these freedoms, I quickly add that I heard a youth girl plead with her church leaders, "Let's not compromise our nonconformity!" A young man in his teens regularly holds me accountable on my phone habits.

Sisters, can we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free? It was for this freedom that Christ set us free (completely liberating us); therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery (which you once removed). Galatians 5:1 (AMP)

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*In response to several requests, I would like to write an article(s) on the subject of the ministry of encouragement among us ladies. All of us have experienced the giving and receiving of the gift of encouragement, and I would love to hear about it. If you have a testimony, an article, or even just words of wisdom or experience on this subject, please send it to my email address (inside front cover). Give attention to Holy Spirit nudges. As you submit your thoughts, I will attempt to knit them together and compose an article(s) authored by all of us.*



**junior messages**

## Singing for Jesus

*Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH*

**W**e find it easy to sing when the sun is shining and all is right with our world. But what about when things go wrong? Does God still give us a song?

Consider two examples. One from the precious Word, the other from a recent kidnapping. In both of these stories, the people sang and praised God in dark days.

### **Songs in Prison**

In Acts chapter 16, Paul and Silas

were walking to a place of prayer in Philippi. Along this road was a female slave who earned much money for her master by fortune-telling. She followed them, shouting, "These men are servants of the most high God. They are telling you the way to be saved." For many days this slave followed them, shouting out the same message again and again.

Finally, Paul, exasperated and tired of her commotion, turned around

and commanded the demon in her, “In the name of Jesus, come out!” At that very moment the evil spirit left and the woman was calm.

In contrast, her owners were upset at the loss of their gain. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the authorities. They accused them of throwing the city into an uproar and advocating unlawful customs. The crowd joined in the attack. Paul and Silas were severely beaten, flogged, and thrown into prison. Their feet were fastened in stocks for the long and painful night.

At midnight, though bloody and in pain, God’s song rose in their hearts. Prisoners in other cells heard their songs. God responded with a violent earthquake, shaking the prison foundations. The doors flew open and everyone’s chains fell off. God brought them out of prison with a miraculous display of His mighty power. The jailer and his family came to Jesus.

### **Songs in Haiti**

On the day that 17 missionaries in Haiti were taken hostage, they were forced to drive back a country dirt road that was bumpy and full of ruts. Dale was driving, and their captors became angry with his lack of speed.

The gangsters stopped, leaped out of their vehicle, ran back to the van, and flung upon the door. They

yanked Dale out of the driver’s seat and smacked him in the face. One of the gang took the wheel and drove furiously. It was a terrifying roller coaster ride. They finally stopped at a compound on a lonely back road—a place in the gang’s territory where the police fear to go.

When they reached that desolate area, all of the women were instructed to get out of the vehicle. They lined them up and looked them over as if it were a cattle auction. Men were milling around with assault rifles and other guns slung over their shoulders.

With their hearts full of wickedness, they sized up the frightened mission women. They started claiming them, “This one’s mine, that one is for me.” It was an evil time—dark and wicked.

The mission men were still in the vehicle and saw the gang’s intentions. They quickly leaped out and rushed over to where the women stood.

God’s song filled the air, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.”

Their desperate prayer to God for His protection winged its way to heaven. God heard their song and pleas. God's power, high above all evil, stopped those men from harming the women.

In their time of captivity, the gangsters never touched the mission women. They brought other clothes for the women. But the women washed their own clothes in the curtained shower area and put their wet dresses back on. The warm sunshine kissed their garments. They valued modesty in ordinary days and now all the more in the face of evil. They could not understand why they were in such a difficult situation, yet songs of praise to God arose in their hearts, a triumphant tribute to Jesus. They sang countless songs in captivity. They sang, even in a place that seemed like a ghetto, surrounded by piles of dirt and trash.

Barry Grant, the director of CAM

in Haiti, told the gang leader, "These people are children of God. You have people who serve Jesus."

The gang leader retorted, "Everyone is in my hands, I am in control. I serve king Lucifer."

Loud satanic rock music often throbbbed through the night, and ungodly women were brought to the camp. But the evil men did not touch the Christian women, and eventually they escaped. God helped them. He answered so many prayers.

The gang, though sold out for Satan, could not do whatever they wanted. God showed HIS MIGHTY AWESOME POWER was much stronger than the evil men.

We cannot understand the ways of God. Throughout history His children have suffered trials, death, and martyrdom. Yet, whether by life or death, to live for Jesus always pays.

*Resources: Testimonies by Barry Grant and Sam Stoltzfus*



## youth messages

### For Such a Time as This

*Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH*

In August 2021 the U.S. military pulled out of Afghanistan where they had been a constant presence since October 2001. The

U.S. withdrawal caused a massive destabilization and created a power vacuum that was quickly filled by the Taliban. Over 120,000 Afghan

people were evacuated with many of them being airlifted to different military bases across the United States. Others were evacuated to eight other countries with plans to either move them to the United States later or resettle them elsewhere.

Meet Leon Smith. Leon enjoyed keeping up with the news. He spent a great deal of time following the news and the world situation, yet found that very little if any of the news to be read was encouraging. He decided to back away from the news and spend more time reading a true source of enthusiasm and joy—the Bible.

In August of 2021, however, Leon couldn't ignore what was going on in the world. The trauma that the Afghan refugees were experiencing got his attention. Leon shared this, "God spoke and said, 'I brought them to your back door, now what are you going to do about it?' That verse in Esther 4:14 gripped me. *'For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'* If we Anabaptists don't do something, these people will have their needs met elsewhere. A government agency will step in

and take care of them, but will they see Jesus?"

What really caught his attention was the fact that the military was bringing a large number of refugees to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, which was a mere 10 miles from their sister church in Sparta, Wisconsin. Here was an opportunity to reach out to Muslim people in need without going to the other side of the world. God had brought them "right into our backyard." Leon began talking with brothers from other churches and found that there was a fair amount of interest in trying to reach out to the refugees. They met several times to pray about it, and after seeking God's will, they formed ARC Ministry and elected a board to lead out in the work. They began looking for a way to volunteer at Fort McCoy and discovered that they could go in under Catholic Charities. God provided a beautiful facility, "an unused monastery," for ARC to house their volunteers. They started bringing volunteers in on a two-week basis. They taught the refugees how to sew and conversed with them in order to prepare them when the time comes for resettlement.

As much as ARC would have liked to be able to do more teaching of life skills, a lot of time was spent just keeping the refugees busy. One

of the Catholic Charity men said, “The goal of the day is to occupy and exhaust the trouble-makers!” Most of their time was spent providing activities for refugees and their children as a way to connect and build relationships. It did just that. Although they were forbidden to proselytize, many of the volunteers had the opportunity to share their testimonies and pray with these dear hurting people. Only about 50% of the Afghanistan refugees speak any English. The children tend to pick it up much more quickly, and they make great interpreters. Around Christmastime, the military began moving the refugees out at a rate of 150–200 a day, so ARC’s work at the Fort McCoy location was finished at the end of January.

Youth who have volunteered with ARC have amazing testimonies. One young man related how his focus in life was working and making money, but his experience working with the refugees changed his life. It’s ironic that it is in serving others that we receive the greatest blessing. So many young people today are pouring their energies into working and making money because that is what others are doing and what is necessary to maintain the lifestyle of so many of us. The question was asked, “Is this our youth’s fault or their parents’?”

Rather than pointing fingers, we should be asking ourselves what we can do about it!

Ask almost any mission board or place of voluntary service today what their greatest need is. Their answer usually isn’t funds, but it’s finding personnel. It is becoming increasingly more comfortable for Christians today to sit back and throw money at these missions than offer up their own time for service.

God blessed in regards to the financial needs for ARC’s work in Fort McCoy far beyond what they could have asked or thought. To those on the board and others involved with ARC, this was a direct confirmation that God wants this work to continue (see Ephesians 3:20). But the work also needs people. These refugees are open to the Gospel. They have been requesting Bibles and are open to learning about Christ. It’s important that the opportunities are seized when they present themselves. Working with refugees who are working toward resettlement is a narrow time window—open, but narrow. When they are still in need and are relying on others, refugees tend to be more open spiritually. Once they settle down and find stability, it’s easy for them to slip back into nominal Islam and to align themselves with a local mosque.


Right now the number of Muslim refugees in the Minneapolis area is far more than the local Muslim community can handle. ARC members had the opportunity to share tea with a Muslim gentleman they met at a New Year's gathering. This man's uncle fled Afghanistan when Russia invaded and sponsored him to come here as a student. He's been here now for about 15 years and knows what it's like to be a refugee. He told Leon, "We as a Muslim community can't help this many people."

The term Leon used was "a mission right here." With vaccine and travel restrictions, are we looking at our local areas to see where we can help? Doors are opening for ARC with possibilities to start a center in Minneapolis. Volunteers will be needed to teach English classes, sewing, and possibly SALT programs (like CAM's). Not only do these programs reach the refugees, but they also touch the volunteers and ultimately bring refugees and Anabaptists together with the goal of showing and sharing the love of Jesus.

So where do we go from here? ARC is still young, and its programs are changing and growing. You

may wonder if ARC is helping with resettlement. It is involved in establishing APA or Afghan Placement and Assistance program in Goshen, IN. They are working with the LIRS (Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) on the APA, with hopes to expand efforts in the area of resettlement.

The goal of ARC can be summed up with their E4 motto (a polite nod to Esther 4:14) Equipping Anabaptists to Engage with refugees to create Enduring relationships that Express the love of Jesus. If you are interested in volunteering in the future, check out [arcministry.org](http://arcministry.org) or call 715-314-0388. In order to volunteer with ARC you must be a born-again believer with a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ and a burden to serve. Serving with ARC is not a party but rather a mission. If you have the light of Jesus in your life and want to share it with others, please join us! Next month we'd like to look at some stories and testimonials from ARC volunteers and give an update on the work in Minneapolis.

*All information was obtained through direct correspondence, either by email or phone interview, with Leon Smith.* 

GOD WANTS SPIRITUAL FRUIT, NOT RELIGIOUS NUTS.



## THOUGHT GEMS

When in doubt, don't.

• • • • •

Being on a diet requires great won't power.

• • • • •

The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your arm.

• • • • •

It's better to keep a friend from falling than to help him up after he falls.

• • • • •

There is nothing so easy to acquire and so difficult to drop as prejudice.

• • • • •

Give not from the top of your purse but from the bottom of your heart.

• • • • •

A real family man is one who looks at his new child as an  
addition rather than a deduction.

• • • • •

True happiness comes not from having much to live on,  
but from having much to live for.

• • • • •

Do unto others as though you were the others.

• • • • •

The best way to escape evil is to choose good.

• • • • •

Hate pollutes the mind.