



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

MAY 2022

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Calvary Messenger

May 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.

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If You Have a Friend

If you have a friend worth loving,
Love him. Yes, and let him know
That you love him; ere life's evening
Tinge his brow with sunset glow.
Why should good words ne'er be said
Of a friend—till he is dead?

If you hear a song that thrills you,
Sung by any child of song,
Praise it. Do not let the singer
Wait deserved praises long.
Why should one who thrills your heart
Lack the joy you may impart?

If you hear a prayer that moves you
By its humble, pleading tone,
Join it. Do not let the seeker
Bow before his God alone.
Why should not your brother share
The strength of "two or three" in prayer?

If a silvery laugh goes rippling
Through the sunshine on his face,
Share it. 'Tis the wise man's saying—
For both grief and joy a place;
There's health and goodness in the mirth
In which an honest laugh has birth.

If your work is made more easy
By a friendly, helping hand,
Say so. Speak out brave and truly
Ere the darkness veil the land.
Should a brother workman dear
Falter for a word of cheer?

Scatter thus your seeds of kindness
All enriching as you go—
Leave them. Trust the Harvest-giver;
He will make each seed to grow,
So, until the happy end,
Your life shall never lack a friend.

Author unknown



How the Gospel Seed Grows

A Reflection on the Core Commitments of Anabaptism

Steven Brubaker, Guys Mills, PA

[Anabaptist Christians, as part of the Christian faith, have some things in common with other Christians. In this article, Steven Brubaker explores five distinctive contributions of Anabaptism to the faith.]

When a group of people receives, embraces, and follows the good news of Jesus, a new way of life takes root and grows. The Gospel seed matures in a tree with particular practices, values, stories, songs, and ways of doing everything. Anabaptism is a faith heritage that emerged from a Gospel planting in the 1500s. While the values of Anabaptists can be found in other faith traditions, this set of emphases forms a distinctive testimony to the Gospel of Jesus.

Devotion

A Bible study in Zurich, Switzerland in the 1520s triggered a series of events that resulted in the birth of the Anabaptist movement. Ulrich Zwingli, a pastor in the state church, gathered a number of capable men to seek biblical direction for the church. Through that Bible study, Zwingli and other members of the group,

including Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and George Blaurock, concluded that infant baptism was not a scriptural practice. They disagreed, however, on what should be their response. Zwingli wanted to turn the matter over for the government to decide, while his students insisted obedience to the Bible was the only option. The government met and ordered anyone who refused to have their children baptized to leave Zurich.

The next part of the story is beautifully told in the *Hutterian Chronicle*:

One day when they were meeting, fear came over them and struck their hearts. They fell on their knees before the almighty God in heaven and called upon him who knows all hearts. They prayed that God grant it to them to do his divine will and that he might have mercy on them. Neither flesh and blood nor human wisdom compelled them. They were well aware of what they would have to suffer for this. After the prayer, George Blaurock stood up and asked Conrad Grebel in the name of God to baptize him with true Christian baptism on his faith

and recognition of the truth. With this request he knelt down, and Conrad baptized him, since at that time there was no appointed servant of the Word. Then the others in their turn asked George to baptize them, which he did. And so, in great fear of God, together they surrendered themselves to the Lord. They confirmed one another for the service of the Gospel and began to teach the faith and to keep it. This was the beginning of separation from the world and its evil ways.

Baptism as an adult represents the early Anabaptist understanding of who is a disciple of Jesus. A disciple is one who has made a personal decision to follow Jesus: "I must make this decision, not my parents, not my church leaders, not my government." The decision for baptism must be voluntary, not forced or manipulated. It must be passionate and heartfelt. It is also an adult decision; it is made with an understanding of its implications.

It is not enough to be born to people who have made that commitment, not enough to go to church with people who have made that commitment, and not enough to be a citizen of a nation that calls itself Christian. It is not enough to merely accept Christ. A follower of Jesus is a person who has made a personal, passionate, and voluntary commitment to Christ and

His church. Anabaptists emphasize devotion.

Brotherhood

An organism is the smallest unit of sustainable physical life. Individual cells, tissues, and even organs ordinarily do not survive when cut off from the life of the entire organism.

What is the smallest unit of sustainable life in the kingdom of God? Is it the church or the individual believer? According to James Sire, "Whether Catholic, evangelical, mainline, liberal, or conservative, Christians see themselves as individuals first and communities second."

The Anabaptist answer to this question has been different. Anabaptism understands that the focus of God's work on the earth is the body of Christ: the church. Instead of the church existing for the individual, the individual exists to be a part of the church. During the climactic last months of Jesus' life on earth, He reveals Himself as Christ, as Messiah, and as King. When Peter acknowledges this, Jesus blesses him and then says: "*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" For 2,000 years, Jesus has been keeping His promise to build His church. The church is at

the center of God's redemptive work. If you want to know what God is up to in the world, don't look to the places of political power or to the places of economic power or to the places in the news. Look at the local church.

The good news of Jesus Christ is not about me. Or you. The grand story of God at work in the world does not revolve around you or me. It revolves around Christ and the body of Christ, the church. As we participate in His church, we enter and become part of that larger story—God's story. Anabaptists emphasize brotherhood.

Separation

An early Anabaptist German phrase, *nachfolge Christi*, points to a third emphasis: following Christ. Anabaptism is Christ-centered. It describes the Gospel in terms of following Him. It reads the Bible through the lens of the teachings and life of Christ. It understands the goal of life: to love Christ and become like Him.

But many Christian groups use the term "Christ-centered." How does the Anabaptist understanding of Christ-centered differ from the norm?

In writing to the Colossians, Paul uses the language of being Christ-centered when he says "*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is,*

seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." He quickly adds additional words,

- "*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you*

- *Put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience*

- *And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*"

Paul expects a focus on Christ to result in a radically different kind of life. Saying yes to Jesus means saying no to all other lords. Christ's followers will love Jesus and be out of sync with the dominant culture. This is not isolation from the world but rather a life of obedience to Christ in full view of the world.

The word we sometimes use to capture both Christ-centered and countercultural is separation—separation to Jesus and separation from evil. Anabaptists emphasize separation.

Sacrificial Love

The means available for people to get in the way of evil range from violent approaches (law enforcement, warfare, assassinations) to sacrificial methods (serving, counseling, dying for another). The difference

between violence and sacrifice is the difference between forcing others to do good and inviting them to do good. It is the difference between having to and wanting to. It is the difference between a person refusing an abortion because it's illegal or because they want the child. It is the difference between causing pain or bearing pain. How does Jesus want His followers to engage evil?

Many Christian groups today embrace the entire spectrum of responding to evil as appropriate for Christ-followers, at least at certain times. From its birth in Zurich and its heavy-handed government, Anabaptism has insisted that Jesus authorized only sacrificial methods of fighting evil. Anabaptists emphasize sacrificial love.

Sacrificial love has two components. The first component has to do with what God is doing in us, His followers. The power of God is made available through Jesus to remake His followers into lovers—lovers of God, the people of God, family, neighbors, and even enemies (Matthew 22:35-39). Sacrificial love is not merely something we do. It is something we are becoming. God intends to change us into people whose natural response to enemies is seeking their best interests.

The second component of sacrificial

love has to do with how God wants to address evil through us. As people who are becoming lovers of enemies, it follows that only those means consistent with love are available to us. As Paul wrote to the Roman church, *“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”* Christ's followers get in the way of evil through redemptively prophetic presence and sacrificial love. This is not self-protection or passivity. This is how we fight against the evil and injustice in the world.

Living

Christianity includes teachings that are to be believed and lived. Which should receive more emphasis: believing the teachings or living them? Clearly, both are important. This is not a question of which one to accept and which one to reject. Instead, it is a question of which one is more basic or more fundamental. One minister said it this way: “You can get your thinking straight or your living right but not both. The Gospel is about getting your thinking straight.” The Anabaptist answer is different. Anabaptists emphasize living.

By living, we don't mean mere behavior. Living is a whole-person word that includes loving, being,

and doing. Anabaptists are more impressed with the person who lives the gospel and cannot talk eloquently about it than the person with a powerful testimony and unconvincing life. This emphasis on sustained, daily, ordinary obedience flows from passages throughout the New Testament that combine believing and living. *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). *“Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves”* (James 1:22). *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock”* (Mat 7:24-27). In the words of the early Anabaptist Hans Denck, “For whoever thinks he belongs to Christ must walk the way that Christ walked.”

In conclusion

The acronym BLESSeD is a way to remember these five Anabaptist emphases. Blessed, a central word in the Sermon on the Mount, brings to mind the pivotal role the Sermon has played in the thought and life of Anabaptists over the years.

• **Brotherhood:** Followers of Christ find identity, belonging, and purpose

in the church.

• **Living:** Followers of Christ live each day in trusting obedience.

• **Separation:** Followers of Christ separate from the evil practices of the age.

• **Sacrificial Love:** Followers of Christ are becoming lovers of others, even their enemies.

• **Devotion:** Followers of Christ are lovingly devoted to God: heart, soul, mind, and strength.

The Christian community, a godly heritage, is a primary way that God provides the resources for living out the good news of Jesus Christ. It is in the church community, a living tradition, that God chose to give as an essential resource that helps us to grow up in Him. Local churches, anchored in 2000 years of faithful doctrine and practice, receiving with gratitude the wisdom that they have been handed, and building anew on the grace of the past, are in position to help fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of God.

[This article first appeared in the Summer 2021 issue of the FBEP newsletter. Used by permission. All Scripture used is from the ESV.]



A *smile* of encouragement at the right moment
may act like *sunlight* on a closed-up *flower*;
it may be the turning point for a struggling life.

Announcement

2022 Youth Fellowship Meetings Schedule

July 23 - 25, 2021

The Youth Fellowship Meetings are scheduled to be hosted by these churches. Please check the dates for your region.

Southeast — Cold Spring Mennonite Church, Abbeville, SC - July 15-17

Southwest — Cornerstone Mennonite Church, Oswego, KS - July 22-24

Northwest — Pilgrim Fellowship Church, Sturgis, MI - July 22-24

North Central — To be announced

Northeast — Nothing scheduled for 2022

the bottom line

The Missing Soap Bottle

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

We four sat at the kitchen table. My first question to this respectable couple was, “What seems to be your main problem?”

He immediately responded with, “We don’t trust each other anymore.”

I felt we were already half way through this marriage counseling session. Good answer! Trust is more basic than love. To love God more, we first need to trust Him more. To love people more fully, we need to trust them more fully.

How did this couple arrive at this place of suspicion, arguing,

and distrust? That part was soon in coming. The scary part about conducting a finance seminar is that you almost always end up having people to counsel about their unmanageable debts, which have come in life-sizes of small, medium, large, very large, or huge. Or else there are disputes in the home or work place over money-handling issues.

This one was very different. The man had a good-paying job. His new house and two-story family barn were already paid for. Besides, he had plans for another building for an

at-home money-making enterprise. He also had a surprising amount of money in investments. He was on a roll.

What was his problem? It turned out that he was a miser. His quiver was wonderfully full with five lovely daughters and one son. People's three cheers for his benefit of daughters caused his phobia of the future. These could begin getting married in 10 years from now and the weddings could cost him from \$10,000-15,000 each! His goal was to save his money; it was to be for himself, not spending it for others.

Her side of the story was that she was not free. In grocery shopping, she would have to justify to her husband every item she bought. There were certain meals she could not make because of not having a particular ingredient. She knew he would object to making even a small purchase if she did not need it NOW. Late fall was especially stressful because the older girls were needing new shoes, boots, and coats.

Where do grievances end when there is serious distrust in a marriage and marital ropes get all tied up in knots of bondage? It cannot heal or free itself over time, but usually it becomes worse. With tears, she told us she had gotten a bottle of soap for the Sunday they have church at

their house. Her husband hid it prior to the occasion just to save several dollars. By his micro-scrutiny, she was hampered from the simplicity of managing the house and family needs.

The disappearance of the soap dispenser became the serious abscess of a sad marriage and family. The drainage was causing the life blood of the marriage to be infected, choking the grace of life intended for a happy marriage. This kind of infection hurts all the children, regardless of their ages.

The husband's father was a poor man and helplessly in debt all of his life. So, this man, early on, determined to carefully save his money and not be like his dad. That extreme reaction to his father's weakness became another extreme, becoming the opposite problem of being a miser (one who is greedy, stingy, and hoards money for selfish purposes, even at the expense of his own comfort –Webster). The dictionary further says such a person tends to be wretched, unhappy, and harmful to his own health.

The burden of this article is to be a beacon of light to shine toward a moderate path for a healthy view of finances. Saving money is held up as a good practice in the Bible, whereas hoarding is warned against and can lead to being condemned. There are

more of us who spend too much, without a plan or a budget, than those who miserly hoard for the mere sake of having a big pile. Yes, misers need to be warned of their selfishness and exclusion of others and their needs. Jesus said we should make friends by the thoughtful and proper use of money.

The unjust steward used some of his master's money by giving discounts to collect bad and delinquent debts. Giving an unauthorized 50% discount was better than nothing. The unjust steward knew he would soon be fired, so he gave these unheard-of discounts to make friends who would later remember and support him when he would be out of a job. Thus, he made friends with his lord's money. Our Lord spoke this as a lesson for His disciples (Luke 16:1-12), and showed that money used for noble purposes could return to bless the wise steward.

The principle by our Lord on this dilemma of the miser is to be generous with people to cultivate friendship and appreciate an on-going friendship.

Hopefully, this reading will cause needs along these lines to be considered and dealt with appropriately in a sense of stewardship and godly living. It enhances life when we pattern our lives toward a

balanced contentment.

The Bottom Line is that:

We should give prayer and forethought to choosing our role models.

As we evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our parents, we need to be careful to not be reactionary and judgmental of them.

Money is a convenient method of exchange. Earning and spending is for the orderly flow of life with money being our servant and not our master.

According to the Bible, saving money is intended to be done with a plan. Hoarding is primarily to make the pile as big as one can.

Housewives should be given money to be able to manage the house and family in a reasonable way.

Most of our wives are frugal and conscientious on how they spend money for groceries and related items. Husbands should be careful to not injure their foresight.

Communication and mutual resolution are still the glue for a good marriage that doesn't become stuck in the silent treatment of tight lips and a cold heart.

Successfully counseling a miser can be harder than advising a man who is in debt if he holds tightly to money as his lifeline in having purpose for living.



Grace and Truth vs. Grace or Truth

Chester Weaver, Itasca, TX

Daddy cuddles three-year old Susie after he applies discipline.

Farmer Brown chases the neighbor's cows out of his corn field after alerting Neighbor Joe where his cows had been and completes the job by repairing and strengthening the fence.

Jesus graciously told the woman taken in adultery, "Go and sin no more."

The Savior told the Jews, "You tithe mint, anise, and cumin, but you omit the weightier matters of judgment, mercy, and faith."

To the one complaining of insufficient wages for longer hours worked compared to others who worked fewer hours, Jesus said, "Why are you raising an issue with my benevolence? I paid you according to our mutual agreement."

What do all of the scenarios above have in common? Both grace and truth.

What description of Jesus Christ does John chapter one mention twice in verses 14 and 17? Jesus Christ represents *grace and truth*. Verse 14 states that Jesus Christ was *full of grace and truth*. The Light that

had come into the world from God Himself highlighted grace and truth.

Grace and truth are familiar words.

Grace means unmerited favor, and truth means that which is right.

The human problem with grace and truth is not that the words remain mysterious, but that humans tend to emphasize one at the expense of the other. Historically, it has been difficult for humans to emphasize the balance of both. Jesus Christ, Who illustrates the equal balance in His character, came into the world to show the human family how to do this successfully. History illustrates the difficulty human beings have had with this basic principle.

The earthquake shocks of the Reformation provided the perfect opportunity for the Reformers to theologically address the grace/truth balance issue. What happened? Reformed theology came down heavily on the side of grace. The Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Dutch Reformed stories for the past hundreds of years illustrate the consequences of heavy grace emphasis. The over-abundance of the consequences reaches down to this very day.

On the other hand, the best illustrations of the truth imbalance can be found in the stories of Fundamentalism, a more-recent phenomenon of the past 100 years. Fundamentalism as a movement contains within itself the seeds of destruction, requiring only the passage of time to prove the failure resulting from this imbalance. Again, those stories also reach down to this very day. Some of these stories get rather close to us.

Are we informing ourselves with these stories? Do we have any problem shielding our eyes from facts we should see? Do we say to ourselves, “Don’t confuse me with the facts; I have already made up my mind?” In other words, do we struggle with some prejudice in this matter? Will ignorance of the facts shield us from accountability? Will our descendants unnecessarily suffer because of our prejudice?

Throughout history wars have been fought over differences in perceived truth. No war has ever been fought over grace. The grace weakness has manifested itself behind the scenes as some people have received grace at the hands of those who could extend it while others have been denied grace for one reason or another. Possibly the largest grace error ever made has been at the hands of churchmen

who have presumptuously decided it was theirs to dispense as they saw fit. Much of that happened because of the misperception of the grace/truth balance.

Theology matters; ideas have consequences.

Closer home, how do *grace and truth* work out in practical ways? Simply by being members of the Kingdom of Christ forces us to deal with the grace/truth issue. We cannot avoid it. Each one of us is presently working out the grace/truth issue in our everyday living.

To be successful with one’s family *both* must be equally emphasized. To be successful in the classroom *both* must be equally emphasized. To be successful in business *both* need to be equally emphasized. For the congregation to flourish, *both* need to be equally emphasized among the congregation. *Both* grace and truth. It has always been this way since Jesus Christ illustrated grace and truth both in His Person and in His ministry. His disciples, by virtue of being His followers, do the same.

And yet it has not always been this way. Historically, the Church has tended to either emphasize truth over grace or emphasize grace over truth. In each mistaken emphasis, failure has followed. Failure still follows such mistaken emphases yet today.

One of the clearest illustrations of the consequences of this mistaken emphasis speaks to us today—the story of the Donatists. What should be done with ordained men who compromised their faith by sacrificing to Caesar in order to escape martyrdom? When Diocletian’s raging persecution ended, should those lapsed presbyters be reinstated to their offices upon their repentance? Granted, the extra elements of sacramentalism and sacerdotalism heightened the issue for the church of that day. Was there a way forward?

The church of North Africa found a way forward by dividing. The Donatists (those who emphasized truth over grace) enjoyed the greater number of people at the time. The traditionalists (those who emphasized grace over truth) prevailed in the long run because the powerful Augustine and the Roman emperor lent their influence that way. But in northern Africa where the grace/truth story became very real and intense, both sides lost their existence because the Muslims wiped out all the Christian churches of that

area in the succeeding years.

Was a church division the solution to the North African problem? So often a church division is the easy answer to a more complex problem. Jesus Christ remains the embodiment of grace and truth. He has always been that way. Humans throughout history have emphasized either grace *or* truth as they have wrestled with their issues. Grace *or* truth is easier than grace *and* truth. It is still that way today.

Grace *and* truth is the divine way to deal with family issues; grace *and* truth is the way to deal with school issues; grace *and* truth remains the way to deal with community issues; grace *and* truth looms large as the way forward with church issues. But grace *and* truth remains the more difficult way to deal with all the issues. It is always easier to deal with grace *or* truth.

[For an illuminating story dealing with the perennial human problem of grace and truth, read the story of the Donatist movement of North Africa. Human nature remains unchanged more than 1500 years later.]



If *mothers* would understand that much of their importance lies in building up the *father image* for the child, the *children* would turn out well.

—Samuel S. Liebowitz



Mama's First Kiss

Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX

I still vividly recall my excitement as the airplane landed at the airport in Belize City. Although I was filled with anticipation, I was also a little bit nervous at the thought of meeting my new mother and little sisters for the first time. I was traveling from my home (Nueva Vida y Esperanza Orphanage) in El Salvador with my new father and brother to my new adoptive family and home in Belize.

To an eight-year-old boy, these were indeed some very life-changing events! When I reflect on all this drama, I realize what a great risk I was undertaking in having said “Yes” to the orphanage administration when they asked me if I would want to be adopted by the Andrew Mullet family. The only connection I had, at that point in time, was the knowledge that Andrew Mullet was the son of the previous administrators, Roman and Amanda Mullet, whom I called Papi and Mami.

Since my father and brother had come to El Salvador to take me home, I already had a connection with part of my new family; but what about my mother and sisters? Now, this brings me back to the Belize City airport

and the point of this story. I do not remember many details of that first meeting with my new mother, but this one I will always treasure, the moment she stooped down and gave me my first kiss! There was so much in that kiss: love, acceptance, reassurance, comfort, etc. While this may seem like such a small matter to make so much fuss over, remember, up to this time in my life I had been an orphan with no permanent home and family to settle down in. I had also been deprived of a mother's affectionate touch, so this was a very special and meaningful moment for me.

Although this incident transpired many years ago, it started a trend which I have not yet gotten over. I may be an old boy, but today I still enjoy my mother's affection and do not take the pleasure of kissing her for granted. To be sure, as long as she is here I intend to continue this habit. Certainly, in her acceptance of me as her son I get a glimpse of my Creator's intimate love for me. Therefore, today when I wish her, “Happy Mother's Day,” these kind words convey much more gratitude, appreciation, and respect than my heart can fully and eloquently articulate!



marriages

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

Keim-Weaver


Bro. Steven, son of Roy and Susan Keim, Brinkhaven, OH, and Sis. Deanna, daughter of Allen and Edna Weaver, Fredericksburg, OH, on January 22, 2022, at Messiah Fellowship for Meadows of Light Church by James R. Mullet.



King-Mast

Bro. Brent, son of Wendell and Ruthie King, Leoma, TN, and Sis. Sheila, daughter of Jay and Sarah Mast, Goodspring, TN, on March 5, 2022, at Mars Hill Baptist Church for Goodspring Mennonite Church by Perry Miller.

Yoder-Miller

Bro. Denver, son of Roger and Rachel Yoder, Richland Center, WI, and Sis. Dorcas, daughter of Richard and Mary Miller, Woodstown, NJ, on January 8, 2022, at Faith Orthodox Presbyterian Church for Salem County Mennonite Church by Melvin Beiler. 

cradle roll

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

Byler, Kendall and Diane (Stoltzfus), Drasco, AR, second child, first daughter, Moriah Jade, March 1, 2022.

Eash, Brian and Kimberly (Yoder), Vanleer, TN, sixth child, fifth son, Logan Timothy, February 19, 2022.

Fisher, Josiah and Janell (Stoltzfus), Lott, TX, second child, first son, Noah Zane, January 8, 2022.

Helmuth, Andrew and Gina (Hochstedler), Nappanee, IN, third child and son, Roscoe Fletcher, March 10, 2022.

Hershberger, Matthew and Violet (Miller), Newcomerstown, OH, first child and daughter, Jasmine Hope, March 21, 2022.

Hoover, Ryan and Rosanna (Peters), Aroda, VA, fourth child, third daughter, Charlotte Anne Reichelt, March 7, 2022.

Kauffman, Kevin and Stephanie (Miller), Lott, TX, first child and daughter, Katrina Rose, January 31, 2022.

King, Shane and Myrna (Stoltzfus), Princess Anne, MD, fourth child and son, Evander Hayes, February 23, 2022.

Lapp, Thaddeus and Edith (Mast), Malta, OH, fourth child, second daughter, Alyssa Joy, February 23, 2022.

Miller, Andrew and Rosina (Esh), Salem, NJ, first child and son, Winston Drew, February 6, 2022.

Miller, Christopher and Rachel (Yoder), Oswego, KS, second child and son, Emmett Ray, March 18, 2022.

Nisly, Luke and Lydia (Goertzen), Oswego, KS, third child, first son, Ezra Gordon, March 8, 2022.

Overholt, Jansen and Monica (Kauffman), Santa Elena, Cayo, Belize, third child, second son, Anthony Philip, January 31, 2022.

Overholt, Micah and Lisa (Marner), Vanleer, TN, first child and daughter, Ivy Jayne, February 2, 2022.

Schmidt, Walter and Miriam (Jantzi), Wartburg, ON, fifth child, third daughter, Malaya Joy, March 17, 2022.

Schrock, Mervin and Ashley (Zook), Vanleer, TN, first child and son, Grant Ray, November 16, 2021.

Stoll, Eric and Frieda (Smoker), Pulaski, TN, fourth child, second son, Gilbert John, March 2, 2022.

Stoltzfus, J. Wendell and Kaylene (Bontrager), Millersburg, OH, fifth child, fourth son, Samuel Alex, March 12, 2022.

Stoltzfus, Ryan and Alycia (Glick), Castile, NY, first child and son, Cody Alexander, November 20, 2021.

Yoder, Duane and Lorita (Chupp), Waterford, Ireland, third child, second daughter (one daughter deceased), Róisín Miriam, February 11, 2022.

Yoder, Randall and Andrea (Esh), Gordonville, PA, third child, first son, Hudson Matthew, January 13, 2022.



ordinations

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

Bro. Matthew “Matt” Stoltzfus, 27, (wife, Ariana Lapp), Coatesville, PA, was ordained deacon for Pequea Amish Mennonite Church, Narvon, PA, on October 31, 2021. Preordination messages were brought by Glen Miller, Marcus Beiler, and Delmar Bontrager. The charge was given by Ben A. Stoltzfus. John Esh, Tim Petersheim, and John Ervin Stoltzfus shared the lot.

Bro. Phil Knepp, 45, (wife, Melisa Graber), Odon, IN, was ordained minister for Mt. Olive Church, Montgomery, IN, on March 13, 2022. Preordination messages were brought by Jadon Yoder. Ryan Eichorn shared the lot.



Bontrager, Ray C., 95, Arthur, IL, died February 7, 2022, at his son's residence, Sullivan, IL. He was born July 14, 1926, in Arthur, IL, to Chris N. and Lovina (Kaufman) Bontrager. He married Ella A. Miller on December 14, 1948.

Ray was a devoted Christian, husband, father, and grandfather. He made his livelihood as a farmer near Sullivan, IL. He spent winters in FL and enjoyed taking friends and family fishing. He was one of the founders of Pleasant View Church in 1958, where he still was a member.

He is survived by his wife of 73 years and six children: Marie (Dan) Kuhns, Arthur; Ruth (Gary) Kuhns, Tuscola; Kenneth (Goldie), Sullivan; Judy (Darrel) Herschberger, Tuscola; daughter-in-law, Esther (Nelson) Kurtz, Sullivan; 22 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild, 9 siblings: Mattie Miller, Arthur; Liz Diener, Humboldt; Verna Bontrager, Sarasota, FL; William (Fannie) Bontrager, Millersburg, OH; Irvin (Mary), Middlebury, IN; Clara (Nelson) Herschberger, Arcola; Katie Helmuth, Glen Flora, WI; Samuel Bontrager, Purdin, MO; sister-in-law, Alma Schweitzer, Goshen, IN; brother-in-law, Oba Herschberger, Sullivan.

He was preceded in death by his parents, two sons: Willis Bontrager and Ernest Bontrager, one grandson: Mark Bontrager, nine siblings: Ida

(Otis) Otto, Edna (Andy) Miller, Carrie (Levi) Herschberger, Fannie (Jake) Schrock, Melvin (Laura) Bontrager, Levi Bontrager, Eli (Katie) Bontrager, Anna Bontrager, Lorene Herschberger, brothers-in-law: Henry A. Miller, Joe Diener, Manassas Bontrager Jr., and Glenn Helmuth, sister-in-law, Pamela Bontrager.

The funeral service was held February 11, 2022, at Pleasant View Church with Matt Bontrager and Howard Kuhns officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Huyard, Naomi Z., 94, of Fairmount Homes, formerly of New Holland, PA, went home to her loving Lord and Saviour on Saturday, February 19, 2022. Born on November 17, 1927, in Farmersville, Naomi was the daughter of the late Jonas B. and Rebecca (Zook) Beiler. For 56 years, she was the wife of the late David J. Huyard, who preceded her in death in 2008.

Naomi was a member of Pequea Amish Mennonite Church. She had a beautiful servant heart and was a godly example to all. She especially enjoyed spending time with her daughter and four granddaughters.

Surviving are a daughter, Martha (Joel M.) Martin, New Holland; grandchildren: Crystal (Rodney) Moser, New Holland; Ginger (Kendall) Fox, Reinholds; Lisa (Arthur) Detweiler, Reinholds; Sonya

(Stephen) Horst, New Holland; 16 great-grandchildren; and brother, Alvin Z. (Malinda) Beiler, Intercourse.

She was preceded in death by sisters: Miriam King and Lydia Beiler; brothers: Simon, Daniel, and Irvin.

The funeral service was held February 23, 2022, at Pequea Amish Mennonite Church with interment in the church cemetery.

Miller, Katie E., 88, of Leon, IA, passed away peacefully at her son's home in La Monte, MO, January 6, 2022. She was born October 5, 1933, in Thomas, OK, to Enos and Polly (Yoder) Mast.

She married Daniel Miller on October 26, 1960, in Thomas, OK. They spent their first months in Hannibal, MO, where Daniel was in 1-W service. In the summer of 1961 they moved to Wellman, IA, where they lived until they moved to Leon in 1964.

She was a faithful member at Leon Salem Mennonite Church and sacrificially served her family, church, and community.

She enjoyed sewing and gardening. In later years, she spent much of her time embroidering and piecing quilts. She will be remembered as an example of trust in God and patient acceptance of His ways and for her sense of humor.

She is survived by her husband of 61 years, Daniel Miller; children: Irene (John) Miller, Malta, OH, Marlin, Leon; Jesse (Janice), La Monte, MO; Steve (Martha), Huntsville, AR; Miriam (Larry) Loar, Leon; 14 grandchildren,

three great-grandchildren; sisters: Fannie Mast, Emma Bender; and brother, Menno Mast.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brothers: Andy and Amos; and daughter-in-law, Sonya Miller.

The funeral service was held January 10, 2022, at Leon Salem Mennonite Church with Monroe Gingerich, Jake Yoder, and Moses E. Yoder, Jr. officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Miller, Roy D., 89, of Lott, TX, passed peacefully into the arms of Jesus on January 28, 2022, at Baylor Scott & White Clinic after a short illness. He was born May 23, 1932, to the late David and Mahala Miller in Holmes County, OH. Roy married Nettie Miller on March 20, 1956. He faithfully loved and cared for her until her passing in 2016.

Roy worked at the Belden brickyard in his youth. He served two years in 1-W service in Cleveland, OH. He also owned a bakery, worked as a farmer, carpenter, and painter.

Roy loved his Lord and served Him faithfully until his death. He was a charter member of Faith Mennonite Fellowship. Roy and Nettie loved to host and serve family and friends in their home. Family devotions were a priority for them as well as caring for foster children. He also enjoyed teaching VBS and volunteering with MDS and Meals on Wheels. Some of his favorite hobbies were fishing, putting puzzles together, making donuts, and in his later years, relaxing on his front porch.

He is survived by his six sons: Omar (Irene), Chilton; James (Rachel), Lott; Dale (Cynthia), Plain City, OH; Wade (Clara), Lott; Lynn (Vonda), Sturgis, MI; Josiah (Lois) Lott; daughter, Mary (late Mervin) Lantz, Lott; 32 grandchildren, 40 great-grandchildren, siblings: David Miller, Jr., Martha Raber, Amanda Troyer, and Esta Borntreger.

Roy was preceded in death by four children: Allen, Floyd, Lora, Jerry; son-in-law, Mervin Lantz; great-grandson, Collin Tage Stoltzfus; and siblings: Atlee, Andrew, and Nettie Troyer.

The funeral service was held on January 28, 2022, at Faith Mennonite Fellowship with Paul A. Miller officiating. Burial followed at Clover Hill Cemetery.

Schrock, Lizzie, 94, of Hutchinson, KS, died February 26, 2022. She was born September 9, 1927, in Hutchinson, KS, to William A. and Rebecca (Nisly) Miller.

Lizzie was a mother and grandmother, a gardener and quilter, and dedicated to her faith in God and her church. During a summer of voluntary service with Mennonite Central Committee in Gulfport, MS, she met Henry Schrock of Medford, WI. They were married June 8, 1952. They raised their children, first in rural Reno County, KS, and then in Eden Valley, MN. After retirement, Lizzie and Henry returned to Hutchinson. They were married for almost 67 years. Lizzie was a member of Center Amish Mennonite Church.

Lizzie was preceded in death by her husband, Henry, her parents; brothers:

Daniel and Levi Miller, and sisters: Mary Yoder, Emma Miller, and Edna Nisly.

Surviving are children: Althea (Raymond) Salamone, Mentor, OH; Virginia Schrock (Chris Moffatt), Richmond, VA; Mildred (Jonathan) Sheppard, Monroe, WA; Wesley (Jean Ann), Arlington; grandchildren: Joseph, John, and Maria Salomone; Joel, Peter, and Daniel Sheppard; and sisters-in-law: Elizabeth High and Anna Schrock.

The funeral service was on March 2, 2022, at Center Amish Mennonite Church with Dwight Miller, LaVerne Miller, and David Yoder officiating. Burial followed in West Center Cemetery.

Smoker, Rebecca S., 95, of Kinzers, PA, formerly of Dundee, NY, went peacefully home to be with the Lord December 27, 2021. She was the widow of the late James Z. Smoker. They were married 65 years until his death in 2012. Born in Caernarvon Township, she was the daughter of the late Ammon S. and Emma F. Stoltzfus.

Rebecca was a dedicated homemaker who enjoyed gardening and quilting. She was a member of Pequea Amish Mennonite Church.

Rebecca is survived by four children: Ruth (Edwin) Zook, Leola; Lill (Daniel B.) Stoltzfus, Kinzers; Lester (Martha) Smoker, Grand Ridge, FL; Arlene (Arlan) Martin, East Earl; 13 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren; sister, Sadie, widow of the late Dave Esh, Hatville; and brother, Neil Stoltzfus, widower of the late Mattie,

Johnson City, TN.

She was preceded in death by sisters: Leah Stoltzfus, Sylvia Haas, Susie Stoltzfus; and a brother, John Stoltzfus.

A graveside service was held December 30, 2021, at Pequea Amish Mennonite Church.

Stoltzfus, Samuel J., 83, of Gordonville, PA, passed away peacefully in his sleep February 17, 2022, at his home. He was the husband of Barbara (Smoker) Stoltzfus. He was born in Narvon, to the late Gideon M. and Katie L. (Stoltzfus) Stoltzfus.

He was a member of Pequea Amish Mennonite Church. Sam was a dairy farmer and then did lawn maintenance. He consistently prayed by name for each of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He spontaneously encouraged many as he went about his work.

Surviving besides his wife are nine children: Linda Ann (Mervin) Fisher, Kinzers; John S. (Mary), Manheim; Mahlon S. (Abigail), Killbuck, OH; Rachel S. (Raymond) King, Castile, NY; Samuel J. Jr. (Sandy), Millersburg, OH; Emanuel J. (Marcy), Paradise; David D. (Lena), Narvon; G. Michael (Virginia), Fairplay, SC; Elvin R. (Lena), Narvon; 55 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, two siblings: Jonathan (Mary Etta), Goshen, IN; and Hannah (Jonathan) King, Gordonville.

He was preceded in death by an infant daughter, Rosanna Lynn, and seven siblings: Omar, David, Aaron, Levi,

Gideon, Emanuel, and Sarah Fisher.

The funeral service was held at Pequea Amish Mennonite Church, February 19, 2022.

Yoder, Sanford, 91, of Santa Rita de Río Cuarto, Costa Rica, died February 27, 2022. He was born on June 17, 1930, in Hutchinson, KS, to Ben and Mary Yoder. On October 30, 1952, Sanford married Martha Yoder.

Besides his wife, Martha, he is survived by his 10 children: Sanford Timothy (Yadira), Aguas Zarcas, Costa Rica; Philip (Elaine), Santa Rita de Río Cuarto, Costa Rica; Mark (Ruthanna), Chachagua de San Ramón, Costa Rica; Paul “Pablo” (Eunice), Waslala, Nicaragua; Judith (Lowell) Miller, Nickerson, KS; Ruth (Duane) Nisly, Pital de San Carlos, Costa Rica; Lois (Joseph) Peachy, Cumberland, VA; Nathan (Vicky), Lisbon, OH; Joanna (Dwight) Miller, Minerva, OH; and Deborah (Kevin) Hershberger, Monterey, TN. Also surviving are 45 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren.

After a troubled and stormy youth, Sanford had a radical new birth. That experience and commitment were the driving force for the rest of his life. Sanford was ordained to the ministry in July 17, 1960, at Aroda, VA. In October of 1961, Sanford moved his family to Shifflett Hollow in Greene County, VA. He found great joy in ministry with the mountain folk of that area in the little Shady Grove Church. Sanford was appointed the first administrator of Faith Mission Home at its founding

in 1965. Several years later, Sanford felt the call of the Lord to move his family of nine children to Costa Rica to begin a Christian colony with the purpose of evangelization. In 1968 they moved to the Arenal area where he helped establish their first Costa Rican church. After a hydroelectric project uprooted that community, Sanfords moved to the San Carlos area and established a church there. In the following years, several other congregations were formed as outgrowths from the La Merced congregation in San Carlos.

God gave Sanford a long and blessed life and used him very extensively both in church-planting efforts as well as an evangelist. His life theme was Matthew

28:19-20. His desire was always that his family and “whosoever will” be active warriors in the Kingdom of God.

Brother Sanford suffered from numerous health issues over the years and a number of times the family assumed they were saying their goodbyes, but God had other plans. Although his heart was severely compromised, it continued to pump faithfully long after it was assumed it would no longer function. Now his life here on earth is through and God has taken him home to his eternal reward. Sanford would be quick to deflect any praise directed to him. Today we can give honor to this servant of God by serving the God Whom he so faithfully served.



observations

In March the 2022 Junior Market Steer Auction was held in Houston, TX. Ava Horn, a 16-year-old from Anson, TX, showed the Grand Champion Junior Market Steer, a white crossbred steer named Vanilla Ice. The steer was certainly deemed a fine physical specimen of 1,300 lbs. of beef on the hoof. The animals that are exhibited are then sold to the highest bidder. This particular auction set a record when Vanilla Ice brought a whopping \$1,000,000! The winning bidders typically don't take possession of the animal at this sort of auction. They

are slaughtered soon afterwards. Ava Horn was awarded \$75,000 for the sale of this animal, and the balance went towards agriculture scholarship programs. The person who made the winning bid was 90-year-old Don D. Jordan who expressed a desire to contribute to the future of agriculture by investing in the youth in this way. I find it difficult to figure out how these kinds of prices work for animals like this. It certainly is much more than intrinsic value. After all, it's not like this steer will make any kind of contribution to the bovine gene pool.



Falun Gong is a religion that originated in China in the 1990s by its leader Li Hongzhi. It has a lot in common with Buddhism, but there are a few variations. The movement, not surprisingly, experienced major opposition in China resulting in deprivation and persecution for some of the adherents. Falun Gong is currently headquartered in Deerpark, NY. There they own and operate a 400-acre compound called Dragon Springs. It is registered as a church, and outsiders aren't quite sure what all goes on there since it is closed to visitors.

Many religions have some redeeming qualities. I would expect this to be the case with this group. Without going into much detail, much of the religious practice of Falun Gong is similar to other Eastern religions that emphasize meditation, accessing cosmic energy, ritualistic exercises, etc.

The Falun Gong Church is not a Christian entity by any stretch of any definition that I can discern. But some of their teaching are things that Christians would agree with. One example is that sexual activity outside of monogamous, heterosexual marriage is wrong. However, they are not Christian, and they are active in outreach. The main arm of the Falun Gong's media outreach effort

is a weekly publication entitled "The Epoch Times."

I subscribed to this newspaper several months ago. I've found a variety of interesting material in this periodical. I find a little bit of it beneficial. However, I plan to let my subscription lapse when it runs out. I grant that there are things that, on the surface, seem friendly to Christianity due to the overlap of some of our values with those presenting their version of the news. But my confidence in them as being balanced, trustworthy, and accurate is not high. We need to beware when the entire tenor of news reporting is slanted one way. They are not Christian and are not interested in promoting Christianity. I prefer not continuing to contribute financially to their outreach efforts through a paid subscription.

Why do I mention this? It is my impression in my interaction with my brothers in conservative Anabaptist circles that this particular publication and similar news sources exert an influence among us that does not serve us well or honor God. I hope I'm wrong. But I subscribed to learn a bit more about this paper that others spoke favorably about. I do not find that it distinguishes itself from much other mainstream media that fall far short of the Philippians

test in chapter 4:8, *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”*

• • • • •

In 1999 Cornell researchers David Dunning and Justin Kruger published some interesting research findings related to the discrepancy between perception and reality. When they surveyed students who had completed an exam, they found that people in the lowest 25% of test scores thought they had done very well and were at the top of the class. Those in the top 5% of scores actually anticipated they would score lower than they did. This was learned by surveying those who had just completed exams and comparing them to the actual scores.

In another study, 42% of the employees at a software company thought they were in the top 5% of the company in terms of job proficiency. This presents a mathematical problem. It is also problematic because those who think they are already at the pinnacle possess little motivation to better themselves. While they could learn from those who are actually better

at their job than they are, they won't tend to see those they regard as less proficient as good sources of further learning and development.

Another study found that 80% of drivers consider themselves to be above-average drivers. That too, is a mathematical impossibility. Statistically speaking, a person who has less than six months of driving experience is eight times more likely to have a traffic accident than someone with more than six months of driving experience. This is related both to underdeveloped driving ability related to inexperience *and* a reduced awareness of that limited ability.

It's also true that often those who are most proficient and most qualified frequently underestimate their abilities. This phenomenon was named after the researchers who published their findings in 1999 and became known as the Dunning-Kruger Effect.

Another aspect of the Dunning-Kruger Effect is the correlation between ignorance and confidence. Often those who know little about a particular topic are more confident in their grasp of the situation than someone with a more robust orientation. The flip side is also true that the more awareness one possesses, the more one realizes that

there is a lot more to learn.

After all, God is infinite. The more we know and understand Him, the more we grasp how great our God is! We also know that the more we know about Him—and it really is enough—the more we understand that we can't really grasp all that He is.

Confidence often inspires trust. Hence, the Dunning-Kruger Effect means that people are attracted to and give ear to those who are the most confident rather than the most competent. This has a pretty significant effect on society because people tend to accept advice from those who are willing to speak first and loudest, rather than to those who hold the most merit.

The last several years have provided us all with a front row seat of the Dunning-Kruger effect playing out in full bloom in American society. Time and time again, wild conspiracy theories with no demonstrable basis in fact have influenced sincere people. The main common thread seems to be persons of influence speaking confidently without corresponding factual basis.

In some ways the conservative Anabaptist community is more susceptible to these voices since we operate on the basis of truthfulness and trust. It is difficult for us to believe anybody would project settled

confidence without appropriate sincerity and supporting facts, but it happens. Let's be humble enough to recognize where we've demonstrated unhealthy susceptibility to this phenomenon.

• • • • •

How about God's people and the Dunning-Kruger Effect? I offer a few comments:

-Being aware of common human tendency is often the first step. After all, the Dunning-Kruger Effect especially affects those who don't know they are affected.

-We should cultivate an awareness of what God says about His children and Himself in Scripture. We are finite. God is infinite. None of us sees the whole picture. God does.

A couple of verses from Romans come to mind that point us to humility. Romans 12:3 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.*" And Romans 1:22 refers to the downward spiral of sin saying, "*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*"

-It is better for us to prioritize those relationships with our brothers in the church than with dubious sources

who might project confidence which may or may not be warranted.

-Halley said, "True learning and true scholarship should make us humble and more broadminded

toward the ignorant." The Spirit-controlled person is one whose responses seek to build up, learn well, and be brotherly in our interactions.

-RJM



Learning Lessons

Kendall Myers, Guys Mills, PA

My life has been enriched immeasurably through my time as a teacher. Every day has provided an opportunity to learn something. Here are a few things that working at school have taught me (though I'm sure I haven't finished learning them yet).

Teaching something is the best way to learn it. It has been a joy to dig into so many different fields of knowledge: how people have lived, how languages have developed, what the Bible teaches, what holds the world together...there is no end to the knowledge that lies waiting to be discovered. Being a guide in the process of discovery has helped to clarify so many things in my own mind and has reminded me how much more there is to learn.

Parents hold the key for a child's success in life. Teachers, curriculum, and programs often have a significant impact on a child's life, but the boundaries of a child's attainment

are largely set by the parents. A child will rarely rise above the expectations of his parents. On the other hand, a child will rise well beyond the standards of a classroom in response to the voice and influence of his parents. Before the school can begin to have a positive impact on a child's life, that child fundamentally needs to experience authority, love, and training at home. Every day.

Both truth and love are indispensable. To hammer what is real and true without charity and trust can provoke an undercurrent of resistance to the truth. At the same time, to do what pleases others without regard to principles, boundaries, and morals results in loss of respect and, ultimately, conflict. An uncompromising commitment to the truth and to the right and a simultaneous and constant commitment to another's good is the only way forward.

It is possible to be "for" everyone in situations that involve relational

conflict. When we encounter conflict in relationships, it isn't necessary to choose sides: to decide who I am going to be for and who I am going to be against. Peacemakers work for the good of all the parties involved. Following God's principles will bless everyone.

Apologizing for mistakes is not a sign of weakness. I've needed to eat my share of humble pie—speaking in impatience, neglecting to consider the impact of my words, not hearing another perspective carefully enough...but I'm so grateful for the healing power of contrition and forgiveness!


There is strength in counsel. I've been blessed by input from parents, co-teachers, and board members. When I'm not sure about the wisdom of a particular course of action, seeking input from others has been invaluable.

The support of the entire church community brings a lot of strength to the school. I have loved seeing

the way that our whole community supports the school. From prayers at Wednesday evening to attendance at school programs to the contributions in the offering basket, it is obvious that the school is supported not only by the patrons, but also by many others in the church and community, and that gives a lot of strength and energy to the school.

God is faithful. God has promised to be with us unto the end of the age, and I've experienced that Presence. He is the Good Shepherd—He protects, He provides, and He guides.

Results belong to God. We work hard and hope for a certain kind of harvest. Sometimes the harvest is less than what we had hoped; sometimes it exceeds our expectations, but either way, we leave it in God's hands, and it is He who gets the credit for any good.

[This article was adapted and developed from a farewell piece in the Waynesboro Mennonite School paper, The Scholastic Scoop. Used by permission.] 

The price of *success* is hard work, *dedication* to the job at hand, and the *determination* that whether we *win* or *lose*, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand.

-VINCE LOMBARDI



Faithful unto Death

Ara Noble, Lodi, OH

“Will you take this gun? All you have to do is touch it! Come on, do it, you _____!”

Wearily, Timothy laid his head in his hands. “How much longer can I stand against this terrible devil?” he cried inwardly.

Timothy had been in jail for almost eight years before this moment, and had not had it easy as a Christ-believing man in Yugoslavia. He fully believed that Christ’s kingdom was not of this world, so he was not supposed to fight, no matter the cost. When he was drafted into the army, he had taken the stand many had taken before him; he would not take or even touch a gun or other war weapon.

“If you do not take this gun, we will shoot you. Are you ready to die? All you have to do is touch the gun. You never have to kill a soul,” the soldier ranted on, using filthy language and then smooth words.

Timothy’s mind was racing, “Am I ready to die? Can I die now? I have a wife and two daughters waiting for me back home.”

At his home, Timothy’s wife had their two little girls in her arms while the rest of the church was gathered in

a circle around her, praying that God’s will would be done and strength and wisdom be given to Timothy. The prayers of that small group did not go unheard.

Back at the prison, the officer was tormenting Timothy again. “All right, if you say yes and touch this gun, we will not shoot you; if you say no, we will kill you.” An evil gleam entered his eyes. “Look, it’s so simple. Just say yes. Just nod your head.” He was so frustrated at the stubbornness of this Nazarene man! “You don’t want to die and leave your family, do you?” His eyes penetrated Timothy’s. “Just say yes.” The room went dead silent. You could have heard a pin drop in that hollow block of concrete called a prison.

“NO!” Timothy shouted as he raised his face to heaven and pled for strength.

“Then the answer is official,” replied the officer as a shot rang through the prison room.

“I can still feel that bullet whizz past my ear and go out the window behind me, and hear that officer say, ‘You are free to go, Folia,’ with tears streaming down his usually hard face.”

Timothy’s eyes had a distant look

as he repeated this wonderful story of God's protection to his grandson. "I hope you will be faithful when tests come to you, my son."

Would you be faithful if and when that kind of test comes to you? Would you be willing to give up the most precious thing you own on this earth

for the sake of Christ's truth? Let's work on strengthening our faith now.

[Author's note: A true happening in Eastern Europe. Later the softened officer helped Timothy escape to Italy and on to Canada where his wife and family joined him (around the 1960s to 70s).]



If I knew you and you knew me,

If both of us could clearly see,

And with an inner sight divine

THE MEANING OF YOUR HEART AND MINE,

I'm sure that we would differ less,

And clasp our hands in friendliness;

Our thoughts would pleasantly agree

IF I KNEW YOU AND YOU KNEW ME.

—NIXON WATERMAN

Go Ye Therefore and Teach All Nations

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

Can we imagine having never heard the precious Bible stories? Yes, we heard these inspiring accounts in family worship and on Sunday through the preaching of the Word and Sunday school. During Summer Bible School we were again indoctrinated with organized studies of God's marvelous redemption plan. Unto whom much is given, much shall be required.

IGo is a Bible Institute in Thailand that offers teaching on how to reach people with the Gospel. Then the students are sent into various countries in Asia to minister. There is one sentence that I will underscore

of this well-written article by Tim Stoltzfus, who is the field pastor and one of the instructors at the Institute: "There are approximately 5,500,000 full-time Christian workers in the world; however, less than one-half of one percent of these are working among the unreached." The IGo program is making some difference in this deficiency (absence of something essential). Part of IGo's mission statement is, "The purpose of IGo is to provide students with a cross-cultural setting in which mission work, Biblical teaching, and personal discipleship can take place simultaneously." Read on.

Fulfilling the Great Commission

Timothy R. Stoltzfus, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Unreached people groups (UPGs) are those distinct ethnicities who have never heard the Gospel or have not heard it in a way they can understand. These are the 2,000,000,000 people alive today who may just as well be living in 1000 BC because they have no knowledge or comprehension of Jesus' coming to earth.

Focus on UPGs should not marginalize evangelistic endeavors in other places. All persons without Christ are dying and going to hell, and we must labor to save all, whether they are nearby or far away. For this reason, focus on the unreached is not primarily an issue about lostness—**all** men without Christ are lost! It doesn't

matter if a person lives in China, Swaziland, or your hometown, if he dies without knowing Jesus, he is eternally lost.

So why give special emphasis on those who never heard? I see four primary motivations:

1. Obedience to the plain command of Christ

Jesus' last words to His disciples were, "Go therefore and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Jesus specifies the target and tells whom we should go to: "*all nations*." This word as spoken by Jesus is *ethnos*, meaning people of the same race, tribe, or group.¹ Our English words *ethnic* and *ethnicity* are derived from *ethnos*. The target is not nation-states or countries, but rather the various racial ethnicities or people groups of earth. In the New Testament, *ethnos* is also translated *Gentiles*, as a general reference to the non-Jewish tribes or peoples of earth. Jesus stated that the gospel would be preached in all the world for a witness to all *ethnos* before the end would come. (Matthew 24:14)

2. God's desire for believers from all the peoples of earth

God's redemptive heart for all the

people groups of earth is a marvelous theme throughout Scripture, beginning at Babel with the very origin of ethnicity. Even in prophecy we see Christ's desire for the nations to become His possession: "*He has said to Me, 'You are My Son; today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I shall give the nations for your inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession'*" (Psalm 2:7-8).

When the Gospel was unveiled, it was a great amazement to Paul that God included the non-Jewish peoples of earth in His redemptive grace: "*How great among the ethnos are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Colossians 1:27).

The culmination of God's grand plan for the nations is recorded in Revelation 7:9, where John saw a large multitude which could not be numbered comprised of believers from "*every ethnos, from all tribes and peoples and languages*."

3. The example of Paul

I will allow Paul himself to tell you about his heart for the unreached (emphasis added):

"*I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, **not where Christ has already been named**, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, **'Those who have never been***

¹ Strong, James. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* and Thayer, Joseph Henry. *Thayer's Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament*

told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand" (Romans 15:20-21).

"It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the ethnos. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have made you a light for the ethnos, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth'" (Acts 13:46-47).

"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?" (Romans 10:14).

"So that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another's area of influence" (II Corinthians 10:16).

4. Disproportionate access to the gospel

Focusing on those who never heard the gospel is a strategic decision. Because not all have equal access or availability to hear, those who know Jesus need to intentionally focus on telling those who have little or no access. Unless a Christian goes and becomes a cross-cultural missionary,

most people in the groups designated as unreached will live and die with no opportunity to hear of Christ. There are approximately 5,500,000 full-time Christian workers in the world; however, less than one-half of one percent of these are working among the unreached!

I have often been stirred in heart by the testimony of John Keith Falconer, missionary to Egypt, who said, "I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light."

Oswald J. Smith said, "No one has the right to hear the Gospel twice while there remains someone who has not heard it once."

Last words are lasting words, but unfortunately, those Jesus uttered have become lost words to many. But not to all. It is a great joy and privilege to serve at IGo and see firsthand the stirrings God is doing. An increasing number of youth from our conservative Anabaptist churches are taking Jesus' last words literally, and God is lighting their hearts on fire to go and make disciples of all people groups.

The Traveling Team, <http://www.thetravelingteam.org/stats>



WHAT YOU ARE IS *God's* GIFT TO YOU;

WHAT YOU MAKE OF YOURSELF IS YOUR GIFT TO *God*.

Work-ship

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



A busy young mother, covered up by babies and housewifely duties, blurted, “I don’t even know how a mother can be a Christian!”

Do you identify with the guilt that nags you when the baby and toddler and school lunches carve away huge chunks of time you’d set apart as “my quiet time?” Are you mentally tired from analyzing whether your spiritual activities weigh less than the career/physical/domestic callings? Do you feel less Christian on the days you’ve not read a chapter? Is your battle cry, “Devotions?”

A holy fascination overwhelms me when I look at the Hebrew word *avad* or *avodah*. This word signifies worship. It is also translated: till, cultivate, serve, and work. In the Exodus account Moses tells Pharaoh to let God’s people go so they can *avad* Him. In Exodus 34 it says, “Six days you shall *avad*, but on the seventh day you shall rest.” And in Joshua 24, Joshua states, “as for me and my house we will *avad* the Lord.”

Our work is worship where we honor the Lord God and serve our neighbors. As I contemplate *avad*, a strange rest begins to nudge away my spiritual anxiety. How would our understanding change if we could see flashcard review, wiping drool, running the copier, and transplanting baby plants as God-worship? What would happen if we could begin to see our service to Almighty God take on the shape of stacks of papers to grade, calloused heels, and creaking rockers at 3:00 AM? What if the distinct lines separating holy and secular would fade? What if the only difference among the cash register, changing table, and lectern is location?

As I begin to grasp the meaning of *avad*, I feel the distinction between Sunday school and Monday’s laundry coming down. I watch the ground leveling between missionaries and cleaning ladies. The verse that tells us to do whatever we do to the glory of God takes on fresh perspective. Everything changes. No task in life is too

small, too dirty, too elevated, or too difficult. Worship is more than two hours every Sunday forenoon and 20 minutes in the Book every morning. Cleaning is worship. Service is worship, and tilling is worship. So is my devotional time and congregational singing.

However, I can tell you about a few times when I sat in the auditorium of a church and although I was going through the expected motions, I was not worshipping. I was not soaking in the awareness of God and the honor of being part of His family. The location and the activity did not by their own merits elevate me to worship, neither were they at fault. The deficit lay in my heart.

Avad is about living in and practicing the presence of God according to His original design. It doesn't matter so much where or what I am engaged in at the moment. It matters that I am living in the awareness of the One Who created me, Whom I serve by serving others. Serving people in the check-out line is as much mission work as fighting off the elephants in the bush.

Go to work! Go to church! You can worship on Monday and on Sunday. The behaviors might be different, but Whom we are serving remains the same. In fact, our worship of God on Sunday should quietly reflect in

a small way how we worship and serve Him the rest of the week. As I fill my place where God has placed me, I *avad* Him. Every aspect of my life at work is a witness to the One I serve. To do what God requires of me reflects the love of my life—my worship.

It's not hard to look into the face of God when I cradle my brand-new granddaughter and gaze into her fresh-from-God eyes. As you cup the fragile emerging plantlet and place it into a larger space for growing new hopeful roots and foliage, you can easily see God. I listen to a dad disciple his son, and I hear God. Living with our senses tuned into God is called practicing the presence of God. William Blake said, "We've been given so much to look at, but we've lost the art of beholding. We look for dramatic ways of seeing and experiencing God, but the reality of God dawns upon us minute by minute." Seeing God is not contingent on the dramatic, emotional, all-encompassing experiences. God is in the details.

This everyday worship, of course, doesn't replace our hunger for dedicated alone times with meditation in God's Word or corporate worship with God's children. In fact, it increases our hunger for those experiences.

Our God-awareness permeates everything about us and is so much a part of everything we do and are and how we process life. Something beyond glorious begins to happen as we behold. *“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another”* (II Corinthians 3:18 ESV). We become what we behold. What we feed grows.

But, of course, work isn't always wonderful. There are times when the assignment nearly tears us apart. The monotonous repetition threatens to undo us. The multiple demands grasp at our sanity, and we struggle to see the sun shine, much less our Creator God. Ah yes, herein lies the greatest service of all worship. God's intention wasn't a vacation timeshare. The older I get the more I realize that life is not designed around my comfort. Eden was in fact created with work being a part of its perfection. The work/worship/serve combination was God's seamless idea from the beginning. To *avad* is to produce joy, especially when it draws from the deepest well of our loyalty and respect for God in the difficult, repetitious, boring, and distasteful. I learn to behold God in how same and predictable He is day after day. Sun up. Sun down.

Stars out. Moon wanes. Winter, then spring. Day after day, hour after hour, year after year.

Jesus came to earth, experienced dusty roads, thirst, hard pillows, and rejection. He, fully alive still, wants to enter into my search for the missing phone number. He guides my thoughts regarding problem resolution. When I can't sleep, He gives me songs to sing. He is at my right hand, and every uncertainty and trouble I experience, He's gone that way before.

Soul rest follows when we learn to ask the right questions. When the serving/worship/work is wearisome and distasteful we begin to ask less “why, God?” Instead, we ask, “what, God?” What are You trying to show me? In all of life, but for sure in the complexities, He calls us: *“Come unto Me... and I will give you rest.”* There is a bigger picture.

As wives, mothers, singles, widows, teachers, helpers, retailers, secretaries, nurses, cooks, business persons, sisters, young and old, may we *avad* our God Almighty. He fills the universe, yet He dwells at our right hand. He sings over us, yet He oversees the galaxies. Our soul at rest knows that devotions happen most days. But devotion fills our lives 24 /7, every cell of our being, every moment of our lives.



Singing in Russia (Part 2)

Fifteen Hundred Criminals Sing

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

Can faith grow and survive in hostile environments? Dmitri was locked up in a small, lonely, foul, prison cell far away from his precious family. He was the only believer, the one light shining among 1500 wicked, sin-hardened criminals.

In prison he continued with two spiritual habits learned from his believing father. Every morning at daybreak he would stand, facing the east, raising his arms in praise to God. He sang a “Heart Song” to Jesus. The prisoners wanted to shut him up; they laughed, cursed, and jeered. They banged their metal cups against the iron bars in mad protest. They tried to get him to be quiet by throwing food and human waste at him. But every morning at dawn, Dmitri sang.

The second discipline was whenever he found any large or small piece of paper, he would write down Bible verses, stories, praises, and songs he could remember and then stick them on his damp wall. The guards would take down the papers, read them,

beat him, and threaten him with death, but he refused to stop.

At dawn every day he rose to sing his praise song. Every time he found paper, he filled it with God’s Word and praise. He found a whole sheet of paper and a pen one day. It was such a gift. He set his mind on Jesus, and even in that horrible prison, he was grateful.

The guards lied and told him his family was gone. He fell into deep, dark despair. But one night God let him hear the voices of his wife, children, and brother praying. He knew they were well and, best of all, living for Christ.

One day Dmitri was dragged from his cell. It seemed they would finally execute him. An amazing thing took place. Before reaching the place of execution, 1500 hardened criminals stood at attention by their beds. They began to sing joyfully as they faced the east. To Dmitri it sounded like the greatest choir in all of the world. The prison rang in a glad chorus to his Father as they sang the same “Heart Song” they heard Dmitri sing

all those years.

The jailers dropped his arms and stepped away from him in terror.

“Who are you?” a jailer demanded.

Dmitri stood erect and stated, “I am a son of the Living God. Jesus is His name!”

Dmitri was abruptly returned to his cell. Later, he was set free to return home to his family. He testified that Scripture and holy song were his lifeblood during his persecution.

With Jesus, the Word, and song, faith can survive in hostile places. Jesus’ love and His power cannot be contained.

Today, let’s choose to sing His praises.

Resource: Nik Ripken, The Insanity of God, B & H Publishing Group, Nashville, Tenn. 2013

Read The Insanity of God for true stories and encouragement in faith in Jesus.



youth messages

What’s in a Name?

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

Almost a decade ago, I was at a volleyball game the night before a wedding. (Yes, way back when youth played volleyball with total strangers and enjoyed it.) As I walked onto the court and introduced myself to my new teammates, I experienced something I’ll never forget. I shook one young man’s hand and said “Hi, I’m Josh Kooistra.”

He replied. “You mean THE Josh Kooistra?” I was slightly taken aback and asked what he meant. He then informed me that he had heard my name and stories about me from friends and relatives. My reputation had obviously preceded me.

As a young man, before I left home for a trip to go to youth activities or something similar, one of the last things that my parents often said to me was, “Remember who you are and Whom you serve. You’re a Kooistra!” Maybe many of you who are reading this had parents who said something similar. Why would they say that? What difference does it make what other people think of me?

Names are used for identity and association. A person’s last name tells you what family he is from. The name of his church or constituency tells you a bit about how they choose to apply biblical principles. Often, before a young person has joined the

youth group, his identity is tied to the name of his father and his family name. Once young people begin to venture out on their own, they begin to make a name for themselves, either positive or negative. It takes much longer to fix a reputation or name if it has been ruined than it does to actually ruin it.

Have you ever been walking in a store and heard your name? We tend to stop and look around to see who called us. Hearing your name called gets your attention. Names have power. The name of Jesus can cause Satan to flee. We pray things in Jesus' name. A person is a stranger until he shares his name with you. Once names are exchanged, a connection can be made. When a baby is born, one of the first things asked is "What's the name?" Most names actually have a meaning, and I personally believe that the meaning of a person's name can influence what kind of person a child will become. For years Bible names were popular among Christians. We wouldn't name a child Lucifer, Judas, or Jezebel simply because of what or whom we associate with those names.

One of the greatest realizations I had after I had gone into voluntary service and moved far away from home (in my case a different country) was that my reputation was in my

hands. Very few, if any, people knew who I was. They didn't know who my parents were, and my last name was one of a kind. My reputation and therefore my name was going to be influenced solely by my words and actions, or as the Bible says, my "conversation" or walk of life.

Our names or reputations, whether as individuals or in association with Jesus Christ, develop over time. Matthew 7:20 says "*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*" Our fruits affect our names. Interestingly enough, one of the most famous names in history put aside His perfect reputation to come to earth as a sacrifice. Philippians 2:7 says, "*But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.*" The phrase, "*made himself of no reputation,*" is derived from the Greek word "*kenoo*" which means "to make empty." Jesus sacrificed His name and reputation when He came to earth. His name became a blank slate. He went from being the I AM to being scorned as the son of a poor, foolish carpenter and a woman who was whispered to have been unfaithful. He was associated with the little hick town of Nazareth where Jewish "rednecks" came from. Then He was hated and ostracized by those who were convicted by His teachings. He

was accused of lying and blasphemy. This Being Whose name was above all names, laid down His name and reputation for loving us.

When we become Christians, we take on that identity—we have His will over our own. We take the name Christian and therefore are associated with Him. With that identity comes expectations. I remember, as a school teacher in Central America, going to pick up food at a restaurant that also served alcoholic beverages. I had a student ask me about it. “Mr. Josh, my mom saw you get food at First Stop. I thought Christians didn’t go to bars?” My identity as a Christian came with a set of expectations even from non-Christians.

Does our reputation and name adequately reflect our association with Christ and the identity that we should find in Him? Are we willing to have our name ostracized for His sake? Are we willing to be called “holier than thou” or a “downer” because we refuse to compromise on what we know and feel to be right and honoring to our parents? I remember being in a situation where everyone

else was going to do something that I knew my parents didn’t approve of. The activity wasn’t necessarily wrong in itself, but my parents recognized some of the dangers in participating in this activity and its potential conflict with our beliefs on nonresistance. I mentioned that if the rest of the group decided to do it, I was going to sit out in respect for my parents. In the end the group did something entirely different and thankfully I wasn’t made to feel bad about what happened. I know I made people uncomfortable by doing what I did. I was just as uncomfortable having to stand by myself. I’ve never asked any of those friends what they thought about that night. Honestly, it doesn’t matter because I can live with myself and the choice I made. I’m just fine with the impact that evening had on my reputation and name. Are we willing like Jesus was, to lay down our name, to make ourselves of “no reputation,” for the cause of Christ?

“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold” (Proverbs 22:1).



When a train goes through a **tunnel** and it gets **dark**,
you don’t throw away the ticket and jump off.
You sit still and trust the engineer.

—Covvie Ten Boom

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A small gift is better than a great promise.

• • • • •

People who understand each other never fight.

• • • • •

Kindness pays most when you don't do it for pay.

• • • • •

Temper is what gets most of us in trouble. Pride keeps us there.

• • • • •

Happiness is not a station to arrive at, but a manner of traveling.

• • • • •

Make happy those who are near, and those who are far will come.

• • • • •

Between tomorrow's dream and yesterday's regret is today's opportunity.

• • • • •

Forgiving those who hurt us is the key to personal peace.

• • • • •

Happiness is making a bouquet of those flowers within reach.

• • • • •

He who cannot forgive breaks the bridge over
which he himself must pass.

• • • • •

Patience is a virtue that carries a lot of wait.