



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

SEPTEMBER 2022

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Calvary Messenger

September 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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Psalm 46:10

Michelle King, Port Royal, PA

*“Be still, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the heathen,
I will be exalted in the earth.”*

Be still, ye birds of this open sky,
Cease your gentle flight for but a moment.
Behold, ye forests brimming with greens,
Behold, how your outstretched limbs cannot contain
 This overflowing light.
 Lift up your eyes,
 Ye fields of quiet emerald.
Whisper softly to the breeze.
 Bow down in reverence;
 Consider this noble silence
 And know:
 All glory, glory to God.
 I AM, God says,
And the rain sings; the oceans roar
 Into one chorus,
Great and terrible and mighty, are you, Lord!
 Let the rocks cry out no more forever.
I will be exalted among the heathen, says the Lord.
 All kindreds and tongues and nations,
 Join in one chorus:
 Glory, glory, hallelujah!
 For God says,
I will be exalted in the earth,
 And it is so. 

A Parable of the Cattle

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

Now it came to pass when Ronald was ruler over the country in the north that the Lord called a young man out of the fertile Penn hills, yea, from the house of the husbandman of fruit trees. And he traveled to a far country in the south, to the land of red dust and slippery roads. And he abode in the house of Simon, the elder steward, and ministered to the sick. He also was the chief herdsman of the cattle that belonged to AMA. The young herdsman repaired the fences for the cattle and cared for the milch kine.

And when Simon, the elder steward, prepared to return to his home country in the north, the Lord called a young man and his wife to be stewards in the place of Simon, the elder steward, and his wife. And they traveled to the far country in the

south and were taught by the kind words of Simon. He taught the young steward how to buy and sell, yea, he took him to a far city and showed him all the merchants of the city where he bought provisions for the house of the midwives that belonged to AMA.

And there was one of the milch kine, Helen, who had been sick for some time. And the physician for the cattle had tried many remedies for a sore upon the back of Helen, but she healed not. So Simon gave instructions to the younger steward to remove her from the milch kine, because they were not able to use her milk since she was sick.

So one day after that Simon had gone to his home, the herdsman and the young steward removed Helen from the herd, and she died. Now there was a distant field, where many such animals reposed and provided sustenance unto the fowls of the air which were in great abundance in that country. But the herdsman and the young steward thought it better to bury the kine where she had fallen. So the herdsman with the hired men dug the grave for her burial. Now during that time a great drought had

fallen upon the land, and the sun beat down and baked the red earth so that the gravediggers wearied of their task. So Helen was buried and the earth was returned upon her.

Now in certain years past, in the home country of the herdsman and the young steward, a great mountain in the far corner of the country in the north had erupted with a great noise, and smoke and ashes and brimstone were spewed for many miles into the heavens. And the name of this mountain was Mount St. Helens.

And so while Helen, the milch kine, reposed beneath the earth, the hot sun did beat upon the earth and caused the place of her burial to bulge and grow tall. And as Mount St. Helens erupted from its top, so did also the grave of Helen. And that event has been remembered as the eruption of Mount St. Helens unto this day.

Now while the herdsman and his hired men had committed no crime, they had ceased their labors while the grave was still shallow. And in the accounts of many crimes and works of evil men, one can read that the magistrates find many bodies in shallow graves.

All of the sons and daughters of man, although they may not smite their fellow men that they die, do often seek to cover their sins by their

own doings. But there is no depth of earth that can cover the sins of mankind, nay, not even if they be buried in the depths of the seas. It is only the blood of Jesus that can take away the guilt of the sinner and cover the sins of each man so that they do not come spewing out in a great and terrible stench.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

There was also among the cattle that were raised for flesh, a cow by the name of Jezebel. She was so named by the herdsman because she was high-headed and was quick to demand her own way among the rest of the cattle. Now one evening when the young steward was about to lay down his head to rest, he heard a great lowing of the cattle in the fields. But since there were times when neighbors walked through the fields that the cattle did the same, the young steward lay down upon his bed and rested.

But the following day, a neighbor did surely walk through the fields and found the cause of the lowing in the evening past. Jezebel, the high and mighty, was determined to make her way into a field of lush grass, but she had caught her head in a heavy gate so that the gate fell upon her neck.

And all of the cattle around her could not remove the gate from her neck, nay, neither the herdsman with the help of the hired men could remove the gate from around her head except the gate be sawn asunder. But Jezebel had died.

So Jezebel was removed from where she had fallen and was taken to the distant field where she became sustenance to the fowls of the air. And after the bones were bleached white with the hot sun the skull of Jezebel was placed on a tall pole in the place of the gathering of the cattle for a warning to those who demand their own way and meddle where they ought not.

“And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon

his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite” (I Kings 21:4-7).

“And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” (I Timothy 5:13).

—AY 

the bottom line

The Lifter Up of My Head

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

“Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.”

We are down here on this vast earth. The sky is also very vast above us, unmeasurable in distance, whether

up, or out in every direction, east, west, north or south. It is assumed and believed that God is up there, out there, and by biblical definition, everywhere.

The biblical concept to be lifted up

Announcement

Faithful Women Seminar

Saturday, October 1, 2022

For Such A Time As This

Ideas about womanhood come from many places today. Society, family, friends, and church communities communicate messages to us about what it means to be a woman, what our role is, what determines our value, and how we ought to relate to others.

In this seminar, we will seek to learn from God's Word about His purposes and plans for women and talk practically about living as women for God's glory.

Biblical View of Womanhood— *Estalee Anderson, Rochelle, VA*

The Role of a Wife— *Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH*

Beauty or Modesty?— *Janice Neuenschwander, Leetonia, OH*

Why Manners Matter— *Christine Martin, Plain City, OH*

Location: Plainview Christian School

8270 Amish Pike, Plain City, OH 43064

For more information or to register, please contact

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was a frequent word which denoted rescue and victory, or a soul cry for it. It was often spoken of as an appeal for a personal awareness, as when they lifted up their short-focused eyes to see their own needs or that of others. It was used when people “*lifted up their voices*” to call for urgently needed help or an earnest cry of grief when trapped in a great calamity. At other times, lifting up the cup of wine was a high honor to

the king or especially honored guests before the king. The heave offering before the Lord in the tabernacle was of the best meat from animal sacrifices. The brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness as the only cure for the deadly plague, and as a prophetic illustration of Jesus being bodily lifted up on the cross for the salvation of the world. As any individual lifts up his eyes of faith toward Jesus Christ, he will be saved

from sin and condemnation. Jesus said we should lift up our eyes to look upon the fields that are ready for the harvest of evangelism.

The manifold blessing of the New Covenant of grace should cause all believers to lift up their voices in singing, preachers to lift up their voices in preaching, and leaders in our assemblies should lift up their voices in more earnestness in praying. It is what is done by all who have a soul-stirring passion for God. He is remembered by our minds and recognized in our physical activity of hands and heart, eyes and ears, and soul and spirit. Let's be done with the melancholy of weak congregational singing (beginning with the song leaders), the lackadaisical "sharing" from the pulpit, and the monotony of cold prayers with predictable sameness.

The contrasts become even broader as we lift up our eyes to see somewhat more about what the Bible says. Satan lifted himself up with pride as the anointed cherub in exaltation against God. Esau lifted up his voice and wept most bitterly at the loss of his inheritance. The Israelites lifted up their cry all night at Kadesh Barnea against Moses and Aaron for the evil report of the ten spies about the impossibilities of entering Canaan successfully. God said it was the tenth

time they tempted Him contrary to His prophecy (Numbers 14).

King Saul also did this (how can one not pity this weakling king?), when he pursued innocent David once again to kill him. David's men could have killed Saul as they discovered him asleep in a cave. David merely used his sword to cut off a piece of Saul's robe as material evidence of his respect for Saul's office, and hence, his person.

Here is my point: upon the discovery of David's deference, "*Saul lifted up his voice and wept*" (I Samuel 24:16). The evaluation spoken by Saul was honest and true when he added, "*Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.*" It turned out to be a fake repentance, because later he took 3000 chosen men to seek for David's life again, searching for him in the vast wilderness.

A loud and bitter cry cannot make up for the insincerity of arrogance, rebellion, and self-righteousness. King Saul is not alone of church men who were mighty in preaching or church administration, and, despite high office, have done like Saul. Even at a later time, when David bested him, Saul said, "*I have sinned . . . and played the fool, and have erred exceedingly*" (I Samuel 26:21). True words from the head only, not from

the heart. It was yet another fake repentance.

The concept of lifting up is in regard to being carried along by a strong desire, having a longing that cannot be denied, stifled, or cut short. One of my favorite Psalms is Psalm 24. Verses 3 and 4 are especially suited to the uplifted experience, asking two questions, and then following with two answers. *“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”* The longing of the soul, it being lifted up to participation in noble endeavors, is an index of receiving God’s favor as stated in the following verse. *“He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”*

Jesus spoke prophetically about being lifted up, even as was the serpent on a pole by Moses in the wilderness. He said it again in John 8:28 and John 11:32-34. The heave offering in the tabernacle could serve as a shadow of Christ’s offering for sin on the cross. Jesus was lifted up as an offering to God for the sin of all people everywhere for all time. Hebrews 7:27 says, *“For this he did once when he offered up himself.”* We take special note to the term “when

he offered up himself” to God.

It likewise was said of Abraham that he had offered up Isaac. *“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only son”* (Hebrews 11:17). God credited Abraham for the commitment of his heart even though Isaac was not actually slain as an offering in death. The lifting up was done in the heart prior to the physical lifting up as the case may have been.

Strange, but I always thought it was a bit weird for the moderator to announce for “the lifting of an offering” as the receptacle is then passed around for us to place our offering in it. Now I see, this offering is biblically meant to be “lifted” as an offering to God.

Raising up both hands high has been an ages-old sign of surrender. The sign of surrender in warfare is to throw down the guns and raise both hands in a declaration, “I give up. I surrender to you. I plead for mercy, and by all means, spare my life.” I don’t know of any evangelists who call for that kind of response at our revival/evangelistic meetings. For a respondent to stand and raise both arms in church could surely be a true sign of repentance toward God. Most times when Jesus healed or helped someone, He would ask for either

a verbal response or some physical move, or both, as a prerequisite to being granted their desire. Maybe we should do some of the same publicly in church.

The book of Exodus is an action-packed drama featuring God with His outstretched hand in guidance for His people and judgment against those who mocked Him. In the royal court there was a miraculous scene where Moses's rod became "*the rod of God.*" In the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, Moses lifts up the rod of God over Egypt, by which great and phenomenal plagues hit the land, their animals, and their people.

In leaving Egypt, they come to the impossible Red Sea. Moses lifts up the rod of God over it, and immediately there is a new series of events that take place for their deliverance. In Exodus 17, Moses was told to lift his rod and strike the rock, and the crisis of no water ended.

"*Then came Amalek,*" another scene in this unusual drama, to fight with the defenseless Israelites, who lacked any warfare strategy, armaments, or experience. Watch what happens. Moses takes Aaron and Hur up to the top of the hill. Joshua and his hordes of chosen men go out to fight against Amalek. When Moses lifted up his hands, Joshua and his men prevailed, but when his hands became weak

and dropped, Amalek prevailed. They set Moses on a stone while Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses through the battle to a decisive victory for God's people. This is an apt illustration whereby we lift up our church leaders in prayer today.

Paul instructed Timothy, as a church pastor, "*I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*" (I Timothy 2:8). There could be reasons given that this is specified for men and does not call on women to do so. Our best obedience is always served in excellence when we do what the Bible says without always knowing why.


When Jesus had finished His work on earth, He was with His 11 disciples for His final words with them. Luke 24:50 says, "*And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.*" His uplifted hands were for a final benediction upon His beloved disciples, and as He did so, "*He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*" Just now it occurred to me that in my boyhood and youth, our ministers always lifted up their right hand as they pronounced the benediction over the congregation as a parting blessing. I (we) also did that at our church at Weavertown all the years of my being a pastor. It

seems to have been discontinued. Did we lose something of worth, or gain something of greater value? I am not saying it is important, but is interesting.

David, our favorite psalmist, says in Psalm 3:3, *“But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head.”* That is the only place in the whole Bible where that word is used, having chosen it for the title of this article.

The Bottom Line is that God has been *“the lifter up of my head”* in many, many ways. I will lift up my

hands and worship toward His holy habitation for His loving kindness, especially in this past year of being laid low with sickness for three months, then in a recovery mode for three months, and now having gained physical and mental wellbeing for the past six months. May the Name of the Lord be praised!

Just now, you have read this consolation. You, as an individual believer, lift up both of your hands to God and join me in surrender to God, and thank Him for His manifold blessings in this past year. 

Divine Poetry

Marvin E. Yoder, Meyersdale, PA

The Greek word “poiema” (pronounced poi-ay-ma) is used only two times in the Greek New Testament. It comes from the root word “poieo” (poi-eh-o) which means “to do” or “to make.” It is also a root (along with French and Latin) from which the English word poem is derived.

“Poiema” is first used in Romans 1:20 where it is translated by the phrase *“things that are made”* in reference to the created universe. *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power*

and Godhead, so that they are without excuse...” (NKJV, emphasis mine). The created universe is a poetic masterpiece that declares the eternal attributes of God.

The wisdom of God is evident in the unique design of creatures both great and small. The greatness of God is declared by the vastness of the universe as well as the minuteness of the microscopic world. The power of God is displayed in the precision with which our solar system functions and having the only known planet (Earth) with all the necessary conditions for life to exist. The kindness of God is demonstrated

in that the sun shines “*on the evil and on the good*” and it rains “*on the just and on the unjust*” (Matthew 5:45 NKJV). The uniqueness of God is seen in the creation of a man and a woman in His own image (Genesis 1:27) with the ability to reproduce other human beings with that image. The Psalmist said, “*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well*” (Psalm 139:14 NKJV). The tri-unity of God may be suggested by the many triplets in the created world: body, soul, spirit; proton, neutron, electron; solid, liquid, gas; lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere.

The downward spiral described in Romans 1:21-32 begins when people do not recognize or when they ignore the attributes of God evident in His poetic masterpiece, the created universe.

The second use of “*poiema*” is in Ephesians 2:10 where it is translated workmanship. “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them*” (Ephesians 2:10 NKJV). In context, this is not speaking of the physical body but of the soul and spirit, our character. At the time of our new birth, God begins a work

in us by the Holy Spirit to produce a spiritual masterpiece.

It is important to notice, as the verses quoted below indicate, that good works do not produce a new creation, but that good works are a result of the new creation. If good works do not follow, one may question whether a new creation has really taken place.

“*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*” (II Corinthians 5:17 NKJV).

“*...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*” (Ephesians 4:23-24 (NKJV).


“*...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works*” (Titus 2:14 NKJV).

Each of us is a work in progress. Hopefully, as long as we are in this life, we will remain on God’s easel and allow Him to continue His creative work. If we obey Him and stay attached to the vine, this “*pruning*” will continue and produce “*more fruit*” (John 15:1-6). The lyrics of the following song express this idea.

He's still working on me
To make me what I ought to be.
It took Him just a week to make
the moon and stars;
The sun and the earth and Jupiter
and Mars.
How loving and patient He must
be,
He's still workin' on me.

There really ought to be a sign
upon my heart,
Don't judge me yet, there's an
unfinished part.

But I'll be perfect just according
to His plan;
Fashioned by the Master's loving
hands.
Joel Hemphill

This brief study of “poiema” suggests that God has two poetic masterpieces to point people to Himself—the created universe and re-created followers of Jesus who “*proclaim the praises of Him who called [them] out of darkness into His marvelous light*” (I Peter 2:9 NKJV). 

Travel Tears

Anita Yoder, Guys Mills, PA

In 2019, I spent a week each in Ireland and Poland. My luggage came a day late in both places, and I had a complicated itinerary, and by the end of the trip I had let anxiety get the best of me. I couldn't relax and enjoy the journey because I felt so alone and unable to cope with the uncertainties that come with travelling solo.

I came home and cried to my mentor that I'm so done with travelling alone. She heard my story and said, “I'm sorry. That's hard. But you'll travel again.” She said it gently and confidently, but I wasn't sure I could believe her.

She was right, of course.

In June 2022, I travelled alone in Europe for three weeks. Alone, as in alone in the airports, trains, and bus, as I went from place to place to see friends and family. I got to see lots of favorite places and lots of favorite people. I wasn't a tourist so much as I was connecting with people in their spaces, and it was a rich, intense, and beautiful vacation.

However, I cried a lot in airports—something I've never done in any of my travels before. I'd always internalized the stress of travelling, or gotten angry or anxious, but this time, the distress came dripping out in tears.

In Cologne I hugged my terminally-

ill friend goodbye, and we said to each other, "I'll see you in a better place!" but I didn't cry then. The next morning at the check-in desk, the agent said the flight to Dublin was cancelled. I messaged my family to ask them to pray about it then burst into tears. Later, after an agent rerouted and rescheduled my itinerary and I found a lovely coffee and pastry to drown my sorrows, I still cried.

I cried into my coffee in Dublin airport, reading the Sermon on the Mount with big feelings. When I got to Copenhagen and ran a mile to my gate and found it closed, I cried. When I got to Warsaw, my luggage didn't come, but I didn't cry then because I was glad to finally be there. I did ask myself why I go to the bother of travelling when it brings this much upheaval but when I saw my friend who had come to meet me, I remembered why I travel. The luggage came 36 hours later.

On my last long layover in London Heathrow, headed back to the US, I made myself buy something sustaining to eat, and as I ate a falafel and hummus bowl, I got the message that my youngest sister had just lost her baby. I'd been with her two weeks before, and when I'd hugged her goodbye, I'd said, "I'll hold your baby at Christmas!" The pregnancy

was 15 weeks along, but the scan that day showed no heartbeat. So I cried in an airport again. Alone, far away from anyone I knew, and so, so sad.

It's a weird, alien feeling to be surrounded with hundreds of people and be crying alone. I felt sad and overwhelmed but invisible because no one seemed to notice.

However, in other moments on this trip, for whatever reason, I enjoyed and interacted with fellow travelers and crew like never before. I saw stunning beauty in people, laughed, surmised, discussed which lines moved the fastest, and watched their luggage. Laughing with strangers is magical!

But bigger than the tears and human connections, two concepts grounded me and kept me from the anxiety and anger I'd felt three years ago. These ideas colored my trip more than the tears and distress.

The Lord watches over the alien. I'd found this verse in Psalm 146:9 and claimed it on behalf of all the refugees in the world. But I decided to claim it for myself on this trip. I wasn't a refugee, but I was a lone stranger in foreign places, and I needed to know God was watching out for me. And He did. In the cancellations and delays and reroutes and tears, I knew His eye was on me and it was going to be OK. I felt a

deep peace that went way beyond positive thinking.

I understood that I was experiencing *privileged loneliness*.

Often in those three weeks, I heard myself say, “Oh, this is so good again. I miss this so much.” It was wonderful to be in Europe, and I reveled in it. I felt overwhelmed with the goodness surrounding me and felt small and undeserving of experiencing so much richness. All I could say was, “Thank you, thank you, thank you, God.” I was very sad and lonely in spots, but

it was a privileged loneliness and a place to feel deep gratitude. Sorrow has seasons; rushing to find beauty in it robs me of the lessons I learn in the dark. But in good time, I could see that the goodness around me was immense, outrageous privilege handed to me without even having asked for it.

Strange how that works. The deepest voids are the places where God’s goodness splashes all over.

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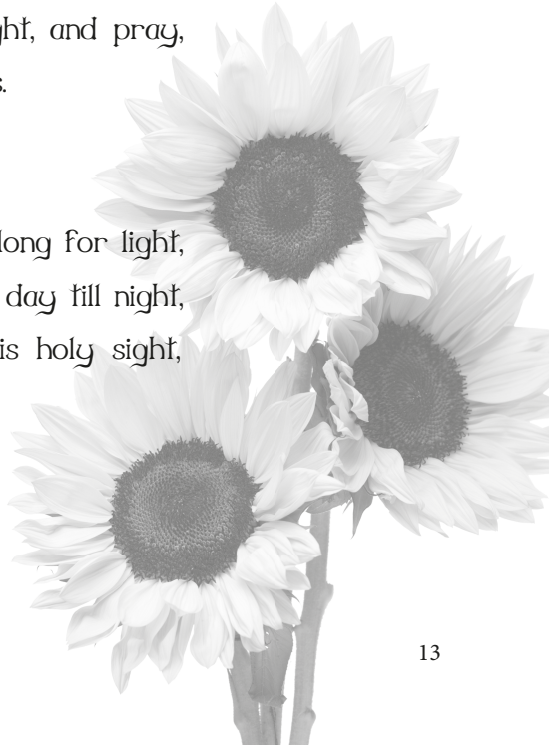


MY TASK

To love someone more dearly every day,
To help a wandering child to find his way,
To ponder o'er a noble thought, and pray,
And smile when evening falls.
This is my task.

To follow truth as blind men long for light,
To do my best from dawn of day till night,
To keep my heart fit for His holy sight,
And answer when He calls.
This is my task.

- Maude Louse Ray



marriages

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

Barkman-Miller

Bro. Wesley, son of Clement and Michelle Barkman, McConnelsville, OH, and Sis. Cheryl, daughter of Marlin and Fern Miller, Kalona, IA, on April 23, 2022, at Fairview Mennonite Church for New Hope Mennonite Church by Delmar Bontrager.

Gerber-Gerber

Bro. Jonathan, son of Paul and Brenda Gerber, Gadshill, ON, and Sis. Rhoda, daughter of Ralph and Bernice Gerber, Millbank, ON, on June 18, 2022, at Cedar Grove A.M. Church by John Gerber.

Helmuth-Beachy

Bro. Rick, son of Steve and Anna Helmuth, Plain City, OH, and Sis. Janelle, daughter of Mark and Carolyn Beachy, Plain City, OH, on June 17, 2022, at United Bethel Church for Canaan Fellowship by Robert Beachy.

Hoover-Schrock

Bro. Ryan, son of Ed and Lisa Hoover, Paradise, PA, and Sis. Amy, daughter of Nelson and Diane Schrock, Yoder, KS, on June 25, 2022, at Arlington A.M. Church by Arlen Mast.

Kline-Schlabach

Bro. Jeffrey, son of James and Katie Kline, Osage City, KS, and Sis. Erica, daughter of Steve and Debra Schlabach, Melvern, KS, on June 10, 2022, at Town and Country Church for Lyndon A.M. Church by Lawrence Overholt.

Sommers-Miller

Bro. Jolan, son of Edwin and Elsie Sommers, Fresno, OH, and Sis. Emily, daughter of Robert and Regina Miller, Newcomerstown, OH, on June 25, 2022, at Maranatha Mennonite Church for Salem A.M. Church by the bride's father, Robert Miller.

Sommers-Swartzentruber

Bro. Zachary, son of Marion and Rhoda Sommers, Hindsville, AR, and Sis. Kaitlyn, daughter of Daniel and Karen Swartzentruber, Hindsville, AR, on May 7, 2022, at Living Water Baptist Church for Lighthouse of Faith Mennonite Church by Dan Byler.

Stoltzfus-Garman

Bro. Duane, son of Curtis and Cheryl Stoltzfus, Coatesville, PA, and Sis. Kelsey, daughter of Larry and Jolene Garman, Ronks, PA, on July 9, 2022, at Pequea A.M. Church by Ben A. Stoltzfus.

Yoder-Miller

Bro. Kent, son of Leon and Anita Yoder, Quenomo, KS, and Sis. Rhoda, daughter of Kevin and Christina Miller, Scranton, KS, on May 27, 2022, at Lyndon A.M. Church by Lawrence Overholt.



cradle roll

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

Albrecht, Adrian and Regina (Byler), Brunner, ON, third child and daughter, Amy Regina, June 2, 2022.

Beachy, Benjamin and Dorcas (Yoder), Brinkhaven, OH, fourth child, first son, Felix Angelo, June 13, 2022.

Beachy, Kevin and Janelle (Miller), Kalona, IA, second child, first son, Chadwick Dean, April 9, 2022.

Byler, Kevin and Veronica (Mast), Vanleer, TN, currently serving in Kenya, second child, first daughter, Kinsley June, June 20, 2022.

Coulter, Jake and Brenda (Peachy), Honey Grove, PA, first child and daughter, Laura Jade, June 26, 2022.

Funk, Christopher and Karen (Fisher), Chambersburg, PA, second child, first son, Erickson Hans, April 16, 2022.

Gerber, Daniel and Renita (Wagler), Millbank, ON, fourth child, third son, Nathan Luke, March 15, 2022.

Hershberger, Brian and Charity (Yoder), Sardinia, OH, third child, first son, Isaiah Bryant, June 30, 2022.

Hershberger, Mark and Emily (Miller), Stone Creek, OH, fourth child, second daughter, Hope Addilyn, July 11, 2022.

Hochstetler, Jared and Sondra (Nissley), Goshen, IN, first child and daughter, Hazelyn Raellie, June 30, 2022.

Horst, Drew and Christine (Yoder), Lyndon, KS, first child and son, Todd Andrew, May 13, 2022.

Hottle, Matthew and Aimee (Beachy), Salisbury, PA, fourth child and son, Myles Jordan, July 5, 2022.

Jantzi, Dean and Heidi (Jantzi), Wellesley, ON, third child, second son, Judson Kent, June 25, 2022.

King, Emmanuel and Phoebe (Raber), New Holland, PA, sixth child, third daughter, Taliah Eden, June 10, 2022.

King, Jason and Rosalie (Byler), Kinzers, PA, fourth child and daughter, Ruby Evelyn, June 5, 2022.

Life is short, and we have never too much time for gladdening the hearts of those who are traveling the dark journey with us.

Oh, be swift to love, make haste to be kind!

-HENRI FRÉDÉRIC AMIEL



Kuhns, Titus and Daisy (Atkinson), Mesopotamia, OH, fourth child and son, Tobias Círdan, May 31, 2022.

Lapp, John and Jolene (Stoltzfus), New Holland, PA, presently serving at Faith Mission Home, VA, fourth child, third son, Nicolas Ben, May 9, 2022.

Martin, David and Beth (Sommers), Fresno, OH, seventh child, sixth daughter, Evania Rose, June 8, 2022.

Mast, Jordan and Alisa (Burns), Goodspring, TN, first child and son, Giovanni Andriy, June 29, 2022.

Miller, Andre and Cindy (Miller), Auburn, KY, second child, first daughter, McKenna Lanai, July 27, 2022.

Naidu, Nick and Rachel (King), Zionsville, PA, first child and son, Levi Zephaniah, June 7, 2022.

Nissley, Dennis and Charity (Bender), Midland, VA, third child and son, Logan Andrew, July 1, 2022.

Overholt, Austin and Liz (Jara), Brightwood, VA, first child and daughter, Rihanna Solina, July 30, 2022.

Raber, Merle and Danae (Nissley), Cassopolis, MI, third child, first daughter, Aviarah Wren, July 7, 2022.

Schrock, Justin and Cynthia (Gingerich), Clarksville, TN, third child, first daughter, Avianna Brooke, June 9, 2022.

Schrock, Matthew and Kathryn (Miller), Wellman, IA, fourth child, third daughter, Avery Madisyn, April 17, 2022.

Stoltzfus, John and Melody (Ebersole), Parkesburg, PA, fourth child, second son, Jeremiah Ray, May 9, 2022.

Stoltzfus, Josh and Amanda (King), Coatesville, PA, first child and daughter, Kaylee Joy, May 18, 2022.

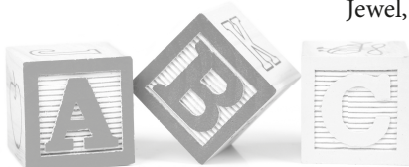
Stutzman, Robert and Deborah (Huston), Lyndon, KS, third child, first daughter, Rochelle Lynn, May 21, 2022.

Wagler, Dave and Hannah (Yoder), Lyndon, KS, fifth child, fourth daughter, Katie Elaine, June 22, 2022.

Wagler, Travis and Lorinda (Zimmerman), Abbeville, SC, second child and son, Charles Maverick, February 1, 2022.

Weaver, Duane and Ruth (Miller), Stuarts Draft, VA, tenth child, fifth daughter, Mary Elise, July 13, 2022.

Weaver, Jared and Lucy (Miller), Lebo, KS, third child, first daughter, Ashlynn Jewel, June 22, 2022.



ordinations

Yoder, Dan and Susan (Eicher),
Melvern, KS, third child, second son,
Joseph Menno, May 3, 2022.

Yoder, Karl and Rachel (Jantzi),
Wesley, AR, first child and son, Isaiah
Leon, July 23, 2022.

Yoder, Kevin and Rhoda (Beiler),
Wesley, AR, second child, first daughter,
Kendra Nicole, June 20, 2022.

Yoder, Rick and Valetta (Byler),
Blackville, SC, fourth child, third son,
Caleb Wyatt, July 9, 2022.

Zook, Josiah and Amanda (Schlabach),
Dunmore East, Waterford, Ireland, (on
temporary leave in Georgetown, OH),
third child, second daughter, Corinne
Elaine, July 26, 2022.

Zook, Tim and Michelle (Stoltzfus),
Gap, PA, second child, first son, Kayson
Wade, June 23, 2022.



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

Bro. Duane Nisly, 65, (wife, Ruth Yoder) was called through the church and ordained bishop of the Iglesia Menonita de Pital on June 19, 2022. Preordination messages for deacon and bishop ordinations were given by Dale E. Heisey. The charge was given by Dale E. Heisey, assisted by Mark Yoder and Phil Yoder. The final message was brought by Mark Yoder.

Bro. Randall Nisly, 33, (wife, Cristian Alfaro) was called through the church and ordained deacon for the Iglesia Menonita de Pital on June 19, 2022. Preordination messages for deacon and bishop ordinations were given by Dale E. Heisey. The charge was given by Dale E. Heisey, assisted by Mark Yoder and Ellis Yoder. The final message was brought by Mark Yoder.



Hope, like the gleaming taper's light,
Adorns and *cheers* our way;

And still, as darker
grows the night,
Emits a *lighter* ray.

—OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Beachy, Judy Catherine, 66, of Winfield, PA, went to be with her Lord July 12, 2022, in her home lovingly cared for by her family. She was born May 18, 1956, in McVeytown, PA, to the late Kore E. and Emma (Spicher) Yoder. On April 26, 1979, in Belleville, PA, she married Perry M. Beachy who survives.

Judy was a member of Shady Grove Christian Fellowship.

She was a homemaker. Judy loved sunrises and sunsets and took many pictures from her front and back doors in the morning and evening. She also loved to sing and her voice could usually be heard at church. She was a people person and loved to visit with people and had many friends.

Surviving in addition to her loving husband, Perry, are seven children: Kore, Winfield; JoAnn (Titus) Miller, Romania; Janet (Arnold) Eby, Bedford County; Kraig (Andreea), Romania; Kendall (Jeanette), Winfield; Jeanine (Ryan) Bontrager, Grabill, IN; Kevin, Winfield; 21 grandchildren, two brothers: Sylvan (Susie), McVeytown; Sanford (Laura), Millersburg, OH; and one sister, Salome (Glen) Yoder, Middleburg.

She was preceded in death by a daughter, Joyce Beachy, two sisters: Mary Ellen Yoder and Lois (Yoder) Detweiler, and a brother, Annas Yoder.

The funeral was held at Shady Grove Christian Fellowship on July 18, 2022, with Simon Bender, Kraig Beachy, Wayne

Yoder, and Titus Miller officiating. Interment followed in the adjoining church cemetery.

Bontrager, Pauline M., 77, of Kalona, IA, passed away May 30, 2022, at her home in rural Kalona. She was born July 6, 1944, to Moses and Cora (Gingerich) Yoder. Pauline was united in marriage to Perry E. Bontrager on September 17, 1971, in Leon, IA.

She was a member of the Sharon Bethel Church.

Pauline enjoyed gardening, caring for her flower beds, sewing, quilting, putting puzzles together, and cleaning friends' homes. Perry and Pauline were avid campers and loved to meet new friends while camping.

She is survived by her husband, Perry, five children: Iva (Michael) Hunsberger, Westminster, SC; Mary Lou Bontrager, Des Moines; Larry, Purcell, OK; Lori (Dwight) Schrock, Riverside; Lamar (Sarah), Pasadena, CA; 15 grandchildren: Austin, Bryson, and Ellie Hunsberger; Dylan, Adison, Alexis, and Leslie Miller; Levi and Gentry Bontrager; Taylor, Nicole, Carson, and Blake Schrock; Selah and Eliza Bontrager; one foster granddaughter, Essence Allen, and one great-grandchild, Mateo Coleman.

She was preceded in death by her parents, daughter, LoAnn, brothers, Maynard and Jerry (stillborn).

The funeral service was held June 2,

2022, at the Fairview Mennonite Church. Burial followed at the Sharon Bethel Cemetery.

Gingerich, Sovilla A., 85, of Arthur, IL, passed away December 31, 2021, at her son's residence. She was born April 7, 1936, in Arthur, IL, to Andrew L. and Lydia (Schrock) Mast. She married Elva W. Gingerich on December 8, 1955.

Sovilla was a charter member of Trinity Christian Fellowship.

She was an involved farm wife and a homemaker. She enjoyed crocheting and quilting.

She is survived by her husband of 66 years, four sons, and one daughter: Glen (Eloise), and Dannie (Laura), both of Arthur; Mary, Steve (Karen), and Duane (Tammi), all of Sullivan; 18 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, and sister-in-law, Mary (Fred) Mast, Myerstown, PA.

She was preceded in death by her parents, three sisters: Sarah Gingerich, Anna Plank, Rebecca Hochstedler; and five brothers: Will, Jonas, Levi, Fred, and Joe Mast.

The funeral was held January 5, 2022, at the Otto Center.

Keim, Arie H., 88, of Berlin, OH, passed away at the Walnut Hills Nursing Rehab Unit on July 16, 2022, after a period of declining health. She was born January 30, 1934, to the late Henry H. and Sarah (Schrock) Beachy. On February 23, 1956, she married William J. Keim who preceded her in death on

November 28, 2008.

Arie was a homemaker and a member of the Messiah Amish Mennonite Church.

She is survived by her children: Wayne (Verna), Ruth (Steve) Yoder, Cathy (Sam) Mast, Wilma (Jesse) Mast, all of Millersburg; 14 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren; brothers: Sylvanus (late Alma), Sugarcreek; Aden, Sarasota, FL; and sisters-in-law: Ada (late Henry) Beachy, and Cindy (late Elmer), Beachy, both of Millersburg.

She was preceded in death by her son, Dean, siblings: Katie Ann (Joe) Miller, Emanuel (Edna), Christ (Katie), Clara (Demas) Mast, Lizzie Ann (Mose) Raber, Andy (Erma), Anna (Roman) Hershberger, Mose (Edna), Henry, and Elmer Beachy.

The funeral service was held at Messiah Amish Mennonite Church on July 18, 2022, with Philip Miller officiating. Burial followed in the Gospel Haven Church Cemetery.

Kuepfer, Irene M., 76, of Brunner, ON, peacefully passed away on March 8, 2022. She was born September 7, 1945, in Wellesley Township to the late Benjamin and Marion (Gerber) Kuepfer.

She was baptized upon the confession of her faith in Jesus Christ in 1962 and was a member of the Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite church.

Irene will be sadly missed by her siblings: Ivan (Anna Mae); Nelson (Elaine); Merrill (Laverne) Zehr; Verna (Nelson) Jantzi; an aunt, Katie

Schellenberger; as well as many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her brother, Willis (Kathryn); and nephews, Brian, Russell, and Wesley Kuepfer.

The funeral was held March 11, 2022, at Cedar Grove A.M. Church with Timothy Gerber and John Gerber serving. The burial followed at the church cemetery.

Kuhns, Abe B., 88, of Auburn, KY, formerly of Arthur, IL, passed away at home June 2, 2022, following a brief struggle with cancer. Abe was born July 4, 1933, in rural Arthur, IL, to Benjamin M. and Sadie A. (Yoder) Kuhns. He married Lovina Kaufman on May 1, 1952, and she passed away on February 8, 1985. He later married Dorothy Wingard on November 27, 1986.

Abe was a member of the Plainview Mennonite Church in Auburn, KY.

Abe's life is a testimony to the grace and goodness of God. He faced many heartaches in losing a wife and three children. Never losing faith in God, he pressed on. He was a man of strong faith and humility, seeking God's approval and direction in all his endeavors. His utmost concern was that God alone would be glorified as the Master Designer, and he, as merely the vessel.

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, seven children: Howard (Edith), Dan (Marie), both of Arthur, IL; Eldon (Ruth), Mulkeytown, IL; Phil, Westmoreland, TN; Lois Lewis, Arthur, IL; Elmer (Mary), Clara (Tim) Yoder, both of

Auburn, KY; son-in-law, Darrell (Ruth) Miller, Lott, TX; four siblings: Jerry, Arthur, IL; Harvey, Tuscola, IL; Omer (Barbara), Sullivan, IL; Mary Miller, Arthur, IL; and sister-in-law, Georgia (Charles Martin) Kuhns, Fort Wayne, IN.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his first wife, sons, Vernon and Timothy, daughter, Mary Miller; four siblings: Menno (Alma and Esther), Levi, Henry, and Anna (Edward) Kuhns; and a brother-in-law, Harvey Miller.

The funeral was held June 6, 2022, at Plainview Mennonite Church with Luke Troyer officiating. Burial followed at the church cemetery with Steve Miller serving.

Miller, Brice Jaxon, 6, of Leon, IA, passed suddenly from this life on June 29, 2022, at the Decatur County Hospital in Leon, IA. He was born March 25, 2016, in Corydon, IA, to Justin and Michelle (Yoder) Miller.

Brice leaves to cherish his memory, his parents, brothers: Blaine, Terell, and Cole, all of Leon; grandparents: Jonas and Linda Yoder, Leon; as well as many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Enos and Kathryn Miller.

The funeral service was held on July 3, 2022, at Salem Mennonite Church with Henry Miller serving.

Miller, Edward E., 80, of Partridge, KS, died July 25, 2022, at Hutchinson Regional Medical Center of complications from open-heart surgery. He was born July

1, 1942, in Hutchinson to John D. and Emma (Helmuth) Miller.

Edward accepted Christ as his Savior in his youth and served the Lord faithfully. He was a loyal member of Center Amish Mennonite Church for 63 years and served as church treasurer for 40 years. A man of few words, Edward was deeply committed to his wife, family, church, and the God he served faithfully and without fanfare.

Edward attended Elmhirst School. He worked for Architectural Millwork for 25 years then was employed as a painter for 32 years, both for Yoder's Painting and more recently for Nisly and Son's Painting. Edward enjoyed spending time with family, doing yardwork, and reading.

On March 8, 1964, he married Alma Miller in Hutchinson. They shared 58 years of marriage. She survives.

Also surviving are his children: Glenda Miller and Carla Miller of Partridge; Gerald (Cathy), Guys Mills, PA; Keith (Miriam), Hutchinson; LaVon (Twila), Partridge; Norma (Tony) Shetler, Partridge; brothers: Jay (Verna), James (Miriam), Arno (Linda), all of Hutchinson; David E. (Barbara), South Hutchinson; Nathanael (Gloria), Partridge; Andy (Frieda), Cañon City, CO; sisters: Barbara Nisly, Hutchinson; Rebecca (LaVerne) Miller, Partridge; sister-in-law, Becky Miller, South Hutchinson; 18 grandchildren, and numerous extended family members.

He was preceded in death by his

parents, stepmother, Emma (Miller) Miller, sister, Fannie Miller, brother, Albert Miller, brother-in-law, Larry Nisly, and a sister-in-law, Esther (Yoder) Miller.

The funeral service was held July 29, 2022, at Center Amish Mennonite Church. Burial followed in West Center Cemetery.

Miller, Sara M., 89, of Kalona, IA, passed away at her home on April 20, 2022. She was born April 1, 1933, in Kokomo, IN, to Menno and Susan (Schlabach) Miller.

She was a member of the Sharon Bethel Church.

In her earlier years she did house cleaning and worked in a local bakery. In 1977 she opened a quilt shop at her home, known as Kalona Kountry Kreations. She retired in early 2000. Her example of selfless giving was an inspiration to many. She made lots of comforters that are in many needy homes here and abroad. She was a firm believer that you can't outgive God. Sara also loved to quilt and gave many lectures on quilts.

Sara is survived by 11 nieces, 19 nephews, and a sister-in-law, Celesta Miller, Goshen, IN.

She was preceded in death by her parents, one sister, four brothers, and one nephew.

The funeral service was held April 25, 2022, at Sharon Bethel Church. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Schrock, Joni A., 79, of Huntsville, AR, passed away peacefully at his home surrounded with his family on April 27, 2022. Joni was born August 8, 1942, to the late Amos and Lydia Schrock in Thomas, OK.

Joni spent his childhood days helping his parents on the farm southeast of Thomas. He attended grade school at Jefferson School District. He accepted Christ in his youth and was baptized. He became a member of Zion Amish Mennonite Church in Thomas, OK. On March 24, 1963, he married Edith Mae Yoder, and they enjoyed 49 years together. They lived on the Ike Yoder farm and there raised their family. Joni took special interest in the church school and planned many field trips for them. He was involved with and enjoyed prison ministry at the Watonga and Hinton Oklahoma prison facilities. For eight years, Joni and Edith served at Calvary Bible School as cooks and maintenance. He treasured those times and enjoyed the interaction with the youth. In October 2009 Joni and Edith moved to Huntsville, AR. There they became members of Lighthouse of Faith Church. Joni enjoyed a more relaxed pace of life and shifted from farming to a small cattle operation. His children and grandchildren meant a lot to him, and he faithfully gave them cards every year on their birthdays. His freezer was always well-stocked with Braum's ice cream for his family any time they stopped by.

Joni was known for his love of

relationships and helping wherever he could. Many times, after church, school, or family activities, he would have a candy shoot for the children with his air cannon. He went to many auctions and frequently gifted family and friends with creative auctions items he thought they might enjoy.

Surviving are two sons: Kenneth (Gina), Partridge, KS; Kevin (Christina), Huntsville; two daughters: Karen (Daniel) Swartzentruber, Hindsville; Kaylene (John) Nolt, Perkins, OK; 17 beloved grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren; two sisters-in-law: Laura Schrock, Thomas, OK; Irene Yoder, Ligonier, IN; an uncle, Jonny Jr. Yoder, Hutchinson, KS; and an aunt, Viola Wingard, Montezuma, GA.

Preceding him in death was his beloved wife, Edith Mae, his only sibling and brother, Truman Schrock, and sister-in-law, Alice Mae Schrock.

The funeral was held May 2, 2022, at the Lighthouse of Faith Mennonite Church with Ed Yoder officiating. Interment followed in the church cemetery.

Schwartz, Joshua Aaron, 18, of Shipshewana, IN, died July 11, 2022, at the scene of a motorcycle accident near Topeka. He was born February 29, 2004, in Topeka, IN, to Emery and Wanda (Miller) Schwartz.

Survivors in addition to his parents are a sister, Bethany, and brother, Jayden, both of the home; grandmother, Katie Schwartz, Shipshewana; many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Olen and Barbara Miller, and Dan Schwartz; and an uncle, Orlen Miller.

Joshua was a member of Fairhaven Mennonite Church and worked at Grand Design. He was a devoted Christian who loved the Lord. He greatly enjoyed spending time with his family, cousins, and many friends. Josh was very excited about getting involved as a volunteer with the Shiphshewana Fire Department.

The funeral service was held July 15, 2022, Fairhaven Mennonite Church, conducted by the Fairhaven Ministry Team. Burial followed in Thomas Cemetery, Goshen.

Swartzentruber, Emma, 100, of La Tigra del Venado, San Carlos, Costa Rica, passed away June 23, 2022, at her home. She was born September 6, 1921, to Dennis and Ida Miller in Kalona, IA, United States. She married Christian Swartzentruber on February 7, 1946.

With their children they moved to Costa Rica in 1968 where she lived until her death. She was a faithful member of La Esperanza Mennonite Church, La Tigra.

Her husband, Christian, and a young son preceded her in death.

Her departure is mourned by her seven children: Ida Mae (Philip) Stoltzfus, United States; Laban (Sarah Yoder), Costa Rica; David (late Esther Friesen), Costa Rica; Eunice (Pablo) Yoder, Nicaragua; Raymond, Costa Rica; Luis (Judith Schrock), United States; Maria,

Costa Rica; 31 grandchildren, and 55 great-grandchildren.

Her faithfulness, dedication, and courage in the Lord's work with her husband, are a challenge that she leaves with her family and brethren. Her testimony inspires us to fight to the end.

Yoder, Rhoda C., 81, of Auburn, KY, passed away on July 28, 2022, at the home of her daughter. She was born July 17, 1941, to the late Christian W. and Anna (Miller) Yoder in Virginia Beach, VA.

Rhoda was a member of the Plainview Mennonite Church.

Her memory will forever be treasured by her three sons: David (Dorothy), Oskaloosa, KS; Lonnie (Violet), Hanover, IN; Timothy (Clara), Auburn; four daughters: Rosanna (Elmer) Yoder, Montezuma, GA; Elva (Wayne) Overholt, Russellville; Christina (Kevin) Miller, Scranton, KS; Melissa (Steve) Miller, Auburn; two brothers: Marvin (Fannie) Yoder, SC; Chris Jr. (Edna) Yoder, GA; four sisters: Arlene (Sam) Nisly, AL; Cora Nisly, KS; Elva (Ray) Byler, TN; and Mandy (Paul) Yoder, GA. She also leaves behind 44 grandchildren and 50 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by Jerry, her beloved husband of 56 years, in March 2018.

The funeral service was held July 31, 2022, at the Plainview Mennonite Church with the local ministry serving. Burial followed in the church cemetery.



“A Call to Men” is a publication with this slogan. “Helping create a world where all men and boys are loving and respectful and all women, girls, and those at the margins of the margins are valued and safe.”

I do not find evidence that this publication identifies with Christianity except for some overlapping values. So, my citation of information gleaned from them should not be interpreted as an unqualified endorsement.

An article dated December 14, 2021, written by Tony Porter entitled “Why Men are Primed for Loneliness” cited some of the ways that loneliness affects our health. Rather than trying to encapsulate what he says about the link between loneliness and our health, I’ll quote him.

Here is what he says, “Who we are emotionally has an enormous impact on who we are physically, and our ability to connect with others is inextricably linked to our wellness. Studies indicate that our relationships with others have more of an impact on our physical health and longevity than even our genes do. There is a large body of scientific research that suggests high-quality relationships and feelings of closeness with others are

highly correlated to a decreased risk of premature death, and that loneliness and isolation can lead to poor health in numbers comparable to smoking, high blood pressure, and obesity. Loneliness in men is also linked to cardiovascular disease and stroke, and men account for 80% of completed suicides (for which one of the leading contributing factors is loneliness).

As men, we need to acknowledge and embrace the importance of connection to people in our lives. As men, we would rather compete than connect. While women enjoy competition, women are much better at embracing connecting. Rather than competing, I’d love to see more of us striving to connect with one another.”

I cannot prove or disprove the veracity of what Porter says, but I find his comments thought-provoking and helpful. Here are a few of my thoughts related to this theme.

- The Scripture teaches us that we are multi-faceted people. We are created in God’s image. Part of the ways that our composition is understood is that we are body, soul, and spirit. To pretend that emotions like loneliness are irrelevant seems to be an imbalanced understanding of the fullness that God provides for

His children. The idea that loneliness affects the physical side of our lives shouldn't be a surprise for those who understand that God designed us as complex and interconnected beings.

- Our ethnic cultural background places a premium value on personal resilience and fortitude. I see this as being reinforced in our pragmatic faith communities and our Germanic cultural heritage. Oftentimes, relationship need is interpreted as weakness. It is often seen as preferable to present a façade that says, "I have it all together," than to say, "I am really struggling. Can you help me?"

- It is my impression that North American conservative Anabaptists have done a good job of identifying the dangers and weaknesses of an overemphasis on emotion and feeling. It is not correspondingly apparent to me that we've done so well at understanding the pitfalls and dangers of a stoic, impenetrable approach to life. This brings some pretty practical questions and considerations as we interact with our brothers in Christ whose cultural background places more emphasize on the emotional aspect of our persons. I'm thinking especially of our Hispanic and African brothers and sisters in the Lord.

- To say, "I have it all together"

tends to isolate one from the connections and relationships that are nurturing and would help one work through those rough spots. Those relationships can help reduce loneliness and its results.

- In addition to the physical dangers of loneliness, it brings a heightened spiritual vulnerability as well. Transparency and relationships are major components of a nurturing brotherhood. To retreat into lonely isolation blunts many of the benefits that brotherhood offers.

- Lonely leaders are particularly vulnerable. I find it ironic that the leaders among us, whether they are heads of households, teachers, ministers, etc. might be those who struggle the most with reaching out in ways that prevent loneliness, and thus might be the most vulnerable among us.

- The isolation during COVID-19 lockdowns was a significant problem for many. Those with well-connected human relationships, and those who were well-nourished by a vibrant connection with God, or some combination of the two, were much better equipped to weather that loneliness.

- The medium of human communication via electronic devices is both a blessing and a curse in the area of loneliness. If it

provides connection where face-to-face interaction isn't feasible, it can be a blessing. But that isn't always the case. When electronic communication replaces a stronger form of communication, it isn't as positive. A good way to help us understand the value of a communication medium is to consider what that medium replaces. If it replaces a weaker form or provides communication where none exists, it can be a blessing. But if it replaces face-to-face communication, it is likely a downgrade and has the tendency to contribute to loneliness.

May God give us the grace and wisdom to reach out in meaningful relationships in the families, churches, and communities where we live.

However, healthy and nourishing human relationships can only provide limited fulfillment unless we are operating out of a sincere and open relationship with God. We should not expect human relationships to do what only God can do for us. When our identity and security is firmly rooted in what God says about us, it frees us to interact with those God has placed around us in ways that limit our sense of loneliness and its negative results. It also equips us to go beyond that and to really seek to serve others through healthy interactions that build each other up in the Lord.

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On the fourth weekend of July our community was privileged to host the Beachy Youth Fellowship Meetings for the Southwest District. The investment in planning, hosting, organization, and execution was significant. A few more than 100 youth were present. Not quite everybody was able to attend all the sessions from the Friday evening beginning through the Sunday noon ending, but most did. My impression is that the speakers did a good job of connecting with those in attendance. The measurable benefits of such a gathering are a bit elusive, but there were some observable results that seemed quite positive to me.

Friendships were made and cultivated among many. Healthy friendships with people in other places build a sense of connection and belonging to something larger than can often happen in our local settings. They are also an excellent way to accomplish what the writer of Hebrews references in chapter 10, verse 24, "...to provoke unto love and to good works."

Rich teaching that calls people to greater faithfulness is always a positive thing. While the general thrust of the content was toward youth, it was beneficial and practical for all who were listening. That

included my wife and me.

It seemed to me that those in attendance displayed a variety of traits that indicated they wished to maximize the event. Those traits included participation in the activities and cooperation with the schedule. It also included attentiveness and verbal gratefulness. Of course, the inherent exuberance and youthful energy helped round out that impression.

The combined effect of physical

activity, social interaction, and spiritual teaching are helpful ingredients that contribute to the blessing of an event like this. It was the first time our community had the privilege of hosting these meetings. It was a very good experience for us as hosts. I hope and trust it was a positive experience for our visitors. I would be wistful if it was the last time.

–RJM 

mission awareness

The Little White Sticker

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

“From that day on I was a new person. I have been on fire for the Lord and hungry for His Word and anything that has to do with the Word of God.”

That is the testimony of Roger Percelli who found a little book in the day room at a correctional facility in New York state. The title of the book was *How to Gain Assurance of Your Salvation*. It had “a little white sticker” on the back cover that read, “We welcome your response,” with an address to respond to Choice Books of Northern Virginia. Roger was a prison inmate when he found this book that was

a seed that led him to a new life in Christ. He responded and began a writing relationship that extended over eight years.

How did that little book make its way to a prison in New York? Who wrote the book? Who introduced it to Choice Books? Who put the “little white sticker” on it? Who got it off the shelf and placed it on one of the “book pulpits” in a retail store in NYC? What motivated a customer to purchase it and donate it to a prison? Many hands and prayers were involved in the journey of this book.

The journey actually began

at Harrisonburg, VA, sometime around 1963. B. Charles Hostetter passionately expounded the Word of God on the radio program called The Mennonite Hour. The message of this book was sermons he preached for this broadcast. These sermons were later published in print form by Mennonite Publishing House in 1963. It was titled *How to Get Assurance*.

This book had been out of print for decades. A Mennonite pastor, John Forry, believed this timely message should be preserved and reprinted. He shared his vision with me and others, "Would this be a potential title for the Choice Books ministry? Merle Gingrich, owner of Little Mountain Printing, saw the potential blessing of its message. It was revised and reprinted in 2012.

Merv Stoltzfus agreed to test it for sales in Choice Books NVA. When it arrived at the warehouse, someone put "the little white sticker" on the back cover that welcomed readers' responses.

It is likely that David King picked up the book from the Manassas warehouse to place on his displays in the New York City area. There a service rep selected it to place it for sale in the public marketplace. It appears that someone purchased a copy that later was donated to the prison.

Roger's testimony is a very encouraging reminder that being "*steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*" (I Corinthians 15:58).

"In August 2010 I was arrested for burglary and was shot in the leg and lower back three times. I was hospitalized for about six months in a prison hospital. When released I was arraigned on the charges, tried, and sentenced to 10 years in a New York State prison. While in my infirmary, I was bored. I went to the day room of the correctional facility and saw a bookshelf. I went over to look for something to read. I found a little red book titled *How to Gain Assurance of Your Salvation*. I read this book and on the back was a little sticker that said, "We welcome your response." So I wrote and let them know that I liked the book and that I would like some more. Simon wrote back and sent me three more self-help books. Little did I know that this was the beginning of a really close relationship between Simon and me. As time went on I would read these self-help books. Now mind you, I was not a Christian yet. I would come across quotes from the Bible, and I would be curious and look them up in the Gideons' New Testaments

at the prison. A man at my housing facility at Fishkill Correctional Facility asked me if I would like to go to the evening chapel service with him. I figured I tried everything else in life, DRUGS, WOMEN, CRIME, and nothing worked for me, so why not give this church thing a try and see what it is all about. I'll never forget, the preacher preached on I Thessalonians 5:16-18. It was a great message. The pastor did an altar call, and I went up for prayer. When he laid his hands on me I started to cry, and immediately I felt the presence of God dwell inside of me. From that day forward I have been on fire for God and His Word, and I have served Him faithfully ever since."

"On April 5, 2015, two days after my birthday, Satan attacked me and I was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes and stage 2 renal cancer. I was immediately put on treatments for the diabetes and cancer and continued to serve God. I reached out to everyone I knew who was a Christian and requested prayer and resumed my daily life. Two years later on August 9, 2017, after routine tests, it was found that there was no trace of cancer in my system.

On April 26, 2018, God opened the doors for me to be released from prison. It was all a part of His divine plan to bring me to Him.

I'm now living in NYC in my own apartment, working, and most of all, I'm very involved in my church, Victory Baptist Church, Bronx, NY. I'm even an usher and treasurer there. My pastor is very supportive and I'm still very much in contact with Simon Schrock. In fact, on December 27-29, I'm going down to Simon's house for three days, and I'm finally going to meet him and Polly. I just want to say God had this all planned before I was born as it says in Psalm 139:1-14."

After the first letter from Roger, I sent him books, books, and more books. He wanted a Bible, so I was able to send him a very good study Bible. His library today likely has around 100 books he accumulated while in prison. During approximately eight years in several different correctional facilities in NY, we developed an ongoing relationship through the U.S. Postal Service. I started a box where I put letters and seasonal cards that I received from Roger. This precious box has around 200 cards and letters sent from prison. He was very faithful in expressing appreciation for the books and listing prayer requests for his family. One special piece of mail was receiving a copy of his baptismal certificate while incarcerated.

Roger was on parole until April 2021. His parole officer gave him

permission to come to VA for a visit and the unique opportunity for us to meet after all these years of exchanging letters. On December 27, 2019, Dave Nisly took me to Union Station, Washington, DC, for the special and long-awaited event of meeting Roger. Dave helped me get to the arrival gate of the train coming from NY. And then in a highlight of my senior years, Roger came through the arrival gate and we finally met and embraced in person. Roger later exclaimed, "It was probably the most memorable day in my life." A special treat was that he was with me for my 83rd birthday. We celebrated the special event with Polly's steamed, spiced shrimp that Roger really liked.

He attended church services with us at Faith Christian Fellowship where he gave his testimony of his new life in Christ. This was the first Sunday that he missed being

at his church in Bronx since he was released from prison. His pastor texted him to let him know he was missed. He brought his treasured Bible along to VA that was sent to him in prison and showed it with gratefulness for having received it years earlier. This weekend was truly a blessing of God's grace.

P.S. Roger calls almost daily. This morning (March 26, 2020) at 6:43, he called and read a devotional to me that he thought applied to the COVID-19 situation that Bronx is experiencing at this time. He also read Deuteronomy 28:16-25 and thought it speaks to what we are going through right now. His parole officer ordered him to stay at home and not even go out for food. His place of employment shut down and he was out of food. How God made provision is too long to tell here.



A Woman After God's Heart

Gomer

Susan Garcete, Hartly, DE



What started Gomer down the wrong path? Let us take a mind trip and follow Gomer's footsteps in an effort to understand her story

in the book of Hosea. Her lifestyle seems exceedingly wrong and so far-out. But have we ever detected in ourselves a desire to sidestep what we know to be right and good? That is

the spirit of whoredoms (Hosea 5:4).

Surely Gomer's childhood had some bright spots—some hopeful or noble possibilities. What went wrong? During her growing up years, she may have rebelled against a strict, unhealthy, or problematic home life. Maybe continual criticism brought her deep pain and a feeling of worthlessness, so she may have sought acceptance in the wrong places. It is possible that she never felt secure at home, or accepted—never good enough, and she couldn't cope with the stares of well-meaning people. Maybe she was cruelly taken advantage of by some selfish person and her days were filled with fear of the next angry words or deceitful move. Even physical necessity could have driven her towards wrong choices. And then, eventually, being married to an unpopular prophet; what different values they must have had! Almost anything could have facilitated bitterness. What a lonely heart!

Whatever the cause, the facts remain. During the course of her years, Gomer would find herself disappointed with her present situation, or possibly she was pushed off the edge. So she moved on, looking for something new, someone exciting and more fulfilling. A new broom sweeps better, they say.

God has a controversy with and an accusation to bring against such living where there is no faithfulness and no acknowledging God (chapter 4). All sorts of wrong things happen that show a lack of knowledge or a rejection of knowledge. And because of that, God will reject Gomer as well, and guess what—her children also suffer for it (4:6). He will allow great and deep troubles to surround her existence. No one else to blame; it was her fault. She had ignored and forgotten God, her Creator and Owner. (See how it works—a kind of chain of events; we forget God, and so God takes that and serves it to our children *and* us.)

Be assured that difficulties are not always punishments, but here in the book of Hosea, Gomer is depicting God's backslidden people. God says He will make her a parched land, and she will be dying of thirst. Thirst for who knows what? God will hedge in or block her way with thorn bushes, and put a stop to her mirth and celebration; those gatherings that are for eating and drinking without worship of her God (7:14).

She may still have said her prayers and retained some form of godliness. She cried out to God, but God said it was not from the heart and called it rebellion. The things she prized and enjoyed were ruined: her sustenance,

the fig trees, her essential well-being, and the grape vines.

There was so much destruction, famine, and thirst! This was so that she might find a door of hope in the valley of trouble. Her thought patterns needed to change. She needed to be done with those dead-end streets and get thirsty enough to go for the Living Water. She needed to quit thinking of God as a Master or Commander, making her a slave. He wanted to be her Husband. He had been doing so much for her, as her husband did—strengthening her arms (making provisions). It seems she hardly realized where her sustenance came from but simply went on her way as a silly dove without heart (7:11), easily deceived and senseless.

“What a life!” we say, and wonder how Gomer felt about it all. Did she ever stop and really think it over? Do we? What may have been her feelings when Hosea showed interest in her? Even more so when he bought her back (chapter 3). Amazed? Curious? Did she wonder how or why? Would he love someone who was not even respectable? Might she have felt that the standards were too high in the first place and was unsure about going back? Did she long to accept a love that promised rest, healing, and security? Yet how could she ever be

good enough to be a prophet’s wife? She hadn’t been able to live right by herself, much less be an example and help to others. She was of the lowest; good people would never put up with her. Or was she so weary and completely done with destroying herself that she burst into tears of contrition and gratitude? Did her heart swell at the words of concern, forgiveness, and healing? Can you feel her heartbeat, considering this forgotten hope?

Responses from us who are prone to wander are many and varied, but the Lord our God asks that we come to Him with words. He asks that we speak our hearts (chapter 14), begging for forgiveness and mercy, praising Him, acknowledging, and promising allegiance.

When that happens, His response is overwhelmingly beautiful. When we return to God with our whole heart and soul, He promises to be like the dew that falls gently and is nourishing and refreshing. He will give healing and love, attention when we call, and care for us all around. We will be like a fascinating plant, thriving upwards, sending down stabilizing roots, and spreading out branches that offer blessed and restful shade. Others will be refreshed and strengthened when pausing for a bit under your growth.

Just as we happily anticipate a well-loved fruit coming to maturity, so our flourishing lives will be a joy, splendor, and fragrance to God and for God. The blossoms produced among the verdant green possess a delicate perfume. Sometimes the sweet scent is actually pain distilled into beauty.

No matter the mistakes in the past, sister, your life can be like a lily plant (14:5) in full bloom, unique in its

own right, pure, lovely, and focused on God. Self-consciousness only gets in the way. Know that any fruit produced is from Him (14:8). Our God knows our fickle hearts, our scars, our hang-ups, yet He loves us with an everlasting love. We are not worthy to be called His daughters, but He says that He will bind us to Him forever in righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, and mercy. Isn't that truly out of this world?



junior messages

Slippery and Secret Places

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

One day in the small town of Ny'gia in Kenya I was stocking up on seasonal fruits and other grocery items. The one shop was downhill from the road. I walked down the gravel bank and my feet slipped. I fell on my knee and skinned it hard enough that it bled. I wiped my knee with my lasso (African scarf) and soon hailed a piki piki (small cycle) driver to take me home. I got on the long seat, being careful to not touch the driver as the culture dictated. He took off and soon dropped me off at our gate.

A young neighbor girl was loitering near the blue gate. On a whim I showed her my knee. She gasped,

so surprised that my blood was red. What a funny thing; for some strange reason the children thought my blood was white.

In America one winter day the snow was coated with ice. I was helping Mark burn trash. My boots were rather smooth. I hoisted some trash on the burn pile and whoosh, my feet flew out from under me. I landed hard on the icy snow. It hurt, and I saw stars. After that fall I was careful and cautious when walking over ice.

Secret places and secret sins are like a slippery slope leading down to the devil's domain.

If you are hiding things that are

wrong from your parents, and you know they would not approve, beware. You are on a slippery slope. Where will your sliding end? If you are tempted to look at things on your phone that are wrong, talk to your parents about it. If your friends are encouraging you to smoke or do other sins, ask God to help you say no, and again, talk to your mom and dad or an older Christian friend.


Satan tempts us to walk in darkness. Jesus calls us to walk in the Light, the Light of His Word—the light of living with nothing to hide.

Remember the Old Testament story of Achan who was so tempted to take money and fancy clothes from an enemy city? He wanted it so much even though Joshua said they were not to take any of these things. Achan did not resist temptation. Maybe he

hid the loot in his robe to sneak it home. When he got back to his tent he covered the things in a hole he dug in his tent.

When we want to hide, we need to look up. God always knows. Achan couldn't hide from God. Achan's disobedience cost his life. Jonah couldn't hide from God. His running from God resulted in three hot nights in the fish's belly. You and I can't hide anything from God. Hiding sins will hurt ourselves and others.

It is a wonderful thing to live for God, starting when you are young. It is wonderful to live with nothing to hide. God can help us so our feet do not slip into sin.

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). 

youth messages

Combating Procrastination

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

No one is served well by procrastination. It breeds the tyranny of the urgent, enslaves us to deadlines, and produces lackluster results. I know this from my own experience as a writer and as a student in school.

Procrastination manifests itself in

three ways. The first is a conscious choice not to act or decide and usually is based on laziness or feelings. The second level is to let busyness distract us away from the important because we have not disciplined our thinking or scheduled our time. The third level is to be steered away from the

necessary by interruptions because we have not learned to focus.

I recently listened to George Kamel interviewing Rory Vaden, author of *Take the Stairs*¹. I do not quote him directly, but I do use his ideas and some of his thoughts in this article. He calls the first level of procrastination Classic Procrastination. For example, I know I have a cavity, but I don't feel like going to the dentist right now, so I put it off and figure I'll do it another time. Simply put, it is not doing what we should.

The second type of procrastination Vaden labels Creative Avoidance. Unlike Classic Procrastination, Creative Avoidance is not a definite choice, it is more subconscious. Creative Avoidance is delaying the things we know we should be doing by creating meaningless things to do. This allows us to still feel productive because we are accomplishing something. For example, I know the yard needs to be mowed but I'm slightly dreading it. As I walk to the garage to get the mower, I notice that the garden needs to be tilled, so I do that instead. While I'm tilling, I notice there are some tall weeds that need to be trimmed, so I get out the string trimmer. As I trim the weeds,

1. Rory Vaden, "This is the Greatest Antidote to Your Success," *EntreLeadership* podcast, July 11, 2022

I see some tree limbs that need to be cut up, so I decide to cut them up and maybe cut some more wood while I have the chainsaw out. I've been productive, but I still haven't mowed the yard.

When we accomplish a task on a list and cross it off, that accomplishment causes a release of dopamine (also known as the "feel-good hormone"). We can easily get addicted to completing things just to complete them because it makes us feel good in the short term. As a child, I vividly remember the list of things to do on our produce farm that my dad would leave for us when he went to work. We loved crossing things off of that list, and sometimes we added things we had done but weren't on the list just so we could cross them off. Unfortunately, staying busy doesn't mean we are getting the important things finished. Success is not related to the volume of tasks we complete, it is related to the significance of them. Focusing on the most important tasks makes us more effective people. When we practice Creative Avoidance we are living a life that can be characterized as a constant state of distraction.

The third type of procrastination Vaden labels Priority Dilution. Priority Dilution is characterized as completing things that are urgent,

but not as important. Picture a business leader who accomplishes a lot of important things in a day but fails to do the few VERY important things that will have the most impact. An example of this would be when I'm at work, and I'm trying to cut out some cabinet parts that are necessary to keeping others producing and to complete an order in a timely manner. One of my team members comes to me and needs help with something. When I'm done helping him, I get a phone call. After that, I have to unload a delivery truck. Then I have to do some quality inspections after which I end up in the office ordering something we're running short on. By the end of the day, I've accomplished many things, but I never did cut the cabinet parts. Those things needed to be done, but they interrupted what was priority. When you allow your priorities to be diluted you allow your attention to shift. If you dilute your focus you get diluted results. Whereas Creative Avoidance can be described as a constant state of distraction, Priority Dilution can be described as a constant state of interruption.

How can we combat procrastination and limit its impact in our lives? First, we need to be willing to recognize and identify areas where we practice procrastination on all

three levels whether intentional or not. Second, we need to put in the effort to change our habits. Third, we must discipline ourselves to make schedules, and fourth, learn to focus on the important.


For some people, making a checklist helps. Make a list of the things you need to accomplish and put them in order of importance. I believe that this applies not only to the day-to-day activities, but also to our broader life plans. Discipline yourself to do the things on the list in the order of priority.

Another thing we can do to help with procrastination is focus. If you take a piece of paper and put it in direct sunlight, it may get warm, but the sunlight won't do much to the paper. If you take a magnifying glass and focus the sunlight, you can burn a hole in the paper. The same water that can buoy a steel aircraft carrier weighing over 2.25 million tons, can be focused into a tiny stream at high pressure and be used to cut through the same steel. One way of focusing is to schedule our time. Just like a budget is focusing money, a schedule focuses time. To get the most out of our money, we budget it. If we want to get the most out of our time, we should budget that as well. When focus is applied in almost every area of our lives, it will yield positive

results. Focus is power.

If we want to continue to improve in our fight against procrastination, we need to be willing to make sacrifices. Procrastination and indulgence are nothing more than creditors that charge us interest. The paradox principle of sacrifice, according to Vaden, says, “Easy short-term choices lead to difficult long-term consequences. Difficult short-term choices lead to easy long-term consequences.” Even though it seems very inconvenient today, it will pay dividends for us tomorrow. Rory Vaden also mentioned a concept that I found thought-provoking and powerful in the right context. “There is no such thing as sacrifice. There are just short-term down payments on future blessings.” For example, the older I get, the harder it is for me to maintain the level of fitness that I had as a young man. It is so easy to take that second helping of food or drink that soda. It’s not so easy to say no or to spend time exercising in order to burn the calories necessary to get to that desired level of fitness. The very things that seem easy in the short term are the very vehicles that lead to the more difficult life. Meanwhile, all of the things that we think of as hard are actually the vehicle to the easier life. The young person who says “Someday I’ll save, but right now I

want to buy _____” does not realize that a few years down the road when they are trying to buy a home, they will wish they had those dollars back.

Priority Dilution has a flip side known as Procrastination on Purpose. This means we put off some things we need to do to complete something that will create or save time in the future. This is accomplished by investing time today into things that will create more time tomorrow. Every year our church does a pizza fundraiser. One of the most tedious and difficult jobs is putting the finished pizzas into a bag before putting them in the box. One of the men from church took the time to design, test, and build a device that holds the bags open so that you can quickly and efficiently put the finished pizza in the bag. It eliminated one more person from each assembly line and allowed them to help elsewhere, which in turn sped up the whole process of assembling 1400 pizzas. We could have kept doing it the hard way, but someone took the time to find a time-saving solution. The shortest most-guaranteed path to greatness is to do the hardest parts of things as soon as possible. That’s called discipline. Discipline is the greatest antidote to procrastination. 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Humility is remaining teachable.

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Life without hope is a life without meaning.

• • • • •

Choice, not change, determines human destiny.

• • • • •

Indolence is the mental alertness to avoid hard work.

• • • • •

He who falls in love with himself will have no rivals.

• • • • •

He who sings his own praises seldom gets the right pitch.

• • • • •

The person who looks up to God rarely looks down on people.

• • • • •

Reputation is the photograph, character is the face.

• • • • •

To every man is given the power of choice.

• • • • •

Choice is the strongest principle of growth.

• • • • •

We forge the chains we wear in life.

• • • • •

Idleness is stagnant satisfaction.