



CALVARY MESSENGER

“ . . . God forbid that I should glory, save in
the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . ”
Galatians 6:14

JULY 2005

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JULY 2005

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 Saviour;

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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Unanswered Questions

Author unknown

[This poem was found after the death of Caroline Plett, whose story was told in “One Family’s Affliction,” Calvary Messenger, March, 2005, page 28. Caroline was suddenly afflicted with a rare genetic failure of her bone marrow to make new blood cells. She died in May, 2003, after a brief, severe illness at 34 years of age. Her mother, Helena, found this poem by Caroline’s bathroom mirror after her home going.—PLM]

Unanswered questions—at times I question my faith,

There are pieces to puzzles I never can fit into place.

But a voice deep within, says,
“Child, trust Me and be of good cheer.

Heaven waits to explain it and make it all clear.”

Doors that won’t open, the storms and painful good-byes,

Fill my mind with confusion, my mouth with, “Dear Lord, why?”

Then He whispers, “My child, take My hand and keep following Me.

Some day heaven will focus the picture that now we can’t see.”

Heaven holds all the answers that we’ll never know till we’re there.

All the reasons for our trials, our burdens and our cares,

In the presence of Jesus, we’ll know and understand well.

Heaven holds all the secrets that time will not tell.



Turning Around

All who find salvation in Christ, find it only after turning around. This is not a random writhing and twisting, but a repentant, decisive 180-degree turn. When we arrive in this world, it is obvious to the observant that we are all programmed to go in the wrong direction. Unless something stops our lemming-like determination to self-destruct, we will all perish.

What can we do? We must all turn away from sin and self and turn to Jesus Christ.

Some hesitate. They realize that something is wrong, but after pausing briefly, they seem always to go on again, in the same direction. Thornton observed: "True repentance consists in the heart being broken for sin and broken from sin. Some often 'repent,' yet never [truly] reform. They resemble a man traveling in a dangerous path, who frequently starts and stops, but never turns back."

Some stop—then go on with a new resolve. They may profess faith in Jesus, and "receive Him as their Savior." But in their minds, their own insights and opinions are much better

than other people's are. And so, they do not find liberating freedom from the tyranny of self. As one prison Bible teacher, whose name I don't know, said: "It is quite important that the essence of genuine repentance is addressed..., because many who make a profession of faith never actually repent. They never change the motive of promoting self supremely, but rather only decide to use God as a means of promoting self supremely." That, unfortunately, happens outside prison doors, too.

Think about it. Unless the new birth includes genuine sorrow for my sin, I am at best only going through some motions of being a Christian. I may copy good men. I can do some of the things they do and say some of the words they say, but if I have not experienced a deep sorrow for my pig-headed desire to have things my own way, to have the most and the best and to be highly esteemed, I am probably just going through the motions of being a Christian. In that condition, I have little "salt" or "light." Unless I bring forth fruit meet for repentance, I am walking only in the strength of my own

determination.

God has something better for me. This can only be found if I abandon the foundation of self-supremacy, genuinely resolving to proceed with life from the ultimate purpose of pleasing, serving, and honoring God supremely.

Tragically, there is a second 180-degree turn that some travelers make. Peter writes about it in 2 Peter 2:22 with two comparisons to common farm animals: Those who turn again from the path of life in Christ are like a dog that eats what it just threw up—its own vomit. They are also like a pig, all washed off, that heads right back to a filthy mud hole. The second 180-degree turn completes a full 360-degree turn that gets us going again in the original direction of travel—away from God. **Beware of the second turn around!**

What are the signs, my friend? Have you really turned from your own way to His way? Or do you take comfort in the things you don't do? You don't copy the dress (and undress) of the world, you don't smoke, you don't abuse drugs, you don't drink, you don't gamble, you don't swear. That's all good, but it takes more than that.

Perhaps you find satisfaction in reciting the failures of other professing Christians. By comparison, your

life looks good, at least to you. This approach also fails to meet God's requirements.

True faith is not shown in what we don't do or who we don't like. It includes a loathing for one's own filthy self-righteousness. Furthermore, it requires the cleansing power of Jesus' blood applied to one's own sins. It is sincere affection for the Savior that admits no rivals. It is a living hope of heaven through the finished work and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Unless we have truly repented, we are holding tickets that won't take us to glory. The good news is that if someone holds an invalid ticket he can do something about it. Even as he looks at it and realizes with dismay that it isn't made out to destination Heaven, while there's life, there's still hope. He can step right up, show his counterfeit ticket and humbly ask for one that's written with the blood of Christ. You can, too.

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Ye Are Gods

In John 10:31-38, Jesus spoke words that have puzzled me. He quoted Psalm 82:6, which says, "Ye are gods." Then Jesus continued with, "...he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I

am the Son of God?"

What does that mean? "**Ye are gods.**"

It seems clear to me that Jesus was primarily explaining why He was not blaspheming by calling Himself the Son of God. But there is more. Why are we humans called gods? Does this simply underscore the fact that man is God's special creation? Does it relate to the fact that it was only as God set about to make man that He offered the explanation that He would create a being in His own image? (Genesis 1:26-27)

I invite helpful insights. Please submit them in time that I can publish some of them in the September issue. They need to be here in July to be in time for that. Thank you, kind readers, for your participation.

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We are grateful to announce the appointment of **Bro. Ernest Eby** as our **new youth editor**. While we did not want to lose the former editor, Bro. Ken Miller, we wish him God's blessings as he passes on this responsibility.

After Ken became youth editor, he and his wife, Linda, served as missionaries in East Africa. They took their young family to Kenya for a term of service, during which time he experienced a near death trauma at the hands of a murderous mob. His story, "Kept by the Power of

God," was published in four installments (April-July, 2002) in *Calvary Messenger*. He wrote vividly in first person of the trauma of that memorable day. No one envies him for that. After all, who would want to be able to write in first person about such a nightmarish experience?

More recently, Bro. Ken has been ordained as minister at Pilgrim Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA. May God's blessings rest on you in that work, Ken and Linda! Sometimes a young man with a young family must know when to acknowledge he's getting too busy. Thanks again for serving as youth editor, Ken!

Bro. Ernest Eby grew up in Maryland, but now lives at Mountain View, Arkansas. He is a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ and is serving well as Dean of Men at Calvary Bible School. In that role he is in contact with many young people of our constituency. We believe that gives him contact with "grass roots" issues and might also provide him opportunity to find good writing from our young people.

To our youth, we welcome concise, well-thought-out writing (interaction with questions, testimonies, essays or poems) **by youth**. Send them to Bro. Ernest at:

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—PLM 

On Adoption

The article on adoption (April, 2005, page 33) was appreciated and the seven points of admonition thought provoking.

However, the statement that “women who are denied physical motherhood have the option to choose adoption” seemed a bit too simplistic to me. For some of us, many factors enter into the decision to pursue adoption.

Some wives may need to exercise lots of patience and gentle persuasion to slowly draw out their husband’s interest in parenting a child unrelated to themselves. Some couples need to face the difficult decision whether the call of the church to serve on a distant mission field should be answered before their inner longing to adopt a family. And for most couples, adopting places a financial strain on the household budget.

It can cause a hard struggle to see our “rich brethren” acquiring more lands and possessions while we, as an adopting family, pinch pennies and take on added debt so that we can welcome a child into our family. We have wondered already why there couldn’t be an “adoption assistance fund” supported by the church.

Many people willingly share

finances when a premature baby requires a long and expensive hospital stay, or when chronic health needs require extensive treatment. But has anyone ever offered money to a long-ing family whose child is living in an orphanage abroad and needs its way paid to “come home”?

To those of you living among us who have been adopted—we love and appreciate you for representing to us the beauty of Christ’s Kingdom wherein all are accepted regardless of their nationality or background. You also represent to us the hope of some day making a difference in a child’s destiny.

If you feel “different,” may I remind you that most of us feel that way at some point in our lives. Some have never known the use of two strong legs. Here is a child growing up as an only child. There is a family whose father has forsaken them for worldly pursuits. Some cope with mental illnesses; others just never seem to be able to acquire financial security.

There always will be those situations and questions with which we feel uncomfortable. I still walk away when a conversation among women turns to childbearing experiences. It’s an event I will never realize. But

let us accept life's unfair situations with meekness and claim Jesus' words in John 14:1 and 27, "My peace I give unto you...let not your heart be troubled."

Name withheld

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Hillcrest Observations

Greetings, Bro. Paul,

Recently here at Hillcrest we received a list of names from the ministers of a certain church, of potential workers within their youth group. Receiving that list was such a blessing and encouragement to us. It felt much better having these names come from the church leaders of these young people rather than from a peer or a friend. Not only did it

communicate support for Hillcrest, but it also told us that these ministers know their young people and are, at least somewhat involved in their lives. There is no hesitation on our part to contact young people who have been recommended by their church leaders. We believe that if more church leaders would do this it would have a positive effect on our VS units.

We hope this will motivate more ministers to send lists of potential workers to our VS units.

Thanks, and God Bless!!

Jason Miller
Youth Director
Hillcrest Home



Beware of Unbelief

Ervin N. Hershberger (1914-2003)

Taken from God's Wake-up Call, copyright, 2004, Vision Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 190, Harrisonburg, VA, 22803. Phone: 540-437-1967. Used by permission.

Chapter Four

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).

"O Lord, I know that the way of

man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Therefore, we must put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who came from heaven to be our Savior and our Guide.

The Background

The warning in Hebrews 3:7-4:1, the second and longest in the book of Hebrews, is based on a happening in Israel's history. The children of

Israel had seen God demonstrate His mighty power in the ten plagues of Egypt. He had parted the Red Sea by stacking up the water like walls on each side and bringing Israel through on dry ground. Then He had brought the waters crashing down, drowning the Egyptian army and their horses.

The bitter waters of Marah He had made sweet with a tree, so the Israelites could drink. One evening he had covered their camp with quail for supper, and in the morning He had rained bread from heaven. Then, all through their wilderness journey, He had fed them daily with manna. He had brought a river of water out of the smitten rock in Horeb, and had delivered them from the armies of Amalek. God had brought them safely through “that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought.” To every problem they encountered, He had been the perfect, never-failing solution.

All this, and much more, they had witnessed and experienced. God had brought them to the very borders of Canaan, and had promised, “I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Jebusite” (Exodus 33:2).

Yet, they did not trust God to do what He had promised. Hear Moses tell the story:

“And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: and they...searched it out” (Deuteronomy 1:20-24).

They were more willing to trust the recommendation of human spies than the omniscience, grace, and promises of Almighty God. Their suggestion even pleased Moses. Because of their request, God told Moses to select one man from each tribe [substituting the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh for the tribes of Levi and Joseph] Ten of the twelve spies were more impressed with the giants than with the promises and power of God. Believing the spies more than they believed God, the people rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and God said, “Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted

me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it” (Numbers 14:22, 23).

For the complete story, study Numbers 13:26-14:15. Here again the Israelites had said, “Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God we had died in this wilderness!” Therefore God took them up on their request and said, “Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness” (Numbers 14:29-33).

Because of their unbelief and rebellion, they had to wander another thirty-eight years in the wilderness, until all the men of war, except Caleb

and Joshua, had died. That disaster is the background of this most lengthy warning in the book of Hebrews.

The Warning

The warning may be divided into four paragraphs. The roots of the first paragraph are found in Psalm 95:7b-11, which Hebrews 4:7 credits to David: “Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest” (Hebrews 3:7-11).

The second paragraph, addressing New Testament and church age situations, is especially pertinent for us today. It diagnoses the tendency of man to do evil, explaining the hardening effects and deceitfulness of sin. But it also assures us that in Christ there is power for Christians to overcome.

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers

of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; while it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation” [at Kadesh-barnea, Deuteronomy 1:19-22] (Hebrews 3:12-15).

In the third paragraph, the writer of Hebrews grieves for the estimated one and one-half million (including 603,550 men of war, their wives, and in some cases their children) who perished in the wilderness through unbelief. Although the word “unbelief” is not found in the KJV Old Testament, the malignancy of it has been very much in evidence ever since the fall of man. It is no wonder that the writer to the Hebrews feared for the unbelieving Jews of his day, and for the wayfaring defectors of our day.

“For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:16-19).

In the fourth paragraph, the writer says, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into

his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” This verse is tailor-made for modern day Christians who after lifelong opportunities to benefit from all these biblical records, still seem to come short of victories they should and could be experiencing in Christ.

The Problem

In some sin-darkened countries today, the Gospel light is beginning to dawn, and churches are growing rapidly. But “enlightened” North Americans seem to be gospel hardened, and churches are dying. God measures spiritual life neither by enrollment nor activity, but by our commitment and receptivity to His Holy Word and will. Many professing Christians are engulfed in entertainment, the pursuit of pleasure, and the lusts of the flesh.

Every year one and one-half million unborn American babies are sacrificed to the gods of self-indulgence and irresponsibility (misnamed “freedom of choice”) with governmental protection and even financial support. Sins thoroughly denounced in both the Old and New Testaments, that our civil laws once prohibited, now are legalized by law and tolerated by many churches.

According to veteran pollster George Gallup, the lifestyles of many church members have decayed to the levels of general society. Society is

not becoming more Christlike, but churchianity is embracing more and more immorality, divorce, remarriage, dishonesty, lying, cheating, pilferage, and the like. God and His Word have not changed and will not change, but churches in unbelief are rapidly ripening for judgment.

Plain (conservative-minded) churches may be relatively free from some of these open and obvious sins, but let us not forget that plain worldliness also is condemned by a just and holy God. Materialism, the love of money, self-centeredness, high-minded thoughts about ourselves, unholy thoughts, and fantasies all are sins that may be hidden from public knowledge, and even from our own personal realization, but not from God, who condemns them.

We may even be guilty of unbelief by unwittingly denying plainly stated prophetic Scriptures. I have been guilty and needed to repent of that myself. God lovingly warns us to beware of unbelief. Let us beware of unwitting oversights that may be unbelief in God's sight.

The Solution

What we need is a living and active faith in a living and active Savior. A dead faith saves no one, but a living faith will save sinners. A living Savior can transform the vilest sinner into a clean, radiant, and victorious Christian. Jesus transformed Saul the

persecutor into a dynamic apostle to the Gentiles with a never-dying zeal for his own people as well.

The word *faith*, which occurs only twice in the King James Version of the Old Testament, appears 245 times in the New Testament. Paul was a most prolific proponent of faith. *Faith* occurs 49 times in Romans, 32 times in Hebrews, 22 times in Galatians, 19 times in 1 Timothy, and 59 times in Paul's other epistles (a total of 171 times).

Paul in sincerity, and yet in blind unbelief and error, had devoted himself to persecuting Christians. But after his conversion, and with Jesus in his heart, the flame of faith was never again extinguished in his life. Let Paul tell you what he willingly suffered for the faith that saved his soul.

“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (2 Corinthians 11:24-27).

Hebrews 11, the faith chapter, in the first 34 verses names 16 Old Testament heroes, telling of wonders they wrought by faith. It continues with others too numerous to name,

“Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had a trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:33-40).

The “better thing” that we now have is the New Testament, the written Gospel of Christ. “For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew

first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of law might be fulfilled [by Jesus Christ] in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:3,4).

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Old Testament saints who by faith embraced the promises of God without wavering enjoyed the saving power of God, even though they died as martyrs. Although they “received not the promise” by seeing its fulfillment in this life, they were sealed and safe by faith in the promise, long before Jesus came in the flesh to make that promise good. But we, with the Gospel at hand and all these examples before us, are even more responsible and more accountable than they were.

“For unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48b).

Beware of unbelief!



Another Anabaptist Reconciliation Conference—Part Two

Aaron Lapp
Kinzers, PA

[In Part One, Aaron Lapp began a report on a meeting held at Petra Christian Fellowship, near New Holland, Pa, April 7, 8, and 9, 2005. This month he continues his report.]

Ivan Doxtater, a Native American preacher, was the featured speaker on Thursday evening. He gave a good message on forgiveness. “Forgiveness is the key to deliverance. Forgiveness unlocks our inheritance. The Bible is a living document. The Bible is also a legal document. The foundation of the kingdom of God is righteousness.” Doxtater said he and other tribal leaders continue to pray that God would forgive the American government for their abuse of Native Americans in the past and for the illegal takeover of their land. Conference leaders called for respondents to offer reconciliation and for the healing of our land.

Friday was a special day. John Ruth, aged Mennonite historian, was particularly eloquent in his talk on Anabaptist history. John’s forbears came to America in 1717. He is of Swiss parentage. He said Pope John Paul

apologized to Jews and Protestants in 2000. An acknowledgement of “the official church” (Catholic) being wrong was almost unthinkable. When the Lutherans in Germany asked the Mennonites to join them in the special celebration of their Augsburg Confession, the Mennonites raised questions about what relations they can have since the Augsburg Confession refers to the “verdammte Wiedertaeufer” (damned Anabaptists). The Mennonites asked “What about that?” The Lutherans replied, “Oh, don’t worry about that, we’ll take care of it.”

Ruth said the printing press made the Bible available to the common man. Conrad Grebel was a young preacher in Zurich. He said he will begin to preach directly from the Scriptures, stating it as it is. Even though Conrad was of the aristocratic class, he failed as a student, yet he turned out to be an excellent writer. Early in his time, he was hailed as the future star of Switzerland. Felix Manz was also a university student and turned in Conrad’s direction as a helper.

The Catholics were justified burning people at the stake, because they were attempting thereby to eradicate

heresy from the land. Thus they burned between 600 and 700 Anabaptists in the northern areas.

Ruth said 200-400 Anabaptists finally moved because of unbearable persecution. They moved up to the Palatinate, which had been devastated by the Thirty Year War, 1618-1648. But Berne could not get rid of their Anabaptist citizens. The Swiss have long been considered the toughest of all European soldiers. People from Berne were the toughest of the tough. (Any readers whose ancestors came from Berne? Now you have something else to be proud of.)

Bernese Anabaptists were also considered, at times, “stoltz” (proud) of their piety. When they were asked why they stayed so long in Berne, they replied, “Because the church was thriving.”

In 1670, the Berne city fathers made a new law: “All citizens must take an oath of allegiance with an upraised hand.” The Anabaptists said Christ forbade swearing with an oath. Soon seven hundred people fled, moving northward to Germany.

Ruth said the Amman/Reist Rift gave rise to the Amish of today. They have “streng Meidung” (strict shunning) and base partaking of communion on faithful adherence to church rules. Some Mennonites have little order or discipline and criticize the Amish. When they do so, they are outside the Anabaptist tradition of being

non-combatant. (Amen? Amen!) Ruth observed that in spite of the fact that we talk about reconciliation we seem to divide more and more.

He said the Dutch Mennonites did not have church regulations. They became merchants, doctors, lawyers, and upper class professionals. As they became influential and wealthy, they were gradually assimilated into the general populace. Later the Russian Mennonites followed in that same pattern with identical results, and they both thanked God for the privilege and gloried in God’s blessings to them. Then Ruth added, “And we Mennonites in America are doing the very same thing.”

This last paragraph was given earlier in his speech. At the end, there was wonderful applause and the moderator hailed John Ruth as “bringing this great prophetic word to us today.”

In the Friday afternoon session that followed, the Swiss Reformed church leaders had a turn to speak. Their words were very interesting and significant. Next month I will give seven reasons for my favorable reception of their coming for reconciliation and healing.

The bottom line is: We have a priceless inheritance from our forefathers. No question about that. How to unlock these treasures raises some crucial questions.



marriages

Gerber-Wagler

Bro. Joseph, son of Raymond and Deborah Gerber, Brunner, ON, and Sis. Anita Marie, daughter of Elroy and Diane Wagler, Newton, ON, at Cedar Grove A.M. Church, for Fellowship Haven A.M. Church, May 7, 2005, by Lewis Tice, Grantsville, MD.

Hostetler-Gingerich

Bro. Daniel Jay, son of Samuel and Anna Hostetler, Belleville, PA, and Sis. Christine, daughter of Abe and Amanda Gingerich, Free Union, VA, at Pilgrim Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA, for Faith Mission Fellowship, Free Union, VA, on April 30, 2005, by Ivan Beachy.

Miller-Hostetler

Bro. Jesse, son of William and Alta Miller, Blackville, SC, and Sis. Lori

cradle roll

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

Bange, Nathan and Martha Jean (Esh), Suceava, Romania, fourth child, third dau., Angelica Rose, May 7, 2005.

Beachy, Mark and Carolyn (Hostetler), Plain City, OH, fourth child, first son, Braden Mark, May 17, 2005.

Kay, daughter of Norman and Anna Mary Hostetler, Belleville, PA, at Valley View A.M. Church, on Nov. 20, 2004, by Virgil Kanagy.

Stoltzfus-Marner

Bro. Jamie, son of Alvin and Lill Stoltzfus, Blackville, SC, and Sis. Esther, dau. of Eva and the late David Marner, Cochran, PA, at New Holland, SC, on Oct. 15, 2004, by Virgil Kanagy.

Yoder-Byler

Bro. Nathanael, son of Dan and Barbara Yoder, Waterford, Ireland, and Sis. Ruth, daughter of Lester and Ruby Byler, Napanee, IN, at Maple Lawn A.M. Church, on Sept. 10, 2004, by Thomas Mast.

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

Beachy, Robert and Thelma (Hostetler), Plain City, OH, second child and son, Gabriel Jon, May 13, 2005.

Byler, John and Barbara (Erb), Brunner, ON, second child and son, Bradley Mark, March 31, 2005.

Bontrager, Nelson and Christa (Wray), Kokomo, IN, second and third children, twin daughters, Nicole Brooke and Natalie Briana, April 28, 2005.

Helmuth, Evangel and Rachel (Miller), Quaker City, OH, third child and son, Reagen Fredrick, May 26, 2005.

Kauffman, Clair and Anna (Kauffman), Lancaster, PA, first child and dau., Kirsten Amber, April 24, 2005.

King, A. James and Melanie (Stoltzfus), presently serving with Choice Books in Brooklyn, NY, second child and son, Daniel Jacob, May 15, 2005.

King, Richard and Shannon (Byler), Lancaster, PA, second child, first son, Gabriel Benjamin, March 9, 2005.

Knepp, Philip and Melisa (Graber), Odon, IN, first child and dau., Cheyanne Yvonne, May 6, 2005.

Lapp, David and Mary (Stoltzfus), Gap, PA, sixth child, third son, Elijah Ryan, March 11, 2005.

Martin, Elam and Barbara (Jantzi), Baden, ON, fourth child, second son, Nicholas Elam, May 1, 2005.

Mast, Titus and Judy (Herr), Newberry, IN, fourth child, first dau., Lori Joann, April 29, 2005.

Miller, Glenn Dale and Ruth Eileen (Lapp), Bird-in-Hand, PA, second child, first son, Erwin John, May 1, 2005.

Miller, Jason and Anna (Troyer), Quaker City, OH, second child, first dau., Kari Elizabeth, May 13, 2005.

Miller, Jonathan and Sherri (Beachy), West Jefferson, OH, second child, first dau., Taylor Elizabeth, May, 29, 2005.

Smoker, Jason and Rosella (Lapp), Parkesburg, PA, seventh child, fourth dau., Maria Elsie, May 24, 2005.

Stoltzfus, Curtis and Cheryl (Kuepfer), Honey Brook, PA, sixth child, third dau., Dorothea Michelle, Feb. 9, 2005.

Weaver, Travis and Rhoda (Schmucker), Franklin, KY, second child and son, Jordan Lamar, April 21, 2005.

Yoder, Lyndon and Joann (Hostetler), Paris, TN, fifth child, second son, Jadon Paul, May 13, 2005.

One good way to wage
war against poverty might
be to abolish credit cards.



ordination

Bro. Charles Hamilton, 42, was chosen by voice of the church and ordained to the office of bishop at Little Flock Christian Fellowship, Harrison, AR, on May 1, 2005. Preordination speaker was Jonathan S. Stoltzfus,

obituaries

Bontrager, Elam J., 80, died April 12, 2005, at his home. He was born at Goshen, IN, Jan 23, 1925, son of the late Jacob and Fannie (Schrock) Bontrager.

He was a member of Rosewood Fellowship.

On March 16, 1948, he was married to Mary Yoder. She died April 23, 1987.

Five children were born to them. Glen (Waneda) Bontrager, Mountain View, AR; Thomas (Rhoda) Bontrager, Goshen, IN; Ruby (Mrs. Ted Gilmer), Leola, PA; Naomi (Mrs. Verlin Cross), Leitchfield, KY; Grace (Mrs. Jerry Hochstetler), Goshen, IN. Other survivors include: 18 grandchildren, one great grandchild, three sisters: Clara Gingerich, Bemidji, MN; Ida Helmuth, Goshen, IN; Viola (Mrs. Crist Gingerich), Shipshewana, IN, and one brother, Gideon (Verna) Bontrager, Goshen, IN.

Preceding him in death were a son, Lloyd; a sister, Laura Ropp; four brothers: Simon, Daniel, Ezra and Lloyd.

Narvon, PA.

The charge was given by Elmer Gingerich, assisted by Jonathan Stoltzfus and Tim Stoltzfus.

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

Funeral services were held April 15, at Fairhaven for Rosewood, with Glenn Yoder, Daniel Bontrager and Leroy Miller serving. Burial was in the Clinton Union Cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Jacob S., 62, McVeytown, PA, died January 24, 2005, nearly four years after he was diagnosed with cancer. He was born July 9, 1942, son of Jacob and Barbara (Stoltzfus) Stoltzfus.

He was a member and bishop of Gospel Light Fellowship, McVeytown.

On Nov. 14, 1963, he was married to Annie S. King. She survives. Also surviving are nine children: Naomi (Mrs. Steve Hershberger); Erma (Mrs. Tim Miller); Katie Mae (Mrs. Johnny Miller); Matthew (Martha); Rhoda (Mrs. Josiah Lapp); Jacob (Orpha); Daniel; Keturah Joy (Mrs. Aaron Knepp); Jadon Elmer, at home and 29 grandchildren.

No funeral arrangements were included for publication. The following tribute was given by his devoted wife, Annie:

In Loving Memory of

Jacob Stoltzfus

(Sincerely, with love and appreciation)

My husband and faithful companion
has gone

To meet His Redeemer—up there by
the throne.

To see Jesus' hands marked by those
nails

That precious blood shed for all of our
sins.

To sing with the other blood-washed
souls,

To live in those mansions Jesus said He's
prepared.

And see little children play on the
streets,

The fullness of joy must be so com-
plete!

His new body free from all sickness
and pain,

Uncertainties gone—Oh, what a gain!
All trials and sorrows of this life are
gone.

His smiles and labors of love are all
done.

The night of his flight seemed unreal
to me,

With joined hearts and hands for 41
years.

The thought of the parting was very
severe.

The farewells and good-byes brought
sadness and tears.

Yet God was calling Jake, "Come home
and rest."

I prayed, "Oh Lord, let me no hindrance
be.

I'll let go his hand and commit him to
Thee.

You've promised to comfort and take
care of me."

I knew for Jake it would all be gain.

I need to submit and here to remain.

And take on the service God chooses
for me,

Till He calls me home my loved one
to see.

To all of our friends and relatives, too,
We thank you for coming and sharing
our grief.

Your prayers and cards, the flowers and
calls

Helped grace our pathway and bring
some relief.

My God receive all the glory and
praise,

And bless each one of you in his special
way.

Continue to pray for us each new day.

So we will adjust and all faithful stay.

One way to learn humility is
to note the help wanted ads
and realize how many jobs
you would not qualify for.

HELP WANTED

The Evolution/Intelligent Design controversy has lately been getting a lot of publicity.

On May 5 and 6, 2005, the Kansas State Board of Education had three days of testimony in Topeka. The issue being considered was whether or not students in Kansas public schools should be informed that there is scientific evidence against Darwin's theory of origins.

Darwinians boycotted the hearings insisting that there is no debate, and that this confrontation was rigged in favor of those promoting intelligent design. But they appointed an attorney whose role apparently was to harass and ridicule pro intelligent design witnesses.

There were 13 witnesses who spoke in favor of intelligent design. This included persons whose training and credibility should be considered solid in academic circles. Among them was biochemist Michael Behe, author of *Darwin's Black Box*. While I have not read this book, a Christian educator has told me that this book effectively shows that Darwinism is not scientifically defensible. Intelligent design is.

Liz Craig, writing for Kansas Citizens for Science states how the group is committed to discredit se-

rious challenges to evolution. "My strategy...is to notify the national and local media and portray them [ID proponents] in the harshest light possible, as political opportunists, evangelical activists, ignoramuses, breakers of rules, unprincipled bullies...We can sure make them look stupid." The event in Topeka got national and international attention, and was mostly reported in a negative light.

Stephen Meyer of the Discovery Institute testified that there is a tremendous amount of criticism that students should be permitted to know about. He says nearly 400 scientists including teachers from Yale and other prestigious schools have signed a statement that questions the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. (Gleaned from *World* magazine, 5-21-05)

It seems apparent from this perspective that some long and dearly-held conclusions are being seriously challenged from within the scientific community. People who do not have an open mind to such a challenge seem nervous and eager to discredit their challengers.

Let us be reminded that truth is not being blemished in all of this controversy. To be faithful followers of the Co-creator who is the Way, the Truth and the Life is safe and it is wise.

• • • • •

The manner of teaching science in the public schools in Kansas has also been getting a lot of attention in the national press. For the most part, the media favors evolutionary doctrine as opposed to creationism. But there are those who have the courage to speak out for “intelligent design.” One such reader has observed that the more that true science advances, the less credible Darwinism seems. Four members of the six-member Kansas State Board of Education favor giving recognition to the possibility of intelligent design in public school classrooms.

Romans 1:18-32 discusses with remarkable clarity God’s attitude and response to those who fail to acknowledge Him as Creator. The following points are gleaned from that passage:

-God’s wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold (restrict, suppress) the truth in unrighteousness. (vs. 18)

-Creation reveals the reality of a Creator. Those who refuse to acknowledge this are without excuse. (19,20)

-Failure to acknowledge and glorify God results in unthankfulness, vain imaginations, darkened hearts and a mistaken sense of their own wisdom. (21,22)

-Idolatry, unnatural sexual attrac-

tion and perverted behavior, plus a long list of sinful behavior and unchristian attitudes are directly traceable to the fact “that they did not like to retain God in their knowledge...” (18a)

-God gave them up to uncleanness. (24) He gave them up to vile affections. (26) He gave them over to a reprobate mind. (an undisciplined, unprincipled mind) (28)

-God respects our right to choose. But we do not have the right to choose God’s response when we ignore or defy Him.

• • • • •

Shoplifting is a major concern for retailers, totaling \$31.5 billion annually in lost revenue. One of 11 people is a shoplifter. Twenty-five percent are youngsters. Thirty-nine percent are company employees. (*The Hutchinson News*, 5-23-05)

This is but one symptom of a society that fails to take our Creator seriously.

• • • • •

Let us also be reminded that to win people is better than winning arguments. When our focus is on winning an argument, it can become a barrier to winning a person. In a recent message, local minister Oren Yoder reported an incident that is pertinent. Philip Behahn was in contact with Norma McCorvey, better known as Jane Roe. She was the nameless char-

acter in the 1973 Supreme Court case that legalized abortion in America.

The question to Ms. McCorvey was: “Did you know that God is ‘pro choice’?” This language spoke in a manner that aroused her curiosity. Her questioner referred to Deuteronomy 30:19b, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live.”

The short version of this story is that now Norma McCorvey is a Christian that deeply regrets her role in helping to bring in the abortion scourge upon our land. She is now a vocal pro-life advocate.

It is sad that there is no way that she can make restitution for the lives of the millions of pre-born babies that have been taken. But may it remind us that the riches of God’s grace are truly unsearchable.



“Give them an inch, and they’ll always take a mile. Give them a quarter inch, and they’ll still take a mile.” This is a quote from Don Partridge, expressing disgust at the way the media handled a recent news item.

It was widely reported that Baptist Pastor Chan Chandler from Waynesville, SC, had ousted nine persons who had not voted for incumbent President Bush. It was generally reported that the pastor did not want members who were Democrats.

World magazine investigated what happened and give their report in the May 21, 2005, issue. Pastor Chandler says his concerns are not along party lines. He has mentioned the names of Republicans whose “views are out of step with the Bible.”


He does say that during an invitation, a regular Sunday-morning practice, he said that persons who were supportive of politicians who supported abortion should repent or leave the church.

The 100-member church became deeply divided. The pastor called a meeting with the deacons, but also invited as many members as might like to come. At that meeting he encouraged adopting a policy statement committing the church to a ministry that would include all of life, including public policy issues. He says he made it clear that if persons who were unhappy with that emphasis were in the majority, he would simply leave. Instead, a clear majority supported him. Nine persons who didn’t, walked out of the meeting in protest. Because of the widespread negative publicity, the pastor has now resigned.

The purpose of these comments is not to support Pastor Chandler’s unusual tactics of leadership, but rather to remind us that mainstream media reporting may be seriously biased and distorted.

The pastor says, “I don’t know how people voted and I never endorsed any candidate. I was not misunderstood, I was deliberately misrepresented.” *World* says: “...for mainstream media a high-handed preacher made far better copy than a mere walkout by a disgruntled

minority.”

To me it seems to this pastor’s credit that he does not seek his just dues. He is encouraging his supporters, a majority, to walk away and leave the church and its property to their critics. —DLM 

Unexpected Blessings


*Rosie Bontrager
Chilton, TX*

Have you ever looked in your shoe for small change? I haven’t either, but once in a while, I slip my foot into my shoe and feel something odd in it. Sure enough, I shake out a coin. We have a pet that loves to sit on our dresser. He has learned the trick of picking coins out of a dish and dropping them over the edge of the dresser. I think he likes to watch them fall to the floor. Occasionally my shoes are in just the right spot.

I like to think that in the same way we sometimes find unexpected blessings in places where we hadn’t thought of looking. For instance, we have a few spare minutes in a traffic

jam, at a stoplight, even waiting to pick up our children after school, when we can pray for someone. What a blessing those few minutes can be!

Perhaps the grasshoppers have eaten our garden. Unexpectedly, we have more time for other things than we had planned on. Admittedly, we would rather have the produce and less extra time, or we’d rather not wait for traffic, and so on. But shouldn’t Christians be the most optimistic people in the world? We can resolve to give “thanks *always* for all things.”

Look for the unexpected blessing in the unusual spot! 



The Bible promises no loaves to the loafer.

Ministers' Meeting Messages—2005

The set of eight tapes of these messages are available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA 20136, for \$40, plus S & H.

3. Built on the Rock

Tim Miller, Orange, VA

A builder in Belize built a warehouse on swampy soil where great effort has to be taken to drive pilings down to bed-rock. This builder failed to do that with the back portion and in time, that whole section sank deep into unstable muck. Thus the building became useless. “For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

In 1 Peter 2:1-8, Jesus Christ is identified as The Rock upon which we are to build. God gives us this word: “He that believeth on him [this cornerstone], shall not be confounded.” This is followed by a description of those who are disobedient. To them this same rock for building is a Rock of Offense to those who stumble at the word.

Jesus Christ must be recognized for who He is. He Himself is the foundation upon which we are to build. “For there is none other name under heaven given among men,

whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Isaiah prophesied about Him who is a “tried stone,” a sure foundation.

Where shall the preacher get his material? In God’s Word. Our faith is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself the Chief Cornerstone. He is the central Focus. The apostles and prophets spoke of Him. The Law shows us Christ. You cannot separate Jesus from God’s Word. He said, “The words that I speak unto you [are different], they are spirit and they are life.”

If our lives are positioned only half way on the foundation, we will sink. We must commit ourselves to building squarely on the foundation. There is no point in speaking about the foundation, if we are going to build halfway off it.

That was the power and the life of the early Anabaptists. They believed that as they gathered around the Word, God would show them the way and the truth. That’s why their primary qualification for preachers was godliness rather than education. Conrad Grebel was a highly educated man. He wrote: “I believe the Word simply out of grace, not of learning.”

That doesn't mean his education was for naught, but it means that his education was not the basis of his understanding. The basis of his understanding was that he had opened his heart to the Spirit of God. This Word was alive and he saw things that men more learned than himself did not see. They believed (and we still believe) that anyone can know and teach the Scriptures if he has the Spirit of Christ.

People today sometimes refer to the Anabaptists as radical reformers. They were actually called worse names than that in their time. We would probably also call them radical if they showed up to teach in our churches. But as I see it, the only really radical thing about them was their submission to the Word and Spirit of God. If the Bible says it, they believed it. Further, if the Bible says it, it can be lived. It is clear that if we are to find their blessing, we must make sure not to "fudge" in our commitment to the Bible as the Word of God. When the Bible says something, we take that as the rule for our lives.

Building on the foundation means living in relationship to Jesus Christ. Spiritual life can only come through Jesus Christ and His Spirit. No one can save another or himself. The Bible says we are dead in trespasses and sins. Anything dead cannot bring

forth life. Regardless of what evolutionists say, it doesn't happen. Only life brings forth life. The Scriptures say that life is in God's Son.

Unfortunately, we can come to this living Word and not receive life. We hear many people stressing reading and studying the Bible. But if we study the Word of God without a real relationship with God through Jesus Christ, it produces either legalism or confusion.

To build on the Rock means also to be in relationship with His body. We receive His life not merely as individuals, but as a brotherhood. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you." If I could fully understand all I need for life and godliness without you, that statement is false. Since I must not say, "I have no need of you," that means that I need you in order to know Christ. But some people will say that to each other, "I have no need of you." If the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," my question is, "Is it really an eye?" In such a question, the eye is putting distance between itself and the body.

Our need goes beyond support from each other. We need each other to receive His life. To be truly Anabaptist is to embrace these truths. As we heard last night, I cannot come to Christ except in the company of my brother. Someone may object with,

“My brother has too many faults.” If you use that to separate yourself from your brother, then you are blinded to your own faults. You have faults and wrong ideas, too. If you separate yourself from him, you will go on blissfully unaware of those faults, for it is in brotherhood that faults and wrong ideas come to the surface. Should we choose to move to northern Canada or somewhere 100 miles from nowhere or by whatever other means we might seek to isolate ourselves, how shall we see ourselves as we are?

Relationships bring out the worst in us. Relationships also bring out the best in us. It seems to me that fewer and fewer people in our time have the humility to accept that kind of exposure.

As a local body of believers, we must also be in relationship with other bodies of believers. Each local body must be submitted to Him and in relationship with other local bodies. If our collective decisions are based only on our preferences, our opinions, our traditions, then we cease to be the Body of Christ. We are not operating under the Head. We must search the Scriptures; we must pray for understanding; we must believe that God shows His will to us in our local congregations. No church will ever “arrive.” Why? One of the big reasons is that the church should

always be taking in the young, the immature, and the newly-converted. Mature discernment does not come overnight. But, not all older Christians are wise all the time, either. So there will be mistakes and imperfections, but there must be a core commitment. Those pilings must go deep onto bedrock as we build on the Person and Word of Christ.

If we do, time will prove that we are living above manmade rules. It is the will of God for us, today. I speak here of application, not doctrine. The decisions that come from faithful and committed people must not be cast lightly aside. How do we move forward in this high calling? Here I offer a few things I think I see, not because I see them very clearly, but because I think I should offer something more specific.

First, I think we must accept that we have not yet arrived. We must want to grow spiritually as a constituency. We believe the riches of Christ are inexhaustible, yet we sometimes get to a point where we seem to say, “We have it all.” We have figured everything out correctly. I would just remind you of what follows Romans 11: 33, “O, the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!...For of him and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever

and ever. Amen. I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God... And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, [not just once, but again and again] that ye may prove [keep putting to the test] what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God... I say to everyone that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly... for as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we being many, are one body in Christ and everyone members one of another.” Notice that individual spiritual life and body life flow out of the unsearchable riches of God.

If we are wise, we will not try to start from scratch in every generation. So we hear what the older brethren are saying today. And we hear what the generations before them said. If anything, it all just takes us deeper into the will of God. I am so grateful for the two generations just before me in this constituency, because I grew up having things explained better to me than my dad did when he grew up. Those advantages are all not as important as is the need to grow where we are.

John C. Wenger says in *Our Christ-Centered Faith*, “The essence of the Anabaptist tradition is

to ignore traditional human theology and practice and in each generation to seek afresh to be holy and faithful to Christ and His Word.” Thus the essence of Anabaptism is in every generation to get as close to Christ and his Word as possible. We aren’t necessarily trying to come up with new ideas.

For the blessing of God, there must be an active submission to the brotherhood. As leaders we must model that submission to the brotherhood. If we are to understand the will of God for our congregations, we must all come under the Word of God.

I’m concerned. Some want to give bishops more and more authority. [Bro. Tim is a bishop.-PLM] While there are dangers on the other side where no one takes responsibility to exercise authority, I fear that we are in danger of disregarding Jesus’ teaching which said, “It shall not be among you as it is among the Gentiles. The one who is to be the leader among you is to be the servant of all.” When bishops have the final word on a decision, rather than the gathered body of Christ, I think that is out of biblical order. It is the responsibility of leaders to guide and call attention to issues, but bishops are not the head of the church. Christ is the Head, and if we bring ourselves and our people under that headship, we have fulfilled our responsibility. If we sacrifice

spiritual life to maintain order and form, we become like Pharisees. The Bible says we are all to submit ourselves to one another in the fear of God. That includes church leaders.

I'm also concerned by the influence of individualism in American culture. Even in the Catholic Church this is noted. I read in this morning's paper, American Catholics are different than Catholics in other lands. American Catholics want to pick and choose what part of Catholic doctrine they choose to embrace. That's American, and we're tremendously influenced by it. God spare us from it! People seem to believe they don't need church or church structure. They're willing to trust their own perspective, their own understanding when they're not willing to trust the perspective and understanding of others. It is illogical and immature at best, and arrogant at worst. How can they know that they understand the Scripture better than the next person, who is also committed to living in obedience to Christ?

I do not understand how one can claim to be in Christ, when he chooses to remain outside the visible body of Christ. The church is the body of Christ and to be outside of the church is to be outside of Christ. A Christian will make every effort to bring himself under a local, Bible-believing and following church, even if it is

an imperfect church. If there is none where he is, he will either move to where there is one, or better yet, build one through evangelism and witness. By some means, he will become part of a church, and will become part of it both by giving and receiving. We tend to like the giving better than the receiving.

I also have come to ask some questions about the content of our teaching and preaching. Are we neglecting the serious study of the Word and replacing it with the study of ideas? I think that's indicated in our emphasis on topical preaching over expository preaching. I think we would help ourselves stay on the foundation, if we simply take the Word and lay it out word by word, phrase by phrase, sentence by sentence, chapter by chapter, book by book—and just teach the Word. While there's no way to get around the need for topical preaching, we don't need to do it all the time. In topical preaching, it's easy to go to our pet ideas rather than by what the Scripture actually says.

If we are to build on the foundation, we need obedience to the Word. The Spirit of God does not illuminate the Word of God to us all at once. He illuminates it just a bit beyond our level of obedience. When we obey what we know, God opens more before us. But if we read it and say,

“Ah, I don’t think so. I’ll wait till next year. This isn’t for our day,” or something that will get me off the hook if I don’t like it.

For example, we might rationalize like this, “You know, I wasn’t really angry at that brother; I just got a little upset,” or something that lets me look respectable. At that point I stop going deeper in the things of God. I cannot go deeper until I obey.

We look at the rich young ruler, and note Jesus’ words to him to go sell all that he has and give to the poor, and we think, well, that was his problem. But how many of you have a member in your church with an apparent problem with material-

ism? Are we seriously calling them to obedience? I fear that too many of us are “building bigger and bigger barns,” rather than working so that we “have to give to him needeth.”

It seems to me that we sometimes treat the weak and discouraged like the unruly. Their needs are different and their rescue is different, too.

We should know Anabaptist writings. Early Anabaptists seemed to have a burning message that exceeds anything of our day. The fire that burns through their writings shows the vitality of their message. Let us acquaint ourselves with what they wrote and taught.



The Puzzle of Perfectionism

*Marvin Eicher
Freeport, Ohio*

Perfectionism can be described as a drive to have things perfect or nearly perfect, along with a sense of frustration when something is not so. Many psychologists consider perfectionism a neurosis. After all, they reason, we live in an imperfect world, so the push for perfection is an unhealthy compulsion.

Some of us do tend to be perfectionists. After all, we reason, Jesus

said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Then how shall we look at perfectionism? Is it good or bad?

Probably the best answer is to see perfectionism as springing from a natural, inborn drive. We have other natural drives, such as the drive to eat when we are hungry and to sleep when we are tired. But we must control those drives or we will become

gluttons and sluggards. In the same way, we need to keep our drive for perfection under control or it may indeed become a neurosis. We should simply recognize that we have this drive and act wisely not to let it take control of us.

Perfectionism is a problem when a speaker conducts a meaningful devotional but afterward feels frustrated with himself because he forgot to mention a certain point. It is a problem when a writer loses sleep because he or she discovers a clumsy sentence in a published story that is otherwise excellent. One good way to view such an incident is to consider it a lesson in humility.

The person could even take encouragement from the thought, *That's about 98% flawless. Not bad for a perfectionist!*

The best response is not to become discouraged by our lack of perfection, but to let our lapses inspire us to seek ever higher levels of attainment. The apostle Paul said it like this: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after [press on], if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12).

His desire for perfection was his servant, not his master.



The Dad I Chose to Be

Stephen Miller

Belle Center, OH

Not long ago when life was young
And married life had just begun,
The grandest dreams I really had
Were how I'd be the perfect dad.

I'd take the time, oh yes, I would
To do the things I really should.
But as the years did come and go,
Where went the time? I do not
know.

The children's needs I could not
meet;
For cows were sick I had to treat.
The stock was needing hay and
grain;
I worried sore it would not rain.

The duties pressed me all around,
And very little time I found
To really listen, and to play
With little children every day.

But now the years have passed
away,
And all my hair is turning gray;
And I look back with deep regret
On all the dreams I have not kept.

So when in death's cold grip I lie,
And all the children pass me by,
It's then that folks can plainly see,
The kind of dad I chose to be.

• • • • •

When I was just a little lad,
I thought I had the grandest dad.
There was no doubt within my
mind,
For he was always good and kind.

In early morning, while I slept,
Into my room he softly crept
And pulled the covers over me,
So I could sleep contentedly.

Then to the barn I know he went;
Most of the day out there he spent.
He had no faults that I could see,
And did his work so perfectly.

He milked the cows and did the
chores,
Inside the barn and out of doors.
He was so busy, this I knew,
For there was always much to do.

The cows sometimes would get so
sick,
But he would make them well real
quick.
He taught me how to give a shot,
For I was with him quite a lot.

He loved to take us all along,
And taught us things, like right and
wrong.
We learned great mysteries of the
sky,
Of how the clouds went floating by.

What mattered most, he seemed to
know,
Would one day hence quite clearly
show.
At times, upon a bale we'd sit,
And have a chat for just a bit.

And as I now much older grow,
There is one thing I really know,
When I was just a little lad,
I really had the greatest dad!



*Our most pressing
need today is more careful readers and
fewer fast talkers.*

A National Tragedy

Phil Beiler

Suceava, Romania

[Phil and Linda Beiler and their family are serving with Christian Aid Ministries in Romania. Besides serving as one of the pastors at Nathaniel Christian Fellowship in Suceava, Phil is director of the Teaching Ministries Programs. A major focus of this ministry is to rebuild and strengthen the family. He and his team (a team often consists of a brother or couple sent from the United States, plus a Romanian interpreter) conduct a number of marriage enrichment seminars during the winter months in various Christian churches. They are thankful to be able to encourage many couples in their marriage relationship. However, they are also saddened by the many people who are experiencing difficult marriage problems. And inevitably, they meet numerous wives and daughters whose Christian husbands and fathers cannot attend these seminars because of employment abroad. The following article is excerpted from a prayer letter sent to the U.S. It reflects a deep burden for this national tragedy in Romania. The problem of seeking employment abroad is also prevalent in other

countries where our missions are situated. This has often been a major hindrance in building churches. But remember, God gives room and wisdom to work. —FSJ

Some time ago, our local newspaper recorded a tragedy. A 31-year-old mother laid herself across the train track just two blocks from our house and committed suicide. Her face-down, sliced-in-two body was a picture of despair. I was deeply saddened. She had left a note to her eight-year-old son asking for forgiveness and to her boyfriend. Here was a soul in torment, her life devastated by her own choices and the decisions of others. She highlights a huge problem here in Romania.

Liliana Cumlet had been married, presumably happily so. Eight years ago, they had a son. Imagine all the hopes and dreams of parents as they cradle their newborn child. And imagine all the hopes and dreams of a young boy growing up. All this has been shattered. Their lives have been permanently altered.

This lonely wife began to seek other companionship in an adulter-

ous relationship. In time, she and her boyfriend both agreed to divorce their own spouses and marry each other. She did so. But then, he backed out. This left her without support and all alone. She was devastated and depressed. The result was graphically depicted in the newspaper.

When the revolution came to Romania in December, 1989, there was hope and enthusiasm for a new beginning. But for many, this hope has faded. The tax-and-spend policies of the government has made it extremely difficult, even impossible, to have one's own legal place of self-employment. The labor laws make it very unfavorable even to hire other people. As a result, huge numbers of Romanians have gone abroad to find work in order to feed their families. The husband of this young family had gone to Israel to work, leaving his wife depicted in the newspaper and her young son behind. This is a national tragedy. It has happened and continues to happen many thousands of times over.

Why am I writing this? So you can pray for Romania. So you can pray for public officials whose daily decisions continue to wreak havoc in the lives of ordinary citizens. So you can pray about the corruption and policies that are holding this country hostage. So you can pray for me, too, as I try to make a difference.

Did this woman ever read our *Seed of Truth* magazine? Did she ever receive a Bible? Did I ever ride with her on my trips in the maxi-taxi to and from town? I have often walked over the tracks at the very spot where she ended her life. Did I ever meet her there? The sidewalk closeby is the maxi-taxi stop that I use. I wonder. But I will never know. Pray that this will motivate me to more effectively proclaim the Gospel, in ways large and small.

More than a year ago, I was asked to speak at an all-day rally for Christian youth. As I spoke and watched their eager faces and saw the visions for a happy future in their eyes, I wondered. Will they make it? What will their faces tell me ten years from now? May God help them!

My interpreter for that day was Gabriel (Lusa) Luca. Lusa told me his parents had divorced nine years earlier. His parents had been faithful members in the church. Then his father had gone to Italy to find work in order to provide for his wife and son. But after a while, they started hearing unpleasant rumors. At first they did not believe them. But after being away for one year, he returned to Romania, divorced his wife, and went back to Italy. There he took another wife, and now has another family. His mother has now also since gone to Italy, but his parents


remain apart.

I cry out to God! When will this scourge in the land end? It is affecting Christian families as well as non-Christian. Dear friend, pray for this land. Pray for the officials who are responsible for this national tragedy.

We appreciate the testimony of Gheorghe and Adriana Stancierc. Gheorghe was raised in a state orphanage and has no idea who his parents are or were. Adriana is the only Christian from her home. When they first lived together, they lived lives of terrible sin. He had been in and out of prison. He was known for his drunkenness and anger. Adriana used to dread holidays, especially Christmas. God has gloriously saved them. Jobs are hard for him to find. Earlier Gheorghe had seriously contemplated going to Italy for work to provide for his growing family. But

he has given up that idea.

The Lord willing, we plan to begin a new section in our *Seed of Truth* magazine. This periodical goes into 100,000 homes every month all over Romania, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. (It is also published in Russian, French Creole, and English and gets distributed in those language areas.) I am working this week to put together a Readers Write page that will be published every issue. We are now receiving numerous questions which I answer. Now their questions and my answers will be published. We have had a number of requests for such a page. I expect that it could generate substantial interest. Please pray for me in this endeavor. Pray that this page will make a difference for someone like Liliana before it is too late.

We wish you God's rich blessings. Thank you for your prayers. 

helpers at home

Summertime

Mary June Glick

Summertime is here. We're rejoicing in the warm days, the joys of being outdoors in our vegetable and flower gardens. I realize for many women summer brings a lot of added work. The children are

at home which means extra laundry and food preparation, along with gardening, hours of canning fruits and vegetables in the warm kitchen. I hope summer will also bring many happy memories of working and

playing together. It's so easy just to let things happen and then feel tired and frustrated at the end of a busy day. It's much better to plan to make this summer a good experience for your family.

You can teach your children to enjoy work and to find fulfillment from a job well done. Two and three year olds love to help, even though it means extra work for Mom. Now is the time to start. Give them empty jars and let them fill them when you're canning, or a broom and dust rag to help clean. Let them put some seeds in the ground and watch with them for the seeds to sprout. What a beautiful opportunity to teach about God Who made everything!


As they get older show them how to set the table, teach them to do it neatly and carefully. Send them out to the garden for flowers to put on the table. They can learn to wash or dry the dishes, to empty waste cans—the list is endless. Give more responsibility with age and maturity. Older children can mow the grass, till the garden, and clean the house.

Some children enjoy working inside and others enjoy the out of doors, and will probably excel in the area they enjoy most, but they also need to learn that life doesn't give them only things to do they enjoy. Teach each child every aspect of caring for a house and garden—cook-

ing, cleaning, sewing, and so on. You give your child a gift for the future by teaching the skills he or she will need for the future.

There needs to be a balance between "all play and no work" and "all work and no play." Playing is also preparing a child for the future. A girl playing house is preparing to be a mother. A boy playing with his trucks, tractors, as well as balls and bats, is being fitted physically and emotionally for work and activity later in life. I like to see children do their work first and then, when that's completed well, have free time to choose and enjoy their activity.

Just a caution about computer and electronic games: Don't allow your child to spend his summer sitting in front of these. He needs physical exercise to grow and develop physically and emotionally. Play with your children, a game of ball or croquet in the evening. Pack a picnic lunch and eat outdoors. Visit local historical sites or a zoo. (The zoo is still one of my favorite places, so if you don't enjoy the zoo, send them over. We'll take them for a day.) Camping builds family togetherness and lasting memories. You don't even need to go further than the back yard.

Enjoy your children. Give them happy memories and a good foundation for the future. 

A Story in the Attic—Part One

Anita Yoder

Ligonier, IN

[This story of fact and fiction is based on the letters of Jerome Segers and his wife, Lijsken, as found in Martyr's Mirror, pages 504-522, taking place in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1551-1552, A.D. —AY]

I rolled over in bed. *What are we going to be working on today*, I wondered. I help my uncle in his shop, but before I got out of bed I heard him calling me.

“Henry, it’s time to get up. Hurry! A special breakfast is waiting this morning.”

A special breakfast? Why today? Is it really today? Yes, it is my fifteenth birthday.

After breakfast, my uncle told me to follow him. *Where are we going and what are we going to do?* We went upstairs and then on into the dingy attic. I hadn’t been in there for a long time.

“Today you turn fifteen, Son. It’s time you know the complete story of your life. I’ve told you some of it. You know that your mother and father were held in Steen Castle. They died when you were very young. You may go through their things and be especially careful to read their

letters. Then you need to decide for yourself what you will do with the information.

The lid squeaked on its hinges as it was opened and revealed some used clothes.

“These must have been my father’s boots, I said, as I took off my shoes and tried on my father’s. They almost fit me. *Am I as tall as he was?* I unfolded my mother’s shawl and laid it aside.

“You can have all morning to look through this chest and any time later if your work is done.”

As Uncle left, I pulled up a little stool and made myself comfortable. *Now where are those letters?* I lifted out my parents’ Bibles and found the letters lying neatly underneath, tied with a frayed purple ribbon.

I hesitated, then stood and walked to the attic window. I could see across town to Steen Castle. There it still stood, and beyond was the Schelde River, where Mother was drowned. I knew all that. I had been there often. *Do I really want to read these letters?* My stomach seemed to be tied in a knot.

Opening the ribbon, I began to read the first letter:

My most beloved, Lijsken, whom I wedded before God and his holy church, and thus took to wife according to the command of the Lord. May consolation, gladness, and joy be increased to you.

I earnestly pray that our Lord will comfort you and protect you from anything too hard. I know, my chosen lamb, that you are very sorrowful on my account, but lay aside your grief and look to Jesus, the Captain and Finisher of our faith.

It sounded as if Father knew Jesus personally, yet how could he? This letter was very long and I kept on reading about what he had answered to the judges. I read on:

I can't thank the Lord enough for all the strength and power He gives me in this distress. He is such a faithful Captain. As Paul asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or danger or sword?"

Hence, my most beloved wife, nothing shall separate us from Christ. As he admonished us, "He who stands firm to the end will be saved." Therefore, let us continue faithful to the Lord unto death. For the crown is not at the beginning, nor in the middle, but at the end.

We must realize, my dear wife, Lijsken, that if He wipes away all tears, tears must first be shed. If he heals us from sufferings, we must first suffer in this world. Therefore, defend yourself

diligently with prayer and hold fast to the teachings of Jesus Christ our Savior. Herewith, I commend you, my dearly beloved wife, to the almighty, eternal and strong God.

Your loving husband,

Jerome Segers

A lump formed in my throat. What commitment they had to each other! What love in their awful separation! One thing I couldn't understand was that it didn't sound like Father had been trying to get released from prison, but was willing to die. Somehow, I didn't yet have such faith. *Would I be able to discover it in this pack of letters?*

(to be continued)

• • • • •

Dear friends,

Hi! My name is Juanita Sue Yoder. I am 14 years old. My birthday is Dec. 9, 1990.

My parents' names are Nathan and Elsie Yoder. I have 4 sisters and two 2 brothers. Deborah (12), Marcus (10), Joel (8), Judith (6), Gloria (4), and Sharon (1).

We go to Peniel Christian Fellowship.

Some of my hobbies are reading, writing, stamping, scrapbooking, and being outdoors.

I would like to have a twin or penpal close to my age.

Write Soon!

Love,

Juanita Yoder

5110 Moreland Rd.

Fredericksburg, OH 44627



Dear Youth,

It's springtime. The trees around my house are very green, and the woods around my house sometimes remind me of a rainforest. Today is May 30, 2005. According to my calendar, we have had two months of spring and in about three weeks it will be summer.

Perhaps this particular point on the calendar represents your place in the seasons of life. Approximately twenty years ago, you were conceived. This was the beginning of "spring" for you. You were fashioned by a Master Planner. You were created for a specific purpose. Since then you have "grown up" in many different ways. School is almost over for you and in just a short time, you will be entering "summer," the period of time that could be likened to adulthood. Should you live another fifteen to twenty years, you will enter "autumn," the period of life that is sometimes referred to as being "middle-aged." And should you continue to live a normal life span, eventually "winter" will come and people will refer to you as being in the "sunset years of life." Does that seem a long ways off? According

to older people, it will come sooner than we think.

My prayer for this section of *Calvary Messenger* is that it will be an asset to you in this "springtime" of your life.

I have three requests to make at the start of this new responsibility.

First:

I would like if you could send me pertinent questions that you face as youth. I will try to solicit and print answers to as many of them as possible.

Secondly:

I may at times print questions for your thought and consideration. On these questions, I would like to hear your response.

Thirdly:

I would appreciate if you would send articles that you think are relative to issues that youth face currently.

This month's question is:

In your minds, what factors contribute to youth being bored with life?

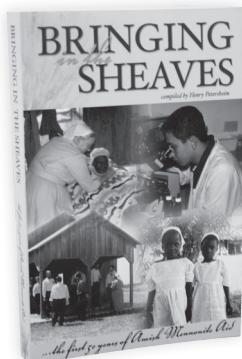
Thank you for your interest, contribution and prayers.

Ernest Eby



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[a new book about the first 50 years of Amish Mennonite Aid]



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THOUGHT GEMS

What this world needs is an amplifier
for the still, small voice.



The Bible admonishes us to love our neighbors and our
enemies, but, hopefully, they aren't the same people.



Joyful laughter is some of the sweetest music
ever to greet the human ear.



It's funny how we never got too old to find new ways to
make ourselves look silly.



If you want to get an idea what a big job it is to clean up
the environment, start in at your garage.



The two great tests of character are wealth and poverty.



The fellow who has no money is poor; the fellow who
has nothing but money is poorer still.



Many a man has found that to get on his feet, he must
first get on his knees.

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