



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

Galatians 6:14

SEPTEMBER 2005

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Purpose of CALVARY MESSENGER is
 To propagate sound Biblical doctrine;
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 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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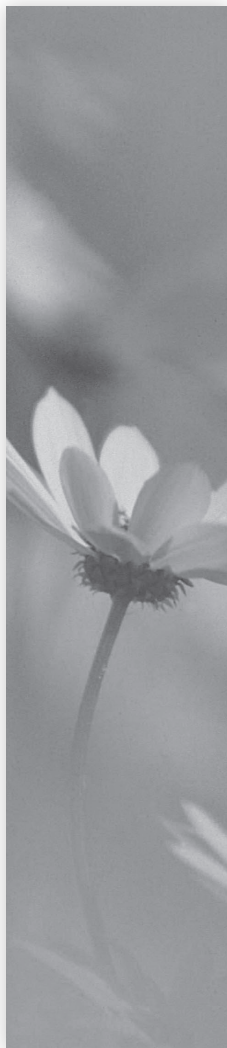
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The Perfect Plan of God

Teresa Yoder

Belvidere, TN



God has a special place for us
Within His sovereign plan.
Just what it is, is hid from view
By us as mortal man.

With master mind our God can see
Exactly what is best;
With love He longs to place us
Just where we'll be most blest.

Remember the heartaches that cross our paths,
Each problem that sweeps our land,
The trials which Satan connives and schemes,
Just play into God's hand.

Sometimes we feel the way God chose
Is hard and full of pain.
We wonder if it's really best,
Was trusting God in vain?

By giving up our own fond dreams,
With trust, into God's hand,
The lovely life He'll choose for us
Excels what we'd have planned.

*"God's way in our lives is always far superior
to what we might have chosen." –Selected*

If Only!

Wistfulness and regret are well-known feelings. We look back and wish we had been less gullible, that we had done better, or that we had loved more selflessly. We sigh and say, **“If only!”** Blessings tend to shrink in such pensive musing. While a thoughtful look back comes naturally, usually God gets little glory from such agonizing. How much better it is in such times to confess our wrongs and seek God’s forgiveness, then press forward despite difficulties and past failures!

Paul’s Experience

In Acts 23:11, when Paul was taken prisoner in Jerusalem, he was almost pulled limb from limb. But God reassured him that He had plans for him in Rome. In a visit from heaven that night, “...the Lord stood by him, and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness of me in Rome.’” Rome lay some 1500 hundred miles northwest of Jerusalem, across the Mediterranean Sea, just north of Italy’s “knee.”

As a prisoner, Paul soon became the “mouse” in a political game of Cat-and-Mouse. A trap was set for

him in Jerusalem in Acts 23:12, where “...certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.” With the way things went after that, they probably got very hungry and thirsty, because Paul’s nephew discovered the plot and was able to help arrange for Paul to slip out of Jerusalem under cover of darkness, well-guarded, down to Caesarea on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Some days later, in spite of heroic efforts on the part of Tertullus, a silver-tongued orator who did his eloquent best to have Paul returned to Jerusalem to stand trial, Paul was retained as a prisoner at Caesarea. Through delays and poorly-explained political ploys, Paul remained in Caesarea for more than two additional years.

Eventually, Paul was ordered to appear before Felix and later before Felix’ successor, Festus. In both cases, Paul, a prisoner in chains, took the opportunity to give an upbeat testimony for Jesus Christ, even issuing personal invitation to these dignitaries to open their lives to Jesus.

When Agrippa and Bernice, a visiting royal couple, arrived in Caesarea,

they desired to meet this famed (defamed) prisoner. After a pompous introduction by the royal pair, Paul joyfully outlined his faith journey from darkness to light. (Acts 26:1-23) His testimony made Agrippa uncomfortable, so he “analyzed” Paul. Agrippa decided Paul had become “unhinged” from too much learning. Paul disclaimed that and pointed out that these issues were not about him, but about the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which God had arranged in plain sight for all to see. (26:26) He further pressed Agrippa to consider placing his faith in the Lord, which really made Agrippa squirm.

In a comment meant to convey sympathy, Agrippa said what our minds tend to conclude when we’re disappointed and fail to recognize God’s hand at work. He said in effect, “**If only** Paul hadn’t appealed to Caesar, we could give him his freedom!”

King Agrippa, I have something to say to you: *Paul doesn’t mind. His faith is focused on the longer view. He has learned to rest in the sovereignty of a God who makes no mistakes. Truly, in all things, **God works things out for good to all who love Him.** This confidence in God’s wisdom and goodness encouraged Paul all the way from Jerusalem to Rome.*

A Wild Ride

Even though it was late in the fall, a ship with connections to Rome soon left harbor for “the coasts of Asia” (now Turkey). Paul accepted this as God’s plan to get him to Rome! He was **not** going on a ticket that said, “If only!” but one that said, “**You must bear witness of Me in Rome.**” So when blustery winds from the northeast whipped up wild waves, he was undisturbed. If he walked across the floors of the pitching vessel, he probably walked carefully for fear of losing his physical balance, but he was rational.

After two weeks of no sunshine and constant storm, very little food had been consumed, likely because of nausea from seasickness and fear. An angel visited Paul one night, explaining that all would be well. The next day Paul encouraged them all to take nourishment, and assured them that they’d all survive.

When devious sailors planned an escape from the impending shipwreck, he spoke up and foiled their plot. The 276 travelers were getting weak. Paul continued to encourage them to eat. Finally, he openly offered thanks to God for some food and started eating. At that point, they also decided to eat some food before they would lighten the ship by throwing the rest of it overboard.

Later, when the sailors would have

killed their human “cargo” to make sure no one escaped, God put it on the heart of the centurion charged with watching Paul to save the life of his charge, thus saving them all.

Then when the ship rammed into a muddy bank and was broken apart by the waves, some swam to shore, some grabbed boards and pieces of the broken ship and, miraculously, all 276 got safely to land, but apparently they all got soaking wet. The first thing they did on land was to build a campfire and dry out.

Only a few days later God made good His promise in Jerusalem to Paul as he walked up the Appian Way to Rome. We believe Paul spent his remaining days at Rome. I’m glad he did!

Peace that Passes Understanding

King Agrippa, I’ll tell you why I think your “If only!” requires revision:

—If Paul had not appealed to Caesar, he would hardly have gone to Rome.


—If Paul had not gone to Rome, and if his life had been spared, he would likely have gone in person through Asia Minor to nurture those

who had come to believe on Jesus during his earlier travels.

—Therefore, if Paul had not gone to Rome, he would not have written those treasured prison epistles. (Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Timothy, and possibly also Hebrews, not to mention Philemon which concerns Onesimus, converted as a result of Paul’s presence in Rome)

Paul’s letters are full of confidence in God’s goodness, of interpretation of the teachings of Jesus, of sincere affection for the church, of deep concern for pure living and of earnest desire to help all he could before his expected execution, which he sensed was imminent. His life hung for several years “by a thread” because of Emperor Nero. We understand Paul’s life was ended by beheading at Nero’s behest in about 68 A.D.

Thanks for the thought, Agrippa, but God’s providence is better than your “If only!”

“God, give us all a holy desire to embrace Your will and to stay focused on it without doubting Your sovereign wisdom when difficulties arise!” —PLM 



Shady business NEVER produces a sunny life.

Re: Reconciliation Conference

Dear Bro. Miller:

In July, 2005, Calvary Messenger, page 12, last paragraph, Surely the sentence should read: "The Catholics (*felt they*) were justified burning people at the stake, because...."

In appreciation,

A reader

[Yes, yes, indeed! I'm sorry that wasn't clear. —PLM]

• • • • •

Re: All ages working together

From a phone call to David L. Miller:

I affirm what you said about youth and the larger congregation interaction and interdependence in the August "Observations" column. I feel the formation of smaller communities is desirable in creating an inherent closeness between the different age groups. I also feel good about the way our small group in Labette County relates to the larger native community.

J. Sam Nisly, Oswego, KS.

A man must be...

BIG

enough to ADMIT his mistakes

smart

enough to PROFIT from them AND

strong

enough to CORRECT them.

Beware of Sinning Willfully

Ervin N. Hershberger (1914-2003)

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For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 10:26).

“Willfully” here is translated from *hekousios*, a Greek word found only twice in the KJV Bible. It means “voluntarily,” and is translated “willingly” in 1 Peter 5:2. Luther’s German renders it *mutwillig*, the equivalent of wanton sport or deliberate malice! It probably is more serious to “sin willfully” than to be unfaithful under persecution and torture. (See Acts 26:11) It implies making light of trusting the blood of Christ to save us from sin, and includes outright rejection of Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Had not Judas Iscariot “received the knowledge of the truth” during his three years of intimate fellowship with Jesus? Did he not then sin willfully when he voluntarily bargained to betray his Lord and Master for thirty pieces of silver, and then “sought opportunity to betray him”? (Matt. 26:14-16; Luke 22:2-6) I believe the preincarnate Christ spoke propheti-

cally, using David as His penman, when he predicted the treachery of Judas, saying, “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me” (Psalm 41:9).

Was not the Jewish Sanhedrin deliberately malicious when it sought false witnesses to condemn Jesus to death? Did not the high priests sin willfully when they bribed the soldiers to lie, saying that the disciples stole the body of Jesus while they slept? Were they not deliberately malicious when they denied Peter and John the right to declare the “notable miracle” that no man could deny? They surely had received some knowledge that they violated willfully.

Saul had been “exceedingly mad” in his effort to wipe out Christianity. (Acts 26:9-11) How were these Christ-hating officials different from Saul before his conversion? I cannot answer that, except with the answers that Paul and Jesus have already given. Paul said, “I have lived in all good conscience until this day.” “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.” “I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience.” Saul had been absolutely and sin-

cerely doing what his authorities had taught him to do. He had been exposed to the knowledge of the truth as Judas had.

Jesus knew the sincerity of Saul, and what a mighty missionary he would be if he were properly enlightened. He also knew that Judas Iscariot had willingly abandoned a perfect opportunity to be a faithful pillar. So also had the Sanhedrin, and those Jewish officials who against overwhelming evidences, and many perhaps against better knowledge, continued their resistance against Christianity. Jesus clearly understood the difference between Saul and other persecutors long before it was evident to man. Therefore, He chose Saul, the madman, to become Paul the mighty missionary.

Many of those Jewish religious leaders tried desperately to deny the blood atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ, even against convincing evidences that could neither be concealed nor denied.

“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be

thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:26-29).

I am afraid many of the described acts had “done despite unto the Spirit of grace.” I am inclined to believe that at least some of those who committed these acts must have felt the truth knocking at the door of their heart. But they resisted and fought against knowledge and insight, which the Jewish Scriptures taught abundantly, because “they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:43).

What about Ananias and Sapphira, described in Acts 5:1-10? Together they secretly planned a pretense to appear more generous than they really were. There is no indication that Ananias spoke a word when he presented part of the money to the Apostles. He had “not lied unto men, but unto God.” Upon hearing Peter’s rebuke Ananias dropped dead. Later, not knowing what had happened to Ananias, Sapphira came. Peter asked her if this was the sum of what they received for the land they sold. She answered in the affirmative and also fell down dead.

This reminds us that in the dawn of the Mosaic dispensation, two priests

“offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them” (Leviticus 10:1,2). Likewise, at the dawn of Christianity, God gave a similar warning by the death of two people that His abundant grace must be obtained by holy, reverential fear, and humble, sincere obedience to the revealed truth of God.

The Hebrews, to whom this epistle is addressed, are God’s “peculiar treasure,” and “the apple of his eye.” This is one reason why they have been subjected to God’s severe discipline. God said of Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2). “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” Because of this and because of their unbelief, the Hebrew people have suffered so often and so intensely for the past two thousand years.

A little story may help us better understand God’s special concern and corrective discipline for Israel. Two boys had gotten into a fight in a city park. A man, coming upon the scene, took one of the boys aside and spanked him.

Another observer challenged him, saying, “That’s not fair! The other boy was just as bad as this one. Why did

you spank one and not the other?”

“Because this one is my son, and the other is not,” explained the father.

Notice that this warning against sinning willfully concludes with two partial quotes taken from the writings of Moses in Deuteronomy. “To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left” (Deut. 32:35,36).

“For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people” (Hebrews 10:30).

Then follows another solemn warning: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” This may refer to the “fiery indignation” of Hebrews 10:27, probably the fire of hell itself, to which there is no end. But the prophets of old spoke extensively of a “great and dreadful day of the Lord” preceding the fire that never ends. The Bible gives that particular time of vengeance and judgment many and various names, of which “the day of the Lord” is the first and by far the most frequent. This speaks of a judgment yet to come, and possibly very soon.

Other possible names for that particular judgment may include the following:

—“the indignation” (Isaiah 26:20; 34:2);

—“the day of the Lord’s vengeance (Isaiah 43:8; 63:1-6);

—“the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7);

—“the overspreading of abominations” (Daniel 9:27);

—“the indignation” (Daniel 11:36);

—“a time of trouble, such as never was” (Daniel 12:1);

—“the time of the end: (Daniel 12:9);

—“great tribulation: (Matthew 24:29);

—“the tribulation of those days” (Matthew 24:29);

—“the great day of his wrath” (Revelation 6:17);

—“the hour of his judgment” (Revelation 14:7).

Several of these verses are followed by statements indicating that this is not the eternal state, that there is yet something to follow:

—“but he shall be saved out of it (Jeremiah 30:7);

—“even until the consummation” (Daniel 9:27);


—“and at that time thy people shall be delivered” (Daniel 12:1);

—“many shall be purified” (Daniel 12:10);

—“for the elect’s sake those day shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:22b).

Jesus Himself describes the timing best of all: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, and from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29-31).

In light of passages such as 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52, I trust that the bride of Christ may “be caught up” before that dreadful tribulation. “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

These solemn warnings remind me to respond charitably to those who disagree with me, and I trust my beloved brethren in Christ to bear charitably with me. We stand together in brotherly love, helping each other to beware of sinning willfully. 

Fourth Beachy Ministers' Week **Penn Valley Christian Retreat**

McVeytown, PA

November 1, 2, and 3, 2005, D.V.

*The following will have one hour time slot each day,
with a bit more free time than last year.*

- A.M. "The Local Church Engages in Evangelism"**
—Paul A. Miller
- A.M. "A Pastoral View of Philippians"**
—Gary Raber
- A.M. Open, round table discussions in small groups:**
Tuesday—"Dealing with pride/humility"
Wednesday—"Dealing with anger/kindness"
Thursday—"Dealing with depression/submission"
- P.M. "Customs and Cultures of Old and New Testaments."**
—Joe Mullet
- P.M. "Spiritual Gifts"**
—Aaron Lapp
- Evening "Exciting Evidences for Creationism"**
—Nate Kauffman

These meetings are open to ordained men and their wives of all ages and denominations. Last year some ministers were sent by their congregation who covered expenses. Great! May the idea spread. In a few cases the whole ministerial team came as a unit. We encourage more of the same.

These dates were chosen to coincide with the annual Christian Aid Ministries open house in the Lancaster area on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 4 and 5. That is also a very interesting and informative experience.

Let us walk together and rejoice together in Christ!

Another Anabaptist Reconciliation Conference—Part Four

*Aaron Lapp
Kinzers, PA*

These meetings were held at New Holland, PA, April 7-9, 2005. Part Four will continue my gleanings along with some personal comment. Even now, months later, memories of the Reformer's spiritual fervor and passion for God and His Word bring tears to my eyes. They have turned away from their church's official policy of persecution and death to the original Anabaptists and these many generations of denial that have followed. Their turning includes embracing what they formerly resisted and embracing that primary doctrine and practice of adult believers' baptism.

Adult baptism was the splitting wedge in the very beginning of the Anabaptist provocation. It is hard for us to imagine that **adult baptism** would be an issue that would cause church people to imprison, burn, drown, tear apart live people, to cut out tongues, to tear out flesh with red-hot tongs from fellow human beings. But it did. For the ensuing 150 years or so from 1527 on, thousands of people died at the

hands of both Protestant and Catholic persecutors.

The more details of documented history one finds, the more bone chilling, grotesquely horrific and inhumanely repulsive it becomes. The children of the perpetrators of these atrocities feel a personal and collective guilt. We, as children of the Anabaptists, have been given a certain respect for suffering for a righteous cause and the Gospel's sake. But the children of the Reformers have a terrible feeling of responsibility for the horrendous actions of their own church fathers.

The confiscation of houses, lands and businesses left behind by fleeing or murdered Anabaptists became the funding for court trials, building more prisons to contain them or to build elaborate church houses for the official State Reformed Church.

Families were broken up, marriages were annulled, children were seized and called illegitimate. Even doing business with these heretical *Wiedertaeufer* was declared illegal. All this was done in the guise of

maintaining a pure religion. Religious zeal and fervor has no equal.

The Swiss woman pastor said she initiated the preparation of a huge rock in which was inscribed a testimony of memory for the Anabaptists. It was dedicated at the mountain site with 300 people from various denominations present. She said she still suffers from official church men for her part.

Another Swiss pastor said, "We want to be true to the gospel of Christ, but sometimes we are persecuted. The Apostle Peter's words on suffering and glory are special to us."

Geri Keller, the aged preacher-patriarch of the delegation, said, "First, we gave our hearts to God and we now give you our hearts. With heart change to Christ and His Word, we have experienced a renewal like unto the first Anabaptists. Our great desire to know Christ and His Word began with a new baptism of the heart and followed with adult water baptism. Outer baptism is a symbol of conformity and commitment to Christ. We cannot keep back people who wish to follow Christ and be baptized with water. Discipleship of Jesus today affects all areas of life. This is to us a heartfelt thrust. *You* Anabaptists of today brought *us* to the fire of our first love, a fire that will never be quenched."

Peter Detweiler, executive secretary of the State Reformed Church, said, "Our love needs to see us die for one another, as Christ died for us. We can no longer be the church of Christ and stand aloof from other churches. Today is a day to recognize and love other churches." One of the most touching, memorable scenes of the conference immediately followed. Ben Girod, the Amish bishop from Montana, now moved to Idaho, stood between these two men, Geri and Peter. In a symbolic gesture of unity in the Spirit and brotherhood, Ben stepped over and put his arm around Geri, drew him over to Peter, and with his other arm around him, they declared their oneness in Christ. Then Ben led in a moving and eloquent prayer. This high point was followed by ecstatic jubilation not seen before in church by this writer! It was of the type, perhaps, of the party's winner of a presidential nomination or what takes place by winners of baseball's world series or maybe an earthly version of the scene in heaven described in Revelation 5!

Now a few excerpts from the conference:

Lloyd Hoover, moderator, "If we cannot embrace our past, we cannot chart our future." (Amen!)

Robert Mast, Amish minister, Idaho, "We have developed terms to justify our own portion of the Ana-

baptist divisions. The world is waiting for our testimony, for the light.”

Swiss minister, “There is no grace in the heart if there is no amendment and right living in life.” (Amen!)

Lancaster Conference pastor, “Let no one silence your message or stop your mouths. Sow your seed in tears, be faithful, keep on, your shoulders will not be big enough to carry the sheaves!”

Literary restraint becomes prudent as I bring this to a close. My tears, my yearnings, my aspirations mingle with theirs as we may yet behold the seed of thousands of Anabaptist martyrs, men, women and young people, strong in their new-found faith in Jesus and sincere obedience to His Word, bring forth new modern-day Anabaptists again by the thousands!

Here then are seven points of personal observation that give evidence of the sincerity of these Swiss church leaders who seek reconciliation and healing, which also provide reasons to embrace them as brothers in Christ.

1. They were not sent by the official church hierarchy, but rather were warned not to enter into close fellowship with Anabaptists.

2. They asked the church authorities of the State Church to bless the babies in church rather than baptize them. They said it this way, Let these

later confess Christ and request their own baptism.

3. They said they are experiencing various forms of persecution by the State Church for their new beliefs.

4. They said many of the State Church pastors are ignorant of Jesus’ salvation from sin, are themselves not saved and remain steeped in church traditions.


5. They emphatically stated they cannot remain long term in the Church of Jesus Christ and the State Church. They acknowledged that there are times when they don’t know what to do. They earnestly implored our prayers for them. But even more than that, they said, we need you to come to Switzerland to help us, to fellowship with us and in particular to teach us God’s Word!

6. They shared their desire to see unbelievers become saved. They go to restaurants and markets to witness to people about the living Christ and the living way. (A sure sign of genuine salvation.)

7. Their humility was very evident. The fruit of the Spirit was unmistakably clear.

The Bottom Line is simply this: Having my spirit and soul immersed in this three-day conference has caused me to seek cleansing in needy areas of my life; it has rekindled a Holy Ghost fire within and created a burden for these seekers of

understanding in the practical ways of scriptural obedience. At the very least, it seems to me, we can participate in such encounters without

compromising our position on Bible doctrine and practice. We bless them in our Lord Jesus. We embrace them in Christian brotherhood. 

cement...announcement...announcement...anno

Announcement

In April, 2005, Faith Builders Educational Programs sponsored a weekend designed to minister to conservative Mennonites carrying various denominational labels. The theme for the program was “Current Issues in Conservative Mennonite Thought and Practice.” Faith Builders now announce that they have tape sets of these sessions available for \$25, which includes mailing costs.

The format of these meetings was that of asking three experienced men to prepare presentations choosing their own way of addressing the assigned topics in question. Each time, after all three speakers had presented their messages, the three responders would further invite the presenters to expand and elucidate their ideas. A sizable audience listened in and interacted between sessions.

The three topics assigned were:

—**“Who Are We and Where Do We Fit in?”**

—**“What Are the Greatest Challenges Facing Us in 2005?”**

—**“How Can We Avoid the Dangers and Maximize the Opportunities of the Next 20 Years?”**

The key speakers were Merle Burkholder, David L. Miller, and Val Yoder. The responders were Collier Berkshire, Melvin Lehman and Roy Longenecker.

What came out of this assembly is quite specific and thought-provoking. It is recorded on six tapes. These observations and emphases may not always seem practical, but they are always thought-provoking. These tapes are well worth your time, if you are interested in the three topics addressed.

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Bender-Wengerd

Bro. Lewis, Jr., son of Lewis and Martha Bender, Catlett, VA, and Sis. Mary Lois, daughter of Andy and Dora Wengerd, Paris, TN, at Bethel Fellowship Mennonite Church, on May 27, 2005, by John Mast.

Byler-Yoder

Bro. Marcus, son of William and Sarah Byler, Bonners Ferry, ID, and Sis. Darlene, daughter of Earl and Mary Yoder, Whiteville, TN, at Somerville, TN, on April 8, 2005, by William Byler.

Eicher-Stutzman

Bro. James, son of Alva and Rosanna Eicher, White Hall, IL, and Sis. Deborah, daughter of Jerry, Jr., and Laura Fern Stutzman, Roodhouse, IL, at Calvary Baptist Church for Rehoboth A.M. Church, Mar. 9, 2005, by Marvin Yoder.

Fisher-Esh

Bro. Elvin, son of Levi and Naomi Fisher, Honey Grove, PA, and Sis. Sara Lynn, daughter of Christ and Lizzie Esh, Honey Grove, PA, at First Baptist Church, Mifflintown, PA, for Shade Mountain Fellowship Church, Mifflin, PA, on June 17, 2005, by Jonas King.

Helmuth-Overholt

Bro. Micah, son of Glen and Mary Alice Helmuth, Bremen, IN, and Sis. Natalie,

daughter of Marcus and Lois Overholt, Abbeville, SC, July 16, 2005, at old Spring Mennonite Church by Ernest Hochstetler.

Herschberger-Beachy

Bro. Alan, son of Noah and Loretta Herschberger, Kokomo, IN, and Sis. Julia Dawn, daughter of Marvin and Carolyn Beachy, Amboy, IN, at Bethany Fellowship Church, on June 11, 2005, by the bride's father, Marvin Beachy.

Hershberger-Hershberger

Bro. Kelvin, son of Jesse and Mary Ellen Hershberger, Staunton, VA, and Sis. Beth, daughter of James and Betty Hershberger, Stuarts Draft, VA, at Pilgrim Fellowship Church on July 1, 2005, by Bennie Byler.

Jackson-Stauffer

Bro. Benji, son of Sam and Carolyn Jackson, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Karin, daughter of Esther and the late Roger Stauffer, Sturgis, MI, June 11, 2005, at Calvary Chapel, Sturgis, MI, for Pilgrim Fellowship by John Miller.

Mast-Jantzi

Bro. Elmer Mast, Whiteville, TN, (son of the late Noah and Elizabeth (Nisly) Mast) and Sis. Norma (Kuepfer) Jantzi, Wingham, ON, (daughter of the late John and Katie (Lichty) Kuepfer) on June 12, 2005, at Whitechurch Amish Mennonite Church, by Arthur Gerber.

Miller-Mast

Bro. Myron, son of Melvin and Lydia Miller, Mesopotamia, OH, and Sis. Rosina, daughter of Loyal and Ann Mast, Linn Grove, IN, at Decatur Church of God for Christian Mission Fellowship, on July 16, 2005, by Melvin Bontrager.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. LaVon, son of Edward and Alma Miller, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Twila, daughter of Paul and Edith Yoder, Poperinge, Belgium, at Oost-Vleteren, Belgium, on July 2, 2005, by David Yoder.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. Willis LaVerne, son of Willis and Lina Miller, Waynesboro, VA, and Sis. Ruth, daughter of Noah and Malinda Yoder, Stuarts Draft, VA, at Pilgrim Fellowship Church, on July 16, 2005, by Bennie Byler.

Sensenig-Schrock

Bro. Wesley, son of Lloyd and Ada

Sensenig, Annville, PA, and Sis. Karen, daughter of Simon and Ellen Schrock, Stuarts Draft, VA, at Pilgrim Fellowship Church, on July 8, 2005, by Bennie Byler.

Sommers-Troyer

Bro. Philip, son of David and Patricia Sommers, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Mary, daughter of John Henry and the late Katie Troyer, Dover, DE, May 28, 2005, at Victory Baptist Church, Dover, DE, for Harmony Christian Fellowship, by Steve Stoltzfus.

Stoltzfoos-Petersheim

Bro. Dwight, son of Roman and Lucy Stoltzfoos, Kinzers, PA, and Sis. Brenda, daughter of Henry and Marie Petersheim, Abbeville, SC, March 12, 2005, at Cold Spring Mennonite Church by Ernest Hochstetler.

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

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

Bontrager, Wendall and JoAnn (Bontrager), Millersburg, IN, first child and dau., Jerria Elise, July 22, 2005.

Chupp, Mitch and Rita (Gingerich), Plain City, OH, third child, second dau., Autumn Katie, July 15, 2005.

Eicher, Reuben and Rosina (Miller), Roodhouse, IL, first child and dau., Rosalie Joy, Mar. 11, 2005.

Fisher, Daniel and Lydia (Stoltzfus), Mifflin, PA, third child and dau., Abigail Ruth, May 13, 2005.

Fisher, Nathan and Ruthie (Fisher), East Waterford, PA, first child and dau., Elise Rose, July 7, 2005.

Friesen, Wilbert and Janice (Yoder), Shippshewana, IN, eighth child, third son, Daniel Allan, July 13, 2005.

Graber, Phillip and Amy (Lengacher), Loogootee, IN, first child and dau., Kiana Beth, June 26, 2005.

Hochstetler, Wendell and Sheri (Beiler), Aroda, VA, third child, first dau., Susanna Faith, May 9, 2005.

Kauffman, Louis and Susan (Wagler), Cottage Grove, TN, sixth child, third son, Eldon Lavern, July 7, 2005.

Knepp, Abraham and Janelle (Wagler), Montgomery, IN, first child and son, Colton Trey, June 23, 2005.

Knepp, Phillip and Angela (Kemp), Odon, IN, ninth child, fifth dau., Gloria Diane, July 10, 2005.

Knepp, Stanley and Shannon (Yoder), Loogootee, IN, first child and son, Bryant Ray, July 10, 2005.

Kuepfer, Jeffery and Rhoda (Wagler), Millbank, ON, fifth child, third son, Curtis Jeffery, June 12, 2005.

Lapp, Joe and Julia (Mast), New Holland, PA, fourth child, third dau., Allison Rose, June 12, 2005.

Miller, Darryl and Renee (Hochstetler), Martinsburg, OH, second child and son, Carson Darryl, May 26, 2005.

Miller, Delmer and Rhoda (Mast), Caneyville, KY, fifth child, first dau., Susanna Marie, July 3, 2005.

Miller, Jeremy and Marla (Bender), Rural Retreat, VA, second child and son, Jaylin Brent, July 26, 2005.

Miller, Joe and Rhoda (Miller), Dundee, OH, sixth child, second dau., Brianna Joy, May 17, 2005.

Miller, Tim and Esther (Oatney), Hutchinson, KS, first child and dau., Cherise Aliyah, July 7, 2005.

Schlabach, Steve and Joleen (Mullet), Sarasota, FL, third child, first son, Joshua Andre`, July 8, 2005.

Schmucker, Abner and Angela (Nisly), Partridge, KS, fourth child, first dau., Olivia Kate, July 18, 2005.

Stoltzfoos, Dave and Gina (Overholt), Leola, PA, fifth child, fourth son, Travis Luke, July 12, 2005.

Stoltzfus, John, Jr., and Angela (Miller), Morgantown, PA, fifth child, second son, Jonathan Trent, June 14, 2005.

Stutzman, Kevin and Carrie (Gingerich), Plain City, OH, first child and dau., Sierra Emily, July 22, 2005.

Stutzman, Paul and Lydia Mae (Eicher), White Hall, IL, ninth child and son, Wesley Alan, July 9, 2005.

ordinations

Bro. Alan Byler, 37, was ordained to the office of minister at Melita Fellowship, Martinsburg, OH, May 8, 2005. Preordination messages were given by Homer Zook. The charge was given by Nelson Beachy.

Bro. Timothy Gerber, 37, Wellesley, ON, was ordained to the ministry to serve at Cedar Grove A.M. Church on April 3, 2005. Preordination messages were brought by Leon Wagler, Paris TN.

The charge was given by Timothy's father, Arthur Gerber, assisted by Melvin

Yoder, Jonathan Daniel and Joyce Lanette (Miller), Waterford, Ireland, first child and son, Jonathan Patrick, May 12, 2005.

Zook, Marcus and Anna Mary (Stoltzfus), Mifflin, PA, fourth child, third son, Marcus Levi, June 17, 2005.

Roes and David Peachey. Also in the lot were Clair Gerber, James Gerber, and Wayne Gerber.

Bro. Laverne Ropp, 50, was ordained to the office of bishop for Fellowship Haven, Monkton, Ontario, on June 12, 2005. Preordination messages were brought by Perry Troyer, Plain City, OH.

The charge was given by Lewis Tice, assisted by Melvin Roes and Perry Troyer. Also in the lot was John Byler.

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

obituaries

Glick, Weston Reese, infant son of Lester and Crystal, Penn Yan, NY, died June 28, 2005, several hours after he was born. He was preceded in death by a brother, Rylan.

In addition to his parents, he is sur-

vived by maternal grandparents, Glenn and Naomi Lapp, Penn Yan; and paternal grandparents, John and Barbara Glick, Gap, PA; maternal great grandparents, Aaron and Susie Stoltzfus, Penn Yan; and Ben and Mary Lapp, Christiana, PA; paternal great grandparents, Elmer and Rebecca Stoltzfus, Dundee, NY; and

Christ Glick, Gap, PA.

Graveside services at the Crystal Valley Mennonite Church were conducted by Mel Lapp and Josh Beiler.

Miller, Ida, 65, died after a short illness on June 15, 2005, at Liberty, KY. She was born October 26, 1939, at Chouteau, OK, daughter of the late Alvin D. and Susan (Troyer) Miller.

She was a member of Casey Amish Mennonite Church, Liberty, KY. She was a retired school teacher.

Surviving are one brother: Raymond (Barbara) Miller, Paris, TN; four sisters: Clara Miller, Paris, TN; Verna (Mrs. Norman A. Yoder), Olney, IL; Laura, (Mrs. Norman S. Beachy), Barry, IL; Mary (Mrs. Earl A. Yoder), Whiteville, TN; sister-in-law: Mary Jane (Leroy) Beachy, Millersburg, OH; stepmother: Erma (Miller-Hershberger) Miller, Casey Creek, KY; one step-sister: LeAnna (Dennis) Miller, Belleville, AR; five step brothers: Dennis (Sue Ann) Hershberger, Nappanee, IN; Ivan (Ruby) Hershberger, Mayfield, KY; Simon (Sue) Hershberger, Jr., Wolcottville, IN; Steve (Katie) Hershberger, Monticello, KY; James (Velma) Hershberger, Summersville, KY; step sister-in-law: Rhoda Hershberger, Liberty, KY; 30 nieces and nephews and 136 great nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by parents, brother, Eli A. Miller and step brother, David Hershberger.

Funeral services were held on

June 19 at Casey A.M. Church.

Otto, Albert J., 80, died June 1, 2005, at Dukes Memorial Hospital, Peru, IN. He was born Oct. 11, 1924, the son of Jerry and Elizabeth (Mast) Otto, in Arthur, IL.

He was a member of Bethany Fellowship Church, Kokomo, IN.

On Aug. 29, 1944, he was married to Mattie Helmuth. She survives.

Also surviving are two sons: Calvin (Jean), Sarasota, FL; Lynford (Marietta), North Adams, MI; four daughters: Mary (Mrs. Dale Bontrager), Ft. Wayne, IN; Barbara (Mrs. Patrick Latiailade), Haiti; Arlene (Mrs. William Tschiegg), Bunker Hill, IN; and Edith (Mrs. Sam Miller), Huntington, IN; four brothers: Freeman, Kokomo; Simon, Kokomo; Fred, Humboldt, IL, and Jerry, Arcola, IL; one sister: Verna (Mrs. Melvin Chupp), Arcola, IL; One sister-in-law, Martha Otto, Humboldt, IL; nineteen grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by one grandson and three brothers.

Serving in the funeral were Marvin Beachy and Darlton Bontrager as well as several members of the family.

Zook, Mollie B., 92, died July 1, 2005 at the home of her daughter, Katie, the Edward Troyers. She was born December 5, 1912, daughter of the late Gideon and Lydia Byler, Middlefield, OH.

She was a member of Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA. She was

editor of Junior Messages “Grandma Emsie” (M.Z.) for *Calvary Messenger* for a number of years and wrote many children’s stories, and was author of four books: *His Protecting Hand, From Wealth to Faith – A Tear-stained Journey; Dilek; and The Troyer Teams.*

On Nov. 19, 1931, she was married to Amos C. Zook, who preceded her in death in July, 1992. They lived in matrimony for 61 years. To this union were born eight children: Lydia (deceased) Mrs. Amos Schrock; Florence (Mrs. Alva Miller), Paris, TN; Barbara (Mrs. Raymond Miller), Paris, TN; Crist (Irene) Zook, Greenwood, DE; Henry

(Esther) Zook, Kalona, IA; Mary Jane (Mrs. Leroy Beachy), Millersburg, OH; Allen (Vera) Zook, Lebanon, PA; and Katie (Mrs. Edward Troyer), Staunton, VA. Also surviving are 41 grandchildren, 118 great grandchildren, four great, great grandchildren, seven step grandchildren and 28 step-great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, daughter Lydia, and son-in-law, Eli Miller.

Mollie needed intensive care the last three months of her life and died of congestive heart failure. While we rejoice that she could go to be with her Savior, we will greatly miss her.

observations

A headline in the *Hutchinson News*, 7-11-05, says, “Dress Codes Being Pursued for Teachers.” A school board member from Michigan says that teachers tend to dress more and more relaxed. He says another term would be sloppy.

Mark Berntson, who teaches high school in North Dakota, says he believes he is taken more seriously and also that students respond better if he is dressed up rather than dressed down.

Following is an excerpt from Harris County Schools, Georgia, “Abundant research exists to indicate that personal appearance has a

significant effect on other people. As public school employees we are all employed in positions of influence. Our dress, grooming and mannerisms will have an impact on the way students and parents respond to our leadership.”

A district in Houston has the following policy: “Male teachers’ hair must not go below the collar. Their side burns must not extend below the ear lobe.” Certain styles of mustaches are not permitted.

The article raises concerns that teachers should not wear tight or skimpy clothing that compromises the modest concealment of flesh and form. Isn’t it interesting that such concerns are being raised from the

public school community? We may rightly conclude that there are practical reasons why we should dress modestly.

As Christian people we believe that the Scriptures teach us to model a standard of modesty that is often out of step with cultural mainstream. Let us be encouraged to uphold Christian standards of modesty and identity, not because it is popular or always easy, but because it is right.



I remember hearing a story about a teacher who taught school in a farming community. She posed the following arithmetic problem: If ten sheep were in a pen and five got out, how many would be left inside the pen? From the teacher's perspective the correct answer is obvious. But a boy in the class had this to say: "Teacher, you may know arithmetic, but you don't know sheep."

That sheep have strong tendencies to follow each other, sometimes to their own destruction, as is borne out in the following story:

Recently some shepherds in Turkey left 1,500 sheep to graze while they had breakfast. For no apparent reason, one sheep jumped off a cliff to its death. True to their nature, the other sheep followed it. Four hundred fifty also died. But as the pile of dead sheep got higher, the fall of the rest was cushioned so that the rest did

not die. The loss of 450 sheep to the 26 owner families is very significant. (*AP News*, 7-8-05.)

In John 10, Jesus twice says, "I am the good shepherd." In verse 11, He adds that He gives His life for the sheep. In verse 14, He said, "I know my sheep and am known of mine." In verse 27, He says, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me."

Let us be reminded that to belong to and follow the Good Shepherd is always safe. But let us also remember that we have the sheep-like tendency to go astray and turn to our own ways. (Isaiah 53:6) This may often simply mean following another shepherd who is not following the True Shepherd.




During the summer months I work two half days a week at Farmer's Market in Hutchinson. This provides an exposure to a cross section of the local urban population. A significant number of people carry a burdensome quantity of extra body weight.

Recently one such person discussed his weight problem with me. He felt good about his last visit to the doctor. His blood pressure, his blood sugar level, and all other tests showed normal. His doctor told him he was pleased with his apparent weight loss since his last visit. He estimates that he had lost at least

25 pounds. The reason that it was only an estimate was that the patient was heavier than the doctor's scales could accommodate. But the patient told his wife that all this good news called for a celebration. They went to Sirloin Stockade and enjoyed a steak dinner.

An article from Abner Riehl, Due West, SC, reminds us that our people tend to soft pedal this aspect of nonconformity. I have his approval to use ideas from the article in this column from time to time. Note the following excerpt: "Recently I was

convicted by Romans 12:1...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable...." That passage reminded me of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "glorify God in your body...." And, of course, Philippians 3:19, our belly as a god? I believe the answer is found in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." What would Jesus do?

The article is a strong appeal to recognize this problem and to work at it together from a scriptural perspective. —DLM 

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.

5. Holiness unto the Lord

Earl Peachey, Mattawana, PA

One distinctive doctrine we hold dear is that the church is a brotherhood. Holiness unto the Lord is to be lived out in the context of brotherhood. In 1 Peter 2:9, children of God are called "an holy nation." Holiness is God-likeness. Holiness is not defined by distinctiveness as an end in itself, but in being conformed unto God. This will

result in distinctiveness as surely as light is different from darkness.

The word "nation" denotes those who are drawn together by having the same nature. I perceive that it is the will of God that we be holy individuals; it is also the will of God that we experience holiness together. Individualism, because of the time and place we live in, is a powerful force pushing upon us.

One who took note of current worship songs found that a high percentage of them started with the word "I." Far fewer songs started with "we," which would point to brotherhood. This is indicative of how "the human

trinity of I, me and my” have come to dominate the common themes of worship in our time.

How do we lead our people to becoming a holy nation? I speak of a holiness that affects us wherever we are, at any hour of the day, in spite of who we’re with.

Let me speak of, first of all, an institutional holiness. It has some similarities to living holiness. It might help someone take a better direction than he would otherwise. Some marks of institutional holiness are statements like this: “Remember we are plain people, and plain people don’t do this or go there.” There is some truth to that statement. But it raises the question, “So if we weren’t plain people, would it be wrong?” Another thing it does is confuse the relationship of principle and application. It might say, “Why, of course, we practice modesty! Don’t our sisters all wear capes?” That’s good, but do capes guarantee modesty? Another weakness it has is that it tends to overemphasize rules and standards as our guide. For example, someone might confess this, “I know that our courtship standards ask for a hands-off policy, and we violated that standard. I ask your forgiveness.” That one troubles me. Do we mean that if it weren’t in the standard, it wouldn’t be wrong? Is that what makes it wrong? While institutional

holiness has some good, it does not serve God’s people well.

How shall we lead our people to greater holiness? First, let’s examine our view of **salvation**. We seem to reduce the terms of salvation to a formula. When Jesus met people who showed interest in His love, He did not say the same thing to all of them. Note the differences in what he said to the Samaritan woman, to Nicodemus, to the rich young ruler, to Zaccheus and to the repentant thief on the cross. Formulas may help people to find God, but if our formulas and our salvation experience do not include a change in the authority ruling the heart, it’s not salvation.

There is no other salvation but Lordship salvation. Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.” I cringe when I hear someone say, “You have received Him as your Savior, now take Him as you Lord.” That makes it sound as though we can be saved without making Him Lord. Making Him Lord is not simply an option; it is an integral part of receiving Him.

Many church problems could be solved if people would acknowledge, “I can’t necessarily have my own way, for I must follow Jesus.”

A second requirement of holiness is **submission** one to another. While

we passionately long for greater holiness, we seldom hear this longing expressed as a desire for submission. I've heard people ask for wisdom in getting along with others. When someone in his youthful defiance says, "No one is going to tell me what to do," we say there's trouble ahead. But when the spiritual version of this occurs, it's harder to detect and to realize. Submission is more than "shutting up and putting up." It affects the way we look at the church and those who are over us in the Lord.

We do not often meet together like this. The best place to exercise brotherhood is at home in the local, home congregation. God, I believe, has a keen interest in the local congregation. A good relationship here has the greatest potential in making a positive impact on a person's spiritual growth. Even though I greatly appreciate places like Calvary Bible School, Faith Builders, SMBI and other programs that are designed to promote spiritual growth, I believe the greatest potential for spiritual growth and revival lies in the home congregation.

Sometimes a need arises for a minister to go and help a congregation which needs assistance. That's alright, but woe to the preacher who finds satisfaction in going here and there to help other churches solve

problems because of the frustrations he experiences at home.

For many people the local church is like a jigsaw puzzle. From a distance it looks much better than when you come up close. We desire smooth sailing, great fellowship, blessed relationships, profound worship, and visionary leadership, but instead we are disappointed to find that there is plenty of immaturity and carnality. We see plenty of mistakes, power struggles, wrong priorities, narrowness, worldly interests, pettiness and quarreling. We sigh in despair! And we tend to see the great work God is doing "over there."

I think if the Apostle Paul had been a typical Amish Mennonite, he might have had different counsel for the church at Corinth. He might have said, "Look, brethren, it's time you start thinking. Those of you who are serious and committed to the Lord, . . . it's time for you to look for another fellowship. It's time for you to go somewhere else. I mean, get together with people who really mean business!" I don't even find him saying, "Look, problems are so serious that you'd better not have communion this fall." He does say they should tarry for one another. And I ask, Are there yet undiscovered flavors and stripes of Mennonitism that would enrich us?

I used to be quite sympathetic with

reform movements that seek to bring greater earnestness and fervor into the life of the church. I have now been around long enough to see how some of these things work. God has been impressing upon me that the real possibility of revival is not so much in finding something new, but in the restoration and revival of the old. I know what it's like to stand with one foot down in the church and the other foot upraised, trying to decide where to put it down. But the Lord showed me over a period of time that if I am to be a blessing to my home church, I must put both feet down in the home church.

Submission is not tested when we agree. That test comes when we don't see things alike. I believe we must all, myself included, learn what it means to submit to one another in the fear of God.

The church is like a jigsaw puzzle in yet another way. Each place fits in a certain place. We best bless the church when we fill that place. Furthermore, little beauty resides in an individual piece of the puzzle. The beauty comes out only as all the pieces are portrayed collectively.

Submission doesn't mean, "Well, then I'll just be quiet." That would be mere passivity. Submission means that I have an active desire to see that those around and over me prosper in the work God has called them to

do. The opposite of submission is sometimes called rebellion. I call it independence. Submission includes accountability to the brotherhood. I'm not convinced that differences among us are really the root problem of our conflicts. I say there is another reason—the lack of submission.

The principles of submission need to be taught to our people. But let us preachers realize that the greater need is for submission to be modeled.

How do submission and holiness relate to each other? Two ways:

1. Submission to each other in the fear of God provides a clear distinctive from the world.
2. Submission creates a good atmosphere to determine the will of God as we face issues and make practical applications of biblical principles.

How can we be holy vessels? 2 Timothy 2:20,21, says, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore shall purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use and prepared unto every good work." "Sanctified" means "holy." "Meet" means "easy to make use of." There is no vacation from holy living. Furthermore, we refuse to segment our lives into

compartments. When that is the case, whether we are at home, at church, at youth activities, or on vacation, a fresh relationship with the Lord will guarantee that our applications of biblical principle will not become institutional.

I admire the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my hero. Nothing thrills me like the thought of some day seeing Him and hearing His approval. In one case I was too preoccupied to properly prepare myself for preaching. When I realized it just a few minutes before I would get up to preach, I called out to God for help and strength. I gave the message and still felt somewhat unsure of where I stood with God. As I moved to the back of the auditorium, a little third-grade boy came up to me and handed me a paper with his memory verse on it. It was Matthew 25:23: "...Well done,...." Then I felt

greatly encouraged and assured that all was well between God and me. I had heard from the Lord.

I know there's a time for opinions, ideas, and much to learn from experience and from how other churches are dealing with a particular issue. But nothing substitutes for the questions, "What does the Bible say?"

Jesus said there's a distinguishing mark of the followers of Jesus. It is not by our knowledge, not by our number, not by power, not by structure, not by administration, or appearance, or doctrine, nor applications of principle, but "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). The practice of love is not liberal, loose or lenient. Living in love is holiness unto the Lord.



Scientific Benefits From Evolution

*Ernest Strubhar
Perkins, OK*

[We continue letters to a newspaper editor who defends evolution. For those who do not believe creationism, Romans 1:28a comes to mind: "...they do not like to retain God in their knowledge...." —PLM]

Mr. _____ asserts that the theory of evolution has proven very useful

to scientists. I would like kindly to request that he give us concrete examples. These two questions come to my mind:

1. In what specific ways has science been advanced because scientists believe in evolution?

2. How has believing in evolution brought benefits to society and

culture?


Let me give one example of how it seems to me that belief in evolutionary theory has impeded the cause of science. Since evolutionary scientists desperately want to find support for evolution, they choose to investigate matters that they hope will support evolutionary theory even if these investigations have no real benefit to mankind. It looks to me like they spend billions of dollars because they want to find reasons not to believe in the creator God of the Bible.

For example, in the course of the last few years, our government and science researchers have invested billions of dollars in the SETI project. What is SETI? The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. Evolutionary scientists suppose that if life evolved here on earth, it likely evolved elsewhere in the universe, too. And they believe that if they would “hear” a signal from space (something like the Morse code), it would certainly mean that there are intelligent beings out there, trying to communicate with us. So the scientific community spends these billions of dollars following an evolutionary dream with money that could be invested in looking

for cures for cancer, or developing alternative energy sources, or working to feed the hungry, or even in repairing hurricane damages in Haiti or Grenada.

More than that, stop and think about the suppositions behind SETI. As I said, scientists suppose that if they discovered anything more than a random signal coming from space it would mean that there is some intelligence behind it. A logical inference, I agree. But at the same time, these same scientists who, though they see evidence of the highest kind of order and complex forms of communication all around them, yet insist that there is no [higher] intelligence behind it! They say that it all happened by mindless chance, that there’s no intelligent design behind it and ultimately no purpose for it.

Come on now, folks. Where did our ability to communicate come from? Why can we think and reason at all? Where did language start? Isn’t this infinitely more complex than a signal from space, one that we have never yet heard?

Forgive me, friends. If I can reason at all, the evidence leads me to a Creator God. 

Changing our habits,

LIKE CLIMBING A LONG FLIGHT OF STAIRS,

IS EASIER TO DO WHEN WE’RE YOUNG.

God's Faithfulness in Preservation

Floyd Stoltzfus

Two miracle stories follow that reveal God's faithfulness in protecting His holy Word. In all our mission endeavors let us keep the Bible central. The Bible ought to be prominent in the life and work of every church.

Merrill Unger states: "The development of the term 'the Bible' to designate the "Book of books" is providential. The English word 'Bible' came originally from the name of the papyrus or byblos reed used extensively in antiquity for making scrolls and books. Byblos (O.T. Gebal) was so named because in that Phoenician seaport, the trade and manufacture of papyrus writing material was carried on. From the eleventh century B.C., or even earlier, papyrus rolls, grown in the delta of Egypt, were shipped to Gebal. By the second century

A.D., Greek Christians called the sacred Scriptures 'ta Biblia,' or 'the Books.'"

Before the New Testament was compiled, the sacred writings were designated as the Scriptures (Matthew 21:42; Luke 24:32; John 5:39); the "holy Scriptures" (Romans 1:2). The Jews' technical division of "the law," "the prophets," and "the psalms" is recognized in Luke 24:44. Some of our missionary brethren preach week after week and are also busily engaged in teaching Bible classes in between. The preacher's one business is the simple expository teaching of God's Word. Paul gives a concise encouragement to Timothy, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2).

The Millionth Vehicle

Betty Troyer

Silvia had a vision but she also thought about the price. Not only the price of the load of Bibles that she wanted to take into the Soviet Union, but also about the price of being discovered. Imprisonment?

Torture? Death? But again the thought came—pray! And pray she did.

Silvia's friends told her it could not be done; she would never get through the border with a load of Bibles. Silvia's response was always

the same—pray, pray with me.

The Bibles were coming from Austria and Silvia seemed to have the assurance that this was a work that needed to be done. How it was to work, she didn't know. She was praying. Her friends were praying. Whole churches were praying. If God wanted those Bibles in the Soviet Union in the year of 1983, He would get them there. The day came and all was ready. The vehicles left at the appointed time and prayers were constantly ascending to the Throne of Grace. At the border they waited in line. They prayed. They waited. They got closer. When their turn came, many guards came and told them to pull to the side. They pulled to the

side and waited and prayed. Soon guards came and media came and made an announcement, "This is the millionth vehicle to cross this border. It will not be opened or searched and may proceed through unchecked. Welcome to Ukraine!"

What a miracle God performed in positioning this vehicle in just the right place at the right time. What an awesome answer to prayer. A load of Bibles into the Soviet Union!

Do we have faith the size of a grain of mustard seed? Silvia had the courage to face even death. She had the assurance and peace that this was God's will and that He could perform it—and He did!

Ludmilla's House Fire

Naomi Zehr

Ludmilla is a very dedicated and joyful Ukrainian native who attends the Khotov church. Her youthful face is without a trace of the hardened Soviet woman she once was. Just recently her house burned and yet that joy has remained on her countenance.

One Wednesday in February, she went to her son's apartment in Khotov. She would often go there to use his running water to bathe and wash her clothes. Since it was Wednesday, she wanted to be prepared for the

evening service in Kiev. Suddenly, her neighbor's son came running and told her that her house was on fire.

Ludmilla dropped everything she was doing and ran. Khotov is about six kilometres from Lesniki where she lives, and she was a three quarter way up there when her son picked her up.

Her house was burning! This was the house that Ludmilla had built with her own hands. She had carefully formed each brick for the walls. She had first combined clay, water,

and straw, and then used her bare feet to mix it. Ukrainians normally would have used a horse to mix the clay mixture, but Ludmilla was determined. Later her son had helped her chop down trees in the forest and build the roof for her house. And now it was burning!

Half an hour later the first fire truck came to the rescue, but it did *not* have any water and some of the Ukrainian firemen were drunk. So the firemen began to pull the burning house apart in an effort to somehow save it. Finally, the second fire truck arrived on the scene, but it was already too late. Ludmilla's house had burned to the ground.

Later, as she sorted through the charred remains of her home that she had worked so hard to build, she found a wonderful sign that her God was present amidst trials. Her

Russian New Testament was lying among the ruins. The outside was slightly charred, *her New Testament was still intact*, and the words were distinguishable. What a reminder of an Almighty God!

Now Ludmilla lives in a very crowded apartment with her son. All her documents and even her passport were destroyed in the fire. She continues to go to work to earn money for her living. She is a very humble lady and does not want attention drawn to her situation. But her expression is still joyful because she believes in a faithful God.

Master's International Ministries* is supplying money to help Ludmilla rebuild.

**Master's International Ministries, RR 2, Wellesley, Ontario, NOB 2T0 Phone: 519-656-2330.*



helpers at home

A Simple Lifestyle—Part Two

Mary June Glick

A simple lifestyle in a busy world—is it possible? We tend to rush about so we have time to do the next project. We drive too fast because we don't have time to get ready soon enough. Then we wonder why we're tired and "stressed out."

Are we busier than we were thirty and forty years ago? We have many time-saving devices—washers, dryers, microwaves, dishwashers, and so on, which are meant to make our lives easier. Are we letting them add pressure to do more? We're available at all times to others with our

cell phones, e-mails, and/or beepers. Can we blame technology, or do we set too high a standard for ourselves and others?

Much of our time revolves around church and family, yet I believe our work drive and desire for recreation have put added stress on our lives. Perhaps we see “busyness” as a virtue. The Bible tells us to “work with our hands” (1 Thess. 4:11). It also tells us that Jesus needed to come away from His busy life and rest, along with spending time with God. Maybe it’s time to evaluate our busyness and find ways to quiet our hearts and our slow down our busy pace.

One mother suggests that our value system was different when we were growing up. She refers to the “credit card malady,” which can give us instant gratification. We don’t have to wait to buy what we want until we can afford it. I believe we would appreciate things more if we would wait and probably many times we would see that we really don’t need them. A suggestion with credit cards is to own only one card and always pay within a month, so we don’t pay interest. Magazines and catalogs can cause us to be discontent as we observe beautiful homes, furnishings and gardens. But we can also be creative and learn to enjoy what we have.

Perhaps we older parents are putting pressure on our younger families.

Our standard of living may be going up as more money is available. When our children get married they may want to match our lifestyle. What if we would teach our children the blessing of giving, of doing without so we can share with others? Is there a way to teach that simple living is a blessing—not a hardship?

Simplicity secrets for a beautiful home:

1. Create an atmosphere of love and acceptance, of peace and joy. Our homes should be a foretaste of heaven, a place we love to be, where family anticipates coming home to.

2. Your house is an expression of you. Don’t compete with others or copy them. Enjoy your house. Make it cheerful—a happy place.

3. Creativity is the ability to make something beautiful out of something ordinary. You could buy used furniture and refinish it, make your own curtains, or buy household things at yard sales. Not everything has to match.

4. You don’t have to be rich to transform a house into a home. Be practical. Make your home “children friendly.” Don’t fill it with “stuff.” Fill it with love.

5. Acknowledge Christ’s presence in your home, by the pictures on the wall, the books, magazines, and tapes.

Women carry the potential to create a happy and contented home. 

An Escape? —Part Three of Four

Anita Yoder

Ligonier, IN

The letters in the attic upset Henry, as he tried to understand his father's actions.

I just finished reading another letter—my father's letter. He told Mother about the threats that were being made against him. I couldn't cry any more.

I was angry. I got up and went to the window, glaring at the Steen Castle. I saw myself creeping through the shadows, in its tunnels and dungeons, until I reached Father. I pictured myself cutting the ropes that tied him.

I would go find Mother. It was mostly for her that I wanted to cut the ropes. My own dear, dear mother had put up with such treatment. She should have been treated kindly.

I would cut the ropes that held them. I would set them free. Why didn't somebody defend them and do it? My buddies could do something like that. I felt myself growing angrier.

We would smash every door, and set every prisoner free. Those guards wouldn't be able to stand against us. The doors are only wood; we would smash them into splintered sticks!

Thinking about this left me feeling hollow inside. I felt myself breaking out in a cold sweat even in the warm attic.

Why wasn't Father angry? Why wasn't he fighting? Didn't he care that they would eventually kill him and Mother, too?

After a time of thinking about all this, I calmed down. He did care. He cared a lot. He was fighting for his very soul and Mother's, too. He was fighting in a different way, but I couldn't quite understand it.

Father was very strong. He wasn't a weakling. He wasn't trying to save his body. He had told Mother he knows men can't do more than God would allow them to do. He trusted God and understood God's love for him. Was that it? Was that the powerful force behind his faith?

He understood that God loved him and also the men who tried to pull his body apart. He understood God's love in his friend praying for him. He had mentioned a man, named Henry, who was in prison with him and had greatly encouraged him. *Maybe that's why I'm named Henry.* The thought warmed him.

Father knew and understood love. Was that the secret of his strength?

I ripped open another letter and started reading.

(to be continued)



Youth Editor's note:

In the July issue, I asked the question, **“In your minds, what factors contribute to youth being bored with life?”**

The following article, “God’s Embrace” is one reader’s testimony concerning her journey from boredom to fulfillment. I thought it fit well with some of the responses that were sent in.

Remember that you are invited to submit new questions as well as replies to each month’s posted question!

God’s Embrace—Part One

By a reader

Rest. What does it mean to you? If you’re anything like me, and I suppose you are, rest is something you enjoy. I’m not going to go into the dictionary meaning of rest, but here’s my definition: Rest is not doing anything that takes effort. Rest is relaxing, maybe in a hammock, with a nice breeze. Or sleeping on the most comfortable bed—your own. Have you fallen asleep yet? That’s physical rest. What about spiritual rest? Is there something like that? I can assure you there is because I’ve experienced it.

Here’s a bit of my story. I can’t write all of it because it’s not finished yet. But the part I’ve been through is such an exciting journey!

I grew up in a large Mennonite community in a wonderful home. I had no doubt that my family loved me. I invited Christ into my life in my

early teens, was baptized and became a church member in my mid-teens, and started going to youth activities at 16. I had great friends who loved me and shared many good times with me. My friends and I had a lot of things in common, of course, like friends usually do. I love to sing and sang in our youth chorus. I taught Sunday School, went to church regularly and I was happy—most of the time.

There were times when I wondered what God had planned for me. Did He want me to go into voluntary service? If so, when? And where? Like all young girls, I also longed for a young man to notice me and love me just the way I was. I wasn’t naïve enough to believe I was perfect, but surely I was good enough for someone I could like.

I went to Calvary Bible School

and made more friends. I got older. My friends started dating. Some of them did VS work, several of them in foreign countries. I went to Sharon Mennonite Bible School and made more friends. My friends got married and started their own families. And on it went. I could rejoice with the ones whose dreams were coming true, but I wondered about my own dreams. Didn't God care about mine? I was still at home. I had never been in VS. There were several well-meaning persons in church who asked me if I had ever considered that. Of course I had! But nothing had ever worked out. It seemed that God just closed doors.

I had a job I loved, though it was stressful, with constant tight deadlines to meet. I had a car that was reliable and paid for. I had a circle of close friends. My youth group was close. My family became more precious than ever. My younger siblings grew up and became in many ways my peers instead of my little brother and sister. We became best friends.

But I was restless. Living in a large Mennonite community has its drawbacks, as many of you know. There were so many things to do and so many places to go. They were things and places, but they left me with little time to *be*! I was always doing, doing, doing—finding my identity in my work and activities.

One day I had had enough. To make a long story short, I moved out of state. Although I had the support of my parents and family, it wasn't all easy. I knew only a few people well in the area to which I moved. I found a good job working for Christian employers, attended a Mennonite church, and started joining in their youth activities, though by now I was definitely on the old side of young.

I adjusted—slowly. What I hadn't reckoned with was the ache of missing my family, especially those who were still at home: my brother's sense of humor and our discussions, sometimes crazy, sometimes serious; my freedom to ask him questions any time and get a male perspective on issues; my times of shopping and laughing and even arguing with my sister. In other words, I had no one with whom I could really connect. No one to dream with. No one to put my arm around and say "I love you." And no one who did that to me, either. I was lonely, desperately so.

I started trying to fill the void. Oh, I didn't do anything bad. I read lots. I spent hours reading, sitting in a comfy chair with a cup of coffee, reading, reading, reading. Always I was wishing I could be spending time with someone; wishing I could find someone there to really connect with.

But I reached out to the wrong

people. I got to know a young man who was not a Christian, but seemed to be a good person. I knew it was

wrong, but I let down the guard of my heart and let him in.
(to be concluded)

This Month's
QUESTION

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

r e s p o n s e f r o m o u r r e a d e r s ...

1. In my mind, a young person that is bored with life is one who has no real purpose and does not understand God's place in his heart. I believe that the most crucial thing for us youth of this day and age is to establish godly goals that will lead us in the direction we want to go and to the place we want to be. When everything we do, think or say is lined up with such goals, we begin to experience inner change, life becomes exciting, and life is no longer boring.

Steven Lockwood, Covington, TX



2. Boredom is rarely mentioned by married adults—much oftener by youth or children. Both loneliness and/or having creative energy that is not being harnessed appropriately can make youth bored quickly! Being married is not a quick fix—some married people don't have their purpose in life figured out either. For married people there seems to be so much to do that they rarely complain about being bored. For instance, I don't usually hear my parents saying

that they are bored. Rather they say things like, "I am tired. You want to go again?!"

Kansas



3. In my mind, there are a number of ideas that are passed on to us, that contribute to us youth being bored with life. These ideas can be summarized as:

Do not think.

Do not feel.

Do not ask questions. (Especially if you are the child of some well-known teacher or minister.) We are expected to consistently produce good works in our "deadened state." We feel trapped. We are not offered "life," yet at the same time, it seems as though we can't escape either. This makes life look extremely hopeless. Is it any wonder that we are frustrated, disillusioned, and bored with life?

Reader from PA



4. The times I get bored with life are when I am not confident that God's smile of approval is on my life.

It is then that regular, normal work and personal time with God becomes mundane and only the exciting things of life are any fun. On the other hand, when I am “up on a mountain” with God, I find enjoyment in everything, and the exciting things of life become even more exciting.

Another thing that I think contributes to boredom is doing just the things you feel like doing, instead of the things you should do. When we do just what we feel like doing, the scope of things that are fun narrows, until everything is boring and nothing is fun.

Serving God, not self, brings purpose and fulfillment.

A youth reader from PA



5. I could avoid boredom by making myself more available to others. I think that anyone who struggles with boredom should cry out to God and ask Him to help find something constructive to do. Keith Crider in a “Just For You” writes, “We get bored when we live for a smaller goal than the one God has intended for us.”

LM, Hydro, OK



6. I wonder if boredom is the result of a lack of purpose in life, a lack of burden for the lost, a lack of vision, a lack of seeing our personal responsibility in serving the Lord and spreading the Gospel. Maybe too often we are too asleep spiritually to see the pressing needs around us. Nothing satisfies the soul like serving the Lord with all our heart and serving others. Too often it seems that the precious years of youth are wasted on self, play, and on things that don’t have eternal value. Rather than these years being invested for the Master, we enter adulthood unprepared for its demands and unequipped for God’s service. I am a youth, too, and I know that it is a battle to keep in tune with the Master and love Him above all else. Having been born and raised in Costa Rica and seeing the many needs in the Latin world I often feel like crying, “Where are the true men and women of God who will take a stand for Him and make a difference?”

A reader from Costa Rica

*Next Month’s
QUESTION*

In a sentence or two, “What is your mental image or description of a youth who is a ‘Disciple of Christ?’”

Please send your responses by August 20.

Youth Fellowship Meetings—July 2005

We received a positive and encouraging response of the meetings in each of the five districts. From one of the districts where there are fewer young people it was reported that they learned to know each other better. The following (approximate) numbers are of visiting youth and families who attended the Sunday morning service. The home folks, families and youth of the hosting congregation, added to these totals.

The Ministerial Committee for Youth Fellowship Meetings
Floyd Stoltzfus, Secretary

- Northeast – Lancaster County, PA—250
- North Central – Holmes County, OH—425
- Northwest – Arthur, IL—85
- Southwest – Auburn, KY—120
- Southeast – Cross Hill, SC—100

Worker Opportunities

at Mountain View Nursing Home

- Nurse Aides - 3 in October
- Kitchen - 1 in September
- Floater - 1 in September
- Orderly/Janitor - 2 in October
- LPN/RN - 1 in September

CONSTRUCTION
Volunteers Needed!

- September
..... Drywall
- October/November
..... Finish Work



Please contact Mark Webb at:
1776 Elly Road, Aroda, VA, 22709
Phone: 540-948-6831
E-mail: markwebb4@Juno.com

CHRISTIAN CARE FOR THE AGED

THOUGHT GEMS

A person can save others much pain
by not jumping to conclusions.



Reputation is precious, but character is priceless.



Merely giving good advice does not often
qualify as helping the needy.



A scandal may be a breeze whipped up by two or more windbags.



He who forgets the language of gratitude can never
be on speaking terms with happiness.



True greatness dwells where simplicity,
goodness and truth are present.



You will be happier if you give people a bit of your
heart rather than a piece of your mind.



Hate somebody and misery will find you.



The love of Jesus breaks hard hearts and heals broken hearts.

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