



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

Galatians 6:14

JANUARY 2006

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JANUARY 2006

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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Facts, Faith, Feelings

Mrs. Wayne Lebold · Millbank, ON

The Facts, Faith and Feelings train went
chugging along;

When Facts was in the lead, then Faith
followed strong;

And Feelings were mostly sight, and nothing
seemed wrong.

But then Faith was weakened by Satan's sly
dart,

The facts of the Bible, not so close to my
heart,

And Feelings were trying the tracks to
depart.

Just hang in there, Feelings, don't flit about
so,

Look in Faith to your Leader, and you will
soon go,

Back again to the true Facts of the Bible to
grow.

Your faith was just weak, in time of distress;

Don't give up and think you're not being
blessed;

These are the times to stand up to the test.

And rest in our Savior and Lord!



To India, With Love

When we accept Jesus Christ as God's approved sin bearer and come to Him with sorrow for our sin and our sins, His peace will roll over us like we saw the waves of the Indian Ocean in the Bay of Bengal come up on the shores by Gopalpur, Orissa, East India.

Recently Lowell Miller, Vidya Narimalla, (who was born in India, but now lives in Kitchener, Ontario) and I went to India in October, 2005, to bring Bible teaching and encouragement to some 24 small fellowships of believers in Orissa state. Raajkumar Chouhan was our interpreter. The pastors from these small house fellowships came for four days of instruction and inspiration. (November 7-10, 2005) These teaching missions have been going on for some years now because these people have expressed an interest in learning more about conservative Anabaptist understandings and interpretations of the Bible. It was a time of blessing from God.

Before that, Lowell and I had visited small groups of believers in and around two cities in Andra Pradesh

state—Hyderabad and Vijayawada—both large cities. In fact, Hyderabad has more than six million souls. Vijayawada is considerably smaller, but it triples Wichita, the largest city in my home state.

India has a total population of over a billion souls. **That's more than 1,000,000,000!** With a land mass of less than one-half of our contiguous 48 states, it has a population density of 747 people per square mile, compared to 73 (psm) in the U. S. and 8 (psm) in Canada. (1991 density statistics) With the warm climate, of course, survival in India is not beset with as many hazards as if it were colder. However, the heat is quite oppressive during the long summer and brings with it sanitation and disease pressures not found in colder climates.

Many people in India show great resolve. They work hard. They are keenly interested in education. Schools typically operate six days a week. Yet many of the poor seem too hard pressed to provide for their children even the most basic literacy and learning. The children's help is

needed, for instance, to work in the stone quarries by Hyderabad. They use hand tools to break stone to be used for road and building construction. Even this hard work brings only meager wages for the workers, because labor is so cheap and plentiful.

Christians are a small minority and frequently face pressures of financial disadvantage for professing Christ. Professing Christians make up about 2.8% of the population in India. While India's constitution provides freedom of religion, forceful proselytization is forbidden. Often gross injustice and even persecution occurs. In recent months two Christian pastors were murdered in Andhra Pradesh state, with little prospect that justice will follow. It seems that a fair trial is hard to come by. All that is needed for a mockery of justice to occur is for some cowardly soul to testify that he was forced to convert to Christianity. When that happens, it's the Christian's word against his accuser in a hostile setting, so justice readily vanishes.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ carries the good news of freedom and joy wherever it goes. Its impact is sometimes lessened because it not well understood. If one embraces faith in Jesus Christ as just one of many paths to God, victory over sin will not fol-


low. If one sees becoming a Christian as a way to gain respectability, disappointment ensues. If one accepts Christ for financial advantage, the result does not glorify God.

But once we experience what it means to be in Christ, and we realize that we are in possession of a dramatic change agent, that old things have passed away, and that all things have become new, the task of taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth becomes our sacred privilege and duty. Certainly, if taking the Gospel around the globe were easy, it would have been done long ago. Nevertheless, those set free from sin have been given ambassadorships for the kingdom of God.

Did we find "pure religion and undefiled before God" in India? It certainly seemed so to me. We don't need to or want to judge, but freedom and joy in the Lord seemed to shine through in a number of lives we met. Coming home to a relatively clean, disease-free environment, this land of much freedom and opportunity seemed different from the homeland we had left only 18 days earlier. The question persists: What would it do for our pursuit of pleasure and ease if we could see what most of the world's poor must live on?

If we would be more observant

of the opportunities that come our way to minister to the needs of the “Lazaruses” that lie outside our doors, even though it may be half way around the world, I think we would spend less on our wants and give more thought to the unfortunate around us.

If we are to live lives of significance, we must rise up and renounce our love of luxury and ease and take up the cross in behalf of others. And God who touched us with His love will smile upon us. He will use our gifts to bless the people whose lives we would touch with His love. —PLM 

reader response

Re: Freedom From the Frenzy

Bro. Paul,

I just read the article “Freedom From the Frenzy” by Bro. Simon Schrock. (Dec., 2005, p.9) I am agreed wholeheartedly with Bro. Simon’s views of Christmas. When my wife and I were first married, we gave gifts to our children, each other and our extended family. After we were converted, we were convicted of celebrating Christmas in that manner.

We then gave gifts at Thanksgiving rather than at Christmas. Eventually, we were convicted about that also and discontinued the practice. We give each other the gift of friendship and family renewal. We are relaxed

knowing that we have not given a gift that is not needed or appreciated, and will not receive a gift that is not needed.

We are free to spend our money on things that are needed at other times. We, however, give our children and each other birthday gifts. This is usually some clothes or another usable item. We enjoy Christmas day and try to honor Him who gives us the wisdom to enjoy the day without guilt.

Alvin Mast

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WHEN ONE WILL NOT, TWO CANNOT QUARREL.

Beware of Satan's Trinity

Ervin N. Hershberger (1914-2003)

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And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God almighty" (Revelation 16:13, 14.).

This was one of many visions by which God revealed to John what would happen at the end of time. This may be the first time that Satan is pictured as a trinity, but it clearly reveals his sinister tactics, ultimate goal, and final destruction. It concisely describes the union and united mission of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. Satan can never duplicate the triune pattern of God's Holy Trinity, but he desperately seeks to imitate it. Our text reveals Satan's trinity as devils working miracles, but they will be defeated in the battle

of Armageddon. That's a universal wake-up call to beware of Satan's trinity.

The dragon is commonly known as Satan (so named 55 times in the Bible). When Adam yielded to Satan, Satan became "the god of this world." Ever since then he has been blinding "the minds of them which believe not." The Revelation reveals him as the designer of the Satanic trio, and Satan gives his power and great authority to the beast that rises "up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. 13:1-4).

The beast "with seven heads and ten horns," appears to be an end-time demonic civil power, evidently the final fulfillment of the "little horn," (Daniel 7:8), the last and major antichrist. Evidently he is Satan's counterpart or substitute for Jesus Christ. By one of his heads being "wounded to death," "whose deadly wound was healed," he may try to fake an imitation of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

The false prophet is so named only in Revelation 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10, but he usually is identified with the second beast, "coming out of the

earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon” (Rev. 13:11). He will do great wonders and deceive them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he has power to do. He will at least pretend “to give life unto the image of the [first] beast” (Rev. 13:15).

Whether faked or actual, whatever miracles either the beast or the false prophet may perform will be done by the power of Satan. In the days of Job, God permitted Satan to make fire fall from heaven. In “the hour of his judgment”(Rev. 14:7), God may permit Satan to perform miracles such as we have never seen as a final delusion for those who persist in unbelief. It is far better to take His warnings to heart before “the hour of his judgment is come.”

Satan’s evil tactics and powers are revealed progressively throughout the Bible, but only in the Revelation is Satan’s power described as a trinity whose ulterior purposes and goals are clearly defined. Moreover, the peak of their demonic powers will hardly be fully reached or revealed until “the great tribulation.” Those will indeed be dark days as God’s judgment is poured out upon a rebellious world. But praise the Lord, at the end of those days their fiend-

ish demonic posers finally will be crushed, as revealed in the references cited earlier.

“And I [John] saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, ...And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses,...And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written. KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:11-16).

Horses were the fastest and most powerful physical means of conveyance in John’s day. Therefore, in his vision, we understand them to be symbols of superhuman speed and power.

Do not the riders who follow Christ include the saints who had died earlier, who “shall rise first:... [and also those who] shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air?” (1 Thess. 4:13-18). “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,” evidently when he descends “with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30; 25:31), to destroy the armies at Armageddon.

John further described the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 19:19-21. The Word of God straight from the

lips of Jesus is sharper than any two-edged sword. Therefore, He will not need any metal or atomic weapons to smite the thousands, millions, or whatever number Satan's trinity will assemble at Armageddon. He who spoke the universe into existence and holds it all together by the word of his power could wipe them all out with one breath of his mouth. Revelation 19:20 plainly reveals the final disposal of the beast and the false prophet. That is the last we read of them, but God has additional judgments in store for the dragon, which is Satan himself.

The Revelation is a much disputed book. I used to read it with serious reservations, much as unbelievers read the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon was preached to a multitude in need of milk. It also contained some strong meat that they were not yet able to digest. The night before His crucifixion, Jesus said to His twelve Apostles, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (Luke 21:27). Pentecost had not yet come. Revelation is part of those many things, conveyed from heaven by Jesus Himself, through John.

Wanting us to know and understand the truth, He kept it very simple,

in very familiar words. He expects us to accept by faith what our finite minds cannot fully comprehend.

Study carefully the first four verses of Revelation 20:

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Verses 5 and 6 of Revelation 20 both mention "the first resurrection," from the Greek word *anastasis*, which occurs 42 times in the New Testament. Some interpret this passage to mean the new birth. Others,

because verse 5 distinctly puts a thousand years between the two resurrections, apply it to the bodily resurrection of the redeemed. We are told that “the dead in Christ shall rise first,” and the lost will not rise until the redeemed will have “lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Rev. 20:5).

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6).


Because nothing else seems as plain as the Bible itself, I can no longer make figurative the plain, simple wording of Revelation 20. Having tried that too long, I stand rebuked by numerous passages that plainly declare a final restoration of Israel, a Messianic Kingdom with Christ reigning on David’s throne, the binding of Satan, and “the restoration of all things.” [Here Bro. Hershberger lists literally dozens of Scriptures.]

The phrase “a thousand years” or “the thousand years” appears six times in the first eight verses of this chapter. While I do not understand everything about the thousand years, I have, nevertheless, come to accept

what Revelation 20 states so clearly. God had planned, perfectly understands, and will fulfill every detail in full accordance with His promises.

John’s inspired vision continue:

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle [one more time]: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:7-10).

This concludes the Biblical revelation and final disposal of Satan in the lake of fire where the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, along with all the unsaved, will be tormented for ever and ever. Until then, and especially at the end time, we need to beware of Satan’s trinity. They are enemies of God and man, but God and His Word remain faithful and true for ever and ever! 

It's Not Fair!

Aaron Lapp · Kinzers, PA

Last evening my wife said, “Look at the parade coming down Newport Road.” There they came—fire engines and ambulances and other equipment with lights flashing. Approaching Pequea Valley High School driveway, they turned in with sirens and air horns going full blast.

I threw open the bedroom window to see this strange sight. For nearly five minutes, non-stop, they gave it all they had with lights, sirens and air horns. Marian asked, “What’s going on?”

I replied, “Probably the students won something big.” Then I blurted out, “It’s not fair!”

What was I thinking? About my wife’s suffering with cancer. I suffer, too. But poor, little, old, selfish, proud me—most of all I was thinking about me. Shame on me! Like the prodigal son’s brother, Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet you never threw a party for me with lights and sirens and air horns, that I might be held in high esteem by

my friends.

God is Fair

God is fair, but life does not always seem fair, even to mature Christians. God, however, is fair. He chooses. He seeks our good. He enables. He disposes. It is we who are not fair, and are always the ones to bring up the subject. It is we who want glory and honor and power. It is we who equate pay with work. We are the ones with that keen sense of justice, tipped in our favor. “Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal?” (Ezekiel 18:25)

It is we who want more than we deserve, more honor than is appropriate, more pay than we are worth. Absolute fairness would require every failure to be publicized, every flaw in character to be highlighted, every mistake to be noted, every ill-spoken word to be remembered.

God is fair, yea, more than fair.

Our transgressions, our sins, our iniquities are forgiven when we confess our sinfulness.

God in Christ remembers them no more. “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:12). God is more than equal, more than fair. His love and forgiveness to the penitent are much more than our failings. Why do we remember our service and sacrifice rather than our misdeeds and times of overstepping God’s will?

God is fair. His magnificent creation brings daily benefits. The sun rises and we go about our day’s labor. It brings increase. We plant fields and gardens. The benevolence of sun and rain causes the earth to bring forth. Health and well-being allow us to live and work day by day. The sun sets. We turn on the lights. We go away in our vehicles to the places of choice. We go home and retire to comfortable beds. We sleep in peace and are surrounded by security. In the morning the sun rises again.

God is fair. Most of us live in relatively good health for 60, 70, even 80 years. Health care professionals are available for minor complaints and most major calamities. We tend to forget the many good years God has already given us.

God is fair, yea, and again I say, more than fair.

God has the last word. God has

a victory homecoming planned for the redeemed! Since Jesus said that the angels rejoice over one sinner that repents, what must it be like to actually come home to the Father in heaven!

I remember hearing the powerful song at Calvary Bible School the students sang, “When the ransomed get home, what a joy that will be!” Poets speculate that the angels are the personal escorts to heaven for the children of God. Like earthly fathers, our Heavenly Father is keeping the best for last.

God is *much more* than fair.

He remembers. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10). I have often marveled how ministers, Christian workers and missionaries persevere in the midst of trial, physical and financial setbacks, and opposition from outside the church. But sometimes the strongest and most discouraging opposition comes from within the church. God sees.

He is fair. He is not unrighteous to forget. He will reward the good and punish the evil. God remembers our needs and forgives our misdeeds. He gives us what we don’t deserve

and forgives the recompense of the punishment we deserve.

Going home to heaven, we will not be forgotten bystanders, lost in the crowds. God will no doubt give all of us the equivalent of a front row seat. We will see Jesus and we will sing and shout the victory. Not for five minutes for some district championship. He will be King of kings and Lord of lords forever.

Here is a little preview of the elegant pageantry awaiting us in heaven. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before the throne, and before the Lamb" (That must be the front row, brother!) "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and **cried with a loud voice**, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9,10). Samuel Beazley in the above quoted

song says very aptly, "What a shouting will sound through heaven's fair dome, on that beautiful shore when the ransomed get home."

I'm letting Pequea Valley High School have their flashing lights, their screeching sirens and their blasting air horns. I'm waiting for an eternally glorious city whose builder and maker is God. And it will be grander than any of us will deserve, or could imagine.

The entrance that is to be administered to us abundantly into Christ's everlasting kingdom will, I believe, be replete with more splendor than any party thrown together here on this earth. "When the saints go marching in" they will get to see and forever be with their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ in person. That will really and truly be the grand finale!

The Bottom Line is that heaven will surely be worth it all!



mission awareness

Is The Living God a Missionary God?

Floyd Stoltzfus

There is a rumor abroad that the Old Testament does not have a missionary message or

vision. Is the Living God a missionary God? Did God intend for godly men to be His witnesses to the fallen

world from the very beginning? Was Old Testament Israel to be God's missionary to the world? Let us seek biblical answers for these questions. Walking with God through the story of the Scriptures will help us understand His purposes.

1. Is the Living God a missionary God?

We discover in Genesis 3 immediately after the Fall that God tactfully and thoughtfully approached Adam and Eve in their sinful state. He became lost humanity's first personal worker by asking them four specific questions: "Where art thou?... Who told thee thou was naked?... Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?... What is this that thou hast done?" In the woeful context of the punishments that would follow, God in His mercy gives us the Gospel in embryo: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). First, the transgression is clearly revealed. Next, God gives the divine condemnation and punishment. It is upon the background of judgment that redemption is prophesied. This helps us see clearly that redemption is of God's grace. This is the pattern we

see God using in the Bible. Because of man's sinful failures, judgment is spelled out, but it is always coupled with His mercy. James tells us that "mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13b).

2. Did God intend for godly men to be His witnesses to a fallen world from the very beginning?

Abel was a true witness to his parents and brother because his heart was in tune with God and he offered an excellent sacrifice by faith.

Enoch was a faithful witness to the ungodly long before the Flood. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly..." (Jude 14,15a).

Noah, as he warned about the coming flood, reveals the same sequence. Judgment would come but it was coupled with mercy through Noah's preaching and the construction of the ark. And God waited a long time, even 120 years (Gen. 6:3), before it began to rain. God in love and mercy had specifically commanded Noah and his sons, "Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth, and multiply the earth" (Gen. 9:1).


At the tower of Babel, however, judgment came quickly. God con-

founded their language and they did not understand each other. “So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth;...” (Gen. 11:8).

But God in mercy raised up Abram and said, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee; And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee....” Let us note two more phrases from Genesis 12:1-3: “...and thou shalt be a blessing.” God’s purpose for Abram was to be a witness to the people where God sent him. But the bottom line is: “...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” The initial recipients of this blessing are none other than the 70 nations listed as “the families” of the earth in Genesis 10. You see, soon after the families were scattered God was already working toward man’s redemption in bringing him back.

3. Was Old Testament Israel to be God’s missionary to the world?

One writer stated it well: “Abraham and his descendants were to be missionaries and channels of the truth

from the very beginning.” Some may say, “How can you see any Gospel in Genesis 12:2, 3?” Remember, Paul named Abraham in Romans 4:13, “the heir of the [whole] world.” That inheritance is obviously spiritual in nature. And again, Paul plainly states in Galatians 3:8, “and the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” The nations were to be blessed in this man’s “seed.” The “seed” of the woman (Gen. 3:15), the “seed” of Shem in whose tents God would come to “tabernacle” or “dwell” (Gen. 9:27), and the “seed” of Abram speak of the same Person, even Jesus Christ, our precious Lord. But the witnesses of this glorious message to the world in Old Testament times was Israel, God’s chosen people. See Exodus 19:5,6; Psalm 67; 96:3,7,9,10; Isaiah 43:10,12. Israel was to be God’s vessel of blessing to the world. We, in the New Testament church, are given the same assignment. 

The more a man knows,
the more he is inclined to be modest about it.

marriages

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

Mast-Miller

Bro. Joseph Elson, son of Mrs. Ruth Mast and the late Melvin Mast, Crossville, TN, and Sis. Anita Faye, daughter of Paul and Elizabeth Miller, Monterey, TN, at Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church, Crossville, TN, on Oct. 7, 2005, by John Mast.

Stoltzfus-Troyer

Bro. Dwayne, son of Alvin and Lily Stoltzfus, Paradise, PA, and Sis. Lois, daughter of Ervin and Esther Troyer, Plain City, OH, at United Bethel Mennonite Church for Bethesda A.M. Church on Oct. 7, 2005, by Perry Troyer.

Troyer-Yoder

Bro. Jesse, son of Aaron and Ida Troy-

er, Rutherford, TN, and Sis. Malinda, daughter of Isaac and Lavina Yoder, Burkesville, KY, at Living Word Ministries for Marrowbone Christian Brotherhood, Burkesville, KY, on Oct. 28, 2005, by John Mast.

Wengerd-Graber

Bro. Virgil Ray, son of Simon and Clara Wengerd, Whiteville, TN, and sis. Heidi JoAnn, daughter of Mervin and Linda Graber, Whiteville, TN, at Estes Church, Hendersonville, TN, for Lighthouse of Faith, Huntsville, AR, on Nov. 5, 2005, by Clarence Bontrager.

Yoder-Miller

Bro. Tim, son of Glen and Salome Yoder, Middleburg, PA/Phoenix, AZ, and Sis. Ruth, daughter of Mervin and Frances Miller, Mifflinburg, PA, at Shady Grove Christian Fellowship, on Nov. 12, 2005, by Joe Peachey.

cradle roll

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

Eicher, Dwayne and Laura (Miller), Spencerville, IN, fourth child, second son, Morgan Cruz, Oct. 31, 2005.

Eichorn, Howard and Ellen (Yoder), Woodburn, IN, second child and dau., Haddassah Chloe, Nov. 14, 2005.

Graber, Harvey and Suetta (Eicher), Grabill, IN, fourth child, third son, Joshua Lee, July 27, 2005.

Helmuth, Myron Eric and Laura Lorraine (Zehr), Due West, SC, (home address: Hicksville, OH) first child and son, Britton Elliot, Oct. 3, 2005.

Kanagy, Titus and Beulah (Peachey), Wytheville, VA, third child, first dau., Abigail Marie, Nov. 26, 2005.

Kinsinger, Milt and Faith (Yoder), Hart-selle, AL, second child, first son, Kaleb Benjamin, Nov. 7, 2005.

Kuepfer, Darryl and Susan (Gerber), Millbank, ON, seventh child, third dau., Rosalie Lynn, Aug. 9, 2005.

Miller, Matthias and Cynthiann (Schrock), Bloomfield, IN, first child

and son, Rylan Eric, Nov. 9, 2005.

Zook, Marvin and Rachel (Stoltzfus), Gap, PA, ninth child, third dau., Susanna Joy, Oct. 22, 2005.

Zook, Michael and Cheryl (Miller), Hartville, OH, first child and son, Cole Michael, May 31, 2005.

ordinations

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

Bro. Steve Miller, 42, was ordained as bishop for Woodlawn Amish Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN, October 30, 2005. Preordination messages were brought by Homer Zook, Uniontown, OH.

The charge was given by Steve's father,

Elmer Miller, assisted by Homer Zook and Delmar Bontrager.

Bro. Maynard Nisly, 57, was ordained as bishop to serve at Christian Mission Fellowship on Nov. 13, 2005. Preordination messages were brought by Elmer J. Miller.

The charge was given by Melvin Bontrager, assisted by Elmer Miller and Glenn Yoder. Chester Mast was also in the lot.

obituaries

Beachy, Noah E., 85, Middlebury, IN, died October 27, 2005, at Goshen General Hospital, Goshen, IN. He was born Jan. 31, 1920 at Plain City, OH, son of Eli C. and Mary Ann (Kauffman) Beachy.

He was a member of Woodlawn A.M. Church.

He was married to Sara Hochstetler on March 26, 1939. She died on Jan. 23, 1978. He was married to Lizzie Ann

Kurtz on Nov. 23, 1978. She died on June 5, 1993. He then married Sadie Yoder on April 13, 1994. She survives.

He is survived by three daughters: Mary Lou Hall, Goshen; Verda Miller, Middlebury; and Judy (Andrew) Gingerich, Plain City, OH; four sons: Marvin Beachy, Goshen; Paul Beachy, Bristol; David (Suetta) Beachy and Gene (Carol) Beachy, both of Middlebury. Also surviving are four sisters: Florence (Mark) Hostetler, Plain City, OH; Betty Lyles, Woodstock, GA; Anna (Willis)

Christner, Phoenix, AZ; and Lena Yutzy, Harrisonburg, VA; and three brothers: John (Miriam) Beachy, Goshen; Alvin (Donna) Beachy and Eli (Katie) Beachy, both of Plain City, OH; four stepsons: Andy (Barbara Ellen) Kurtz, Ott, NC; Emanuel (Wanda) Kurtz, Plain City, OH; Paul (Grace) Kurtz and Delbert Kurtz, both of Lebanon, OR; five stepdaughters: Barbara (Jonathan) Stoltzfus, Narvon, PA; Sarah (Lester) Gingerich, Sarasota, FL; Rosa (Clifton) Yoder, Stark City, MO; Esther (Ervin) Troyer, Plain City, OH; and Mary (Millard) Yoder, Danville, AL. He leaves 19 grandchildren, 40 great grandchildren, 56 step grandchildren, and 104 step great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by three brothers, Jonas, Neil and Leroy Beachy; a stillborn sister and eight children: Henry, Barbara Jean, William, Howard, Miriam, Wilma, Irene, Lavern, and Sharon Sue Beachy.

Funeral services were held at Fairhaven A.M. Church, with Elmer Miller, Jonathan Stoltzfus and Ed Yoder serving. Burial was in the Thomas Cemetery.

Miller, Henry, 86, died at Ft. Wayne, IN, on Sept. 22, 2005. He was born at Grabill, IN, Jan. 20, 1919, son of the late Jacob and Lena (Bellar) Miller.

He was a member of Ridgeview A.M. Church.

As a widower, he married Sarah Mullet on Nov. 29, 1980. She survives.

He was first married to Mary Graber on Mar. 12, 1939. She died Mar. 19, 1969,

after living in matrimony for 30 years, in which God gave them six children: Magdalene (Louie) Yoder, Ft. Wayne, IN; Esther (Gene) Hansen, New Haven, IN; Martha (Elmer), New Haven, IN; Henry (Marabeth) Miller, Jr., Hicksville, OH; Marilyn (Steve) Eicher, Hicksville, OH; and Lavern Miller, deceased.

Survivors include five children, 13 grandchildren, 21 great grandchildren and 2 great great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were one brother, Ezra and one granddaughter, Amy.

Funeral services were held on Sept. 26 at Ridgeview Church with Lester Zehr and Bill Hochstetler serving. Willard Hochstetler served in the committal at the Schlatter Cemetery.

Miller, Marilyn, 51, Millersburg, OH, died of cancer at her parents' home July 8, 2005. She was born Nov. 28, 1953, at Millersburg, OH, daughter of Ura B. and Clara (Schrock) Miller.

She was a member of Living Waters Fellowship Church, Sugar creek, OH.

She is survived by six sisters and two brothers: Hosanna (Mrs. Roman B. Mullet), Newcomerstown; Sara Etta, Calverton, VA; Judy Lapp, Sugar Grove, WV; Rosa (Mrs. Eugene Schlabach), Free Union, VA; Lois (Mrs. Luke Stutzman), Millersburg; JoAnn (Mrs. John Roth), Millersburg; Ura (Karen) Miller, Jr., Odon, IN; and Richard (Yvonne) Miller, Goshen, IN.

She was preceded in death by her

mother, and by a stillborn brother, Samuel and by brother-in-law, Steve Lapp. Her father was living at her passing but died on Sept. 15, 2005.

Funeral services were held July 11 at Bethel Church, with James B. Mullet officiating. Burial was in the Bethel Cemetery.

Miller, Ura B., 79, Millersburg, OH, died of an apparent heart attack at his home Sept. 15, 2005. He was born Feb. 16, 1926, at Millersburg, OH, the son of Benjamin and Emma (Gingerich) Miller.

He was a member of Living Waters Fellowship Church, Sugarcreek, OH.

On March 2, 1948, he married Clara Schrock. She died June 7, 1995.

Ura and Clara had ten children, of whom eight survive: Hosanna (Mrs. Roman B. Mullet), Newcomerstown, OH; Sara Etta, Calverton, VA; Judy Lapp, Sugar Grove, WV; Rosa (Mrs. Eugene Schlabach), Free Union, VA; Lois (Mrs. Luke Stutzman), Millersburg; JoAnn (Mrs. John Roth), Millersburg; Ura (Karen) Miller, Jr., Odon, IN, and Richard (Yvonne) Miller, Goshen, IN. Surviving are 26 grandchildren and 21 great grandchildren. Also surviving are a sister, Elva (Mrs. Reuben Kaufman) and a brother, Roman (Ada) Miller.

Ura remarried Nov. 27, 1997, to Vesta Ropp, daughter of Joseph and Mary Ropp. She survives.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Marilyn; an infant son, Samuel; a son-in-law, Steve Lapp and a sister, Sarah.

Funeral services were held Sept. 18 at Bethel Church, with James B. Mullet officiating. Burial was in the Bethel Cemetery.

Schmidt, Elmer J., 90, died Oct. 11, 2005, while traveling from Millbank, ON. He was born in Mornington Twp, Sept. 3, 1915, son of the late Peter B. O. and Elizabeth (Jantzi) Schmidt.

He was a member of Cedar Grove A.M. Church

On March he was married to Annie Lebold. She died July 25, 1991.

They had one child: Barbara (Mrs. Roy Kuepfer), Newton, ON. Also surviving are 10 grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

As a widower, he married Ella Mae (Jantzi) Wagler on Sept. 12, 2005. Stepchildren include: Raymond (Margaret) Wagler, Wellesley; Harold (Nancy) Wagler, Millbank; Norma Kuepfer, Millverton; Eva (David) Erb, Wellesley; Mary (Delmar) Erb, Wellesley; Eleanor Wagler, Bayfield, ON; Daniel (Marlene) Wagler, Wellesley. Surviving are 22 step grandchildren and 43 step great grandchildren.

Other survivors include sister, Fannie (Jacob) Lebold; sisters-in-law, Mary Schmidt and Katie Erb and brother-in-law, Lorne Lichty.

Preceding him in death were two brothers: Nicholas (and wife, Emma); and Lorne; two sisters: Laura Lichty and Emma Erb; One brother-in-law: Cornelius Erb; step son-in-law, Levi Kuepfer, three grandchildren, and one

great grandchild.

Funeral services were held Oct. 17 at Cedar Grove Church with Arthur Gerber officiating. Burial was in the Mornington A. M. Cemetery.

Spicher, Lillian M., 74, Belleville, PA, died Oct. 21, 2005. She was born Sept. 12, 1931, daughter of the late Samuel and Mary (Peachey) Spicher at Belleville.

She was a member of Valley View A.M. Church. She was a wheel chair patient for the last three years and was lovingly cared for by her three sisters.

Surviving are three sisters: Verna M. (Mark) Yoder; Martha M. (David S.) King; and Mary M. Spicher, all of Belleville.

Three grand nephews and one nephew preceded her in death.

Funeral services were held at Valley View Church on Oct. 24, with Eli B. King, Jr. and Earl Peachey serving. Burial was

in the Locust Grove Cemetery.

Wagler, Katie E., 90, died in Nithview Home in New Hamburg, ON, on August 16, 2005. She was born April 14, 1915, in Wellesley Twp., daughter of the late David and Catherine (Erb) Wagler.

She was a member of Cedar Grove A.M. Church.

Relatives surviving are a sister, Lavina Lichti and a sister-in-law, Luella Wagler.

Preceding her in death were three brothers: Daniel, Enos and David and four sisters: Emma Lichti, Lydia Erb, Sarah Ropp, and Nancy Wagler; and four brothers-in-law: Aaron Lichti, Sam Erb, Amos Ropp and Mose Lichti.

Funeral services were held August 19, with Arthur Gerber officiating. Interment was made in Cedar Grove A.M. Church Cemetery.

observations

Gerald Ford, 38th president of the United States, wrote a column that appeared recently in our local *Hutchinson News*. He said, "Like most men my age (92), I have given a thought or two to my funeral." He doesn't seem to have much choice as each presidential family is periodically solicited for

personal touches including choice of eulogists. Thus Ford contacted Hugh Sidey a few months ago, inviting him to offer a eulogy at his funeral.

As it turned out, Sidey died recently, age 78. The column that Ford wrote is essentially a eulogy of Mr. Sidey. His name was only vaguely familiar to me but some of the things Ford said seem noteworthy.

He said he admired Sidey for his

“transparent decency and for the tough but fair coverage he accorded” Ford and nine other presidents. Ford said he did not always like what was written about him, but he felt it was a small price to pay for a free press in a free society.

But Ford also felt that for an ex-president to choose a reporter would remind people that it is possible for a politician and a reporter to enjoy mutual respect, admiration and even friendship in a climate that is too often overheated and adversarial between those in power and those who report on their activities.

Ford said that Sidey was from Greenfield, IA, where four generations of Sideys practiced journalism with integrity and humor. He quotes Sidey as follows: “A sense of humor is needed armor for the presidency. Joy in one’s heart and some laughter on one’s lips is a sign that the person deep down has a pretty good grasp on life.”

He appreciated an observation of Woodrow Wilson: “Those who arrive at our nation’s capital, presidents included, have a tendency to either grow or swell.”

Despite the fact that the above content is hardly typical of this periodical or this column, it seems to me that there are several things worthy of our notice:

—Despite a 14-year difference, the younger man died first. Death is certain—God’s timing is not.

—It is not wrong to contemplate our own funeral services. But it is far more important to live right and be always ready.

—I am not sure what all is meant in Luke 16:8b, that “the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.” But it seems clear that Gerald Ford shows a level of maturity that is too often deficient in church circles.

When this happens, someone has failed to give honest priority to the One who is able to “supply **all** our needs *according His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 4:19).

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The reason I feel free to share the following is because I believe sometimes there are things to be learned from persons with whom we do not totally agree.

Adrian Rogers was elected as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1979. He had become pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in 1972, where he served until March, 2005. During that time the congregation grew from 9,000 to 30,000 members. He also headed a national radio and television ministry entitled, Love Worth Finding.

In the mid seventies, he met with several conservatives who were alarmed at liberal trends in SBC seminaries. He reluctantly agreed to become a candidate for the presidency. He pledged, if elected to use his nominating powers to name only those who believed in the inerrancy and authority of the Bible. Eventually conservatives weathered opposition to take the levers of power in this 16 million-member denomination. Rogers and his successors followed through on his pledge. Adrian Rogers, 74, died November 15, 2005, from pneumonia. He was under treatment for cancer.

It is interesting that from the years 1965 to 2003 most historic denominations experienced significant membership losses, but the Southern Baptists showed a 52.6% increase. (*World*, 12-3-05) It seems right to observe that to take a stand for what is right need not result in a loss of membership. And to become liberal beyond what is scriptural leaves little attraction for serious Christians.

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The following is adapted from an article by Clarence Rempel. It appeared in *Mennonite Weekly Review* and *Faith Digest*.

Caesar Augustus was a powerful world figure in the time of Christ. He

built cities, roads, bridges, harbors, and aqueducts. Many of his structures have survived to this day. He was a world traveler.

He was commander-in-chief of 250,000 trained and disciplined soldiers, deployed in peace-keeping missions around the world. He brutally suppressed all opposition.

He lived in palaces of marble and gold. He was attended by hundreds of slaves who served exotic foods from the far-flung regions of the empire. He was a great orator.

When he gave the order that “all the world should be taxed” (Luke 2), he was unaware that he was asking at the bidding of a far greater Ruler who was unfolding His plan of salvation. Augustus reigned 40 years.

Jesus did not make a lasting mark as a carpenter, but He exemplified the virtue of honest toil. Jesus never traveled more than 100 miles from home. He had twelve disciples. At one point, He sent out 70 men on a short speaking and healing tour. They were to love their enemies and do good to those who hated them.

Jesus never owned a house. As far as we know, He did not do any writing. But His manner of teaching was effective, not as the scribes. (Matt. 7:29) His earthly ministry lasted a mere three years. Jesus’ death and

resurrection initiated a kingdom that is far above all principality and power and might and dominion and He has been given a name that is above every name, not only in this world, but also in that “which is to come” (Eph. 1:21).

Today the reign of Caesar is merely a memory. He has no followers.

It is our blessed privilege to be numbered among the millions from every kindred, tribe, and nation who have received the King of kings, and Lord of lords, as Savior and Lord of their lives.



—Our disposition has more to do with our happiness than our position.

—A discussion seeks **what** is right. An argument seeks **who** is right.

—The surest way to get somewhere is to know where we are going.

—Plan your future carefully. You are going to spend the rest of your life there.

—Don't use your lot in life as a parking lot. Cultivate it.

—A merry heart is good medicine, whether we are sick or not.

(From “Capsule Sermons,” *The Furrow*, 12-05) —DLM



From Then Till Now

Chester Weaver · Grandview, TX

We struggle with the “cow-boy spirit;” we struggle with emotional music, we struggle with too much volleyball, we struggle with too much work to do, and we struggle with a lot more. Did past generations struggle with issues such as these? Or was everything more family-centered, slow-paced, and quiet? Was not God’s Word held in higher esteem in years past? If only we could return to the past.

The past would take care of so many burdensome issues. But Ecclesiastes 7:10 says, “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.”

The opposite is also true. If everything is such a mess today, why not just start all over? Starting fresh would solve so many problems that are hangovers from the past. But Ecclesiastes 1:9,10 states, “The thing

that hath been is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us.”

And so we are trapped by life; we are bound by the present. We should not try to escape to the past nor should we try to escape to the future. We must squarely face the issues of today. But how?

Ecclesiastes 7:11,12 suggests that wisdom is as good as an inheritance, yea, even better because those with wisdom have life. Life is self-perpetuating, life is warm, life is the perfect working of complexity, life overcomes disease, life reproduces life, life is flexible and full of energy. Nothing about life is static.

And so, why not employ the strength of wisdom and the energy of life for the present? Why must we struggle so much with present issues? If the past has been essentially the same story as the present and the future will still be the same story dressed in different clothes, why not benefit from considering timeless principles at work in human experience? How have past generations dealt with the issues of their generations? How has Christianity worked

itself out in practical experience? What distracted past generations from their vision to love God with all their strength and their neighbors as themselves? What did past generations do to rise above the lethargy and stagnation of their times?

We have the same indwelling Holy Spirit they had, the same Word of God they had, the same human nature they had. But we have something no past generation has had. We have the experience of one more generation. And we have the advantage of technology making it easy to look into the past. Those in the past did have a harder time of it.

And so we are positioned in the best possible position to face the present with its issues. How are we doing? With our present advantages we should be making great contributions to the extension of God’s kingdom. Are we?

Being lazy human beings we would like God to drop answers out of the sky. Or, if necessary, we could gather them like manna each day. But nothing is dropping from the sky and the ground is manna-free. God is waiting—and watching. He has placed the answers within our reach, asking us to rise out of our seats to go diligently search them out. He has restrained Himself from serving us

with answers while we are reclining in our easy chairs. He urges us from His Word, "Wisdom is the principal thing; get wisdom." And He stands back to watch whether or not we will heed.

God loves projects. One of His favorite projects is synergizing with man to accomplish His work in the world. In fact, this is the only way He works. He restrains Himself from doing work He could do better, to synergize with us. He loves to work with us. He does not seem to be impatient when we get tired or when we make mistakes. The only criterion He has is that if I do not synergize with Him He will move on to find someone who will. His Kingdom will increase either with me or without me.

Please understand, Kingdom work is not done by man and Kingdom work is not done by God. Kingdom work is done by man cooperating with God, by man synergizing with God. Only God can do his part of the work; only man can do his part of the work. When they synergize, when they work as a team, then Kingdom work gets done.

As it relates to discovering truth about issues, the Holy Spirit will not read the past for us. He stands there to assist in the search and to graciously assist in understanding

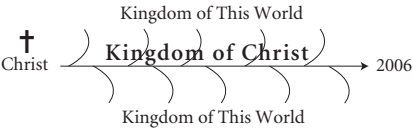
what we find. He knows what has already happened; He expects us to search it out. He moderates while honest minds and hearts digest what they find. He moderates in honest corporate digestion as well. He loves to synergize with His people in situations just like this. But He will not supernaturally drop facts into our hearts and minds.

God has not given any direct revelation for 1900 years now because He has been expecting the above to happen. The New Testament is about principles that universally apply to all times and all places. God has been expecting each generation of His Kingdom to operate out of these New Testament principles. He also expects each generation to learn especially from the two directly preceding generations. After all, they are the closest to us and are the immediate reason for the present issues. If a generation is 25-30 years, a normal life span covers three generations. The rest is oral history or written history.

Granted, God has concealed from our eyes much that has happened in the last 1900 years. He did the same in His written record, the Word of God. But He has not left Himself without witness. What we need to know He has made available to us. The problem has been that we and

our fathers have not made use of His provision with all diligence. The result? Unnecessary failures—both for our fathers and for us. We all have been lazy, both our fathers and we. We have chosen too often to judge issues from the context of our short span of experience. We have lifted up our hearts and heads with arrogance as we did so. And the Lord of the Church cringes.

What does 1900 years reveal about the synergy record? Consider the following diagram. (The straight line represents the true kingdom of Christ—those who have lived a balanced life of faith in obedience to God and His Word.)



Check the record for yourself. And remember that a little discovery tends to puff up the discoverer. The more discovered, the humbler the discoverer becomes. Oh, that our generation would fill up with humble discoverers! The Kingdom of God has remained intact until our day, but where is it? Is it embodied in a particular system? Is it nebulous? Is it a living reality residing in strange places? Read the record.

Following are several basic princi-

ples to keep in mind while searching history and while grappling with present-day issues:

1. My mental map must *accurately* portray the landscape of human nature and history. Notice that on one side of the diagram people and groups veer left in the name of Christ and His Church while mixing religious flesh and spiritual matters. On the other side of the diagram people and groups veer right in the name of Christ and His Church while mixing religious human authority and spiritual matters. Much could be pointed out from history and from present-day religious life to illustrate this point. If I understand what is going on in terms of these two errors as they relate to eternal truth, I receive much guidance for the present. But I must be brutally honest and I must be humble about what I learn.

2. Human nature resists dealing honestly with human tendencies. All of us tend one way or the other on the above diagram. But when challenged, human nature naturally defends itself in its particular tendency. The left tends to declare, "If the heart is right, all is right." Ignoring the matter of fruit that Jesus stated as the real test of genuineness. The right tends to declare that if human authority does not do something, the whole

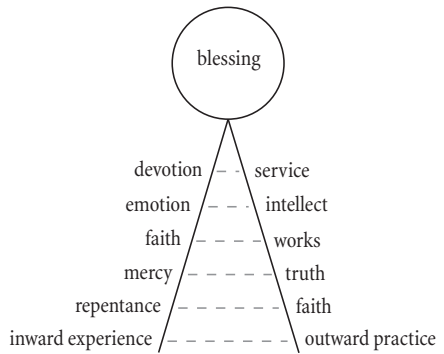
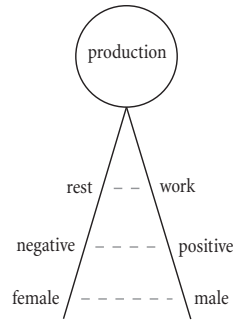
church will fall apart. Both are right in their own eyes. But the way of the cross is humble honesty with the facts coupled with faith that Jesus Christ is divinely building His Church.

3. The Holy Spirit has called God's people of all ages to operate realistically with the **Creative Synergy Principle**. God has built this principle into the natural creation as absolutely necessary for life to continue. The same is true in the spiritual. Individuals and churches who try to operate apart from this principle will fail. 1900 years record the story. The same 1900 years record the stories of individuals and people who understood this principle and who have succeeded because they operated according to it. Dealing effectively with issues demands that we actually operate this way. Consider the following diagram:

Both legs must work in synergy with each other. Just one leg or the other means failure.

There is nothing new under the

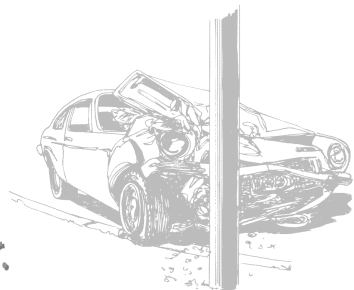
sun. All the issues are the old issues. We are the new faces in the sun. If Christ carries, what will future generations conclude about this present



generation? Will we contribute a model to be patterned after or will we be one of the failures to be learned from? Time will tell.



Drive like lightning and
you may crash like thunder.



Ministers' Meetings Messages—2005

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

8. A Vision for Making Disciples

Gary Raber, Freeport, OH

We need to be concerned for God's glory, for some day every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. The church—every individual and corporately—we are to bring glory to God. The world is robbing the Lord of the glory He deserves. He wants to be exalted among the heathen in all the earth!

Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." How's the fishing this afternoon? Have you caught many? The great Master Teacher wants to teach us. If we love and follow Jesus, He will teach us how.

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gave us our Great Commission: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with

you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." We are assigned to make disciples, not just in our own churches, but globally. We are to bring our people to a commitment to obey God's Word. When they make that commitment, they are disciples.

I'm for teaching all things, but the Holy Spirit also teaches "the all things of God." He is the teacher of every one of us. Isaiah 55:10 and 11 gives us such a precious promise when it says: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." We need that confidence in God's Word and in the Holy Spirit. It will come out right if we're faithful. Let's trust God for it. Paul said that he was confident that He who had begun a good work in the hearts of the Philippians, would "perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

We must go in the power of the Holy Spirit. Much of our work might be undertaken without the power of

the Holy Spirit, but not effectively. “When the Holy Ghost comes upon you, ye shall be witnesses,” He says. It happens. You don’t have to generate it and make it happen. You don’t have to push people to do it—“Ye shall be witnesses.” We need a vision for our communities—right where God has placed us. We’re called to penetrate the darkness. We’re called to be salt and light.

Do your neighbors know what you believe? Read the Scriptures to them. If at all possible, have a Bible study with them. Get them to start reading the Bible. Do things that are reproducible. Sit down and talk. Listen. I had some very concerned neighbors who couldn’t figure out why I wouldn’t go to the polls and vote for Bush. I sat down and explained it the best I could. Sing and pray with your neighbors. Love them. Who will they call when they face a hard time? The people who take an interest in their spiritual lives.

We notice in the example of the apostles in Acts 13, they prayed and fasted about an important ministry they were considering. Thus the vision became important in their hearts. If you feel you don’t have a vision, God can give you a vision, if you want it. After the vision was confirmed in their hearts, they laid

their hands on them and sent Paul, Barnabas and John Mark away. Here we see the church sending them out, but it was said that, they were sent forth by the Holy Ghost and they preached the Word of God. Notice one more thing: It brought tremendous results!

God wants us to reproduce spiritually. As God created His creatures to reproduce after their kind so it is spiritually. We are to reproduce after our kind. We’re not saved to keep it all to ourselves. We are not meant to pile up the good seed of the kingdom. We are meant to scatter the seed. We may be satisfied to go to church week after week, with our families living close by and coming home for a good Sunday meal. We may read a meditation out of *Our Daily Bread* or *Beside the Still Waters* for family altar. We may hold good-paying jobs and be satisfied to keep on doing the same things year after year. That pattern could continue till the day we die. In one way, it’s wonderful when that happens, but God wants us to bring others into the kingdom besides our families. Many others need family and they need love.

Following Christ calls for discipleship. When we go to a restaurant, we can seat ourselves so that we don’t see the trash box (TV). Let’s make

it practical. Let's not make it so easy on ourselves that we wind up with good talk, without a good walk. Real discipleship is total discipleship. If it doesn't cost us anything, what do we have? What glory do we bring to God? Not all of us will die a martyr's death, but all of us can muster a martyr's spirit.

Two sources of spiritual power are given to us: The Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Getting people to read the Word of God is spiritually profitable, for it has great power to go where we can't go and do what we can't do. It divides soul and spirit and discerns thoughts and motives of the heart. Have you read the Bible through from cover to cover, preacher friend? Dale Heisey said one year at our Central American ministers' meeting that he thinks we should read ten chapters every day. He took it back because some of us cannot read fast enough to make that practical. Maybe he didn't need to take it back. Maybe we should try. Jesus asked his disciples, "Can't you watch with me one hour?" If the pastor gets excited about Bible reading and discipleship, his people will, too.

What are some hindrances to making disciples outside our culture? I want to remind us that we have a rich heritage. We ought to thank

God for it, but our culture is not all good. We can learn things from other cultures. We may have pride about our traditions. Pride is a big problem. "I'm better than" or "I'm more spiritual than" indicates a problem. Likewise: "I've got it together better than they; just look at my family." Such comparison is unwise. It relieves us from searching for better answers and greater obedience. We may need to change our thinking on a few things. We don't have it all together. Not everything is working well. Our culture is not *the* culture. Were it not for the grace of God, we would have no hope.

Jesus has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. We're meant to fellowship together and grow up in Christ together, but that can only be accomplished in and by the Spirit. Look on the things of others and live for the good of others. When Jesus and the disciples were leaving Jericho, blind Bartimaeus cried out for Jesus' attention. They might have been running late, but Jesus took time right there for this man and his need. We need that attitude. Sometimes we find it hard to budge for the sake of people and relationships.

Some Sunday morning a man with long hair might come to your services

with a lady friend. She's all decked out with jewelry, make-up, and immodest dress. We might say, "You can sit back here." The people look them over. The children turn and stare and snicker and they know that they're probably not welcome. It'll be the last time you'll see them in your services. Jesus came for people like that. The Bible says there's one proof that we are His disciples: If we have love one for another.

In a recent visit to a small group of inquirers in Michigan, our family and

my parents went to have a service. When we started singing, we sang in harmony. The little group was simply moved to tears. I love singing in four-part harmony, but maybe we can do better than to demonstrate that ability in such a case. Maybe we could show a greater adaptability by singing the melody, thus teaching the song first. Let us never let our "strengths" become obstacles to fellowship.



True Wisdom

Ernest Strubhar · Perkins, OK

[We continue letters to the editor of The Perkins Journal. They were part of a public discussion of creation/evolution. Some of them were selected for publication—some were not. —PLM]

Consider these two Bible verses:

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments” (Psalm 111:10).

“The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

Both teach the same truth. The word *beginning* could be translated “principal part” or “foundation.” Without this foundation of the fear of God, men end up shaking the fist of their puny wit in the face of God Almighty. God lets them do that now. Just as the Bible says, such men “change the truth of God into a lie.” (Romans 1:25) Here’s how they do it: God says, “If you sin, you will surely die.” Such men say, “We can sin, and get by.”

Are they wiser than God?

Romans 1:25 goes on to say that these “wise men” worship and serve the creature (themselves) more than

the Creator. Men call that humanism. God calls it idolatry and folly.

Worldly wise men speculate endlessly about the origin of the universe, about the meaning of life—and even about what the Bible says. Their ideas change as quickly as the winds in Oklahoma.

For example, when I was a teenager, I was told the earth was 3 or 4 billion years old. Now, I am told, it is at least 6—probably 8 billion years old. Incredible! I know time passes swiftly, but I had no idea that I’ve lived 3 or 4 billion years!

Instead of believing the simple Bible message that God created a good world and that death entered the world through sin, some “wise” men speculate that God used death to create life. They tell us that natural

selection and the death of millions of creatures over millions of years produced the wide variety of plants and animals that we see in the world. Classical Darwinistic evolution says that this all happened through “useful mutations.” But can scientists give one example of a useful mutation? If they really believed their own theory, wouldn’t they bombard themselves with x-rays in hopes that their offspring would evolve into super men? They all know better.

Mutations destroy the precisely programmed information in the genetic code, producing degeneration. Where did this information come from to begin with—out of primordial, chemical soup bombarded by cosmic rays?

Of course not! God created it. 

helpers at home

Simplicity in Recreation

Mary June Glick

Ecclésiastes 3:1 says, “To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven.” A new year reminds us of TIME. Will we make good use of the minutes, hours and days in 2006? Our Mennonite upbringing (or

perhaps our German heritage) has taught us how to work and to do our work well. In recent years, however, we have seen a new emphasis on recreation or leisure time. I do believe we need to enjoy life and spend time with our families, but we also need

to use simplicity in this area.

If you really want to know your children or grandchildren, play with them. This is a time to teach them your values of honesty, upright character, good sportsmanship, and integrity. It is also a time to laugh and relax together. What shall we play? We can play table games or outdoor games. We can get down on the floor with the little ones. We can read to them. Our grandchildren enjoy when I do craft projects with them. It doesn't seem to matter so much what we do, but that we give them our full attention.

One mother writes: "Learn to enjoy inexpensive beauty in nature, for instance. Find beauty nearby rather than going on expensive trips. Make use of a free park, if there's one nearby. In our early years of our marriage, we often patronized a country Dairy Queen. Sometimes we'd eat a picnic supper at a table across the road then get sundaes for dessert."

Each area has interesting places to visit such as airports, museums, firehouses, libraries, or parks. When the children are older, let them help you with the planning. Eating out tends to get expensive and may be kept for very special events. I remember one special time for our family was after the corn was all picked, Dad

promised them a night at McDonalds. They could buy anything they wanted, and in those days that was SPECIAL. Celebrating at home can be just as much fun, let the birthday child plan the menu, or make all the food match the holiday, like red for Valentine's, green for St. Patrick's and so on.

Camping as a family creates many special family memories: sleeping together in the tent, cooking on a camp stove or open fire, hiking, fishing, or whatever. The children will never forget the bear or deer that came too close to the campsite. For our family, it was a horse and a monkey that we remember. A cabin in the mountains or a cottage by the lake will also make great memories. At the same time, let's remember that God has given us many resources for enjoyment but we are stewards of these things.

Most important, let's teach our children that there is much more to life than pleasure but the true happiness comes from helping others. We have many opportunities to reach out such as helping sort clothes at Christian Aid Ministries for a day, serving in a soup kitchen, or volunteering for short-term service projects like teaching Bible School.

Let's use our leisure time to bless our families and to encourage others.



The Story of the Good Samaritan

Karen Yoder, age 15 · Orrville, AL

I traveled on an old, deserted country road, riding from Jerusalem to Jericho, singing as I went.

There were many large boulders and lots of little bushes lining the road which, in my mind, were perfect places for bandits to hide.

I tried to push those thoughts out of my mind, but they continued surfacing. Finally, I decided I'd pray. Pulling my mule to a stop, I knelt down in the dusty road and prayed that God would protect me and take my fears away.

I felt better after I'd prayed and continued on my journey, but there was still an uneasy feeling in the pit of my stomach. Feeling as though someone was watching me, I turned and looked behind me, but there was nothing to see but the empty boulder-lined road.

A curve lay ahead, and I slowed down. Fearfully I rounded the bend and there a sight met my eyes that sent chills up and down my spine. Three bandits dressed in filthy rags stood at the side of the road. It ap-

peared as though they were just waiting for me. They held sticks and clubs and I thought to myself, "Is this the end for me? Please help me, Lord!"

I rode on toward the waiting men, my heart thumping wildly in my chest. As I approached, they made no move to get me so I thought I must have mistaken them for bandits when they were only poor travelers. But I was badly mistaken, for just as I was riding by, something hit the back of my head. I urged my mule to go faster, but it was of no use. Large hands grabbed my robe and pulled me off my mule. I was thrown to the ground and rudely stripped of my garments. Three more men came from somewhere and raided my saddlebags, fighting over the contents.

When I thought they were about finished with me, they roughly flung me into the ditch and as they were getting ready to leave, each of them threw something at me. Wham! A rock crashed down on my head, and everything went black.

As I regained consciousness, a groan escaped my lips. Pain shot

through my body as I tried to sit up. I've got to get out of here! I thought, and then, for the first time I realized that the bandits had also taken my mule. I sank back in the weeds, praying desperately that the Lord would see fit to send someone to help me.

I drifted in and out of consciousness, when I thought I heard something. Slowly my mind cleared, and I turned my eyes toward the road. Did I hear footsteps? Was God answering my prayer? The sound came closer, and with all my will power, I raised my head. My heart quickened. It was a man—a priest! I groaned and was sure he looked my way, but muttering something under his breath, he passed by on the other side of the road. He must not have had time for me.

I fell back into the weeds again, wondering if I'd ever be rescued on this desolate stretch of road. Why didn't God answer my prayer right away? Why didn't He send someone? But God had things under control and in His perfect timing, my prayer would be answered.

Again I heard footsteps, and again I lifted my head and looked. Sure enough, there was a man, a Levite, coming down the road toward me. But I was only disappointed again as the man ignoring my cries, passed by

on the other side of the road.

There's no use hoping someone will come now, I thought, but I was mistaken, for only minutes later, I heard a trotting donkey. My hopes soared, and for the third time, I raised my head and looked toward the bend in the road. A Samaritan came into view. I didn't know what to expect. *Will this man stop and help or will he too keep going?* I wondered.

He rode up alongside me and pulled his donkey to a stop. "Been robbed?" He asked kindly. My only reply was a moan, but he seemed to understand. Dismounting, he came over and gently examined my wounds. "They beat you up rather badly," he said, "but I'll see what I can do for you."

His gentle words and actions were like a balm to my aching mind and body. I prayed a silent prayer of thanksgiving to my Heavenly Father.

The Samaritan dressed my wounds and clothed me with clothes from his own saddlebags. Then ever so carefully, he lifted me up onto his donkey and took me to an inn, where he paid the bill for my stay. Before he left, he said he'd be back in a few days.

I sank back into the softness of my bed and thought to myself, "Now he truly is a Good Samaritan!"

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Hi! My name is Heidi Charlene Jantzi. I'm 12 years old. My birthday is Feb. 13, 1993. My parents are Larry and Beatrice and my siblings are Jeremy (14), Rosina (9) Lavon (5) Cameron (3).

I live on a farm. I'd like a twin or pen pal.

Heidi Jantzi
5843 Perth RD 119 RR1
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youth messages

Dear Youth,

How was life this last month? Did you find yourself communing with God a lot? Did you find it a joy to participate in the expansion of His kingdom? The THINGS around us in life tend to distract us from giving our lives to these two important priorities.

This month's youth section deals specifically with how we go about acquiring and using financial resources.

Most people get jobs and acquire money because of the security, pleasure, and pride that it brings.

Why do Christians go to work and what is our motive for acquiring material things? Does our purpose for going to work each day differ from the world much at all? How does the time that we spend from Monday to Saturday affect the advancing of

God's kingdom? Are we rich?

Recently I have been concluding that the "rich" to whom Jesus refers, are people like myself—people who have more time and money than they need for daily survival. (Most people in the world possess less than two dollars cash.)

Why is it that we do not like to think of ourselves as being rich?

Here are some things that came to my mind that I submit for your consideration:

It appears that a goal of Satan is to get us to believe that we are not really rich. His goal is to get us to believe that it is right for us to put ourselves under heavy financial obligation, to spend our resources on ourselves, to pursue earthly securities, and to become "entangled with the affairs of this life." He, of course, does not

use those words. He makes it sound very justifiable by asking questions such as, “Don’t you need to make a living?” “Shouldn’t you take time to live?” “Shouldn’t you be a responsible steward?” and, “Shouldn’t you work hard so that you can pay your bills?”

God does want us to provide for our needs, to enjoy His creation, to be responsible stewards and to pay our bills. But God’s purposes bring freedom and sacrifice rather than bondage and self-centeredness. We tend to think that our time and money is ours to do with as we please. But really, the time and resources that He gives us are for us to give back to Him as a love offering for all He has done for us.

I often think of the thousands of teens in Asia who have very few personal resources, yet they sacrifice their daily needs, that they might in some way advance God’s kingdom. Interestingly, they do not see such sacrifice as an undesirable thing. Rather, they view this sacrifice as only their reasonable service. Could it be that the American view of work and money has dulled our spiritual sensitivity to a point where we no longer feel guilty to spend everything on ourselves?

The youth writers in this issue

discuss some of these principles as they answer this month’s question. Perhaps you would like to gain a clearer perspective of God’s purposes for your life. Ask Him to do that. Offer your life to Him.

One man I know, who has given his life in ministry to people, offered his life to God when he was inside a silo. One night at 12 years of age, when he lay on the forage trying to catch his breath, he stared at the night sky through a crack in the roof. Only God knows what transpired in that young man’s heart as he offered himself that night to God. There have been times in the years since that this brother wonders whether he took the right path in life. And then he thinks back to that night in the silo, and in his spirit he knows he made the right choice.

You can choose your spot, but I urge you to get alone somewhere with the Creator and allow Him to impress upon your spirit what He intended for you to do with His gift of time and resources. The things you believe “down deep” about work, money, and time will influence nearly every decision that you make in the next several decades. —EE

This Month's
QUESTION

There are people among us who believe that to spend or invest borrowed money is to use money that God has not yet given to us. There seems to be some wisdom in this caution. What wisdom can you see in this, especially as it applies to people your age?

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

There are people among us who believe that to spend or invest borrowed money is to use money that God has not yet given us. There seems to be some wisdom in this caution. What wisdom can you see in this, especially as it applies to people your age?

I think one of the reasons that borrowing is harmful is because it makes us a servant to the person from whom we borrowed money. The vow we made to pay back what we owe, binds us. Depending on the circumstances, this can take away from our potential to serve God. We should especially be careful not to borrow in circumstances where we do not feel God's direct leading. He may want us to be free from that bondage so that we can serve Him in some other way. If we make financial commitments based on a certain length of time, how can we know for sure whether we will be able to pay the money back on time? It's better

not to vow a vow, than to vow a vow and not fulfill it.

Carita Keim, Millersburg, OH

• • • • •

The wisdom that I perceive in this is that it is good to be extremely cautious about going into debt for risky ventures and items that depreciate rapidly such as a car. God's plan may not involve my working overtime to pay off large debts incurred by my [self-confident] assurance of my fiscal expertise.

Andrew Beachy, Winfield, PA

• • • • •

I'm not sure that we can in all cases refrain from borrowing money, but I think that, if at all possible, it is "wiser" to be content with "such things as ye can afford" because if you start out life in debt, often things get worse instead of better. Perhaps the "thing" purchased holds more value if we need to save up for it, and that in turn helps us to be good stewards of what God has given us.

I think focusing on where our heart's treasure is will help us to make wise choices as to how we should spend our money!

Krystal Barkman, McConnellsville, OH



There is a lot of wisdom in such a caution. I think we have assimilated many of the world's financial standards and goals. Jesus said plainly that our basic needs would be taken care of, and that we should "take no thought" for them. Have we denied God opportunities to keep that promise, in His own amazing ways, by borrowing to set up our own material security? If I have \$2,000 for a car, why would I borrow money to buy one that costs \$8,000? This has made me take a hard look at my motives. Frankly, I believe that as young people who want to be a part of God's kingdom, borrowing money should be something we do rarely. I'm talking especially about borrowing toward physical possessions and/or increased financial

"success," as it's called. The values of God's kingdom are upside down from the world's, and those in His kingdom should reflect His values. What if we would need to refuse to do a work He prepared for us because we're tied to monthly payments? We miss out, not God.

Borrowing money is not a sin; but it is to be considered cautiously and with wisdom.

Nathanael Byler, Windsor, OH



I believe there is wisdom in this, especially for single youth.

We are to give our best to God, which includes tithing on our time.

Often this can be done in our youth, as we have fewer responsibilities at this time in our lives. By tying ourselves down, payments that could be avoided, we may be limiting our usefulness to God.

If God wants to call you to another place, but payments hinder you from going, what will you do?

Becca Petersheim, Oakland, MD

*Next Month's
QUESTION*

What are some scriptural principles and directives that will help us single men and women excellently relate to each other, and how can we know if the way we are relating is emotionally or spiritually damaging?

(Submitted by a reader)



THOUGHT GEMS

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Hatred is the most inefficient use one can make of his mind.

• • • • •

Hatred is cancer of the intellect.

• • • • •

You know you're past your prime if after you've gone all out,
you find yourself all in.

• • • • •

Humility is one of the qualities often missing in the self-made man.

• • • • •

When prosperity comes your way, don't use all of it.

• • • • •

Psychologists tell us that talking helps solve our problems,
but it often causes them, too.

• • • • •

Applied child psychology is often more effective
when the applicator is a small paddle.

• • • • •

Some of the driest speeches are made by people who are all wet.

• • • • •

Public speaking is a little like eating salted peanuts—
you have to know when to stop.

• • • • •

An argument is a disagreement with two sides and no end.

• • • • •

Daydreams at the steering wheel may lead to nightmares in the hospital.

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