



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

Galatians 6:14

NOVEMBER 2006


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Under The Juniper Tree

Violet Yoder · Danville, AL

How often are we like Elijah of old?
We're tired of life and the duties we hold.
So we find ourselves a "juniper tree,"
From cares of this life we ask to be free.

The Lord may answer and grant our request,
But He wants us to grow by passing the test.
The Lord may speak with something quite great,
But sometimes He may answer, "For now you just wait."

In a still small voice He often will speak.
To hear that Voice we must diligently seek.
So listen real close what He has for you,
Arise and work with strength anew! 

The Garment of Praise

One mark of a winsome Christian is a positive attitude. People with a “spirit of heaviness” tend to make clever remarks, like “What can go wrong will go wrong.” Or when there’s some outdoor event we’d really hate to miss, they’ll say: “The weather will probably be bad.” When people talk like that, God’s grateful children don’t join in. They carry an attitude of gratitude that fits the forgiven soul like a beautiful garment.

A modest garment is often not very noticeable. It adequately covers the wearer but may be so inconspicuous that later when we try to give a description, we cannot say exactly what color or design it bore. Its beauty comes partly from the fact that it does not call attention to itself. It is just there—modestly sufficient. It is not form-fitting or scanty and its color is not loud with bright gaudiness or outlandish messages.

An anonymous song writer speaks of a garment of praise and calls us to worship and gratitude with these words based on Isaiah 61:3: “Put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Lift up your voice to God.

Praise with the spirit and with understanding. O, magnify the Lord!”

Of course, things do not always go as we wish they would.

Disappointments Do Come

- We see a business opportunity. We put our best efforts into it, but by the time we get going, the outlook changes. We pray and look to God. We ask others for advice. We adjust our plans and proceed. In it all, we find God’s promises taking on new meaning. We learn contentment as we submit our needs and wants to Him. God teaches us both through what He provides and through what He doesn’t provide.

- In God’s plan for families, children grow up and make their own choices. During their childhood, we tried to give them “roots, then wings.” We took charge of their welfare, their nurture, and their discipline, but in adulthood they make their own decisions, often without asking. God offers disappointed parents love and kindness for open relationships with their adult children.

- The doctor announces a diagnosis of illness. We really tried to eat right and live right, but in spite of that,

sickness comes. The burden of extra expenses looks insurmountable, not to mention the specter of disability. In it all, our good God brings new ways of having us lean on Him for wisdom and strength.

- Life advances and we must reduce our work schedule because as the years advance, our strength wanes. Retirement knocks at the door and we are not ready for it. We don't want to "rust out;" we want to "wear out." We look for new ways of investing our time. But we also learn to delegate, because we realize that if we burn our candle at both ends, we are probably not as bright as we think we are.

Let's be reminded that if Job could handle the trials and the stresses life socked to him, you and I, too, can learn to cope. If Job could continue with confidence that God would see him through after he had lost much of his great wealth, almost all of his large family, and his health teetered so precariously that the prospect of death was welcome, then surely we can square our shoulders and proceed with positive attitudes.

An Attitude of Gratitude

Let us learn thankfulness. When the hard times come, let us face them. In the School of Life, dropped courses earn no credit—only an "Incomplete." Let us study our lessons

well. I dare say Job had more trials than any of us, but when he came "to the end of his rope," he seemed "to tie a knot and hang on." He would not let go of his confidence that God would see him through in it all. Even in the valley of despair, Job said, "[God] knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). And sure enough, when his trials ended, Job's positive response had allowed God to produce precious "metal." Job's faith had been refined and he came forth as gold.

Thankfulness can be cultivated. Our words may—or may not—be profuse, but an appreciative attitude makes it clear that we are grateful to God. When Paul wrote to early Christians at Thessalonica, he said, "In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Diligence Makes a Difference


Paul also urged the Christians at Thessalonica to keep busy. They thought the return of Christ was so near that they might as well slack off. I think they decided to plant no more trees—probably not even gardens. Paul encouraged them to get to work, pointing out that that's an important aspect of God's provision for us.

Abraham Lincoln once observed

that most of us are about as happy as we make up our minds to be. As far as that's concerned, I think the happiest people are often those who are too busy improving their walk with the Lord to think much about whether or not they are happy.

Gratefulness, Happiness and Willingness to Work seem to be triplets? I believe that, as William Barclay observed in *Daily Celebration*, "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that what the world needs more than anything else is men who are ready and prepared and willing to do an honest

day's work." (p. 232) I concede that Barclay's statement probably speaks more poignantly to our country than to many poorer countries of the world. We North Americans tend to put forth as little effort as possible until a ball game starts.

Real godliness is characterized by an upbeat, diligent outlook. Even in hard times, a contagious Christian sees God as being good. God does not switch on and off His love for us. Let us not switch on and off a grateful and diligent attitude! —PLM 

reader response

Re: Repetition

Since it may be kind of hard to accept [negative comments] from those who don't appreciate what you wrote, I deemed it an act of brotherly love and support to let you know that I appreciated the editorial, "Repetition," (Sept., 2006).

This finds us in Australia. We came on August 3 and, Lord willing, will be here until November 20. Our beloved brother, Donny Swartzentruber, was guest teacher for our third annual Bible conference held September 1-3. The theme was: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. We had some people come from Western Australia, from

Victoria and from New South Wales, and a number from our home state, Queensland.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Eli Kauffman



Re: Concern April, 2004

You request response on the veiling in the August issue. I feel instruction on size, color, and wearing of the covering is long overdue.

I remember well a conversation I heard in CPS back in the '40's. A Mennonite man, whose wife showed up at camp occasionally with a covering similar in size to what some of our

girls are wearing today, approached a General Conference man about his wife's cut hair and no veil. The GC man said, "I would call the Amish girls' covering a covering; but your wife's covering is not a covering."

When is a covering a covering? Perhaps our ministers go to Ministers' Meeting like too many of us lay members go to church on Sundays. We listen to the message and go home the same as we came. Many of our older sisters would be good examples to follow.

Paul, I'm 88. I have not changed my mind on Christianity, but I have learned to accept what I cannot change. I often think of Peter's words, "I must shortly put off my tabernacle." My eyes are failing and

it's hard for me to stay on the lines as I write. I love the Lord Jesus.

I was seven years old when we moved from Kansas to Ohio. I have so many fond memories of Kansas that I could talk about it all day. One memory of Kansas stands out that is not good. There we had a neighbor who later died. He was a vile man. The preacher at the funeral said, "This man was not a Christian." None of his neighbors seemed to have any hope for him.

If you come to Ohio, come and see us. We have a bed and breakfast that can't be beat, price-wise. We even have more than enough "straw and provender."

Your brother in the Lord.

Eli M. Yoder, Millersburg, OH 

Announcement " " "

The theme of the annual Ministers' Meetings is: **The Way of Christ in Human Relations.** These meetings are scheduled for April 3-5, 2007, to be held at Hutchinson, Kansas, and are to be hosted by the Arlington, Cedar Crest and Center congregations.

Our community wishes to extend a welcome to ministers and other Kingdom workers to come to this time of revival, reporting, planning, and moving ahead with the work of God.

—*The Amish Mennonite churches of Reno County, KS*

From Mystery to Reality

Aaron Lapp

We here present an introduction to the New Testament in mysteries and God's intent for personal application in grace. The incremental steps in this new series will be to show the reality of personal development as we pursue fullness in Christ. This is the first of a seven-installment series.

The Mystery of the Kingdom of God – 1

Word studies fascinate me. The inspired Word of God uses words specifically chosen with explicit meaning. The word “mystery” is a unique word that is used in a variety of scriptural concepts. None of these usages clash against the other.

I am surprised that the words “mystery” and “mysteries” are not mentioned in the Old Testament. It is an idea that belongs in the New Testament, to the age of the Holy Spirit. The mysteries are meant for *revelation and appreciation* to those who are filled and led by God's Spirit. These two words are used 27 times in the New Testament, with only four of them in John's Revelation.

Christ Himself spoke of mysteries

of the kingdom: Mark 4:11; Matthew 13:11; and Luke 8:10 are examples of this.

The word *mystery* is always used relative to knowable facts, as in: “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,” (1 Cor. 2:7); “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,” (1 Cor. 15:51); “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will,” (Eph. 1:9); “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery...” (Eph. 3:9). We should pick up on the ideas of *made known unto us* and *make all men see* as the revealing aspect by God concerning the mysteries mentioned.

In addition to the mystery *facts* here referred to, there are also concepts of mystery of God in regard to *relationships*. There is the *mystery of Christ* (Eph. 3:4); *the mystery of the Gospel* (Eph. 5:32); *the mystery of God* (Col. 2:2) *the mystery of the faith* (1 Tim. 3:9) and *the mystery of godliness* (1 Tim. 3:16). Does *the mystery of iniquity* (2 Thess. 2:7), belong here? Perhaps that belongs in a separate category.

Quite in contrast to mystery cases investigated by the famed FBI, or mysteries in fictional stories, or the mystical in bizarre religions, the mystery factor of the Gospel has the precious *element of revelation* in it for all who look to the Lord. These are all parts of the complete “package” of salvation, including the life that now is and that which is to come. The mystery of God has a full-orbed purpose that moves toward a glorious consummation and a life without end.

Every one of the various aspects of the mysteries of the kingdom contributes toward a complete revelation by God’s Spirit adding distinct realities for whosoever will. These mysteries are meant to be *experienced* personally and *seen* in a distant reality. The time frame encompasses the entire age of the Spirit since Pentecost and reaches to eternity future, into heaven itself. The fullest revelation of the mystery will be realized in heaven. There reality will be fully known and seen, quite beyond what is possible here on earth. “But in the days of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, *the mystery of God should be finished*, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (Revelation 10:7).

The Bible offers, however, that the practical aspect of the mystery of

the kingdom is revealed here and now. The mysteries of the kingdom of God serve a very unique purpose. What is light to some, is darkness to others. What makes sense to some, is confusion to others. What causes the opening of the eyes to some, causes blindness to others. This timeless principle was stated by Christ in a classical statement when He said, “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand” (Luke 8:10).

The watershed agent in regard to whom it is *revealed* and to whom it is *concealed* is the work of God’s Spirit. Paul writes, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they [the concepts] are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). This discerning is not by academics, or by “gut feeling,” or by mystical intuition. Only by God’s gracious Holy Spirit given to a person who loves God can the mystery of God be known, and beyond that be experienced in personal benefits.

The benefits experienced are spiritual verities and realities that comprise the very essence of life in Christ. The mysteries in the New Testament are designed to contribute to spiritual

insight and life-enhancing realities. Intangible spiritual realities are as real as the tangible world of seeing, touching, and feeling, to those who are Spirit-filled and Spirit-led.


The Apostle Paul has contributed much to understanding the mysteries of the kingdom. He writes, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom... But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared [present tense!] for them who love him. But God has revealed [present tense!] them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:7,9,10).

So the mystery of the kingdom continues, concealing and revealing, opening eyes and closing eyes, opening ears and closing them, according to the heart of man and how he faces his need before God.

God clearly intends for all to see the glory and reality of spiritual life in His Son, Jesus Christ, and be transformed by it. To those who refuse to believe and obey God, the mystery continues. To those who claim to believe, but don't obey God, they seem to be in a spiritual fog. But to those who truly believe and honestly seek to obey God's Word, a level of

explicit insight is given to the highest realities of life. Thus the mystery of God is kept in place against those who resist God, and at the same time is favorably resolved for those who truly love and obey Him.

The mysteries of God are designed for discovery. The mysteries are meant for particular revelation to God's children. They are not intended to cause frustration—or even speculation. Every one of the mysteries given in the New Testament is meant to be discovered by those who are His. That discovery occurs at the level of participation in God's saving grace, followed by Spirit-led obedience. The manifest effect is to bring life in Christ and its attendant upward movement.

The Bottom Line is that the mystery of God's kingdom is so simply and so intrinsically designed that it skewers the skeptic and confirms the believers. It confuses the analysis of those who approach it solely on the basis of academics, and convinces those more and more who give themselves to it in faith. The mystery of the ages is, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” As Colossians states it: “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” 

Hives Save Lives

Linda Whitby, Project Director

Hives Save Lives—Africa

Some years ago when bees which had earlier been brought from Africa somehow escaped in South America and made their way north, we were warned that they were more aggressive than our native bees. We were also told that they produce more honey. Wouldn't it be wonderful if these bees would make a significant difference in the poverty gripping the vast continent of their origin?

The following report comes to us with a plea for recognition and support. It tells about an organization which seeks to approach charity with the noble goal of self-help for many of the poor in Africa. Since there is so much need in Africa and around the world, it seems the part of compassion to assist in worthy self-help projects.

The address of this organization is: Hives Save Lives, c/o Chapel and York PMB #293, 601 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Suite 900, South Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20004 info@hives-savelives.com HSLA is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. —PLM

Africa is the only continent now poorer than it was 25 years ago. In many African countries, life expectancy is less than 33 years. There are 34 million

orphans in Africa, 30 million people are facing starvation, and 30,000 children die daily from largely preventable diseases.

Statistics on this scale take humanity out of the equation and contribute to the 'compassion fatigue' of potential donors. They create a sense of helplessness in terms of effecting any real change. Individual human beings are overlooked in the debate raging around debt relief, trade barriers, and corrupt governance.

But what do the actual men, women, and children suffering under the burden of poverty see as a solution? Many of them simply need, and want, the opportunity to earn their own living.

A sustainable solution for Africa is providing support directly to those who need it most to create self-employment:

- Driving the economy from the bottom up.

- Replacing aid dependency with economic activity.

Hives Saves Lives – Africa (HSLA) works towards the creation of self-employment and income generation with apiculture. We believe that debt relief will only be effective if

translated into development, driven internally. The raising of trade barriers is effective only if the people have something of value to trade....

Beekeeping can be a very powerful tool to income generation. It is a traditional activity in many parts of Africa. It is culturally and environmentally appropriate, and income is generated not only from honey and hive products, but also from increased crop yields as a result of the pollination activities of the bees. Beekeeping can also be practiced by the most marginalized communities in Africa because it does not discriminate in terms of age, gender, or disability.

HSLA is currently working in Uganda, where we provide a 'package' of hives, training and equipment to groups prepared to take a commercial approach to beekeeping, maintaining records and repaying the cost of the hives over a 5-year period. Training and support are therefore focused on helping projects with business as well as beekeeping skills.

The hive we are using has been designed for use in Africa to improve the quality and quantity of honey produced. A prototype was shipped to Uganda, and is now being made by local contractors, along with protective clothing, to boost local employment. A single hive costs \$60.00 to

make and can generate over \$70.00 every year from honey and other hive products.


A typical beneficiary project is the Uganda Gospel Rehabilitation Centre (UGRC), a three-hour drive from Kampala. The centre was started in the aftermath of the civil war to give shelter to hundreds of orphans, and has developed today into a school which serves a large [area], and still supports orphans, although now they are more likely to be the victims of HIV/AIDS than armed conflict. The school is typical of many rural schools with no electricity; water has to be pumped daily from the borehole; and basic necessities such as books and bedding are in short supply. Initially, they were given 20 hives and two members of staff attended a 7-day training course. There were many "teething" problems to overcome, such as ants invading the hives, but every setback created a learning opportunity and they persevered until the hives were colonized and productive.

They have now trained three more members and have taken delivery of another 40 hives. The long-term plan, proposed by the school itself, is to extend the project to families in the [area] and to use the school as a collection point during harvesting periods. Thus, the entire community

will ultimately benefit; the children are learning a life skill that they can take with them when they leave, the school can plough income into basic necessities without being dependent on handouts, crop production is on the increase, and local farmers are seeing first hand the benefits of diversifying into bee farming, rather than 'honey hunting.'

Challenges remain. There are logistical problems because roads are in poor condition posing substantial transport difficulties. There are security concerns in some parts of the country, and this very fact makes these the areas most in need of al-

ternative income streams. Above all, there is the need to generate funds to keep the manufacturing and training on track.

However, while current production levels are too low to make export viable, there is plenty of capacity on the domestic market to guarantee a ready market for the honey produced, and when production levels rise there is excellent potential for organic certification to boost the market value. Above all, however, there is the determination of the people themselves to seize the opportunity to work their way out of the poverty spiral. 

True Happiness

Wanda Mast · Flintville, TN

How can happiness be found?
I ask my restless heart.
If change would come into my life,
Would happiness then start?

I think I would find such bliss,
If skin were soft and smooth.
If blemishes would disappear,
It would my spirit soothe.


If just that certain someone,
Would claim me as his own.
Then surely joyful happiness,
Would in my life be known.

If all my trials and struggles,
Would quickly disappear.

Then would that lasting happiness,
Be always very near.

But then I heard my Savior,
In voice so soft and clear,
He said, "My troubled daughter,
True happiness is here.

"To find that lasting happiness,
You'll have to look to Me.
And as your gaze is steadfast,
True happiness you'll see."

Oh, blessed Lord and Savior,
I now so clearly see,
True happiness, abiding peace,
Is found only in Thee. 

marriages

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

Beachy-Bontrager

Bro. Gene, son of Merle and Sue Beachy, Free Union, VA, (Kisumu, Kenya, East Africa), and Sis. Kristina, daughter of Linford and Kay Bontrager, Goshen, IN, at Fair Haven A.M. Church for Woodlawn A.M. Church, Goshen, IN, on August 26, 2006, by Steve Miller.

Birky-Mast

Bro. Aaron, son of Vernon and Elizabeth Birky, Fairfield, MT, and Sis. Elaine, daughter of Ernest and Helen Mast, Melvern, KS, at Lyndon Amish Mennonite Church on August 25, 2006, by Rudy Overholt.

Glick-Beachy

Bro. Paul Andrew, son of Eli and Verda Glick, Santa Ana, El Salvador, and Sis. Geneva June, daughter of Merle and Sue Beachy, Free Union, VA, (Kisumu, Kenya, East Africa), at Pilgrim Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA, for Faith Mission Fellowship, Free Union, VA, on Sept. 22, 2006, by Ivan Beachy.

Herschberger-Chupp

Bro. Eric, son of Ira and Marjorie Herschberger, Arcola, IL, and Sis. Danelle, daughter of Daniel and Naomi Chupp, Plain City, OH, at United Bethel Mennonite for Bethesda Fellowship, on Sept. 1, 2006, by Elmer Stoltzfus.

Hostetler-Beechy

Bro. James, son of Raymond and Tura Hostetler, Belleville, PA, and Sis. Maria, daughter of Ed and Carolyn Beechy, Millersburg, IN, at Fair Haven A.M. Church for Woodlawn A. M. Church, Goshen, IN, on Sept. 2, 2006, by Steve Miller.

Hostetler-Stoltzfus

Bro. Keith, son of Ervin and Susan Hostetler, Plain City, OH, and Sis. Ariana, daughter of Benuel and Priscilla Stoltzfus, Morgantown, PA, at Bethel Christian Fellowship, on August 12, 2006, by John U. Lapp.

Kuhns-Herschberger

Bro. Mark Edwin, son of Ed and Leona Kuhns, Sullivan, IL, and Sis. Jennifer Dawn, daughter of Ira and Marjorie Herschberger, Arcola, IL, at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Arcola, IL, on August 5, 2006, by Howard Kuhns.

Kuhns-Yoder

Bro. Ron, son of Ed and Leona Kuhns, Sullivan, IL, and Sis. Cynthia, daughter of Rufus and Naomi Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Clearview Mennonite Church, Montezuma, GA, on July 8, 2006, by Donnie Swartzentruber.

Lapp-Mast

Bro. Thaddeus, son of Nelson and Anna Lapp, Malta, OH, and Sis. Edith, daughter of Elowayne and Esther Mast, Lincoln, MO, at Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Warsaw, MO, on May 12, 2006, by Raymond Barkman.

Miller-Hershberger

Bro. Dale Laverne, son of Raymond and Ada Miller, Uniontown, OH, and Sis. Myra Beth, daughter of Henry, Jr., and Barbara Hershberger, Abbeville, SC, at A.R.P. Church for Whispering Pines, at Due West, SC, on July 15, 2006, by Joe Hershberger.

Miller-Otto

Bro. Brandon, son of Marvin and Rosemary Miller, LaGrange, IN, and Sis. Yvette Nicole, daughter of Robert and Loretta Otto, Shipshewana, IN, at Fair Haven Church, Goshen, IN, on Sept. 9, 2006, by Wilbur Yoder.

Ropp-Lapp

Bro. Eugene, son of Laverne and Elaine Ropp, Monkton, ON, and Sis. Dorcas, daughter of Nelson and Anna Lapp, Malta, OH, at North Terrace Church of Christ for Ebenezer Mennonite Church, McConnellsville, OH, on April 29, 2006, by LaVerne Yoder.

Stutzman-Miller

Bro. Aden, son of Junior A. and Emma Stutzman, Millersburg, OH, and Sis. Rosanna, daughter of Crist and Lydian Miller, Sugarcreek, OH, at Maranatha A.M. Church, Sept. 16, 2006, by Paul Leroy Miller.

Yoder-Guadron

Bro. Jamin, South Bend, IN, son of Glenn and Amy Yoder, Middlebury, IN, and Sis. Raquel, Shipshewana, IN, daughter of Jorge and Rosa Guadron, El Salvador,

at Fair Haven for Rosewood Fellowship, on July 15, 2006, by Glenn Yoder.

Yoder-Hostetler

Bro. John, son of David and Faith Yoder, Quenemo, KS, and Sis. Sharon, daughter of Jesse and Lillian Hostetler, Lyndon, KS, at Lyndon Amish Mennonite Church on Sept. 15, 2006, by Rudy Overholt.

Yoder-Smucker

Bro. Reuben, son of Jonas and Ada Yoder, Malta, OH, and Sis. Mary Lynn, daughter of Reuben and Sue Smucker, Chuckey, TN, at Zanesville, OH, for Ebenezer Mennonite on Sept. 15, 2006, by LaVerne Yoder.

Yutzy-Pifer

Bro. Nicholas, son of Norman and Rhoda Yutzy, Hutchinson, KS, and Sis. Andrea, daughter of Fred and Diane Pifer, Adel, IA, at the Dunkard Brethren Church, Dallas Center, IA, on Sept. 30, 2006, by Fred Pifer.

Yutzy-Yoder

Bro. Ben, son of Eli and Mary Yutzy, Leon, IA, and Sis. Kristi, daughter of Jonas and Linda Yoder, Leon, IA, at Trinity Christian Church for Leon Salem Mennonite on June 17, 2006, by Norman Troyer.

.....

The most lonely place in
the world is the human
heart when love is absent.

cradle roll

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

Brenneman, Daniel and Marlene (Hochstetler), Virginia Beach, VA, third child and dau., Rachel Elizabeth, June 29, 2006.

Coblentz, Marlin and Amy (Stutzman), Hicksville, OH, second child and dau., Alicia Anne, August 29, 2006.

Gerber, Richard and Wanda (Kuepfer), Brunner, ON, third child, second son, Wendyn Ronald, Aug. 10, 2006.

Graber, Willard and Julie Ann (Schwartz), Lyndon, KS, eighth child, third son, Sean Willard, Sept. 18, 2006.

Kauffman, Richard and Mary Ann (Peachey), Wytheville, VA, second child, first son, Brian Eric, Sept. 29, 2006.

Kemp, Jonathan and Rebecca (Knepp), Loogootee, IN, fifth child, third son, Jonathan Ray, Jr., Sept. 19, 2006.

Lapp, Daniel and Connie (Yoder), Quarryville, PA, first child and son, Daniel Jordan, Sept. 27, 2006.

Mast, Mervin and Katrina (Knepp), Odon, IN, fourth child, second dau., Serena Dawn, Aug. 3, 2006.

Miller, Carl and Wilma (Miller), Plain City, OH, sixth child, second son, Jensen Carl, Sept. 24, 2006.

Miller, Lester and Twila (Gingerich), Middlebury, IN, third child, second son, Logan Dayne, Aug. 28, 2006.

Miller, Eli and Diana (Miller), Crossville, TN, third child, second dau., Kendrea Lanore, Aug. 25, 2006.

Miller, Sam and Marjorie (Troyer), Haven, KS, sixth child, second dau., Rachele Danae, Oct. 4, 2006.

Miller, Tim and Heidi (Yoder), Goshen, IN, first child and dau., Keesha Rachele, Sept. 8, 2006.

Nisly, Rod and Sylvia (Miller), Nickerson, KS, seventh child, fourth son, Benjamin Eric, Sept. 18, 2006.

Schmucker, Alvin and Doretta (Schrock), Bealeton, VA, first child and dau., Selena Hope, July 18, 2006.

Schrock, Kevin and Christina (Miller), Thomas, OK, fourth child, second son, Thomas E., July 22, 2006.

Stoltzfus, Clayton and Naomi (Stoltzfus), Intercourse, PA, first child and son, Landon Jacob, Sept. 30, 2006.

Swartzentruber, Glen and Gina (Nisly), Abbeville, SC, fourth child, third dau., Shari Lane, Sept. 7, 2006.

Swartzentruber, Ivan and Gloria (Schrock), Abbeville, SC, first, second, and third children received by adoption, Sept. 5, 2006, first son, Tracey James, born Oct. 8, 2001; twin daughters, Dixie and Linda, born March 28, 2003.

Troyer, Titus and Sharon (Miller), Middlebury, IN, fourth child and son, Rylan Clay, Sept. 8, 2006.

Wagler, Charles and Donna (Swartzentruber), Cross Hill, SC, fifth child, third dau., Karla JoAnn, Sept. 24, 2006.

Wagler, Dale and Heidi (Wingard), Washington, IN, first child and dau., Alexis Yvonne, Aug. 19, 2006.

Wagler, Leland and Sherri (Knepp), Odon, IN, third child, first son, Joshua Lee, Aug. 28, 2006.

Yoder, Calvin and Rebecca (Pifer), Hutchinson, KS, second child and dau., Abigail Janae, August 21, 2006.

Yoder, Eugene and Roseanna (Miller), Hydro, OK, fourth child, third son, Durlin Benjamin, Feb. 14, 2006.

Yoder, Kenneth and LuElla (Schrock), Arthur, IL, second child, first son, Clayton Lee, Sept. 19, 2006,

Yoder, Steve and Charlene (Miller), Bakersville, OH, first child and son, Joshua Dale, Sept. 20, 2006.

Yoder, S. Wayne and Clara (Bender), Wytheville, VA, third child and dau., Vanessa Dawn, Sept. 18, 2006.

Zook, Andrew and Wanda (Byers), Middleburg, PA, second child and son, Landon Ray, July 17, 2006.

Zook, Dwayne and Heidi (Gingerich), Beavertown, PA, first child and dau., Amber Sage, Aug. 4, 2006.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING
A FATHER CAN DO FOR HIS CHILDREN

is to love their mother.



ordinations

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

Bro. Dean Miller, 43, Goshen, IN, was chosen by lot and ordained to the office of minister at Woodlawn A.M. Church, Goshen, IN, on Sept. 10, 2006. Preordination messages were brought by Clyde Stoll, of Odon, IN.

The charge was given by Steve Miller, assisted by Elmer Miller and Wilbur Yoder. Dewayne Yoder was also in the lot.

Bro. Lamar Ropp, 52, Kalona Iowa, was chosen by voice of the church to serve as

minister at Sharon Bethel A.M. Church, on Sept. 17, 2006. Serving in preordination services was Melvin Beiler, Grove City, MN.

The charge was given by Delmar Bontrager, assisted by Melvin Beiler and Elmer Miller.

Bro. James Stoltzfus, 28, Morgantown, PA, was ordained to the office of deacon at Bethel Christian Fellowship, on Sept. 10, 2006. Preordination messages were given by Menno Kuhns.

The charge was given by John U. Lapp, assisted by Jonathan Stoltzfus and John U. Glick. Bill Lapp and Omar Stoltzfus were also in the lot.

obituaries

Miller, Christopher Ryan, 20, Etna Green, IN, died August 6, 2006, in a drowning accident. He was born March 23, 1986, son of David, Jr., and Bertha (Yoder) Miller.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by a brother, Curtis; a sister, Fonda; both at home; and his fiancée, Victoria Robb of Nappanee, IN. Grandparents surviving are Emmon and Mary Anna Yoder, Etna Green; and Amanda Miller, Utica, OH. He was preceded in death by grandfather, David J. Miller.

Funeral services were held at the First Church of God, Nappanee, where he had been attending, with Sam Bennett, Matt Long, and Wade Burkholder serving. Gary Burkholder conducted the com-

mittal at the burial in the Maple Lawn Cemetery.

Smoker, John S., 63, Atglen, PA, died at his home surrounded by his family Sept. 1, 2006. He was born a son of the late John E. and Rachel (Stoltzfus) Oct. 19, 1942, at Lancaster, PA.

He was a member of Mine Road A.M. Church.

On Nov. 22, 1966, he was married to Elsie M. Stoltzfus. She survives. Seven sons were born to them: Jason Merle (Rosella Lapp), Parkesburg, PA; John Mark (Rosana Yoder), Kinzers, PA; Jeffrey Myron (Joanna Mast), Strasburg, PA; Jay Matthew (Martha Stoltzfus), Atglen, PA; James Marlin (Charmaine

Stoltzfus), Strasburg, PA; Jadon Micah (Regina Beachy), Strasburg, PA; and Justin Michael, at home.

Other survivors include two sisters: Malinda (Mrs. Alvin Beiler), Ronks, PA; and Barbara (Mrs. Samuel Stoltzfus), Narvon, PA; and two brothers: Samuel (Rachel), Gordonville, PA, and Omar (Esther), Rawlinsville.

He was preceded in death by one sister, Sara Beiler.

Funeral services were held at Weavertown A.M. Church, on Sept 4 with Jason Smoker, John U. Glick, John U. Lapp, Daniel Lapp and Alvin Stoltzfus serving. Interment was in the Mine Road Cemetery, Kinzers.

Troyer, Moses J., 92, Millersburg, IN, died from injuries sustained in an accident when he was struck by a car while riding his bicycle on August 9, 2006. He had lost his house by fire about two weeks before. Moses was born in Clinton Twp., Elkhart County, IN, June 9, 1914, the son of the late Jacob C. and Sarah (Miller) Troyer.

He was a member and deacon of South Haven A.M. Church, Millersburg.

On Oct. 6, 1938, he was married to Lovina Hochstetler. They had one son:

Leroy, Millersburg, IN; and twin daughters: Sarah Ann (Mrs. Toby Miller), Plain City, OH; and Mary Ann (Mrs. Dennis Miller), Jerico Springs, MO. He is survived by 13 grandchildren; 18 great grandchildren and two great great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, four brothers, and four sisters.

Funeral services were held at South Haven August 12, with Fair Haven ministers, Wilbur Yoder and Neal Beachy serving. Burial was in the South Haven Cemetery.

Zook, Natalie Joy, 19 months, died July 16, 2006, from a drowning accident at home. She was born Dec. 16, 2004, beloved daughter of James and Rebecca Zook.

Left to cherish her memory are her parents, sisters, Kaitlin, Amanda and Jenna; grandparents, Leon and Mary Zook and Victor and Viola Overholt; nine aunts, seven uncles, 15 cousins—and a special Golden Retriever, Shadow, which apparently led Natalie to the pond where the drowning occurred.

Funeral services were held at Kempsville Mennonite Church July 19, with burial in the church cemetery.

You must arrange in advancel

for pleasant memories.

The *Hutchinson News* recently gave front-page prominence to an article that was friendly to homosexual practice. I felt moved to submit the following response:

“The front-page article about gays on Saturday, September 17, provides food for serious thought. As far as I know, such an unnatural attraction remains something of a biological mystery.

“It is clear, however, from the biblical record that God’s view of this unnatural practice is not neutral. Homosexual practice was common in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 19:24 says, ‘Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven.’ The New Testament in Romans 1:21-28 confirms that God does not look lightly at homosexual practice.

“I hope that the following thoughts are worthy of thoughtful reader consideration:

- “It is wrong for us to reject persons who struggle with unwelcome attractions, and we do well to encourage them. The Lord Jesus also desires to give them complete deliverance from it.

- “We are free to make choices, but we cannot control the results of wrong choices. In other words, we

reap what we sow.

- “To be tempted to be immoral is not wrong, but to practice immorality is sin according to God’s Word. Who do you think will have the last word when we approve conduct God disapproves?

- “When people decide homosexual practice is alright, that does not change the results of such choices.

- “No one is ethically free to engage in any sexual activity outside biblical guidelines. All efforts of legitimizing or ‘Christianizing’ wrong conduct are exercises in futility.

- “The Bible clearly says that all of us will some day face the Righteous Judge of all the earth.

- “Human life is relatively brief. Eternity is endless.

- “It is God’s desire and provision that all of us are reconciled to Him. To choose repentance and reconciliation is wise. Failure to do so is ‘otherwise.’”

Some days later, it occurred to me that to reprint the letter here might serve a useful purpose. There can be honest disagreements in our understanding of Bible teaching. But that is very different from having us assume that we are ethically free to let human reasoning or experience lead us to conclusions contrary to Scripture. It is precisely such reasoning that has compromised the permanence and

sanctity of marriage to the point that divorce and remarriage have become acceptable in many churches.

It is also the reason that homosexual practice has become a divisive issue generating serious discussion on something that is abundantly clear from the Scriptures. We do well to guard against thought patterns that put preference and convenience above God's Word.

Attitudes become decisions. Decisions become pathways that lead to destinations. It is wise to give first place in our lives to the One who will have the last word.



To assume that visual religious identity is worthy of serious attention and discussion is to run the risk of being labeled as having a case of misguided sincerity. It is certainly true that man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. Does this mean that God is not concerned about our outward appearance?

It is common knowledge that the prevailing culture is not a responsible guardian of Christian values and priorities. And this is in some manner reflected in outward appearance. What is not always so clear is how the church should respond to this situation. I am not suggesting that there is only one right way to respond.

But it seems to me that a response of neutrality often leads to serious compromise.

At a non-local funeral recently, I met a man and his wife who were both raised in a "plain" Anabaptist setting. He is now retired from teaching in a Mennonite institution. The appearance of this couple was a fresh reminder that visual identity is an important issue to others outside our immediate circle. The man had rather profuse facial hair around the mouth, the hair on his head a bit longer than what is common. His wife's hair was at least as short as her husband's. I don't understand what all this couple was saying by their appearance. But it was obvious that their appearance reflects preferences and identity different from their upbringing.

When we see men in our circles with facial hair only around the mouth, it seems apparent this also is an identity statement. Probably it is more a preference statement than a statement that identifies them with a particular church group.

Consider with me the following points pertinent to this subject:

- The essence of our relationship with the Lord is not something we can arrange with our hands. It is not worn on the outside. It is always a matter of the heart.
- If we know the Lord, it seems

logical that we would want to be careful that our appearance would not convey a conflicting message.

- To leave such issues as only matters of personal choice seems to support the idea of individualism rather than responsible membership in the body of Christ.

- To reject traditions as legalism may be essentially reactionary and negative. Let us idealize a positive identity with the Lord and the church.

- Let us evaluate present practices and trends in light of the future. A commitment to faithfulness is neither passive nor neutral.



Pope Benedict XVI made international waves when he quoted a 14th century emperor as follows: “Show me just what Muhammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith that he preached.” Even though he was quoting someone else, it touched off a new wave of violence among the Muslim population.

To this observer it seems a rather clear affirmation of the ancient statement. We of this country should remember that the United States is seen by others throughout much of the world as a nation who uses military superiority with indiscre-

tion and arrogance. Muslims and many others get their impressions of the U. S. from the American movie industry: from rampant loose moral behavior, a high crime rate, and the breakdown of the home and family. They can understandably reach conclusions that are not complimentary. While we object to Muslim violence, we believe that wrong doing in this country is evil as well.



Treasured Memories by Rachel Hochstedler and Susan Wheary is the story of Lester and Rachel Hochstedler, an Amish family with nine children when they moved from Kalona, Iowa, to the Chaco in Paraguay in the early 1970’s. The eventful journey began with Uncle Emery and Aunt Katie Ropp of Seymour, Missouri and their seven children in a motor home. The seven Ropp children rode only from Kalona to their own home at Seymour. The Hochstedler family and the Ropps went on toward Florida, with at least three overnight “Mennonite” stops between Kalona and Miami.

They visited the Amish folks living in Honduras before flying on to Asuncion, Paraguay. There they had planned to take a bus for the final twelve hours to the Chaco. But when the buses couldn’t run because of muddy roads, it was decided to take

a plane rather than to wait for the roads to dry off.

Life in the Chaco is depicted as a continuous adventure and challenge of some unexpected features of the climate and culture. The Hochstedler family is presented as a close-knit, diligent unit. Papa is resourceful and creative. Mama “looketh well to the ways of her household” (Proverbs 31:27). A daughter and son were added to their family during their stay in the Chaco.

As it actually turned out, the Amish community the Hochstedlers had anticipated failed to materialize. The 288-page book closes with their move to eastern Paraguay, where they started over in an old granary owned by Uria Shetler. The book provides a pleasant and interesting reading experience.

This reader would have appreciated more specific dates. It does mention the couple’s 17th wedding anniversary. Another record states that they were married in 1955.

The Chaco is described as a challenging place to live. To have given a bit of history to this area that was so recently a harsh wilderness would have seemed appropriate. The book is, nonetheless, an interesting look into the life of a large family who had a strong faith, a lot of work, many visitors and, in spite of many struggles, a joyful spirit.

Copies are available from:

Rachel Hochstedler

66295 E Hwy. 60

Wyandotte, OK 74370

Phone 918-678-3976

(Price: \$10, postpaid)

—DLM



Ministers’ Meetings Messages—2006

This is a condensation of a message given at the annual Ministers’ Meetings, April 4-6, 2006, at Sugarcreek, Ohio. The set of eight cassette tapes with 11 messages is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA 20136, for \$40; or a set of 11 CD’s for \$45, postpaid.

6. Love, the Power of Healthy Relationships

—Jonathan Stoltzfus, Narvon, PA

I think love is often misunderstood. There is much cheap love around today and it’s not just outside Christian circles. It’s in the church, too. There’s lot of “fuzzy,” sentimental stuff that doesn’t do

much lasting good.

We were reminded that love is from God. We learned love from God and from those who went before us. But then, it's gotten a bit twisted. We have verses like John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave..." and that kind of love can only express itself in giving, in serving, and in sacrificing of itself. But a lot of what passes for love today, doesn't have that quality.

Love is one of God's attributes, but not the only one, nor is it as many think, the primary one. I like A. W. Tozer's *Knowledge of the Holy*. In my opinion, it's a tremendous treatment of the attributes of God. Bro. Simon Schrock was kind enough to get a supply here, in case you'd like to have one.

One of the most foundational matters in our congregations is what we really think God is like. That determines a whole lot about what we believe and how we live. When you think God is kind of a fuzzy lover, with whom anything goes, it gives us a false idea. He's not like that.

God is not only love, He is also good, just, changeless, sovereign, holy and the three omni's—all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere present. God isn't all love. In Isaiah, we have 30 times, "The Holy One." Some Bible

teachers in the past have taught us that God's chief attribute is holiness. I'm not sure that that's correct, either. In the Scriptures, much is said about His holiness. Peter wrote that we are to be holy, for He is holy. Hebrews 12 says that we are to "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." In the visions that God gave to men of Himself, the chief thing that men were moved by was God's holiness. Isaiah cried out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!" He didn't cry out, "Loving, loving, loving is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is filled with his love."

No, God is not all love. But neither is He "an austere man," like the one-talent man said He is. "Austere" has the idea of rough and severe, and perhaps even mean. God is all the traits we mentioned—infinately. I don't know how far you can go with those kinds of words. We're limited in every way. God is not. He is limitless—infinite, and has all these attributes in perfect harmony. Love is one of His attributes and God has it in perfect harmony with His other attributes. God does not sometimes love more or less than at other times. He is not sometimes more just than at other times.

Matthew 5 says that God lets rain fall and His sun shine on the just and on the unjust. Then Jesus said, "Be ye

therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (5:48). The idea is He is mature and he is asking us to have the same goal. God impartially gives the sun, the rain and many other bounties to those who love Him in return as well as to those who don’t. God does that from within Himself. His attitudes and actions toward those people are not determined by how they treat Him.

He wants us to love people from the fountain of love He places within us regardless of how they treat us. We don’t have to be very bright to realize what that does to relationships, do we?

Let’s consider our love for God and others. This concerns the first and second commandments. To love ourselves doesn’t mean that we must love ourselves. It only acknowledges that we do love ourselves and that we should love our neighbors like that, too.

In 1 John 3:16, we are told that, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us....” Do people know we love them because we talk nice to them and tell them we love them? It is nice to do that, for that matter, but does it need to be more than that? Do people realize we love them because we say it or is it because we give and serve and we sacrifice on their behalf? That’s how

we perceive God’s love.

God didn’t decide to write it in the most beautiful letters in the sky. He didn’t decide to have the angels sing it so outstandingly beautifully that it even exceeded this group that sang for us this evening. He could have had the angels provide music that we couldn’t hold a candle to. Had He chosen to do that, would we understand more about His love than we do this way? I think not.

John 15:9 says, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.” From Father to Son, from Son to us, and from us to others—Jesus continues to show His love through His people. I suppose we should have expected Him to do it that way. Providing God’s love, we are to give it out. God’s love is constant. Our love should be similar. Our love, like God’s, should be genuine. Let love be without putting on. I fear that too often it is not from the heart, it is “put on.” Let us take this to heart—no hypocrisy! Hypocrisy in love hinders relationships.

In marriage vows we promise to love only one, and forsaking all others, keep ourselves only to this one as long as we both shall live. That vow reminds me of something else I want to say, Love not only draws together, it also separates. A good marriage relationship can only be between

two people. They exclude all others. Our relationship with God calls for the same kind of exclusiveness. It calls for singleness of heart. There is some of that in good brotherhood relationships. The love that draws us together also separates us from a lot of people and things. I have wondered recently if we should have more of a commitment to each other in our baptismal vows.

I think maybe I've been so hard against "fuzzy" sentimental love, that I may have missed some good things about love. In spite of the fact that God is not primarily love, but holds His attributes in perfect harmony, I also see that the primary mark, the highest virtue of Christians is to be love. In Colossians 3:14, we read, "And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

We go to verses 12 and 13 and see that we are to "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; If any man have a quarrel against another, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Then follows the admonition in verse 14 that instructs us to put on charity and identifies it as the bond of perfection.

In Galatians 5, we are given the

fruit of the Spirit. Love (agape) is at the head of the list. Does the fruit of the Spirit help relationships? Do you like to be around people that radiate the fruit of the Spirit? Yes, it is a tremendous blessing!

1 Corinthians 12:31b says, "And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." In chapter 12 you have Spirit gifts. In 14 you have instruction on church order. The chapter on love comes between, right after the introduction of the more excellent way. The final comment in the last verse in the love chapter mentions that three things remain but that "the greatest of these is love." Is love the highest Christian virtue?

Sanford Shetler, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 13, expands with many words, the meaning of the virtues that are listed. The "sounding brass" and "tinkling cymbals" and those other vain things in the opening verses are gifts and abilities without real love. Then he describes real love and explains how it behaves. He says it's kind, gracious, benign (of a gentle disposition). Benign is a love word; malignant is not.

My wife has had two surgeries in the last two months. Both involved tumors. The first one was malignant, but we were given assurances afterward that things looked quite hopeful. The second one had the doctors

and us worried. Then when it was over, to our great relief, we were told that it was benign. I wonder how Jesus feels when there are malignancies in His bride. Malignancy kills. It attacks. It tears down.

Let us continue the description of love in Shetler's commentary. **LOVE:** is very slow to lose patience (Greek: has a long mind), looks for ways to be constructive, never boils with jealousy, is not eager to impress, is not on parade, does not boast, is not envious, is not arrogant or conceited, is never rude or unmannerly, is not indecent, is never selfish and does not pursue selfish aims, does not insist on its rights, bears no malice, is not quickly provoked, does not keep a record of others' wrongs, does not take offense easily, is not irritable or resentful, is not touchy, does not feel good when others go wrong, is always glad when truth comes out on top, overlooks faults in others, has unquenchable faith in others, is always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, can face anything, has no limit to its endurance, is always hopeful, will never come to an end. Agape love sacrifices itself in service for God and others.

1 Peter 4:8, gives us another "above": "And above all these things, have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of

sins." I believe that sins in this context is what we would usually call faults. Charity overlooks a lot of faults. It isn't easily irritated. Most of us probably have pet peeves about some things that people do which we don't appreciate. Charity doesn't let such things hurt a relationship. Someone has said, "If you really love someone, they could dump a plate of food in your lap and it's alright, but if you don't, they can't even hold their fork right." When we don't love our brothers and sisters in the church, it's very hard for them to get things right.

In 1 Peter 1:7 instructs us to add to brotherly kindness charity. There we are told to add a series of Christian virtues to one another. The capstone of these virtues is charity. Love that sacrifices and serves is a wonderful lubricant to help a healthy congregation function smoothly.

Depending on what's wrong, we shouldn't simply put on extra lubricant. If there's a part broken, lubricant doesn't take care of that. But when things are in order, good lubricant helps things run smoothly. Romans 13:9b says, "And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Please remember that when the

rich young ruler came to Jesus, Jesus told him his condemning fault because He loved him. Remember also that Jesus rebuked Peter for the same reason. Love is willing to take the risk to help a brother or sister in the right way. Love won't resort just to making them feel good on their way down. Love will try to help them in the right way.

In 1 Timothy 3, we are told that a candidate for bishop shall rule his own house well. It asks further, if he is not doing that, "How shall he 'take care' of the church?" I read this for many years to be asking, in effect, If he can't rule well his own house, how can he rule the church? Or, to put it into other words, If he can't rule a little group, how can he rule a big group? But it doesn't say that.

The word translated *take care of*, is used in only two other places in the New Testament—both in Luke 10, in the account of the Good Samaritan. When the Good Samaritan came to the injured man, he poured in oil and wine—he *took care of* him. Then he took him to the innkeeper and told him to *take care of* him at his expense. "Take care of" is a love idea.

Romans 12:10 says, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another." What does that mean? Let's think of an example where it

might apply. Some years ago, Barbara and I visited a young couple in our congregation who were in violation of church standards. It seemed quite obvious that they had lost interest in our church. I don't know why some people do it that way, but they seem to hang around and try to take others with them. We tried to talk to them about the situation. They weren't really interested in making any changes. We found out later that he said that I had been so angry that I was red in the face when we visited them. I checked with Barbara about that. Neither of us were aware of it. Is one to apply, "In honor preferring one another" to a case like that. Perhaps I conveyed something I didn't realize.

One time I saw children playing a made-up game they seemed to enjoy very much. They were playing on the sidewalk, and called their new game: "You go first." One would say, "You go first." Then, the other would say, "No, you go first." That was answered with, "No, you go first." And so on. In honor preferring one another might ask us to observe simply the "No, you go first" principle. Just how far should we take something like that? I'm not sure, but I believe there are times when others can see us better than we can see ourselves.

Just remember that "The greatest of these is love."



Principles in Church Planting—Part I

Floyd Stoltzfus

Church planting is simply preaching the Gospel, in which the Holy Spirit convicts men and women of sin and they turn to the Lord. The Bible calls it “obedience to the faith” (Romans 1:5). Newborn babes in Christ are naturally interested in the doctrines of the Scriptures. Practical applications are made for holy living. When the specific requirements of church membership are embraced by the applicants, water baptism is administered and they are received as members into the visible body of Christ. Thus a new church is planted.

The question often comes, “How do we carry out mission work?” To assume that a missionary has all the answers to this complex question may seem presumptuous or arrogant. Is there not a model to follow? Let us turn to the blueprint—the Bible. What can we learn from the early disciples about church planting? The following principles are derived from the first part of Acts:

1. Promise

It was important for the followers of Jesus to wait for the promise of the Father: “For John truly baptized with

water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4,5). This group of believers rested in “the promise” of the coming of the Holy Spirit. They joyfully anticipated this event but probably did not know how it would be fulfilled. In church planting we, too, need to rest in the promises of the Scriptures and believe that God is able to accomplish what He has spoken.

2. Prayer

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication....” (Acts 1:14). This prayer season prepared the “120” for what lay ahead. Prayer played an important role in the ministry of the early church. (Notice Acts 2:42; 4:23-31; 7:55-60; 8:14-17; 9:11, 36-43; 10:1-4, 9; 12:1-11; 13:1-3; 14:23; 16:25; 20:36; 21:5; 27:35; and 28:8.) These believers prayed: to give God praise and glory; for courage in the face of danger; for direction in sending out missionaries; in ordaining elders; and in overcoming satanic strongholds. God makes it clear that something happens when people pray because nearly every chapter in Acts has some mention of prayer. Someone has said,

“Prayer is both the thermometer and the thermostat of the local church, for the spiritual temperature either goes up or down, depending on how God’s people pray.” Prayer gives God room to work and to accomplish what He longs to perform.

3. Partnership

The phrase “of one accord” appears six times in Acts. (1:14; 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25) The partnership here described is a virtue that is deeply rooted in the Godhead. The unity of these believers was a direct answer to Jesus’ high priestly prayer. Five times He fervently requested of the Father “That they may be one.” (John 17: 11, 21, 22, 23.) The basis for this partnership is found in Jesus who called His apostles. Secondly, there was unity of supernatural experience on the day of Pentecost, when the baptism of the Holy Spirit came. Thirdly, this unity was enriched by a deep expression of love in the distribution of wealth and goods to those in need. Godly partnership is a foundational key to biblical church planting. One may never know the far-reaching effects of Christian unity on the body of Christ and in the world.

4. Power

“But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...” (Acts 1:8). “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...” (Acts

2:4). “and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus...” (Acts 4:33). The word power in these verses comes from the Greek word, “dunamis.” Dunamis is an inherent spiritual quality of great capability. It means being able. Its opposite is “adunatos” which means “not able, incompetent, and impossible.” Christ’s supply of “dunamis” will never run dry. We need a fresh anointing of this “dunamis” every day, but it must be seasoned with grace and patience.

5. Personal Work

Personal evangelism became an integral part of the New Testament church. Immediately after the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost the believers “began to speak with other tongues...” (Acts 2:4). They did not go to some public meeting place and invite people to come and hear their testimony. I believe all 120 were out there in the streets witnessing in the midst of a great company of lost souls representing at least 15 different languages. The Holy Spirit introduced the next step in the divine program. Peter stood before the multitude and preached the first expository message for the church era. It has been widely imagined that the 3,000 converts were brought to Christ by Peter’s sermon alone. I believe the one-to-

one witnessing of all the disciples had a direct bearing on the results that day. Correlating that with the powerful preaching of Peter brought the remarkable results of that day. If the personal witnessing had not preceded Peter's preaching, it is not likely that such results would have followed. It seems to me that this pattern of beginning with personal

witnessing and inviting people to church to hear the Gospel preached would bring results for every age.

All can be involved in this rewarding endeavor. This builds the church. Maybe God has not called you to be a preacher or a teacher. But there is no Christian who is not appointed by the Spirit to be a witness for Jesus Christ.

(to be continued)



The Truth Will Set You Free

Brenton Wise · Quinter, KS

[Studying the past is meaningful. This writer takes us back into specific times in history and recreates some of its conditions. It helps us appreciate our time and our many opportunities. Let us learn things of value as we ponder the past. —PLM]

The night is dark as I sit at the table in my home. A candle is my only light. The book that lies on the table is the Holy Bible. It is not mine; I have it only for a short time and then it must go to another. Even though I can't read, I will have it long enough for the reader to come to my home and proclaim the words to my family and me. The reader never transports the book lest he be caught and imprisoned by the rulers. This is the first time this has ever happened and may be the only time in my life.

How I wish everyone could partake

of this Word. I have heard the Bible spoken of for many years, but to see it is to believe. I hope some day my children may obtain the knowledge to become readers. The readers know all. Books open to them, just as the door opens to my home for me. Nothing is hid from the reader, just as all is exposed when I pass through the door of my home. No secrets, no fear, no unknown.

I have tilled the soil as my father did before me. Our life is simple. The village mill is a morning journey away. We have been fortunate to have a beast of burden to carry our heavy loads. Most people of our class walk wherever they go. Our world is small; some day it will become larger when books and readers are common. [I hope that] some day there will be no fear of the truth. **The year is 1375.**

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I sit at the table in my home reading the Bible. My great grandfather built this table. Many times he told me the story of this table, the Bible, and the reader. I was just a young lad when he passed on. His desire was that everyone could have a Bible and be able to read. My father never learned to read, yet he told me many times of his desire to know. Life was too hard, work too long, and the struggle to survive too great to allow the time for knowledge.

The recent seasons have brought about much change. Just a few years ago in the village square, the comment was made about a method to print books instead of writing them by hand. Could any greater thing happen than for man to obtain knowledge? Until this time, a human hand has scribed everything that was printed. Books take many months, sometimes even years, to copy. The church bishops are afraid that knowledge will become common, that man may know too much. Even though I can read, I do not broadcast my ability. I was taught by the reader who came to our house from time to time while I lived in my father's home. I have never traveled beyond the bounds of my remote village.

I do not till the soil as my forefathers did. I was taught the lumber trade and reading by the traveler who came through our village to proclaim

the Gospel. The knowledge came easily for me; [even though] for some, it didn't. **The year is 1485.**

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I am traveling to another land. My final destination is unknown due to the fact of persecution by the rulers of the land where I reside. The heavy hand of forced religion on every person was one that we could not continue to bear. "Believe our way or die," they said. Many have suffered and some have died at their hand. Our family has chosen to flee to a new land where freedom of religion is accepted. It has come at a great cost of material possessions. We left everything behind except for an old trunk, which was made from the table in our home. Our Holy Bible is in the trunk and our belief [in it] is in our hearts. We look forward to this new land where freedom and the Bible can be shared openly.

I was a carpenter in my small village. I know not what trade will be available in this new land but I am willing to do anything. We must indenture ourselves to a master for seven years in order to pay for the travel costs to this land. What a small price to pay for freedom. What a small price to pay for the truth. **The year is 1710.**

• • • • •

I am standing on the battlefield that not many days ago held a conflict between the North and the South.

The differences between them are so great, is reconciliation possible? Both groups believe in the same God, talk the same language, and sing the same songs. Yet they have gone to war because they would not agree. If not soon reconciled, I fear this country will become so weak, it will no longer stand. It has proclaimed freedom and peace, yet I see no peace, only bloodshed. My father taught me the way of the Bible. We do not take human life. Our way is one of peace without force. Our home was heavily damaged by this conflict. Very little remains of the structure; just a few interior belongings have been salvaged. With the family Bible, an old trunk, and two chairs, we will try to rebuild, plant some crops, and feed our family.

I was a farmer with several head of livestock, a home, a barn, and a good water well. I'm not sure what the future holds; yet I'll trust the Lord Jesus to be my guide. **The year is 1863.**

• • • • •

My office is filled with volumes of printed material. I have read most of the titles but not nearly all of the contents of these books which line the walls. My ancestors were great readers. I enjoyed learning. I live in a land where personal freedom is all that I have ever known. This freedom which I've often taken for granted is in jeopardy even now, for America is involved in a war against an evil

ruler. Information seems to be at its peak. Christian religion is prevalent in most of this land. The Holy Bible is the most widely printed book known to man. I read it daily and hear it proclaimed on Sunday when we attend services at church. Above my bookcase, I have a board from a homemade trunk that was brought to America by my ancestors. If only that board could speak of yesterday's experiences, would I listen if it could?

I am a teacher. My early American forefathers were farmers in a rich and fertile land. Instruction in knowledge is my goal for those who have a desire. I pity those who have gained knowledge, know it, and need it no more. Truth is never-ending. **The year is 1943.**

• • • • •

I sit at my desk typing a paper to submit to a local publication. I am a writer by desire and a teacher by profession. Information in today's world is reached by the touch of a keystroke. Never before in the history of mankind has more information been available to more people than today. I can't imagine how it could progress any further. Books still have value but computer technology has surpassed the printed page. The information highway has opened doors **never** to be closed.

I have traveled the world seeing the great wonders of man, yet everything

comes back to the simple truth of the Holy Bible. My forefathers proclaimed it and lived it. They suffered for it, yet counted it all joy. They endured material loss and overwhelming prosperity. Religion in America is vast with many beliefs and differences, yet the Bible states that the redeemed will be drawn from every nation, kindred, and tongue. Opinions in some churches have become so strong that they override the true spirit of the Word.

Above my desk is a wooden board that has been handed down through our family for many years. The writing proclaimed on it is profound: The Truth

Will Set You Free. **The year is now.**

• • • • •

Six different eras of time, each with its desires and burdens. Each era had changes to deal with and, if handled properly, godly men prospered by them. We have change before us every day. Time is ever changing, yet the Word of the Lord is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. How do we reconcile the aspect of a consistent Savior in an ever-changing world? Jesus will guide us in “the truth” if we allow Him to rule in our hearts.

[From *The Vindicator*, August, 2006, used by permission.] 

helpers at home

A Thankful Heart

Mary June Glick

The Bible says, “A cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine.” Let me paraphrase that and say, “A *thankful* heart doeth good like a medicine.” The definition of *thankful* is: “conscious of benefit received, expressive of thanks, well-pleased, glad or grateful.” Some other words used to portray thankfulness are: “grateful, appreciative, a sense of indebtedness or obligation.”

We celebrate Thanksgiving in November and I appreciate the fact that our government sets aside a day for us to remember and to thank God

for the good gifts He has given us in the past year. I wonder, though, if we experience the same sense of gratefulness that those first pilgrims did when they celebrated with a time of worship and celebration in the new land.

The first year had been very difficult: They had barely enough food and got the soil prepared too late to plant crops, and they had much sickness and death. But as they entered the second year they had become friends with the Iroquois Indians, who taught them to grow corn and other food crops and how to hunt and fish. So along with 90

local Indians, they celebrated that first Thanksgiving Day. In spite of the hardships they had experienced, I believe they were truly grateful to God for His blessings to them.

A thankful spirit is often born in adversity. We appreciate more those things we have had to do without, the things we've waited for or worked hard to get. This is also true in the spiritual sense: joy comes after trial, healing from pain, light after darkness, peace after turmoil.

We live in a land where our material needs are being met. We're not hungry or cold, we have a house for shelter, and a car to take us where we want to go. We have freedom to worship God as we choose. We have Bibles and lots of other reading material in our homes. Yet, I wonder if we are really a thankful people. Are we content with all we have or are we restless with a desire for more? Do we dream of things bigger and better to keep up with our peers?

When we lived as missionaries in Belize I was content with the little we had. We actually had more than those around us did. I remember the challenge of fixing up our house in small ways, the joy of learning to cook like the village women did, of providing for the needs of the our family and feeling happy and satisfied. I ask myself now how we can learn contentment in the midst of our

present situation of plenty.

I believe developing an attitude of thankfulness is a matter of the will. In Psalms we often read, "I will praise the Lord." David purposed in his heart to praise God in spite of difficult circumstances he was experiencing and we can do the same.

Let me share some suggestions to help us develop a heart of thanksgiving:

1. Express your thanks verbally to God each day as you enjoy the vibrant colors of nature—birds, flowers, sunsets, and autumn leaves. Let the children hear you give thanks.

2. Compare with those who have less rather than those who have more than you. Be aware of world needs and talk about them to your family. Pray for world needs specifically, using prayer requests out of our missionary newsletters.

3. Be appreciative of gifts and expressions of love and care you receive from others. Teach your children to appreciate what they receive and to thank people. Never speak negatively of a gift.

4. In our times of plenty our children may see few answers to prayer, because they seldom or never have to pray or even work for what they need. Somehow we must find a way to teach them the value of prayer and the joy of doing without things they want, so they can help others.

5. Give your children the oppor-

tunity to enjoy the simple things of life. I believe this happens when they are very young with the type of toys and equipment for the new baby. I find it very disappointing nowadays when I try to buy toys in a store. It seems that everything has to make noise or movement and I wonder how these things develop the creativity in a child. Playing should prepare children for the future. A child can

spend hours with Legos, crayons and construction paper, play dough and things like that. Not everything has to be hi-tech.

6. Be content with your house. Make it a cheerful place for your family. Thank your husband for providing for you. Let him know you appreciate his hard work and that you support him in it.

Thanksgiving is thanks living! 

junior messages

Try Kindness

Veronica Hochstetler, age 12

One fall morning the fourth grade girls hurried out the school door—happy for a break.

“Do you want to see the new book I brought along, Cindy?” asked Rose excitedly.

“Yes! Where is it? I would be happy to see it!” replied Cindy.

“It’s inside. I’ll go get it,” Rose answered, skipping away.

The girls sat outside, looking at the book together. But it seemed that everything Rose noticed, Cindy didn’t like.

“Look at that ugly, purple dress!” Cindy said laughing.

“That isn’t ugly!” Rose objected.

“Yes, it is!” snapped Cindy.

“You’re not enjoying my book. I’m not going to talk to you again.” Rose stated flatly, getting up to leave.

Their teacher, Miss Weaver, heard them and asked, “What’s wrong here? Why are you arguing?”

“Cindy doesn’t like my new book,” Rose complained.

“Girls, come here. How about letting the law of kindness rule? What do you suppose happens when we practice that rule?”

“We’d try to make the other person smile,” Cindy offered quietly.

“Friends need to be kind, I guess—and forgiving,” Rose admitted.

“That’s right, try kindness!” Miss Weaver added, encouragingly.



Dear Youth,

There were no youth responses to the question in the September issue, so I will share some of my thoughts on this question.

I would really like to hear from you. Quite a number of you have been telling me that you enjoy reading what other youth have to say on the various questions that have been

raised. If this column is to continue, and since you are good at reading between the lines, I don't need to remind you that people like yourself will need to take a turn at sending in a response. Please don't be too scared to write. It is a good experience to become vulnerable and willing to challenge and edify other youth through writing.

This Month's
QUESTION

For centuries, Christians have discussed the relationship between “being” and “doing.” Does “doing what we know to do” make us eventually become like Jesus, or does learning to know Jesus make us “seek to do what we know to do”?

What do you think?

There are two aspects to our relationship with Christ: hearing His voice, and following His voice. We learn to recognize His voice as we stay close to Him. We learn to know Him as we follow Him.

While we are journeying through life, and are learning to know His voice, we are constantly making choices. Sometimes at those decision points, our Shepherd tells us, “This is the way. Walk ye in it.” At other times, He leaves the decision to us. How well we know Him at this point

affects what decisions we make.

There are persons who do not know Christ very well at all. Yet, if such people act upon the little bit that they know, they are much closer to God than someone who knows lots about God's heart, but make choices that do not honor Him.

One man I know said something like this. “Each morning I like to kneel by my prayer bench and commit myself to doing the will of God. If during the day I choose not to do what God wants me to do, I will arrive at my prayer bench that

evening, a different person. **What I choose to do affects who I become. Who I am as a person affects what I will choose.** The two cannot be separated.”

So, if at our “prayer bench” in the evening, the Spirit reminds us of a wrong choice we made that day, we can repent, learn from the experience and go to sleep, closer to God than we were that morning. If, on the other hand, we are not at all concerned about following the Shepherd and acknowledging Him in all our ways, we will finish the day as a person who is less likely to do the will of God the following day.

This is one reason why there are so many middle-aged and older people who seem to care so little about the kingdom of heaven. They might care about a lot of good things and attend church functions regularly, yet their lives are not characterized by the graces and attributes that characterized the life of Jesus while He walked this planet. Perhaps in their younger years these people started a pattern of disregarding their Shepherd’s voice, and year by year they recognize His voice less and less.

Some people who are sensitive might read what I just wrote and think, “What if that would happen to me? What if I am not learning to know the Shepherd’s voice? What

if I have not repented of my wrong choices?” In response to that, I will let the Shepherd respond from His own book:

“He knoweth our frame...remembereth that we are dust.”

“Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart, and I will be found of you, saith the Lord...”

“Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.”

“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken and contrite heart.”

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Saints of all ages have needed to trust their salvation into the hands of One mightier than they. Even the Apostle Paul wrote, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

No saint can claim that he has repented of every sin, always cared about the kingdom of God, and always followed His voice. But every saint can call on God to keep the promises and treasures that they’ve committed to Him.

I’ve talked about how our choices affect our being.

How does our being affect our choices?

A person who has made the decision to follow Jesus, spends time in conversation with his Shepherd. A person who serves one God rather than many, will become like his God. It is that simple. A person who loves his Shepherd will year by year become more and more attracted to Him and less and less attracted to other shepherds. Talk to an older man or woman who for many years has served The Shepherd and ask them if it really is this way.

As the years tick by, a “single-eyed” servant becomes more and more familiar with the Shepherd’s voice and seeks to do what his Shepherd wants him to do. He serves, worships, and loves one Shepherd. Just one. Can you imagine what kind of choices such a person makes in life?

You might ask, “I thought the Bible says we are to submit to other Christians and do what they ask us

to do. How can we obey people and serve only one Shepherd at the same time?”

When churches follow God’s design, the members of the church help each other to serve only one Shepherd and become like Him. If we fail in helping each other do this, we are missing the two greatest commandments, and our brothers and sisters may never become people who delight to do the will of God. If we are not the kind of person who delights in serving only one God, we are probably worshiping other people—or ourselves. If that is the case, we are among those who worship more than one God.

May you be blessed this coming month as you become one of those persons who delights to do His will and as you make choices that will keep you close to your Shepherd.

—EE

Next Month’s
QUESTION

Something unique about Jesus’ ministry was the number of times He was “moved with compassion.” He didn’t just see needs, but was moved. This seems to be something that is lacking in our churches today.

Why do you think this is so? What do you think will need to happen in order for our youth to be known as people who are “moved with compassion”?

Please send in your response by November 20. 

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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THOUGHT GEMS

Those who go against the grain of God's law
shouldn't complain when they get splinters.

• • • • •

No one ever climbed a hill just by looking at it.

• • • • •

Christian education won't make us all leaders,
but it can help us to know which leader to follow.

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Being uninformed is not as shameful as being unwilling to learn.

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What we need is not more liberty but fewer people
who take liberties with liberty.

• • • • •

Trying to make life easy is often what makes it hard.

• • • • •

For many people, living life to the fullest simply means overeating.

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You can win more people with your ears than with your mouth.

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Good luck is a lazy man's estimate of a diligent worker's success.

• • • • •

A hearty laugh is a tranquilizer with no side effects.

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