

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

Galatians 6:14

FEBRUARY 2007

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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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A Tool In God's Hand

Stephen Miller, Belle Center, OH

Within our shop—all in a row,
A set of wrenches gleam and glow.
I need them oft; they're dear to me;
For when their time of service be.

Within the drawer—how still they lie,
Yet not one hopes I pass it by.
There's some I use more than the rest;
But I can't tell which I love best.

Yet to the side—in its own part,
There lies a wrench dear to my heart.
Twisted and turned, it's bent out of shape,
Its edges rough—a cruel fate.

There was a time when it was new,
And many tasks would faithful do.
Its surface gleamed, filled well its place,
Performed its work with ease and grace.

One day I faced a special task,
And from my tools which could I ask?
I put this wrench into the fire,
And as the heat was climbing higher,

I bent it here, and cut it there,
Completely twisted out of square.
Until at last how grand indeed,
Fit perfectly that special need!

How oft it is that you and I,
Do question God and wonder why,
While others gleam and glow in life,
That we feel nought but stress and strife.

And yet we know, God's way is best;
He knows full well why this great test.
God has indeed a special work,
For you and me—we dare not shirk.

And when we're passing through the fire,
Our will is bent but we acquire,
That blessed peace of brokenness,
How truly then our God can bless.

For we will never fully know,
To what extent our fruits will grow.
But in submission calmly rest,
Assured that truly God knows best!

[Written for those with special health needs who can take courage from God's life giving words to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."]



Beauty All Around

Some of life's greatest treasures are intangible. You can't touch them. Of course, we must also have tangibles. We can't pay for groceries with anything but tangible cash or credit, but if mealtime—a tangible time of consuming such groceries—is devoid of good will, mealtime is not a good time. It may be a shouting match, a grabbing contest, or a time of complaining. If it is any of these, it is definitely also an endurance test. God wants something better than that for the Christian family.

Even though all families have some hard times, a prevailing sense of God's presence rests on the home that is truly Christian. John McNaughton, the song writer, had it right when he wrote, "There is beauty all around, when there's love at home."

Seeking God's Will

Happy family life starts with respect in courtship. Courtship in our settings is a time of deciding with whom one would share life. Marriage, in God's design, is a relationship of bliss, of common interests, and of encouragement. If a man and his maiden do not find mostly common interests during courtship, they owe it to each other to face it. Where good potential appears to be in

doubt, and after praying and seeking counsel from others with experience, it is much better to end the relationship. Then, unless it becomes abundantly clear that God would have the relationship resume, one should simply accept its demise, chalk it up to experience, and move on.

When prospects in courtship are positive for a life-giving relationship, God in His goodness gives both parties the desire to enter upon lifelong vows of commitment and mutual devotion. The Psalmist notes, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4).

But even Christians must live with fallen natures that have only been *mortified*, not *eradicated*. Can we trust our desires? Can the other party safely trust our desires? When is marriage a good risk? When is marriage likely to be less than blissful? We know that God delights in pouring out His blessing and bounty upon every marriage. But He must have our supreme love and loyalty in the planning stage and at the heart of our commitments.

Living the Vows

After lifelong vows have been made, every effort must be made to fulfill the marriage vows to the

glory of God. Any time that respect or desire taper off, repentance and affectionate deeds can bring back the glow.

Those who come to marriage expecting to be always made happy are in for a rude surprise. Being made happy is only half of it—and it's not the first half. The first half of marital bliss is seeking the happiness of the other. Only after we seek each other's welfare, can we rightly expect delight. It is much more natural to want to *get* happiness than to *give* it. But until we penitently face our natural selfishness, we have not prepared ourselves for the primary ingredient of marital bliss.

Blessing The Child

It is in the domestic atmosphere of husband and wife living together who supremely love God and each other that an atmosphere is created that nourishes the spirit of the child. The child senses, long before he can put it into words, that Mother and Father are very fond of each other and deeply committed to each other. Their life-giving relationship nourishes the child's developing personality.

The child learns that **God is good**—even when he himself is not. In his growing-up experience, his lies are so destructive that he must face the consequences. Hatred is so evil that when he hurts a sibling, he is chastened. Thus he is introduced

to a God of justice.

He also learns to live with disappointment—and even death. He observes God's power and goodness in the storm and the sunshine.

Those who gave him life provide an atmosphere of beauty which excludes the vain glitter of worldly entertainment and the empty noise that rules the electronic world.

His parents explain life to him and try to teach and equip him to take adult responsibility as he grows up. They assure him of their unconditional love and their prayers as he matures and goes to work.

The world of nature, of science, of language, of music and art all add to his appreciation of God's wonderful world and his place in it. This child is naturally enthused and wants to become a giver, not simply a getter. And much of it comes with the good fortune of being born and raised in a home where there is beauty all around—where **God's love** pervades the home!

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Correction in January issue:

In the announcement on page 3 for the Conservative Mennonite School Board Institute, there is an error in the date given. **It should say February 2 and 3, 2007!**

While this mistake may be obvious, I am sorry for any inconvenience it may have caused. —PLM 

reader response

Re: Concern, August, 2006

I could appreciate the discussion on sufficient head coverings. Is it not ironic that the people who are seen as orthodox, rigid, and not spiritual-minded can maintain sufficient coverings, but among those who call themselves enlightened, we see anything from objects that resemble small coffee filters with strings at-

tached to objects not much larger than pepperoni. It seems obvious that these people would like God to see that they are wearing something, but certainly hope that no one else does.

And I wonder, is that God's workmanship?

—John Paul Raber, Millersburg, OH



the bottom line

From Mystery to Reality—Part 4

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Inquiry Yields to Discovery (1)

Discovery is not designed by God to be distant, dim or indistinct. Discovery is not meant to be difficult, demeaning, or diminishing to one's person.

Discovery is designed by our Creator as one of the steps to reality. Reality is more than one step from mystery, and from discovery. Mystery is shrouded in the unknown, the unseen, and the unclear.

Exercising the imagination is a very human and natural way of wanting to peel away what is concealed by mystery. Imagination and visualization are necessary aspects of adult

living and even more so for the child as he develops toward adulthood and life-sized realities. "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27).

Discovery is the reward of inquiry. Discovery is not an end in itself, although it is exciting to the young child. Share the thrill with your child. Be a part of the discovery experience, because then as Dad or Mom or Teacher, you can better lead to the next steps of diligence and faith. "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

and thou shalt teach them diligently [German: *einscharfen*] unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house [and when thou drivest down the road, and when thou arrivest home from thy work, and when thou playest family games, yea, even when thou arisest in the morning and hast the choice of being in a good mood or not.]...” Deut. 6:7 (with A. L. paraphrase added)

The child who is routinely despised and mocked for his part in the imagination-curiosity-inquiry stages will likely be dwarfed emotionally. Such a child might gradually develop unreal, even perverted fantasies, which do not connect with the real world of God-consciousness.

As these children grow to adolescence and even adulthood, they become easy prey for dabbling in the psychic powers of fortune telling, the Ouija board, transcendental meditation or the occult. We do not say these will result, but rather that the pull to such perversions are a greater threat.

God’s purposes are frequently counterfeited with subtle deceptions which at first appear to be clever, ingenious, or even just an interesting alternative. Jesus said that the thief (Satan) comes “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (John 10:10). Satan

seeks to make inroads at a younger age, wherever mystery has been poorly dealt with in a child’s life.

Mystery counterfeits feed a certain curiosity so that person’s inquiry leads to all kinds of vain imaginations. It is part of the “mystery of iniquity” that deceives unstable souls as they grasp for reality and get hold of counterfeits.

Discovery, in that case, is an anti-God defiance of His truth. By it the possibility of godly reality is sabotaged and destroyed by the destroyer. The claimed glitz and glamour of all this reaches its peak in Broadway shows and television platforms. It is done by a world that defies God and is daily displayed for all to see. Celebrities’ lives and values are constantly held up in daily newspapers and national weeklies. Indeed, “that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15).

Neither the life they live in public nor the life they act out on stage is close to reality for the average person. The life they act out causes a fantasy syndrome in the masses. It is a dream world that excludes God and right living, and besides, it has no hint of eventual judgment. The reality they claim is a broad-based deception that runs amok with moral corruption and is then followed by artificially

trying to drown out guilt with alcohol, drugs and pleasure-seeking. It is called the high life, but its victims sink ever lower and further from the life that is fulfilling.

The burden here is to move the young and old from the fertile imagination stage to a sanctified curiosity going on to an honest inquiry stage of behavior that can righteously be fulfilled. Our goal is to nurture and win the child for Christ. Godly influences, good parental role models, Christ-centered education, good books and wholesome activities with some suitable work all contribute toward great discoveries in life's true realities.

There is compelling evidence that of all the stages from birth to death, the adolescent stage is the most critical stage of all! What happens in these several years is more likely to affect one's life than any other stage. The assumptions during this stage lead directly to a set of adult pre-suppositions, which distinctly impact the longer span of adult years.

Blessed is the man who never outgrows the inquiry stage, for by it discovery never ends, though he lives to be 100!

The adolescents among us are offered a big mix of ideas. More and more the adolescent feels the importance of how his peers stand—or

lean. His parents' views, his teachers' five-days-a-week proposals, his ministers' biblical inputs, and his reading material all become a part of his mental diet. Did I miss something? What about his music? Hopefully, none of these are canceling out the good effects to be gained by the others. These should all be godly and scripturally sound so that each part complements the others.

What happens when these are offsetting each other with conflicting assumptions and ideas? There is confusion and conflict. But remember, *the persons to which the adolescent has the most free and satisfying relationships wins the ideas war!*

Peaceful relationships have a strong, magnetic attraction. Ideas that flow from those relationships are powerful and convincing. Suspicion and ongoing conflict turn off the flow of ideas. It is possible to force adolescents to say "yes" with the mouth when their hearts are saying "no." In life, however, they will follow their heart, not their mouth. If parents *can keep the hearts of their children*, it will spare them the later agony of trying to "win" their offspring.

Some of the answers to the puzzling questions of life are unspoken questions which are answered with unspoken words. Those are forcefully given and underlined by adult

example, such as parents, teachers, ministers, relatives, neighbors, and anyone else who happens to pass by.

The Bottom Line is that the adolescent inquiry stage is the most critical stage in setting the thought processes for later life. The adolescent interval is the period of time least addressed by church programs. It warrants much

more study than is given in this brief article. *The adolescent's discoveries become the underpinnings of his later life.* This critical fact deserves much, much more attention by adults. It asks for more than most of us, ministers included, have bothered to consider. Thank God for the delightful result when wholesome discovery is made by honest inquiry. 

What Motivates Our Changes?

Stephen Russell, Jerusalem, Israel/Guys Mills, PA

Thirty-two years ago just before I turned 21, I joined the Amish Mennonite (Beachy) Church. The biggest reason for this decision was the nonresistant position of the church. I was converted at 17, and from then on, I believed that Christians should not participate in killing others. But I did not find a church that believed as I did until the summer before I joined this church. I was also impressed at the time with what seemed to me a solid commitment to following the teachings of the Bible.

In the 32 years since I have learned a lot of things. I have come to see our churches in a little different light. This essay is not meant to be highly critical, but rather it is meant as a

simple attempt to express how one convert from outside the Mennonite-Amish world has come to evaluate his chosen constituency.

As I mentioned, the solid commitment to a biblical world view and lifestyle drew me strongly to our fellowship. To this outsider, the Beachy church seemed to be a stable community with clear ideas coming from the Bible to direct everyday life. My own inclination is more strongly rational than emotional, so perhaps that influenced how I first evaluated what I saw and experienced as I moved toward joining the church and then actually became part of it in October, 1974.

It's been a quite a while since I joined, so I don't clearly remember

when it started, but some time after I joined I began to wonder about certain attitudes that I hadn't noticed or recognized at the beginning.

I think I resisted the evidence for these attitudes because I didn't want to believe they existed in the fellowship I loved and enjoyed. But over time, I had to recognize that they were indeed present, and even in some cases, predominant in the church:

1. First and probably least destructive was embarrassment about being Amish or plain or different, however you want to express it.

2. There was also a strong discontentment with things as they were.

3. Finally and most destructive of the three, there was a reactionary attitude.

I think these attitudes are all destructive. If they are not repented of, they will almost certainly grow, undermining and eventually destroying a person's commitment to the church. It seems to me they are essentially emotional responses to the church community—its traditions and its values. This is the key point I want to make. Much that has formed and motivated and changed our fellowship over the years has happened because of emotional reactions rather than because of spiritual growth or well-considered evaluation of what

effect it will have on the church.

I am not against changes where changes are needed, but often our method of changing our traditions and customs has more to do with intense dislike than with anything in the Bible calling us to change. The danger here is that we will not only change those things which don't matter or things that should be changed, but we will also abandon practices and principles that are clearly scriptural.

As we abandon our own tradition and formative story (that is: our Anabaptist stories, our reading of the Bible and our nonconformed practices), we will necessarily pick up and take to heart some other traditions and formative stories.

I am in favor of accepting anything that is scripturally sound, from whatever source—even from the Catholics, which is my upbringing and background. I believe I received much good from Catholicism. But if we are operating under the reactive mode, we will not be very likely to do this. Instead, we will more likely “throw out the baby with the bath water.” I think I've seen this happen.

Now, I truly believe that our tradition has much good in it that has somehow been lost in many churches. Much of this unique tradition had a part in attracting me in the first

place to join a Beachy church. Non-resistance, of course, fits under that heading. But other biblical practices that American evangelicalism has long abandoned, or never practiced, were also part of that biblical approach that I identified over 30 years ago. But because of our undermining attitudes we are in danger of losing many of these good things. Even with the best intentions, it is very difficult to hold onto the good things from our Anabaptist heritage, if we don't stay in a church where others believe and practice those things.

Why is all this so? I don't know if I have answers, but I will offer some possibilities. If this essay provokes discussion, it may help us arrive at clear answers and solutions together.

One problem that I see is rooted in our tradition. John Ruth, a Mennonite church historian, once commented about a key part of Amish tradition. Ruth wrote that Amish culture is quite non-verbal. It is rooted in expressing itself by action, not by verbalizing or with extensive argumentation and evaluation of various ideas. While this willingness to do can and does have a good side to it, the lack of emphasis on understanding and explaining is potentially catastrophic. When we were more isolated from the general American

culture this factor in our culture may not have had a large impact. But today no one can remain isolated.

I am not advocating isolation, but simply stating that at one time our inclination toward being nonverbal may not have had as large an effect on our families when we tended to be farmers and had less contact with others. With increased contact comes increased questioning. This is not a bad thing. We Christians are called to be ready at all times "to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason of the hope that is in you..." (1 Peter 3:15 ESV).

We need to overcome this tendency to be nonverbal if we wish to maintain the truth we have. This demands hard work, but it yields great gains for understanding and commitment. And learning to understand well what we believe will enable us to pass on our heritage to our children, to win others to Christ, and to practice more completely the Christian walk. And if we could become more able generally to explain ourselves and our beliefs and practices, that would go a long way to remedying the first two attitudes I mention.

The Bible really does call believers to a non-conformed lifestyle, and if we understood our practices and how they apply to biblical principles, we would be less likely to be embar-

rassed by them or discontented. This isn't to say that everything that was traditionally called non-conformity is required, but the doctrine is clearly biblical. We need to maintain non-conformity although we may need to change certain aspects of the tradition to align more with the Bible. But let us not abandon the doctrine.

Another problem that I sometimes see among us is a strong reaction to our background: the Old Order Amish. I recognize that in some localities there were practices that needed to be rejected and that in some cases basic Bible doctrines were ignored or even rejected. But that is not the case everywhere and the traditions themselves had much good in them. I also suspect that sometimes the reaction against our foundational tradition may have had its source in a need to justify the breaking of fellowship. Thus the ones we were leaving needed to be “bad guys” in order for the break to be acceptable.

Even where there were justifiable reasons to break with a particular congregation, how one does it is extremely important. I myself am thankful that when I left the Catholics I don't think I reacted but instead left with real pain. My reasons were theological, not reactionary. When our focus is reactionary, those against whom we react become our focus

and it becomes less likely that we will go on to grow in the best way possible. Instead the wrong focus will keep us thinking about the very things we have rejected, even if only because they are the things which we never want to accept or do. And consequently, something good is lost because we don't see the good in the tradition being abandoned.

I would suggest that we need to learn to appreciate the good in our heritage and also that we need to evaluate and perhaps even repent of our attitude toward those whom we left. As we strive to understand the meaning of our heritage we will grow in our Christian life. As we repent of improper attitudes toward those we broke fellowship with—for reasons good or bad—we will also grow spiritually. As we grow we will be able to give an answer to those who ask us about our faith.

There are many in this world who are looking not just for “fire insurance” but for a path of life upon which they can walk faithfully with other believers as they all grow closer to God. And there are many who seek to live a “peaceable and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Timothy 2:2 ESV) as they raise their families in a world going farther and farther away from God. I believe our churches can be a place where such

seekers could feel at home. But we who are presently part of the church must first feel at home here. Otherwise those who come to join us will likely leave us again because of

our contradictions. I think we have something to contribute in bringing the Kingdom of God into the hearts of people. But first we must come to grips with who we are. 

Wrinkles Don't Hurt

Enos D. Stutzman, London, OH

I am getting older. My joints ache when I get up in the morning. I get tired more quickly than I did. I cannot think as fast as I could at one time. My responses to stimuli have slowed down. My hair has turned white and become more unruly. My skin is becoming wrinkled in places and my chest has migrated south a bit. I find myself falling asleep whenever I relax. The truth of the matter is: my body is wearing out.

Yes, the aging process progresses slowly, but relentlessly. We may be able to slow it down with exercise, medication and diet. But it seems that is all we can do. We can slow it down, but we cannot stop it—much less reverse it.

Incidentally, the cause of aging has been discovered. Yes, we now know exactly what causes it. It is caused by *survival*. Without survival, no aging would occur. Simple, is it not? So, we are left with one of two alternatives: *We survive and age* or *we don't survive*. Most of us would probably

choose to survive.

Just suppose we could choose the best of both worlds. Suppose we could survive without aging. Suppose we would discover what Ponce de Leon failed to find—a fountain of youth—one that really worked. Suppose we could be young all our lives. Then, barring an untimely accident or fatal disease, we could live forever on the earth.

Ponder such a prospect. How would one feel after several millennia on the earth, with no prospect of moving on to the eternal realm. Perhaps the glitter of the terrestrial would wane by that time. I think the attraction of perennial youthfulness would diminish eventually.

In reality, of course, no such thing appears possible. So far, no one has found a cure for aging. However, it is not for want of trying. Dye the hair, fill the wrinkles with makeup, apply artificial blush to the cheek, or even undergo plastic surgery.

Whether or not the result is ef-

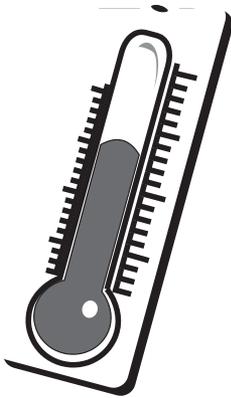
fective is a matter of opinion, but in many cases, the artificial appearance that results is worse than the condition it was meant to correct. But even if it were effective, the only result of all this fuss is a change of appearance. The aging process itself has not slowed down a bit. Only the outward signs have been affected, and even that is a losing battle. In a few short years, the attempts at preventing the appearance of aging fail anyway, as time takes its relentless toll. So essentially, the efforts are futile.

How important is youthfulness? Whom are we trying to impress? How does the Lord look at our attempts at denying outwardly what is taking place inwardly? If we look at the subject of old age in the Scrip-

tures, we find a great respect given to age. The hoary head is considered worthy of honor instead of shame.

We do well to accept the changes that time brings to our bodies. If our priorities are in order, growing older will not be of great concern to us. What awaits God's children when survival fails is far beyond anything we have experienced in this life. Certainly it is better than permanent youthfulness.

A good attitude toward aging was expressed recently when several older ladies were visiting. One mentioned her increasing wrinkles. The other one responded, "My wrinkles don't bother me. At least, they don't hurt!" 



Giving is the
THERMOMETER
of our love.

marriages

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

Beiler-Crouth

Bro. Vincent, son of Phil and Linda Beiler, Suceava, Romania, and Sis. Lydia, daughter of Thomas and Lucille Crouth, Hagerstown, MD, at Zion United Church of Christ on Nov. 18, 2006, by Milo Zehr.

Beiler-King

Bro. Carlin, son of Philip and Linda Beiler, Suceava, Romania, and Sis. Hadassa, daughter of Calvin and Judy King, Harrison, AR, at Eagle Heights Baptist Church for Cornerstone Mennonite Church, on Oct. 27, 2006, by David Yoder.

Coblentz-Wagler

Bro. Jonathan, son of Bill and Miriam Coblentz, Bloomfield, MO, and Sis. Sara, daughter of Daniel and Anna Wagler, Lyndon, KS, at Grace Community Church for Lyndon A. M. Church on Nov. 25, 2006, by Rudy Overholt.

Gingerich-Obispo

Bro. Frederick Gingerich, Au Gres, MI, and Sis. Sandra Obispo, Sarasota, FL, at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, on Dec. 3, 2006, by Lester Gingerich.

Martin-Coblentz

Bro. Joel, son of Timothy and Anna Mary Martin, Harriston, Ontario, Canada, and Sis. Darlene, daughter of William and Miriam Coblentz, Lincoln, MO, at Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Warsaw, MO, on July 25, 2006, by Truman Yoder.

Mast-Beiler

Bro. James, son of Alvin and Esther Mast, Millersburg, OH, and Sis. Sherilyn, daughter of Phil and Linda Beiler, Suceava, Romania, at Pequea A. M. Church, on Dec. 9, 2006, by Alvin Mast.

Stoltzfus-Miller

Bro. Lyndon, son of Amos and Hannah Stoltzfus, Drasco, AR, and Sis. Jessica, daughter of Jason and Ruth Miller, Concord, AR, at Missionary Baptist of Concord for Shady Lawn Mennonite on Dec. 2, 2006, by Elmer Gingerich.

Yoder-Weaver

Bro. David, son of Paul and Linda Yoder, Sarasota, FL, and Sis. Wanda, daughter of Raymond and Ruth Weaver, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church, on Oct. 21, 2006, by Lester Gingerich.

cradle roll

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

Barnhart, Matthew and Heidi (Keller), Lincoln, MO, second child and son, Brendon Keith, Aug. 19, 2006.

Beachy, Clayton and Twila (Yoder), Bastrop, TX, fourth child, third son, Glendon Lamar, Dec. 15, 2006.

Byler, Steve and Ruth (Wengerd), Sarasota, FL, second child, first dau., Alana Jo, Dec. 22, 2006.

Esh, Eugene Dale and Andrea Grace (Mullet), Gordonville, PA, second child, first son, Brandt Daniel, Dec. 7, 2006.

Garber, Alton and Faith, Lincoln, MO, fifth child, first dau., Amy Jolene, Sept. 8, 2006.

Gingerich, Carl and Joy (Kratzer), Waslala, Nicaragua/Mt. View, AR, third child and dau., Natalie Kay, Nov. 22, 2006.

Gingerich, Vernon and Rosalyn (Yoder), Wytheville, VA, seventh child, second son, Jevon Timothy, Nov. 24, 2006.

Good, Ryan and Teresa (Mullet), Circleville, OH, third adopted child, second son, Brennon Lee, born May 27, 2004, fostered for some time, with adoption finalized, Dec. 18, 2006

Helmuth, Anthony and Rosemary (Knepp), Sarasota, FL, second child, first dau., Ashlie Nicole, Dec. 6, 2006.

Herschberger, Darrel and Maria (Yoder), Arthur, IL, first child and dau., Madison Skye, Dec. 1, 2006.

Hostetler, Charles and Jessica (Keller), Lincoln, MO, first child and dau., Andrea Rose, June 13, 2006.

Hunsberger, Elon and Mary (Kensing-er), Mechanicstown, OH, second child, first son, Denver Lane, Aug. 4, 2006.

Kensinger, Aaron and Melody (Hochstetler), Minerva, OH, third child, second dau., Cassandra Leigh, May 9, 2006.

Mast, Arlen and Gloria (King), Hutchinson, KS, first child and son, Kendall Wade, Nov. 28, 2006.

Miller, Jerrel and Karen (Swarey), Stuarts Draft, VA, first child and dau., Brianna Dawn, Aug. 14, 2006.

Miller, Kevin and Christina (Yoder), Lyndon, KS, sixth child, fourth dau., Meagan Nicole, Nov. 28, 2006.

Miller, LaVon and Twila (Yoder), Partridge, KS, first children, twins, daughter and son, Jeanette Aveline and Bryce Edward, Dec. 22, 2006.

Miller, Willis Lavern and Ruth (Yoder), Stuarts Draft, VA, first child and son, Japheth Benjamin, Dec. 14, 2006.

Nisly, Nathan and Marjean (Wickey), Hutchinson, KS, first child and dau., Jana Nicole, Dec. 16, 2006.

Overholt, Michael and Darlene (Mullet), Franklin, KY, third child, second dau., Ivanna Shalom, Dec. 16, 2006.

Overholt, Ronald and Marcia (Schrock), Lincoln, MO, third child, second son, Laramie Ross, Nov. 22, 2005.

Schlabach, Steve and Joleen (Mullet), Sarasota, FL, fourth child, second son, Kyle Grant, Nov. 30, 2006.

Schrock, Don and Joanna (Yoder), Lincoln, MO, first child and dau., Shalae Nicole, Nov. 19, 2006

Stoltzfus, Paul and Marlene (Riehl), Bird-In-Hand, PA, third child, second son, Tal Jamal, Oct. 20, 2006.

Stoltzfus, Steve, Jr. and Erma (Beiler), Honeybrook, PA, sixth child (one deceased), third son, Randal Andre, Nov. 12, 2006.

Stutzman, Kevin and Carrie (Gingerich), Irwin, OH, second and third children and daughters, twins, Chloe Brooke and Jasmine Kate, Dec. 22, 2006

Yoder, Emanuel and Glenda (Yoder), Danville, AL, first child and son, Judson Emanuel, Nov. 28, 2006.

Yoder, Paul and Ann (Stoltzfus), Harrison, AR, sixth child, third dau., Brooke Lanae, Nov. 30, 2006.

Yoder, Trenton and Amber (Plank), Montezuma, GA, second child and son, Bryce Logan, Oct. 17, 2006.

ordinations

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

Bro. Mervin Yoder, 34, Arcola, IL, was ordained to the office of minister Dec. 3, 2006, at Trinity Christian Fellowship,

Arthur, IL. Preordination messages were brought by L. J. Helmuth, from Whiteville, TN.

The charge was given by Dannie Diener, assisted by Elmer Miller and Noah Yoder. Dannie Gingerich and Darrell Herschberger were also in the lot.

TWO TELLTALE MARKS OF A REAL CHRISTIAN:
GIVING & FORGIVING.

Fisher, Malinda S., 79, died at her home in Lancaster, PA, on Nov. 22, 2006. She was born June 17, 1927, daughter of the late John and Malinda (Stoltzfus) Stoltzfus at Bareville, PA. She was a member of Weavertown A.M. Church, Bird-In-Hand.

On Nov. 17, 1949, she was married to Aaron G. Fisher, who survives. They had five children: Lena (Bob) Sloyer, Lancaster; Ada (John Mark) Stoltzfoos, Willow Street; Naomi (Mervin) Glick, Lancaster; Rose (David) Shenk, Lancaster; and Aaron, Jr. (Dawn Eberly) Fisher; Pamplin, VA; and 17 grandchildren.

Other survivors include four brothers: Eli (Katie King) Fisher, Madisonburg, PA; Daniel (Miriam King) Fisher, Narvon; John S. (Marian Shonk) Fisher, Lancaster; Amos J. (Fannie Stoltzfus) Fisher, Penn Yan, NY; and two sisters: Ada Fisher, Lancaster; and Emma (Jacob R.) Beiler; Lancaster.

Preceding her in death were brothers: Levi Benuel and Henry and sisters: Mattie and Rachel Smoker, Rebecca Stoltzfus, Mary S. King, Sara and Katie Fisher.

Funeral services were held at Weavertown on Nov. 25, with John U. Lapp, Crist Dienner and Mervin Lapp serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Hershberger, Lulu F., 92, died on Nov. 21, 2006 at Goshen, IN. She was born August 5, 1914, in Holmes County, OH, daughter of the late Jacob and Fannie

(Miller) Beachy. She was a member of Fair Haven A.M. Church, Goshen.

On Dec. 31, 1935, she was married to Noah E. Hershberger, who survives. Also surviving is one son: Owen (Ester) Hershberger, Goshen; and two daughters: Elsie (Simon) Yoder, Goshen; and Betty Hershberger, Middlebury, IN; seven grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were one son, Freeman; four sisters, Sarah Troyer, Mary Schrock, Elmina Beachy, and Edna Beachy; and four brothers: Andrew, Abe, Sam and Roy.

Funeral services were held at Fair Haven Nov. 25, with Wilbur Yoder, Harvey Miller and Dan B. Miller serving. Burial was in the Miller Cemetery, Goshen.

Hill, Susan Elizabeth, 58, of Franklin, KY, died at the Medical Center of Franklin. She was the daughter of the late Joseph A. and Helen Etwiler.

She was baptized upon her confession of faith. She was a homemaker and a native of Shreve, OH.

She was a homemaker and wife of the late Richard Hill. Survivors include two sons: Jonathan Etwiler, OH; and Richard B. Hill, Auburn, KY; and two daughters: Mary Hill, Macon, MS; and Susie Hill, Columbus, MS; and two brothers, Clark and Joe Etwiler, both of Ohio.

Funeral services were conducted on Dec. 20 at Providence Mennonite Fellowship by David Yoder, Jr., and Vernon Hochstetler. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Lapp, Marian E., 67, died Dec. 3, 2006, at her home in rural Kinzers, PA. She was born in Ronks, PA, on Oct. 23, 1939, daughter of the late Elam and Edna (Augsberger) Kauffman. She struggled with cancer for the last one and one-half years.

She accepted Christ and was baptized as a member of Weavertown Church in 1952.

On July 25, 1959, she was married to Aaron Lapp, Jr. He survives. Seven children were born to them. They are: Gerald (Rosie Atkinson) Lapp, Avella, PA; Charlotte (Elvin) Ranck, Mifflintown, PA; Cynthia (Jason) Beachy, Kinzers, PA; Audrey (Klaas) Reimer, Foxworth, MS; Curtis (Ella Wagler) Lapp, Kinzers, PA; Eugene (Marie Brubacker) Lapp, Kinzers, PA, and 26 grandchildren.

Other survivors are siblings: Dorothy (George) Burkholder, Blue Ball, PA; Anna (Daniel) Kramer, Gioas, Brazil; Sam (Mattie) Kauffman, Ronks, PA; Elsie (Ivan) Beachy, Free Union, VA; Amos (Sara) Kauffman, Lewisburg, PA; and Carol (Omar) Stoltzfus, Oxford, PA.

Funeral services were held Dec. 6 at Ridgeview Mennonite Church with Mervin Lapp, Norman Kauffman, Ivan Beachy and Eugene Lapp serving. Burial was at Weavertown Cemetery.

Miller, Elijah ben Matthew, son of Matt and Abby (Miller), Minerva, OH, was stillborn Sept. 19, 2006. He is greatly missed by his parents and his big sister Alexis. Grandparents are Dennis and Margaret Miller and David and Judy

Miller, all of Minerva.

Funeral services were held at Minerva Christian Fellowship on Sept. 22, with Lonnie Beachy and Delbert Miller, both uncles of the parental pair. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Schrock, Brenda Joann, 18, of Lincoln, MO, died suddenly at her home April 7, 2006. She was born April 26, 1987, in Whiteville, TN, daughter of David E. and Catherine (Miller) Schrock.

In 2001, she moved with her family to Lincoln, MO. She was a member of the Gospel Light Church of Lincoln.

Surviving are her parents, three brothers: Galen Lavon, Jonathan David, and Gerald Sylvan; two sisters: Christy Renae and Bethany Rose, all of the home; a maternal grandfather and step-grandmother, Sylvan and Laura (Yutzy) Miller of Strawberry, AR, and a paternal grandmother, Sarah (Byler) Schrock, Summersville, MO.

Funeral services were held at Gospel Light Church on April 12, with Danny Hostetler and Truman Yoder serving. Burial was in the Mint Hill Cemetery, Linn, MO.

Yoder, Alice (Kuhns), 82, died at Goshen General Hospital, following an extended illness. She was born Nov. 11, 1924, to the late Menno and Fannie (Miller) Kuhns. She was a member of Maple Lawn A.M. Church, Nappanee, IN.

She was married on Feb. 29, 1948, to Steve L. Yoder, who later served many

years as minister and bishop. Alice worked to provide clothing for the poor. She was gifted in teaching small children. She managed Yoder's Bookstore for many years. In 1977-1980, she and Steve served in Isabella Bank, Belize, with AMA.

Surviving besides her husband are four sons: Glen D. (Salome), Phoenix, AZ; David A. (Christine), Elkhart, IN; Steven J. (Jennifer), Kyle, TX; and John W. (Linda), New Paris, IN; and three daughters: Mary Jane (Chente) Mejia, Puerto Viejo, Heredia, Costa Rica; Ruth A. (Marvin) Schmucker, Goshen, IN; and Bertha (Steven) Hulse, Nappanee; 28 grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren; three brothers:

John Henry (Patsy) Kuhns, Nappanee; Menno (Esther) Kuhns, Trego, WI; Willis (Carol Ann) Kuhns, Elkhart, IN; four sisters: Elizabeth (Albert) Schrock, Carrington, ND; Edna (Edwin) Yoder, Nappanee; Leona (Marvin) Stutzman, Nappanee; and Fannie (Ralph) Stichter, Wakarusa, IN.

She was preceded in death by a grandson, Darrell Schmucker, four brothers: Albert, Obed, Manass and Harvey Kuhns; and a sister, Martha Kuhns.

Funeral services were held at Maple Lawn Dec. 5, with Thomas Mast, Paul Yoder and John Mast serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

observations

The Selective Service System is planning a comprehensive test of the military draft machinery; they call it a "readiness exercise." This was also done in 1998. The official word is that they are not gearing up for a draft.

From a military/political perspective the war in Iraq is not going well. There is talk among officials of sending more troops to Iraq. At the same time, there is increasing resistance in the U. S. to continuing the effort in which a military victory is highly unlikely. The death toll for U. S. troops has now passed 3,000. Iraqi fatality numbers are much higher.

The war effort in Iraq has been very costly. A draft would add greatly to financial pressure. Our contacts with the SSS office report that they feel the pressure of budget constraints.

With all the conflicting information we simply don't know if or when there will be a draft. Let us be reminded that the way of Christ is not something to be dusted off for use to evade military service. It touches every area of our life. The needs in our troubled world should motivate us to want to help whether or not there is a draft.

Cassandra Costley from the Washington office tells us that if there were

a draft, we would likely know it as soon as the employees at SSS do.



The Reformation of the 1500's brought changes that are still important nearly five centuries later. A major feature from an Anabaptist perspective was separation from the Catholic Church and later from the mainline reformers. According to this, present-day Anabaptists can rightly say that their beginnings involved a major church split. A simplistic conclusion is that therefore church splits are not wrong.

Religion News Service and the secular press continue to report on a major division in the Episcopal Church. The divisive issue is the authority of Scripture and the acceptance of practicing homosexuals in leadership.

Churches in foreign countries have been vocal on this issue, which has become more intense since December 17, when eight Virginia congregations including two large, historic parishes voted to leave the national body. Three more are considering similar action. One of the congregations has historical roots that include George Washington as a member of their governing board. Value of property involved is quoted at more than 27 million. Property rights will become a major legal issue. Their

national conference will resist losing control of the properties.

This is a reminder that while Anabaptists have experienced more than their share of church divisions, divisions do occur in other groups.

It is assumed that readers of this column would agree both of the examples mentioned above were justified matters of scriptural necessity. In both cases, it was clearly a matter of recognizing the authority of God's Word. Many times there have been divisions in which the issues were not so clear.

Party spirit and carnality in the early church at Corinth is sharply reproved in the early chapters of Paul's first letter. The same author writing to the same church makes a strong appeal for separation from unholy alliances with unbelievers and wrong practices. (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1) Spiritual opposites cannot be reconciled:

- righteousness/unrighteousness
- light/darkness
- Christ/Belial (Satan)
- temple of God/idols

—To knowingly ignore or discard either abruptly or gradually the practice and principle of the woman's veiling is a very serious matter. Very often this precedes loss of integrity in marriage.

—Unguarded identity with cul-

tural mainstream involves serious compromise of Christian priorities.

Let me offer additional thoughts about division:

—Separation or the formation of a new group is still justified when the authority of Scripture is intentionally ignored.

—The way of Christ in peacemaking and non-retaliation is abundantly clear from both Christ and the Apostles.

—To recognize the New Testament standard of the permanence of marriage is basic.

—It is to be feared that there are many divisions which are borne of unworthy motives. A spirit of independence is contrary to the blessing of wholesome interdependence in the body of Christ.

—A God-given call to leadership is usually verified by the church. There are many opportunities for needed and useful service besides pastoral roles.

—The desire for more freedom is not necessarily the same as wanting a closer walk with God. True freedom is not found in the absence of discipline.

—Wrong attitudes toward the church can greatly increase and produce a regrettable harvest.

—Christian maturity will earnestly seek solution instead of division.

If no solution is found it refuses to harbor ill will.

—The human heart is deceitful. This allows for the possibility of mistaken sincerity. To cultivate honesty and openness toward fellow members is a helpful safeguard.

—The stewardship of oversight (Acts 20:28) without being unduly authoritarian (1 Peter 5:3) requires a delicate balance and is a constant challenge to many servants of God who want to be found faithful. Error on either side of this fine line can bring undue pressure on the church.



Some 40,000 German-speaking Mennonites in Bolivia have established 42 farming settlements. They provide a large percentage of the country's soybean and sunflower harvests. They export significant quantities of cooking oil and animal feed.

Bolivia's president, Eno Morales, is proposing to redistribute 48 million acres of land to hundreds of thousands of peasants. This land is either idle or is believed to have been purchased illegally. The Mennonites are uneasy, not knowing how this will affect their holdings. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*)



Cell phones have quickly come into

widespread use. A counselor who works with people from our constituency and other similar groups is discovering that the wrong use of cell phones can do very serious damage.

Parents need to be aware that unrestricted access to cell phones may also include photography, text messaging, and internet access. The potential results are too graphic to print.

Technology is friendly to Christians only as its use is consistent with Christian values.

Parents, please note! Our dear

young people are entitled to loving nurture and oversight that provides appropriate protection from the evil world in which we live.

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All of us want to graduate successfully from the school of life. Required reading is the language of the classroom, but not of *Calvary Messenger*. However, if our constituent ministers would recommend that every young person and his/her parents read the article by Stephen Russell elsewhere in this issue, it will be a helpful influence in making a passing grade.

—DLM 

Ministers' Meeting 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.

9. Inter-Generational Relationships

Wilbur Yoder, Goshen, IN

A healthy relationship doesn't just happen; it takes effort. We must feed it, for it takes time. Most of us struggle with this. Time is in short supply for many of

us, but in order to build relationships we must take time. A healthy relationship is driven by love; it builds trust, and challenges people to a higher level of commitment.

Relationships, if they are perceptive, bring perspective. Our children and young people do not always see the dangers so we need to be perceptive for them. We know that unhealthy relationships end in pain, frustration, and lack of trust. Many of us as teenagers were involved in unhealthy relationships. I could tell you where unhealthy relationships take you. I had friends that got me

involved in things that I regret. I told my parents at a certain point, “You don’t understand. You’re from the old age.”

Let me illustrate unhealthy ways to communicate from the barnyard. I’m a farmer and we have some beef cattle. I have two black and blue fingers, which are a result of failed communication. It’s really more stupidity than anything, but my son Joe and I were working some calves we had weaned. Some were 600-700 pounds and had never been close to human beings. When we got this one calf into the chute, it went berserk. It went up and down till its head hit the latch and out it went. We got it back in, but as you know, the second and third time doesn’t go easier. Well, the next time it broke the side of the chute and got away again. The third time we got it in, there was contempt in its eyes. I finally overpowered it and treated it while it lay on its back. I was angry. I asked that calf as I sat on it, “Who’s your daddy now?”

The next calf banged my fingers between his head and the crash bar. When I looked at that calf, I saw hate in its eyes. He spun around and got out of the chute and the next thing I saw was his tail in the air as he was going around the corner of the barn. We communicated alright, but it was unhealthy communication. Let me

repeat that the last thing I saw was the back side of that calf.

Communication has a form or connecting passage. If we don’t connect in communication, it is not true communication. Yes, we communicate our wishes at times, but we don’t really connect. The other party may be wounded. Their eyes may be blazing contempt. If this happens, we have failed in communication. We don’t operate that way in our churches, or do we?

Intergenerational communication is with someone who’s either older or younger than we are. A generation is generally considered to be the length of time between the birth of the parents and the birth of their children. In our culture, that’s about 25 years. We definitely have some generational challenges in our churches. Polarization of the generations isn’t new; it has been a challenge for years. We can illustrate polarization with the toy dogs glued to magnets. Face them one way and they push apart. Reverse them and they pull strongly together.

Let us note that polarization between age groups is much more pronounced in Europe and North America than in some other countries. A missionary acquaintance of mine who serves in Sierre Leone, noted the respect the young people

there have for the old people. If a child initiates a conversation with an older person, he might be flogged right there on the street. Of course, we don't operate that way, but we have lost a lot in our country.

I believe that building good relationships is equally important for you wives as for your husbands. You have a vital role in establishing good communication in your churches, and with the young people.

A relationship with God is supremely important. Jesus prayed that "they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Paul prayed that he "might know Him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. 3:10).

In 1 Samuel 18, we notice that David and Jonathan's souls were knit. They were very close and of kindred spirits. Jonathan loved David as his own soul—his own life.

Every soul is valuable. Sometimes people aren't as loveable as we would like. How are we to handle those situations? First, we must see the value of that soul and the effect our relationship has on that person. God made man in His own image. Psalm 8:4-6 says, "What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou

hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

God didn't carelessly make man. He made him just a little lower than the angels. When we consider that each man is equal to us and God created him in His own image it helps us relate to those who are difficult to relate with.

In 2000, the first ministers' meeting I attended, Wayne Schrock spoke on the topic, "Where Are The Shepherds?" That topic struck my heart. The cry of Wayne's heart is still echoing in mine. I have needs in that area. Let us note Ezekiel 34:3-5: "Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered." This passage has been speaking to me as a pastor,

a shepherd. What am I doing? Am I scattering sheep? Am I feeding sheep? Am I binding up the wounds? How am I relating to the flock?

1. I'm afraid all of us have been guilty at times of scattering sheep, sometimes not intentionally. We don't get everything done we should. Sometimes we speak before we think, at least I have.

2. Sheep must have someone whom they trust to watch out for them. Sheep are not like dogs. A dog trusts almost anyone that pats its head, scratches its ears and heals its wounds. But sheep trust only their shepherd, or someone who has earned their trust. People are a lot like sheep. We need to earn their trust.

3. True shepherds are motivated by love, they earn trust and respect. If we breach trust in a relationship, it is difficult to win that trust back. A friend of mine works in a business where they send their salesmen to a Dale Carnegie course to help them relate better to people. In this course they said that once you breach someone's trust, it might take about 36 perfect performances, before trust is restored. It doesn't come back automatically. It takes a lot of hard work to win back a person's trust, especially if he has been wounded in a relationship.

4. We need to build community.

For this to happen, the pastor needs a number of things. First is **brokenness**. In the case of David and Absalom, we know how David treated Absalom, who was behind an insurrection. Yet when Absalom died, David wept with brokenness. **Humility** is also needed. Even Christ did not take His own equality with God a thing to be selfishly grasped. Samuel reminded Saul of the time when he was little in his own sight, and God was with him. **Servanthood** is the third element of three very important things that help build community.

A surgeon of international renown was once assisted by an intern who was quite awed by the experience of learning from this man. After the patient lay on the table and was under the effects of the anesthesia, the senior surgeon turned to the novice and asked him who he thought was the most important person in the room. The young man didn't want to mess up that important question, but was unsure what to say. Finally, the senior surgeon said, "The most important man in this room is the man on the operating table. Don't ever forget that!" The person we are building a relationship with is the most important person in our world at that time.

Merle Burkholder, who served many years in Northern Youth Pro-

grams, believes we have lost our sense of community. He says, “We have made a major transition in culture.” I ask you, were our immigrant ancestors really in their hearts Americans? Were they not rather, Swiss-German Anabaptists? It seems that now we are Americans and proud of it. What happened to the stranger/pilgrim perspective our forefathers had? Back in that time, the community was the church. Obviously, we can’t go back there. Back then, old bishop Melvin would shock wheat with young Raymond. And they would talk, perhaps even about questions Raymond had about the validity of Christianity. And the sisters worked together, too. The deacon’s wife might be canning pickles with young Susie, who had questions about a courtship she was in. They could relate. And that built community. It was an informal discipleship and mentoring program that happened without elaborate design. But we’re not there anymore, are we? While we cannot go back there, we can try to recover a sense of community.

Furthermore, Merle Burkholder says, “Every year we receive volunteers whom you pastors describe as ‘the cream of the crop’ from your churches. But a large percentage of the young men which come to us from your churches have experi-

enced moral failure. When this is disclosed, what do you suppose is the hardest thing for these young men to do?” Merle says the very hardest thing for these men to do is to contact us—their pastors. Why? He believes it is because so many have poor relationships with their pastors.

Woodlawn was my home congregation for 33 years of my life. I was there under Elmer Miller’s tutelage; then in 1994, a group of us went to Fair Haven to help that church. So I was ordained at Fair Haven. I remember about 18-20 years ago that I had a topic while still at Woodlawn. I made a statement about the youth being the church of tomorrow. An old man, who is still there now—hump-backed and old—got up as soon as I sat down, and said that the youth are not the church of tomorrow, but are the church of today. I remember it well because I got what I deserved. Youth are not the only ones in the church of today, but they are part of the church of today.

I also spoke with an experienced teacher from Calvary Bible School. You may remember about four or five years ago in a report in a business session at ministers’ meeting that someone related some of the challenges and heart cries of students at CBS. We also heard similar things from Milo Zehr about what they face

at Faith Builders.

I also asked a veteran teacher of more than a decade of teaching at CBS, “What are some of the things you hear from the young people at CBS as it pertains to their relationships with church leaders?” His first comment was that they don’t look for perfection. But,

#1, We desire openness in our pastors. We need to see their humanness.

#2, We want to see honesty. We know our pastors struggle, but we want to hear it.

#3, We want communication on a one-to-one level, not just over the pulpit or with 20 people in the foyer.

#4, We want to be able to ask questions. Sometimes asking questions is treated as rebellion.

#5, We desire to be needed. We want to feel that we are contributing to the church.

In one class, the students were registering dissatisfaction. The teacher told them to go home and do everything the ministers and their parents ask of them and just see what happens. He said he almost had a revolt on his hands. They said, “What? No one obeys our standards! Not even our pastors do.” I’m not saying that you must make many changes in your standards, but standards that are out-

dated cause frustration. Sometimes we’re afraid that if we change things we’re becoming worldly. But, quoting Merle again, “We’d better look again, because we may be worldly already.”

While I don’t have answers as good as I’d like to have, of this I’m convinced: Young people are looking to us for discipleship and opportunity to serve. The church should be the safest place to ask questions. I know that young people are not always reasonable nor are they always practical. That’s a given. That doesn’t mean we have to say ‘yes’ every time. And it doesn’t mean we should listen to the voice that’s the loudest. But let me say this too, that while we can’t say ‘yes’ all the time, we must not say ‘no’ before they are finished speaking. If you want to see the back side of a church member, that’s a sure way to make it happen.

When Gideon asked God for another sign, God was patient and showed Gideon what His desire was and that He trusted Gideon to do it. Some people take more care and guidance than do others. So we need patience. I’ve discovered what we term rebellion, is at times a cry for communication. Sometimes, of course, it is rebellion.

Let me suggest several ideas, even though I realize that many of you

do better at these things than I do. When was the last time you took a struggling young man out for breakfast on a Saturday morning? To you wives, when was the last time you had a tea party for several girls from church who seemed a bit disoriented? Perhaps they had just come back from Bible School and were having a tough time assimilating back into the church. The Bible instructs older ones to teach the younger ones—both men and women.

Many of you have been developing values and convictions for several decades. Young people haven't done that, and they are in the heat of the battle. They need you. If all your communication is done within the church walls, it is very possible that you do not have a significant relationship with the persons in question.

If we allow ourselves to be distracted when conversing with someone and we look this way and that way, lest we miss making another contact, we send signals to the person we're conversing with, that seems to say, "You're not as important as that other person I need to talk to." I speak to myself, first of all. One young person said, "If my pastor would only take an interest in me!" We seem to have many lonely people.

Peter says we are to be ensamples and not lords. I note also that Jona-

than took off his coat and put it on David. I don't know what kind of coat it was, but I assume it was not what one might find at Goodwill Industries. Jonathan was the king's son, and he took off his coat and put it on his best friend, a shepherd boy. Our calling should never intimidate young people or make them fear us. If it does, we have sent an unfortunate signal.

When I was about 17 years old, I had a heart of stone. I was rebellious. I was on the way out of the Beachy church. I had made my decision: *Enough is enough!* I won't go into all those reasons, but anyway, I was struggling. At that time I made a confession for something at church. But I still wasn't truly sorry. I had bitterness and anger in my heart. Two men in their 70's, who are still at Woodlawn today, both came up and put their arms around me, and said, "Wilbur, we're proud of you for the courage you had to say what you did today." They didn't know I had a heart of stone, but they followed their heart and came and showed me love. They showed an interest in me and it melted my heart. It seems we sometimes think we must deal with rebellion in a harsh way, but I don't see where Jesus ever did that.

Pastors should start with the children. Jesus took the children in His

arms, did He not?

In Mark, where one such incident is recorded, in German it says He drew them to His breast, which is an embrace. Children are precious. Pastors should make an effort to become friends with the little children. One mother of preschoolers recently said in a council meeting, “We love this church. My boys love to come to church, because the pastors always take time to talk with them.” What a blessing! One of my personal goals is to know the names of all the children in our congregation.

One day I saw a young child get very excited to see her uncle Dick. I asked her why she liked Uncle Dick. She said, “Because he gets down on the floor wiss me.” I still haven’t forgotten that, even though it happened some 20 years ago.

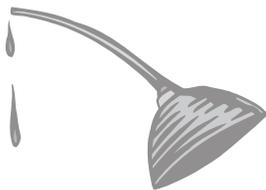
I think many of you know we built a new church building two years ago. I love it, but there’s one thing I miss about the old building. This one’s totally flat. No steps. On a nice sunny morning after church, I would love to sit on the steps and talk to the

children. No, you’re not odd if you do that. If you are, then I am, too.

If someone has a surgery scheduled or an important health test coming up, it’s good for a pastor to show up and pray with them before. If you want an improved ministry with all ages in your congregation, you may have to move out of your comfort zone. But it will be very rewarding.

One more observation, that also came from the teacher at CBS, is this: “Love your co-pastors.” Just as the greatest gift a father can give to his children, is to love their mother, so loving your co-pastors will bring security to your people. If you find it difficult to work as a team, you will face serious challenges communicating with your flock.

Let me close with 1 Peter 2:15-17: “For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.”



A little oil of courtesy
will save a lot of friction.

New Law in Russia

(From a Master's International Ministries newsletter)

According to reliable reports in, for example, World magazine, persecution against Christians in Eastern Europe is on the increase. The following reports verify this fact.

Grace Press, Ephrata, PA is organized under a board representing several conservative Mennonite fellowships. They send Bibles and Gospel literature to countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union. Master's International Ministries is planting churches there, as God opens the way. –FS

A new law has been passed in Russia concerning religion. The Gospel may only be preached inside churches. You may not speak to people about God outside the church. Nor are you allowed to give out tracts or invite people to attend church.

In the homes you are only allowed to share with people about God when they have invited you and asked you that you share with them.

It is strictly forbidden to approach people with the Word of God. You can only share it in the church. This is only part of the new law that has

been given out.

Let us pray that Christians may be strong in the Lord.

Persecution Report

(Grace Press News)

April, 2006

This is a report of Gagik Mirsoyan who ended up in prison because he witnessed to the soldiers and refused to swear the oath of allegiance after being drafted into the military. The location is in Nagordno-Karabach, an autonomous republic in the country of Azerbaijan.

“When Gagik’s mother visited her son in prison on March 13, she was profoundly shocked at his physical appearance. His entire body gave convincing evidence of the violent physical abuse to which he had been subjected. His face, arms, and legs were swollen and covered with dark bruises. He was not able to write, and every step caused him severe pain.

“It has been learned that the administration of the prison where Gagik is serving his sentence tried to force his cooperation in becoming informer on his fellow inmates—which Gagik refused to do. Because of this refusal,

he was assigned to do the most degrading and dirty labor possible. He was also beaten severely and then put (half-clothed) into a cold isolation cell for ten days. While being kept in this cell, Gagik felt compelled to refuse food and to fast for five days. He is now being threatened with yet another prison term if he does not renounce his convictions.

“Let us remember to pray for Brother Gagik, that the Lord may strengthen him in his determination to be faithful to the end. We also propose showering Gagik and his mother with notes and cards with verses of encouragement. If you are interested in helping with this, please write to us and we will send you their addresses. You may request specific Bible verses, which we will send to you in Russian. You may also write a few sentences of greetings and encouragement which we will translate for you.

“Even though the prison officials may refuse to give Gagik his mail, this does not say we should not write. In the past when brethren were in prison in the Soviet Union and lots of letters were sent, it sometimes caused the prisoners to be treated better because the prison officials realized that this was known far and wide. Also, some prison officials were known to resign from their job and

even became Christians themselves as a result of reading mail intended for the Christian prisoners.”

Update on Christian Prisoner Gagik

October, 2006

“In the April newsletter we gave opportunity for you to write to this Christian prisoner and his mother. We are grateful for those who responded to this opportunity. Some of those who wrote to Gagik’s mother have received letters from her. Following is an excerpt from one of her letters:

Writing to you is your sister in Christ, Anna (Gagik’s mother) from Karabakh, city of Mardakert. I am wholeheartedly thankful for God’s love given by God to His children. I am thankful that we became close by His holy blood. I did not even imagine it in my head that somewhere far away that there would be someone who would cry and sorrow with me, and who would be praying with me for my family and for me, who would comfort and support me during this difficult time. May the Lord bless you all in all your work and walk.

“Gagik’s prison term expired on September 5. He was released from prison, though the military authorities have threatened that they would try again to force Gagik to say the oath of allegiance—and if he were

not to cooperate, they would put him back in prison.

“Gagik said, ‘Dear brothers and sisters—please pray for me! If God should allow yet another prison term for me, I am willing to suffer—I am ready to take it.’

“The sufferings of the young Christian who, despite all the harassment and persecution, has not given up his trusting God, but instead has been following the Lord without wavering has not gone unnoticed. His case has

made news throughout the world and has encouraged many to choose to walk the narrow road. Thanks to the countless petitions on Gagik’s behalf, the government has been motivated to act, and is presently working on a new law which would give young men who are drafted into the military the option to choose an occupation in the civil service during their military term.

“The prayers and petitions of God’s children do not go unanswered.” 

helpers at home

Ten Ways to Be a Good Mom

Mary June Glick

We all know “good moms” don’t just happen. I define a good mom as a loving, caring, Christian mother. They are mothers like Hannah who pray for their children and lend them to the Lord. Recently a mother mentioned that maybe we should have more teaching and preparation before we become mothers. A mother has the awesome responsibility of preparing a child for the future and also helping him to be happily adjusted today. A child learns contentment, creativity, security, and many other noble qualities from his mother.

Today we want to look at ten ways of being a “good mom”:

1. *Walk a mile in his moccasins.*

Think back to when you were a child. Try to remember your fears, your longings, your sensitivities. Did you cringe when someone spoke harshly or belittled you in any way? Did you desire to be heard or understood? Try to look at life through the eyes of a child.

2. *Create quiet moments for your child.*

In this time of much activity and noise, children need to learn the beauty of quietness. Even a small

child can learn to have quiet time by looking at books, or coloring in them. In our day of computers, cell phones, videos, and other electronic marvels, parents must know how to control and limit the child's access to this type of noise. I know one family who allows their children one hour after school for any electronic activity. Aside from that, they need to do homework or join the family in other things. Jesus Himself needed to get away to a quiet place and rest awhile.

3. *Make a child-friendly home.*

Make your home a place where your children love to be. For small children, create a play area in your living room or somewhere close by. Set up their toys when they're sleeping and they will play contentedly for a while. For older children, find an area for games, books, Legos, or maybe even a table where they can work undisturbed. Encourage their creativity and teach them to put things away when they are finished.

4. *Celebrate small things.*

Find joy in small things. Celebrate good report cards, special days, a job well done. Enjoy a picnic on the living room floor in the winter, hot chocolate and cookies after sledding, a note in your child's lunchbox. There is so much in life to be happy about. Children love to celebrate.

5. *Stop trying to be perfect.*

Good moms are not perfect moms. They are moms who trust God to help them. Don't expect perfection from your children. They will make mistakes and you will, too. Learn to say, "I'm sorry" and to go on.

6. *Love your children's father.*

The best way of giving your children security is by loving and respecting their father. Let the children hear you express love to your husband, show them that you respect his wishes, never belittle him in any way before the children.

7. *Pray with your children.*

I'm not referring merely to family devotions, but to you as the mother praying personally with your child when he has a special concern or problem or when he is asking God for a specific answer to prayer.

8. *Be there for your child.*

Try to be at home when your child comes home from school. Also be there for him by listening to what he is telling you. He knows if you really hear him.

9. *Watch your words.*

Words are powerful; they can make or break a child. Ask God to put a watch on your lips, guard them carefully.

10. *Act grown-up.*

Sometimes mothers feel they need to act like their children or teens to

win their affection. Children want parents to be role models, to guide and protect them—not to be their “buddies.”

A “good mom” is always learning and growing. She asks God for wisdom and depends on Him to guide her and her family. 

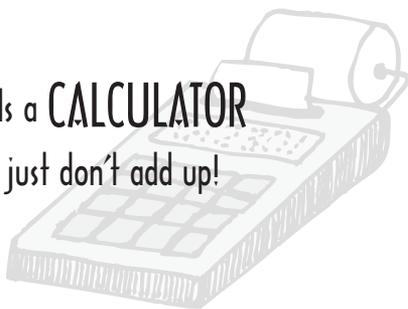
junior messages

Words of Blessing

Anita Yoder

- Good job!
 - I knew you could do it.
 - I appreciate you.
 - I’m glad you’re my friend.
 - Thank you for helping.
 - Please...
 - I’m sorry!
 - I see your talent.
 - I didn’t mean to.
 - I forgive you.
 - You’re a good sport.
- You tried hard.
 - Let’s take a walk.
 - I trust you.
 - Nice try!
 - You make a difference.
 - Let me help.
 - Good game!
 - I respect you.
 - We had a great time.
 - I love you!
 - Thank you, God! 

Oh, how this world needs a **CALCULATOR**
for all the things that just don’t add up!



Announcement

The annual Christian Youth Fellowship meetings for 2007, are scheduled to be held July 20-22.

The reports of the five area meetings held in July, 2006, indicate that good interest was shown. Attendance ranged from 80 to 150 youth in the meetings, thus making it possible for smaller churches to host them. We praise God for this and commend you young people for your part in making these good times. We also give recognition to the hosting communities for planning enriching programs and for providing sincere welcome for the youth and families attending.

The districts and their meeting places for 2007 follow:

North Central	Pleasant View Church, Hartville, OH
North East	Faith Mission Fellowship, Free Union, VA
South East	Cold Spring Church, Abbeville, SC
South West	Calvary Christian Fellowship, Paris, TN
North West	Bethany Fellowship, Kokomo, IN

Let us look to God for good meetings this summer!

Delmar Bontrager, Wellman, Iowa

Chairman, Annual Christian Youth Fellowship Meetings

youth messages

Dear Youth,

Have you ever met someone who was too scared to be a genuine Christian? I find it sad to meet people who don't live for Jesus, because they are afraid they will not be able to "pass the test." For some, this is simply an excuse. For others, it is reality—a very paralyzing fear.

As we grow with God, and "taste

and see that He is good," we become better able to lead others to the Father so they too can learn that He is good.

This month's contributors share some truths they believe about this subject.

Thank you, writers!

—EE

This Month's
QUESTION

If you met someone who thought they could never be good enough to be a Christian, what would you tell them?

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

What would I tell someone who believes that they are not good enough to be a Christian? The first response of one person asked was, “That is absolutely true.” If God would only save those that are “good enough,” no one would be saved. God is not limited in His saving abilities by what we have done. It is his delight to transform a sinner, who sees his undoneness, into a saint.

God’s Word tells us that He will save whoever will come to Him. If God would choose to save some and not others, why would anyone want to serve Him? God’s great love reaches out to everyone in an equal longing for all to willingly serve Him. Therefore He extends His mercy and grace on His terms, not on ours. We only need to believe and accept that God will set us free of all the things that hinder us from fellowship with Him and freely serve Him.

—Laurena Lapp, Penn Yan, NY

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My first thought is, if someone says something like that, they are probably trying tactfully to get out of a situation in which they feel pressured to commit

to something they don’t want to commit to. If that is the case, it is probably best not to push the issue. If, however, they are sincere, they are right—the whole reason behind Christ’s sacrifice is that we are not good enough! God doesn’t seem to be bothered by the fact that we can’t make it on our own, and He is not over-awed by our mistakes or problems. That is why He sent Christ to die—He wanted to provide a way for people to be healed and cleansed from sin because we were not able to provide that way for ourselves.

If you look at the lives of people in the Bible, there are many unusual and unexpected characters—ranging from kings and queens to shepherds and fishermen—who followed God and were accepted by Him. Peter, a dedicated disciple, denied three times in one evening that he was a follower of Christ and was forgiven. The thief on the cross was told that he would be with Christ in paradise later that day. Mary Magdalene and the woman at the well were both accepted by Christ. God doesn’t expect us to be good enough. We are not, which is why we can be so thankful for Jesus’ righteous-

ness that covers us.

—A youth reader from Europe

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I would probably first say that I agree completely. But, you are totally missing the whole purpose of Jesus' death. Romans 3:10 says, "There is none righteous." God showed us in the law that we could never *do enough good* to satisfy Him. Only through faith in Jesus does God count us righteous. Jesus died, as a gift to us, exactly because He knew we couldn't be "good enough."

When we do good things, with the motive that God expects it from us for payment of salvation, we are insulting the value of Jesus' death. We can only accept it as a gift with our thanks and love in return.

On the other hand, if you think you can't be good enough to be a Christian, you are a lot closer to the truth than someone who thinks they are "a pretty good person." It is Satan telling you that to discourage you from accepting God's gift. Realizing you can't please God is exactly where God wants you, so He can show you how wonderful His provision for you is. Jesus did not die merely to make us "good people." God is primarily interested in a relationship with us. When we love God, and communicate regularly with Him, He will show us things that don't please Him. We can

then trust Him, and "good" things will come out of the love in our hearts.

—Simon Yoder, Summersville, MO

• • • • •

Ravi Zacharias says it like this: "Jesus didn't come to make bad people good; He came to make dead people live."

Christianity is seen by many people in terms of an individual being bad versus good, instead of dead versus alive. That is the warped idea of Christianity since even a non-Christian can act good and be seen as such, but a spiritually dead person can't portray himself as alive, no matter how hard he may try. Maybe a view like this would result in someone making this statement: "I could never be good enough to be a Christian."

Some people see the Christian life as something so high they will never be able to reach it. The Kingdom Christian's standard indeed is high, and cannot be compromised just because one feels that he can't measure up to it.

Why would someone feel he could never be good enough to be a Christian? Does he see Christians so actively involved in "doing good things" that he despairs of ever being that good? Maybe by the way some Christians live, he has come to conclude that the Christian life is mostly about doing good things instead of it being a dead life that has been made alive

with good works resulting from it. A person living the surrendered life will be unconscious of the good things he does since his only passion is to glorify Christ.

A question to ask ourselves is, "What view of Kingdom Christianity are people receiving when they look at my life? Have I watered it down to keep me comfortable? Or have I kept the standard high, and am I living as Jesus has called me to?"

—Vicki Kauffman,
Liberia, West Africa

• • • • •

You say you could never be good enough to be a Christian? Well, I guess what you're saying is the exact truth. Whoever you are, whether you're some high-up official or a druggie on the streets, or maybe you've been raised with godly teaching, you can never, ever, of yourself, be good enough to be a Christian—and neither can I!

Our own righteousness or "goodness" will only be to God as a pile of filthy rags. (Isaiah 64:6) We will absolutely never be good enough to be

a Christian! But wait—there is hope! God doesn't say, "Reform yourself first," but "Come just as you are."

Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." He will remove our transgressions as far as the east is from the west. (Psalm 103:12)

John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Jesus' blood will cleanse the most filthy and wicked thing you ever did, or whatever it is that makes you think you could never be good enough. All God asks for is a broken and a contrite heart and faith in Him.

Do you fear you don't have the ability to remain a Christian? In 2 Peter 1:1-8, we have the promise that God will enable us to live the Christian life and will provide all things that pertain to life and godliness through His divine power. There needs to be daily recommitment and dying to self to remain faithful. Why not believe Him?

—Juanita Beachy, Huntland, TN

Next Month's
QUESTION

What do you think would change in our Mennonite communities if all the youth would spend seven to fourteen hours per week praying, reading the Word of God and diligently studying their Shepherd's example?

Please send your replies by February 20. 

THOUGHT GEMS

Few people would stoop to starting rumors;
but many will pass on negative reports.



Beware the church member with an open mouth
and a closed pocketbook.



Isn't it strange how some people insist on having
expensive clothes and yet are satisfied with shoddy religion?



The hardest thing to give is *in*.



The kind of wealth many of us are short
of isn't so much dollars as sense.



There's more hope for the confessed sinner
than the conceited saint.



Faith gives us the courage to face the present
with confidence and the future with expectancy.



As long as your conscience is your friend,
never mind about your enemies.

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