



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

Galatians 6:14

APRIL 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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To Be Like Joseph

Lois Whitt, Montezuma, GA

Lord, help me be a Joseph.
My life I freely yield to You.
Take my vain and sinful wishes,
And turn them into love for You.

Take this selfish inner being,
Melt it in Your sinless forge.
Until the dross of sinful thinking,
From my inner man is poured.

Give me courage through each heartache,
To claim the promise of Your grace.
May I see through every trial
The look of love upon Your face.

Help me learn, as Joseph did,
The Lord Jehovah will provide.
He can fill my longing heart;
My every need will be supplied.

May I see through eyes of faith,
That You can take this sin-stained soul.
Wash it clean in Calvary's fountain,
And make it meet for Christ's control.



Sarcasm—Fun Loving or Unloving?

Suppose I'm impressed with my senior friend's knowledge on a wide range of subjects, but I'm also slightly annoyed with it. Then suppose that because I know that he has no interest in and no experience with computers, I grin as I invite him to use my computer, and say, "You're such a bright fellow. Just hop to it and use my computer!"

Or suppose I wistfully look at the sky and say, "It will probably rain this weekend. The weather seems to know when I have an outdoor activity planned that means a lot to me."

My negative-toward-others and/or ungrateful-to-God feelings have certainly expressed sarcasm.

Sarcasm is a sharp and often ironic utterance designed to cut or give pain. It is a mode of satirical wit depending for its effect on bitter, caustic, and often ironic language that is usually directed against an individual. (Webster's definition)

Who enjoys sarcasm? Probably the one having the most fun is the speaker. Sarcasm shows sharp wit, but often someone gets hurt by that sharpness.

Kenneth L. Pike* wrote of the

time he got into using such humor: "When I was a freshman in college, I was part of a crew that served tables in the cafeteria, and a couple of the crew were the most accomplished fellows at barbed comments that I've ever met.

"In competition with them I became clever, too, and by the end of that year I couldn't hear a sentence from one of my colleagues without thinking of something clever or sharp with which to reply.

"When my Dad heard me, he would say, 'Why don't people study to say the kind thing instead of the cruel thing?' But I couldn't think of anything encouraging, or sweet, or good. I had become totally corrupt. I could think only of the cruel thing, at which people had to laugh even if they were hurt.

"I saw after a while that I was losing...my friends, and I asked God to break me of that habit. It took three years to break it, and in order to do it, I had to [promise] God that I'd be silent rather than say something barbed and cruel. I wasn't used to being silent and it hurt to have nothing to say when I was bursting with a

clever remark. But God doesn't want us to look clever at the expense of someone else. We are called to serve, to make others look good."

What's wrong with sarcasm? Consider these ideas:

—It typically laughs at its own jokes.

—It often exaggerates.

—It mocks others' foibles or weaknesses.

—It seeks to increase its influence by clever and degrading remarks.

—It makes light of sacred and/or serious matters.

—It is fueled by competition.

—It "multiplies" once love has been subtracted.

The list is hardly complete, yet it helps define the problem.

A school teacher who often used sarcasm was being observed. He believed he had good classroom control. His observer mentioned that his use of sarcasm had a uniting effect on the students. This felt good to him until the observer concluded his observation by saying, "It unites the students against you."

If we wish to say something that is helpful and humorous, let's find something constructive to say. If we are caustic toward God or an

act of God, we are irreverent. If we are sarcastic toward other people, we are disrespectful. Walking in the fear of God makes sarcasm seem out of place. Walking in the love of God deals with the carnal desire for the perfect, verbal "put-down."

Sarcasm, like sticking out my foot to trip you, springs from my lack of love for you. It may seem less aggressive than throwing a punch, but it is no more loving. Let the hateful hurl their insults and their barbed comments. But let those who revel in God's grace enlist God's help in consigning sarcasm to oblivion—"an extinct verbal species."

Note these significant nuggets from the book of Proverbs as they appear in *The Living Bible*: "Some people like to make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise soothe and heal" (12:18), "Self-control means controlling the tongue! A quick retort can ruin everything" (13:3), and "The Lord...delights in kind words" (15:26).

*(Quoted in *Personnel Administration in the Christian School*, J. Lester Brubaker, BMH Books, Winona Lake, IN, 1980, page 129.) —PLM



DOU'NT CALL IT EDUCATION UNLESS
IT ALIGNS WITH THE GOSPEL.

Re: What Motivates Our Changes?

Words fail me to express my thanks and appreciation for the article asking “What Motivates Our Changes?” I believe this is something we should ask ourselves corporately and individually.

It is to our shame when a church makes changes because so many people are violating a standard.

I wish there would be a way to have everyone read Stephen’s article and seriously consider the validity of his emphasis.

Sometimes we read an article that more accurately conveys our thinking than we can express it ourselves. This is what Bro. Stephen’s article has done for me.

I believe too often we are eager to reject what we consider a worn-out tradition, and exchange it for a tradition of the world without enough consideration for the biblical basis of the tradition being traded off.

—*Elmer Beachy, Salisbury, PA*

• • • • •

I really appreciated Bro. Stephen Russell’s article. It meant much to have someone who found fellowship among us some years ago make comparisons of what he saw then with what he sees now. Let us be careful

of the changes we make.

(From a conversation with the editor)

—*Clara Mae Nisly, Hutchinson, KS*

• • • • •

I read with great interest “What Motivates our Changes?”

My background is not Catholic, neither is it plain. My first church was with a very small denomination that required head coverings and did not have musical instruments. The men were not dressed plain and some wore the tie. Today head coverings are optional and almost lost and they have musical instruments in all their meeting houses except one.

From there I was part of the Pentecostal movement for a little over a year. I then went to a liberal church with a plain background. Now I am part of a plain church.

The concerns expressed are very real in our fellowship. It has always amazed me that the things most of us find to be dear who come from a non-plain background are being set aside by many of those who were raised plain.

I learned about nonresistance while in the liberal church with a plain background from an organization that is part of this denomina-

tion. But I heard basically political pacifism or patriotism.

While I consider the Roman Catholic religion to be a false religion, I agree with the writer that not everything taught by them is wrong.

I notice quotes from the ESV version, which I am not acquainted with. I have never been a part of a group that uses the German Bible (Luther) and I do not speak German or PA

Dutch. But I see using other versions than the King James Version as another type of falling into modern thought.

I also agree that most plain individuals tend to be non-verbal about their faith. I further agree that change is not always wrong, but being ashamed of the plain way is wrong.

In Christ,

—James M. Hite, Palmyra, PA 

School Board Members' Institute

Enos D. Stutzman, London, OH

The first Conservative Mennonite School Board Institute was held at Antrim, Ohio, on February 2 and 3, 2007. The meetings began on Friday morning and lasted through Saturday noon. Around 225 souls braved winter winds and snow to attend this meeting. Most of the attendees were board members, with some school administrators present as well. The Antrim Mennonite congregation provided their good facilities, a warm welcome, and three wonderful meals for this big crowd.

The first address was given by Lloyd Weiler of Pennsylvania. He sketched a brief history of education in the United States, with special reference to the rise of private Christian schools. The vision for Christian schools which early founders of the

movement embraced should spur us onward to continue the great work of Christian education.

Galen Miller of Indiana spoke next. His topic was entitled, "What's Expected of a Board Member?" He emphasized that each board member needs to be a contributor. There is a temptation to be passive in order to avoid criticism, but the effectiveness of the board is diminished whenever any member fails to contribute his part, in spite of controversy that surrounds sensitive issues.

Paul A. Miller of Ohio addressed the topic of "Efficient Board Meetings." He emphasized the role of order in the board's procedures. Punctuality, adequate preparation before a meeting, having an agenda known ahead of time, and address-

ing matters in an orderly manner, are some highlights of making a board meeting successful.

Mark Beachy, a school principal from Sugarcreek, Ohio, with many years of experience, spoke on the topic “The Roots of Finding and Keeping Teachers.” He emphasized the board’s role in proper planning and in providing leadership for the school. He stressed the need for adequate financial support for teachers—“God bless you” does not pay the bills.

Paul L. Miller of Kansas, another long-time educator, shared the topic “For Such a Time as This: Developing a compelling vision for our schools in the rising generation.” We face a large task in these times. Public morality is slipping. The Christian school board’s responsibility is to *think*, and the principal’s responsibility is to *do*. One of their greatest jobs is to hire a capable principal. The board should not micro-manage the classroom, but should set policies and delegate the responsibility of carrying them out to faithful and dependable staff.

Edwin Eby of Pennsylvania spoke on the topic of “The Role of the Ministers in Raising Vision and Support for the School in the Congregation.” He spoke of the need for pastors to embrace the vision of Christian education. A vision is something that is not yet. If you want something you do

not now have, you have to do some things that you have not done before. If you do the same things that you are now doing, you will have more of the same results you’ve been having. The pastor’s vision is important, because a congregation often embraces the views of its pastor, even though it is a gradual process.

Jay Martin, a teacher from Pennsylvania, spoke on “Evaluating and Choosing School Curriculum.” If a voter votes a straight ticket, he has abdicated the responsibility of considering the issues. The party has done this for him. In a similar manner, the person who automatically patronizes only one publisher has relinquished the responsibility of textbook issues to the publisher. Emphasis on truth in textbooks should be felt more than stated. Curriculum with questionable emphasis will have an influence on students, but it is only one of many such influences. Well-written textbooks are a tremendous help for students in a multi-grade classroom who do much of their work independently. Well-written teacher guides assist a busy classroom teacher in his work. Bible emphasis in texts is appropriate, but the primary Bible teacher is the home, followed by the church. The school’s main emphasis is academic.

Paul Miller of Kansas spoke on the subject of “Working Effectively

with and through the Principal or Head Teacher.” The relationship of the board and the principal is a vital one in the successful operation of a school. There needs to be mutual trust, respecting the others’ turf. In this employer-employee relationship, each party must have an honorable exit option. Neither is bound to the other in a permanent way. The successful principal looks ahead and seeks to avoid management by crisis. Longevity in staff tenure is most desirable. Adequate wages are one key to retaining staff long term.

There were nine workshops at various times throughout the meetings. Two of these were presentations by textbook publishers—Rod and Staff and Christian Light Publications. Mark Beachy conducted a workshop on “Salaries, Support, and Benefits for Teachers.” He had conducted a survey of teachers and board members, and shared the results. Some of the most treasured items for teachers were parental and board support for the school. The most common reason for teachers quitting was getting married. Nearly as common was low wages.

The meetings were wrapped up with a panel discussion on questions which had been submitted during the meetings. Four of the speakers made up the panel. One subject that came up was the matter of apprentice

teachers. An apprentice teacher could work under the supervision of an experienced teacher the year before taking it up on his own. This might even be a salaried position. There was also discussion about the advisability of retaining students. Some schools use the 11th percentile on achievement tests as an absolute cutoff point. *The Handbook for Creative Teaching* by Rod and Staff, was recommended as a valuable resource for school personnel. The matter of the Christian school’s relationship with home schooling was also brought up.

A business meeting was held Saturday forenoon, during which questions were raised about continuing with more such institutes. Attendees were given evaluation forms, in which they could indicate a preference for annual or semi-annual meetings. The school board institute is still in its infancy, and further planning needs to be done to put it on a permanent basis. There seemed to be a consensus that such meetings are needed in some fashion or other.

If any did not get mailings announcing this institute, who would like to get future mailings, please let Elmer Glick know. Call, e-mail or write him at: Elmer D. Glick
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From Mystery to Reality—Part 6

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Diligence Yields to Faith

The seed thought behind this series of articles came from a realization that the mysteries spoken of variously in the New Testament are all given to discovery. Twenty-one references in the Gospels and Epistles (excluding Revelation) refer to the mystery of the Kingdom, the mystery of God, of Christ, of the Gospel, of faith and of godliness. All of these have been laid out and declared open by Christ and the writers of the Epistles.

The believer's eyes of faith in Jesus Christ the Savior are to be clearly focused to see the mysteries as fulfilled in Christ. Conversely, the eyes of unbelievers are clouded over and veiled to the point of blindness into these mysteries, whether Jew or Gentile.

The previous installment dealt with the engaging concept that *discovery leads to diligence*. By it we sought to lift ourselves from the neutralizing effects of the mediocre and the stupor of being satisfied with mere averages. Any rise in Christian profession or spiritual possession will demand a greater measure of diligence than

what commonly passes as “average” or “good enough.”

Diligence has ascending qualities. Success and promotion are not her rewards, *but rather her results*. Success and promotion diminish and deteriorate when they are regarded as rewards. Success and promotion, if they are to be useful, must be treated like manure. If it is left lying on top, it stinks. To be beneficial, it must be turned under. *Under* the lordship of Christ; *under* others in God's chain of command; *under* as a servant for others' profit.

Everything yields to diligence. Furthermore, nothing is easy to the unwilling. Diligence is the motor of motivation. Pure diligence fires on all eight cylinders. Motivated diligence moves forward, sometimes without touching the ground! “The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness...” (Pro. 21:5).

Diligence that is spurred on by personal discovery is outwardly exciting and inwardly satisfying. The diligence quotient is too low for many Christians because of personal attempts at discovery that are sadly

unmotivated, uninterested, and un-informed. And it barely bothers us. We look around and conclude that we are average. *Averages seem never to rise and most people are satisfied with just being average.* Actually, in such cases, averages always go lower with each succeeding generation.

Diligence calls on us to be more than average. Being mediocre is not being very bad, nor is it being very good. Diligence does not tolerate mediocrity. Diligence gives rise to constant and careful effort.

The diligent give attention with intention. They generally succeed in business, work well in committees, are effective as marriage partners, do commendably well as administrators, and are sought after as employees. The diligent are in demand, are appreciated, are cooperative, give more than average, and are promoted. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...I will make thee ruler over many things..." (Matt. 25:21).

The diligent notice others, give honest praise, have an eye for detail, are open-minded, and are humble about it. They are active and attractive, and certainly are not reactive against others. Check out Strong's Concordance with diligence and discover for yourself in the Bible many good things God says about diligence! Lay your open Bible along-

side and read each verse. (My, what a diligent reader you are!)

Diligence is extra measure, extra attention, extra effort, extra planning, extra time, and extra thought. Diligence comes only in large, extra large and XX large. It seems that these sizes don't fit everybody.

Diligence is not held out as an alternative to faith. It is that which enhances faith. It is a winner's combination. Diligence is in personal application, faith waits on God's timing. Diligence is being willing, faith is being dependent. Diligence is in being ready, faith is in accepting delays. Diligence has the vision, faith awaits the call. "...give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:10, 11). There is nothing average about this passage!

Diligence is not being busy for the sake of busyness. Diligence is in being busy with a purpose, an intended goal, a specific result. Much time and energy may be put into making a living, paying off a mortgage, making a business successful, and finally being debt-free. Sporadic intervals of free time, pleasure pursuits and vacations are interspersed to maintain a degree

of sanity in the “rat race.” Diligence plans for worthwhile “time out” from the fast pace of life. Diligence knows when to go, and when to stay.

Diligence has a way of slowing the pace without losing the vision. Diligence keeps in step with the necessary movement of events, seldom in a hurry, usually on time. God is “a rewarder of those who diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

A strong, confident, enduring faith arises out of a diligent life. Turning to faith gives diligence a new breadth of experience. Holding on to faith gives diligence a new height of exuberance. The grasp on faith gives diligence a new dimension of enlightenment.

Diligence without faith in God makes one self-centered. Diligence without faith in God makes one move in purposeless circles. Diligence without faith in God makes one increase the speed without enjoying the scenery. “And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith...” (2 Peter 1:5).

Faith is larger than diligence, for it expands the mind. Faith is higher than diligence, for it rises to connect with God. Faith is a good leader of diligence, for it smooths out more of

the rough spots. Diligence is great, but faith is meant to be even greater.. “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

And so, whether there be diligent effort, it shall dissipate; whether there be diligent planning, it shall be temporary; whether there be diligent timing, it shall be subject to change; whether there be diligent vision, it shall vanish away. For now our diligent eyes see in part, but when faith is come, the eyes of our understanding will be given perspectives unknown by the efforts of our diligence.

And now abideth imagination and curiosity, inquiry and discovery, diligence and faith, these six; but the greatest of these are diligence and faith.

The Bottom Line is that real Christians are those who are outstanding in their diligence which yields a soul-satisfying and spirit-stimulating faith in God. “And we desire that every one of you do show the same *diligence* to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be *not slothful*, but followers of them who *through faith and patience* inherit the promises” (Hebrews 6:11, 12).



THE FACT THAT ONLY A FEW BELIEVE SOMETHING

Doesn't keep it from being true.

Joy, Love And Peace

Wilmer D. Swope, 2006

Stetterburg
Nicolas Decius, 1545

1. Joy, love and peace will bless each one In teach - ing
 2. True head-ship zeal will bless - ing bring, With - in the
 3. Prayer zeal our watch-word now to be, In Church and
 4. Pre - serve God's wis - dom on the veil, Let sis - ters
 5. A state - ment full up - on the head, Pow'r of the
 6. Be - fore Thee now we come in prayer, We thank Thee

of God's pre - cious Word; Be - hold the Ho - ly Spir - it's work
 Church and home with peace; A ser - vant's wit - ness in the Church,
 home a grow - ing peace; A ser - vant's wit - ness in the Church,
 in the Church o - bey The teach - ing in God's Ho - ly Word,
 an - gels those who see, An - gels that God's pro - tec - tion give,
 for the veil, O Lord; Thy Ho - ly Word is for all time;

To fol - low and o - bey our Lord, Wit - ness with - in our
 Joy, peace will in the home in - crease, The head - ship veil will
 In truth and prac - tice to in - crease, The an - gels all its
 God's Word to live with - in each day, Let bro - thers in the
 With - in the Church and home to be, To sis - ters meek who
 Keep now the teach - ing of God's Word, Write on the ta - bles

deeds to - day, The ho - ly head - ship ser - vant's way.
 sure - ly bless, God gives His ser - vants more than less.
 pres - ence see, Re - spect a bless - ed use shall be.
 Church ac - cord, The cov - ring veil be - fore the Lord.
 wear the veil, The veil in prayer, it shall pre - vail.
 of the heart, E - ter - nal wis - dom, Lord, im - part. A - men.

marriages

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

Burkholder-Eash

Bro. Marcus, son of Earl and Esther Burkholder, and Sis. Wanda, daughter of LaVern and Carolyn Eash, Whiteville, TN, on Sept. 9, 2006, at Warren Community Church for Whiteville Mennonite Church by LaVern Eash.

Stutzman-Schmucker

Bro. Lyle, son of Perry Lee and Judith Stutzman, Hutchinson, KS, and Sis. Maria, daughter of Joe and Carol Schmucker, Hutchinson, KS, at Yoder Mennonite Church for Center A.M. Church, on Dec. 29, 2006, by David Yoder.

cradle roll

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

Brenneman, Lowell and JoAnn (Miller), Falkville, AL, eighth child, fourth dau., Andrea Rose, Feb. 13, 2007.

Forrest, Tom and Holly (Greenawalt), Gap, PA, fifth child, third son, Jacob George, Feb. 1, 2007.

Kauffman, Marcus and Susan (Miller), Chesapeake, VA, fourth child, third dau., Lydia Grace, Jan. 31, 2007.

Lapp, David and Mary (Stoltzfus), Gap, PA, seventh child, fourth son, Micah Jordan, Jan. 13, 2007.

Miller, Joseph and Connie (Nisly), Casitas, El Salvador, fourth child, second son, Brendon Charles, Jan. 23, 2007.

Miller, Kenneth and Rochelle (Miller), Canon City, CO, fifth child, third son, Jamin Kent, Feb. 14, 2007.

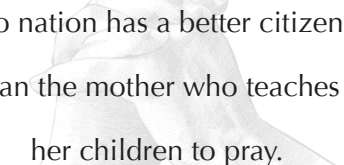
Sommers, Marcus and Anita (Mast), Maysville, MO, eighth child (one deceased), first dau., Virginia Grace, Feb. 6, 2007.

Steckly, Ronald and Sharon (Roes), Millbank, ON, eighth child, third dau., Melody Dawn, Jan. 25, 2007.

Stoltzfoos, Adin and Heidi (Denlinger), Burgettstown, PA, fourth child, second dau., Janna Elizabeth, Feb. 4, 2007.

Stoltzfus, Ivan and Ruth Ann (Stoltzfus), ninth child, second dau., Sherilyn Marie, Jan. 4, 2007.

Stoltzfus, Laverne and Annette (Miller), Partridge, KS, fourth child, first dau., Bryana Elyse, Feb. 10, 2007.



No nation has a better citizen
than the mother who teaches
her children to pray.

ordination

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

Bro. Ivan Stoltzfus, 41, New Holland, PA, was ordained to the office of deacon at West Haven A. M. Church Feb. 18, 2007. Preordination messages were given by Jacob Lapp.

The charge was given by Lee Stoltzfus, assisted by Leroy Lapp and Wilmer Peachey. Also in the lot were Mahlon King and Alvin Stoltzfus.

obituaries

Miller, Alberta (Whitmer), 89, died at her home at Plain City, OH, on Jan. 25, 2007, from cancer. She was born in Plain City, Ohio, April 11, 1917, daughter of the late John and Martha (Hostetler) Whitmer.

She was a member of Haven Fellowship.

She was married to Melvin J. Miller on Jan. 9, 1935. He died Nov. 1, 1984. They had four children, all of Plain City: Leon Miller (who died Feb. 20, 2007); Joe (Susie) Miller; Louise (Leon) Troyer; and Johnny (Ruth) Miller; 14 grandchildren and 36 grand grandchildren. Also surviving is a sister: Minerva Yutzy.

Receding her in death were three sisters: Sarah Whitmer, Katie Kramer and Gladys Miller and two brothers: Pete Edward Whitmer and Dan Harley

Whitmer.

Funeral services were held Jan. 8 with Lonnie and Mark Beachy and John Hostetler serving. Burial was in the Haven Fellowship Cemetery.

Miller, Leon M., 72, died Feb. 20, 2007, at Milcrest Nursing Center, Marysville, OH. He was born Nov. 28, 1934, son of the late Melvin J. and Alberta (Whitmer) Miller, at Plain City, OH.

He attended Haven Fellowship for the last 25 years, faithfully taking his mother to church every week.

He is survived by two daughters, Lonita (Norm) Mast, Uniontown, OH; and Linda (Ken) Yutzy, Marysville; and six grandchildren. Other survivors include two brothers: Joe (Susie) Miller; and Johnny (Ruth) Miller; a sister, Louise (Leon) Troyer; and one aunt, Minerva Yutzy, all of Plain City and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Funeral services were held Feb. 23, with Lonnie Beachy, Melvin Yutzy and Mark Beachy serving. Burial was in the Haven Fellowship Cemetery.

Nisly, Edna (Miller), 75, died on Feb. 26, 2007, at her home in rural Hutchinson, KS, after a long struggle with pulmonary problems. She was born July 5, 1931, daughter of the late William A. and Rebecca (Nisly) Miller.

She was a faithful member of Center A.M. Church.

On March 12, 1954, she was married to Harvey Nisly. He survives. Their three children are: Sharon (Larry) Thacker,

Hutchinson; Clayton (Jennifer) Nisly, Abbyville, KS; and Emma June Nisly (and Sonny Rushman), Cass Lake, MN. They have 12 grandchildren. Also surviving is one sister, Elizabeth (Henry) Schrock, Eden Valley, MN.

Preceding her in death were two brothers: Daniel and Levi Miller and two sisters: Mary (wife of John C.) Yoder

and Emma (widow of John D.) Miller, as well as three infant siblings in 1918, 1921 and 1934.

Funeral services were held Feb. 28, with David Yoder, Nathan Yoder (VA), LaVerne Miller and Paul Miller serving. Burial was in the West Center Cemetery.

observations

It is important that our youth understand both the basis and the practical implications of being nonresistant Christians. Specific incidents where the practice was severely tested can be helpful. Two incidents from World War 1 are pertinent:

John Schrag came to Kansas from Russia with his parents in 1874. He was 13. By the time the United States entered WWI, he had become a prosperous farmer. Patriotic war hysteria required that citizens support the war against Germany. The German-speaking Mennonites whose faith included objection to war were seen by some as slackers who needed to be converted into patriots.

The sale of war bonds (also called liberty loans) was vigorously promoted. Most Mennonites reasoned that it was a kind of tax and cooperated. John Schrag felt that buying bonds supported the war. His conscience did not permit him to participate.

On November, 11, 1918, five carloads of men drove 11 miles to get Schrag to join Armistice Day festivities in Burrton. They ransacked the farmstead and forced their way into the house and took him to Burrton.

In Burrton he was told that he must buy war bonds or face the consequences. He offered to give \$200 to Red Cross and the Salvation Army. This was not sufficient.

They demanded that he salute the flag and carry the flag through town at the head of the parade. Schrag quietly but firmly refused. The flag fell to the ground. The crowd became an enraged mob. They applied yellow paint to the victim's scalp and beard. They led him to the city jail. Someone ran to get a rope to hang him.

A local non-Mennonite intervened by standing with a gun. He made it plain that he was willing to defend Schrag with his own life if necessary. They backed off with intentions to

return later in the night to force entry into the jail and hang this so-called traitor.

Schrag was rescued when the Harvey County sheriff came that evening and took Schrag to Newton, for safe keeping, to the county jail.

Newspaper coverage from Newton and Hutchinson was not sympathetic to Schrag. The possibility of confiscating his holdings and deportation to Germany were mentioned.

His case was heard in a federal courtroom in Wichita. On December 9, U. S. Commissioner C. Sherman found Schrag not guilty of disloyalty and desecration of the U. S. flag.

This is a condensation of a report in *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 22 and 29, 2007.

I had been somewhat aware of this incident, but I was surprised to learn that John Schrag was the grandfather of Dan Schrag who with his wife, Betty, and daughters, Ann and Pauline are members of our local Center A. M. church.

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In May of the same year an incident occurred at Kalona, Iowa, which was somewhat similar.

The issue was also the pressure to buy war bonds. A 29-year-old Amishman could not in good conscience participate. Apparently, most of the church people did give some

support to this effort. On several occasions there were night visitors seeking entrance through locked doors. The wife and mother later reported that they feared the door would give way. But the mischief makers retreated to the buggy shed with yellow paint to make a statement. After they left, the young couple took kerosene to remove the paint from the buggy wheels. These were not close neighbors. It is not clear exactly who they were and how far they came. Not all the details are clear but the family (there were two young sons) spent at least one night sleeping outside at the straw stack. The situation was extremely tense. A U. S. Marshall came to the farm home and took the young father/husband to Davenport. It is assumed that this was protective custody. The man was Ananias J. Beachy, who in 1950 became my father-in-law.

Mary tells me that she does not remember ever hearing her father talk about these things. But her mother did mention some of the experiences.

After Mom's passing in 1991, two letters that were written from prison dated May 19 and 20, 1918, were found. The collection also included six newspaper articles pertinent to the case. These had to have been extremely stressful times. On May 30,

1918, a third son, Glen, was born. The charges and the newspaper coverage clearly reflected a mood in which patriotic zeal seemed to displace reason.

The charges were as follows:

- attempting to cause disloyalty to the government
- interfering with enlistments in the army
- threatening the life of President Wilson.

Ananias' stay in prison was probably not more than a few days. As soon as paper work could be done, he was released on bond, secured by his father-in-law, John Shetler and Joe C. Miller, an uncle. We are not aware that the case ever went to court. While many details have been lost, several things seem clear:

1. A. J. Beachy showed a willing spirit by supporting Red Cross.
2. To maintain a clear conscience can be costly.
3. The conflict between good and evil is real.

We believe these examples of steadfast faith should encourage us to "hold fast the profession of our faith, for He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23).




*Intelligence is a bit like a river—
the deeper it is, the less noise it makes*

An incident during World War 2 involved a bus load of draftees who were on their way to Fort Leavenworth, KS, to take their physical examinations. The group included some Holdemans who were recognized as C.O.'s. Others in the group decided to show their disapproval by attacking them. There were significant injuries. None were life-threatening or permanent. The military disciplined these offenders. They were sent to the front lines of battle, and had no opportunity to advance their military rank.

This incident is included in a book by John M. Dyck, entitled, *Faith Under Test*. Brother Dyck is presently an older deacon at the Meridian (Holdeman) Church near Hesston, KS.

Let us notice that in all of the above cases the legal system did not support the misguided patriotic zeal of the offenders.

As we observe the workings of our government, there are many things that are disappointing. That should motivate us to remember to pray for them. Our prayers should include thanksgiving for religious freedom and many other benefits not realized in many countries. —DLM 

Bible Teaching on Material Possessions—Part 2

Paul Kline, Millersburg, OH

Borrowing

Long ago people were ashamed to be in debt; now it is too common. There are times when one has to go to outside sources for financial aid, but there is not one positive reference in the Bible encouraging the borrowing of money. Borrowing is always found in negative contexts with warnings.

The Bible stresses being free financially. Romans 13:8 NIV says, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another.”

To be able to [live without] borrowing is a blessing from God. “The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto the land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow” (Deut. 28:12). “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender” (Prov. 22:7).

Count the cost. Luke 14:28,29 says, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it. Lest haply, after

he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him.”

Think things through and ask advice. The church should and needs to know before any large or major borrowing and investing is done, because in a brotherhood the church is ultimately responsible [for unpaid debts].

Starting up in a small way and growing is the ideal way, then we don’t have to go into debt so much.

Planning ahead examples:

—Joseph’s grain storage (Genesis 41: 34-36).

—David’s plan for the temple (1 Chronicles 22:5).

—Prudent man looks ahead (Proverbs 22:3).

Lending

Lending means to let another use or have our possessions temporarily on the condition that they are to be returned again. It is permitting another to use your money. This is different from just giving someone the money. The borrower has the responsibility of being a good steward of somebody else’s money. The lender also has the responsibility to see that

his money is used rightly. Thus, with lending, supervision also needs to be given.

By helping each other in this way, we can avoid giving a tremendous amount of interest money out of the community which will never benefit us anymore.

How Should We Lend to Our Brothers?

[Note Old Testament instruction]

“Neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.” (Ex. 22:25).

“Take thou no usury of him...” (Lev. 25:36).

“Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother...unto a stranger thou mayst lend upon usury” (Deut. 23:19, 20).

“He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his abundance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor” (Prov. 28:8).

There is blessing in lending interest-free to [someone in] our brotherhood. When lending to business ventures, one may charge a modest interest.

Warning About Materialism

Our goal should not be prosperity, but to please God! Plan to acknowledge God.

The choice to have a materialistic life style produces the following:

In 1950—10% of all income was spent on luxuries, 50 billion.

In 1980—30% of all income was spent on luxuries, 350 billion.

The editor of *Money Magazine*, after a study on money, concluded that money has become the #1 obsession of Americans.

What Is Materialism?

a. An obsession, a passion, a pre-occupation with the things of the world.

b. It isn't determined by how much or how little you have; it is a matter of the heart.

Some Warning Signs Are...

a. When you go from managing your money to becoming anxious over it.

b. When your eyes begin to wander and you begin to compare what others have with what you have.

c. When you begin to lose appreciation for what the Lord has already given you.

d. When you lose the joy of cheerful giving.

Every spending decision is a spiritual decision. God uses money and material possessions in our earthly life as a tool, a test, and a testimony.

A materialistic world can never be won by a materialistic church.

Giving

Giving is not a cause for spirituality, but an outcome of spirituality. The most important principle from God's Word on money is not sharing, but

stewardship. With poor stewardship there is little to be shared. With good stewardship there is an abundance to be shared.

Why Give?

1. It is a command: "Give and it shall be given unto you..." (Luke 6:38), and a blessing: "There is that scattereth, and yet increases, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. 11:24,25).

2. For God is the owner of our possessions. Malachi 3:8-10 says, "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

3. To learn to fear the Lord. "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year...that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always" (Deut. 14:22,23).

4. It unites and causes thanksgiving to God. "Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God" (2 Cor. 9:11).

5. A response of love to God. Giving reflects the degree of spirituality within. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became

poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

6. Because of the poor. Jesus said, "...the poor ye have always with you." Prov. 28:27 explains, "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse." Deuteronomy 15:11 says, "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to the needy, in thy land."

How To Give

1. In the right spirit. (Matthew 6:1-7)

2. Not grudgingly or of necessity, as Paul explained: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

How To Share Our Money

The tithe: "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year" (Deut. 14:22). "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase; So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov. 3:9,10).

What Is The Tithe?

10% of our income. The number 10 represents the whole, thus "tithe" means that all is given. It acknowledges that God owns it all. Tithe therefore is a testimony that all be-

longs to God! Jesus said, "...For ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23).

What About People In Debt?

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33)

"Honour the Lord with thy substance and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov. 3:9,10).

The Bible Also Speaks Of Offerings

The source of our offerings is our abundance or surplus.

"Moses spake unto all the children of Israel, saying, this is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying, take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord..." (Ex. 35:4,5).

"And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks" (Deut. 12:6).

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:6,7).

Purpose Of Offerings

1. Equality. "But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack" (2 Cor. 8:14,15).

2. To Fulfill Needs. "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto him, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things needful to the body, what doth it profit?" (James 2:15,16).

The Bible Also Speaks About Sacrifice

"How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:2-5).

How Do We Sacrifice?

By giving of our needs, wants, and

desires. “And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: But she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had” (Luke 21:1-4).


When Should We Sacrifice?

God’s plan for sharing includes:

Tithes—A testimony to God’s ownership.

Offerings—Giving from our abundance or surplus.

Sacrifice—Yielding up our needs and wants for others.

[From *The Brotherhood Messenger*. Submitted for publication by Marvin Weirich, Goshen, IN. Used by permission.] 

Ministers’ Meeting Message—2006

This is condensation of the final message given at the annual Ministers’ Meetings, April 4-6, 2006, at Sugar-creek, 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.

11. Prosperous Spiritual Health

—Dave Nisly, Manassas, VA

Our theme verse has been, “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 2). Let us recap some of the things we have heard, for in the course of these days together, most of my points of emphasis have been made by the speakers ahead of me.

“Prosperous spiritual health” is an

interesting combination of words. In prosperity, we often think first of business success and material wealth. But is that really prosperous living? It seems that we have been quite prosperous, even by the world’s standards. But are we prosperous by God’s standards?

When we come to defining spiritual health, it is not quite as straightforward. Spiritual health is holy living. The spiritual realm is not that tangible, but it’s real. Our definitions are limited to the realities that we have experienced. So we may find it hard to reach out to that which God desires for us. God has His definition of spiritual health. He sees past our superficial tendencies and our posturing. He sees our motives and our attitudes; He alone sees our true spiritual health.

When we make associations between physical and spiritual health, we open an important subject. Diet and exercise are vital to good physical health. We are only as healthy as our spiritual diet and our spiritual exercise program makes us. The Hebrew word translated success means to be prudent, to wisely understand. So success and prosperity are not one-time goals, but a way of life. We don't *achieve* success; we *learn* success.

Let us define spiritual success as consistently living so that we can hear Jesus Christ say, "Well done," at the final judgment.

We have probably all experienced valleys and peaks in our walk with God. How can we remain healthy? Let us note several symptoms that indicate a weakening vitality:

1. A loss of passion for Jesus Christ and the Word.

2. Stagnation in the ministry. Staleness in the relationship with God and others.

3. Emptiness. Having little to give to others.

4. Physical fatigue and exhaustion from overcommitment and insufficient rest.

As I peruse these symptoms, I realize that I'm not completely healthy and I must do something about it. What causes these symptoms?

1. An inadequate connection with God. Our time investment in know-

ing God rather than in enjoying our lifestyle is crucial here. What part of our time is spent in recreational or entertainment activities? Are we spending enough time with God?

2. The pressures of life such as family challenges, church responsibilities, and financial obligations. Paul Byerly wrote, "All too often a church or ministry becomes 'the other woman' in the eyes of a minister's wife. She finds herself often at the end of the list and by the time he gets to her, he is out of time and energy. I understand that it's tempting to think that our family should understand that we're doing His will, but where in the Bible are we told to sacrifice our wife, our marriage or our children to the Lord? If a man is not loving his wife as Christ loves the church, how can he be a witness for the Lord? If he is not devoting himself to his wife, to caring for her, praying for her, and building her up, how can he be a leader? As Paul said to Timothy, 'For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?' Any man who puts his church or his ministry ahead of his wife does not understand the Word of God or God's commands to husbands. And such a man is not worthy to be leader in the Lord's name. Yes, that is harsh, very harsh. I see the destruction among pastor's marriages. I see wives who feel worthless and children

who feel unloved. I see divorces and the marriages which are marriages in name only. I see youth who are falling into drugs, premarital sex, and worse. They will spend eternity in hell because their father was too busy saving the world to help them. I would say, 'For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and loses his wife and children?'"

3. Health concerns. Our bodies deteriorate with age.

4. Financial pressures.

5. Cultural pressures. We may be quick to say we're not conformed to the world. We believe in separation and nonconformity, but do we really? Is our thinking different from the unsaved?

6. Materialism. For where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." The Bible says a lot about the dangers of riches. I fear that we live too affluently and hear too little teaching against affluence.

7. Busy-ness. The speed of travel has taken natural periods of rest away. When my mother spent three years in voluntary service in Germany from 1959 to 1962, she did not even

have the option of flying there by commercial airliner. It took six days to get there by ship. After three years of VS, without any visits home, with several of her sisters getting married while she was there, and with just one phone call from the US, it was time to come home. She then had the option of flying home. But she thought she needed more time to adjust to life at home, so she took a ship that took nine days to come back.

8. Earning a living and doing adequate work in church. How are we to balance the demands for our time and our priorities with our family and church without burning out?

Let me offer four prescriptions for reversing the decline of the ministers' spiritual health:

1. *Develop a heart of worship.* The singing here is an inspiring example of worship and adoration for God. Adoration and worship need to take a higher priority in life than anything else we do. We are created first and foremost to bring glory to God. In Romans 11, after Paul lays the groundwork of biblical theology, he breaks out in a paean of praise in verses 33 to 36.

2. *Desire to know God.* We will never learn to know God unless we learn to know Jesus Christ. Years ago while we lived in Arkansas I met Bill Clinton when he was governor of that state. I don't really know Bill Clinton,

but I know about him. Do we really know God or do we simply know about Him? Knowing God is the key to a fulfilled Christian life, according to Peter's opening comments in his second epistle. We have all seen professing Christians who lacked the joy and fulfillment that speaks of Christ's presence within. Knowing God is the answer to every problem we face. Even though we are surrounded by mind-boggling advances in knowledge, knowing God is, unfortunately, not increasing.

3. *Count your blessings.* Sir John Templeton is a man of considerable wealth, whose objective in making money is giving most of it away. He gives away millions of dollars each year. This man has a habit of lying awake before rising and thinks about five new ways he has been blessed. While I do not know where he stands spiritually, Templeton has learned something about counting blessings. Isn't it amazing that our problems diminish at about the same rate that we find things to be grateful for? If we have a heart of worship for God, gratitude will follow naturally. As we see God for Who He is, we will see blessings all around us. The Psalmist in Psalm 103 tells himself to bless the Lord with *all* that is within him.

4. *Cultivate your soul.* Our souls left to themselves will lose out with God. Furthermore, our souls will

never find true fulfillment apart from God. The only cure for this situation is to spend time with God. Gordon McDonald observed that more time for activity means less time for devotion. Satan wants to keep us from spending time with God. Just as we need daily food for our bodies, we need daily food for our souls. If Jesus, the very Son of God, in His busy-ness needed time with God, how much more do we need it! Many of the new books that come out for us to consider marketing through Choice Books are one-minute devotionals or one-minute Bible reading—even one-minute prayers. At best, that seems to be the spiritual equivalent of fast food. It provides little wholesome nourishment. It may even be a mockery of what time with God should be. I believe that the depth of our private encounters with God is one of the best thermometers of our true spiritual health. A daily encounter with God is absolutely critical for the Christian's survival.

In our time with God, we need to:

a. *Be regular.* It can't be leftovers. Just like tithing doesn't seem to work when we give God what is left, instead of the firstfruits, so we must make it a priority. I would challenge you to schedule your time with God. Set minimums. Don't let Satan wiggle things into that time slot.

b. Do it alone. Jesus did it that way. Find a place away from the distractions of the telephone, the door bell, the day's tasks, family interruptions, and technology.

c. Do it in stillness. If sleep departs during the night, instead of getting frustrated, use that time for communion with God. We seem to be bombarded with noise and activity. We must find a place of quietness.

d. Read. Reading the Scriptures is central to our time with God. Start with a prayer like the one in Psalm 119, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." If we start with a prayer like that in our hearts, God will show us something.

e. Read the entire Word of God at least once every year. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." If we don't know the whole Scripture, we are more prone to deception. We don't see all that we need to. We should read slowly so our souls absorb the words. Make notes of your thoughts as you read. Mark up your Bible. Make it meaningful to you.

f. Meditate. Pray, Lord, what do you want to tell me? Then just sit back and listen. I believe that God speaks to those who take time to listen. Let us be reminded that God always speaks in full harmony with His Word.

g. Pray. Praise God. Intercede for others. It would be a worthwhile practice to pray for every member by name. I don't know who to credit for this, but I offer this: "If the request isn't right, He answers, 'No.' If the timing isn't right, He answers 'Slow.' If you aren't ready yet, His answer is 'Grow.' If everything is right and ready, His answer is 'Go!'"

Our souls need rest. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

For the busy pastor, he may need to take another day off besides Sunday to rest. These meetings have been described as days of having our batteries charged, but I would not see them as days of rest.

In conclusion, prosperous spiritual health is possible. It's God's will for us all. He doesn't want us to be sickly. Isn't it wonderful that while our physical bodies deteriorate, our spiritual bodies can thrive and prosper until the day we die, regardless of our physical health! God yearns for our spiritual well-being. Let us not disappoint Him!



Rarely do we admire the virtues we do not possess.

Has The Vision Died?

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

The countdown is on. Calendar pages have been turning, and starting time is being counted in days. Now the clock is ticking.

Prayers have ascended. Phone calls were made. Not only is it a late-night hour, but it is getting close to the day school is to begin, and the staff is not yet hired. What will we do? Will we need to call a meeting with the parents and tell them we cannot have school?

The school board and ministers were involved in forming a list of possibilities, giving suggestions, and calling prospects. I was given a list of names and the calling began. My list of prospects came up empty. Then I called my preacher friends—probably close to a dozen of them around the country. School was to start in days and we still did not have a teacher.

I was reminded of a few things during my search. I called my preacher friends who listened to my desperate need and too often the comment came, “We’re still looking for someone to teach in our school.” I didn’t keep record of how many times I heard that, but I wish I would have. At least, it gave us a bit of comfort to know that we were not alone in

our search.

That temporary comfort quickly returned into a cumbersome burden. “We’re still looking for a teacher,” came one reply. Others said, “We don’t have our staff yet. The school where he was does not have a replacement yet.” Another said, “I don’t know what to tell you; we knocked on so many doors and for some reason they all came up empty.” One person indicated it was “impacting” the mission work of AMA (Amish Mennonite Aid). Not only was the response from my fellow ministers revealing—the responses from the list of possibilities became alarming. One person indicated that our offer was the third one. Another said it was the fourth time he had been asked to teach.

The search included calling Faith Builders Educational Programs. They were not able to give us helpful leads. Steve Brubaker’s comment was, “Alarming—has the vision died?” What can we do to change the situation? Maybe we should attempt to revive the vision. Might it be more accurate to say *resurrect* or *develop* a vision? Developing a vision requires essential ingredients. Let us consider several basic ones:

Vision of Ministry

We are the body of Christ traveling through a wicked world that Jesus would surely describe as a “sinful and adulterous generation.” God has graciously blessed us with children. One of the church’s major missions is to train our children in the ways of God and His Word. The Christian school is an aid to the church and home in preparing and equipping our children to live for God in this sinful world.

We may have become calloused to hearing Solomon’s proverb, “Where there is no vision the people perish,” (Proverbs 29:18). Whatever your explanation is of the meaning of that proverb, here is my paraphrase, as it relates to a Christian school, “Where there is no vision for a quality Christian education, the children suffer.” In my search for a teacher there were no indications that teachers are losing heart because they don’t sense a vision from the church. Church schools should go beyond just fulfilling government requirements or keeping our children from the evils of public education. Perhaps we need to encourage one another in developing a vision for equipping our children with a quality, godly education.

Our congregation was blessed at a Sunday evening service with missionary Merle Beachy’s report of the work in Kenya, Africa. Darrell Yoder,

who had been on a mission endeavor to Pakistan, was also present that evening. Only brief mention was made of Darrell’s presence. While this was significant, I thought of another mission Darrell had been on. He was formerly one of our school teachers. While he taught he was on a mission for Christ and the Church. The Christian school is a vital ministry of Christ’s church. Let us cultivate that vision.

Vision of Affirmation

We need a fresh breeze blowing across the church. Maybe it could simply be called an attitude adjustment. Let us develop an atmosphere in the church that acknowledges teaching as an honorable vocation. Being a school teacher is as honorable as piloting a jet plane or building an upscale house. I wouldn’t want to argue on this, but I wouldn’t be surprised if committed Christian school teachers would have more stars in their crowns than do famous jet pilots.

Teaching in Christian education is helping direct our children to yield their lives to Jesus Christ and to develop their skills to be of service to Him. Christian education is spiritual child development. It is not meant to be “day care” to relieve parents of their “kids” for a while. Let us develop an attitude around the church that teaching is an honorable and

appreciated vocation.

Vision of Development

Look over the little ones of the flock. God has a purpose for each of them. We do not know what God wants them to do in service for Him. Until then, it is our responsibility to be role models, and teach so they will have the tools needed for their calling. Can you visualize the importance of equipping them with a solid Christian education for whatever God calls them to do. School, learning, and education—they are musts in preparing for their work in life. It is more than the golden opportunity “to shape lives for the glory of God.” Let us set our sights for a high vision of a school that equips our children for challenging opportunities to serve the Lord.

One of my teachers must have had a vision of development. She told me that I was bad enough and good enough that someday I would be a preacher. She’s been long gone from this earth, and I’m ‘still preachin.’ The influence and life of a teacher lives far beyond the day of death. Never lose sight of what God can do with a naughty child who experiences God’s saving grace and yields his or her life to Christ.

Vision of Joyful Participation

Joyful participation by the entire congregation at school meeting sends a powerful signal to staff and

students. One seasoned teacher expressed disappointment at the lack of interest from the church. “If only more people would come to the school meetings!” was the lament. Members’ non-attendance at school meetings is discouraging to staff and students.

When my children were students it meant a lot to me when members who did not have children in attendance came to school functions. Now I’m a grandpa and I get a warm feeling when I see others showing enough interest in “my wonderful grandsons” to attend the special programs put on by the students. School is the church’s mission. Many of us like to sing, “I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God.” Show your support for the school, even if you don’t have children involved, after all, it’s part of your family, and that includes all the children.

Vision of Giving

School boards should not be handicapped for funds. The only earthly possession you can have in heaven is your children. Investing in our children should be a top priority. We are giving a message to our children when the board needs to keep reminding the congregation that funds aren’t reaching. A truly Christian school is a powerful mission at our fingertips. Give generously!

Roy Lowrie wrote a brochure in

1988, entitled: "Giving to the Christian School." He pointed out that the "entire body benefits when a child or young person is trained for God." He further stated, "Developing and operating a good school takes more than parents can give in tuition." He encourages parents, students, grandparents, and alumni to give. "The church should give, for the school is a work for God which advances 'The Cause of Christ.'"

House payments, maternity bills, doctor visits, car repair bills, and school tuition payments are often heavy burdens for young couples with children. The body of Christ should be sensitive to the teaching of Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:13-15. "For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing left over; and he that gathered little had no lack." It can be discouraging for young couples who cannot meet expected tuition, when the brothers they share the hymnbook with are able to take long trips, drive nice cars, eat out frequently, own recreational paraphernalia, and other things that go well beyond "food and raiment." (See 1 Timothy 6:8)

To develop the vision of giving, consider this point from Lowrie, "People who love the Lord but do not have children in school should give toward the godly training of the young."

Vision of Paying

This sobering comment from a teacher's wife was passed on to me: "His heart is still in the classroom, but we cannot afford to have him keep on teaching. He taught for 15 years. They feel like 15 years of VS!"

One teacher commented, "We do really appreciate decent pay. We're not just working at school, but after school, work is brought home, and we must sometimes work late into the night."

A former board member at our school frequently reminded us how one teacher approached them on the subject of pay. He told his board if they figure the income of each family and they pay him the families' average, he will be satisfied.

Vision of Participation

In my search for a principal, I heard some concerns and frustrations from seasoned teachers. From the teacher's perspective there is room for some parents to sharpen the vision of being partners in educating their children. Maybe hearing frustrations of teachers will help us listen and identify with the teachers' problems.

Here are some struggles and sor-

rows from the teacher's perspective:

—When a student does careless work time and time again and you know he can do better.

—When you feel a parent isn't wholeheartedly supporting you.

—When a student lets something slip that was said at home about school life. You check it out hoping it isn't true, but it is true.

—When the parents take no initiative to visit the school and check on the child's progress. A teacher gets tired of always making the first move to discuss a child's problem.

—When parents seem to be glad to have a place to put their children for several hours.

—When parents dispute and challenge the grading of a child's work without getting a true picture of the situation.

—When students are habitually tardy. "It's distracting when they come into the classroom when you're halfway through devotions. School days are busy without the extra work of tardies."

There is a significant number of former teachers scattered across the church. If you want to learn why so many decided not to stay with it, here is an idea for you. Invite a former teacher for coffee or dinner, with the understanding that you try to hear why teaching was not a career ministry they chose to pursue. From

a non-threatening, non-critical, honest, and humble heart seek to learn why some good teachers do not continue to teach. Do not be defensive or argumentative, but truly search for why effective teachers quit. Teaching is a difficult challenge. Hearing all angles of their frustrations will help us keep teachers teaching. Once we know why they don't start or don't stay we can begin responding with ways to sharpen and enhance a vision for teaching.

In my search and call to Faith Builders, Steve Brubaker and I exchanged some ideas. I suggested the problem may not be with young people not pursuing teaching, but numerous issues the church must address and make some adjustments. He responded with these thoughts: "The questions run deep, and the answer is even deeper. I suspect the answers have tentacles deeply embedded in who we have become. The answers are not only deep, they will take years to become operational. We are talking about a change of cultural values, not merely the bandaging of a superficial wound. Until we value the place of the mind in loving God, teaching and schools will be a place to meet government requirements and 'do time' until you can enter the 'real world' and make lots of money."

The situation alarms me. Ask yourself and God what you can personally

contribute to changing our values from bandaging a superficial wound to a lively vision of the church's vision for Christian schools.


Maybe this positive note from an active teacher will encourage us to sharpen our vision. "In my teenage years, I didn't have a desire to teach. I was scared I couldn't do it right. My biggest fears were that I wouldn't be able to come up with a schedule that I could work in all the lessons, and I just simply couldn't teach the lessons to where it would make sense to the children. I thought teachers were so tied down. All they do is sit at their desk with piles of work, answering hands—non-stop. I thought teachers were really 'shut-ins.' But I know now that they don't have to be shut in. I enjoy playing with the children three times a day. I look forward to recesses. And we do get a lot of sunshine and fresh air. My eyes have been opened to a world I didn't know existed. I've experienced the joy of a

note saying, 'I love you. You're a good teacher; Thanks for all you do.'"

Another teacher noted, "A mother sent a note saying she'd like to pack the teachers' lunch tomorrow; an older single girl wondered if it would suit to bring soft drink floats to school one afternoon. Flowers from the back yard picked just for me, and yes, we teachers love to get snacks after school. Some days are trying and tiring and those are such day brighteners!"

Alarming—Has the Vision Died?

There are rays of the vision around us. Can we revive it to the point of opening more eyes to the world "I didn't know existed"? Can we restore the vision to where the joys outweigh the sorrows, and the rewards start here and now and last through eternity?

[Recommended reading: "Climbing Mt. Everest—The Future of Mennonite Education," by Steve Brubaker, Faith Builders, Issue 82, Winter, 2006.] 

helpers at home

Secrets of a Beautiful Home

Mary June Glick

Our homes are the expression of our hearts. Our house is the extension of

our personality. Proverbs 31:27 tells us that a virtuous woman looks well to the ways of her household, which

includes not only her house but the people who come there.

Women have a tremendous challenge and opportunity to create a home that speaks of peace and love. This is true not only if your house is full of people, but also if you live all alone. Our homes should speak “Welcome!” to those who step inside the door.

A welcoming home is a place where people feel loved and feel they are important to you. It is a place where children and adults alike can be relaxed and comfortable. It is a refuge from the outside world, a place of safety. This kind of home does not establish its value on money or material possessions. It takes time and sensitivity to the needs of others.

A welcoming home is a place of order.

I’m not talking about a place where you’re almost afraid to breathe, but a place where things are put back in place, where clothes are hung up, where dishes are washed and floors are swept. It is a place that is organized to make things easier for you and for those around you. A place of order does not allow disobedience and disrespect. Each person knows his or her job and does it cheerfully.

A welcoming home is an expression of you.

Your home should express your

personality; it’s not a copy of the Joneses’. Of course, when you are married and have a family it will also reflect your husband and children’s likes and dislikes. Part of the beauty of your home is the diverse personalities, depending on the age and gender of its members.

A boy’s room should look like a boy’s room, even if it’s not always what you would prefer. Children need to be allowed to enjoy their toys and be creative. I remember when our children were small my husband built a small table for the kitchen where they could play or color or do other table activities. Children like to have a space that is specifically theirs. As they get older and share bedrooms with siblings, allow them to have a corner with a desk, a table, or some space of their very own.

The decor of your home should be warm and creative, with wall hangings, books, and furniture that express your family interests.


A welcoming home is a blessing to others.

Your home can be a bit of heaven on earth. It should be a welcoming beacon in the community, a place of hospitality. Use it to bless other lives. You can do this by praying for others, by having time to sit down and chat or drink a cup of tea with those who just drop by for a visit. Inviting

families from church to your home for Sunday dinners is a beautiful way of showing hospitality. It seems to be a dying art in our larger Mennonite communities, with eating out in restaurants seeming to take its place.

I realize that eating out can also be a blessing and there are times when it is more appropriate. But there's nothing that takes the place of eating

in our own homes. Cookouts are a good way to invite people we don't know as well. We have been blessed many times through the years by the hospitality of others and have received rich rewards and friendships by sharing it as well.

May your home be blessed as you share it with those you love. 

junior messages

Are You Okay?

Anita Yoder, Ligonier, IN

Dan and Martha Otto, along with their family, answered God's call to work at Blue Ridge International for Christ mission in Haiti. Their family met with many adjustments and experiences.

Haiti is a poor country and not English-speaking, so they had to learn French Creole.

Some of the sights you might see in this country are vendors trying to sell anything beside the road to make a little money. "Taptaps" (taxis) offer rides on the back of pickup trucks. By equipping these with ladder-carrying racks, the passengers have something to hold onto. Buses are usually crowded. Wheelbarrows and carts are either pulled or pushed loaded

with all manner of things. Ladies carry enormous loads on their heads. Hungry children with sad eyes seem to be everywhere. Trash and filth litter the ditches. The roads are poorly maintained.

One of the first months in Haiti, Dan and Martha needed to travel to Christian Aid Ministries for the scheduled language classes. They made their way through the countryside, traveling slowly. At a busy village they started following a taptap and a bus. Then they saw the taptap hitting the bus. Not only did he hit it once, he hit the bus again several times.

The taptap driver stopped and got out, and looking very angry, he made

his way to the back of the bus and tore off the license plate. Using his anger for strength, he tore the metal plate in half and threw it under the bus. By then, many people were milling about, and a fight began right in front of the vehicle. What could they do? Would the crowd insist on including them in the fight? Dan and Martha were stuck; they couldn't move.

A black man tapped on Martha's passenger window. "Are you okay?" he asked in English.

Surprised that he spoke English, they answered, "No, we're not okay;

we want to go through this village."

He said, "Follow me!" Spreading out his arms he made a way right down through the middle of the thronging traffic. They turned to thank him for his help, but he had disappeared. Had God provided an angel to take care of them that day?

God is glorified through telling about miracles that He performs. God is also glorified by our prayers for Christian workers in other lands. Are you remembering to pray for them?



PEN PALS, PLEASE

Dear Readers,

My name is Destinee Lynn Stoltzfus. My parents are Dathan and Wilma Stoltzfus. I have one sister and 3 brothers. Their names are Andrea (8) Brandon (7) Kyle (5) and Lavon (2).

My hobbies are reading, baking, and cooking, writing and swimming, camping and meeting new friends. I would like a twin or pen pal of any age. My birth date is Feb. 23, 1997.

Your friend,
Destinee Stoltzfus
2462 Simmons Rd.
Perry, NY 14530

Dear Readers,

My name is Andrea Fern Stoltzfus. My parents are Dathan and Wilma Stoltzfus. I have 3 brothers and 1 sister. Their names are Destinee (9) Brandon (7) Kyle (5) and Lavon (2).

My hobbies are swimming, baking, reading, and playing outdoors. I would like a twin or pen pal of any age. My birth date is August 22, 1998.

Your friend,
Andrea Stoltzfus
2462 Simmons Rd.
Perry, NY 14530



Dear Youth,

How would you evaluate your commitment and devotion to God?

The amount of time you spend with Him can be one indicator as to how important you think He is.

In one of our churches, the youth spend an average of 3½ hours per week in personal Bible reading and prayer. Their level of maturity is likely higher than youth who do not spend much time with God at all.

On the other hand, if the youth from this church would study the

lives of other youth who spend 7-14 hours per week in solitude with God, they would probably discover an even greater level of maturity.

It must be clarified that spending time in solitude does not necessarily equal spiritual maturity. Yet, those who have a high level of commitment to God, find the time they need to spend quality time alone with Him.

This month's writers have done well in addressing this question. —EE

This 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?

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

Here is what I would expect to happen to the youth and Church, in order of occurrence:

1. Their relationship with God would become closer and more vibrant.

2. If they spent seven hours a week, there would be a quiet and gradual awakening in the Church.

3. At fourteen hours a week, the Spirit would be even more powerfully among us.

4. Either way, a revival would start with the youth that the parents would have to grapple with and they too would likely be swept along with it. (Ideally, the parents would lead in the revival.)

5. The Church would have fewer mediocre Christians.

6. The Church would become more active in evangelism.

7. Because of the outsiders brought in, the Church would have to rethink

and explain its doctrines.

8. The Church would become known and feared in hell.

9. The church would likely suffer some persecution, because Satan would feel more threatened.

—Kenneth Anderson, Rochelle, VA



I devote at least seven hours a week to Bible reading. I pray as the Spirit stirs me and as I place my dependence on God's intervention in my life. One may ask the question, "Does an increase of time necessarily result in increased holiness or a more meaningful experience?" Maybe not always, but usually. I believe that the product of a sincere desire to know God results in increased time spent with Him. And as the time spent in these activities increases, so will their meaningfulness. I spend the time I do because I love God, not out of compulsion or pride. There's a level of devotion and love we young people may not rise above because we do not believe we can or believe it will sort itself out in time or are content with where we are since that's where our peers are. Let's love God more fully now!

—A young adult reader



I believe we would see a revival, first of all, in the church, and next in America in general. We have no perception of the power that can be

unleashed by fervent prayer from a dedicated Christian. God stands ready and willing to pour out blessings on us, and conviction on our neighbors. We need to ask Him for it, and show Him we're serious about it.

—Kraig Beachy, Winfield, PA



If the youth in our churches would spend more time in the Word and prayer, I think we would wake up and see that a lot of stuff we do should change. We would see more of God's Kingdom, and the kingdom of this world would be less attractive. I believe we would take more time to witness to others. We would become more Christ-like and serve Him with ALL our hearts.

—Darin Riehl, Lewisburg, PA



What you take in is what you become. It is our human nature to only take in (eat) what we like instead of what's good (healthy) for us. Prayer, reading the Bible, and studying Jesus' example—instead of a steady diet of listening to music, watching videos and surfing the internet—will make us stronger Christians. We will look forward to spending time with God every day. Our identity will become clear (Who am I?). We will know the God we represent with our lifestyle and take a clear uncompromising stand in this evil world for only Him.

What are you doing with your extracurricular time?

—Micah Lepp, Penn Yan, NY

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I think we would be much bolder to preach the Gospel and to reprove our neighbors of evil. They most likely would not be as bold to openly disobey moral principles in our presence. There would also probably be more neighbors joining our church.

—Joel Snyder, Tower City, PA

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People would notice we're different, because we would be more like Christ. People would know we are Christians by how we act and treat others rather than what we wear or don't say. I think there would be more people of non-Mennonite background in our churches. We would be more knowledgeable about the Scriptures and would have more outreaches and our churches would grow faster because we would care more about the unsaved. We would be more willing to get out of our comfort zones for Jesus' sake. Non-Mennonites would not have to initiate discussions about our beliefs. There would be more missionaries

and they would be better supported because we would be more aware that we are just stewards of what God has given to us. Voluntary Service units would not have such a hard time finding people. It boils down to knowing more about Christ, being more Christ-like, and being more excited about Christ.

—Aaron Yoder, Parsons, KS


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The only worthy reason to come before God is to adore him with a heart of love. 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." The last part is talking about physical healing, but I believe it applies spiritually. The Anabaptist's driving vision was that all men would hear and believe. That's a fulfillment of this verse! If we would just follow this verse, I believe we conservative Mennonites would bring the Gospel to the whole world in a relatively short time. This would totally change our communities.

—Joseph Friesen, Lewisburg, PA

Next Month's
QUESTION

What subjects do you rarely hear taught that you would like to hear more teaching on in your church community?

Please respond by April 20. 

THOUGHT GEMS

We tire of the pleasures we take but
not of the pleasures we give.

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One way to be popular is to listen attentively
to things you already know.

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Some soul winners fish for compliments
while others fish for men.

• • • • •

Two people won't hate each other if they both love God.

• • • • •

Promises may get friends, but performance keeps them.

• • • • •

Rolling up your sleeves and looking for work
is better unemployment than studying your
toes with your hands in your pockets.

• • • • •

Watch out for ulcers caused by mountain-
climbing over molehills!

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