



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

Galatians 6:14

DECEMBER 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 Savior;
 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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What If?

—By the editor

What if God had not showed pity, had prepared for us no city,
For us mortals deeply marred by Adam's sin?
What if He just gave out justice? Said, "They do not seem to trust us,
It's no use; they're not wanting to come in!"


What if Jesus had not agreed to, saying "Father, do I need to—
Go to earth and save these rebels from their sin?
Could we not devise a plan...that would give the power to man--
Make them good enough to *earn* their way back in?"

What if Mary dear, had balked, paid no heed when Gabriel talked?
What if Joseph had stalked off in mortal shame?
If they'd said, "It's too much...we can't think of doing such,
Just imagine what it does to our good name!"

Oh, how fortunate are we...
Their responses bring us favor!
But *what if* for you and me,
Makes us ponder what we savor.

What if we scorn the gift He proffers; turn away from love He offers.
Is there is any other hope for our poor souls?
We will have a rough ride...if we resist, push Him aside,
And we know not when the last bell for us tolls.

God has mercy and grace for the whole human race;
No one has to suffer such an awful loss.
Let us never try to fake it, think that somehow we can make it,
If we fail to bow down low at Calvary's cross.

Christ will keep us "in the know," and will not let us go,
If we let Him hold our hand across the miles.
Let us not grow weak and weary, or upset, downcast and leery.
We'll be rewarded when we see the Savior's smiles! 

Seek Ye First

—Ken Nisly, Harrison, AR

God so loved that He gave and He wants us to give, too. This month, by permission, I use part of a recent article from the pen of Bro. Ken Nisly, director at Hillcrest Home, in Harrison, Arkansas. As a constituency we may tend to look for something new to give our energies to, but does not steadfastness require that we give continued support for projects already begun? I commend the leadership teams at our long-established units for their efforts in making voluntary service a time of spiritual progress for themselves—and for all who volunteer. —PLM]

For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:”

Matt. 6:33: “**But seek ye first the kingdom of God**, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Mark 12:30: “**And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart**, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.”

If I **seek first the kingdom of God**—what does that mean for me? What does it mean for me when I get

out of bed each day? Does it mean that I am getting up because there is reason and purpose in getting up? Does it mean **seeking first the Kingdom** is the most important thing I can do today and that I surely can’t afford to waste any time just lying there any longer? Or am I getting up and going to work because of some selfish goal I have set for myself but I would really rather just lie in bed and not get up at all, because I really don’t have a clear purpose in life.

What makes me different than another nominal Christian? Is the thing that makes me different the fact that in my church we dress different? Is my heart really different? If only clothes make us different, I question whether we are really different.

Consider this statement: “**For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.**” What are the things that they/we are seeking that Jesus was warning about? It seems to me that it is living out our lives and pursuing these things, so that we can say, “This is why I am put here on earth.”

So, if I **seek first His kingdom**, will it also change the way I view my giv-

ing? The 90% left over after the usual 10% tithe—is that His, too? Am I also accountable for the way I spend, give, and save?

If I seek first the Kingdom will it change what I allow for myself and what I do on vacations?

If I seek first the Kingdom, will I read much of the King’s Word because I love Him so much and reading His Word is such a delight, not merely reading to pacify my conscience because I don’t like the felling of guilt if I **don’t** take the time to read?

Will I begin to view the Church as a **Mission** and a **Body** that really has a purpose and that the Great Commission is something that I want an active part in? Is the Church more than just a place to go to socialize and to make me feel good about myself?

Can I begin to understand that **seeking first the Kingdom** and loving the Lord with all my strength and soul requires that I grow? Can I go along with the idea that growth is often painful? In the words of Bro. Charles Hamilton, “**If the thought of asking God to work in our lives doesn’t bring some kind of terror to**

us, then we are not thinking about what we are asking Him to do, or we are not serious about what we are asking.” Have you ever asked God to work in your life and been 100% serious about that request? Have you ever asked and not had an answer to that prayer?

That phrase--about **seeking first the Kingdom of God**—has been on my mind a lot lately. What are the evidences of it my lifestyle? I am seeking it to the point that others around me know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the passion of my life is just exactly that.


Pray for us as we seek to live out our lives with this purpose always before us.

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CORRECTION:

Please note the corrected e-mail address of Kevin Miller at Red Lake, Ontario:

klmiller@tbaytel.net

For those of you who have been trying to contact Kevin about the 50-year MIC workers’ reunion planned for next summer, I sincerely apologize for the giving you the wrong address. —PLM 

Power is dangerous
unless it is joined by humility.

The New Conservatives

Melvin B. Lehman

Faith Builders' Educational Programs

Guy's Mills, PA

How to view the challenges facing the church today is offered many answers. Bro. Melvin Lehman gives us a hopeful assessment of the indications he sees in his recent working with deeply committed youth from conservative Anabaptist churches.

Melvin wonders if the term "conservatism" should be replaced with a better term. Maybe so. Perhaps "faithfulness" or "orthodoxy" could be part of a helpful label. At any rate, let us hear him out and make sure that we carefully consider this insightful essay. —PLM]

Those of us who grew up in the 1960's are known as the baby boomers. In childhood our generation felt the cool shades of the early Cold War and the fear of the "Red Scare." We experienced the tension of the Cuban Missile Crisis and were rudely awakened by the assassination of a president. As teenagers we were horrified by the graphic scenes of a war half-way around the world that confused the average American. Many of our brothers and sisters spent time away from home doing

a stint of 1-W in obedience to the laws of the land. We experienced the intoxicating effects of the free-spirited rebellious 60's. Many of us attended public schools and so were exposed to the spirit of the age, and there we drank from the cisterns of the popular ideas of the day. Some survived. Many succumbed.

Against this backdrop of popular culture, our own Mennonite communities were convulsed by movements within and without during the 1960's. The solidarity in the conservative Mennonite Church was challenged and finally broken along the fault-lines of these movements. There was significant disintegration from the mid-60's through the early 70's. Conferences dissolved or experienced an administrative metamorphosis that weakened their solidarity. New "alliances" and alignments emerged. Most of this activity was clothed in the garb of "liberal" or "conservative" terminology and practice. In spite of the obvious relativity of these terms, it could be argued that for a while they had real content and real meaning. In my opinion as the years

have gone by, the content and the meaning of these ideas have become increasingly obscure.

I remember those days as if they were but yesterday. With clarity I recall my instinctive reaction to the boldest of Mennonite liberal thought and practice. Young and as inexperienced as I was, I knew that this was not the path for me and my family. But the answers were not easy and some decisions not all that clear. Conservative thought and practice had its flaws and snares too that could potentially militate against a genuine spirituality. Giving all due respect to some of our friends who chose differently, my wife and I chose a decidedly conservative path...some may call it moderately conservative. Why? Well, we found that most people on this path took the Word of the Lord seriously. If God said so, then so it is! Of course many inconsistencies [in their practice] can be pointed out and they ought not to be ignored. Nevertheless, a commitment to Jesus as Lord and the subsequent understanding of the call to obedience seemed to my wife and me to be a good “rule” to live by. It was and is our desire that our children and grandchildren would walk in the same path.

Recently, it occurred to me that conservative Mennonite practice has developed along several different

lines of thought. There is what may be called the Old Conservatism that has sought diligently to maintain certain baselines at all costs. There is much to be respected and appreciated in this general stream of thought. In my years of work at Faith Builders, I have become increasingly aware that there is also a New Conservatism that I believe has emerged and found expression in many communities across North America. I coin the term “New Conservatism” to make the point that this stream of activity is rooted in mid 20th-century conservatism and for the most part rejects the primary premises of the liberalizing movements of the 60’s and 70’s. It clearly is a reaction to the static nature of some conservative practice and at the same time is unwilling to follow in the steps of the old liberal movements.

I became aware of all this through my acquaintance with students at Faith Builders. I feel quite privileged to have the opportunity to interact with some of the finest young people in the world. I have found them to be young men and ladies of sterling character who truly seek a good path. They are not rebels. They have a deep desire to serve God in their communities in significant ways by building on the work of those who labored before them. They respect their elders. They are dismayed when

they see a lack of genuine spirituality, and frustrated when caught in the middle of petty “political” intrigues. They are attracted to a vibrant, alive, conservative way of life. They come alive when presented with a compelling vision for how they can contribute to the cause of the Kingdom in their home communities. They want good things and solid leadership to lead in good directions.

What are the distinguishing marks of this New Conservative stream of thought and practice?

First, the New Conservative **appreciates traditional practice**. He does not react nor rebel simply because something is traditional in nature. In fact, he *values* it and gives it due *respect* knowing that the stabilizing traditions of a culture have grown up for a reason. Those reasons should not be lightly discarded even when they do not make immediate sense. On the other hand he does not venerate and idolize tradition in and of itself, knowing that such a position can potentially lead to spiritual deadness and passivity.

Second, the New Conservative **rejects authoritarianism without relationship** as a means of church discipline and maintenance of traditional practices. To be sure, he believes in Church authority and seeks a healthy platform for the exercise thereof; the Scriptures

are clear on this and must not be ignored. Through diligent Bible teaching and exposition the New Conservative leader builds conviction and respect for doctrine and practice. He recognizes that a compelling Bible-based vision that is taught patiently and personally to the next generation will outrun an impersonal authoritarianism over the long haul.

Third, the New Conservative **seeks to respect and honor other Bible-believing groups**. He sees no reason to build unnecessary walls of exclusion because of differences in application and practice; especially if those applications and practices are non-essential and perhaps even inconsequential. Rather than walls he seeks to build bridges in keeping with Jesus’ command to love one another and seek unity of heart and soul.

Fourth, the New Conservative **values a Christian education**; he encourages focused training for the good of the Church. He respects the inherent dangers of education in the same manner as the inherent danger of wealth is feared. Christian education is not an enemy but rather an ally in the work of the Kingdom. In all of this, he understands that all educational efforts and understandings must be seen in the light of the *fear of God* and

the *wisdom of the Cross*.

Fifth, the New Conservative **believes that separation from the world in thought and practice begins in the heart and affects every area of life not just arbitrarily selected areas.** Non-conformity cannot be dictated but must be a reality if the Christian community wishes to prosper in the 21st century. Rather than a static, tradition-based non-conformity, he seeks an *active, counter-culture lifestyle* and boldly bears the name of Christ while identifying himself as a fellow human being with his non-Christian neighbors. He does not fear interacting with culture from his Christ-inspired counter-cultural position.

Sixth, the New Conservative **longs for meaningful Christian community as a basis for personal growth and effective mission activity.** This is most clearly seen in “cell group” movements (or more generically “small groups”), increased congregational involvement in church administration, various approaches to serious discipleship programs, finding personal mentors, and “church planting” mission efforts. It may be noted that the New Conservative young person generally feels negative about large concentrations of Mennonites in large communities. They tend to look out from their large communities

with desire to have impact in out of the way places through small communities that have a personal touch.

I make these observations not to endorse them in every respect or to create controversy in respect to their validity or non-validity. I offer them here because I think these positions are unwittingly defining the future of many of our communities. While I view these general positions positively, I am increasingly concerned about how we can make significant changes in the way we think and practice without thoughtfulness and prayerfulness. It is very dangerous when things “just happen” by default over time rather than by deliberate decision based on Bible principles and couched in the wisdom of the ages.

I have the growing sense that “the jury is still out” in respect to what I am calling the New Conservative perspective. These so-called New Conservatives have yet to demonstrate that they have adequate infrastructure to achieve sustainability over the long haul. For example, the second point made in this essay suggests that the New Conservatives view authority differently than did the Old Conservatives. But it is obvious that no movement has ever achieved sustainability over centuries without an adequate center of authority to


give definition to its ideas. Personally, I think the New Conservatives have some work to do here both in thought and practice.

Or one could look at point 3 on “respecting other Bible-believing groups” and note how this can quickly turn into a deadly ecumenism that assumes we will all get to heaven by and by somehow. This too must be understood and resisted steadfastly.

Then too, I note that point 5 has often been used as a neat argument to open the way and even give credence to a crass worldliness. As much as I personally am in agreement with the New Conservative understanding, I feel compelled to put forth the warning that without careful thought and prayer coupled with the resolve to come to terms with the inherent

weaknesses cited herein, this movement is not sustainable.

Finally, I apologize for not being able to think of a better word than “New Conservatism” to define the stream of thought that I have attempted to identify. I personally have a deep respect for the contributions of the “Old Conservative” positions during the 20th century and have no desire to devalue that contribution by suggesting there is a “new” way that we must follow. The path that leads to God is an old path that many saints have trod before us. We are brethren with them...and shall always be as we walk in the ways of the Lord. We are indebted to them all.

From Issue 85 (Fall), Faith Builders’ newsletter. Used by permission. 

ANNOUNCEMENT

Executive Director needed for Menno-Hof Amish/Mennonite Visitors’ Center in Shipshewana, Indiana.

Responsibilities: Implementing strategic direction for the organization; providing senior leadership to achieve organizational goals; and overseeing fundraising and constituent relations.

Qualifications: Knowledge of Anabaptist faith tradition; experience in strategic planning; and ability to communicate issues of faith and culture passionately.

Complete job description available at: www.mennohof.org.

Application deadline: December 15.

Send resumés or inquiries to Leanne Farmwald c/o Menno-Hof, P.O. Box 701, Shipshewana, IN, 46565 or lfarmwald@aol.com.

Obesity: A Weighty Subject—Part Two

—Harold S. Martin, Lititz, PA

1. Chemical Imbalances

An imbalance in body chemistry can lead to obesity, and thus some people who are overweight have not come to that state as a result of willful and careless habits on their part. Some of those who have an abnormal craving for food need our support and not our condemnation.

People who are overweight are often viewed as persons who are jolly, happy-go-lucky, and laid-back kinds of people who may not be dependable employees, and thus need not be taken seriously by the community. *Time* magazine reports that marketers and manufacturers are often reluctant to cater to overweight people because “*many national and global brands—whether cars or sneakers—want to be seen as young and hip, and fear that any association with overweight customers will muddy their expensive image making.*” On the other hand, as Americans grow heavier, attitudes seem to be changing. The *Time* article is concluded by citing a recent survey which indicates that 75% of the people surveyed felt that it is okay to be overweight, up from 45% twenty years ago.

Still, there is widespread discrimination against fat people which violates the laws of societal justice.

Obese people are frequently refused employment opportunities because of their appearance. Many overweight people have very few friends because there are some who simply do not want to be seen with them.

2. Physical Fitness

Excess weight can increase the likelihood of developing diabetes, and it can put an additional strain on the heart. Weighing too much is a major factor not only in diabetes and in causing heart problems; it is also linked to various cancers and to other physical woes.

Restaurant meals are getting bigger and bigger, but no matter how big they get, the one who ordered the meal needs to push the plate away, or share it with another person, or ask for a box to take part of it home. The desserts are loaded with calories; for example, one of Cinnabon’s *pecanbons* has 1,100 calories—and that is considered a mere snack! The hottest new hamburger at one of the fast-food chains is an unhealthy mountain of meat (with four strips of bacon)—called a “monsterburger.” Back in the 1950s, when MacDonald’s got its start, the average soft drink contained seven ounces; today the average drink is

20 ounces. French fries used to sell in packets of two ounces; today the size averages six ounces.

Snacking between meals often includes doughnuts and cookies and gourmet muffins and pastries and specialized coffee drinks that are loaded with whipped cream. School health classes talk about eating fruits and vegetables, and then sometimes the youth are served French fries, cheese pizza, and soda pop in the cafeteria. One report says that it seems like candy bars, French fries, and pizza are becoming the “cigarettes” of the 21st century.

Michael Berman, in *Living Large*, reports that many “financially strapped schools are getting rid of their physical education programs and playgrounds, even as they allow vending machines and food advertising in their buildings; and [they permit] computer and television programs that ensnare [youth] who might otherwise be playing outside.”

Former President Bill Clinton said, “*the truth is that the children who are born today could become part of the first generation in American history to live shorter lives than their parents, because so many are eating too much of the wrong things and are not exercising enough*” (Fox News, May 12, 2005).

It is time to focus on shutting down the computers, and turning off the TVs, and trying regular exercise along with eating moderate amounts of food.

3. Spiritual Well-Being

Overindulging in food not only leads to larger waistlines and clogged arteries. It can also lead to spiritual disaster. Frederica Mathewes-Green says that “food is an intoxicating pleasure... ‘What is so bad about engaging in a little gluttony anyway? It’s not one of the bad sins like adultery or stealing...it’s the cute sin’” (*Christianity Today*, November 13, 1995).

While Christians generally frown upon smoking and alcoholism and sexual promiscuity, they are slow to speak against overeating. The words “fat” and “gluttony” are seldom used in the newer translations of the Bible. In a *Christianity Today* article (January 11, 1999) entitled, “The Fatted Faithful,” Virginia Stern Owens says that Eglon, the king of Moab, is the only person specifically described as “fat” in the Bible. Ehud, under the guise of bringing tax money to the king, plunged his dagger into the king’s stomach, and the fat closed over it.

There is really very little biblical evidence to indicate that being obese is in itself a sin. What happened to Eli, however, should be a good lesson for us (1 Samuel 4:18). And there are other warnings in the Bible, such as:

“...whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly” (Philippians 3:19).

“...whether you eat or drink,...do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

One of the sobering scenes which demonstrate the displeasure of God toward those who disobey His laws is found in the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 21:18-21 says, “If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; *he is a glutton and a drunkard.*’ Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.”

Psalms 78 tells about the Israelites who were calling for meat (instead of manna). Verses 29-31 say that God “*gave them their desire...but while their food was still in their mouths, the wrath of God came against them, and [He] slew the stoutest (KJV “fattest”) of them, and struck down the choice men of Israel.*”

In light of these Scriptures, the early church fathers listed *gluttony* as one of the “seven Deadly Sins”—the root sins that gnaw away at our spiritual vitality. It is proper to be physically fit, but it is even more important to be spiritually fit (1 Timothy 4:8).

Elisabeth Elliot, in one of her news-

letters, comments: “I do not speak as a doctor or weight loss expert. I leave to professionals matters of metabolisms and compulsions. I speak merely as a woman who loves God and wants to do what He says. His Word tells me to present *my body* as a living sacrifice, holy, and pleasing to God. This is my ‘spiritual’ (or reasonable) ‘act of worship’ (Romans 12:1). It is a marvel to me to realize that this body of mine (which happens to be tall, white, Anglo-Saxon, female, and old) can actually become holy and pleasing to God as I present it to Him. It is thereby set apart just as the vessels of the tabernacle were made holy by being set apart. This physical body becomes a spiritual act of worship. I must give serious thought to the *stewardship* of that body. I am told that I am not my own. Once I have presented this body to God, it is no longer mine. It is His. Yet I live in it and I am made the ‘custodian’ (the caretaker, the keeper) of it. I am responsible to treat it as His property, which means that I must exercise control.”

Elisabeth Elliot continues, “Some years ago I became aware that I had gained more weight than I should be lugging around. I was ashamed. It did not occur to me to try any program or buy any special low cal foods. I did not begin counting calories or refusing desserts. I did two things which seemed sensible: I bought a

scale and determined to monitor my weight, and I cut the usual portions of food in half. Do I offer this as the perfect ‘solution’? No, there is no perfect solution. But *motivation* is what matters. Whose am I? Is this body mine, or does it belong to Another? Has He promised to help me? He has—over and over again. “The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded. Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed’ (Isaiah 50:7, KJV)”

The following paragraph is adapted from Elisabeth Elliot’s essay on “Weight.” The Lord will help us, but we must take responsibility. *Nehemiah* both prayed and set a watch. *Noah* built an ark, but God gave him the plans and the strength to build the vessel. *David* chose five stones and stretched the slingshot, but God saw that the stone reached its target. *Moses* lifted up the rod that was in his hand, but God parted the waters. This God is our God forever! He knows how to make the sun stand still if He needs to do it for the sake of one of His servants. He knows how to help *us* conquer self-indulgence, but we *must make up our minds* to do what needs to be done. It will not all be accomplished in a day. It is not *merely* a matter of willpower. Children of God come to Him in helplessness,

yet offering their bodies as an act of spiritual worship—one day at a time—trusting a merciful and loving Savior to send all the help His servant needs!

Sometimes sermons on “temperance” (self-control) center on the use of tobacco and alcohol, and say nothing about overeating. The congregation feels good because most of the members “don’t drink, smoke, spit, or chew—or associate with people who do.” Yet they think nothing of feasting on a big meal of mashed potatoes and ham loaf and gravy—topped off by a piece of chocolate cream pie!

Many church members are finding that their church-related activities seem to promote higher body weight! Very few board meetings and Bible study groups can gather these days without having some food on which to snack. Church socials usually have far too much food. Should we just say “no” to church carry-in meals? That does not seem to be the answer. Jesus accepted so many dinner invitations that He was accused of being a glutton and a drunkard and “a friend of sinners” (Matthew 11:19). Novatian, a third-century church leader commented: “Although in the Gospels, the use of meats is universally given to us, yet it is understood [that they] be allowed use only within the law of frugality and self-control” (A

Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, David W. Bercot, ed., page 283).

In our day there are people who laughingly speak about how they have overstuffed their stomachs, but few consider it a sin. Gluttony seems like a private vice—a cute sin—but it is undisciplined indulgence in eating! It dulls the mind; it ruins our powers of concentration; it hobbles our bodies at an early age.

The key concept in dealing with the problem of overeating is **self-control**. Gluttony is not wrong because it makes an individual fat; it is wrong because an inordinate consumption of food is one of the marks of self-indulgence. *We will never conquer gluttony until we stop making it a joke, and start making it a moral issue—a*

A Parable...

The Church and the World Marry

Wilmer Swope, Leetonia, OH


Have you heard the wedding bells of the marriage of the church and the world?

History teaches us that when a church denomination or congregation marries

matter of right and wrong.

Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23), and mealtime is a good time to put the virtue of self-control into practice. Mealtime is a human necessity; it represents what is meant by our “daily bread.” There may be no better time to impress children and youth with the importance of self-restraint, courtesy, and gratitude than when we gather around the table to partake of food. Also, it is spiritually healthy for God’s people to practice periodic fasts, and donate more of our resources to meet the needs of the hungry of the world.

From BRF Witness, Vol. 41, No. 6. Used by permission. 

the world, seldom is there a divorce afterward. Christian ethics are neglected and there is almost never a return to former biblical doctrines and practices. 

The world looks brighter from behind a smile.

marriages

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

Beiler-Stoltzfus

Bro. Marvin Jay, son of Josiah and Rachel Beiler, Dundee, NY, and Sis. Lydianne Renee, daughter of Simon and Joyce Stoltzfus, Taylorsville, NC, at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church for Dayspring Christian Fellowship on Sept. 29, 2007, by John U. Lapp.

Bontrager-Schlabach

Bro. Gregory, son of LaVon and Mamie Bontrager, Arlington, KS, and Sis. Patricia, daughter of Eugene and Rosa Schlabach, Free Union, VA, at Trinity Methodist Church for Faith Mission Fellowship on Oct. 6, 2007, by Ivan Beachy.

Helmuth-Miller

Bro. Eli C. Helmuth, Whiteville, TN, and Sis. Sarah Miller, Kalona, IA, at Sharon Bethel A.M. Church, on Sept. 23, 2007, by Delmar Bontrager.

Miller-Yutzky

Bro. Glendon, son of Freeman and Maudene Miller, Huntsville, AR, and Sis. Lisa, daughter of Rudy and Marietta Yutzky, Brookfield, MO, at Trinity Fellowship Center, Brookfield, for Lighthouse of Faith, Huntsville, AR, on Sept. 22, 2007, by Elmer Gingerich.

Nisly-Brenneman

Bro. Conrad, son of Melvin and Clara Nisly, Hutchinson, KS, and Sis. Judith, daughter of Henry and Vera Brenneman, Rochelle, VA, at Oak Grove Mennonite Church on Oct. 13, 2007, by Tim Miller.

Stoltzfus-Troyer

Bro. Mervin, son of Omar and Nancy Stoltzfus, Advance, MO, and Sis. Katy, daughter of Melvin and Lois Troyer, Advance, MO, at First Baptist Church for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church on Oct. 19, 2007, by Melvin Troyer.

Wagler-Yoder

Bro. Dave, son of Daniel and Anna Wagler, Lyndon, KS, and Sis. Hannah, daughter of Galen and Sylvia Yoder, Wasilla, AK, at Zion Lutheran Church in Hancock, MI, for Pelkie Mennonite Church, on Sept. 8, 2007, by Henry Doerksen.



cradle roll

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

Bales, Nelson and Wilma (Landis), Advance, MO, fifth child, third son, Lyndon Jay, Aug. 25, 2007.

Beachy, Daniel and Salina (Kanagy), Winfield, PA, fourth child, second dau., Jana Rachelle, Oct. 21, 2007.

Beachy, Walter and Ramona (Miller), Chestertown, MD, third child, second dau., Sarah Elizabeth, Oct. 3, 2007.

Graber, Kevin and Mary Anna (Swarey), Odon, IN, first child and dau., Megan Nicole, Oct. 19, 2007.

Hochstetler, David and Virginia (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, fourth child, second son, Collin Ray, Oct. 15, 2007.

Hochstetler, Wendell and Sheri (Beiler), Abbeville, SC, fourth child, second dau., Abigail Joy, July 27, 2007

Holbrook, Steve and Stephanie (Enck), Oglethorpe, GA, sixth child, third dau., Moriah Faith, Sept. 9, 2007.

Kauffman, Allen and Naomi (Lantz), Iva, SC, sixth child, fifth son, Kyle Jacob, July 27, 2007.

King, Richard and Shannon (Byler), Lancaster, PA, third child, second dau., Nadia Patrice, Oct. 12, 2007.

Knepp, Phillip and Angela (Kemp), Odon, IN, tenth child, sixth dau., Dorcas Irene, Oct. 19, 2007.

Miller, Lamar and Eva (Chupp), Arthur, IL, fourth child, second dau., Cheryl Elaine, Oct. 11, 2007.

Stoll, Tristan and Lisa (Wagler), Washington, IN, first child and dau., Katelyn Elizabeth, Sept. 20, 2007.

Stoltzfus, Calvin and JoAnn (Mullet), Lewisburg, PA, fourth child, second dau., Rachelle Ann, Aug. 30, 2007.

Wagler, Lester and Lois (Overholt), Lyndon, KS, second child, first son, Lester Adrian, Oct. 5, 2007.

Wagler, Titus and Donna (Miller), Cross Hill, SC, seventh child, fourth son, Alex Remington, Oct. 24, 2007.

Wingard, Faron and Roselyn (Weaver), Montezuma, GA, sixth child, third dau., Janae Yvonne, July 20, 2007.

Yoder, Anthony and Rose (Stoltzfus), Cedar Creek, TX, fourth child, first son, Landon Joel, Oct. 1, 2007.

Yoder, Conrad and Rebekka (Van Ammel), Poperinge, Belgium, first child and dau., Keturah Jochebed, Sept. 15, 2007.

Yoder, Reuben and Mary Lynn (Smucker), Malta, OH, first child and son, Nicholas Drew, July 5, 2007.

Yutzy, Wilmer and Joanna (Miller), Linneus, MO, sixth child, fourth dau., Trinity Hope, July 30, 2007.

ordinations

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

Bro. Merlin Beachy, 40, Grantsville, MD, and **Bro. David Kauffman**, 36, were called by voice of the church and ordained as ministers to serve at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Salisbury, PA, on Oct. 21, 2007. Preordination messages were brought by Leonard Orendorf, Accident, MD, and Ernest Stoltzfus, Perry, NY. The charge was given by Jerry Yoder.

Bro. Leland Nisly, 33, was ordained as bishop at Cedar Crest A.M. Church on Oct. 21, 2007. Preordination messages were brought by Ernest Hochstetler, Abbeville, SC. The charge was given by Paul L. Miller, assisted by David Yoder and Ernest Hochstetler. Donald Miller and James Shetler were also in the lot.

Bro. Leon Troyer, 30, Russellville, OH, was ordained to the office of minister for Still Waters Mennonite Church, Brown County, OH, on May 13, 2007. Preordination messages were brought by Dale Heisey, Costa Rica. The charge was given by Bill Mullet, assisted by Paul Weaver and Dale Heisey. Also in the lot were David Keim and Ivan Miller.

obituaries

[Correction in obituary of Mary Martha Miller, October, 2007. p. 17: "Nephew Samuel Wayne Nisly, Hartselle, AL, preached in the funeral service." I inadvertently omitted this. I'm sorry! —PLM]

Beachy, Lena E, 77, of Salisbury, PA, died Oct. 4, 2007, in Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, MD. She was born Oct 18, 1929, near St. Paul, PA, daughter of the late Eli L. and Amanda (Hershberger) Yoder. She was an active member of Mountain View Mennonite Church. She especially enjoyed the sewing circle and served as secretary for Mountain Anthems Chorus for 20 years. Her gracious spirit and encouraging smile will be greatly missed. On August 29, 1952, she was married to Elmer N. Beachy, who preceded her in death June 6, 2007. Survivors are a son, Jason Beachy, Greencastle, PA; six daughters: Esther (Leon) Hershberger, Wooster, OH; Rhoda (Dale) Curtis, Grantsville, MD; Orpha (Edward) Petersheim, Oakland, MD; Edith (Thomas) Miller, McConnelsville, OH; Kathleen Beachy, Salisbury, PA; Brenda (Brian) Yoder, Grantsville, MD; two brothers: Paul H. (Marie) Yoder, Grantsville, MD; John E. (Grace) Yoder, Salisbury, PA; one sister: Edna (Claude) Beachy, Paoli, IN; 20 grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

Worry is interest paid on difficulty
before it is due.


The funeral was held at Mountain View on Oct. 7, with Jerry Yoder, Menno Yoder, and Delmas Gehman serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Beachy, Lawrence Lee, 77, of Plain City, Ohio, died Sept. 26, 2007. He was born March 13, 1930, son of the late Joe and Alma (Miller) Beachy. He was a member of Bethesda A.M. Fellowship. He faithfully served as deacon there since 1971. On Nov. 8, 1951, he was married to Anna Mae Miller. She survives. Their four children are Dale (Linda) Beachy, David (Angela) Beachy, Freda (Jonnie) Eash, all of Plain City, OH; and Fannie Mae (Mark) Zook, Burgettstown, PA. Also surviving are 19 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Other survivors include, brothers: Homer (Lena) Beachy; Joseph (Ada) Beachy; Walter (Mary Jane) Beachy; sisters: Lovina (Lester) Hostetler; Sue (Ralph) Yutzy; all of Plain City, Inez (Abe) Miller, Sarasota, FL; and sister-in-law, Lovina Beachy, Plain City. Preceding him in death were an infant son, Elmer Jay in 1954, brothers: Noah in 2001, Eli William in 2005; sisters: Alice in 1919; Malinda Beachy, 1917; infant sister in 1939; and Alma Gingerich in 1977, his twin sister, Laura on Aug. 25, 2007; sister-in-law, Barbara Beachy in 1992; brothers-in-law: Dan Gingerich in 1989 and Joe Detweiler in 2000. The funeral was held on Sept. 29 at United Bethel with Elmer Stoltzfus, Ray Stutzman, and Perry Troyer serving. John L. Gingerich was in charge of the committal at Bethesda Cemetery.

Lapp, Mary Ann, 86, Worton, MD, died Sept. 24, 2007. She was born Jan. 24, 1921, at Gordonville, PA, daughter of the late Daniel and Leah (Esh) Smoker. In May of this year she was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, which was the cause of her death. She was a member of Harmony Christian Fellowship. For many years she was actively involved in the sewing circle and in meeting many family and community needs. On Dec. 10, 1940, she was married to Samuel L. Lapp, who preceded her in death on April 12, 1991. They had four children: Daniel (Ida Mae) Lapp, Dover, DE; Mervin (Sue) Lapp, Worton, MD; Elvin (Nancy) Lapp, Dover, DE, son-in-law, Alvin (Anna) Yoder, Mifflinburg, PA; 17 grandchildren, and 13 great grandchildren. Others preceding her in death were a daughter, Edna Mae Yoder, and a granddaughter. The funeral was held at Harmony Church on Sept. 27, with Steve Stoltzfus, Tim Yoder and Mahlon Stoltzfus serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Nissley, Dan Jay, 82, of Catlett, VA, died at his home. He was born Sept. 1, 1925, in Kansas, son of the late John and Fannie (Miller) Nissley. He was a member of Pine Grove Mennonite Church. He served as bishop for over 50 years. On April 10, 1947, he was united in marriage to Alma Miller. She preceded him death on Jan. 24, 2006. To this union were born 13 children: Dan Jay, Jr., (Martha),

Calverton, VA; Amos LeRoy (Lydia), Catlett; Barbara Ann (Albert) Bender, Calverton; John David (Susanna), Martha Marie (Lewis) Bender, Sylvan Edward, Samuel D. (Nancy), Allen Ray, all of Catlett; Dora Esther (James) Martin, Cynthiana, KY; Sharon Rose, Paris, TN; Rachel Fern (Robert) Martin, Cottage Grove, TN; Steven Isaac (Edith), Paris, TN; Fannie Mae (Henry) Nissley, Clifton Hill, MO. Surviving are 72 grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, and two sisters: Mary Swartzentruber, Dover, DE, and Susie Bender, Oakland, MD. Preceding him in death was a sister, Barbara Ann, a brother, Amos, and one great grandchild. The funeral was at Pine Grove Church on Oct. 28, with Henry Brenneman, Bennie Byler and Eli Yoder serving.

Otto, Earl Jay, 26, Arthur, IL, died in a construction accident Sept. 27, 2007. He was born April 17, 1981, at Humboldt, IL, a son of Omer Ray and Lorene (Miller) Otto. He was a member of Trinity Christian Fellowship. Survivors include brothers: Wilbur (Bethany) Otto, Sullivan; Merlin and Ryan Ray, both of Humboldt; sisters: JoEllen, Beth Ann, and Lori Marie, all of Humboldt. Other survivors include maternal grandfather, Eli Miller and paternal grandparents, Fred and Martha (Miller) Otto. He was preceded in death by maternal grandmother Mattie Miller. The funeral was held on Sept. 30, with Dannie Diener, Lonnie Gingerich and Mervin Yoder serving. Burial was in the Pleasant View cemetery. 

Salvation

Maria (Miller) Rockhill

Lisbon, NY

Betrayed. Abused. Condemned. Alone.
He anguished. Died. For hearts of stone.
Like mine. Like yours. No striking spark.
Unbending. Proud. Unthankful. Dark.

Then piercing, brilliant Christ's death shone,
Unleashing love that shattered stone.
He's melting, molding, making new;
Transforming me. Transforming you.

Redeemed. Restored. Forgiven. Free.
"My life, a trifle, I give to Thee.
Oh, Savior, Priest and Risen King,
With all my heart, my thanks I bring."

observations

Recently I was asked, rather unexpectedly, what I idealize for the present church. This has caused me to think seriously on the matter. If I had it to do over, I would want to say something like this:

—Recognizing the important part of young people in the church, I want to cultivate an open and meaningful relationship with them.

—I desire that their zeal, idealism, and energy be accompanied by 20/20 vision. This means that they are neither far-sighted nor near-sighted, but rather that they are eager to participate in service and witness opportunities where they live and work. They are also willing to follow the Lord's call to other places.

—They are entitled to see in older people models of Christian maturity in priorities and relationship. It is discouraging to young people if older people fail to relate well together. Serious-minded young people will notice if temporal interests are more important than eternal values.

—Let us remember that no church is so ideal that individuals do not need to make right choices. A healthy church will be concerned and prayerful with any members who are going astray rather than following the Lord.

—Ideally, there are not generation gaps or other gaps in the body of believers. All should desire to live lives that please the Lord and be at peace with one another.

• • • • •

Recently a brother, in giving a topic in a mid-week meeting, mentioned that in their family the children who earned any money gave such earnings to family support until they came of age. My impression is that such a practice is rare in general society. Some would view it as a serious injustice to the children.

Right or wrong, it seems to me that the more general practice is becoming increasingly common in our church circles. I do not recall of having heard this specific issue discussed from the pulpit or in writing.

A local parent told me that their underage children received ten percent of their earnings. An equal amount was designated as a tithe. The remainder came to the parents.

There are probably different ways of doing this right. But however it is done, it should not foster an unhealthy spirit of independence from parents and church.

The amount of money minors have access to has changed drastically in my lifetime. It seems to still be changing. The important thing

for the Christian is that money, in any amount, is a trust of Christian stewardship. For people of any age to live with that awareness is distinctly Christian. The cause of Christ and the church will benefit from such stewardship. And the stewards will be blessed, too.

• • • • •

Christian counseling continues to attract a great deal of attention in conservative Anabaptist circles. There seems to be widespread agreement that ideally emotional needs could be met under local pastoral care. It is regrettable, to put it mildly, when non-local counseling alienates a counselee from his/her primary spiritual care givers.

It is, however, sometimes necessary that non-local help is sought. This can strengthen rather than weaken local ties.

Davy Mast, who has counseling experience, will not accept a counselee without the consent of the home leadership. This has proven to be helpful to all concerned.

If the counselor is hesitant to initiate contact with local leadership, leaders should not rule out the necessity of making the first move. Long-term benefits are best realized when there is no trace of competition on the part of the parties involved.

• • • • •

Global warming has become a politically-correct concern. Former vice-president and presidential candidate, Al Gore, was recently awarded the Nobel Peace prize for calling attention to this issue through his book, entitled, *An Inconvenient Truth*. He also made a movie on the same subject. Despite the fact that this theory is widely accepted, there are credible persons who bring up serious questions about the basis of these claims.

Elmer J. Miller was recently asked to prepare an article on this subject for *The Woodlawn Chronicle*, which appears in the Sept/Oct, 07, issue. The following notes are gleaned from that article:

—Researchers report that Al Gore uses more electricity in one month than the average American uses in a year.

—www.Global-Research has called Gore's work "A Convenient Lie."

—British television has produced a documentary entitled, "The Great Global Warming Swindle." This study is backed by very extensive research involving weather patterns as far back as 1100 A.D. They conclude that the present warming trend is another cycle that is not related to human activity.

—It is true that the Arctic ice cap is melting noticeably faster in recent decades. At the same time the Antarctic continent is getting colder. The ice cap there is actually getting thicker.

To me, these global warming concerns seem ill-founded. But to be good stewards of our natural resources is certainly right. We do well to remember that we Americans use far more than our share of the world's non-renewable resources. Furthermore, it is not a secret that automobile exhaust emissions in congested areas cause air pollution and a variety of health problems. While I am not a scientist, it seems to me that something of global proportions would surely affect both polar regions.

The article by Melvin Lehman in this issue strikes me as being unusually deserving of serious attention. It may be too easy for some of us to dismiss the concerns of young people as being too idealistic to be practical. Young people are not always immune to attitudes that are not

friendly to solid inter-generational relationships.

A careful review of this article can be helpful to all concerned.

On the one hand, the article reflects insights that may to some seem a bit unsettling. But it also reflects a tone of respect and caution that is an important part of its potential usefulness.

—DLM

Apology from the editor:

I accidentally left off part of a statement in last month's Observations column. Bro. David was reporting favorably on Parents and Grandparents Alliance. His final comment reflected our brotherhood's stance on the problem, but it was cut off.

Here it is: "This should remind us afresh that not only should TV be considered unacceptable in our homes, but children's access to video games and unrestricted access to the internet present unacceptable risks."

I sincerely apologize! —PLM 

Satan doesn't care what we worship

as long as we don't worship God.

Compassion for the Poor and Needy

—Nancy Coblentz, Haynes Street, Belize

Sis. Nancy Coblentz, better known as “Miss Nancy,” has served in Belize with Amish Mennonite Aid since 1966. She has cheerfully and compassionately distributed relief goods, taught school, counseled, hosted guests, and ministered in various other ways that brought spiritual help through the church.

In particular, Miss Nancy has exercised her gift of encouragement through visitation. The Haynes Street Mission in Belize City where Miss Nancy resides along with other missionaries is situated in a drug-infested community, in a poor section of the city.

The following stories reveal the great need for the love of Jesus for those in the depths of spiritual and moral depravity.

Revised excerpts from a letter by Miss Nancy follow. —FS

Last week at the hospital I met a fellow who had been shot in the leg. I also visited one of my former school boys who was nearly killed by being chopped. He defended himself. We have heard a lot of shots in our community recently. The victims are usually hospitalized or killed. It

is getting worse and worse. The city police and Belize Defense Force have been patrolling the neighborhood much more since so much shooting is going on.

On Sunday night we were at a wake (night vigil) for a 93-year-old man, George Garbutt, who lived in our neighborhood. He and his wife were members of Pilgrim Fellowship Mennonite Church at Hattieville years ago. I used to wash for them.

I tried to visit them twice a week. It was a poor situation. They were both slightly retarded. Last week I took food over for them because George had been injured when he was knocked down by a police cycle. He was in the hospital for two days and then was sent home to die. He had a broken leg and a few deep cuts in his head. We were expecting the daughter would care for them. No care was shown.

A grandson came to ask if we wouldn't please come and tend him. There were ants crawling all over him and into his cast. Flies were going into his mouth. It looked like he was dying. David and Alma

Hochstetler came over to help clean him. I sprayed the ants. His foot had a bite from a rat. I sprayed under and around the bed and in the cast of his leg. He was wet with sweat lying on a plastic mattress with no sheet. The gash of his head was full of dried blood. This too was attracting flies. The blood was dried in his hair. Oh, the sight and stench! He must have been lying in the mess for days!

He also had bedsores. The grandson just wept and wept aloud. He couldn't take it that we had to clean such a mess. When he asked what I needed to clean him, I said, "Give me the rags and toilet paper and I will get him clean."

He was ashamed and kept saying, "God will punish the people that just left him lay." He was referring especially to his mother. I had never cleaned up such a mess before, but God gave strength and determination to get the job accomplished. We then washed him thoroughly with soap, put clean sheets on his bed, and dosed his sores with antibiotics. He must have felt 100% better! He drank and drank water after the ordeal, but was not responding verbally any more. We knew George would probably not last long. That night he died.

We went over to the house. When we uncovered him, we saw another

sight we'll never forget. Rats had eaten the flesh off three of his fingers and were starting on the fourth. The bones and nails were still there. I asked Gloria, his wife, if she saw the rat. She said, "Yes." She said that during the night he would try to move his hand and made a noise. She chased it away a few times but it sure did some awful damage. It was so gruesome and sad!

Here is a better story: Miss Eileen, our neighbor, just turned 100 years old in September. A good while before her birthday she broke her hip. She is now on a wheel chair and we give her groceries every week and clean her house. She is an outstanding Christian and loves when we read to her. One of her dogs is very jealous over her. When I hold her hand to pray with her, the dog tries to put his paw in my hand, too. So that way we pray. She came to our church but was never a member. But she is pleased that her funeral can be in the Menonite Church.

[May these accounts encourage all of us to care for the poor and needy in our communities. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40) Let us remember to pray for protection, strength, and wisdom for our missionaries. —FS]



Celebrating Christ's Birth

Mary June Glick

In the Old Testament God gave commandment to his people to remember the special things He had done for them by setting aside days of commemoration and celebration. New Testament believers are also commanded to observe ordinances that Jesus set up, such as communion, baptism, and marriage. We celebrate other times of joyfulness in the lives of our families such as birthdays and anniversaries.

Christmas highlights the birth of Christ, even though we don't believe it is necessarily the correct date. It is shared by believers and unbelievers all over the world. The question we face as believers is how we can celebrate this special time in a way that honors Christ and is a reflection to the world of the true meaning of Christmas.

In the recent past, nativity scenes are being removed from public places. I rejoice when I see our neighbors make a public statement by placing a nativity scene in their yard. Recently, also the word "Christmas" is being replaced by words like "holiday" and

"winter." Fortunately, many people have resisted this and have returned to the use of "Christmas."

How can mothers contribute to Christmas by making this a meaningful experience for our families? I believe, first of all, we need to prepare our own hearts. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a beautiful example of preparing her heart for Jesus. Luke 1:26-38 gives us the account of the angel's visit to Mary and her response to this astonishing announcement that she was to be the mother of the Messiah. I love Mary's response. She said simply, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." I see this as submission to God's will and purpose for her life.

I believe that as we accept God's will and purpose for our lives we will find peace and joy, not only at this Christmas season but all through our lives. Let's try to exhibit this peace to our families and to our neighbors as we together rejoice in Jesus' birth.

Now for some practical suggestions to make this Christmas a meaningful experience:

1. Give it spiritual significance.

The four Sundays before Christmas are called Advent. This is a time of reading the prophecies concerning Christ's birth and leading on up to the actual birth in Bethlehem. Children enjoy hearing this story because they can identify with a baby. Some families light a special candle each Sunday. When our children were small, we read Christmas stories out of a Bible story book. The nativity scene can be a beautiful teaching tool for children as they act out the Christmas story (with or without flannelgraph figures). Sing the beautiful carols of Christmas with your family.

2. Family Traditions. Develop your own family traditions that give your children memories. It is never too late to begin. We have begun new ones as we have added grandchildren to the family. It can be certain foods that are special or doing certain

things together like baking, playing, singing, etc.

3. Share with others. Teach your children unselfishness by allowing them to make a sacrifice for others. Possibilities include singing in a nursing home or hospital on Christmas Eve or caroling in the community, baking plates of cookies for neighbors, adopting a needy family, volunteering at a homeless shelter, inviting someone in your church who doesn't have family in the area for a special Christmas meal—the opportunities are endless.

4. Giving. This is a time for giving. As God gave his only Son as a gift to mankind because He loved us, so we give to show our love to others. Avoid commercialism in your giving. Give simple gifts out of love. Let's teach our children that they don't need all the new gadgets and toys to be happy.

Let's celebrate Christ's love this Christmas! 

The fact that few want to believe something
doesn't keep it from being true.

The Christmas Miracle

Based on a true story

—Roseanne Peachy, Oakland, Maryland

I will never forget that cold December night. It was that joyous time of year when the air was filled with Christmas carols, love, laughter, and fellowship. But this year I did not feel it, for this was my first Christmas without my dear Grandma.

She had died suddenly three months before without so much as a good-bye and I felt upset with God. Didn't He know how much I loved and needed Granny yet? Couldn't God have at least let me say good-bye? How I missed her twinkling brown eyes, her singing and the hot apple cider she'd make especially for me when I came to visit her. Oh, how I missed her advice for any difficulty I faced! She loved Jesus more than anything in the world. She'd always tell me. "Miriam, it is only Jesus who can understand you completely. Tell Him everything because He knows you even better than you know yourself?"

Now suddenly she was gone...gone as a leaf in the wind. She seemed so far away that cold December night as my family and I were driving

to our church's annual Christmas candlelight service. I gazed into the night, watching the snowflakes drift past the car window. The moon gave a soft glow across the snow and the trees gently swayed in the wind. Dad drove and Mom sat beside him. My two brothers snuggled near me humming, "Away in a manger." I remembered how Granny used to sing that song with tears in her eyes. She'd say, "The king of God, our Savior, was born poor, so He can truly show us He is on our level, that He wants us to know how much He loves us."

Through all the swirls of snow, I gazed once more into the night sky; very faintly I could see a sprinkling of stars. Somewhere beyond the stars my dear Granny lived with God. I truly wanted to pray, yet I felt upset that God had taken her away.

We crested a hill when suddenly—it happened! Our car screeched to a halt, a blinding flash of brilliant white light flashed in front of us from nowhere. Mom screamed and Dad shouted, "What was that?"

"Did something explode?" my

brothers asked excitedly. Dad stopped the car at the side of the road and we got out. Mom and I saw a human form at the same time who dropped to its knees. Just a few feet from our car stood a small child. A woman came running toward us sobbing and crying, “My son, my baby! Oh, thank God you didn’t hit him.”

As we parted ways, my brother voiced the question we all had been thinking, “Dad, do you think an angel stopped us with that bright light?”


“Yes, maybe it was an angel,” Dad’s voice quivered, “whatever that light was, I’m sure God watched out for that baby.” Mom wiped her eyes and said, “He shall give His angels charge over thee.”

As we started on our way again my heart became filled with a strange excitement. I knew I had witnessed a miracle. If God cared about that baby, surely He cared about me, too.

That night at church, the carols seemed to take on a new light, “Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.” I thought about Jesus and how He came into this world as a tiny baby. “Shepherds quake at the

sight, glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia...” I thought about the angels, how they were full of praise and rejoicing at the birth of Jesus, who came to save us. He came to save me, too--even me.

The candles throughout the church burned brightly, bathing a warm, peaceful glow on everyone’s faces as we sang some more. “Son of God, love’s pure light, radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus Lord at thy birth...”

As we knelt to pray, I decided to pray my own prayer, “Dear Jesus, come into my heart to stay forever. I give you all my life, my everything. Amen.” I was filled with a wonderful peace and joy. In my mind’s eye, I could see Granny’s radiant smiling face and feel her wonderful love for me. I pondered about the miracle I saw on the road, and how God is so high and holy, yet He watches everyone and has a plan for everything. I could feel Jesus and the angels rejoicing over me in heaven. “Joy to the world, the Lord is come!” I sang with all my heart. 

To be angry with a weak man

indicates that you are not strong yourself.

Dear Youth,

What do you do with the world's pressures? Are you fascinated by them? Do you cater to them? Do you try not to think much about them, hoping they will go away? Or do you feel their power but choose not to yield to them?

You live in a time of unprecedented pressure from the kingdom of darkness. Many of these pressures are so subtle that it is hard to detect their presence or their source. These subtle pressures work their way into

our minds through advertisements, songs, wealth, drama, and scores of other avenues. God knew all about this age and in His knowledgeable way, He has put influences into our lives to help us walk in truth and light. Our job is to recognize those influences and continue to seek Him with all our heart.

As you read this month's responses, perhaps you will recognize some ways that God has looked out for you over the years so that you will be a person who loves and serves Him. —EE

This Month's QUESTION

What have been some significant influences that have motivated you to keep turning your back to the world and turning your face toward God?

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

I believe that the influence of godly men and women in my life has had the greatest impact in keeping me turned to God and away from the world. My parents, grandparents, teachers, and pastors are only a few examples. These people have been genuine in their walk with God, they have been honest about life issues, and they've shown good attitudes about Christianity. These are traits that have drawn me to the Christian faith again and again! I've discovered that the Christian life is sometimes confusing, often tough, but *always*

rewarding. God is REAL and the abundant life that He offers to his true children is incomparable to anything else!

In contrast, I've also experienced people who are hypocritical, pessimistic, or cynical. Thankfully, such people have been repulsive to me and have turned me in the opposite direction—toward God! From my observations I've learned that following God's standards and living life God's way is the only way to fulfillment and happiness!

As I grow older I realize more and

more how much power of influence each of us possesses. It's challenging to think that my attitudes, actions and testimony can be a positive or negative influence in the lives of every person I meet! As youth in 2007, let's give everything within us to the work of the Kingdom. The "abundant life" (John 10:10b) that is promised us when we follow God is an adventure no one should miss out on!

—Irene Miller, Townsville, PA



The Spirit of God and my own conscience have strongly convicted me when in the wrong. That is a powerful motivator to repent and return to God. To be forgiven of a great debt of sin is a blessing that tends to brokenness and desire to turn away from continuing in sin. Also, for me, the knowledge of truth is so helpful in turning my back to the world. To know what God says about the wicked and to realize that peace is really in obeying God is so reassuring. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And guess what a good way is to know the truth? Read the Book! And, isn't it true that we forget things often? Read it again and again! It seems to be new every time. Indeed, the Word is alive! It is one of the best ways that I know to get to really know God.

The people of God around me are another great motivating factor to keep turning to God. If things are not well between my Lord and me, being

with His people to worship together is not a joy. The fellowship with my brothers and sisters seems strained. Yes, the church's very presence around me constrains me to be faithful. Lastly, it is harder for the devil to get a foothold when I am talking to God, or singing, or thinking of His ways. The consciousness of God's presence with me right now gives me strength. Alleluia!

—Phil Miller, Stanardsville, VA



Christian women who have traveled the path before me have influenced me greatly. There have been times I couldn't go on any longer that an older woman encouraged me. They tell stories and I see the Lord led them through victoriously, stories about hard times similar to mine. Somehow sharing in this way helps me grasp the reality of God's goodness.

—Verda Nisly, Oswego, KS



Our lives are surrounded by other people's influence, as we all realize, influence for the good or for the worse. If I think back over all the good examples that I have been influenced by, I cannot name them all. A few, I can, such as Moses from the Bible. He basically had an awesome future of pleasure awaiting him as the son of the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Yet he "...chose to share the oppression

of GOD's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin." Hebrews 11:25 NLT. I assume that more than a few Egyptians thought the decision he made was rather stupid. But his choice then to love and serve GOD is still benefiting him today. I have also been influenced by my immediate family, relatives, friends, and church family in showing by their lives that being a child of GOD is totally worth it. And finally, the perfect example of Jesus, who said to all those who make a personal commitment to follow Him, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

—Mike Miller, Minerva, OH

• • • • •

One of my motivations to serve God is His love for us, especially since He died on the cross to save us from our sinful nature. Next, is all my Christian friends who encourage me, though we cannot always depend on man. We still have Jesus who cares for us. Also a lot of the immodesty of the world has never impressed me or inspired me to follow those in the world, because

there doesn't seem to be happiness in their lives.

—Randall Miller, Arlington, KS

• • • • •

I think that my Dad has been a significant motivating influence in my life. With some of the disappointments that I've seen in our church life, my Dad stuck by principle and didn't make the common excuses in the name of "church" or authority. His stand on truth and Biblical principles helps me to appreciate his stand then on separation issues. When inconsistencies in the church are overlooked, in favor of maintaining a strong emphasis on authority and separation, people turn away and say, "None of this separation from the world is necessary."

This makes me wonder, "Are we really standing on principle or is one's image so important that we make excuses and then have to say it's our own fault that we lost our motivation?" Matthew 18:5, allows no room or excuses for causing someone to lose their motivation. Being a motivation to others is a big help in our own motivation in staying turned toward God.

—David Yoder, Baraga, MI

Next Month's
QUESTION

What are some basic Bible principles that can help us in our daily relationships with family members and fellow employees?

Please Respond by December 15. 

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Authors and their contributions

Abbreviations Identify Sectional Features:
(M) Meditation; (P) Poem; (BR) Book review;
(Ed) Editorial; (MA) Mission Awareness;
(MM) Ministers' Meetings Message; (Obs)
Observations; (HH) Helpers at Home; (Y) Youth
Message; (JM) Junior Message; (RR) Reader
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that doesn't keep them occupied.

• • • • •

If you think nothing is impossible,
try sneezing with your eyes open.

• • • • •

An expensive vacation may be two short
weeks of fun, then weeks too short of funds.

• • • • •

A sharp tongue and a dull mind may occupy the same cranium.

• • • • •

Some ask for special privileges by asking for tolerance.

• • • • •

It is a poor religion that is well only when its owner is sick.

• • • • •

We learn some things from prosperity, but more from adversity.

• • • • •

Some political timber is mostly bark.

(USPS 767-160)
Calvary Messenger
2673 Township Rd. 421
Sugar creek, OH 44681

Periodicals