



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

Galatians 6:14

APRIL 2008

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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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## A Heartfelt Prayer

*Name Withheld by Author*

My God, do hear my earnest cry,  
Heal our infirmities, draw nigh.  
I will hold tightly to your hand,  
Accept your will, what You have planned.

You've healed the sick, the blind and more,  
O bring them through the open door.  
Our loved ones near the fold, I plead,  
That they would search and see their need.

Some stray away, taste of the world,  
A bitter harvest will unfold.  
May they just lay down self again,  
So that the tempter cannot win.

We know temptations never leave,  
So to the cross of Christ we cleave.  
For victory we persevere,  
O God, the Father, draw us near.

O, Holy Spirit, touch the heart,  
We pray that you will not depart.  
We intercede on bended knee--  
For our loved ones, please hear our plea.

*"If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it"* (John 14:14). 

## “Let’s Eat!”

Our ears perk up when we hear these words: “The food is ready; come and eat!” Even the Psalmist praised God, who satisfied his mouth “with good things” (Ps. 103:5a). Food is a gift of God. But, as with other gifts of life, we must use food rightly, or it no longer blesses us and our consumption of it no longer brings glory to God. Gluttonous appetites and poor self-control militate against the work God would do in our lives.

Being overweight has become a major health problem. The typical American’s weight has increased so much that airlines now figure fewer passengers to reach payload weight than they did a decade ago. Seats in various seating accommodations must be made wider to make sitting comfortable. How can “the good life” create such problems?

**The key is healthy food choices and self-control.** Food is not like tobacco, drugs and alcohol. No one needs that notorious trio, but we all need food. Indeed, *using too much of something we need* represents an entirely different question than does *using something of which we need nothing at all.*

Even though good health is sustained with good appetite, we must be careful lest good food becomes a controlling force in our lives. I, for one, must exert considerable effort to curb my weight. While the doctor has not chided me about this, I probably deserve it. It would be better for my heart if I weighed 15 pounds less. This extra weight slowly came on over a period of years. Sometimes I manage to shed a little weight, but if I let down my guard, I quickly gain it back.

I feel hungry sooner and oftener than I wish. Perhaps it’s partly a matter of boredom, or worse, of failing to find my deepest satisfaction in my Savior. I know He knows what I actually need and desires to give it to me. I think doctors sometimes recommend fasting one day a week for people who struggle like I do and eat for reasons other than hunger.

I find the article, “Substance Abuse in the Church,” elsewhere in this month’s *Calvary Messenger* deeply challenging and helpful. How many readers will join me in a renewed effort of honoring God and respecting our bodies by maintaining a healthy weight?

Let us choose nutritious foods.

Taste is not a good index of value. Fresh fruits and vegetables deliver more nutrition than do highly processed foods. The modern supermarket has a large selection of attractively-packaged foods. Even with a full shopping cart, we may take home many empty calories with little nutrition, if we consult chiefly our taste buds.

Let us accept the challenge of eating that honors God. Let us be satisfied with enough.

• • • • •

An added blessing that comes with conserving, sanctified lifestyle choices is that it enables us to give more “to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28). Here’s an insightful quote: **“The poor will always be with us. Genuine concern and love for them will show, not so much in how indignant I am when others waste money, but in how I share what God has given me.”** (Daniel R. Horst, Altamont, TN, in *The Timely Truth*, Feb., 2008.)

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### Old Men Shall Dream Dreams

Just before I woke up this morning I had a dream that still disturbs me. While most dreams fade fast this one was quite vivid and still lingers. As I pondered this dream, it came to me that I might ask your reaction to it.

### What I Dreamed

**What I saw in my dream did not happen in real life.** In 40 years of teaching school, as well as several de-

cares in parenting, this dream never happened to me. It involved an old pickup truck with a stick shift, unlike any we owned while our two boys were at home. Our adolescent son (I don’t know which one) was in the truck wishing to drive. I told him not to start or drive the vehicle.

His curiosity and eagerness, however, overcame his better judgment. He turned the key with the vehicle in gear. The starter caused it to lurch forward. While it did not “fire up” and damage anything, I was very disappointed in him. My first reaction was to think that he should be taught with the “hickory stick.” I delayed that action, however, and spoke with him as we walked away from the scene.

Then I began to have second thoughts.

A bit later, I thought of another course of action: I could write down comments my son might be feeling and thinking. These comments would range from **good responses:** (“My dad told me I should not do that; I am sorry”) to **bad responses:** (“This is no big deal.” “My dad is just being crabby.” “I must be allowed to experiment so I can learn to drive,” and so on). Then I would invite my son to cross out the ideas he does not identify with and to underline the responses that describe his feelings. In this way, I could discern his thinking and find out where his “heart” is.

That would provide a better basis for appropriate discipline.

*Then I woke up.*

### **What Can We Learn From It?**

What does this dream mean? I don't know. We cannot afford to take sin lightly. Parents and teachers must not ignore unpleasant realities. Wrong doing should not be "swept under the carpet." But I also remember some of my past poor judgment in child discipline. Some of those errors were from impatience and even anger, and some also from another extreme: looking the other way.

I am now 74. I cannot undo past mistakes. I have tried to make amends and express my sincere regrets wherever

I can. If these musings were just the wistfulness of an old man, I would not be bothering you with them. Because many of you readers are busy teachers and parents, I invite anyone willing to take the time to use my dream as a springboard to give your advice to those presently occupied with training and nurturing children.

### **Use this dream as a starting point.**

Tell our readers what you see in my dream, positive or negative. Don't worry about offending me. (One's skin gets thicker with age, doesn't it?) Seriously, I would rather see a teacher or a parent helped than to have you shielding me. All glory be to God!

—PLM 

## **reader response**

**Re: "Uncertain Sounds"** (Nov., p. 25) and **Reader Response**

Dear Bro. Paul,

It is with keen interest that I read your article "Uncertain Sounds" and the responses to it. However, I have a very real burden about these and other issues we face. People may say, "Oh, but we are experiencing a real close church life; these are good people, just a little weak in some areas." But these outward signs are simply revealing a casual spirit of the heart. We cannot expect to casually coast

into heaven. It is that serious!

My plea and burden is, "Who is willing to stand up and not only talk about it but take a stand in these areas as fathers and leaders and get back to the Bible way, helping our people see the seriousness of following the trends and styles of the world?" If we do not take a stand when we know the truth, we are only hardening our own hearts and the hearts of those following us.

Let us rise to the challenge.

*Robert Byler, Maypearl, TX* 

# The Credit Card Crunch

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Sharing in finance seminars has put me in touch with many wonderful people. Success stories abound. We are living in an era of unprecedented income. Giving for our schools, missions, and local congregational needs is at an all-time high. Our sense of stewardship is commendable. But I am concerned. A deep sense of apprehension grips me again and again. I feel inadequate in trying to think how we can be spared the devastation of unmanageable debt.

The incidence of out-of-control spending via credit cards is increasing. The situation now requires some straight talk. Examples could be cited of a number of members in our Beachy churches with credit card debt from \$40,000 to \$220,000. People in these higher debt ranges have been using as many as 20 (and even more) cards.

Sadly, in addition, there are outstanding loans from lending institutions, and from relatives, church people and non-church individuals. The financial life blood is hemorrhaging, keeps getting worse, and sometimes seems nearly unstoppable.

Before credit cards came into use, people sought loans at banks or other lending institutions. These organizations would routinely look at the lender's assets and liabilities

and from those decide whether or not this person was a good credit risk. If the lender was denied a loan, some would try to borrow from relatives or acquaintances. If that was unsuccessful, the person had to do without and adjust his life accordingly.

Credit cards changed much of that. Credit cards are now being used as a way of making a loan. Credit card debts can postpone the downward adjustment of one's life style, while actually, it accelerates the need for scaling down because of exorbitant rates of interest and late payment charges which greatly increase the repayment total. If scaling down is delayed, when the moment of truth hits, the jolt is severe and devastating.

Victims should make their situation known to the church's ministers. In some cases it is almost more than the local congregation can handle. Because of counselor confidentiality, I am not at liberty to give details of individual cases. Most times there is a way for the congregation to rally around and put together some measures that work toward debt relief. I say, "toward" because these larger debt loads are usually years in the making. To come out and be debt free **always** takes longer than it does to go in. Discipline, tough measures, self-denial, and time are required.

It is not appropriate for those in

debt to feel that there are rich men in the church who could “pay this off for me and still have plenty left over.”

One single factor stands out above all else in regard to credit cards: **the high rate of interest.** I have seen high-end debts to be anywhere from 18% to 28% APR. On a \$20,000 debt, at 28%, finance charges and late payment fees and penalties could cause that debt to grow to \$100,000 in just six years. (A \$100,000 debt at 28% is \$28,000 per year just for the finance charge!) A \$20,000 debt at 18% could be \$100,000 in 11 years. (That’s \$300 a month, without any payment on the principal.) Not even the rich can justify that kind of expense. Nor can the poor afford it, or scarcely pay it off. The *drain* is horrendous, the *strain* is overbearing, the *pain* is unrelenting, and the *gain* is nonexistent.

It is hoped those reading this and who are on those on the punishing end of these sad scenarios will **take immediate steps to get out now!** Read on.

The temptation is real. People are tricked into thinking another card will make a way to get through. But another card practically always makes the hole bigger and deeper. They use one card to pay another, to pay another, to pay another that is “maxed out,” on and on, in an unending cycle. It is like the game of Crack-the-Whip which we teenagers played while ice skating. The person at the far end couldn’t handle the increased speed, causing him to fall

and slide flat out against the pond’s bank. The viciousness of unpaid debt is devastating. One person used 25 cards before he called for help. The time and energy used to juggle so many cards is unconscionable (*i.e.*, unreasonable, excessive, not guided by conscience).

When the moment of truth comes, the victim is in a deep dark pit where he can scarcely see the light of day. Coming out will take a long time. Loaning more money is not the answer. That only makes the pit deeper. Giving large amounts of money is also not the answer. It, too, will likely be squandered. Most certainly, small amounts to provide food or basic necessities could be offered. It will show that people consider them persons of worth. Few such people can save themselves. The most workable approach I know of is for the church to establish a lay committee of three men and their wives to oversee the church brother’s income and expenses. It has worked wherever the needy brother and his wife have cooperated.

It is a humbling experience, to be sure. Those assigned as overseers should be careful not to let this *humbling* experience become a *humiliating* experience. There is a vast difference. It can also be a beautiful and successful experience. The goal is financial freedom. And that, my friends, is being beautifully successful.

The committee should first of all arrange for a meal together with the couple to be assisted. Let’s celebrate



the love of Christ! And then in the bonds of brotherhood, express that love to and for each other. Work hard at preventing an adversarial relationship. Seldom in our lives is there a time when mercy, sympathy, and love are more needed.

Now the hard work begins. The committee should arrange to receive all of Sam's income. (a hypothetical name). They should establish a budget for Sam and his wife, and make sure it is adequate for their family's needs. At the same time, Sam should hand over all his credit cards along with his credit card statements. The committee must decide whether or not Sam is permitted to keep one card for specific uses.

The key to making this work well is for church members and/or relatives to give money as interest-free loans. That way all of Sam's income above expenses can go for debt relief. A second option is to borrow money at the bank which will at least be a sizeable reduction in interest payments.

This arrangement will call for sacrifice on both sides. The body of Christ sometimes requires sacrifice. It is not easy for Sam and his wife. It is not easy for the committee. Nor is it easy for those who loan the money. Jesus has called us to do what is right and that is not always easy.

One man from the committee and his wife should meet regularly with Sam and Mrs. Sam. The wives need to be involved at this level. A sense of honor and respect is thus retained

for Sam's wife when she sees another woman taking interest in this arrangement. Much is conveyed, even when not everything is spoken. When flow and regularity has been established, not all of the committee needs to be present for every discussion and decision with Sam.

When Sam has been able to pay off the debt, he can go back to managing his own financial affairs. He has seen a budget work. He has adjusted his life style to his income. He has experienced the freedom of debts being paid off. If he is wise, he now will live within his income. Sometimes Mrs. Sam needed the discipline as much, or maybe more, than Sam himself. Financial freedom has the potential of adding a new dimension to their marriage.

The whole program should be seen in the lovely framework of brotherly sympathy and sharing. Our witness for Christ and the Gospel is diminished and tarnished when debt is not appropriately addressed. Being free in every area of our lives is a worthy goal. It really is the main desire of our hearts. The goal of becoming financially free must not be lost.

With credit card statements in hand, one of the committee should call each credit card company, briefly explain the problem and share what the church has put in place. Tell them you are serious about paying the full amount for Sam and ask what reduction they could offer. Yes, they will be glad to hear from you. No, this isn't

unfair, cheating, or unethical. For them, a percentage paid is better than having nothing paid.

There may be other creative ways to address debt. Surely God makes a way when we repent and turn to Him. Easy credit is like a comfortable bed—easy to get into, but hard to get out of! Payment of old debt is not easy. Looking back contains the regret of inadequacy in not being able to control the spending. In addition, there is the grief of needing to pay off those purchases, plus the discouraging interest. Looking back at one's mistakes, or looking ahead to the rigors of debt repayment and seeing how badly we're stuck is disheartening in every respect.

**Here are five rules for those in debt:**

**Rule #1:** In almost every case, a change of life style is required. We resist it. We don't like it. It hurts. We resist pain. Very few couples can be given hope toward being debt-free without it. Don't think of it as a penalty. Use it as a new discipline to honor Christ. Work at it together. Make realistic goals. Have someone monitor your progress who can encourage and counsel you.

**Rule #2:** Use a budget. Keep record of your spending. Find ways to save. Find ways to reduce expenses. Seek advice on where to buy. Both husband and wife need to be committed to record keeping, or it won't work.

**Rule #3:** Sell unneeded items (e.g., expensive pickup for a cheaper, fuel-saving one; boat; four-wheeler; motor home; or expensive sports equipment.) Don't buy them again until you can do so with cash. Having these extras around takes time and maintenance, and it is contrary to a reduced lifestyle.

**Rule #4:** Find ways to encourage yourself without spending money. Some of the best things in life are still free. Look for someone who needs encouragement. "Give, and it will be given to you." If you are under a financial management committee, give yourself to them. Never be too proud to express need, desire, hope, and just plain thankfulness.

**Rule #5:** If you have gone two months on your credit card without paying in full, **STOP! GET HELP!** Make it known to your pastors. It will be much easier to get help with a debt of \$2,000 than one of \$20,000. Right now is the time to make a break from digging that deep, dark hole.

**The Bottom Line** is that living beyond our income through easy credit is a dangerous trap. The generation growing up in our midst needs training by precept and example. Be courageous. Use this message to begin the journey of becoming free from consumer debt.

Next month, let's look at some ideas on the prevention of credit card debt.



# ANNOUNCEMENT

The annual Christian Youth Fellowship meetings this summer are scheduled to be held July 25-27, 2008.

The reports of the five area meetings held in July, 2007, indicate God's blessings were abundant in spite of smaller numbers in attendance in several districts. We praise God for His continued faithfulness and commend our youth for their part in making these meetings a success. Certainly recognition is due to the hosting communities for their hard work in planning enriching programs and their unselfish hospitality.

May we continue to work together to make these meetings the success they have been. Let us prayerfully look to God in anticipation of more good things at the meetings this summer. The districts and their planned meeting places for 2008 are as follows:

North East	Valley View Church, Belleville, PA
North Central	Melita Christian Fellowship, Utica, OH
North West	Believers Fellowship, Grove City, MN
South West	Cedar Crest Church, Hutchinson, KS
South East	Calvary Fellowship, Blackville, SC

Donald Miller, Hutchinson, KS · 620-728-1678  
Chairman, CYFM Ministerial Committee

## *Unconditional Eternal Security*

*Larry Gembicki, Cleveland, OH*

**T**his false teaching probably concerns me more than any other. I believe there will be millions in hell because of this erroneous doctrine. It basically says that one can ask God for the forgiveness of their sins and then nothing else we ever do matters. It is also known as the "once saved—always saved" doctrine. It is an affront to all the martyrs

and those in the past who endured great trials and persecution for their Savior, Jesus Christ. It basically says their suffering was all for naught. There is no compelling reason to live for God. You are going to heaven--no matter what!

I believe the error has its foundation in the understanding of the word, "believe." As we know, the New

Testament was originally written in the Greek language. The Bible in many places says that if we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ we will be saved. What does the word “believe” mean? In our American culture it means to give something our mental assent. That’s not enough. The Greek word means “to trust in, to cling to, to rely on.” It is something you continue to do.

The Bible in 1 Corinthians 9 likens the Christian life to a foot race. Having competed in track meets, I know that in order to win a race, you must do several things: First, you must sign up for the race. Second, you have to start running the race. Third, you have to finish running the race.

Some races are short, called sprints. Some are long, called marathons. The Christian life is not a sprint, but a marathon. It matters how we continue running.

We can all finish the race. We all can be faithful till the end of our days. God promises to help us. But, we have our part to do. If we do our part, He will take care of the rest. The Bible says that God will complete what He has started with us, but that it is up to

us to let Him do it. God doesn’t take away our free will when we decide to follow Jesus. If we get tired of it, we can decide not to follow Him anymore. God will not force anyone to go to heaven against his will.

I believe this race is like one at the Special Olympics a few years ago. I was told that one of the contestants fell down and all the others went back to help him up and they all walked over the finish line together. That’s how it ought to be in the Christian “race.” It’s not every man for himself. We are our brother’s keeper.

In an earthly race, there’s usually only one winner. In the Christian race, we all can be winners. We all can cross the finish line, even though we cannot do so in our own strength. Jesus said: “Without me, ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Paul said that in his flesh dwelt no good thing. But with God’s help, we can do all things that He requires of us. He said, “If we deny him, he also will deny us” (2 Timothy 2:12).

For a more in-depth study of this subject, read the book, *Life in the Son*, by Robert Shank. God bless you!



*An empty tomb proves Christianity...*

**an empty church denies it.**

# Tribute to Evie Jewel Nisly (1986-2008)

*By the family*

**E**vie was born on January 18, 1986, in San Salvador, El Salvador, one of twin daughters born to missionaries Arthur and Lillian (Miller) Nisly. She died at Hutchinson, KS, Feb. 16, 2008. (Note her obituary in this issue.)

Apparently due to the poor judgment of an overconfident doctor, Evie almost died at birth from lack of oxygen and nutrition during the last days before her emergency birth. Trauma suffered at birth resulted in permanent brain damage that made her a dependent person all her life. In spite of extensive therapy for several years she was never able to be mobile or take care of herself. Yet she won the hearts of those around her, and even though she could not talk, she still had ways of expressing her preferences. She loved to eat ice cream and to go with her family when they went to church or on their almost weekly family night.

Her patient and cheerful disposition were known by all that she encountered. For many years she was healthy. Only in Spring of 2007 did the curvature of her spine, significant weight loss, and severe anemia make so that she could no longer sit in her

special wheel chair except very briefly to eat and then quickly off again to avoid pressure sores.

We, her parents, clearly felt God's direction in January, 2006, to go on a one-year sabbatical in Kansas. The Lord made it happen in His timing. The reason that we thought we were taking this sabbatical leave were not God's reasons. We could not have known what God knew. We stand in awe that within 40 days of our arrival in Kansas, it was necessary to start with Hospice Care, a compassionate medical assistance that is not available in El Salvador.

As her body deteriorated it became apparent that God's plan for Evie was that her physical body would not be healed. For years we had prayed that we would not have to make difficult decisions that go with feeding tubes and life support systems. God graciously answered that prayer.

## **Singing at Jesus' Feet**

Sheri Nisly

Evie, our tears simply rained  
Incredible, gut-wrenching pain.

In our tremendous sorrow and loss  
We look to Him at the Cross.

He cradles each broken heart,

All the feelings that are torn apart.

His presence is very near  
We know surely that He is here.  
Your body is lifeless today,  
We will miss your smiles, and all  
your ways,  
Yet we rejoice in the midst of grief  
Because we know you've finally  
found relief.  
No more sickness, no more pain,  
And you've got everything to gain!  
You will meet loved ones gone before,  
On that wondrous, beautiful shore.  
You are dancing in delight,

You are happy in the everlasting light.  
You are in a land, oh, so sweet,  
And you are singing at Jesus' feet.  
You can finally run—for miles,  
Your face is simply all smiles.  
Your laughter can't be beat,  
For you are singing at Jesus' feet.  
And though we miss you so,  
One day we surely know,  
In heaven we will again meet,  
And together, we will sing at Jesus' feet.  
[This tribute and poem were read at  
Evie's funeral.]

## *MIC Workers' Reunion Announcement*

The 50-year MIC Workers' Reunion, planned for this summer, June 19-21, 2008, is to start on Thursday evening and go through Saturday forenoon. This gives those attending the opportunity to visit other places (such as where they were stationed) on the weekend.

It would be good for them at Red Lake to know soon how many are planning to come. If you know already, let Kevin Miller know. As soon as you know, let him know at: Box 428, Red Lake, ON, Canada POV 2MO or [klmiller@tbaytel.net](mailto:klmiller@tbaytel.net).

If you know of someone who would be interested in coming, who might not know about this gathering, please let them know, because Kevin does not have everyone's address.

Kevin is also looking for good pictures to be shown to the group that comes. It would be nice to have it on DVD or something that can be shown in a Power Point presentation. Address all questions to Kevin Miller.



*The best thing to spend on children is your time.*

# The Money Trap

David Hertzler, Dryden, ON/Milford, DE

**G**eorge was in trouble. He often spent money on things he did not need. When he went into a store and saw something he wanted, he bought it. He already had a lot of things he hardly ever used sitting around his house.

Now he was running short of money to pay the phone bills and buy food. He didn't want to lose his phone, but it seemed he could not break his spending habit.

One day George had an idea. He started a little list. When he saw something he wanted, instead of buying it, he wrote it on the list with the date beside it. Then he would wait 30 days before buying the item. When he bought it, he would never spend more than he had budgeted for it. But how surprised he was! He found that after 30 days, he did not even want most of the things on his list.

This simple plan helped George escape from his money trap. Now he not only has enough money to pay the bills, he can also enjoy helping others in need.

Getting out of the money trap is not this easy for everyone. Some people need a great deal of counseling. Some never get out of debt. The best way to stay out of the money trap is never to get into it, of course, but saying that doesn't help much in getting someone out.

Getting into the trap is very easy. Our economy runs on people's desires for more goods and services. Things wear out quickly. New things are always there begging to be bought. You can always

find someone to loan you money in return for a high rate of interest.

Besides, life keeps throwing newer and more expensive problems at you. Job layoffs, illness, dental bills, another pregnancy, automobile breakdowns, accidents, or death of the wage earner can be just around the corner.

However, most people get trapped because they forget four little words: **plan, save, give and record.**

**Planning** helped George break his bad spending habit. A good plan is a **budget**. In this plan you write down how much you expect to earn, and how much you plan to spend, how much you will give, and how much you plan to put into savings.

**Saving** helps you pay expenses for which you couldn't plan. Maybe your car breaks down. Your savings account could help you pay for it without going into debt.

**Giving** is taught in the Bible. God promises to supply the needs of those who trust Him and put Him first. When you love God, you want to give to help His work. Planning helps you do this.

**Recording** helps you improve your plan. Maybe your first budget was a guess. But if you write down everything you spend, save, or give, you can soon make a budget that works.

With careful planning you can, as many others do, **enjoy life debt free**. Romans 13:8 says, "**Owe no man anything but that ye love one another.**"

[Slightly adapted from the book, *Growing as a Father*. Used by permission of Northern Youth Programs]



## marriages

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

### Sapp-Miller

Bro. Johnny, son of John and Brenda Sapp, Dover, DE, and Sis. Shari, daughter of Maynard and Ruth Miller, Goshen, IN, at an outdoor service at Lambright Cabin for Woodlawn Church on August 11, 2007, by Steve Miller.

### Wagler-Wengerd

Bro. Lavern, son of Menno and Barbara Wagler, Cottage Grove, TN, and Sis. Ruth, daughter of Andy and Dora Wengerd, Paris, TN, at Bethel Fellowship Church, Cottage Grove, TN, Feb. 22, 2008, by John Mast.

### Wagler-Wengerd

Bro. Mervin, son of Menno and Barbara Wagler, Cottage Grove, TN, and Sis. Wilma, daughter of Andy and Dora Wengerd, Paris, TN, at Bethel Fellowship Church, Cottage Grove, TN, on Aug. 3, 2007, by John Mast.

### Yutzy-Beachy

Bro. Ryan, son of Gary and Ina Yutzy, Plain City, OH, and Sis. Heather, daughter of David J. and Suetta Beachy, Middlebury, IN, at Pleasant View Mennonite for Woodlawn A.M. Church on Oct. 6, 2007, by Steve Miller.

## cradle roll

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

**Barbar**, Clement and Carol (Goldsmith), Fairfield East, Sydney, Australia, twelfth child, fifth son, Stephen Luke, Jan. 3, 2008.

**Beiler**, Ernie and Elmina (Stoltzfoos), Gap, PA, third child and dau., Emily Brooke, Jan. 28, 2008.

**Bontrager**, Craig and Leanna (Schlachbach), Goshen, IN, first child and dau., Aliyah Rayne, Sept. 15, 2007.

**Burkholder**, Kendall and Glendora (Overholt), Etna Green, IN, second child and dau., Vanessa Anne, Feb. 21, 2008.

**Byler**, Steve and Dianne (Yoder), Catlett, VA, third child and son, Alvin Daniel, Jan. 4, 2008.

**Fisher**, Sam and Rosetta (King), Ronks, PS, fourth child, (one son deceased), first dau., Savannah Hope, Jan. 23, 2008.

**Helmuth**, Darrell and Regina (Troyer), Belvidere, TN, first child and dau., Lynette Faith, Feb. 5, 2008.

**Hochstedler**, Morris and Anna Marie (Mast), Summersville, KY, seventh child, fourth dau., Kristi Lorene, Jan. 2, 2008.

**Hostetler**, Michael and Ellen (Kauffman), Belleville, PA, first child and son, Kenneth Ervin, Feb. 7, 2008.



**Hostetler**, Norman and Jeannetta (Shiley), Cottage Grove, TN, first child and dau., Amy Lynette, Dec. 18, 2007.

**Huston**, Eli and Ruth (Miller), Cottage Grove, TN, sixth child, third son, Jalon Daniel, Oct. 10, 2007.

**Kauffman**, Clair and Anna (Stoltzfus), Lancaster, PA, second child, first son, Brennan Dayshawn, Jan. 23, 2008.

**Keim**, Ray and Kathryn (Yoder), West Union, OH, sixth child, first dau., Kari Irene, Jan. 22, 2008.

**King**, Kenneth and Edith (Kauffman), Cottage Grove, TN, eighth child, first dau., Rosetta Fern, Aug. 20, 2007.

**Mast**, Marcus and Wilma (Mast), Winchester, OH, fourth child, third dau., Elmina Faith, Feb. 1, 2008.

**Miller**, Daniel and Cristine (Hostetler), Cottage Grove, TN, seventh child, sixth son, Shawn Allen, Dec. 15, 2007.

**Miller**, Delmar and Rhoda (Mast), Millwood, KY, sixth child, fifth son, David Lee, Jan. 7, 2008.

**Miller**, Jonathan and Malinda (Swarey), Stuarts Draft, VA, third son, first dau., twins, Patrick Shane and Heidi Renae, Dec. 8, 2007.

**Nissley**, Elam and Nina (Yoder), Paris, TN, fourth child, first dau., Daria Nicole, Feb. 21, 2008.

**Peachey**, Matthew and Daria (Yoder), Lewistown, PA, third child, second son, Johann Daryl, Feb. 15, 2008.

**Plank**, George and Gail (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, first child and son, Chadwin Lee, Feb. 5, 2008.

**Stutzman**, David and Regina (Byler), Sarasota, FL, third child, second dau., Jenny Elizabeth, Feb. 21, 2008.

**Troyer**, David Lee and Barbara (Miller), Leesburg, OH, seventh child, fourth son, Bradley Jordan, Jan. 4, 2008.

**Troyer**, Nathanael and Ruth (Smucker), Plain City, OH, sixth child, fifth son, Josiah Andrew, Feb. 3, 2008.

**Wengerd**, Titus and Kathy (Schrock), Paris, TN, first child and dau., Amber Rose, Jan. 28, 2008.

**Yoder**, Joshua and Mary Ann (Yoder), Clarkson, KY, third child, second son, Joash James, Feb. 6, 2008.

**Yoder**, Steve and Delilah (Schrock), Bealeton, VA, first child and son, Bryson Cole, Jan. 17, 2008.



## obituaries

**Bontrager**, Amy Mae (Troyer), 89, of Middlebury, IN, died in her home three weeks after a stroke, Feb. 18, 2008. She was born July 1, 1918, in Limon, CO, daughter of the late Christ and Elizabeth (Miller) Troyer.

She was a member of Fair Haven A.M. Church, Goshen, IN.

On Nov. 24, 1938, she was married to David A. Bontrager. They were charter members of Fair Haven church, where her husband was minister and bishop for nearly forty years. He died Feb. 15, 1989. Their five children are: Daniel (Carolyn) Bontrager, Shipshewana; Katie (Larry) Slabaugh, Nappanee; Herman (Jeanette) Bontrager, Akron, PA; David (Rose) Bontrager, Middlebury; and Amy (Glenn) Yoder, Middlebury; 22 grandchildren, 49 great grandchildren and one great great grandson. Also surviving are three sisters: Ella Miller, Middlebury; Sue Bontrager, Due West, SC; and Wilma Hershberger, Goshen and one brother, Cephas (Jean) Troyer, Goshen.

Preceding her in death was her husband and four brothers: Owen, Lester, Ora and Leroy Troyer.

The funeral was held on Feb. 21, with Wilbur Yoder and Edwin Weaver serving. Burial was in the Thomas Cemetery, Goshen.

**King**, Abraham L., 89, died at his son David's home Feb. 19, 2008. He was born April 15, 1918, son of the late David L and Katie (Lapp) King. He was member of Weavertown A.M. Church. On Jan. 1955, he was married to Lillian Beiler,

who preceded him in death. Survivors include five children: Leslie (Miriam) King, Ronks; Raymond (Mary) King, Burgettstown; Eldon King, Waymart; David (Mary Ann) King, Leola; and Kathryn (Kenneth) Weaver, Bird-in-hand; and 27 grandchildren. Other survivors include sisters: Savilla Zook, Paradise; Fannie King, Honey Brook; and Susie Kauffman, Loysville.

Preceding him in death were sisters: Lydia King, Annie King, Barbara Ebersole, and brothers: Crist and Isaac King.

The funeral was held on Feb. 22, with Norman Kauffman, John U. Lapp and David Stoltzfoos serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Miller**, Eli J., 96, of Stuarts Draft, VA, died Jan. 10, 2008, at his home. He was born Oct. 6, 1911, son of the late Joni and Lizzie (Hochstetler) Miller.

He was member of Pilgrim Christian Fellowship and lived in Augusta County for 50 years.

Survivors include his third wife, Edna (Roth) Miller, and son Joni E. Miller, Roodhouse, IL; a sister, Barbara (Miller) Shetler, OH; and a sister-in-law, Barbara (Shetler) Miller, Rosebush, MI; seven grandchildren, 36 great grandchildren, and seven great great grandchildren and two stepsons: Sam and Elmer Kanagy, and ten step grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Emma (Shetler), who died in 1956; his second wife, Elizabeth (Peight, Kanagy) who died in 1972; infant son Johnny Miller, daughter-in-law, Lydia (Schrock) Miller, two great great grandsons and one step son, David Kanagy; three brothers:

John, Uriah and Joni; and three sisters: Mary, Emma, and Ella.

The funeral was held Jan. 13, at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, with Kenneth Miller, Ervin Yoder and Bennie Byler serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Nisly**, Evie Jewel., 22, died Feb. 16, 2008, at Hutchinson, KS. She was born Jan. 18, 1986, daughter of Arthur and Lillian (Miller) Nisly at San Salvador, El Salvador.

She was an honorary member of Center A.M. Church, one of God's special children, spending most of her life in a bed or a wheel chair. (Note the tribute elsewhere in this issue.)

She is survived by her parents; her twin sister, Ellie Joy (Mrs. Eddy Loewen), Manitoba, Canada; sister, Sheri Jane; and two brothers: Kevin Arthur and Karlin Jon. Other survivors include maternal grandfather, Ervin J. Miller, Partridge, KS; and paternal grandparents, Menno and Edna Nisly, Partridge; KS, and a number of uncles, aunts and cousins.

She was preceded in death by a sister, Kari Jean, by maternal grandmother, Mary Martha Miller, and by infant twin uncle and aunt, Paul and Pauline Miller.

The funeral was held on February 20 at Center Church, with David Yoder, Laverne Miller and Oren Yoder serving. Burial was in the West Center Cemetery.

**Yoder**, Harry, 78, of Millington, MD, died at his home on Dec. 14, 2007. He was born Dec. 14, 1929, in Wayne County, Ohio, son of the late Adam E. and Lydia (Kauffman) Yoder.

He was a member and bishop of Harmony Christian Fellowship for many

years.

On Dec. 13, 1941, he was married to Lizzie Ann Schrock, who predeceased him by eleven days. Surviving are four daughters: Ruth Schlabach, Sugar-creek, OH; Wilma Ebersole, Leola, PA; Miriam Getling, Chestertown, MD; and Arlene Beachy, Millington; two sons: Freeman Yoder and Tim Yoder, both of Millington; 12 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Other survivors are the following sisters and brothers: Edna Yoder, Apple Creek, OH; Fannie Keim, Apple Creek, OH; Arie Raber, Dundee, OH; Eli Yoder, Millersburg, OH; Adam Yoder, Fredericksburg, OH.

A son, Wayne, preceded him in death, as well as two brothers and four sisters.

The funeral was held on Dec. 17, with Steve Stoltzfus, Eli Schrock, and Mahlon Stoltzfus serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Yoder**, Lizzie Ann (Schrock), 78, of Millington, MD, died Dec. 3, 2007, at her home. She was born July 28, 1929, in Millersburg, OH, daughter of the late Abe and Lizzie Schrock.

She was a devoted member of Harmony Christian Fellowship.

On Dec. 13, 1941, she was married to Harry Yoder who died 11 days after her demise. Some of the survivors are listed in that obituary above. Others not listed include two sisters: Anna Troyer, Holmsville, OH; and Amanda Miller, Hartville, OH; two brothers: Andrew Schrock, and Wayne Schrock, both of Catlett, VA.

The funeral was held on Dec. 6, with Steve Stoltzfus, Mahlon Stoltzfus and Jesse Yoder serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

## observations

Over the next 10 years, in Mennonite Church of Canada, more than half of the 349 pastors will reach retirement age. Their U. S. counterparts and the Mennonite Brethren will need 500 new leaders during the same period. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*, 2-08)

Shortage of pastors seems to be a fairly common problem. From my simple (or simplistic) perspective the following features are obvious:

- A single, salaried pastor is a departure from earlier practice. Mandatory retirement at 65 is also a relatively new practice in Anabaptist circles. Plural leadership teams were common a few decades ago, which ideally allowed for smooth transition of leadership.

- Conference leadership is actively involved in the choice and placement of pastors. In earlier times, local congregations played a greater role.

- Having Mennonite women in pastoral leadership is a product of recent decades, and is part of the present leadership picture.

We are well aware that leadership and church problems can occur when none of the above conditions exist. But we would surely agree whenever changes in practice are made evaluation should go beyond seeing how well they work.



The same issue of MWR has an extensive article about current Mennonite participation in presidential primaries. Some of our readers may recall that following the 2004 election, John Roth, a respected history teacher at Goshen College, recommended that the Mennonite Church take a five year sabbatical from partisan politics. He was uncomfortable to note that fellow church members sometimes became involved in sharp and vocal disagreements. He felt that this was out of harmony with our primary allegiance to God's kingdom. Roth's comments received major attention in the Mennonite press.

The article states that according to research by Conrad Kanagy, Elizabethtown College, comparing 1972 with 2006, the percentage of members who believed that Mennonites should vote grew from 66% to 93% in that time. Other statistics from this period indicate a similar trend in other aspects of Mennonite political involvement.



Someone has observed that growing old is not something to look forward to, but for most people it is preferable to dying young. It is also true that our natural bodies deteriorate with age so that release can be welcome under some circumstances. But, in spite of great medical advancement and technology, all of

us add years at the same speed. I continue to feel that we do well to want to stay in touch with this reality at any age.

The earlier comment in this month's column touches on different systems of church leadership. Let us remember that the human element is an important factor in any system. Church leadership should be friendly to stability and orderly succession of leadership. It is fairly common and commendable in our circles that a bishop replaces himself in the lead role while he is still able to make a helpful contribution in pulpit ministry. This has often worked out very well.

- A bishop's willingness to provide leadership in such a transfer is basic.

- The younger person chosen has the advantage of ready access to the counsel of the former lead person, who in most cases has decades of leadership experience. He also has the advantage of drawing counsel from the same ministerial team still in place.

- The young leader can be expected to take his responsibility seriously. Let us assume that the bishop who voluntarily steps aside sincerely wants his successor to succeed. He will not want to be in the younger man's way. He will be reluctant to offer advice unless he is asked. But the young leader who has the wisdom and humility of a teachable spirit and

openness to counsel will be doing himself and the flock a great favor.

• • • • •

For some reason, the matter of aging and leadership seems to persist in my mind. Could it be because, at my last birthday, I crossed over the four-score threshold? By Scripture definition, this is definitely old age.

I have no way of knowing how much longer I should continue to be active on the leadership team. There is a 46-year spread between the youngest member and myself. There are four other brethren who are, age-wise, in their prime. My preaching at home has been reduced to every other turn. I have an understanding with the other team members that they should not let me overstay my usefulness. When relations are like they should be, this can work well.

To require a uniform retirement age seems second-best to me. Let us not assume that we can improve on God's manner, Who allows us to depreciate at different rates.

Of course, we all know that the time will come when preaching (and writing) should be left to younger persons. Happy is the man who accepts this reality with grace. Every faithful servant wants to finish well. Faithfulness includes putting the counsel of trusted peers and the welfare of the congregation above personal preference. —DLM



# *Eli Herschberger*

*A tribute to my father*

*Lavina Gingerich, Mountain View, AR*

**E**li Herschberger was born at Garnett, Kansas, on May 18, 1906. His parents and his six siblings made the long journey from Nappanee, Indiana, only 18 months before his birth.

Farming in Kansas was difficult. The family had not only heavy soil to contend with, there were invasive cockleburs and severe windstorms that threatened their garden and crops. And so it was, that before baby Eli was one month old, the family moved back to their former home at Nappanee.

Although too young to know about it, Eli's life was undoubtedly impacted in various ways by having his father ordained to the ministry in the Amish church in the fall of 1906. But an event of much greater consequence was the death of his mother after giving birth to a stillborn son when Eli was five.

We can only guess what adjustments came when their father married a widow who brought eight children to join the eight Herschberger children on July 25, 1912. Several of the older ones married soon thereafter. Eli was only six years old.

Besides the fact that his father was ordained to the office of bishop

when Eli was 14, we have little record of his teen years. However, at some time, while working for his brother in the Nappanee area, he became acquainted with Mattie, the fair young daughter of neighbor Sam Chupps.

Their friendship continued to blossom and at age 20, Eli claimed 19-year-old Mattie for his bride on January 6, 1927. Their married life began on a small farm near his brother Moses and family, 30 miles from Nappanee, near LaGrange.

Life was filled with hopes and dreams for the young couple as they joyfully set up housekeeping, in spite of meager beginnings. When work required Eli to be gone during the day, Mattie would go get the mail at the time of his return so they could walk home together.

The first summer passed and the days turned to fall when, without warning, tragedy struck the Herschberger home. At Eli's brother's Moses' house, their eight-year-old daughter mentioned a strange light she saw while looking out the window just before bedtime. She asked, "Why does the moon look so funny?"

When other family members came to check out what she reported, Mose cried in alarm, "That's a fire! It looks

like it's at brother Eli's place!" It was indeed. Eli and Mattie's house was on fire! Because of a hill between them, only a strange glow appeared at the crest of the hill.

Earlier in the evening Eli and Mattie had gone on that pleasant fall evening to the home of their non-Amish neighbors, who had only recently rented the Wade farm nearby, to visit with them. As they left home, Eli walked past the kitchen table and reached for one last handful of popcorn. Then he turned off the oil lamp hanging on the wall near the pantry door.

Some time later, when another neighbor came past Eli's house, he noticed the fire and stopped to check it out. Getting no response from his frantic knocking, he broke the bedroom window in desperation, fearing that the couple was asleep in bed!

Finding no one at home, he hurried on to the Wade farm to call the fire department. Here he found no telephone, but he found Eli and Mattie enjoying a pleasant visit with their neighbors.

Somehow, a fire truck was called to the scene, but it was too late to save the burning house. When Eli arrived, he broke in the door, hurting his arm on the rusty screen. Crawling along on the porch floor, he managed to grab the leg of a wooden chest and pull it to safety. Although the chest was damaged, the contents were

spared, which included Eli and Mattie's wedding clothes. Very little else was salvaged and the house burned to the ground.

Eli and Mattie stayed with Moses' family for several days, then moved into their tenant house until another house could be built. This house, even smaller than their first one, had only two rooms on the main floor. They did not move into the new house until some time after the birth of their first child on April 12, 1928, a little girl they named Lydia Mae.

A year later, their second daughter arrived on March 4, 1929. They named her Sara Ann. During that time, just five months apart, Eli's step mother and father both died.

Mattie was apparently not very strong physically and her health seemed to decline after the babies were born. When her health got worse, even though Eli had hoped to build more onto the house, they decided to move closer to Mattie's parents. Their hopes and dreams for better days were not realized. Rather, her family and friends looked on helplessly as Mattie's health ebbed slowly away.

We have in our possession, a small tablet where visitors are listed on its yellowed pages, beginning on January 1, 1930. Dr. Eicher's name is listed on January 5 and 10. On January 11, Dr. Price was there and three brethren from the church stayed all night.

On January 13, at the end of a long list of names, the undertaker's name is recorded. It was a bittersweet day when dear Mattie was relieved of her earthly suffering.

Eli recorded Mattie's obituary in his own handwriting in that same tablet. Mattie died at only 22 years, six months, and three days of age, leaving two small children for others to care for. She and Eli had been married only a little over three years.

Since Mattie's diagnosis was tuberculosis (TB), the doctors predicted low resistance for her children. This proved to be true when the oldest, Lydia Mae died on February 4, 1930, only three weeks after her mother's death. Only one year and nine months old when she got pneumonia, her little body lost the struggle for survival.

The maternal grandparents at first took care of both little girls. However, after Lydia Mae's death, Eli's sister, Sarah (Mrs. Henry Mast, living in Kokomo, IN) asked to take care of her little namesake. Eli and the grandparents consented to this arrangement, although it meant being separated by many miles. This was during The Great Depression, and Eli felt he needed to stay where work was available for him. Visits to little Sarah were few and far between.

Sarah Ann was a small-featured little girl like her mother, but she ran and played like any healthy child.

Henry and Sarah's family became very attached to their "pretty little sister" and hoped some day to adopt her.

Aunt Sarah had little Sarah tested for TB several times, which resulted in positive readings. Although the doctor was not hopeful that she would live to see her second birthday, the Masts remained optimistic, since she seemed so healthy and normal. For nearly a year Sarah Ann experienced good health and the doctor's predictions appeared to be wrong. However, on February 16, 1931, two and one-half weeks before her second birthday, little Sarah Ann suddenly became very ill.

By evening, the doctor was called out, since she was swelling badly around the mouth and neck. The doctor lanced the inside of her mouth expecting it to be filled with pus, but there was none. He assured them that she would be alright by morning. After he left, Aunt Sarah, feeling very uneasy, suggested contacting Eli yet that night, which they did. When Eli arrived at 1 a.m., everyone was up because Sarah Ann was in such misery. She was filling up with fluid. It was hard on everyone to see her suffer so. Leaning across the stove, Eli said sorrowfully, "Oh, if only she could go!"

Aunt Sarah found it very hard to give her up but Eli, seeing how sick she was, asked his little daughter



gently, “Do you want to go far away to rest?” She seemed to recognize her father and relaxed. Giving a slight nod to his question, she threw back her arms and was soon gone.

For the third time Eli painfully wrote out an obituary in his tablet and followed the little coffin to its place of burial.

We may never understand all of God’s purposes in His plan for Eli to give back to Him the three people on earth who were the dearest to his heart in one year’s time. No doubt, his love for people and visiting others helped to ease the pain and loneliness during these difficult experiences. Living close to his in-laws, Eli spent many evenings with their large family. They graciously welcomed him into their home, and his spirits were often lifted as he joined in the evening’s activities with their fun-loving and caring ways. Long after Eli’s second marriage, his former in-laws included him and his new growing family in their circle. Today we still consider ourselves partially


related.

We children thought too late about capturing many of the memories of our father’s earthly life, and much of what he knew and felt is gone beyond recall. However, we still remember him and the strength and courage that carried him through life’s great hardships. Here are some things I learned from my father:

-Being no stranger to death and disappointment, he frequently took time to attend viewings and funerals, whether it was a close relative or a mere acquaintance.

-He held onto earthly possessions very loosely, giving what he had to others, if he felt that they needed them more than he did.

-He taught us to eat what was set before us, often reminding us, “If hard times came, you would be thankful for this food!”

I am sure my father, Eli Herschberger, would want us to give God the glory for any good that comes out of his life. 

## *Unsung Heroes*

*By your neighbor*

*The seed for this piece was born out of despair,” writes the author. “Our little community is experiencing problems. But surely not all is bad. I began looking for the good things, and sure enough, they were there!”*

I’m not talking about the celebrities who have a whole list of heady achievements after their

names. The ones I have in mind are the wonderfully ordinary type that live in my community (or yours)

who go about their daily lives with a courage and faith that inspires me. Most of them are probably unaware that they *are* an inspiration. They just do what they perceive is right for no other reason than simply to have done the right thing.

The following are some examples I especially respect, although perhaps I lack the courage to tell them so. Maybe your own neighborhood is blessed with the same types. Probably all you need to do is look for them, since they are not likely to draw attention to themselves. If you have more gumption than I, why don't you mention to them that you're impressed? It just might make their day!

**School age children** who obey willingly at home and in the classroom: you are gems! You may not realize, but your cheerful attitude and obedience now lay the foundation necessary for a faithful Christian future.

**Teenagers** who use these priceless years to add groundwork to the foundation you began earlier. Block by block you add maturity, kindness, faith, friends, and experience to your life. I am so glad to notice that you are choosing quality material to build with.

I respect teenagers (and their parents) who are grown up enough not to begin or allow "romantic pairing up" of boys and girls in their early teen years, let alone teenage mar-

riages. A sure sign of maturity is being able to wait on God's timing.

You have no idea I know this, (I respect you all the more for not blabbing it around) but I'm aware that one of you girls lately passed up an offer of marriage. Thank you for not treating the road-less-traveled as so awful that you'd speed toward the first exit ramp, in order not to remain single. You demonstrate with a lovely life that godliness with contentment is great gain.

**Couples** who are strong enough to end an incompatible courtship. Dating is special; breaking up is painful. The pain you endure now is mild compared to an agony of a lifetime of marriage with the wrong person. I am glad you are wise enough to see that, even through tear-blinded eyes.

**You men (or women) who do not stoop to flirting**, especially not with someone they have no intentions of ever marrying. Thank you for being realistic enough to know that the phrase "We're just friends," is worn out.

I appreciate **parents** who teach their young children that "no" means just that--not "maybe," or "probably." That two-letter word is still the hardest one to say (or teach), but what an awful life if one doesn't learn to obey it!

It's so nice to see **whole families working or playing together**, not

because you have to, but because you want to. I wouldn't mind being a member of your family!

**Childless couples:** You're right, the rest of us don't understand the depth of your disappointment. Thank you for not closing your hearts so tightly that it keeps the gritty pain from forming into lustrous pearls of kindness, hospitality, and compassion. You are jewels in our community.

**Teachers,** your assignment is huge. Your influence helps shape tomorrow's hired hands, maids, teachers, parents, ministers, farmers, or businessmen. The seeds you plant now will be harvested in a circle far outside your classroom. Thank you for bravely and prayerfully cultivating those pliable young hearts.

Are there words to thank the men and women who leave their homes and duties behind to serve as **house parents, counselors, and caregivers**, in havens for the disturbed and emotionally shaky souls among us? You are a blessing to those who serve. May God bless you richly in return.

**Families** who absorb somebody into their home deserve some recognition. Be it an elderly person, or a mentally-handicapped, special-needs person. It's not only the extra loads of laundry you do, it's the loads of patience and grace you need in order to do this. Adding anyone to an already

functioning household can cause turbulence. I admire your ability to keep the strong winds of change from capsizing your family's boat.

You **widows and widowers** are bravely trusting God to supply for needs your partner is no longer here to provide. God has chosen to show you that marriage is no warranty that you'll never face the future alone. I admire your courage, even as I doubt that I'd be as strong as you are.

**You who have taken the leap of faith to enter the plain circles** in contrast to the worldly culture you were raised in. I can't grasp the changes your family has gone through while leaving "the flesh pots of Egypt" in order to possess what "the children of Israel" often take for granted. You inspire me. At the same time I shudder to think of the inconsistencies you may see among us, even in my own life. Don't give up now. Your example is priceless.

**Midwives** must submit to erratic and stressful schedules. How many times have you given up your plans for a day, or your rest for the night? How many thousands of dollars have you helped others save? Your faith and expertise are valued as you participate in the miracle of life.


Thank you to the **bishops, ministers, and deacons** who serve us Sunday after Sunday with the Word

of God. Thank you for not watering down the truth. Please don't become discouraged. We need you. And thanks to the wives and children who must share their husbands and fathers with the many needs and problems of a congregation.

To **the elderly** among us who face the sunset: we still need your prayers. Your years of active service may be behind you, but for those of us still in the heat of the battle, your example is priceless. You have "fought the

fight, and kept the faith." We need your encouragement and prayers to do the same.

**All these are faithful examples** I'd do well to learn from. God puts each in a special position to serve Him just where we are, and I'm so glad He put so many of you right here in my neighborhood!

[From *Family Life*, January, 2008, used by permission. Emphasis added. Submitted for publication by David L. Miller, Partridge, KS.] 

## *Substance Abuse in the Church*

*Ronald K. Martin, Fredericksburg, PA*

**O**ver the years, the conservative churches in general have taken a stand against various forms of substance abuse. Section 4 in Article VI, *Christian and Self Denial* in our *Decrees for to Keep* is titled "Tobacco, Alcohol, & Substance Abuse." It opens with 1 Corinthians 6:19: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost..." and continues on to prohibit the use of tobacco and alcohol due to their harmful effects on the body. Also included in the rationale is the fact that the use of these substances has negative impact on others and is a poor testimony for a child of God. The section closes with this sentence: "**All other substance**

**abuse is also forbidden."**

Substance abuse is the use of a substance with an overall negative impact on the body. People who fall into the category of substance abusers typically start using the substance for the short-term pleasure it produces. These substances are often addictive either physically, psychologically or both. Thus, by the time the user realizes the negative impact the substance is having on the body, it is no longer a simple task to stop its use.

Usually, our minds go immediately to such things as smoking or chewing tobacco, various types of alcoholic beverages, or a variety of illegal drugs when we think of substance abuse. While we need to continue teaching

against these things, I believe it is time we wake up to the fact that a serious form of substance abuse is prevalent in our churches; a form of substance abuse spoken about more directly in the Scriptures than is smoking or the use of illegal drugs. Specifically, I am referring to **the abuse of food by eating too much.**

We speak or at least think disparagingly of a smoker racked by coughing and whose lungs are being consumed by cancer when we see him light up another cigarette. We cannot imagine that a person who destroys his health in such a way could ever legitimately claim to be a child of God. But really, how is what a smoker is doing different from what we do when we overeat? Smokers enjoy smoking; we enjoy eating. They ruin their lungs; we ruin our heart. They cough; we pant. They are at risk for emphysema; we are at risk for diabetes. They die of cancer; we die of heart attacks and strokes. Neither of us, apparently, has the self-denial necessary to change his situation. Yet somehow, we think they will go to hell because of their habit but our habit will not keep us out of heaven.

God has designed our bodies in ways that are very complex and yet at the same time very simple. In relation to food, in general, the equation is rather simple. For each person there is a certain amount of food sufficient to maintain body weight. If we eat

more food than we need, our body stores the extra energy as fat, and we gain weight. If we eat less food than necessary to provide the energy we need, our body will consume itself, and we lose weight. No overweight person ever starved to death.

We attempt to mollify our conscience and put some distance between smokers and ourselves by pointing out the cost of cigarettes and the effects of second hand smoke. At least overeating does not harm others. Really? Children of overweight parents are much more likely to develop the same poor eating habits and be overweight themselves. Furthermore, while the cost of overeating tends to disappear in the food bill, the extra food is not free. More importantly, the Bible condemns gluttony (greedily eating to excess) in Deuteronomy 21:20; Proverbs 23: 1,2,23.

A limited amount of stored fat is healthy, but medical science has documented beyond reasonable doubt the health hazards of excess body weight. Clogged arteries, high blood pressure, diabetes, cirrhosis, appendicitis, and back troubles are more common in overweight people, who also are at greater risk for falls and other accidents. Can we continue to remain silent about this form of substance abuse and still experience the blessing of God in our lives and churches? Are we serious when we say, "All other substance abuse is also


forbidden”?

**Let us hear the Word of the Lord:**

“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

“For many walk of whom I have told

you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, **whose God is their belly**, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Philippians 3:19,20).

[From *The Pilgrim Witness*, Jan., 2008. Emphasis added. Used by permission. Submitted for publication by Ernest Strubhar.] 

## **Anabaptist Heritage—Is It Yours?**

*Name Withheld by Writer*

**W**hat do we mean by “heritage”? Webster says, “What has been or can be inherited.” So is it safe to conclude that it can only be claimed if it *has been passed on* to us?

How we view “heritage” will be evident in our personal lives and the life of the church. We know people who fervently claim that they appreciate the godly heritage they have been given from their parents and grandparents, but it seems to make little difference in their life choices. Is it really their heritage? As we look then at what we claim as part of our Anabaptist heritage, we may rightly ask, “What does it do for us?”

We note Anabaptists’ great courage in standing for their faith, their willingness to speak to the issues of their day and the firm stand they took against the apostate church. We hold

in great honor their writings, even when they spoke against the corrupt leaders of their day. Does this heritage express itself in your life with the issues facing your church?

After Pilgram Marpeck became an Anabaptist, Reformed preachers of his city said: “Concerning Pilgram, know that he is nothing but a stubborn heretic. He has forsaken much but can never forsake himself. He rejects God’s temporal gift and possesses conceited forwardness. Otherwise, he and his wife are of ir-reproachable character.”\*

Why do we overlook our responsibility to stand, speak and write for the heritage? When a leader says that he will not stand alone for truth against the church of today, he forfeits his right to claim the heritage. When people in the church refuse to look at Scripture and say the Bible is not

for debate they have lost their right to claim the heritage.

Along with refusal to look at Scripture and debate comes the problem of putting church authority ahead of the Bible as was the problem with Ulrich Zwingli, who against his better knowledge “completely capitulated to the judgment and authority of the council’ after he had firmly stated that he would not. “He claimed by ‘special revelation’ to allow the Zurich Council to decide. It is also evident that the bold pioneers of the free church movement did not at first part with Zwingli because of a difference of opinion over baptism but over the Lord’s Supper and ecclesiastical authority”<sup>\*</sup> Are you claiming that bold heritage?

“Within the Reformation no group took more seriously the principle of *Sola Scriptura* (only what’s in the Scriptures) in matters of doctrine and discipline, than did the Anabaptists. In this regard the Reformation stance of the Anabaptists is unequivocal.”<sup>\*</sup> Is yours? Do you hide behind the safety of letting the council decide, thereby saving your life?

Along with *Sola Scriptura* we must not miss mentioning Menno Simons. “The foundation of his theology was the Bible interpreted through Christ, repeating the phrase, ‘For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ’ (1 Cor.

3:11). He even said that if Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, and Augustine could support their teaching with the Word of God, we will admit they are right. If not, it is the doctrine of man and accursed according to the Scriptures. (Gal. 2:8) Menno reminds his readers, ‘Put your trust in Christ alone and in His Word and in the sure administration and practice of His Holy Apostles, and by the grace of God you will be safe from all false doctrine and the power of the devil and will walk with a free mind before God.’ Menno made effort to avoid phraseology even slightly resembling a creed. He feared that a creed might take precedence over the Bible or become in time a test of faith among the brethren.”<sup>\*</sup> Is our heritage a creed or is it *Sola Scriptura*? Can we say we’ve kept our church free from the things he was so concerned about?


Let’s take a look at some of the things the Anabaptists faced in leaving the church and compare it with our life today. Menno himself was harassed severely. “They put a price on his head and all were told not to give him food or shelter. Pardon was promised for any crime committed to any one delivering the renowned heretic into the hands of the authorities.”<sup>\*</sup> Can we say that we have no such things happening in our churches today? Has this reasoning ever prevailed? *If the right support*

*is given to those in authority, we'll protect you and deal with the heretics that speak up against us.*

Notice what happened to a man by the name of Hans Hut. They had him in prison and had weakened him by torture. "He died of asphyxiation from a fire of unknown origin that had been ignited near his wasted form. But even death itself did not keep him from human judgment. The officials took his dead body to court on a chair, tied to the executioner's cart, sentenced it to die, and burned

it at the stake."\* Has your heritage caused apostates to take such drastic action?

Jesus' words to the Pharisees in John 8:39-47 summarizes well the claim to our godly heritage. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. If God were your Father, ye would love me. He that is of God heareth God's words."

[\*All quotes taken from *The Anabaptist Story*, by William R. Estep, William B. Erdmans Publishing Co. Used by permission.] 

## mission awareness

### *What has Happened to Kenya?*

*Hosea Troyer, AMA Missionary to Kenya*

**F**ebruary 29, 2008: The curtain has fallen on the Kenya we know and love, and reopened to a country we scarcely recognize. Stolen votes, corruption, a fight between two sides for the presidential seat have torn into ugly factions along ethnic lines. Old feuds and tribal bitterness of shocking depth have resurfaced. Kenyans who have lived and worked together have suddenly become bitter enemies. Gruesome beatings, burnings, decapitating and dismembering of one another, stir the fires under the boiling cauldron of hate. 1,500 Kenyans are dead because of the violence. 600,000 have

had to flee their homes. Lorries with furniture piled high on top, bikes hanging off the side, people inside the truck bed are common sights. Luo refugees going West meet Kikuyu loads going East. Mixed-marriage couples don't know where to run.

The weeks following the Dec. 27, 2007, presidential election have been an unfolding horror story; each day a page, unpredictable and full of suspense. While opposing political parties and mediators tried in vain to find a solution to the political war, violence spread from area to area. Looting, gutting, and burning businesses, Kenyans have nearly destroyed their



own economy in fits of rage.

Because our missionary compound is located in a hotspot for riots, we have uncomfortable front row seats to the action. Fences and high hedges keep us from seeing everything, but we hear the screaming mobs, see smoke rising, and hear gunshots, day after day, sometimes so close that we can smell the gun powder. Tear gas stung the noses of the school children at recess one day. And when a bullet was found inside the compound, we tried to concentrate only on the angels surrounding us. We wondered about the safety of our church people in the interior while they feared for our safety in town.

During the hottest week of the crisis, hunger and fear were too real. Kenyans, who “get this day their daily bread” couldn’t find food. Markets were closed and supplies could not be transported. Vehicles were stopped by angry young men, ID cards were examined and the mother tongue of the occupants was determined. If the occupants were not fluent in the area tribal tongue, they were in danger of having their car burned, being beaten or killed.

When a measure of quiet finally came back to Kisumu, a Luo hub, chaos erupted in Nakuru, where AMA’s other unit is stationed. Nakuru has long been a melting pot of various tribes. When Kikuyu decided to claim

Nakuru as their own, Luo church members ran for their lives as fire was set to their belongings. Others headed to refugee camps until they could be transported to safe areas. The Lamp and Light office became a hiding place for 80 people. Emotions ran high as missionaries put their church people on buses to go back to their homelands, doubtful that they would ever see them again.

Uncertainty--we’ve never been so well acquainted with the word. Will we be safe from looters, stray bullets? Will our food and drinking water outlast our confinement? Will we have to evacuate? Will we be able to get flights out if needed? What will happen to our church people? Will chaos ever end?

But on February 28, word reached Kisumu that a power sharing agreement had been reached and signed at last between the warring leaders. Raila, the Luo, will be sworn in as Prime minister, while Kibaki, the Kikuyu, remains the President. Thousands of screaming, cheering, singing, dancing, Luos celebrated in the Kisumu streets for hours.

How two bitter enemies will join hands and rule a country seething with ethnic bitterness remains to be seen. But for now, Luos are happy while Kikuyus seem resigned. Maybe some semblance of “normal” will

return for us as missionaries.

With donated funds, the mission has been picking up the pieces in small ways by providing transport for Luos who are still stuck in refugee camps in hostile areas. There is much work to do among the displaced ones coming back to Kisumu, taking supplies to the local camp, and giving a listening ear to the traumatized. One man narrowly escaped decapitation because he was beaten unconscious and thought dead. Others around him lost their heads which were then carried around in bags by the crazed enemy. A shell-shocked woman reached camp carrying the head of her husband.

There is staggering loss for refugees who have experienced such atrocities at the hands of fellow countrymen. When hope of new life through forgiveness is offered, one may hear comments like, “When I see 10 enemies die, then I can forgive.” Merle and Sue Beachy have also had to forgive the violence in Kenya, and so can identify at least partially with the hurting as they work among them. Promoting forgiveness, Sue says gently, “It works. You know, the Luos also nearly killed our son.”

• • • • •

Ahhhh, Kenya. Dare we hope?

“Peace” is a word that has often been in our vocabulary. We talk of it as an elusive dream; we pray, hope, long for it. Last night, the day Kisumu celebrated their victory, our girls wrote little songs and brought them to me. Here are the words:

**Peace With Us**

Peace be with us

Peace be with us

Thank you, God, for Peace with us.

Thank you, God, thank you, God.

Amen, Amen.

By Leah Ruth, age 7

**Peace With Us**

Peach, peace, peace with us.

Peace is with us again!

The angels of God were with us.

Round us, above us, all around us.

God’s angels were with us.

Thank you, God, for your protection.

Thank you, God, for peace now given.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Amen.

By Hannah Grace, age 10

OK, I’m crying. These girls have said it for all of us.



## Removing the Mask

Mary June Glick

**A**m I really the woman that people see or am I wearing a mask that hides the *real me*?

Does that mask protect me from exposing my deepest inner needs that can only be satisfied by my personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Since we were small children, we have learned to wear masks in an effort to be loved and accepted. We may not even be aware of our masks. A mask simply means that I pretend to be someone that I am not. I may do things so other people will approve me or grant me favor. When we accept the personality and abilities that God has given us, and when we develop them to serve and bless others, then we can begin to become the person God intended us to be. And we have no need to wear a mask. Let's be practical and look at ways that Christian women may try to hide behind the *real person* they are.

Mothers tend to be different at home from what they are with friends or in public. I realize we all need a place where we can relax and be ourselves and that should be the case in our own homes. But that doesn't give us the right to speak unkindly or to complain and nag at those we

are with the most. They are the ones we are to love the most. What tone of voice do our children hear when we answer the telephone? Is it the same voice we use to respond to them? Do we show the same excitement when hubby comes in the door as we do in greeting a friend of the family? The *real me* is who I am at home.

How about the mask of doing things for approval? It is a normal response to want to feel needed. At times, we may volunteer to help with activities outside our homes out of a desire for approval, even to the neglect of our own families.


I must also add the importance of remembering that we need a servant's heart to be willing to help others and not use our families as an excuse *not* to reach out. We must ask God to show us what our motives really are in each situation. It is good to ask our husbands for their advice.

We often hide our real feelings and emotions behind a mask. We paste a smile on our face and pretend everything is fine when we're hurting deeply inside. We give the impression to others that we don't make mistakes, our families are perfect, and that we don't need any help. Is

it any wonder that others do not ask us for help? People in need want help from someone who is able to feel with them in their need. We must remove the masks and get down in the dirt and grime of real living to identify with those who are really hurting. I have been amazed at the way even strangers will share their inner hurt and pain when they realize that I too have hurts in my life.

A person wearing a mask will pretend to be your best friend and then turn around and talk about you behind your back and or share your confidence with others while a true friend will desire only the best for you and about you. Genuine friendship

does not expose the faults of others. It cares and encourages the friend to be what God plans for him/her to be.

Why do I go to church every Sunday, teach a Sunday school class, do good works, and act like a Christian? Is it out of love for God and a longing to serve Him or am I doing it to impress others? A mask can keep us from experiencing a close relationship with God. God always sees through the mask so we will never fool him. Even if I am able to fool people, I will not experience the fullness of joy that God has provided for me until I remove all my masks and simply allow others to know me as I truly am—a woman forgiven and loved by God. 

## junior messages

### *One Girl's Song*

*Anita Yoder, Ligonier, IN*

**M**any years ago a terrible accident happened in the coal mines near Scranton, Pennsylvania. It buried several men alive. Early rescue efforts to save them seemed doomed to failure.

The majority of the miners were German. Sympathy for the wives and children of the buried men, and despair at their own rescue efforts made them almost frantic. Intense excitement reigned.

A big crowd of men and women

gathered at the mouth of the mine on the evening of the third day. A sullen murmur arose that it was probably useless to dig further—the men had surely died.

In the crowd stood an eleven-year-old German girl. Her pale face and frightened glances from side to side showed that she fully understood the danger they faced. Suddenly, with great effort, she began to sing in a hoarse whisper a song that could scarcely be heard. As she gained


courage, her voice rang out with the familiar hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is our God.”

The usual talking died and the lone voice could be heard, then one voice joined with the girl’s, and soon another and another voice joined her until the whole group rose in one solemn unified cry:

*“Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right man on our side,  
The man of God’s own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus it is He.*

*Lord Sabbaoth His name,  
From age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.”*

A great quiet fell on all of them. The men resumed the rescue effort with renewed strength, working into the night and before morning the glad cry came up from the pit that the men had been found—alive! How they rejoiced to see them!

They were reunited with their families, thanking and praising God for the song that had sparked hope in the hearts of the tired rescue workers. 

## youth messages

### *Dear Youth,*

**I**s there value in building on the work of the former generations? Doesn’t each generation need to decide what is right for them? Isn’t our heritage so complex that it is time to start over? Many people before you have pondered these questions. Some have decided that what they’ve been given is so mixed up and diluted, that the only solution is to start completely from scratch.

This sounds logical at first, but on closer observation, we conclude that people who start over from scratch, rather than building on the good things from their heritage, lose their moorings. Starting over from scratch is similar to unraveling a roll of yarn without ever becoming rewrapped. The young men who write this month have noticed some good things from our heritage that we can build on. Thank you for writing! —EE

*This Month’s*  
**QUESTION**

**What have you received from your Christian heritage that you would like to pass on to the generation after you?**

## *Response from our readers...*

One thing I have received from my Christian heritage is the example of the early Anabaptists. As I read about them in *The Secret of the Strength* and *The Martyrs Mirror*, I began to realize how godly they were. They gladly served each other and freely surrendered their rights. I realized that I, instead of serving others, often attempted to get out of work. Instead of giving up my rights, I doggedly refused to allow others to go first in line, get the bigger piece, etc. In general, with my actions, I was not showing love to those around me. In Matthew 5:46, it says, "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not the publicans the same?"

The Anabaptists not only showed love to their friends, but also extended Christ's love to their enemies and persecutors. Matthew 5:44 says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" Even though it cost them their lives, the early Anabaptists would not strike back, yet I, if annoyed, felt free to retaliate in anger by kicking a shin, tattling, or some such petty meanness. As I began reading about the early Anabaptists and their selfless, godly lives, I was convicted of my self-centeredness. Their witness caused me to reexamine my life. I

began trying to truly follow Christ as they had, not just following Him in name; as a result of their godly witness, I became a Christian.

*Stephen Correll, Seymour, IN*



The greatest thing I want to pass on is the principle and practice of humility and submission. For a time, the conservative Anabaptist people have been known as those who are willing to suffer loss so that Christ's name is not besmirched. That is fast being lost in the many church struggles, strife and splits. Therein is the problem. If we truly want to live like Christ and follow His example, we must be willing to suffer. The best way to demonstrate that to the next generation is by living it out. Sadly, though, it does not seem like the message is getting through.

*Eric Beachy, Millersburg, OH*



There are many things that I appreciate about my Christian heritage. The central thing that I want to pass on is a passion for Jesus Christ. All other things that are important to me are vain if Christ is not central. A passion for Christ and His kingdom is often grown in the heart of a young person by seeing a real heart for God in a major role model in their lives. That is the kind of role model that I want to be.

*Clinton Miller, Hutchinson, KS*

• • • • •

Do you know that you're rich? Yes, very rich. And no, I'm not talking about your checking account, or your equity in your house. I'm talking about grace, salvation, sanctification, sacrificial love...the list could go on and on, but talking about our riches in Christ sometimes seems more boring to us than talking about our new truck, mutual fund investment, shopping spree, etc., etc. Shame on us!

We as Christians are very blessed to have a loving relationship with the Almighty God. We are blessed to be Mennonites with a rich spiritual heritage. Each one of us should seriously think about what kind of spiritual heritage we are passing on to the oncoming generation. Our ancestors suffered very much for simply living the Bible as they understood it. Some spiritual treasures that we must pass on are:

1. Believing the Bible is our absolute, it is the truth that we can base our very lives on.
2. Living that truth out practically every day of our lives.
3. Being willing to be on the offensive against Satan.
4. Possessing peace and courage to suffer and/or die for the name of Jesus Christ. We as the present gen-

eration have to make this a reality or we will slide into apathy. We cannot afford the spiritual poverty that will result in the next generation if they do not see these as needed realities.

So, start writing your spiritual will today, by living in a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ, and pass this heritage on by your example.

*Mike Miller, Minerva, OH*

• • • • •

What have you received from your Christian heritage that you would like to pass on to the next generation after you?

One of the things that has come down through my grandparents and parents is the importance of a proper perspective in life. They have taught this with their words and by their example. Life is just a tiny space in time, and what we do here on earth determines where we will spend all of eternity. Living for God and obeying Him is all that really matters. Since all of our earthly possessions will some day be gone, it helps us to put our treasures in heaven, and be less worried about things here on earth. The importance of a good perspective of life is well worth passing on to the next generation.

*Caleb Gingerich, Amanda, OH*



## The Lord can hardly guide a man...

*who hasn't decided that he really wants to go wherever the Lord leads him.*

# THOUGHT GEMS

It seems strange that folks spend great effort loving their enemies when they should really be treating their friends a little better.

• • • • •

Turn your head neither too low nor too high; that will tilt your nose about right to see where you are going.

• • • • •

He who could rightly boast doesn't need to.

• • • • •

One way to keep young boys from getting on the wrong track is to use better switching facilities.

• • • • •

A wise business manager hires optimists as salesmen and pessimists to run the credit department.

• • • • •

You can tell a man's character by what he turns up when offered a job—his nose or his sleeves.

• • • • •

Too often a neglected child is one who is still living with his parents.

• • • • •

The true expression of Christianity is not a sigh but a song.

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