



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

Galatians 6:14

AUGUST 2008

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 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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My Day in God's Hands

Emily Stoll, Bloomfield, MO

*In the quietness of the morning,
When I rise at the dawn of day,
I seek to find a place aside
To meditate and pray.*

*At evening when the sun has set,
And I'm alone once more;
Recalling all the day's events
My thoughts, to God I pour.*

*If I've inspired new confidence,
Or revived a faded dream
Of a troubled individual
With words of hope supreme,*

*My day will have been successful;
I've stood the crucial test.
I'll know that God has guided,
And I am greatly blessed.*

The Stones Cry Out

(Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19)

Palm Sunday came only five days before Jesus would be betrayed, apprehended, tortured, and crucified. On that first Palm Sunday, His followers were still earnestly hoping that His possible death, which He had been predicting in some detail, could somehow be prevented. In fact, they were so convinced that Jesus ought not to die, that they took part in a rally to make His popularity invincible. They apparently hoped that by rousing the people who supported Him against those who wished Him ill, they could muster effective resistance and thereby foil any plot to kill Jesus.

Jesus' disciples wanted Him to "make a definite statement" about his mission on earth. He seemed willing and told them how He would do it: Several of them were to go into Bethany where they would find a donkey colt tied by the street. They were to untie it and if anyone asked what they were doing in leading away someone else's animal, they should simply tell them that the Master needs it. They were to bring it for Jesus to ride on into Jerusalem. They found all of this just as He said they

would, in fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9.

Excitement was running high that day as Jesus mounted the untrained donkey colt without incident and rode into Jerusalem for what would be His last visit there. He had shown Himself Master of man's great enemies: sickness and death, as well as lesser enemies like hunger and storm. In this case, He showed Himself Master over an untrained burro. The little beast of burden carried Him willingly and gracefully into town.

In preparation for Jesus' announcement, His enthusiastic supporters placed a few of their garments on the donkey's back. They also spread clothes and palm branches on the roadway to welcome The King. Surprisingly, the assorted colors and shimmering fronds on the donkey's path did not seem to bother it at all. Then, as if what was underfoot had not sufficiently tested the animal's nerves, the crowd got noisy. They shouted: "**Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!**"

No doubt those who were sympathetic toward Jesus were pleased with these developments and saw him as a likely king. They were eager to throw off the heavy yoke of Roman occupation.

All the noise and commotion did not bother the donkey, but it bothered the Pharisees. In fact, the crowd got so noisy that the Pharisees asked Jesus to quiet them down.

Jesus countered their objections with this, “I tell you that, if these would hold their peace, **the stones would immediately cry out.**”

No, people’s grand designs for an effective uprising against Rome did not materialize, but God’s plans were fulfilled that day. What a colossal difference it would have made if their plans had worked the way they wanted them to!

As we ponder Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, let us consider another question:


Why Are There Severe Earthquakes?

My golden-aged friend, Wilmer Swope from Leetonia, Ohio, raises this fascinating question: “Are today’s earthquakes as ‘the stones crying out?’”

I offer further questions: Are God’s children making the message of salvation clear enough? If not, is God having ‘the stones cry out’ through mighty earthquakes?

Jesus said plainly that His followers should proclaim the Gospel to the very end of time. We are to be witnesses of his salvation. If we hide our “lamp” under a bushel and refuse to speak for the Savior, what might God choose to do? He just might ask the stones to speak so that men everywhere realize that the God of heaven is powerful and that He does not leave Himself without witness.

If God sends a strong message like an earthquake we cannot stop Him. Certainly, we must never question His love or His justice! When God sends judgments like grinding rocks, buckling earth, landslides, and tumbling buildings that leave thousands dead, **He grieves**. He does not afflict humanity without having it bring pain to his own heart. Lamentations 3:33 says, “For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” God is committed to our holiness even more than the saintliest human parent is committed to good character training for his children.

God gets glory when His children *speak* of His love. We who are grateful for our salvation are able to make God’s love just as clear (or clearer) than an earthquake does. Let us walk **and talk** “that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).
—PLM 

Re: The High Cost of Low Talk

Dear editor,

With the presidential election process in full swing I, like most Americans, am tired of the gossip, slander, and mud slinging that seems to go on and is now continuing to go on between the candidates.

In my research and from my own personal and professional experiences, I have found that gossip has caused more wars, instigated more fights, destroyed more businesses, broken up more homes, and hurt more people than anything else in human history.

I believe it's time to take action, so I am challenging people everywhere from all walks of life to go gossip-free. I am organizing a nation-wide challenge to go 8 days gossip-free starting on 8-8-08. I have chosen the number 8 because it is the number of "new beginnings" and I am hoping that these 8 days will be the beginning of cleaner speech and the beginning of a new awareness about the high cost of low talk.

I am asking that people wear some type of white clothing... There is so much attention on this presidential election and gossip is extremely prevalent, so I want to offer the challenge for people to begin practicing now.

I have already sent this challenge to John McCain and Barack Obama and to their campaigns...

There is definitely a high cost to low talk and this is one way to encourage people to think about the power their words carry. This is a challenge, not just for our political leaders. This is a challenge for all people...

If you are interested in taking the challenge or if you are interested in the book *Gossip Free? The High Cost of Low Talk*, more information can be found at www.gossipfree.org.

Sincerely,

Kevin Hester
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Coloma, MI 49038
269-208-3844

Editor's Note: "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2:1,2).

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Re: Pressures on God's Flock, July, 2008.

Brother Paul,

I have just finished reading the editorial of *Calvary Messenger*, July, 2008. The thoughts are well-stated and much needed. In the past several years I have met a couple who left the popular evangelical setting and were attracted to the Anabaptists for various reasons. A few weeks ago, we asked the brother to speak to our congregation, telling us what

attracted them and what they saw as the most serious threats facing our conservative peoples today.

His response was very informative and sobering. One of the areas of concern to him and his wife and family is that they see the very things they sought to get away from are being welcomed and embraced by the people they were once attracted to. I told them how in the past 20 years or more, we have had believers who escaped from Communist countries speak to thousands of Anabaptists across the United States and tell their stories. (I love do love these people and thank God for their testimony.) But the question I have is, "Is communism a threat to our churches' spiritual fall?" I doubt that it's a serious one.

These two, Lynn and Sarah Leslie, have a tremendous story that our

conservative Anabaptist churches should be hearing by asking them to come and speak to our churches. But the truth is they are being treated rudely by some and ignored by others. Some of the reasons that the doctrinal errors are finding their way into our circles come under the heading of the first hazard you mention in your editorial: "Desire for Public Acclaim." Many of these new ideas (popular teachings of popular authors) are embraced by people looking to be like the first boy on the block to get the latest technology. Few people take the time to discern content, and those who seek to do so are called "judgmental," etc.

Again, I appreciate your article and want to take it to heart personally.

Blessings to you,

Lyle Kropf, Wickenburg, AZ 

Hope for the Hopeless

Perry M. Yoder, (1899-1976)

[I dedicate these words of encouragement to the descendants of Minister Perry M. Yoder and to any who struggle with hopelessness, the problem Perry so helpfully addressed in this article. -PLM]

Now and then we meet born-again, consecrated Christians who feel as though they are hopelessly lost. They know that Christ died for sinners. They can quote from memory many of God's promises of salvation through Christ. Usually they are

noted for their conscientious lives and an overwhelming desire to do what is right.

Being human they are not perfect. And Satan seems to have a magnifying glass which he has reserved for the super-sensitive. Most people he lulls into a spiritual sleep with the opium

of indifference and unconcern. But a super-sensitive conscience cannot be lulled, so he brings out the magnifying glass and makes their errors look to them like unpardonable sins.

Of course, they look to Christ for grace and pardon. They know He can save to the uttermost all who come to God through Christ (Hebrews 7:25). But just then Satan will thrust his powerful binoculars before their eyes turned wrong end towards them. It makes Christ seem so far, far away—and oh, so small! (You know how distant a nearby object appears when you look at it through a telescope the wrong way.)

They turn to the Bible and read again the promises they know by memory, but those promises seem to be only for others! They go to church and hear sermons intended to arouse a sluggish conscience, for that is what the majority needs. For them it is the wrong medicine. Their suffering is only intensified by mass treatment.

Super-sensitive consciences are few and priceless. They need and merit special care. What they need above all else is the faith to look up and live. They need special help to turn their minds away from the wound and fixed on the Great Healer.

When God sent fiery serpents among the children of Israel (Numbers 21:6-9) He gave only one remedy. There is no evidence that the serpents were removed by divine

intervention. Probably they had to be destroyed one by one until the camp was rid of them all.

So poisonous were those snakes that the Bible calls them “fiery.” Their bite was a sting of death. Dressing the wound was to no avail. Gazing at the wound did not kill them. No medicine or drug could counteract the venom injected by a single strike.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should have eternal life” (John 3:14,15).

The biting serpents only typified sin, which is the sting of death; and the serpent of brass was only a symbol of the crucified Savior. If looking upon the symbol gave life to those who were bitten by the serpents, how much surer is the guarantee of life for those who look unflinchingly to Christ for salvation from sin!


Look up, penitent soul, look up! Look not at your mangled spirits here below. There is no balm, no drug, no cure on earth with which to dress the sting of death. Break off those reversed binoculars which Satan uses to make Christ seem far away. If you feel your need of Him, then YOU are the one He came to save. His promises are for YOU, a thousand-fold surer than if you felt you were getting along quite well on your own merits.

“For by grace are ye saved through

faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9).

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

Accept His promises with all your heart. They are meant especially for YOU!

[From *The Brotherhood Messenger*, Vol. VI, Issue 1, 2008. Used with permission.] 

Keepers of the Master’s Vineyard

(Based on Luke 13:6-9)

Joseph van Loon, Tasmania, Australia

*Are you a keeper of the vineyard—a dresser of the vine?
Have you accepted the Master’s commission?
When He called and said, “Take care of what is mine.”
Do you bow your head in prayer and seek Him on bended knee?
Do you search His Word for what He wants you to be?
Have you sought Him for support in time of stress and anxiousness?
Have you sought Him in times of ease to express your thankfulness?
Keepers of the vineyard--do not shirk your task,
Though at times it seems to be too much to ask.
You need to remember that what the Master entrusted to your care.
It is His vineyard with many vines which He wants you to prepare.
His vineyard He has planted and bought with His own blood,
And now this very vineyard He has placed in your charge.
He provides you with manna in His Word to feed His precious vines.
Soon He will be coming back, saying, “Account for what is mine.”
Have you fed, watered, pruned, and trimmed His vineyard for His glory?
Or have you sought to edify yourself from the crop?
If you’ve labored for the Master’s glory by providing fruit you have nothing to fear,
But woe will come if self you have served; cast out you’ll be when He does appear.*

(Joseph van Loon, October, 2004)

All the parables Jesus spoke had a very direct application in the lives of His audience and there is no doubt that Jesus meant them to be applied to all of us who hear His words until the moment of His return. We are no less His audience than were those who heard Him speak 2,000 years ago. His words continue to speak to us today and will continue to do so until he returns to gather His own.

In Luke 13:1-9, Jesus gave a parable which refuted the theology of His Jewish audience that said that if a calamity such as being killed by your enemy or by a building collapse than those that died must have been sinners. Jesus said, "I tell you nay, but except you repent you shall likewise perish." He then continues with a story about an unfruitful tree in the vineyard, which contains an important lesson for us all.

Some who read this believe that verses 6-9 only apply to or speak about God's chosen people—Israel. 1 Timothy 3:16 tells us that ALL Scripture is given for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. . . . We therefore, cannot pass it off as being unimportant for us today.

Each of us at some time has the oversight of others. The vineyard spoken of here is the church, the body of Christ. Ownership is God's,

who has placed it in the hands of His Son, Jesus Christ. The vines or trees can be compared to people in the church or our families. The vine dresser is responsible to the Master of the vineyard for its upkeep and fruitfulness. Each person who has spiritual oversight of others is a vinedresser, so let none of us shirk our responsibilities by saying, "Well, I am not an ordained minister." The truth is that all of us have God-given tasks or gifts (talents). The parable of the unprofitable servant clarifies the matter of individual accountability as it applies to us. (Matthew 25:14-30)

God owns the vineyard; His rights are absolute. In the parable of hiring of laborers for the vineyard, we see that the owner decides what He will do, even if some consider it unfair. Who are we to question God's prerogatives? (See Matthew 20:1-16)


He, as Master and Owner, chooses whom He would have to work in his vineyard. He calls and we answer. For some, the vineyard we work in is our home (our family); for others it may be the mission field. For others it is a combination or a ministry position in the brotherhood of believers.

No matter what position you hold, you have been called by the owner of the vineyard to be His vine dresser. He supplies you with all the necessary material to dress His vines.

1 Corinthians 12 outlines gifts of the Holy Spirit which energize this work for the Master. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Unless we have a real desire and determination to carry out the task at hand, it will most likely not be well done. Our motivation must be with real warmth of love to Christ, the Master of the vineyard, to His truths, and to His people. If we have that motivation, then the task of dressing the vines will be like an anthem of praise on our lips and it

will please Him.

As we dress the vineyard, let us not forget to intercede for it and for those we teach. It is not sufficient to give ourselves to the Word of God. We must also give ourselves to prayer so that as we work as vine dressers, we continue to draw strength from him. In and of ourselves, we can do nothing, but through Him all things are possible. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). 

Ministers' Meeting Messages—2008

This is a condensation of a message preached at the annual ministers' meetings, March 25-27, 2008, near Arthur, IL, at Otto Center. The complete set of eight tapes or CD's is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA, 20136 for \$45, postpaid.

3. The Enemy That Destroys Brotherhood

Paul Weaver, Russellville, OH

Two weeks ago I had two calls from brethren who said, "We're defeated." They were in two different locations, and both said they were talking about themselves and their churches. I tried to encourage them. As I hung up on the last call, I wondered, *God, where are You?* As I look across the [conservative] Anabaptist landscape, I see a lot of confusion, struggle, and battle. We see churches in turmoil. There are [spiritual] POW's and MIA's [prisoners of war and missing in action] all over.

I went down on my knees and cried, *God, where is Your glory?* I ask you that question: Where is the glory of God? Should not the church bear the glory of God--the victory, the beauty, and the love of God? Let us bring that glory back. That glory only comes back with His presence. Before the people of God come together, there is no glory in the place where they meet. We must each bring that glory when we come together to worship in the presence of God.

I'm burdened that we may be delivering sons called Ichabod. In 1 Samuel 4, we have the story of the woman in childbirth whose husband

was dead. Her father-in-law was dead. Her husband's brother was dead. But what caused her the greatest travail of soul? The ark of God had been taken away. May God's presence never leave us. When Jesus agonized in the garden and prayed that high-priestly prayer, (John 17), He prayed, "The glory thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one." I don't think there's any conflict in heaven today. There is unity, beauty, and oneness; the angels are not blaming others, there is no battle there, but here in the church on earth it is sometimes not that way.

Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Do you believe that? What man calls "church," at times, is not what God calls it. The gates of hell do not prevail against the church of God.

In our (conservative) Anabaptist churches in America, there are people who are wounded; churches, (only half as full as they used to be), which are shattered; there is division and struggle. If leaders don't deal with these conniving and destructive spirits those spirits will eventually deal with us. Soon we will find ourselves standing in the rubble, wondering what happened. God is calling us to confront these destructive spirits.

I will attempt to describe one spirit which is often unseen and not often dealt with. In Ephesians 6: 12, we are told that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood." Our battle is not at eye level. Often, that is where we seem to battle. When Peter objected to the idea that Jesus would die, Jesus disagreed with him and said, "Get the behind me, Satan." He didn't see Peter as His enemy; He saw beyond that and spoke to the real enemy, Satan. When we focus on the conflicts in our churches, we must look higher than eye level. We must address the powers of darkness.

Let us also be reminded that it is more important to know God than to know the devil. We are not to be ignorant of Satan's devices, however, let us know God. Let us bring God to our people. Let us bring the glory of God into our midst. The presence of darkness cannot stand in the congregation of the righteous. When we fail there, it indicates weakness and makes a place for the devil to get in.

It is in the interests of the enemy to be unnoticed. That is what makes this subject hard, yet that is my assignment. Here are four crucial points that we need to give consideration:

Try the spirits with truth.

By their fruits ye shall know them.

Determine the origin of a suggestion.

Knowledge is not enough; we must have Holy Spirit discernment.

I am not afraid of the Spirit of God. Some movements of the past may have caused some confusion on the role of the Holy Spirit. We might even draw back and not be so welcoming to this Holy Spirit. But if we push the Holy Spirit out of our lives and our churches, we will find ourselves confused and not able to discern how to proceed. Then we tend to bring the battle down to the eye level. We hear, "It was that brother," or, "It was a personality problem."

I shall now identify one enemy spirit with the story of a personal experience. Here is what happened: I was a teenager. We had a nice, new-fallen snow. I pulled on my boots and got my gun while it was still dark. I started out close to Bunker Hill and walked down a country road about a mile. When I got to an agreed-upon meeting place, others came and we waited for daybreak. At daybreak we headed into the woods. We were looking for some tracks. One man suddenly remarked, "Here are the tracks of a red fox."

We trailed it for a while. Then he said, "Let's have some of you men go to the other side of these woods and be ready for the fox when we drive it out." After a while we came to a fresh

track. The fox had obviously crossed U. S. Highway 62. So we whistled and got those still in the woods on the trail to come out.

We went to the next woods. We figured the fox was probably lying in there. So again we went out around and when we got to the other side, it had already passed through. We kept on going, through one woods after another, and we tracked that fox all day. About four o'clock that evening, we had walked close to ten miles and were near Mt. Eaton, and we still hadn't found our fox.

Our idea was that the presence of tracks meant that there was an animal close by. So it is in life: the tracks of a very elusive spirit indicate that it is present, yet it escapes identity. It often hides under the cloak of concern. "I'm concerned about the church" or "I'm just concerned about that brother." I believe this is one of the most wicked spirits that roam the churches.

Let me clarify one point: I do not believe that a born-again person can be demon-possessed.

What is temptation? Temptation attempts to give us instruction: "Do this. Do that."

Deception comes by wrongly identifying the spirits. This unidentified spirit has often damaged men, women and churches. It burdens me that very few leaders are willing

to look at, identify, and confront this spirit in the name of the Lord and let the mighty power of God deal with the person who is listening to that spirit.

This spirit inhabits the hearts of the unconverted but its tracks are also seen among God's people. One day a couple came to speak to me about the husband's depression. He said that as he was praying earnestly to God one day, it came to him that one of the ministers was living in adultery. I asked him, "How do you know that?"

He said, "I just know it, because I was on my knees and it came to me and I just know that's what it is."

Then I remembered what someone had told me about that situation. So I said, "But how do you know it's true?"

Again he said, "I just know it's true." I asked him what he knows about this brother. He said, "He was my favorite preacher. He was the one about whom I thought that if I were ordained, I would want to be like him. We were close friends—very close."

He even wanted me to ask the lady in question. I told him we cannot go there. Unless we know it to be true, we cannot think it or believe it. I tried to tell him what his problem is. It ended that he went home. I met with the accused brother, who laid down his ministry for a

while. The situation may still not be resolved. This depressed man is now excommunicated. I told him that the spirit he'd been listening to is THE SPIRIT OF JEALOUSY.

In 1 Timothy 4:1, it says: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines (instructions) of devils."

How many confessions of *jealousy* have you had in your church? It is a most elusive, evasive spirit. It is almost always present in relationship struggles. One might conclude it is not here, except that we see its tracks. In James 3:14, it says, "But if ye have bitter envying [jealousy] and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth." Since the warning is given not to lie against the truth that, in itself, tells us it is easy to lie about it and say it's not there.

Each of us in this room is gifted differently. The problem we are discussing loves to get between ministers. You may feel you are not like your ministering brother. If this spirit is listened to among the ministers, get ready for the rebels. You will have them. It is a divisive spirit. James continues, "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish [demonlike]. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

We can expect every form of evil to come in if we allow this evil to “run around in our woods.” Look for feelings of ill will because of another’s advantage; resentment for another’s influence; demanding exclusive loyalty; feeling left out while another has the advantage and resenting another’s honor and respect.

Many contentions have roots in pride. Proverbs 27:4 says, “Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous: but who is able to stand before envy?” Proverbs 6:34, 35 says: “Jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest him many gifts.”

It is difficult to build a relationship with a person motivated by this spirit. You can give gifts and invite them over for supper, but this spirit cannot be satisfied. You cannot pay ransom to this spirit. The only thing that will address this spirit is deep repentance. Jealousy is poison to a man. Jealousy is as cruel as the grave. How is that? It parts relationships and does not release its hold.

Here are six tracks of jealousy from the story of Cain and Abel and of Joseph and his brothers:

It will kill. (From speaking against others to actual murder; it attacks to destroy.)

The countenance will fall. (Suddenly

things change from warm to cold.)

Anger. (Sometimes masked as hurt feelings. A silent frustration that embitters the heart.)

Is often comes against those more righteous.

It strains relationships; it is not open to entreaty.

It removes, defames and weakens the influence of its victim.

I notice four cases of jealousy in the Bible. They all occurred in close relationships: The prodigal son and his older brother; Cain and Abel; Jacob and Esau; and Joseph and his brothers. Jealousy seems to spring out of close relationships gone sour.

The depth of your ministry lies not in your words, but in your heart broken before God. If you are hosting this spirit, follow Jacob to the ford Jabbok (Genesis 32:24-32). He struggled deeply with God and was never the same after that. Thus we must deal with this evil spirit when it becomes active in our own lives.

If we find the spirit of jealousy in the flock of God, we must confront this spirit and give time and encouragement for repentance. If repentance is not found, I believe we need to remove the person hosting it.

If we don’t deal with this spirit, it will grow and deal with us and our church. May God give us grace that we never listen to or act out of jealousy.



marriages

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

Beachy-Quevedo

Bro. Darius Lynn, son of Ivan and Elsie Beachy, Free Union, VA, and Sis. Rosalie, daughter of Mario and Linda Quevedo, Paraguay, at United Bethel Church, Plain City, OH, for Canaan Fellowship Church on April 12, 2008, by Ivan Beachy.

Byler-Martin

Bro. Linnford, son of Ray and Elva Byler, Whiteville, TN, and Sis. Amber, daughter of David and Christine Martin, Rochelle, VA, at Oak Grove Mennonite Church on June 13, 2008, by Tim Miller.

Herschberger-Yoder

Bro. Clinton, son of Darrell and Judy Herschberger, Tuscola, IL, and Sis. Carolyn, daughter of Ernie and Clara Mae Yoder, Tuscola, IL, at Sunnyside Mennonite Church for Trinity Christian Fellowship, Sullivan IL, on May 31, 2008, by Dannie Diener.

Knepp-Graber

Bro. Clifford, son of Henry and Laura Knepp, Montgomery, IN, and Sis. Mary, daughter of Herbert and Odie Graber, Odon, IN, on May 10, 2008, at Bethel Mennonite Church for Mt. Olive Mennonite Church by David Yoder, Jr.

Kreider-Vance

Bro. Nathan, son of Mervin and Priscilla Kreider, Myerstown, PA, and Sis. Roberta, daughter of Robert and Beatrice Vance, April 26, 2008, at Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church by John U. Lapp.

Lengacher-Wittmer

Bro. Brent, son of Ray and Sue Lengacher, Loogootee, IN, and Sis. Juliana, daughter of Larry and Barbara Wittmer, Montgomery, IN, on June 28, 2008, for Mt. Olive Mennonite Church by David Yoder, Jr.

Miller-Gingerich

Bro. Brian Lee, son of Marvin and Neva Miller, Grove City, MN, and Sis. Rose Marie, daughter of John and Christina Gingerich, Spooner, WI, on June 7, 2008, at Wesleyan Church for Hope Mennonite Church, Spooner, WI, by Mel Beiler.

Mullet-Hostetler

Bro. Christopher, son of Elmer and Alma Mullet, London, OH, and Sis. Sheila, daughter of Perry and Karen Hostetler, Plain City, OH, on June 7, 2008, at Shiloh Mennonite Church for Haven Fellowship by Lonnie Beachy.

Peachey-Bender

Bro. Ezra, son of Noah and Annie Peachey, Oakland, MD, and Sis. Mary Grace, daughter of Lewis and Martha Bender, Catlett, VA, at Pine Grove Church on June 5, 2008, by Bennie Byler.

Ropp-Eash

Bro. Michael, son of Laverne and Elaine Ropp, Monkton, ON, and Sis. Monica, daughter of Dennis and Wanda Eash, Romney, WV, at Christ Community Church, Augusta, WV, for Slanesville Community Mennonite Church, on May 31, 2008, by Elmer Glick.

Stutzman-Miller

Bro. Henry, son of Jonas and Lizzie Stutzman, Arthur, IL, and Sis. Ada Mae, daughter of the late Alvin and Annie Miller, Ligonier, IN, at Fair Haven Church, Goshen, IN, for Woodlawn A.M. Church on May 3, 2008, by Steve Miller.

Wagler-Stoltzfus

Bro. Gerald, son of Darrell and Wilma Wagler, Washington, IN, and Sis. Esther, daughter of John and Anna Stoltzfus, Narvon, PA, on June 14 2008, at Bethel Christian Fellowship by the bride's father, Paul Stoltzfus.

Zook-Yoder

Bro. Anthony Wayne, son of Wilmer and Esther Zook, Rural Retreat, VA, and Sis. Judith Anne, daughter of Glen and Salome Yoder, Phoenix, AZ, at Shady Grove Christian Fellowship, Mifflinburg, PA, on May 31, 2008, by Perry Troyer.

cradle roll

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

Beachy, David Lee and Michelle (Hershberger), Stanardsville, VA, second child and son, William Drew "Liam," May 21, 2008.

Eicher, Chris and Bethany (Gingerich), Drasco, AR, third child, second dau., Jennifer Lynn, March 15, 2008.

Glick, Myron and Joleen (Lapp), Himrod, NY, third child, second son, Adriel John, April 26, 2008.

Graber, Justin and Carolyn (Villalobos), Quenemo, KS, first child and son, Trenton Justin, March 11, 2008.

Hochstetler, Lavon and Karisa (Boll), Virginia Beach, VA, third child, second son, Ian Scott, Feb. 15, 2008.

Hostetler, Keith and Ariana (Stoltzfus), Plain City, OH, first child and dau., Kiana Nicole, June 10, 2008.

Jantzi, Michael and Twila (Yoder), Stanardsville, VA, third child, second dau., Kiana Joy, June 12, 2008.

Knepp, Philip and Melisa (Graber), Odon, IN, second child, first son, Jordan Wade, June 29, 2008.

Mast, Michael and Eunice (Miller), Mountain View, AR, first child and son, Darren Michael, June 10, 2008.

Miller, Jonathan and Sheri (Beachy), West Jefferson, OH, third child, second daughter, Amari Grace, July 4, 2008.

Miller, Kristen and Rhonda (Brenneman), Knotts Island, VA, second child and son, Samuel Jon, June 9, 2008.

Miller, Loren and Mandy (Miller), Eden Valley, MN, second child, first dau., Rose Melody, June 16, 2008.

Peachey, Ivan and Kay (Raber), Kisumu, Kenya, eighth child, sixth son, Jeremy Marcus, June 6, 2008.

Robbins, Matthew and Linda (Floyd), Vinemont, AL, fourth child, third son, Mark Owen, July 3, 2008.

Stoltzfus, Lester and Hannah (Stoltzfus), Honey Brook, PA, ninth child, seventh dau., Latisha Dawn, May 27, 2008.

Thayer, Matthias and Martha (Kauffman), Dyke, VA, third child, second son, Manley Obadiah, May 30, 2008.

Wagler, Michael and Lisa (Wagler), Montgomery, IN, third child, first son, Collin Michael, June 30, 2008.

Yoder, Mark and Martha (Stoltzfus), Free Union, VA, fifth child, second son, Stedman Brock, May 15, 2008.

Yoder, Steven and Daisy (Beiler), Aroda, VA, currently serving in Waslala, Nicaragua, third child and dau., Heidi Raquel, June 18, 2008.

Zimmerman, Javan and Matina (Overholt), Lyndon, KS, fourth child, third son, Zachary Javan, May 26, 2008.

Zook, Daniel and Karen (Zook), Belleville, PA, first child and son, David Noah, May 27, 2008.

ordinations

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

Bro. Michael Mast, 26, was ordained as deacon on April 27, 2008, at Shady Lawn Mennonite Church at Mountain View, AR. The charge was given by Elmer Gingerich, assisted by David Yoder and Freeman Hochstetler. Preordination messages were given by David M. Yoder, Partridge, KS. Others in the lot were Ernest Eby and Robert A. Byler.

The lazier a man is, the more he's going to do tomorrow.

obituaries

Chupp, William J., 92, died of heart failure at Kinzers, PA on June 3, 2008. He was born at Yoder, KS, on July 20, 1915, son of the late Joseph C. S. and Amanda (Detweiler) Chupp.

He was a member of Weavertown A.M. Church.

On Dec. 21, 1946, he was married to Esther Smoker, who preceded him death. Their seven children are: William J. Chupp, New Holland; Mary Ann (Reuben) Yoder, Free Union, VA; Martha (John) Ramos, Sarasota, FL; Lily (Alvin) Stoltzfus, Oxford, PA; Harvey Chupp, East Earl, PA; Wanda (Norman) Kauffman, Bird-in-Hand, PA; Wilma (Jerry) Byers, Campbell, TX; 21 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Other survivors include three brothers: Andrew, Nappanee, IN; John (husband of Esther), Nappanee, IN; and Harvey (husband of Nancy), Eden Valley, MN.

Preceding him in death were five brothers and five sisters.

The funeral was held at Weavertown Church on June 8, with brethren Mervin Lapp, Aaron Lapp, John U. Lapp, Norman Kauffman and Alvin Stoltzfus serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

King, Barbara Ann (Stoltzfus), 43, of Kinzers, PA, died at her home on April 29, 2008. She was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor in September, 2002. After initial surgery and treatment she was blessed with five wonderful years with her family. She was born January

18, 1965, daughter of Mary (Beiler) and the late Chester Stoltzfus.

She was a member of Summitview Christian Fellowship.

On June 7, 1986, she was married to Ivan King, who survives. Also surviving are her eight children: Kevin, Jason, Regina, Rhoda, Arlin, Mary Jane, Maria, and Katrina, all at home. Others survivors include her mother, Mary Stoltzfus, Talmage, PA; three brothers: Omar (Sadie), Whitewright, TX; D. John (Anna Mary), Kinzers, PA; Eli (Naomi), Talmage, PA; and two sisters: Fannie (Mel) Beiler, Honey Grove, PA; and Katie (Emanuel) King, Port Royal, PA.

The funeral was held on May 2 at Summitview Christian Fellowship with Reuben Beiler, Dave Stoltzfus, and Marlin Stoltzfus serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Miller, Glen D., 74, of Millersburg, OH, died on April 28, 2008, at Walnut Hills Nursing Home. He was born June 23, 1933, in LaGrange, IN, son of Mose J. E. and Elizabeth (Miller) Miller.

He was a member of Messiah Fellowship church of Charm, OH. He was employed at Castle Nursing Home for 33 years as a cook and dietician. Glen and his family catered many events over the years.

On June 2, 1955, he was married to Ada Coblentz. She survives. Also surviving are nine children: Jerry (Karen) Miller, Sugarcreek; James (Rebecca) Miller, Sugarcreek; Joseph (Betty) Miller, Baltic; Myron (Anne) Miller, Millers-

burg; Carol (Aaron) Bauman, Smithville; David (Julia) Miller, Hartville; Daniel (Rita) Miller, Sugarcreek; Charran (Kathy) Miller, Columbus, NC; Rose Anna (Alan) Gingerich, Millersburg; 33 grandchildren, six brothers and sisters: Arlene Yoder, Walnut Creek, twin sister Gladys (Ivan) Troyer, Sugarcreek; Wilbur (Anna) Miller, Apple Creek; Niva (Roman) Coblentz, Walnut Creek; Mary (Lewis) Wagler, Hartville; and Betty (Aden) Miller, Millersburg.

He was preceded in death by a granddaughter, Whitney Hallie Gingerich.

The funeral was held on May 1, with Philip Miller serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Smoker, Benjamin K., 72, of Gordonville, PA, died on May 30, 2008. He was born June 15, 1935, son of Jacob and Barbara (Kanagy) Smoker.

He was a member of the Tourist Mennonite Church, Sarasota, FL. Ben was ordained a minister and when they were not in their winter home in Florida, they faithfully attended Mine Road A.M.Church.

He was married to Barbara Fisher on June 16, 1956, at New Holland, PA. They had five children: Sara (David) Yoder, Leola, PA; Elizabeth (Mahlon) King, Gap, PA; Emma (Wilmer) Stoltzfus, Leola; John (Naomi) Smoker, Belleville, PA; and Ben (Kathryn) Smoker, New Holland, PA. Also surviving him are 33 grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were a son,

Elmer, and a daughter, Annie.

The funeral was held on June 2, at Weavertown Church, with John U. Glick, Perry Troyer, David Graber and Daniel Lapp serving. Burial was in the Summitview Christian Fellowship cemetery.

Troyer, Edna Elvesta (Frey), 87, of Plain City, OH, died June 10, 2008, at Dublin Methodist Hospital, Dublin, OH. She was born in Plain City, Dec. 21, 1920, daughter of the late Eli B. and Susanna (Yoder) Frey.

She was a member of Haven Fellowship. She is remembered for her faith in God, her interest in others and cutting a total of 53,282 quilt blocks for charity.

On April 24, 1947, she was married to William B. Troyer. He died in August, 1993.

Surviving are four children: Ina Faye Troyer, Pratts, VA; William, Jr., (Ruth) Troyer, Marysville, OH; Loren Edward (Rachel) Troyer, Sarasota, FL; and Ruth Ellen (Ralph) Dickerson, Blacksville, SC; ten grandchildren; and nine great grandchildren; a brother, Jonas Marvin Frey, Plain City; two sisters, Verna Irene Miller, SC; and Clara Sue Frey, Plain City.

She was preceded in death by five brothers and three sisters: Lydia Ellen Bontrager, Noah Elmer Frey, John Edward Frey, Ada Viola Yutzzy, Emma Elnora Overholt, Eli Ramen Frey, Nelson Lee Frey, and Homer Lloyd Frey.



observations

Observing the pre-election political process is a fresh reminder that the kingdom of Christ is in many ways opposite from earthly kingdoms. To voluntarily humble oneself is foreign to office-seeking candidates. Self-exaltation, prominence, and seeking power stand in sharp contrast to the servant symbolism of the “basin and towel” demonstrated by the Lord Himself. (John 13)

Many of us believe that it is better to make our contribution to good government by prayer for those in earthly authority rather than active participation in the election process.

We need to be especially aware that those branches of the government that must keep order in unruly society must sometimes resort to means that are in direct violation to the way of Christ. As stated in the Schleitheim Confession, (1527), earthly powers are “ordained of God outside the perfection of Christ.” Separation and non-conformity has a valid expression in our relationship to a God-ordained government. History seems to teach us that for Christians to infiltrate government to make it better is to run the risk of having salt lose its savor. (Matthew 5:13)

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We do right to appreciate our government for its generosity toward religious freedom. But it is only realistic to acknowledge that there are many things in U. S. history that are far from being Christian.

A major blot on the pages of history is the practice of slavery several centuries before the Civil War, 1860-65. The discrimination against African-Americans in the century following was also a continuing injustice to people of color.

Our gratitude for our government should be tempered with humility, with the awareness that it is far different than the Kingdom of Christ.

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Something more current appeared in *Mennonite Weekly Review*, 6-9-08. Donavon Russell writes that the annual U. S. defense budget is 600 billion dollars or as much as the next 15 big defense spenders combined. This amounts to 46% of the world total. U. S. spends \$1,756 per capita annually for defense.

Knowing such things should help us clarify issues concerning priorities, citizenship and kingdom loyalties for the serious Christian. It should also remind us of the need for fervent prayer for those in authority.

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Hitler’s effort to annihilate the Jews and other “undesirables” is well

known. The number of people who perished in concentration camps in his uncivilized endeavor is considered to be about 11,000,000, including about 6,000,000 Jews.

In 1917 Marxist Communism was introduced to the Soviet Union. This was the beginning of a reign of terror that lasted until 1990. Historians estimate that during this period 60 to 70 million perished by execution, slave labor, deliberate starvation or imprisonment.

Significant numbers of Mennonites who were no longer able to leave their homes were caught in this heartless purge. Very often some who managed to get out left behind other members of their families.

A book, entitled, *Letters from Stalin's Gulag*, compiled by Ruth Derksen, published by Pandora Press, 2007, 391 pages, describes the experiences of Jacob and Maria Regehr as slave laborers during the 1930's. Katie Funk Wiebe reviews this book in *Mennonite Weekly Review*, 6-23-08. Seven of Regehr's children were forced into Siberian labor camps for 11 years.

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Bill Kenna was involved as a marine in the Vietnam war. He is presently a pastor of the Faith Harvest Church in Kissimmee, FL. He sees his military experience as a terrible waste and is

earnestly studying the Scriptures for a better way. The Amish response to the Nickel Mines school shootings incident seems to have affected him and his church deeply.

Kenna and his family traveled to Lancaster County, PA, and did extensive research through reading, telephone and the internet. In their search they discovered Rod and Staff and Christian Light Educational school materials. As a result Elmer Glick was asked to come to their school for one week of Teacher Training using CLE materials. He stayed with the pastor's family being with them 24/7.

On a Wednesday evening, they asked him for a historical overview of the Amish and Mennonites. This was followed by a 45-minute question-and-answer period. Brother Elmer reports that there were some hard questions. But he felt they were honest questions that needed to be answered. Elmer said it was, all in all, a very busy week and a pleasure to serve the Lord in this way. (From a letter to *The Budget*, 6-25-08, with Elmer Glick's permission.)

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How to Overcome Evil God's Way was written by Stephen Russell, (319 pages.) An interesting feature of this book is the author's own faith journey. He was converted at age 17 in a

non-Anabaptist setting. His Christian commitment and serious study led him to eventually join a conservative Anabaptist church. Close contact with the young people of the congregation brought the startling reminder that the basic principles of Christian nonresistance must not be taken for granted. The book has 6 sections and 17 chapters. Section 1. "Getting Started"; 2. "Nonresistance in the Old Testament"; 3. "Nonresistance in the New Testament"; 5. "Modern Need for this Witness"; 6. "Where do we go from here?" Section 6 includes a summary, highlighting key points from every chapter, making it suitable for use in group study. A selected bibliography notes 30 different books that are pertinent to this subject.

To me this book is impressive for several reasons: 1. It is the result of the author's personal conviction on an integral part of following Jesus. 2. It reflects careful study of biblical and historical bases for this important principle. 3. The author reflects the awareness of differing views among professed Christendom. But he is very clear about Kingdom/citizenship priorities and loyalties.

The book strikes me as being an

interesting combination of scholarly research and practical, easy-to-understand principles. Selected parts would be very useful for group studies.

Simon Schrock, Donovan Graber and John Coblentz offer comments of endorsement that appear on the back cover. The forward by Brother Coblentz includes the following: "We are called to live today to follow the teachings of Jesus among the people we know. It is a high calling...."

Love as Jesus taught us demands courage, vision and sacrifice. It means standing with the downtrodden, feeding the hungry and caring for the sick in body and soul. It means forgiving those who mistreat us. It means having the strength to absorb hatred and to respond in genuine love. The love that Jesus taught us is neither passive nor weak nor ineffective. It rings with the rich, powerful life and example of Jesus."

The book is available from Faith Builders Resource Group, P. O. Box 125, Guys Mills, PA 16327. (Price \$12.99, plus S & H. Toll-free phone number: 877-222-4769)

—DLM 

Faultfinding is as dangerous as it is easy.

Building on a Solid Foundation—Part Three of a Condensation

Lowell Miller, Nickerson, KS

This is the third installment of the keynote address given at Hutchinson, KS, at the area-wide Christian education meeting on January 19, 2008.

America, a Christian nation. I greatly appreciate our nation. I appreciate the freedoms we enjoy, freedoms which vastly exceed the freedoms of our Christian brothers in India or China. I also acknowledge that many of our laws are based on Judeo-Christian principles. However, I feel that some of the recent zeal among the religious right has strayed from the mark. There is a strong push among fundamentalist Christians to bring America “back to God.”

Gregory Boyd, in his book, *The Myth of a Christian Nation*, draws some thought-provoking conclusions: Jesus did not spend a lot of energies trying to address the social ills of His day. He came to introduce another kingdom altogether. Christ said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” (John 18:36). He was looked to by the Jews as being the possible Messiah, the One who would rescue Israel and throw off the yoke of Rome. He steadfastly resisted those efforts to be made an earthly king. He represented another Kingdom entirely.

Boyd ponders the cry by many to take America *back* for God. So if America once belonged to God, when was it? Was it when the land

was forcibly taken from her first inhabitants? When nearly every treaty with them was broken until at last these Native Americans were gathered up and herded onto isolated reservations? Or was the golden age of God’s America when the white “Christians” loaded 5 to 6 million Africans on cargo ships to bring them to this newfound country, enslaving the 3 million or so that survived the trip across the Atlantic? Was it during the two centuries that America became wealthy by the sweat and blood of these slaves? Some might suggest that the golden age was after the Civil War. That doesn’t quite work either. For widespread discrimination against minorities continued well into the twentieth century. Boyd notes that few Christian Native Americans, African-Americans, or other non-whites seem taken up with the cry to “Take America back for God.”

Boyd feels that most of the founding fathers were more deistic than Christian. I would see Deism as a basic acknowledging of God based on evidences of nature and reason, but an acknowledgement that stops short of a personal faith in Christ.

When Christians see America as a

Christian nation, a nation specially God's own, it will influence how we act. If America is God's nation, what she does is God's will. If America goes to war, God is on her side. What America does is justified, because she is God's special project. We put ourselves egotistically on a pedestal as God's favored child. The first Gulf war left many Americans marveling at the relative cleanness of the war. It was so quick and there were so few "casualties." It seemed easy for the American church to overlook the tens of thousands of Iraqi "casualties," who were hastened to Christless graves at the hands of "Christian" America.

If we believe in the need to bring the nation back to God we may be tempted to try to do it within the political system of the land. Someone who attended our church for a year or two thought we should be having Beachy Amish men in government. We may be tempted to get on the bandwagon for a political candidate who supports our views. This could be debated on and on. Some candidates more closely reflect our world views. Perhaps one political party more consistently represents our views. Does this mean we should get behind these candidates and support them all we can? What if that same political leader is a strong proponent of war? How does that affect us? How we view our country will greatly influence our world view. A conservative Anabaptist said it something like this: "You just need to

decide which candidate most closely supports your world view and then get behind them," but Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

God-and-country patriotism was made extremely popular in the last several decades. The Moral Majority gained a lot of clout. Part and parcel of strong patriotism includes unmistakable militaristic overtones. How much can Anabaptists interact with these movements without being fundamentally changed? What is the impact of using school curriculum from these sources? Many people from my generation attended public school. We had many privileges in our school with one of our own as principal and various other Mennonite teachers. But basically, the school was part of a secular system. I believe it is good that we left that system, but where are we today?

IVA Biblical World View What do you see as landmark distinctives of a biblical, Anabaptist world view?

The Two-Kingdom concept. At the very core of the radical "upside-down kingdom" theology is the two-kingdom concept. Our most basic understandings hinge on this fundamental truth. If we do not see Christ's kingdom as exclusive and different from the world's kingdom, it skews our perspective. Understanding the basic difference is the key which unlocks much of the rest of Christ's teaching. In John 18:36, "*Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom*

were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” When Jesus was explaining new kingdom teaching, He said it over and over, “Ye have heard by them of old time, that it was said...but I say unto you...” (Matthew 5).

Christ came with a different set of values. What He taught went beyond the outward. He cut to the heart of the issues. It is the work of Christ in our lives that effects these changes. Christ came with a new set of criteria. Outward compliance is not enough. It takes a changed heart.

The Kingdom Christian has different goals from the world.

The Kingdom Christian has different entertainment from the world.

The Kingdom Christian has different values from the world.

The Kingdom Christian has a different allegiance from the world.

Sermon on the Mount Christians: Our historical view is to apply the Sermon on the Mount to our daily lives:

• **We want young men and women who are meek.** This stands in sharp contrast to the mentality of the youth of the world. The phrase “No Fear” was popular in the world not long ago. Romans 3:18 seems to refer to this mindset: “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Meekness is not weakness but is a quiet strength.

• **We want young men and**

women with a hunger and thirst for righteousness. As we raise our children, it is important that we instill godly values. If our own energies are all spent on temporal things, it will be hard to transmit godly values. The old cliché, “More is caught than taught” holds a lot of truth.

I remember my father-in-law relating how when he was young and would go to the barn in the morning after his father had gone to start the chores that it was not unusual for him to find his father in the granary fervently praying aloud for him. These were hard times. The family was barely subsisting during the 1930’s in Nowata, Oklahoma. Sanford Yoder went through a very careless time in his youth, but eventually he heard God’s call on his life. He has now had a long life of preaching and evangelistic work. Three sons in his family are active in ministry.

What kind of values are we transmitting to our children? Sometimes we think it would be nice to have a bigger, newer house or nicer machinery. But there are many things worse than having your children learn to do without things. We want to cultivate a hunger and thirst for the things of God.

• **We want young men and women who are peacemakers.** Oh, how we need peacemakers in our world today! We need people who are willing to put themselves on the line for the reconciliation of opposing parties. Today’s society seems to

make much of sticking up for our own rights. Privileges have become rights. We want our children to be peacemakers.

•**We need young people to be salt and light in a dark and insipid world.** The world around is dark. Oh, how we need light! In the recent ice storm, we were without public power for 10 days. There was something depressing about all that darkness. To light a lantern and dispel the darkness was such a joy. The darkness in the world around us is discouraging. As parents and teachers, we can do much to model the light. Let us let our lights be lit by the life of Jesus within.


We show what's inside us by our business dealings; in how we respond to adversity; in how we control our tongues; and in how we handle our anger. Our job is to prepare our children for that city where there will be no night. We want our children to be salt and light today.

•**We want children who have learned to forgive and love their enemies.** There is beauty in little children who can quickly forget a squabble and move on. It is not natural to love our enemies or to bless those who curse us. Jesus Himself, on the cross, prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Stephen had a similar response to those who stoned him: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

Our ability to forgive is somehow

connected to our ability to receive forgiveness from God. Even though forgiveness is not natural, it is very therapeutic. It frees the offended and often speaks to the offender. Someone has said it well, "There is no revenge so complete as forgiveness." We want our children to forgive and love their enemies.

•**Christians need to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.** Society around us is generally affluent. There is also much hoarding of resources. Jesus taught us where to safely lay up treasures. America uses up more than her share of the world's resources. Now some of the growing economies like China and India are becoming major consumer nations and it is putting a crunch on our consumerism. How do we teach our children faith and trust if they always have whatever they want?

Some people seem to have money left over at the end of the month. I seem more likely to have month left over at the end of the money. Jesus taught us to trust the One who takes care of the lowly sparrow. He is the One who can create a lily more glorious than all the pomp accorded to King Solomon. It seems that Jesus is gently chiding us for our preoccupation with things when the King of the universe knows our needs perfectly well. A proper view of possessions is critical to developing a godly world view. 

To be concluded....

Authority and Accountability

Osiah Horst, Cobden, ON

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Timothy 5:17).

Many people are in positions to exercise some level of authority over others. Parents, teachers, employers, and spiritual leaders are given certain responsibilities and the authority to carry them out. All who have these responsibilities are accountable to someone for the way they exercise their authority. They are responsible to whoever gave them the authority as well as to those people they have authority over. In some cases the authority comes from man. In other cases it is from God.


Those in offices of responsibility and authority are entitled the respect that is due to that office. The first honor is that which goes with the office and is normally readily given. We earn the second honor as we faithfully fulfill the obligations of our office. If we appear to use our office for personal honor or to further selfish interests, we will not likely be

counted worthy of double honor, and we stand a very real chance of losing the first honor as well.

Many teachings in Scripture are directed to those in authority. “Masters, give unto your masters that which is just and equal” (Colossians 4:1); “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Colossians 3:2); “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works” (Titus 2:7). These injunctions apply to all in authority, regardless of their office. Hebrews 13:17 gives us further instruction regarding those in authority: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.”

If you are a person in authority, remember to exercise your authority in a way that makes it easy for others to obey. Also remember that if you abuse your authority, the people you have authority over will suffer and you will be held accountable.

There is no authority without corresponding accountability.

[From *Beside the Still Waters*, June 10, 2008. Used with permission.] 

Please Forgive Your Pastors

Thad Bergmeier

Pastor, Grace Bible Church

Hutchinson, KS

Forgive us! I really mean it: Please forgive us, your pastors. If there is one thing that will affect your church, your ability to listen to your pastors during their sermons, it will be if you hold something against them.

Maybe you have hurt feelings against your pastor because he never called you when you were going through that loss of a loved one. Maybe he was there for you during the loss, but not much since then. Maybe he was a little too harsh with you when you were dealing with those issues in counseling.

Maybe you feel like he asked you to do too much in your ministry or made you feel like you were not doing enough at the church. The list can keep going, but please remember: Your minister, your pastor, your preacher is just human, which means he has faults just like you. Let me even go this far: **If anyone, outside of your spouse, needs your forgiveness the most, it is probably your pastor.**

There are many reasons why you need to forgive your pastors: It honors God; it pleases Christ; but let me offer one superficial reason: We desire it! I cannot speak for all pastors, but the ones I know would be quick to seek your forgiveness if they had any idea that you have something against them. The reality is that they probably have no idea that you are offended. Whatever it was that offended you, it was probably done out of ignorance--not intentional. Talk to us; plead with us, but please never hold something against us.

The Apostle Peter says that the most important thing that we can do in our relationships with one another is to keep fervent in our "love for one another; because love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).

The reason why we are in trouble if we do not love so radically to forgive each other is that we all mess up. You mess up in life. We mess up in life. I mess up in life. We are all sinners—and if you hold onto the sins that other people commit (especially pastors) and then keep bringing it back to them, it is sort of like holding things over their heads, and it will really mess up the church. Forgiveness means that you hold no grudges; it means that you do not hold on to an offense.

A few months ago, I came to a point in my life where I needed to forgive someone, and here is what helped me: I thought of all those offenses they had committed against me, all those hurt feelings, and then I multiplied them by an infinite amount, and that is what I had done to God just in one day because of my sins.

And yet Christ stands ready to offer complete, whole, absolute forgiveness for all of my sins.

The Apostle Paul calls us to forgive each other just as the Lord has forgiven us (Colossians 3:13). A person will never be more like God than when he forgives like Christ. For all the things we have done to you, please forgive us--and forgive me.

[From *The Hutchinson News*, June 28, 2008. Emphasis added. Used by permission of Pastor Bergmeier.]



Summertime Fun

It seems that summertime fun and human pursuits and pleasure cause us to forget God and neglect His Sabbath.

God designed a weekly refreshment that would help us keep Him central and keep our hearts uplifted in worship. (See Genesis 2:1-3, before the fall) God knew that even in a perfect world a day of celebration and worship is essential to the human-divine experience. Every loving couple knows that time together is essential for staying in love. The Sabbath is a weekly “date” with God.

The Sabbath had become a burden by the time of Christ with hundreds of additional man-made laws. Jesus liberated the Sabbath by doing six miracles on the Sabbath [that are recorded]. These show that it’s a day of healing, a day to experience God’s creative energy and be refreshed and empowered by coming into contact with the Messiah-Creator...

Greg Wellman, Penticton, B.C.

[Selected by the editor from *Faith Today*, Sept./Oct, 2007—a reader’s response.]

The Little Cottage

Linda Peachy

This is a tribute to Barbara King, whose obituary appears elsewhere in this issue.

It was written by a friend, and fondly remembered by a sister, Fannie Beiler.

Fannie notes that she and Barbie were close. They were dear friends, as someone said: “Chance made them sisters; love made them friends.”

There was once a homey cottage,
Lovingly built by God’s own hand.
Using bone and human flesh as timbers,
Every niche was formed as God had planned.

To this cozy cottage God entrusted
The pure soul and spirit of a maid.
As she grew in godly understanding,
A submissive spirit she displayed.

Jesus who delights in humble dwellings,
Sought for entrance at her cottage door;
She responded, “Enter, blessed Master,
Make my heart your home forevermore!”

So His holy presence joined the maiden
Living in her cottage fair.
After some extensive renovation,
It was clear that God resided there.

As when Jesus walked upon this planet
And daily showed compassion—doing good.
So motivated now by His sweet Spirit,
She faithfully did all the things she could.

She birthed and fed and nurtured her eight children;
She cooked and sewed for others who had needs.
Creatively she reached out to the hurting
Offering hope and comfort by her deeds.

And daily deep within the heart was woven
A tighter bond of love between the two.
And when she needed wisdom or direction
The assurance of his presence she knew.

God's Word on the pages of her Bible,
Were words impressed upon her mind.
She clung to words He softly whispered;
No greater joy or purpose could she find.

For years they lived together in this cottage,
And daily they communed with God above,
And closer knit their spirits with each other
And closer with their Father, God of love.

Then the walls began to crumble 'round them;
Lightning flashed across the distant sky!
A storm of illness shook the cottage soundly!
And from within was heard the startled cry.

"What shall I do? Where shall I go? Oh, Lord, have mercy!
Shall the sturdy timbers of our home all rot away?
I have found life glorious living with You!
Is this not a homey place to stay?"

"No, my child," He answered her so gently,
"You must leave this crumbling house of sod.
Death will be your exit from this cottage
And your entrance to the home of God."

"Where thou lodgest, I will lodge," she murmured;
"Even death cannot rend me from your love.
I will leave my cottage in the valley;
Move me to the Paradise above."

The Spirit of the Lord is still out searching
For a cottage home where He can nest.
Gone is the dwelling we called "Barbie,"
But His Spirit brings our spirits to His rest.



How Can We Assist The Poor in Our Mission Localities?

Floyd Stoltzfus

In considering this question some months ago, I wrote in this column, “This question is relevant, acute and sensitive. Its practical application lies deep in the heart of every devoted missionary, particularly those who reside in countries where the living standards are poor, jobs are scarce, and the people suffer from want of food, clothing, and shelter.”

This month let us pursue the topic further. The Bible defines the order of priority in our relief efforts. Our first responsibility is toward “them that are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). The early church responded thus to the cry of the widows who were neglected in the daily provisions by ordaining seven deacons to oversee this program. “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint to this business” (Acts 6:3).

A number of mission churches in our Amish Mennonite organizations have used this pattern with blessings and fruitfulness. Teaching on

tithing and giving is biblical, even in countries where income is low. In the old covenant, every male was required to come to the tent of meeting with an offering for the Lord on the three main annual feast days. (See Exodus 23:14-17 and Deuteronomy 16:16,17).

In some offerings the poor could bring pigeons or turtledoves instead of lambs or bullocks. Perhaps one Sunday each month, an offering would be specifically designated for the poor widows and others who face special hardships.

Much wisdom and discernment is needed for anyone to handle God’s funds. The question is sometimes asked: “Is it advisable to lend money to those who request it?” We know that Jesus said, “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away” (Matthew 5:42); and “Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again” (Luke 6:30).

I believe a few questions are in order to those requesting a loan.

- What is the goal, purpose, or

motive behind this request? Are you in need of food, clothing, or shelter? If this is the case, perhaps a gift of these tangible things (not money itself) would be better.

•Are you able to give this person work in order to earn money rather than giving him a loan? In most situations, the person's request could be taken to those in charge of the brotherly assistance program. In my observation, where a larger church has had a credit-union type of loan, things have gone well. A few personal loans have also worked out well, but more often they have not.

The church must not be viewed as a welfare program for those who could work but are unwilling. The church's resources are not for the benefit of able-bodied man who could work but are not willing to work enough to support their families. It is healthy for the church to note the needs of the poor in their number and even to reach out to those who make no profession of faith. There are times, also, for giving to other churches facing special hardships.

The following article speaks to these concerns. West Indies Witness is a mission program sponsored by conservative Mennonite churches from California, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Ohio, and other states and provinces. This newsletter was written by Lamp and Light

Publishers, Farmington, NM. The editor welcomes response from those who have helpful insights on this sensitive issue.

Help the Poor, How?

We have a problem. Financial issues are at the root of it, and it is disturbing some brethren in our Dominican churches. We share these concerns in an effort to promote understanding among us, and we wish to solicit both your prayer support and your cooperation.

The problem has two bases: the first is poverty, which we all understand to be a lack of money. The second is easy credit, which some understand to be the opposite.

Another factor that contributes to our problem is our relationship with the churches in the United States. Please do not take that as an (ungrateful) blow, but our cultural differences have at times had a negative effect on the relationship between us. We want to communicate to help minimize this factor.

Sometimes we compare cultures, and that is probably alright. But when we in our Dominican setting try to take for our pattern the norm of life in the U.S., we take on many problems. And when those living in the U.S. see our poverty, and pour some easy money into the system, we take on new problems. These are problems that money cannot solve.

According to the Bible, who are the poor? The truly poor are: widows without children, orphans, and those who for health reasons are unable to provide their own food and raiment. (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 5; 6:8).

The Bible gives a recipe for helping the poor. It includes having deacons serve tables, taking offerings from among the brethren, and giving and receiving counsel in the brotherhood to more clearly understand the needs, so they can be properly addressed.

So we need deacons. In our small congregations in the Dominican Republic, we find it difficult to provide these deacons. At present we have only one.

We need to take up offerings. The Bible is clear on how it should be done. The brethren are to give as God has prospered and thus needs are met. (See 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; Philippians 4:10-19). This method supplies the needs in the church and does not call attention to the giver. (Matthew 6:1-4)

We need the counsel of our local brethren regarding what the real needs are and how they can best be helped. Many times when help comes from loving, generous, well-meaning brethren, but who live far away, the counsel of the local brethren is hindered or unheeded. This type of help can rob us of our sense of responsibility among the

local brethren.

Here are a few questions for your consideration:

- Does climbing the financial ladder satisfy? Does it not produce a mentality of needing to climb higher?

- Is it not true that those who think they need more tend to lose their contentment and complain more?

- Is progress measured in dollars? Could generosity make a poor man think that without money there is no progress?

- Could it not be harmful to a poor man to hand to him that which he could and should earn himself?

- Could generosity ever be a cover for selfish pride? Think especially of the desire to be known as the benefactor in the life of another.

- Is there not a proper sense of dignity that could be destroyed by promoting a poor man's dependency upon generosity?

- Do we still believe that "the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7)?

These questions are not meant to accuse our brethren, whom we believe to generous as a direct result of love of Christ in the heart. They are simply meant to help us think together on these issues.

[Used by permission from *West Indies Witness* newsletter.]



Simple Living

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Simple living is either a choice or a necessity. In most parts of the world, simple living is a way of life. There is no other choice.

Even for those of us who have grown up in an affluent Western life style, many of us need to learn to live more simply in order to make ends meet for our families. Others have chosen to live simply in order to give to those less fortunate, following the formula Paul gave in 2 Corinthians 8:14, 15: "A need plus a surplus equals enough."

Jesus chose simple living when He left the riches of heaven to live among the poor and needy. I believe the heart of Jesus must be grieved today when He sees the lack of equality even among Christian people today.

Recently I heard about an illustration given to children attending a vacation Bible school. The teacher gave out five vanilla wafers to some of the children; to others he gave one and to some he gave none. He did this to illustrate the differences in food distribution in our world today. Surely, the children will long remember it. When we see life in this perspective, it is much easier to be contented and accept what God has given to us.

Living simply can be quite a challenge. Perhaps some of you reading this are thinking: We live as simply as possible and we still cannot make ends meet. I understand, because I too have

been in that situation. I know the feeling of desperation when the money doesn't stretch far enough to pay the monthly bills, when there is not enough money for groceries or to take the children to the dentist. Is it possible to be content in such a situation? Habakkuk 3:17-19 has blessed me through those lean years. Read it for yourself.

Contentment is a CHOICE.

Accept your situation. If your husband is working hard to make a living, express appreciation and support for him. Never belittle him for not making as much money as someone else. Maybe you are a single woman and the bread winner of your home—you also need to accept your situation as God's plan for you.

Be thankful for what you have. I believe this is the secret to finding contentment. When we are truly grateful for all we have: our home, family, the basics of life (food, shelter, and clothing), nature (flowers, birds, wildlife, the stars, and so on) then we will enjoy life and we will be content.


Simple living is a CHALLENGE.

Use your creative instincts to stretch your budget. Moving furniture, placing fresh flowers in a vase, putting a coat of spray paint on a worn object, using special dishes on the dining table, placing pretty books on the coffee table, setting flower pots on the window sill—these all

transform your house into a home and may cover a worn area. If you have children, teach them the joy of being creative.

Live within your budget. Plan a certain amount for groceries each week. Use a calculator at the grocery store. Don't shop at lunch time. Plant a garden; canning and freezing food still saves money. Buy used clothing whenever feasible. Sort through your clothes and get rid of what you don't wear or don't need. Extra clutter takes

too much energy and there are people who could use what you don't need. When buying, ask yourself: Do I really need this or can I do without? Impulse buying can be expensive.

Honor God in your lifestyle. Share with others. Use your home to show hospitality. Reach out to those who have less than you do. Involve your children; teach them compassion. Remember that you are accountable to God for all He has given you. 

junior messages

The Man in White

Part 4 of 6

Roseanne Peachey

Mohammed knew his family was putting him to a grim test. He had gone against his father's wishes and accepted Jesus into his heart. He looked at the cup of poison in front of him.

Mohammed swallowed hard as he gazed into his father's cold, angry eyes. Scenes of his life flashed through his mind. He remembered how, as a child, he had deeply admired Baba's knowledge and kindness and that he always wanted the best for his son. Now he was trying to force him to drink a deadly poison—all for leaving the Islamic religion and turning to Jesus Christ.

Mohammed knelt before his relatives that surrounded him, his heart thudding with a sickening fear.

His uncles shouted, "You have brought this upon yourself, you foolish infidel! Allah is the one and only true god and if you will continue denying him, we will watch you die!" Others shouted, "We will throw your body in the river!"

Yes, Mohammed knew that if a Muslim forsakes Islam, rejection, persecution and even death may follow. Yet, the wonderful face of Jesus Christ, glowing with power and compassion was ever before him. Jesus had appeared to Mohammed in his many dreams as the only way to God. *How could I ever think of denying Jesus,*

Mohammed pondered.

“Mohammed,” his father said sternly, “we are giving you one last chance. If you value your life, you must return to Islam! You are being a very disobedient son. Forget the foolish Christian teachings and we will forget your disobedience.”

Suddenly Mohammed remembered his dreams and how Jesus had always defended and protected him from every evil attack. And now at this terrifying moment, with death facing him, Jesus Christ also stood ready to protect him from the claws of evil. A strong peace flooded Mohammed’s heart as he said, “Baba, I can never reject Jesus. He has given me eternal life. He will give you life, too, if you will only listen to His voice.”

“Then may my bones be cursed forever for having a son who is a foolish infidel,” his father’s voice seethed with hatred. Rage swept through the little group that surrounded Mohammed. The cup of poison was thrust into Mohammed’s hands. The acidic vapors rising from the cup already burned his eyes and nostrils.

“Baba, allow me to pray first,” he said. Mohammed lifted the cup toward the sky and prayed in a loud, clear voice. Without further hesitation, he drank the contents then handed the cup back to his father. Mohammed quietly arose and walked back to his family’s hut. He stumbled onto his cot. Already he felt sick.

The next morning, however, Mohammed was the first to greet his father. Baba was both mystified and

furious that his plan had not worked. He immediately filed a report with the Islamic community to try to have those arrested who had influenced his son to become a Christian.

Several days later, Baba gave orders to his son, “your disobedience to Allah and me as your father have gone too far. Today you will leave this house forever!”

Mohammed turned and looked his father squarely in the eyes and replied, “Baba, my only wish is that you and my household will find the same peace of Jesus Christ that I have found.”

“Peace?!” his father spat into his face. “You are a miserable dreamer. Now I order you to leave us forever!”

to be continued....

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Dear friends,

Hello. My name is Sarah Rachele King. I go to Silver Lake Mennonite Church. My parents are Raymond and Rachel King.

I have six siblings: Matthew (16); David (15), [me (12)]; Bethany (10); Maria (9); Marilyn (3) and the baby is Abigail Grace.

My birth date is Feb. 12, 1995. My hobbies are sewing, reading, playing volleyball, baking, babysitting, writing and receiving letters. I would enjoy hearing from girls, aged 10-15 years. Thank you!

Sarah King
5393 Middle Reservation Rd.
Castile, NY 14427
P. S. I’m home schooled.



Dear Youth,

One of the biggest problems we face in a land where there is plenty of food, plenty of work and plenty of wages, is an increasing amount of confusion between our *needs* and our *wants*. When we begin viewing our wants as needs, we lose perspective on what we really **should** want.

The youth who write this month call us again to consider what we should ask God for at the beginning of each day. —EE

P. S. The article in the July issue, "Cultivating Fervent Beliefs" was authored by Heather Schrock from Millersburg, Ohio. Thank you, Heather, for your good work!

This Month's QUESTION

What should youth want more than anything else?

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

What every Christian should want the most is to bring pleasure to God in everything he does. After all, we were created for God's pleasure. Sadly, it is easy to forget what our purpose is, and instead of working to bring God pleasure, we expend a lot of energy doing what brings ourselves pleasure. We get up in the morning thinking, "What do I need to do today?" followed by, "What else do I want to do today?" We make plans to make sure we are going to have a good day.

Being born with a sin nature, we automatically do what we like, how we like, when we like. We think it was a successful day if we ended up having

a good time. Instead, God wants us to get rerouted; counting our days successful if we have helped Him have a good time. I like the thought I heard recently, "When you wake up in the morning, think 'What can I do today to help God have a good day?'" It changes the perspective we often have on life.

So what we as youth should want the most is to bring our Creator Pleasure--to do what He likes, how He likes it, when He likes it. To find out how, read His written word to man, which gives lots of ideas on "How to Please God."

Norah Anderson, Rochelle, VA

I think the thing youth should want more than anything else is wisdom. "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." (Prov. 8:11) Proverbs also gives us the promise that if we search diligently for wisdom and knowledge, the Lord will give it. If we have wisdom, we will be able to be better used by God and He will receive the glory.

Melanie Beiler, Honey Grove, PA

I think more than anything else, we should desire a close relationship with God. A relationship in which our own dreams, plans, and desires become dim, and we desire only God's will. Such a relationship will prove to be a great blessing to the people we come in contact with as well as a testimony of what God can do with a life that is totally devoted to Him. Our own lives will also be blessed simply by knowing that we are in the will of God.

Norma Beiler, Sabina, OH

One of the most important things I believe we as youth should be seeking is excellency in our relationships. This, of course, includes a good relationship

with God, but I believe it should also be much more than that. I believe we as youth should also actively be pursuing healthy relationships in our home and in our church. As long as we live, we will have a family, and as long as we are actively serving the Lord, we will have a church. These two institutions have been put into our lives by God to have a very direct impact on our lives, and it is highly important that we cultivate healthy relationships with both of these. For us as youth, these two probably present the most challenges in our relating to them; however, having a healthy relationship with both of these will bring us the greatest fulfillment.

Philip Beiler, Suceava, Romania

A relationship with God should be first and foremost. Or should I say a friendship with God... knowing God and Who He really is. Other relationships will find their proper place. I believe good relationships with our parents and ministers are very important and should be a high priority. We will need to seek and cultivate these friendships.

Melodie Beiler, Kenya, East Africa

Next Month's QUESTION

There are still quite a number of large "people groups" in our world who have never had any contact with Christianity. What are some of the various roles that youth can fill, in helping these unreached people learn about the Savior?



THOUGHT GEMS

In the orchard of opportunity, it is better to pick the fruit than to wait for it to fall.

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Some children are running everything around the house except errands.

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Self-control is listening silently while someone tells you his experience with the same surgery you had.

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When you laugh at people, be sure to laugh at what they do and not at what they are.

• • • • •

In sizing up others, be sure to see with your heart, not just with your eyes.

• • • • •

Environmental pollution makes even spring seem to have halitosis.

• • • • •

Forbidding prayers in school is unfortunate, but even more unfortunate is forgetting our prayers at home.

• • • • •

Temper gets people into trouble and pride keeps them there.

• • • • •

Punctuality is the art of wasting only your own time.

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