

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

Galatians 6:14

OCTOBER 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.

Calvary Publications, Inc., is a non-profit organization, incorporated in the State of Ohio, for the purpose of sponsoring, publishing, and distributing Christian literature. The board is elected, one member annually, by the ministers of the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches, at their annual spring meeting.

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Material for *Calvary Messenger*, marriages, births, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles—send to the *Editor*. Other Material—mail to their respective *Editors*.

Subscriptions, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to **Circulation Manager**. **When you move**, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

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Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications, 2673 TR 421, Sugar creek, Ohio 44681. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$8.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$24.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$7.00 per year to individual addresses. Renewal \$4.25 when you also give a 1-year gift subscription at \$4.25. Second class postage at Sugar creek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW, Dundee, OH 44624.

Lord, I Love Thee

Leon Troyer, Bourbon, IN/Guys Mills, PA

Sonnet V

Lord, I love thee, yet I would love thee more.
And fain would bend my heart and will to Thine,
And graft my life into Thy Living Vine.
Lord, I am knocking, open Thou the Door.
Redeem my brokenness and come restore
My soul to fellowship; Take what is mine
And make it Thine; change earthly to divine.
I love Thee, yet how shall I love Thee more?

I cannot love Thee; cannot bend my soul,
Nor mend the broken pieces of myself—
For Thou must change me; Thou must make me whole
And Thou must graft me to Thy Living self.
For only Thou canst change me at my core.
And only Thou canst help me love Thee more. 

Finding Grace to Help

A young preacher spoke to a group of thirty men of a denomination different from his own about personal purity. The pastor who had invited him was frankly disappointed in what he chose to speak about. The speaker had suggested the possibility that some of them might struggle for purity in their personal lives. After the meeting, the pastor said to the visitor, "I'm afraid you have the wrong group; these men I brought up here are converted Christians, deacons in my church. I know them all personally. If you keep on dealing with these kinds of problems, I'm afraid you will lose our group's attention altogether."

The visiting minister was naturally sorry he had disappointed the pastor and wondered what to do. He earnestly sought God's face. Later that same evening, after bedtime, one by one, no fewer than five of the thirty deacons came to his room seeking help and confessing difficulty with personal purity. Then they took new steps of faith in living for God's glory.

That pastor's response raises disturbing questions: What would be his response if struggles for purity

were brought to him? What was the level of spiritual honesty in his life? Would he, if confronted with moral struggle or failure, simply recommend rejection to purge out the undesirable? Was he, by his attitudes, leading a social club of Pharisees or a fellowship of sinners saved by grace?

It is an ongoing challenge to face seamy issues with sufficient humility and honesty to be of help. If we fail to do so, however, we may sit down in smug self-congratulation. That is not a good posture for helping those who struggle and/or stumble.

Why do we find it so hard to deal with such struggles? Here are possible reasons:

- We regularly entertain impure thoughts and rather enjoy them.
- We think that because we are of the right race, family, or denomination we have very little need.
- We want to be well thought of and fear losing our good reputation if we speak from the heart.
- We think that if people knew about our struggles, they would think us unfit for Kingdom service.
- We know the Gospel promises freedom and we don't want to be a disgrace to the cause of Christ.

It brings wonderful freedom to confess our humanity and be willing to talk about such struggles and our need for God's help to maintain purity of heart. When we realize this we do well to acknowledge, "We are all made of the same stuff. There, but for the grace of God, go I." Confessing our humanity removes the need to scorn anyone.

Paul Tournier, in *Guilt and Grace* wrote: "No one can get rid of the spirit of judgment by an effort of the will. As long as I am obsessed by a friend's fault which has shocked me and made me reproach him, no matter how much I say to myself; 'I do not wish to judge him,' I judge him nonetheless. **But the spirit of judgment evaporates as soon as I become conscious of my own faults and speak freely of them.**"

It does nothing to purify our hearts when we carry a spirit of sharp criticism toward those who fail. It is only as we honestly pray, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" that forgiveness and grace come to us. After that, we can bless and encourage our brothers and sisters. Humility and a sense of need convey acceptance to those whose struggle for Christian victory is difficult.

Humility must also, at times, speak with "tough love." We do not help the cause of Christ when we brush lightly over sin. Even though godly wisdom is "first pure, then peaceable" (James

3:17a), it does not dodge life's tough issues. Such wisdom is particularly brave at facing the facts.

When I do not have a strong desire to see the one who stumbles restored to usefulness, most likely, I have enough nominal Christianity to make me seem upright, but not enough genuine Christianity to make me gracious and encouraging to others. Quoting Paul Tournier again: "A man's judgment of another depends more on the one judging and on his passions than on the one being judged and his conduct."


Let us cultivate humble attitudes of love for our fellow man and faith in God with a keen awareness of our need for help to maintain a pure heart. Let us remember that unless and until we experience repentance and new life in Christ, we cannot accurately portray the life of joy and freedom in Christ. Otherwise, we may seem religious, but men in need can sense that something is wrong and that we care little for them. God Almighty knows whether or not we have come to Him for grace. He can tell if our hearts aren't in it and we are simply going through the motions of acting right.

Let us ask God to fill us with sympathetic understanding so that we may minister His grace to others. Hebrews 4:15 explains that Jesus is uniquely qualified to bring an end to fruitless struggle. Then he places in

our hands means to help others with these words: “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and *find grace to help* [us and others] in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16, italics added).



In births and obituaries this month the same name appears. A very young child, Sean Edward Yoder, died at

just under seven weeks of age. We sympathize with the parents, Eugene and Rose, and also the disappointed siblings, Jenson, Denver, Jayla and Durlin. May God comfort and bless them. No one knows when any of us may be need to answer the Creator’s summons. But this much we do know: He does all things well! —PLM 

Christian Counseling in the Local Church

Tim J. Good — Out of the Fire Ministry — Lancaster, OH

The relationships between Christian counselors (who are not pastors, yet are involved in counseling a member of their congregation), and the ministers or pastor of a person being counseled can be problematic. Some pastors feel the use of “outside” counselors is an infringement on their responsibility—a failure of theirs to meet the needs of a member or family in the congregation, an unnecessary duplication of services which they could supply, or a needless intrusion into the work of the leadership team.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, are the opinions and practices of some Christian counselors who feel that they have a calling, right, or responsibility to respond to any request for counseling from a Christian brother or sister with

no responsibility to involve the counselee’s pastor/ministerial team in the process. This position is defended by the counselor on the basis of protection of the counselee’s *privacy*, particularly in cases involving marital strife, moral failure, and other sensitive issues.

Between these positions is the situation where the church member or family does not wish to share their issues or problems with the local ministerial team—for various reasons.

As we see more involvement in Christian counseling among conservative Anabaptists, the problem described above could possibly cause division and hinder hurting people from getting the help they need. This issue can also cause problems for the local ministers.

As a former counselee and resident

in a Christian men's rehab facility, and now involved in providing Christian counseling as a lay counselor, perhaps I can offer some thoughts on this issue. I realize that my perspective is biased, and perhaps incomplete, since I was only very peripherally involved in my local ministerial team's struggles to work through and address all of the "constituencies" in my case—my family, the local congregation, the pastoral team, and the counseling agency. This maze of involved people in cases of sin and moral failure in the church is the *usual*, and cannot safely be ignored or taken for granted.

My life's journey involved needing outside intervention to assist in bringing me to a point where I could again be shepherded by a pastoral team. This intervention was "tough love," demanded by my family, my ministers, and even most of my fellow church members. Areas of considerable disagreement included: length of residential counseling, transition back into the home/family and congregation, and degree of post-discharge "control" or accountability by the counseling agency versus the local pastors. These issues required lots of discussion.

The resolution of these issues ultimately depends on the intervention of the Holy Spirit to bring, over a period of time, or sometimes more dramatically, a genuine visitation of

the Holy Spirit in a meeting of the primary parties to the situation. This can be a family meeting, a meeting of the ministerial team, or a meeting including members of the counseling ministry or any combination of those involved. God honors honesty and brokenness before Him, and there is no limit to His ability to bring healing and peace to complicated dilemmas. That is *my* story of God's grace in my situation.

My story is not unique. Long-standing moral failure, severe marital discord, spousal or child abuse, or control or anger issues—when these "ugly, not-easily-fixed" situations are brought to light in marriages or families of church members, the impact on the church body is frequently almost overwhelming. Responses from others may range from denial to anger. Proposed or considered actions frequently include immediate excommunication of the most obvious offender. The ministerial team may be bombarded with demands for action from the offender's family, friends, fellow church members, other congregations in the conference or fellowship, and sometimes fellow ministers. In cases of abuse, the legal system may get involved. These demands frequently lead to desperate attempts to refer the offender "some place" for help. For many of these cases, "some other place" is absolutely necessary.

This “some place” is usually a Christian counseling agency. This counseling may be intensive outpatient counseling, or a residential program where the offender is referred for an extended stay. Such programs, then, frequently complicate the involvement of the local church family, as *financial* issues must be considered. The direct cost of the counseling program is compounded in those cases of residential counseling, by concerns of how the family at home will survive when the bread winner is away from home for periods of several months to a year or more; especially if the offender *owns* his own business. These financial pressures can also cause additional tension in the local church.

The list of issues and potential areas of stress, misunderstanding, even disagreement, between the many parties involved in these painful situations must be recognized and addressed by the local church and its leaders. Counseling agencies and individual counselors must be sensitive to the concerns of the local church and leadership, and recognize the effects on congregations and families which result from the exposure of long-covered sin or a dramatic failure in the life of a previously active and apparently victorious brother in the church.

So, I would like to offer the following points as my personal beliefs regarding Christian counseling

and then present a number of issues for further consideration by local church leadership teams:

1. Situations and issues arise in Christian’s lives, and in Christian families which can overwhelm the local ministers and/or require outside intervention by unbiased, qualified Christian counselors. Certain issues also frequently impact the local congregation, and are best addressed in settings which allow for some “distance” and perspective separate from the daily and weekly meeting together of the local church.

2. Counseling must be *Christian*. To be Christian, it must be biblical. So counseling, which is provided by non-Christian counselors, or counseling which conflicts with biblical truth obviously is of concern to the church’s leaders.

3. Counseling must be *counseling*. Counseling is not preaching, teaching (although that is obviously included) or other usual activities of the church.

4. Christian *counseling* almost always *follows* conversion. I’m not sure I can provide *Christian counseling* to an unbeliever; I *can* share the truth of the Gospel and offer salvation in Christ.

5. Christian counselors are not exempt from *accountability*—in their personal lives and in their counseling practice. Counseling provided *outside* an accountability

arrangement on the part of the counselor and/or counselee should rightfully be a cause of concern to the ministers (both the counselor's and counselee's ministers).

6. Counselor character is emphasized over knowledge. A Christian counselor's relationship with God and his/her reliance on God in the counseling process is paramount.* (* from *Competent Christian Counseling*, Clinton and Ohlschlager, 2005)

7. Truth is truth. There are absolutes. Counseling should not be considered an option or alternative to biblical truth and is not intended to *replace* needed steps of church discipline. Counseling should *complement* the role of church leadership and discipleship.

The above listed "core beliefs" apply specifically, in this discussion, to the issue of using a "third-party" as counselor. Item 1 does not preclude or minimize *pastoral* counseling. I would suggest, however, that there are still situations and issues which are most appropriately handled by someone who can "come alongside" the member/couple to minister to emotional and spiritual needs for a brief or extended period of time.

I believe we can all agree on items 2, 3, and 4. Item 5 may be where the first digression in approach to counseling members in the church appears. How and to whom should

the counselor be accountable? This issue naturally goes to this basic question: "Who directs or controls the counseling process?"

Is counseling a mutual endeavor of the counselor and the ministerial team? Should the counselor be accountable to the counselee's ministers? If so, how? Are there situations in which the ministers should be advised to *distance* themselves from the counseling situation? This would require them to "hand off" the member for a time. Should the counselee's ministers direct the counseling program of one of their members, especially if they have requested or recruited the services of the counselor?

Item 5 addresses the importance of a Christian counselor being accountable to someone. A Christian counselor's first accountability is to Jesus Christ, of course. Methods of counseling used shall always be ethical, right, and Christ-honoring. The next level of accountability is sometimes where Christian counselors get into trouble. Especially problematic is for the counselor to practice alone, perhaps in a "lay-helper" role, assisting individuals upon request but not in an office or clinic setting.

The American Association of Christian Counselors strongly encourages counselors to be "accountable to their pastors and to

at least one colleague or supervisor.” (*ibid.*, page 248) Counseling activities expose counselors to a multitude of interpersonal relations, emotions, situations, physical symptoms, courtship, marital, and sexual issues, in addition to *spiritual* issues. Counselors operating alone in this morass expose themselves to grave danger spiritually, ethically, and emotionally.

Ethical Christian counseling also generally advises significant caution in counseling a *fellow church member*, since this relationship holds the hazard of other relationships. This is especially true in small congregations where fellow church members frequently serve on the same committees or are involved in joint ministries and activities.

Counselor *character* is paramount. Expecting Christian counseling without Christian character is an oxymoron. Christian counseling is based on the premise of “Divine revelation yielding moral absolutes.” (*ibid.*, 246) Jesus Christ and His Gospel provide the divine absolute. Application of this divine revelation to personal problems and situations is dependent on the discipleship of the counselor. Included in this walk of discipleship, in addition to accountability and included in that process, is “truth-telling, love, honesty and integrity, trustworthiness, and humility.” (*ibid.*, page 248) Maintaining these character traits

circles back to the counselor’s commitment to accountability.

Knowledge of counseling processes and techniques are not to be belittled or scorned, but are placed in their proper perspective. “The promise of Christian counseling is in the hope and power of Christ.” Christian counselors do not depend on the approach or technique used, but “actively invite God to be the heart of the helping endeavor.” (*ibid.*, page 6). This dependence on the Holy Spirit by the counselor obviously requires the counselor to be in right relationship with God. He prays and invites the counselee to commit to the same relationship.

I would like to invite ministers and counselors to reflect on the questions presented and to review a number of issues listed below for on-going consideration and discussion. These are offered as recommended starting points of agreed-upon counseling procedures and expectations:

1. Members of the church have the *right* to request counseling and the right to *choose* their counselor(s). This right may be altered in situations of fractured marriages or compromised family structure, where the choice of the estranged spouse or family may prevail, and in situations involving legal sanctions (*e.g.*, abuse).

2. Members of the church are entitled to *privacy* in the counseling process. This right may be altered or

abrogated in situations listed in #1 above, and in cases where counseling is mandated as a component of *church discipline*. (Note: I personally believe that mandated counseling as a component of church discipline should be approached with much caution and counsel.)

3. The ministerial team is *not* entitled to be informed that counseling is taking place in *all* situations. In what situations *should* the ministerial team be informed and to what degree? [I think Bro. Tim is saying that every situation merits some degree of confidentiality. —PLM]

4. The counselee (presumed to be a church member) has an obligation to share his issues/struggles with sin with a member of the ministerial team. The counselee should be informed of that expectation prior to beginning counseling. He must agree to it before the counselor is free to disclose anything.

5. A Christian counselor should not be used as a communication link from the ministers to the counselee. The integrity of the ministerial team should be preserved by directly, with biblical gentleness and firmness, communicating directly to the counselee any directives, decisions, or recommendations for the member,

including the recommendation that he *begin* counseling.

6. I recommend that accountability partners be arranged with members of the counselee's congregation, whenever feasible. This has the potential of enhancing the effectiveness of the counseling given.

7. Christian counseling by an outside agency or counselor should not be viewed as *failure* of the local ministers. In contrast, the provision of Christian counseling should be welcomed as the provision of an additional gift made available to the body of Christ. Such counseling should be integrated appropriately and sensitively into the mission and work of the local church as a *cooperative effort*.

The list of questions and points for discussion on the role of Christian counseling in the church could go on and on. It is my prayer, however, that this presentation would foster increased dialogue between local churches and their leaders and the counselors and counseling ministries. My fondest hope is that more communication, rather than simply providing pat answers, would result in more selfless and prayerful consideration of how to help those involved in these human tragedies.



Worry often gives something small a big shadow.

Practices That Need To Be Maintained To Preserve Biblical Principles

John R. Mumaw (1904-1993)

Past President of Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, VA

The early Anabaptist movement was strongly motivated by a deep desire to know the will of God and do it. The Biblicism that characterized their doctrine was paralleled by insistence upon righteous living. They not only committed themselves to a biblical faith but also pledged themselves to Christian behavior. To them, the nature of the Christian life required self-discipline and positive morality. Life with the risen Christ is more than a profession; it is a walk of obedience to the Word of God. This serious acceptance of Biblical teaching, particularly the principles expressed in the New Testament, put quality into the fiber of Mennonite thought and life. This gave depth to denominational faith; a requirement of quality in life for church membership. It augured strongly for a high standard of morality and a prominent overtone of spiritual obedience. It formed the basis of the practice of non-conformity to the world.

Within the life of the Christian church there has always been an effort, in varying degrees of intensity, to relate what one believes to what one does. The possibility of maintaining

a vigorous belief without a direct application of faith to practice is open to serious question. Doctrine finds its flesh in human behavior. Belief finds its true meaning in living demonstration. The reality of inner experience finds its authenticity in outward expression. This is the major thrust of discipleship. The way in which the believer puts his understanding of the Scriptures into practice, determines the quality of his Christian experience. It may even constitute the proof of reality in his commitment to faith. In a large measure Christianity keeps alive by putting principles into practice a strong belief which produces a spiritual accent in personal behavior. Where faith is practiced—there principle is preserved.

To throw this in reverse order poses another aspect of our current problem. We are concerned with ascertaining the extent to which the preservation of a principle in the faith of the Christian community is dependent upon an outward practice. Obviously a principle as such does not change, whether or not it is expressed outwardly in a given community. It remains to be proved, however, that a principle

can be kept alive in the sense of awareness, without application in life. A practice represents belief. If there is no practice in a given area of religious sanction we may well question whether the belief is taken seriously. To believe in the principle of love and to have no evidence of that love in practice leaves the impression of unreality. Therefore in a survey of practices that need to be maintained to preserve Biblical principles it is necessary to bear in mind that practice does not produce a principle; conversely, a practice is derived from a principle. It is equally true that a principle is meaningful to Christian living only as it is applied in actual behavior. To give witness to a principle requires a practice of it.

For the purpose of this discussion we limit the survey of practices to those that are more distinctly Mennonite in their orientation. These, we have held, are based on Biblical principles.

The practice of marrying within the brotherhood extends the principle of unity to family and home.

The wearing of the devotional covering is a practice which promotes the principle of headship in the Church.

The practice of feet-washing expresses the principle of brotherhood in the church as opposed to class distinction and rank.

The practice of mutual aid in material need represents the principle of brotherhood as applied to temporal

affairs.

The practice of a cappella singing supports the principle of free and general participation in church worship.

The practice of pouring as a mode of baptism represents the principle of Holy Spirit unction to the believer.

The practice of uniformity in wearing unconventional dress gives expression to the principle of separation from the world.

The practice of affirmation when subscribing to legal documents represents the principle of integrity.

The practice of worship in the home is an expression of the principle of family commitment to faith.

The practice of the holy kiss supports the principle of love as expressed within the brotherhood.

The practice of nonparticipation in politics is an application of the principle of separation of church and state.

The practice of restraint from pleasure seeking in carnal indulgences is an expression of the principle of priority to spiritual interests.

The practice of non-litigation is an application of the principle of non-resistance to evil.

The practice of withholding legal partnerships with unbelievers is an expression of the principle of godliness.

The practice of excommunication of unfaithful members of the church is an expression of the principle of discipline.

The practice of refraining from intoxicating beverages and from the use of tobacco supports the principle of respect for the physical body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The practice of holding council meetings prior to communion and observing close communion is an expression of the principle of order in the disciplined church.

The practice of anointing with oil those who are sick and who request anointing for the healing of the body is an expression of the principle of faith.

The practice of self-denial in the exercise of Christian discipleship gives expression to the principle of obedience.

The practice of restraint in social expressions of courtship is an application of the principle of purity.

The practice of limiting residence architecture and household furnishings to their utility values is an expression of the principle of simplicity.

The practice of restraint in expenditure for recreational pursuits is an expression of the principle of stewardship.

The foregoing is not intended to be a comprehensive list. It is representative of practices that obtain in many areas of Mennonite life. If the principles they express are to be kept alive as essential elements of our faith it will be necessary to make application of these principles

in some outward manner. It may be that modifications should be made. Some expressions will no doubt be replaced by some other form. If, in the process of such change some better expression is found, we have nothing to lose. If in the processes of accommodation and adjustment the practices are dropped and we lose sight of the principles, then distinctive qualities of our [faith expression] will be lost.

In another approach to this problem we may well say that principles are preserved by practice. The statement of a principle postulates the need for some expression in practice. From this point of view we might consider the following propositions:

The principle of integrity in speech is preserved by: (a) purity and good taste, (b) truthfulness without swearing, (c) kindness and inoffensiveness, (d) blessing and not cursing, (e) restraint and not boasting, (f) testimony and Christian witness.

The principle of stewardship in recreation is preserved by: (a) care in spending money, (b) refraining from overexertion, (c) avoiding unwholesome company, (d) refraining from theatrical audience and participation, (e) selecting wholesome activities, (f) avoiding sensual stimulation.

The principle of temperance in social life is preserved by: (a) total abstinence from alcoholic beverages, (b) regulated eating to avoid gluttony, (c) refraining from use of tobacco, (d)

refraining from improper stimulation of the senses.

The principle of brotherhood in community life is preserved by: (a) sharing with those in need, (b) meeting together for fellowship, (c) observing the ordinance of foot-washing.

The principle of discipleship in personal living is preserved by: (a) subordinating natural affection, (b) subordinating personal ambition, (c) subordinating natural possessions, (d) acts of obedience to the teachings of Christ.

The principle of peace in relation to fellowmen is preserved by: (a) non-litigation, (b) non-resistance, (c) avoiding the unequal yoke, (d) non-participation in politics, (e) refraining from insistence on own rights), (f) suffering rather to be defrauded [than to maintain my rights.]


The principle of piety in religious life is preserved by: (a) Bible studies, (b) prayer meetings, (c) family devotions, (d) private prayers and meditation.

The principle of separation to

God is preserved by: (a) marks of simplicity in household furnishing, (b) avoiding inconsistent business connections, (c) avoiding prolonged and intimate social contacts with the world, (d) avoiding surrender to conventional styles in dress.

The principle of submission is preserved by: (a) devotional covering, (b) love as brethren (in honor preferring another), (c) submitting our case to the brotherhood for counsel.

In terms of the closing remarks of the Sermon on the Mount the issues of the Church in our time may be submitted to the test of obedience. "He that heareth these sayings and doeth them" is wise. The final issue depends on the believer's response to divine truth. Hearing the teachings of the New Testament must issue in practice of Christianity. Profession of religious faith has value only when it issues in practice.

[From *The Sword and Trumpet*, October, 1967. Emphasis added. Submitted for publication by Willis Nisly, Hutchinson, KS] 

ANNOUNCEMENT

"[God] gave some...**teachers**; for the perfecting of the body of the saints...for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11,12). Has He given you the gift of teaching? Are you willing to develop it for His glory? Here's an opportunity:

Plainview Christian School in Plain City, Ohio, needs a Principal/Teacher. Apprenticeship training should start in January, 2009. the second semester of this school year.

If interested, contact Ron Stutzman at 614-733-0875.

marriages

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

Iwashige-Kuepfer

Bro. Shane, son of Hiromi and Miriam Iwashige, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Dorcas, Hutchinson, KS, daughter of Mark and Esther Kuepfer, Free Union, VA, at The Father's House, Hutchinson, for Center A.M. Church, on August 9, 2008, by David M. Yoder.

Miller-Kuepfer

Bro. Craig, son of LaVerne and Rebecca Miller, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Rachel, Hutchinson, KS, daughter of Mark and Esther Kuepfer, Free Union, VA, at Westside Baptist Church, Hutchinson, for Center A.M. Church on June 14, 2008, by David M. Yoder.

Lengacher-Wingard

Bro. Caleb, son of Floyd and Marietta Lengacher, Lexington, IN, and Sis. LaRhonda, daughter of Lamar and Loretta Wingard, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on July 5, 2008, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Mast-Yoder

Bro. Mark, son of Alton and Mary Ellen Mast, Belvidere, TN, and Sis. Lynette, daughter of Irvin and Beulah Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on June 7, 2008, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Petersheim-Sommers

Bro. Michael Shawn, son of Paul and Naomi Petersheim, Oakland, MD, and Sis. Melissa Dawn, daughter of Willis and Marlene Sommers, Salisbury, PA, at Maranatha Assembly of God for Mt. View Mennonite Church, on August 9, 2008, by Jerry Yoder.

Plank-Yoder

Bro. James, son of Lewis and Mary Plank, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Megan, daughter of Harley and Lisa Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on May 30, 2008, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Wagler-Viafranco

Bro. Ronald Wagler, Jr, son of Ronald and Kathryn (Hershberger) Wagler, Cross Hill, SC, and Sis. Rosalyn Kay, daughter of Francisco and Diana (Tulcey) Viafranco, Esperanza Village, Cayo, Belize, on May 9, 2008, at Cayo, Belize, by Orlando Matute.



cradle roll

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

Bender, Derrick Wayne and Cynthia Joy (Kinsinger), Accident, MD, first child and son, Jairus Wayne, July 23, 2008.

Herschberger, Andy and Leona (Plank), Sullivan, IL, third and fourth children, second and third daughters, Jenna Leann and Josie Lynn, July 8, 2008.

Hostetler, Carlon and Lillian (Esh), Warsaw, IN, first child and son, Wilson Grant, August 5, 2008.

Hostetler, Jay and Tricia (Troyer), Etna Green, IN, (serving in Cañon City, CO), first child and dau., Kensington Jae, born Nov. 25, 2006, received for adoption August 13, 2008.

Kauffman, Melvern and Patricia (Whitt), Montezuma, GA, fourth child, second son, Josiah Andrew, June 18, 2008.

Mast, Mark and Margaret (King), Montezuma, GA, third child and dau., Lauri Nicole, Aug. 12, 2008.

Miller, Luke and Beth (Overholt), Abbeville, SC, second child, first dau., Antoinette Grace, August 15, 2008.

Miller, Matthew J. and Lorene (Shetler), Fredericksburg, OH, fourth child, third dau., Jennifer Nicole, July 22, 2008.

Nolt, John Mark and Kaylene (Schrock), Thomas, OK, fourth child, second son, Caleb Joni, July 16, 2008.

Sommers, Philip and Mary (Troyer), Abbeville, SC, first child and son, Dylan John, Aug. 19, 2008.

Yoder, Eugene and Rose (Miller), Thomas, OK, fifth child, fourth son, Sean Edward, April 16, 2008.

Yoder, Gary and Maria (Schlabach), Sarasota, FL, second child, first dau., Kara Lyn, July 30, 2008.

Yoder, Troy and Matilda (Nisly), Montezuma, GA, sixth child, fourth dau., Carmen Sue, June 22, 2008.

Zook, Alvin and Wanda (Miller), Aroda, VA, fourth child, first dau., Elizabeth Irene, July 11, 2008.

obituaries

Mast, Levi E., 72, died at Sylvia, NC, on July 26, 2008, following a battle with cancer. He was born Feb. 19, 1936, at Uniontown, OH, son of Ezra and Anna (Miller) Mast. He was a retired cabinet maker.

He was a member of the Antrim Mennonite Church, Antrim, OH.

On March 22, 1956, he was married to Delilah Jean Wagler, who survives. Also surviving are three daughters: Emma (Alvin) Brenneman, Catlett, VA; Mary (David) Kanagy, Williston, SC; Viola (Loren) Sommers, Bonners Ferry, ID; five

sons: David (Ruth) Mast, Midland, VA; Daniel Mast, Kilmarnock, VA; John (Becky) Mast, Cleveland, NC; Willis (Tammy) Mast, Monroe, GA; Richard (Jennifer) Mast, Midland, VA; 32 grandchildren, and 11 great grandchildren. He is also survived by three sisters: Fannie (John) Dettweiler, KY; Edna (Noah) Byler, PA; Emma (Ben) Troyer, WA; and 12 step sisters and brothers.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Sara Ann Mast and a step father, Noah Coblentz.

The funeral was held on July 30, at Antrim Mennonite Church, with brethren Eli Schrock and Marion Miller officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery with Jason Miller in charge.

Miller, David M., 85, of rural Grove City, MN, died at his home on July 28, 2008. He was born Feb. 25, 1923, at the family farm near Kokomo, IN, son of the late Menno I. and Susan (Schlabach) Miller.

He was a member of Believers Fellowship Church, Grove City.

On Jan. 31, 1946, he was married to Susanna Herschberger, who survives. Their thirteen children are: Neoma (Jerry) Miller, Eden Valley, MN; Moses (Mary Ann) Miller, Crossville, TN; Levi (Sarah Mae) Miller, Bloomfield, IN; Thomas Miller, Grove City; Homer (Mary Ann) Miller, Millersburg, OH; Sara

Grace, Litchfield, MN; Anna (Marcus) Yoder, Grove City; Jesse Miller, Grove City; Nancy Ellen (Steve) Stoll, Odon, IN; David, Jr., (Esther) Miller, Lexington, IN; Earl (Patricia) Miller, Cross Hill, SC; Glen (Laura) Miller, Mechanicsburg, OH; Mary (Tim) Edmonson, Annandale, MN. Surviving are 40 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren. Also surviving are brothers: Levi of Kalona, IA and Moses of Buffalo, MO; and sister: Sara Miller, Kalona, IA

He was preceded in death by a sister, Elva; a brother, Ivan; and grandsons Leonard Yoder and Samuel Miller.

The funeral was held on August 1, with Mel Beiler and Verlynn Yoder serving. Interment was in the Burr Oak Cemetery, rural Grove City.

Yoder, Julian Andrew, 13 months, of Belvidere, TN, died from injuries sustained in a farm accident July 29, 2008. He was born June 11, 2007, son of Victor and Marlene (Summy) Yoder.

He is survived by his parents; four brothers: Vincent, Randall, Patrick, and Denver; and one sister: Victoria; paternal grandparents: Paul and Mary Yoder; maternal grandparents: Edwin and Lena Summy; aunts, uncles and cousins.

Maternal grandmother Nancy Summy preceded him in death.

The funeral was held on July 31

with Stephen Beachy serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Sean Edward, 43 days old, died at home June 3, 2008. He was born April 16, 2008, son of Eugene and Rose (Miller) Yoder, of Thomas, OK.

Survivors include his parents; three brothers: Jensen Eugene, Denver Joseph, and Durlin Benjamin; and one sister, Jayla Nicole. Other survivors are grandmother, Linda Miller, Hydro, OK; two grandfathers: Perry Miller, Kansas City, MO; and Amos C. Yoder, Thomas; one great grandfather, Ben Kanagy, Guthrie, KY.

He was preceded in death by grandmother, Susan Yoder.

The funeral was held on June 7, at Zion Amish Mennonite Church with John Nolt, Kevin Schrock, Ed Yoder, and Jonathan Miller serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

observations

We who are members of the conservative Anabaptist family generally wear clothing that has some measure of religious identity. At the same time we realize that clothes are strictly external and may not accurately reflect the condition of the heart of the wearer.

It is fairly common for people to assume that since clothes have no spiritual value we should consider

them a non-issue. To follow this line of reasoning can lead us to two possible conclusions:

Pure logic suggests that if clothes are really a non-issue, should we not then do away with them altogether? Of course, we all know better than that.

A second conclusion is that while we recognize the limits of outward appearance, the Christian's choice of clothing should reflect the awareness of Christian principles on the matter. A commitment to church loyalty can be a helpful safeguard against changeable fashions that contradict biblical expression.

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Greg Boyd is a Presbyterian pastor from Minneapolis. He has a commitment to biblical authority that has had some major implications. When he manifested his conclusions to the congregation on the way of Christ in non-resistance, he lost 1,000 members. (*i.e.*, one-third of the total membership)

Hesston College recruited him to participate in week-end meetings in the fall of 2007 where he spoke of how he came to his present understandings.

He says that he has admired Mennonites from a distance for years, but this was the first time he'd ever taught among them or fellowshiped with them. "On a deep level it kind of felt like coming home"

Boyd says: "But there was another very interesting thing I learned about the Mennonites: They're in trouble. One man literally wept as he told

me how he's been grieved seeing Mennonites abandon their core vision and convictions over the last several decades. They're losing their counter-cultural emphasis and becoming Americanized and 'mainstreamed.' Consequently, many Mennonite leaders are getting involved in partisan politics in a way that goes against Mennonite tradition."

One person told Boyd he was more Mennonite than most Mennonites are today.

Pastor Boyd says that attending the conference left him excited but also left him unsettled seeing that Mennonites are in the process of losing their identity. Quote: "My heart was strangely warmed and unusually disturbed. I'm going to be praying about what this means."

His discovery has awakened an intense desire to somehow call Mennonites back to the core values of their rich history.

One reason that I feel these comments are worthy of this column is simply this: We face the pressures of the mainstream community in a variety of ways. Unless we successfully resist these pressures it will eventually lead us to an illicit alliance with the unregenerate world in which we live.

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Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 2008, strikes me as deserving mention in this column. That issue contains five articles about the Amish and also an article about the Low German/Old

Colony Mennonites. The titles are as follows:

"Understanding the Amish in the Twenty-first Century" by Paul S. Boyer.

"Who are the Real Amish? Rethinking the Diversity and Identity among a Separate People" by Steven M. Nolt.

"The New Order Amish and Para-Amish Groups: Spiritual Renewal Within a Tradition" by G. C. Waldrop.

"To the Ends of the Earth: An Introduction to the Conservative Low German Mennonites in the Americas" by Royden Loewen.

"Amish Contribution to Medical Genetics" by Harold E. Cross and Andrew H. Crosby.

"Shifting Images of Lancaster Amish in the 1930's and 1940's" by Steven Reschly and Katherine Jellison.

This issue of MQR has 143 pages. It is available from Editor John Roth, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526. Price: \$10, postpaid.

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The July, 2008, issue of MQR also contains a number of lengthy book reviews:

"Plain Diversity: Amish Culture and Identities," by Steven Nolt and Thomas J. Meyers.

"Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcends Tragedy" by Donald B. Kraybill, Steven Nolt, and David Weaver Zuercher.

"Forgiveness: A Legacy of the West

Nickel Mines Amish School” by John L. Ruth.

“Train Up a Child” by M. Johnson Weiner. (An in-depth study of Old Order schools)

There are several other book reviews and various notes of possible interest to our readers.

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Some time ago an occasional reader of this column confronted me kindly about my style of writing. His main criticism was that it lacks simplicity and forthrightness. Since this person teaches writing in a college I could not dismiss his comments lightly. In fact, I accepted his offer to go over a column that had already passed the editor and a proof reader and was with the printer. It came back with many marks and suggestions in line with his earlier comments.

I consider a teachable spirit a desirable trait at any age. But I admit to significantly change my manner of writing at this stage of the journey looms as a major challenge. An important question to me is this: How well is my writing understood by those who are regular readers? What suggestions would you have for improvement with manner of writing or choice of subjects? I never want to outgrow a willingness to learn and improve. Feel free to offer suggestions.

• • • • •

Attorneys have long been known to use many words to make simple

statements. The current issue of *Mennonite Weekly Review* (8-18-08) has a column on the subject of “conference speak.” To illustrate how “conference speak” may sound, the writer makes a fifty-word statement that is supposed to convey the same message as the Seventh Commandment: “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”


Simplicity and clarity are valuable traits whether writing or speaking.

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Rick Warren, pastor and “Purpose-Driven” author, hosted both presidential hopefuls, McCain and Obama with a one hour series of identical questions. McCain said that a baby’s human rights begin at conception. Obama favors legalized abortion. At this writing (8-17), the campaign tactics are a fresh reminder that the best contribution we can make is to actively pray for those in authority and those not yet elected.

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“They train us and they expect us to rely back on that training. Then when we use that training, they prosecute us for it.” This quote is from a former marine Jose Luis Nazario, Jr. He feels that he is being brought into a civilian court for doing what his superiors taught him to do in battle. He is being tried for having killed unarmed persons in Iraq.

To us the whole question of legal/illegal, civilized/uncivilized killings has been settled by the One who wants to be our Savior and Lord. —DLM 

5. Communicating the Gospel Effectively

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

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

I recently wrote a book, entitled, *Freedom Under God's Order*. I have not yet found a publisher. I do have a few copies here that are yet subject to revision. Be free to pick one up, if you are interested. I have these few copies priced at \$9. This is your opportunity to get a book we might call "an unadulterated copy." The publishers and editors have not yet put their fingerprints on it. It is just as the author wrote it.

In Ephesians 6:19, "And for me that utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel." One helpful way to interpret a Scripture is to look for oft-repeated words. The word (in Ephesians 6:10-18) "stand" is repeated four times, and "against," "with," "all" are each given six times. We are to stand using four things: "we **wrestle** not against flesh and blood," "against the **wiles** of the devil," "against the **world**," and we are to benefit from the "**whole** armor of God."

Let us look at the word, "utterance."

"Utter" rhymes with "butter." We don't want to butter up our audience for political advantage. We think about "clutter," which might describe a sermon that rambles without particular direction. We might think about the "gutter," as a theological ditch, not a good place to get caught. We might think of "mutter," meaning garbled, unclear or indistinct. If we think of "stutter," that might be a case of being biblically tongue-tied and unable to articulate Scripture.

Here are some preacher resources: The Bible, primarily; a *Strong's Concordance*; a dictionary; a file; (I have some copies here today of an alphabetical filing system here that I have developed.); commentaries, (not just one); *Doctrines of the Bible*, by Daniel Kauffman; *Unger's Bible Doctrine*; a Bible dictionary, (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, for example); a Thesaurus. I feel that that I may be outdated. It seems that some people don't use books much any more; they use computers. Whatever your

situation, use such resources.

Work ahead in good time on your sermon preparation. Get it thought through. Let your ideas come ahead of the last minute. Use some reference books, but not necessarily all of them in the preparation of any given sermon. God can direct us in the use of such books. Use the Bible. Let it be that which you meditate on.

I like to use the overhead projector for all my messages, as much as possible. In doing so, one must be concise. While it takes more preparation, it helps the listener stay with you better and retain better what you say. While it takes time in preparation, it saves time in presentation. You can repeat less. It provides the double effect of seeing and hearing. It is probably more important for a teacher to use an overhead projector than for a preacher to do so.

I have sometimes used diagrams or drawings to help convey the point I wish to make.

[As Bro. Aaron showed various visual aids, he left us with a number of gems -PLM]: If sermons were labeled, some might be labeled “food,” some “dry goods,” and some “notions.” Revival has always brought renewed obedience to God’s Word. The sinner has a small faith and a small obedience; this connects to the verse in Romans 3:23, which says,

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” And rebellion is “as a backsliding heifer” (Hosea 4:16).

As I prepared for this topic, I was concerned that what I say here might seem to reduce preaching to mechanics. The spiritual preparation and one’s walk with the Lord do not come by the practical tips I am sharing here. Many times this past winter, I have experienced an intimacy with the Lord that has been precious, in those times when I had no one else to talk to. He is enough.

A moderator should not say, “Our brother needs no introduction,” but rather introduce the speaker and, if appropriate, his topic. The introduction is partly for the speaker’s sake.

In conducting meaningful devotions, it is generally best to read from one Scripture only. I think we need to get back to true, short devotional meditations. We are more and more giving a topic instead of a devotional. Select short Scripture passages. A very meaningful devotional I once heard was based on only one verse. If there is key verse in the reading you choose, read that text verse first then read the larger context. Read the passage in its entirety. I recommend making comments on the passage before the reading, then not interrupting the reading. A few comments after

the reading can also be meaningful. Don't attempt too much. Incorporate ideas back in prayer to God.

I find if I write down some of my first thoughts when I receive an assignment, that these are some of the best thoughts that come my way.

If I don't have any stories to go with the material have prepared, I don't sweat over it. I just use what God gives me. Not every sermon has to have a humor point, a current event, or a story. Use those if they seem to apply.

If there is insufficient preparation here is what may result: perhaps five minutes of rambling, (the program, the weather, some crisis); then five minutes of, "I didn't know what to preach," (big schedule, didn't know where to start, when I got started I didn't know where to stop); then one or more Bible passages are used; then five minutes of personal commentary; then ten minutes with three Bible characters; then ten minutes about the excesses of today; then five minutes to appeal for change for the church's sake; then a five-minute appeal for change for the leadership team's sake; a five-minute appeal for change for God's sake—and that took an hour and five minutes! "He who gets up not knowing what he will say will undoubtedly sit down not knowing what he said." Such a sermon is problematic. Do the

problems remain? Perhaps they have actually increased.

Let us look at basic topical sermon structure. Have a Bible base, noting key passages. (Not every point has to have a Bible verse as a proof text.) Deal with problems related to the subject. Don't unduly create controversy. Newspapers sell on that principle. Interestingly, every chapter in the Gospel of John has a tension point. That is part of what creates interest. Let's not leave these tension points hanging without resolution. A personal word includes how we dealt with, struggled with, overcame and found God's answer. So you have the Bible base, the problem, the cure, and the result.

You might use five minutes for introduction; five minutes for a Bible base; (the text in context); five minutes for problems to be addressed; fifteen minutes for the cure; ten minutes for the result; five minutes for the aspiration. That totals 45 minutes.

Write out your main ideas. Condense them. Use paper size which won't require folding. Write on one side only. Write out your opening and closing statements. When finished with your study, put your notes in your Bible. It's not good to get to church and find you've left your notes at home. When you write out your last statement, you will know when you're finished. Otherwise, you

may be like an airplane that's circling around, looking for a place to land.

The dynamics of delivery: Know what your first statement will be. Don't say, "As you heard my topic is on...." Just give it and get into it. I like to start with something I saw on a church sign or from a bumper sticker. It establishes contact with the audience. Don't comment about the weather, the song, the devotional, or the previous topic. Just get into yours! Start on a low note. Don't come with too high a head of steam. Let it build up as you go—if it wants to. Don't lean on the podium. Credit your audience where you can. Don't speak down at people. Have good eye contact—don't look at the ceiling. There's nobody up there. There's usually no one outside the windows, either.

First, let your people know what your outline is; then, work your way through it; then, remind them of what you said.

The average speaking speed is about 125 words per minute. The thinking speed is about 400 to 500 words per minute. So we need to keep moving, for our listeners tend to be ahead of us.

Watch out for overstatements. They do not help. Wrap your ideas with sufficient words to convey your thoughts.

It has been said that every speech has

three speeches: The one we prepare, the one we give—and then there's the one we wish we had given.

In sermon preparation and delivery let us give it some *oomph*. Let the Spirit work through us. Let us linger over the message to where we feel deeply about it. We speak for a cause. We might even become emotional, but should not cry at every sermon. Emphasis can come by being louder, but being quieter also calls attention to it. Being loud the whole way through does not work, either. If you find it contrary to your manner, work on putting some energy into your teaching.

Is there a problem between preaching and sharing? More and more we are "sharing." Let's get back to preaching. A preacher is a herald! He may lift up a banner! A Christianity that does not touch the emotions isn't worth very much. 2 Timothy 4: 3 is about teachers and verse 5 is about evangelists. It is interesting to see the different gifts in a team of ministers. One ministerial team I know has one prophet, two exhorters and two teachers.

The preacher who stands on an elevated platform is in an excellent position to get the full benefit of a [bored] yawn. Let us look not only for that which *challenges* us but that which *changes* us.



The Spirit of Korah

John Siegrist, Sunbury, PA

The rebellion of Korah, recorded in Numbers 16, reveals a dangerous spirit that brought heavy judgment on Israel. Can this spirit be found in our time, in our congregations, and even in our own hearts? A look at this account should help us to identify the spirit of Korah and its expressions.

The spirit of Korah is set against divinely appointed authority. “They gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron” (16:3). Moses and Aaron had been called by God to lead His people. This insurrection against them was an affront to the One who had placed them in authority. Moses identified the issue clearly: “thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord” (16:11).

Rebellion against parental authority, school administration, church leaders, or civil government is rebellion against the One who set up these institutions for our good. If seeds of contempt and disdain are sprouting in our hearts against those over us, the spirit of Korah may be there.

The spirit of Korah is contagious. Korah and his three partners “took

men” (16:1). Soon they had two hundred fifty princes who were famous men (16:2). Next “Korah gathered all the congregation against [Moses and Aaron]” (16:19). In just two days the revolt affected the whole camp.

The Lord hates the person “that soweth discord among brethren” (Proverbs 6:19). If we are influencing others to turn against authority or if we are allowing others to turn us against authority, the spirit of Korah may be at work.

The spirit of Korah piously professes holiness. Korah argued that “all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them” (16:3). It was not holiness that led Korah to turn God’s people against their leaders. True holiness on the part of the congregation would have expressed itself in respect for Moses and Aaron and would have made their leadership tasks much easier.

In our time, cries arise for more spiritual life. “Let us just go by the Bible” is one such cry. And indeed, we are ever in need of spiritual growth, and all our doctrine and practice must be based on the Bible. But

when these cries are actually calls to turn against established church institutions and standards, the spirit of Korah may be taking root.

The spirit of Korah uses false accusations. “Ye take too much upon you” (16:3) was not at all true of Moses, who was called the meekest man that ever lived (12:3). They also falsely charged, “Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of the land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness?” (16:13) This charge did not accurately portray their past condition or God’s future purposes.

We must beware lest untrue reports are circulated and believed among us. “A false witness that speaketh lies” appears on God’s list of hated things. If our “concerns” must be reinforced with exaggerated statements or misrepresentations of facts, the spirit of Korah may be hidden underneath.

The spirit of Korah boldly persists when challenged. When Moses presented the plan to let the Lord choose between Aaron’s censer and two hundred fifty censers, these men should have feared. But Korah boldly “gathered all the congregation” (16:19), expecting the outcome to be in his favor.

When usurpers are taken to the Scriptures to show them their error,

too often they will not see it. When pride takes over a person’s thinking patterns, spiritual blindness sets in. When we are no longer willing to heed warnings from our leaders and brethren, the spirit of Korah may be gaining ground.

The spirit of Korah provokes the Lord. “Moses said, hereby ye shall know...,if the Lord make a new thing,...then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord” (16:28-30). The Lord indeed made a new thing, and the earth opened, then closed on “all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods” (16:32).

God is no more tolerant of rebellion today. His judgment may not fall as promptly or come in the same manner, but it is sure. “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14,15). Hard speeches, spoken against God and God-delegated authority, are expressions of the spirit of Korah.

The spirit of Korah dies hard. “But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured


against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord” (16:41). The whole camp called Korah and his mutineers “the people of the Lord,” they falsely charged Moses and Aaron with murder, and they were unwilling to see God in the whole picture. What a false summary of all the sin that we just noted! Again the Lord was indeed provoked! If it had not been for Aaron’s intercession, the whole congregation would have been consumed.

Summary

“Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” (James 3:5). Eternity will reveal the far-reaching effects of rebellion today. Congregations are

affected. Generations are affected. Godly patterns for living are lost. The world ever has its mouth open to swallow, through apostasy and worldliness, all that give themselves over to the spirit of Korah. And no one with the spirit of Korah will escape the eternal judgment of God.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).

[From *The Eastern Mennonite Testimony*, August, 2008. Submitted for publication by Eli A. Yoder, Stuarts Draft, VA. Used by permission.] 

On Being Radical

Suzie Oatney, Partridge, KS

I remember the 1980’s, when the term “radical” was kind of a buzz word in evangelical circles. Being radically saved was the goal. Today I am hearing this word again, popping up in different places in Anabaptist circles, mostly referring to how we should be impacting the world around us.

The American Heritage Dictionary’s second and third definitions for this word are: 2. *Departing markedly from*

the usual or customary extreme. 3. *Favoring or effecting fundamental changes in current practices, conditions or institutions.* Clearly, the term *radical* indicates something extreme or revolutionary. When I think of someone acting radically, it brings to mind a picture of someone doing something bizarre or offensive. It may be that some Christian practices are just that to the on-looking world; however, if we are doing *radical*

things to make a statement to the world around us, I wonder what fruit it will bear.

In *Martyrs' Mirror*, I have been reading accounts of those who were martyred to see if I could tell from the accounts given what they believed. In most cases it is very clear. I have been particularly challenged by the testimonies given during inquisitions by church leaders to those who were clearly at odds with the established church in their beliefs. The example given by many of these martyrs is wonderful in that they were convicted by Truth and changed from the inside out. They lived what they believed. I think that if we are looking to affect the world around us in a radical way, we need to have this same experience of encountering Truth and living what we believe.

One account was particularly thought-provoking to me: A man on his way to be burned at the stake kicked off his slippers from his feet so that someone else could get some good from them. It occurred to me that this man must have had a heart that looked after the needs of others most of his life. If he had not given much thought to the needs of others, at this point in his life that thought probably would have been far removed from his mind. But even as he was facing death, this man was

living what he believed. Think of the person who would have received those shoes to wear. How do you think it might have affected his life? How would it have affected you?


My great aunt is in a nursing home—very ill with cancer. She is all alone. Her husband has died; she had no children and—except for my mother, my siblings, and me, she has no family. She has a roommate named Mary, who is 103 years old, whose hearing is poor. Mary is feeble, but can get up and walk a few steps with her walker to the restroom. One day, Mary was found at my aunt's bedside massaging my aunt's legs because they hurt so much. What a testimony this was to me! At 103, she is old enough to be my aunt's mother and could rightly expect others to wait on her. But, as I listen to her children and see her cheerful countenance, I know she is doing what she has done all her life—serving and looking after the needs of others.

To me, this is what Truth does. It changes a person from the inside out, so that the thought processes and the actions that follow are somewhat reflexive. They are not dreamed up to shock the world, although, like Mary's actions, they may. We would not have expected Mary to serve my aunt in this way, if we didn't know her well, but for those who do know

her, it is no surprise. It's really second nature to her. She doesn't have to dream it up for the world to see—she just lives what she believes.

When we live what we believe, it may appear strange to those around us. It may be offensive. Look at the leaders of the early Catholic Church. To be baptized upon confession

of your faith was a pretty radical idea—and particularly offensive to the Catholic Church.

Those early Anabaptists were changed from the inside out by Truth. They could not live any other way. It was life to them; but it cost many of them their earthly lives. **That was radical!** 

A Cantankerous Attitude

John Czekalski, Catlett, VA


Recently my wife and I were sitting and speaking to each other and were having trouble agreeing with each other on much of anything. She told me I was in a cantankerous mood and she was certainly right. She is usually right in those assumptions.

I soon parted from her and went to milk the cows. I took my cantankerous mood with me and the cows must have sensed it. Most of them decided that they could be more cantankerous than I was. There I was in a milking parlor that must have been between 90 and

100 degrees Fahrenheit, with 140 cantankerous cows to take care of. But somehow, we got done.

As I worked, I got to thinking about Jesus Christ and my wife. They seem to have a lot in common with their love for me—looking beyond the faults in me and loving me for who I am. A forgiving heart can be a blessing for a cantankerous heart.

When I finished milking the cows, I came home to a wonderful chicken dinner and a wife with a beautiful heart.

“Thank You, Lord, for turning my attitude around!” 

*He is a weakling who cannot get angry,
but he is wise who will not.*

Coping With Culture Shock and Stress

Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA

A missionary hospital in India opened a new department of mental health services. The staff expected long lines of Indian patients. Imagine their surprise when this mental health department was soon visited by missionary patients from all over the country. In fact, for some time the missionaries were the focal part of this department.

A missionary doctor wrote: “Most missionaries experience some stress, but it would be inaccurate to say that all missionaries feel stressed all the time. Many have few serious problems, adjusting quickly to the new pattern of life. Others, however, feel stressed by the newness of it all.” Language learning, homesickness, climate changes, and lack of modern conveniences can all add to the culture shock. And oh, the agony of filling the shoes of former missionaries who had adapted to that land and were appreciated by the natives!

A brother who grew up in a mission setting writes, “We are all creatures of our own culture. As we grow up, we nail together a raft of familiarity that helps us ride the waves of change in our own society. Year after year, plank

by plank, we have unconsciously hammered out a coping strategy for life. It may be a rough-hewn vessel, but we have each mastered the cultural cues for our own sea of life.

“Culture shock sums up all the complicated emotions that we feel when the planks of our raft begin to separate. Up until this time, the planks of the familiar were so firmly fastened together that we were unconscious of them. Now, as they float away, we look longingly for each splinter of wood. Culture shock can make the most committed missionary feel like quitting, but it can also be a positive learning experience.”

There are often four progressive stages that people face in fields of service whether in their own land or abroad. To understand these stages of adjustment may help in coping with the stress of dealing with our feelings and the new world that confronts us. The following account is fictitious, although true to life, as one might experience in the exotic tropics of Belize.

Stage 1: Fascination. Imagine yourself being sent as a missionary pastor with your wife and family. You

have left the shores of America. You are awed by the deep, blue Caribbean Sea far below the airplane. Finally, after several hours of flying, you see the Belize River winding its way through the lush, green forests. You land, get off the plane, and are faced with the warmth of the afternoon sun. After claiming your baggage and going through customs, you meet missionary personnel and are taken to missionary headquarters.

After several days of orientation, you take the 180-mile trip south to a seaport city. There you load your belongings on a large dory propelled by a two-cycle engine powerful enough to push a ton of luggage and passengers on the 50-mile trip to your assigned service destination.

As you travel on the sea, you are fascinated by the lonely, winding river and the farther inland you travel, the more lush and dense the jungle becomes. You see various kinds of tropical birds, iguanas, and even monkeys. The thatched roofs, the exotic palm trees, grapefruits, and bananas in abundance add to the romantic euphoria. Your family is absorbing all these strange sights, sounds, and even smells, with enjoyment and flexibility. You meet the native brethren and note their quiet and peaceful manner. It brings you a sense of rest and welcome.

Stage 2: Frustration. By and by, you face one embarrassing situation

too many. Everybody in the little community finds out about it. It is the last straw. The honeymoon is over.

The realities of mission service have set in. Language learning can be frustrating. Door callers interrupt family life. The gasoline engine operating the washing machine does not start. The propane supply is getting low. An animal gets in the chicken coop. Rain and more rain falls; high humidity and fatigue all add to the frustration. The miles between you and home seem so distant. Letters from home are more scarce.

At this crucial point, do not react.

Stage 3: Fellowship. The first sign of recovery from the second stage of culture shock is when your sense of humor returns. You can chuckle at your mistakes. You enjoy a day working with the natives on their plantations.


To help the adjustment process, visit their homes; eat their foods; and learn a word or sentence in their language every day. Learn what you can about their arts, skills, beliefs, and behavior patterns. Take your family on a picnic in a secluded spot down the river. Write a diary. Keep a journal.

Stage 4: Fruitfulness. The fourth stage of adjustment speaks of a deep, growing love for Christ and His church. To bear good fruit you need good root stock. In other words, teach sound biblical doctrine. It

takes skillful pruning methods, care, cultivation and patience. It will not come overnight.

God will give the increase. We are to bear fruit, not produce it. Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18b). This relieves the stress and frustration of Kingdom building. There is joy in allowing the Holy Spirit to work. However, fruit bearing is not automatic. Take time in the Word, meditate, and pray. Preach the Gospel. Edify the believers.

One of the secrets of coping with culture shock and stress is to prepare

your mind for it. Stress can be very useful in helping us to depend more fully on the Lord. Stress teaches us to be thankful in difficult times for it is when we are weak that God will show Himself strong. The Lord told Paul when he was facing distresses, buffetings, and weakness: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul echoed a tremendous response: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9). 

helpers at home

Forgiveness

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Recently a friend and I were discussing the subject of forgiveness. As we thought about various aspects and questions on forgiveness, she challenged me to write an article on this important theme in many of Jesus' own teachings. I've continued to think about this subject and realize that forgiveness affects each one of us on a daily basis. Women are especially confronted with the issue because God created us as relational beings. He has also placed within each of us a tender, sensitive spirit which can easily be hurt or offended. We are given to detail and because of that we

sometimes express more of our inner feelings and emotions. We are also more prone to talk about other people and circumstances, at times sharing confidences that were meant only for us. We are busy people and can become easily frustrated and irritable. Receiving and extending forgiveness is a part of our lives. Learning to ask for forgiveness and also learning to extend forgiveness is a lifelong process. In the following thoughts, I want to explore some questions that are frequently asked on this subject:

•Should forgiveness be an immediate response?

According to Matthew 6:15, if

we refuse to forgive our sister (or brother), God will refuse to forgive us. I believe if we refuse to forgive immediately we open our hearts to bitterness. Responding with forgiveness enables us to claim the blood of Jesus upon the situation each time the thought of what has happened comes to mind. Immediate forgiveness leads to healing.

•Does forgiveness mean forgetting?

The Bible tells us God will remember our sins and iniquities no more. I know God has the capacity to forget, but we will continue to hurt with the pain and suffering of this earth as long as we live here. Healing is a process. Healing comes on its own after we forgive. We *will* to forget as we learn to take each thought captive by God's grace and don't allow our minds to dwell upon the things that have hurt us. Our minds can become like a scratched, old-fashioned phonograph record that keeps on repeating the same thing. It is up to us whether we stay there or not. If we choose to think on other things that are more encouraging, with time we will forget the details of those hurtful situations. We may never heal completely. Sin brings consequences and some of the pain in our lives comes from wrong choices—either of our own or of those we love. Forgiveness does not always change the circumstances but it definitely changes us.

•How should I ask for forgiveness?

I believe when we ask for forgiveness we should acknowledge our wrong in the matter and say, "I am sorry; will you forgive me?" In this way, we are giving the other person opportunity to clear herself. If she answers, "I forgive you," the matter is closed. If someone asks your forgiveness, don't say, "I forgive you, but..."

•Should I ask forgiveness if I hold a grudge against someone?

If the person you hold a grudge against is not aware of it, I believe it is better for you to ask God to forgive you and allow the matter to stop. I remember a situation where someone came back to an older woman and asked forgiveness for feeling badly about her but she didn't elaborate as to *why* she felt the way she did. This older person worried for many years about *what* she had done to cause these feelings.

There are situations that may be forgotten by one party or they may have thought the matter was forgiven. If we go back it will very likely revive feelings that have been dealt with and that are not helpful to bring up again. Ask God to help you forgive and to bring healing to your sensitive spirit.

If you know the feelings are mutual then you should talk and ask forgiveness for your fault in the situation.

Forgiveness brings freedom. Unforgiveness is bondage.



The Man in White—Part Six of Six

Roseanne Peachey, Oakland, MD

Mohammed's spiritual journey took him through many trials. His deep longing to know the true God had brought dreams about a "Man in White." Finally, he had accepted Jesus as clearly as it had been revealed to him. His family rejected him and stealthily offered him poison to drink. He ran for his life encountering a deadly arrow that was meant to stop him. God had a servant of His come upon Mohammed and take him to a hospital just in time to save his life. To hide in the village 20 miles away did not provide secrecy enough. His family found him and had him put in prison for six months. Then they had him released to come back to them.

If only Baba could feel the great and glorious love of Jesus!" Mohammed thought to himself as he observed his father's lonely sadness.

Mohammed spoke gently, "Baba, I want you to know that I love you, even though you've twice tried to kill me. But I have chosen to forgive you, with the help of Jesus. It is my deepest wish that you and my family and relatives would get to know Jesus, too."

His father turned his face toward the wall and replied coldly, "I see that we will never agree."

After a long silence Mohammed said sadly, "And that is why I have decided to leave. I have made plans to live in Jos and will be leaving in two days. But I want you to remember that only Jesus can give you peace and eternal life."

For two years Mohammed never heard a word from Baba or any of his family.

One day he received an urgent and important message from home. His father was in the hospital and wanted to see him. Immediately, a flame of hope began burning in Mohammed's heart. As he traveled to the hospital, he went back over the last conversation he had with his father. Baba's voice had been cold, his countenance sad and wrinkled, with a haunting expression of hopelessness and bitterness. Baba was such a devout follower of the Islamic religion, perhaps the most devout one in the entire village! Could the glorious light of Jesus Christ come through to him? Was God speaking to Baba?

Finally, Mohammed reached his father's hospital room. Baba's eyes were tightly shut and a deathly stillness hung in the air. Mohammed gently touched his hand and his eyes flickered open. "You sent for me, Baba?" Mohammed whispered.

Tears filled Baba's eyes and he said hoarsely, "Forgive me, my son. I've wronged you and hurt you so many times and you never grew angry or fought back."

"I choose to do nothing else but forgive you," Mohammed said with tears of compassion in his voice. "The Bible teaches forgiveness. I love you, Baba, but Jesus loves you so much more than I ever could."

Wistfulness swept over Baba's face as he replied, "Son, hold on to this God of yours with all your might."


"My God can be your God, too," said Mohammed. He clasped his father's cold hands in his own.

"Even after all the hurtful and wrong things I've done?" questioned Baba. A

tear trickled down his gaunt face.

"Yes, oh, yes!" Mohammed assured him. "God, the Christian's God, is pure love. He just asks one thing of us and that is that we accept Jesus as our Savior. Baba, he promises to receive you if you will receive Him."

And so, in the next few moments, heaven's light reached down to a far away African village hospital—down to a man whose soul had wandered in unbelief, pitted against Jesus for many years. And his son, who had suffered much under his harsh hands for many years, finally fell into his father's welcoming arms. Together they wept with joy.

Reconciliation and love was at last beating the same rhythm in their hearts. And even though the son was the one who led his father to the true light, it was Baba who was the first to embrace the "Man in White" in heaven, for he died three hours later with the peace of God in his heart and the joy of the Lord in his soul. 

The person who kills time
has not learned the value of life.

Dear Youth,

Despite the fact that Christians today have the time, technology, and finances to reach every person in the world with the Gospel, there are still multitudes of people, even in our nation, who have not had anyone present the Good News to them. We simply don't sense the urgency of the hour.

Hopefully in the next few years, many of you will gain a vision for the Kingdom of Heaven, and will decide to pour your heart, soul, mind and strength into the advancement of God's Kingdom here on earth. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He will strengthen your heart.

—EE

This Month's
QUESTION

There are still quite a number of “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?

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

My first thought was money, but the longer I thought it seemed to me that young people should be willing to go to the established missions. This in turn would free those who are accustomed to the culture and more experienced in mission work in general, to reach out to those that have not heard.

Now I will admit there may be times when we as youth need to step out and break sod as was done many times in the history of missions. There are missionaries that have gone out largely on their own, driven by their

God-given burden to reach the lost.

Justin Yoder, Mannsville, NY

Most times we think reaching out to these people is not a job for youth, but rather for the more wise and experienced couples. This does have some wisdom to it, but youth should not get discouraged. Being involved in reaching out in our own community is a start in preparing us to be called to go spread the Gospel elsewhere. If we don't have a vision for ministry when we are young, how will we get it when

we are older? I believe God uses people that are active.

What are some practical ways that we can let our community know about Jesus? Volunteer our time to go help our neighbor. Be willing to turn off our rush mode when we're in town so we don't miss opportunities. Let honesty and courtesy become characteristics that come naturally in our daily living.

In our community we have started a children's club. We pick up the children and spend two hours with them one evening a week in the summer. Then through the winter months we keep in touch by getting together once a month, sometimes involving our parents and theirs. Some of the children have really gotten attached to us and attend our church services regularly. Children these days go through more hardships than we can imagine. It is rewarding to be able to mentor them through their struggles. Children are very receptive and have a good memory. What they learn now will have an effect on their lives later on.

We as Mennonite youth have been given so much. What are we doing with it?

Beth Martin, Rochelle, VA

One of the easiest but most important things we can do is earnestly pray that God would open a way for these people to be reached with the Gospel and also pray for those who are trying to reach out to

these people now. Not all youth and especially younger youth have the opportunity to go to these people and minister to them personally, but right now is such an important time in our lives to be molding character and preparing for service in God's kingdom in the future. God has a plan for each one of us and He may call some of us to this work so we need to be willing and ready for whatever God calls us to.

Jay Yoder, Montezuma, GA

I believe that we first of all need to cultivate a heart of true compassion for these people and realize these are souls who will spend eternity somewhere! If we look at Jesus' example of how He truly cared for people above and beyond Himself, we can see how powerful that really can be. Also, prayer is so vital in reaching these people. If only we would humble ourselves and intercede for those who need Jesus so desperately. If we are listening to the will of God for our lives, and are open to His plans, I believe God will do mighty things through us. We also need to remember that we are totally incapable of making a difference on our own. We need Jesus!!

Michelle Miller, Partridge, KS

As youth, there are some things we can do to reach those who haven't heard the Gospel.

Some youth are called to actually

go to the mission field, others are called to stay at home and support those that have gone.

We can support them by praying for them, by sending them money and gifts, and also by sending encouraging letters. We can also go visit and maybe help with short-term projects.

This might mean helping support missions that are not from our own “Mennonite Denominations.” If we do this, we need to be careful we don’t just hand out money to whoever asks but do some research on them and make sure that what they’re teaching is biblical.

As youth, we need to do what we can where we are now. “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10a).

Carla Miller, Lott, TX

I think the first and ultimate thing we as youth can do to help spread the Gospel is to pray. Prayer is a very vital part of a life that is tuned in with God and wants to do His will. Also to spread His Word abroad we need to start at home. If we can’t tell others of his salvation while we’re at home then

God can’t use us when He calls us to bigger things.

There are several ways we can reach those who haven’t heard the Gospel. Many mission organizations today have programs in which youth in particular can participate in to help others around the world hear the Good News. All we need to do is look for those opportunities and follow God’s leading to whatever He calls us to. If we just step out of our comfort zone and ask God to show us opportunities, He will show us!

Mike Stoltzfus, Taylorsville, NC

The first thing I thought of that youth could do is to pray—pray for these people that their hearts would be prepared for the Gospel when someone brings it to them. Also pray that God would place a burden on someone to go and reach these people. We as youth need to be willing to go if God calls us into service for Him. We could also support someone going, by praying for them and helping with gifts of money, etc. May God place a burden on all of our hearts to reach the unsaved.

Emily Lapp, Quaker City, OH 

*It’s not so much what we know that causes trouble;
it’s the things we “know for sure” that aren’t so.*

THOUGHT GEMS

One big reason the credit card generation is in trouble is that it's way too easy to access excess.



The soundness of your ideas is more important than the sound of your words.



Wouldn't it be great if we showed as much patience with people as we do waiting for fish to bite?



The world would be better off with less television and more heavenly vision.



It's always hard to find a job for the fellow who doesn't want one.



Some ulcers are caused by inflammation of the wishbone.



Truth may anger those whom it fails to convince.



Anger makes your mouth work faster than your mind.



The right train of thought can take you to a better station in life.



He who buys what he does not need steals from himself.

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