

# CALVARY MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

**NOVEMBER 2008**

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Purpose of Calvary Messenger is:  
 To propagate sound Biblical doctrine;  
 To stimulate a deeper study of God's Word;  
 To anchor and fortify the faith of Christians;  
 To point lost and dying souls to Christ the Savior;  
 To welcome prodigals back to the fold and family of God;  
 And to help defeated Christians find victory in Christ Jesus.

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## *Be Strong*


*Brenda Coblenz, Greensburg, KY*

Youth, would we all the true faith keep?  
Here are some things we first must seek:  
While we aren't born with this, you know,  
'Tis something in our lives can grow!

Faith in the head is where you start,  
From Satan's worldly ways to depart.  
Confess, repent, turn from the wrong,  
And for the Lord, oh now, be strong.

"Come out from them," the Lord doth say,  
"Don't follow them, 'tis not the way.  
Leave the vain fashions, sin, and pride.  
The Holy Spirit will be our Guide."

Like Joseph, we may commit to God,  
To always serve Him on this sod.  
And may we once He needs a man,  
Say, "Lord, I will; with You, I can!"

And when we meet with trials sore,  
Just like a child our Lord implore.  
We'll stand for Lord Jehovah's sake,  
And meet Him at the pearly gate. 

## Facing our Mortality

*Paul L. Miller, Partridge, Kansas*

**Y**ea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4).

In 1999, my thyroid was removed surgically because of a malignancy. After five years had passed with no further signs or symptoms, I was again able to give blood to Red Cross several times a year. I have enjoyed that. It seemed that good health had returned to me.

On August 12, I was shocked by our family doctor. He spied a quarter-sized, dark spot on my thigh, so he sent me to a dermatologist.

Here are more journal entries of recent times:

**Day 1:** The dermatologist took a biopsy.

**Day 3:** I announced this health need in church today as a request for prayer. Many in the brotherhood began praying fervently. What a blessing and encouragement! “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself” (Romans 14:7).

**Day 8:** The results are back. The dermatologist pronounced my spot

a melanoma and said that it must be removed. I can hardly wait to see it go. This evening (August 29) Bro. Lee Nisly and several other Cedar Crest ministers came by request and prayed over me and anointed me with oil in the name of the Lord Jesus. It was very comforting to have them pray, because I find it harder to know how to pray when it is for my own health needs. We agreed to ask God to bring healing as it brings glory to that Name above all other names—Jesus. If there is ever a time that we need each other, it is at times like this!

Fortunately, I am not my own but I belong to Him who gave His life for me. I want to serve Him in sickness and in health, whether by life or by death. Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! He is sovereign and I want to honor Him with a childlike trust in His wisdom. We are definitely asking Him for healing. If He sees that’s not best for me, I want to bow my heart in willing submission. My only God-honoring option is to accept His will with His joy!

**Day 10:** We still find it difficult to face this situation. We will find out today what two recent tests show.

It is tempting to worry, but we try not to. Worrying does no good and it interrupts our continuous commitment of this earnest entreaty for healing to God. Furthermore, it dishonors God, Who gives us precious promises like Isaiah 26:3, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.” Though we believe our doctors are competent, we find greater reason to trust our infinite God, even as we seek the services of skilled men of integrity.


**Day 11:** The doctors report good news! The PET Scan gives no indication that the problem has spread. Hallelujah! Surgery is scheduled in five days, after which we may be facing additional treatment.

Here’s a bit of advice for anyone who has an unusual looking spot appear on the skin. Don’t delay reporting it to a doctor. The thought that through neglect I had failed to bring a potentially life-threatening situation to the attention of a doctor was my unwelcome companion for these last eleven days. I found no comfort there!

Facing end-of-life issues is

instructive, even if it is not pleasant. Let me say with the psalmist, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted” (Psalm 119:71a). We know our lives are fragile and that death could come at any time, but somehow a distant view looks different than a close-up one.

**Day 17:** Yesterday the melanoma was removed by surgery. Martha and those in the family waiting room were given the word (while I was still in recovery) that the surgery went well and that the lymph node in question tested clear of cancer in the lab. So chemotherapy is unnecessary. It is hard to find words that adequately express our gratitude. Here then is our understatement of the week: **“Praise the Lord!”** And for those of you who knew about this and were interceding for us, “Thank you and God bless you!”

Truly our lives are in the hands of the Creator God who has made us and placed us here. Our uncertain lives continue in the hands of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who loves us and gave Himself for us! “Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:8c). –PLM 

*We can only change the world  
by changing men.*

## *There Are No Single Issues*

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

Every human issue somehow connects to another one. Every circumstance somehow relates to some other happening. Every picture has a “before and after” that is a part of the whole.

Politicians sometimes assert that elections turn on a single issue. Economists postulate that upturns and downturns pivot on one sector of the economy.

Church people claim one issue makes or breaks a congregation. Individuals sometimes claim that one event or condition caused them to do wrong.

Days are separated from nights, but they are connected. Absence separates friends, but they are still friends. Events may be separated by time and yet be related.

Having conceded all that, there are no single issues that by themselves adequately explain our human dilemma. The social and emotional dynamics of our lives have multiple inputs and outputs. The flow of our lives is a continuous stream of ebb and flow. No single event can be totally divorced from the ongoing

progress of our lives.

To be sure, there are single issues that define a person. And there are sometimes single issues that cause people to go over the proverbial cliff. A single issue may loom so large it blots out its cause and blinds us to the consequential effect. But, in general, it is safe to assert that no issue comes of itself, nor stands or falls by itself. The Bible even says, “No man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself” (Roman 14:7).

Why is it, then, that certain people seem to get “hung up” on a single issue? The “hung up” part is more revealing than the issue itself. Sometimes when such people finally get past one issue, they get hung up on something else. It is an age-old phenomenon. Some people foist themselves into every congregational crisis. They seem drawn like a magnet to “hot button” issues. And occasionally, if there is no crisis brewing, they try to create one.

Vibrant, genuine Christians are more known by what they are *for* than by what they are *against*.

The special, single-interest groups

of our day frequently relate society's ills to a single error. One group faults the environment. Another group blames the war in Iraq. Another group blames the fact that the wrong political party is in power. Another group is sure that society is disintegrating because of mediocre education. Some folks fault Social Security and the low minimum wage law. Some blame the legislators and the courts. And somewhere it comes down to indicting people who don't vote. Each of these groups holds their cause as being of paramount importance, often to the exclusion of other ills that beset our western society. They become self-made "specialists" in their own sphere of a narrow interest, supposing that correcting this one error would set the world straight.

In the church similar things happen but with a different list. Several are against church "hierarchy." Others call church administration a conspiracy of control and label it Phariseeism. Some are sure that the church is weak because of tolerating worldly fads and contemporary dress, while others feel the church is anemic because people aren't interested in their favorite mission project. Some feel our powerlessness is due to material pursuits. Each sees any failure in the church as being related to the

single issue of their personal focus. Thus, somehow, failure is someone else's fault.

I repeat, there are no single issues. Spiritual lack in an individual church member (or the church, collectively) is caused by a number of related issues.

Some say that what the world needs is more forgiveness. Some say our greatest need is faith. Others say our lack really is heartfelt obedience. Still others say the world needs a godly fear. Some are sure more tolerance would fix our world's ills. Others say the real solution to our world's sad state of affairs is to show more love.

Which one is right? What is most important? None of the above by itself is fully adequate to make right the world's wrongs. But all of them taken together could open the way to begin constructive change for the better.

On further thought, maybe we should first begin to implement a broader application of primary issues such as forgiveness, faith, obedience, meekness and love in the church. And that is only a short list. All of God's truth is important. Correcting imbalances in the church must precede setting straight a narrow-minded world that seems bent on traveling on the wide road to destruction.

Church members who champion

a single issue are usually eventually not taken seriously. Their credibility becomes a liability to their narrow focus. That also explains, in part, why single-issue people tend not to be chosen for leadership roles.


Any worthy leader needs a broad frame of reference. His interests and goals are shaped by an informed, broad range of subjects and issues. Being a specialist passes in the professional world for social stature and professionalism. But effective and profitable leadership in the church requires an open mind and an open heart given to broad-based application of all of God's truth.

An open mind has interest in all facets of biblical truth—discipleship, witnessing, doctrine, nurture, evangelism, and prophecy. A specialist sees almost everything coming down to one facet in almost every situation. An open mind does not know it all, or have rigid presuppositions about every subject. An open mind relates new information to general facts and conclusions that were settled by serious and diligent Bible study. An open mind doesn't "fall for" every

new idea that comes along. It has a frame of reference capable of making reasonable judgments.

An open heart can show love to those who choose to differ. An open heart can refuse wrong concepts without expressing anger, contempt, or making threats. An open heart is steady without being consumed by fear, and is patient without being neutral, or just giving up in spineless surrender.

Having an open mind and an open heart are qualities suited to maximizing social skills, regardless of leadership responsibilities. Church leaders, in particular, should be aware of special interests they verbalize too frequently to be effective.

Surgeons, I am told, are specialists who do the same operation over and over. One family doctor told me being a surgeon is relatively easy, but being a family doctor is, in many ways, harder work. They must consider many possible problems and solutions. ***The Bottom Line is that effective servants in the church must, in many ways, be more like family doctors than surgeons.*** 

Feeling sorry for the needy is not as important as helping them.



# *Prayer is a Journey*

*Marie Yoder, Stanardsville, VA*

The sun shone warm in Siret, Romania, and the worshippers gladly stepped into the cooler building as they arrived. Pastor Liviu greeted each one with “The Lord bless you!” and a hearty handshake. Many had walked for a few minutes (some for an hour) to attend the service. The assembly room would soon be filled and the service would begin. As Liviu lingered near the door, he noticed a white-haired gentleman approaching. Suddenly he recognized him.

“Brother Dumitru!” Liviu exclaimed, throwing his arms around the visitor. “Do you remember me?” he asked, his voice full of emotion.

Dumitru looked baffled. “No, I can’t recall that we met before,” said the elderly man while studying the face of the tall young man.

“I’m so glad to see you again and would love to visit with you. Could we meet after the service?”

“Sure, that would be fine. I’m in no hurry to get home,” answered Dumitru, still wondering why the pastor was interested in him.

The summer sun was still warm when the service dismissed. Finally only Liviu and Dumitru remained. Liviu’s blue eyes sparkled as he mo-

tioned toward a comfortable chair at the rear of the assembly room, inviting Dumitru to sit down. “I’ll sit on the bench across from you. Now we can visit,” Liviu said with anticipation.

Liviu began, “Do you remember that night in June, 1983, when I was baptized near Granicesti in the Suceava River? You and the brethren Morosan and Zaharia were there on that dark, rainy night. Do you remember?”

Dumitru studied Liviu’s face. Slowly he nodded his head as he recalled the baptismal service being described. The older man’s eyes glistened as Pastor Liviu enthusiastically described that night when everything had to be done in secret. Dumitru leaned forward and inquired, “Tell me, Liviu, how was it that you became a Christian and were baptized?”

“It’s a long story—one that took me on a journey in which I learned to pray. My father, Alexander, was a dedicated Communist. He was tall, handsome and smart. His commitment to the Communist party earned him the position of Director of the Primary School in Siret. He took pride in telling children what a wonderful world the Communists were building and encouraged them

to join the Young Pioneers to help create a better environment.”

Dumitu nodded as he recalled the propaganda of bygone days. “Mother taught in the same school where Father was director. About the time I was born, Mother became a Christian. Knowing her faith in God would upset Father, she didn’t tell him; in fact, she was afraid of him.” Liviu cleared his throat and continued: “Every year the teachers were re-evaluated and were asked to answer questions like, ‘Do you believe there is no God? Are you dedicated to teaching atheism?’ When Mother needed to answer these questions, she simply and modestly said, ‘No.’ Father became furious. She had disgraced him in front of all the other teachers, so he fired her on the spot!” Liviu sighed.

“Did your father leave her?” Dumitru wondered.

“No, he didn’t leave her.” For twenty-five years he persecuted Mother when they were together in public, but at home he treated her respectfully. Apparently he admired Mother’s integrity. To my knowledge, she never questioned him or gave him a cold shoulder because of the treatment he gave her in public. When they disagreed about something, she refused to argue. She seemed to understand his behavior and loved him in spite of it.”

“How remarkable! You have an outstanding mother. Do you have any siblings?”

“Yes, I have a brother Andrei. He’s two years older than I. Because Mother was no longer allowed to teach school, she became a homemaker. When we were very young, she taught us to be kind, to treat Father with respect, to love all people, and to treasure our family. Before bedtime at night, she told us Bible stories and taught us how to pray. Every day we prayed for Father. She did not tolerate having us use the bad language we heard from playing with the other children.” Liviu thoughtfully stroked his Bible as he recalled his childhood. “Mother often took us along to the garden, and we worked alongside of her, pulling weeds, picking beans and tomatoes, and digging potatoes. We learned that hard work builds strong muscles and helps us grow. Mother made life interesting for us and we loved her.”

“Did your father spend much time with you and your brother?” asked Dumitru.

“No, Father was too wrapped up in his own interests and spent very little time with us boys.” Liviu gazed out the window, then continued, “Mother had a Bible, but kept it hidden. After we learned to read and understand more about God, she would

let us read the Bible in our bedroom. We would hold it inside another book, making sure the outside cover of the book was toward the door. Sometimes Father looked into our bedroom to tell us good-night before going to bed, but he never asked what we were reading.” Liviu smiled, recalling those earlier times.

“Now Brother Dumitru, to answer your question, Mother continued teaching us about God during our teenage years. Those years were not easy. Our friends did not follow God and sometimes my brother and I did things that were wrong for which we were sorry afterwards. We came to realize we were sinners by nature.” Liviu dropped his gaze and shook his head. “We were like lost sheep. Andrei and I talked to Mother. She explained the steps we needed to take to have our sins forgiven. We repented of our sins and invited Jesus to come into our hearts, rule our lives, and help us to follow Him like sheep follow their shepherd. Peace came to our troubled hearts.” Liviu smiled and continued, “Andrei was eighteen and I was sixteen when we made this choice and shortly after this commitment, we desired to be baptized.”

“What did your father say to that?” Dumitru asked, raising his eyebrows.

“We debated if we should ask

his permission to be baptized. We asked Mother what she thought. She advised us to pray about it, to obey God, and try not to cause conflict with Father. She thought it best for us to take the responsibility to arrange for our baptism, since it needed to be done in secret, and we were not to tell her about it until later. She prayed often for us, and my brother and I continued to pray for her and Father every day.”

“How did God lead you the night you were baptized?”

“We learned that a baptismal service at the Suceava River was planned for midnight one night in June and decided to join them. A light rain was falling when the time came to leave the house. Andrei and I sneaked outside knowing we were taking the risk of being caught by the authorities. At the river we met a few brethren in the Lord, and you, Brother Dumitru, were there too!”

Dumitru nodded as Liviu smiled and continued. “We returned home that night with light and happy hearts, still soaking wet from the baptism in the river and from the rain we walked through. Andrei is such an encourager. I often thank God for giving me such a wonderful brother and an understanding mother.”

“What did your father say when he learned that his sons had become

Christians?” Dumitru wanted to know.

“It was amazing. He neither discouraged nor encouraged us. He said that we need to build our own lives and take responsibility for what we do. We firmly believe God gave him that attitude and it was God’s way of taking care of us.

“Eventually we became old enough that our interests took us away from living at home. We continued praying daily for Father’s salvation. Sometimes we wondered when God would answer our prayers and were tempted to think God did not really care about our father. Unknown to us, God worked behind the mask that Father wore. In 1994, he had open-heart surgery. The Christian surgeon knew Father was not prepared to meet God. After surgery he needed to shock Father’s heart so it would start beating again. At first, it refused to start. The doctor kept praying and persisting until the heart fluttered and became active again. This caused burns on Father’s back that took six months to heal.”

“How did he respond to life after that?” Dumitru shifted in his chair.

“He found life difficult to cope with and worked through a lot of depression. Satan tried to trip Father and make him believe God could not save him. We kept on praying for him and

finally he came to realize God had given him another and perhaps last chance to repent and commit his life to Christ. He seized that opportunity and begged God’s forgiveness for sinning against Him all his life,” Liviu said with feeling.

“He regretted how zealously he had promoted Communist ideology that by then had gone to shambles. Most of the people in our village knew him and remembered his former philosophy. This made him shy away from crowds. We knew God had changed his heart and view of the future; and that is what we had prayed for every day.”

“Is your father still living?” asked Dumitru.

“No, he died three years after his open-heart surgery. By then he had gained victory over depression and looked forward to meeting the One who had forgiven his sins and transformed his life.

“Today I’m very thankful that we kept on praying for Father, even if it took twenty-five years for our prayers to be answered. To pray for him was a journey that kept me in touch with God ever since I learned to pray. I want that journey to continue the rest of my life. God proved to me that He hears when we pray and sometimes the right time for Him to answer takes a long time, like it did for my father.”



# He Got It Out of a Book

*David L. Martin, Rochester, WA*

**I**t seems that the prophet Daniel got much of his information for free. He “had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Daniel 1:17). He interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s visions. He read the handwriting on the wall to Belshazzar. He not only interpreted the visions of others but also had remarkable visions of his own.

So it appears almost out of character for Daniel to do what we find him doing in Daniel 9:2. “I, Daniel, understood by books...” Think of it—this man of God, who already knew so much by direct revelation, spent time with his nose in a book. In fact, it is safe to say that he must have spent more time reading than dreaming. But why?

Daniel believed that other people knew some things too, and he was not too proud to learn from them. In this case, it was the Prophet Jeremiah that he read. That book, and not some vision or personal revelation, was how God showed him that the Babylonian captivity would come to an end after seventy years.

Jesus, who knows even more than Daniel, still read from Isaiah the prophet. When given the opportunity to speak at the synagogue in Nazareth, He took the scroll and “found the place where it was written” (Luke 4:17). He

was well acquainted with the book and easily found the place He wanted to read, even though in His day there were no numbered chapters and verses.

“How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” Jesus’ listeners wondered in John 7:15. By this they did not mean He never went to school. Rather, they were referring to the fact that He never took advanced education such as many of the scribes had taken. (Certainly He had attended the synagogue school, just as other boys of His time did. And we may be sure he applied His mind to the studies at hand.)


Many people in today’s world would gladly study if only they could. The Bible speaks in Amos 8:12 of a time when people “shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it.” In some countries, this crying need is obvious. Missionaries can toss literature out of moving vehicles and expect to see people pick it up. We may count it a great privilege to be a part of the great publishing work giving thousands of people the opportunity to read books and pamphlets and Bible study correspondence courses.

Reading, however slow and plodding, has God’s blessing on it, and none of us is too good for it. Studying books and periodicals and Sunday school lessons, is one way to begin a

humble learning process that the Lord finally rewards with direct inspiration through His Holy Spirit.

We should be teaching our children what a privilege and pleasure it is to dig buried treasures out of books for themselves. And, finally, we should be leaving a good example. Let us be careful, not only what we read, but

what our children see us reading. News periodicals may have a place in our homes, but godly literature should have the most prominent place. Where our reading interests lie today, our children's interests will lie tomorrow.

[From *The Literature Lamp-lighter*, Sept-Oct, 2008. Used by permission.] 

## *My Personal Testimony*

*Russell Coble, Hutchinson, KS*

I gave my life to God on July 24, 2008, after serving the enemy for the last 14 years. Let me explain what I mean: I was born July 6, 1984, to an atheistic family. For the first 10 years of my life I believed that there is no God and we are just here [on earth without purpose]. When I was nine, I was taken away from home. For the next years I was put in a number of different foster homes.

In one of these, the foster parents were a high priest and high priestess of the local order of the Disciples of Satan. (DOS) The DOS is an underground, outlaw, vampiric, satanic order that believes in shedding and drinking of blood for purification and as a sacrifice to Satan for being our god and giving us magical powers.

I studied under multiple masters for the next six years and when the current deacon of the order gave his life for the order, I was able to obtain the position by showing strength and gaining favor

from the lord of the underworld. There he is known as Lucifuge; Christians know him as Lucifer or Satan.

After ten years of service to Satanism, I no longer claimed it in name, but I continued to serve Satan. I wanted other people to believe that I was a Christian so I could lead them astray. In reality, I was still a practicing magician and had absolutely no heart knowledge of Christ. Some might ask how that could be. Let me explain a little: At 13 I started a serious study of not only Christianity but also other religions. I studied Christianity for two reasons: (1) Christians were sworn enemies of Satan; and (2) Christianity is the exact opposite of Satanism.

I came to know the basics of Christianity well enough to trick even the best—those ordained by God to share the Gospel. I used to say, “I know the Bible as well as Satan because he is my teacher.”

When I came to prison in 2005, I

kept up the façade to the point that when I finally told everyone that not only was I not a Christian, but I did not believe anything, I think there are still a few who don't think that I was an unbeliever.

I finally "came out of the closet" about my beliefs, but for some reason, I also started to study more about God and Jesus. I guess I was trying to prove myself right and Christians wrong. Thankfully, that did not happen. During this time God slowly pushed through the barriers that Satan and I had set up. It got to the point that I could not do my daily or weekly devotions to the dark gods. I also lost my power to do magic.

All this time I had been enrolled in the Freedom Challenge program which shows us biblical ways to overcome life-controlling issues. I was a chapel helper working the sound board and the projector. On July 24<sup>th</sup>, I was working the projector and after the singing was over, I put up a picture of Jesus. I kept staring at the picture and I asked Him, "Who are You, really? How do You have all these people tricked?" I still believed it was all a hoax and that he had everybody fooled.

When prayer was started, we were told we were free to go if we didn't want to pray. I did not go. I knew I needed help to clean up, so while everyone else was praying, I kept looking at the picture. I finally told Him, "Look, I

know You exist. I don't know how or why, but You do so well; just show me who You are!"

At that time I answered the knock at my heart's door. I felt Him come in and the next thing I knew tears were running down my face and pretty soon I found myself at the altar, almost without knowing how I got there. I broke down and cried out to God and finally gave it all to Him: all the 24 years of pain and the 14 years of service to His enemy. Most of all, I gave Him my heart.

It has not been easy. I have had a lot of people turn on me because of my choice. I have even had a few Christians turn on me for not telling the truth about my religious past. I know, however, that God is faithful and I love Him with everything in my power. I gave Him my all and I plan to leave it that way, no matter what happens. I plan to serve Him strongly because I know he is REAL!

For all of you who are struggling, I can only tell you that you have to cry out to Jesus and He will answer. He will show you He loves you and He will guide you to where you need to go for Him.

*[Submitted by Eli J. Yoder, Hutchinson, KS, who gives weekly time to teach in prison. Russell Coble regularly attends Harley Nisly's Bible classes in Hutchinson Correctional Facility. Russell found Jesus during a Freedom Challenge gathering.]*



## marriages

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

### **Bowser-Hershberger**

Bro. Jeremy, son of Allen and Rhoda Bowser, Harrison, AR, and Sis. Abigail, daughter of Gabriel and Rachel Hershberger, Harrison, AR, at First Assembly of God Church for Little Flock Christian Fellowship on July 5, 2008, by Charles Hamilton.

### **Falb-Eichorn**

Bro. Roger, son of Howard and Mildred Falb, Dalton, OH, and Sis. Wanda, daughter of Enoch and Leanna Eichorn, London, OH, at United Bethel Church for Canaan Fellowship on Sept. 26, 200, by Nelson Beachy.

### **Gingerich-Miller**

Bro. Marcus, son of Abe and Amanda Gingerich, Free Union, VA, and Sis. Melissa, daughter of Marlin and Fern Miller, Kalona, IA, at Fairview Church for Sharon Bethel Church on May 17, 2008, by Delmar Bontrager.

### **Hege-Miller**

Bro. Brent, son of Danny and Benita (Heatwole) Hege, Olar, SC, and Sis. Valletta, daughter of Valentine, Jr., and Darletta (Hege) Miller, on Sept. 27, 2008, at Day Spring Mennonite Church for Gospel Light Mennonite, by Melvin Yoder.

### **Jantzi-Schmidt**

Bro. Conrad Joseph, son of Bruce and Ruthann Jantzi, Wellesley, ON, and Sis. Christine Kathryn, daughter of Ralph and Kathryn Schmidt, Millbank, ON, on August 9, 2008, at Faith Mennonite for Fairhaven A.M. Church by Melvin Roes.

### **Kensinger-Overholt**

Bro. Ephraim, son of Daniel and Louise Kensinger, Mechanicstown, OH, and Sis. Jennifer, daughter of Joseph and Ruth Overholt, Minerva, OH, on August 16, 2008, at First Christian Church for Calvary Chapel by Leonard Overholt.

### **Lapp-Stauffer**

Bro. Aaron Lapp, son of the late Aaron and Fannie Lapp, Kinzers, PA, and Sis. Esther (Miller) Stauffer, daughter of the late Ammon and Gertie Miller, Sturgis, MI, at Calvary Chapel, Sturgis, MI, on Sept. 13, 2008, by Dave Stoltzfoos.

### **Mast-Zimmerman**

Bro. Elson, son of Elowayne and Esther Mast, Lincoln, MO, and Sis. Beth, daughter of Wayne and Joyce Zimmerman, McBride, BC, at little Flock Christian Fellowship, Harrison, AR, on August 23, 2008, by Charles Hamilton.

### **Otto-Miller**

Bro. Marcus John, son of David and Miriam Otto, Crossville, TN, and Sis. Nancy Elizabeth, daughter of Paul and Elizabeth Miller, Crossville, TN, on Sept. 6, 2008, at First United Methodist



Church, Crossville, for Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church by John Mast.

### **Schmidt-Dolly**

Bro. Shawn David, son of Dan and Crystal Schmidt, Crossville, TN, and Sis. Stephanie Marie, daughter of Dane and Martha Dolly, Burlington, WV, on Aug. 16, 2008, at North Forks Mennonite Church, Petersburg, WV, by Larry Showalter.

### **Tice-Yoder**

Bro. Aaron, son of Sarah and the late Monroe Tice, Grantsville, MD, and Sis. Dorothy, daughter of Herman and Thelma Yoder, Grantsville, MD, at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church on June 14, 2008, by Leonard Orendorf.

### **Wagler-Gerber**

Bro. Jason Mark, son of Mark and Darlene Wagler, Linwood, ON, and Sis. Amy Rose, daughter of Wilmer and Marjorie Gerber, Nithburg, ON, on August 16, 2008, at Faith Mennonite for Fairhaven A.M. Church by Melvin Roes.

### **Wagler-Kuepfer**

Bro. Dwayne Stephen, son of Mark and Darlene Wagler, Linwood, ON, and Sis. Carolyn Kathleen, daughter of Steven and Mary Kuepfer, Newton, ON, on July 5, 2008, at Faith Mennonite for Fairhaven A.M. Church by Melvin Roes.

## **cradle roll**

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

**Beachy**, Crist and Marlene (Wagler), Leon, IA, ninth child, sixth son, Brandon C., Aug. 22, 2008.

**Beachy**, Gabriel and Dawn (Hurst), Cedar Creek, TX, fifth child, third dau., Amy Elizabeth, Sept. 18, 2008.

**Beiler**, Vincent and Lydia (Croutch), Lancaster, PA, third child, second son, Logan Thomas, July 26, 2008.

**Burkholder**, Marcus and Wanda (Eash), Cumberland Furnace, TN, third child, first dau., Kaitlyn Sue, June 26, 2008.

**Byler**, Tim and Eleanor (Eichorn), Plain City, OH, first child and son, Dustin Wade, Sept. 16, 2008.

**Derksen**, John and Miriam (Hershberger), Summersville, KY, fifth child, fourth dau., Debra Janae, Sept. 4, 2008.

**Gerber**, Richard and Wanda (Kuepfer), Brunner, ON, fourth child, third son, Chadwyn Lavell, August 2, 2008.

**Gerber**, Steven and Janette (Schmidt), Brunner, ON, fifth child, fourth son, Trevor Burnell, August 26, 2008.

**Gerber**, Timothy and Mary Beth (Wagler), Gadshill, ON, sixth child, fourth dau., Melissa Faith, Sept. 9, 2008.

**Gingerich**, Lavon and Marjorie (Miller), Auburn, KY, fourth child, second son, Rilee Daniel, May 2, 2008.

**Glick**, Wendell and Janelle (Martin), Waterloo, ON, first child and son, Lucas David, August 18, 2008.

**Helmuth**, Dan and Laura (Yoder), Brookfield, MO, seventh child, second son, Daryl, August 10, 2008.

**Hershberger**, Titus and Ella Mae (Frey), LaGrange, IN, third child, first dau., Amanda Grace, August 25, 2008.

**Kauffman**, Vincent and Rachel (Peterheim), Mill Hall, PA, second child, first dau., Clarita Raquelle, Jan. 25, 2008.

**King**, Wendell and Ruth (Schrock), Leoma, TN, sixth child, second dau., Kianna Beth, July 18, 2008.

**Kuepfer**, Darryl and Susan (Gerber), Millbank, ON, ninth child, fifth dau., Emmaline Faye, July 9, 2008.

**Mast**, Mahlon and Rebecca (Mast), Auburn, KY, fourth child, third dau., Jennifer Nicole, May 4, 2008.

**Miller**, Dale Lavern and Myra Beth (Hershberger), Uniontown, OH, first child and dau., Nicole Alexis, July 4, 2008.

**Miller**, David III and Charity (Miller), Berlin, OH, second child and dau., Olivia Madelyn, July 25, 2008.

**Miller**, Eldon and Faith (Smucker), Stuarts Draft, VA, fifth child, fourth son,

Benjamin Michael, August 6, 2008.

**Miller**, Jacob and Regina (Yoder), Kalona, IA, fourth child, second son, Carson Jay, May 19, 2008.

**Miller**, Jonathan and Ruth Yvonne (Yoder), Millersburg, OH, first child and dau., Kaylene Rose, August 28, 2008.

**Miller**, Lloyd and Ruthie (Fisher), London, OH, (presently serving at Faith Mission Home), fifth child, third son, Joel Andrew, Sept. 1, 2008.

**Miller**, Myron and Rosina (Mast), Middlefield, OH, first child and dau., Jana Kalyne, July 17, 2008.

**Miller**, Nelson and Laura (Coblentz), Cumberland Furnace, TN, second child and dau., Erika Lashae, Sept. 4, 2008.

**Miller**, Raymond and Wilma (Peachey), Shipshewana, IN, fourth child, third son, Carson Ray, July 16, 2008.

**Nisly**, Wayne and Sharon (Breneman), Hartselle, AL, fourth child, second son, Josiah Wayne, Sept. 15, 2008.

**Schlabach**, Ervin and Rosalyn (Hershberger), Plain City, OH, fourth child and dau., Kamryn Alyse, Aug. 18, 2008.

**Schmucker**, Alvin and Doretta (Schrock), Bealeton, VA, second child, first son, Evan Quinn, Aug. 8, 2008.

**Smucker**, Mark and Regina (Ginger-

ich), Ruckersville, VA, twins, third and fourth children and daughters, Miranda Kate and McKenzie Gail, Sept. 9, 2008.

**Stoltzfus**, Amos and Priscilla (Stoltzfus), Bridgeton, NJ, seventh child, fifth dau., Jolene Grace, May 28, 2008.

**Stoltzfus**, Jamie and Esther (Marner), Blackville, SC, first child and son, Davalyan Hunter, Sept. 7, 2008.

**Strubhar**, Carl and Lillian (Miller), Perkins, OK, second child and dau., Chloe Patience, August 28, 2008.

**Wagler**, Philip and Sheila (Schmidt), Wellesley, ON, first child and son, Chad Murray, July 15, 2008.

**Weaver**, Harry and Rhodora (Stauffer), Russellville, KY, fourth child, third dau., Jessica Fern, May 5, 2008.

**Yoder**, Jesse and Sarah (Holofchak), Cottage Grove, TN, first child and son, Kendrick Ryan, Sept. 11, 2008.

**Yoder**, John and Renita (Kuepfer), Arlington, KS, second child, first dau., Maria Grace, Sept. 23, 2008.

**Yoder**, Trenton and Amber (Plank), Red Rock, TX/Montezuma, GA, third child and son, Jadon Antonio, Sept. 11, 2008.

## ordinations

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

**Bro. Lloyd Beiler**, 45, was ordained as deacon on Aug. 24, 2008 at Weaver-town Amish Mennonite Church, Bird-in-Hand, PA. The charge was given by David Stoltzfoos, assisted by John U. Lapp and Raymond King. Preordination messages were given by Glen W. Miller, from Middlebury, IN. Others in the lot were Sam Fisher and Nathan Bange.

## obituaries

**Albrecht**, Henry, 69, died at his residence at Newton, ON, Sept. 7, 2008. He was born Dec. 4, 1938, in Mornington Twp., son of the late Solomon and Bena (Zehr) Albrecht.

He was a member of Fairhaven Amish Mennonite Church, Milverton.

On May 21, 1964, he was married to Magdalena Kuepfer, who survives. Other survivors include: Larry and wife Anne Albrecht; Mervin and wife Connie Albrecht, all of Newton; Anne and husband Robert Jantzi, Wellesley; and 13 grandchildren. Other survivors include brother David and wife Mary Albrecht, Milverton; Cornelius and wife Esther Albrecht, Listowel; Catherine and husband Levi Streicher, Harriston;

sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law: Sarah Albrecht; Elizabeth and husband John Gerber; Alvin and wife Esther Kuepfer; Adeline and husband Dave Kuepfer; Amos and wife Marie Kuepfer; Leroy Kuepfer; Ammon and Laura Kuepfer; Emaline and husband Allan Kuepfer; Marion and husband Wolfgang Strauss; and Aaron and wife Martha Jantzi and a number of nieces and nephews.

Henry was preceded in death by brothers Jonas and Tobias and sisters-in-law Esther Albrecht and Marie Kuepfer.

The funeral was held Sept. 10, with Bishop Melvin Roes serving. Burial was in the Mornington Amish Mennonite Cemetery.

**Hostetler**, Lester, 91, of London, OH, died peacefully at his home, surrounded by family on August 27, 2008, after two years of declining health. He was born Oct. 11, 1916, at Plain City, OH, son of the late Dan M. and Emma (Frey) Hostetler.

He was a member of Canaan Fellowship Church.

He was married to Lovina Beachy on Oct. 14, 1943. She survives. Also surviving are three sons and two daughters: Vernon Lee Hostetler, London, OH; William Edward (Cornelia) Hostetler, London, OH; Alice (Vernon) Miller, London, OH; Naomi (Donnie) Brenneman, Virginia Beach, VA; Lawrence Ray (Sharon)

Hostetler, West Jefferson, OH; 21 grandchildren; 34 great grandchildren; one brother, Sam Hostetler, Sarasota, FL; two sisters, Katie Ann Kramer, Belle Center, OH; and Martha Hostetler, Plain City, OH.

He was preceded in death by one sister, Emma and four brothers: John, Eli, Dan and William.

The funeral was held on August 29 at Canaan Fellowship Church with Nelson Beachy, Robert Beachy and Roger Hostetler serving. Burial was in the Canaan Church cemetery.

**Nafziger**, Ira, 88, died at Greenwood Court, Stratford, ON, June 13, 2008. He was formerly of Lancaster, PA. He was born July 10, 1919, at Millbank, ON, son of the late Eli and Magdalena (Boshart) Nafziger.

He was a member of Fairhaven A.M. Church, Milverton and Faith Mennonite Fellowship Church, Lancaster County, PA.

He was beloved husband of Christina (Gerber and former wife of Dan W. Erb) and the late Sara (Clymer).

He was loving father to Calvin (Naomi), Columbus, OH; Twila (Kenneth Ryan), Armuchee, GA; Joyce (Theron McCarty), Hickory, KY; Leslie (Bonnie), Ephrata, PA; Lucille (Greg Ositko), Rehoboth, DE; Carol (Darrell Good), Ephrata, PA; Bonita Osley, Asheville, NC; Robert (Evelyn), Washington Boro, PA; Sara (Lamar Shelley),

Hickory, NC; Shirley Nafziger-Lyne, Stevens, PA; Cynthia (Dennis De-twiler), Hickory, NC; Yvonne (Marvin Miller), Stormer Lake, ON; June (Gary Eberly), Stevens, PA.

He was the dear stepfather of Nancy (Harold Wagler), Millbank, ON; Margaret (Peter Kuepfer) and Delmer Erb (Mary), Nithburg, ON; Harold Erb (Marie), Milverton, ON; Daniel Erb, Sandra Erb, Wellesley, ON; Shelley (John Erb), Monkton, ON; Sheila (James Jantzi), New Hamburg, ON; Denise (Kirk Bannerman), Wellesley, ON; and son-in-law, Melvin Roes (Marietta), Gadshill, ON.

Other survivors are 44 grandchildren and 54 great grandchildren; 33 step grandchildren and 65 step great grandchildren; two brothers: Melville and Andrew and two sisters: Catherine and Adeline.

Preceding him in death were two children, Leon and Mabel; brothers: Manuel, Samuel, Levi, Ezra, Ephraim; sister, Lovina and step daughter Mary Roes (nee Erb).

A funeral was held at Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, ON, on June 16. A second service was held at Faith Mennonite Fellowship, Stevens, PA, on June 18. Interment was at Mellinger Mennonite Cemetery, Lancaster, PA.

**Ropp**, Edna (Wagler), 77, of Brunner, ON, died August 11, 2008, at St.

Mary's Hospital, Kitchener, ON. She was born Sept. 8, 1930, daughter of the late Amos and Edna (Brenneman) Wagler.

She was a faithful member of Fellowship Haven A.M. congregation, Monkton.

On May 18, 1954, she was married to Elmer Ropp of Brunner, who survives. She was the loving mother of Laverne (Elaine) Ropp, Monkton; the late Miriam (Murray Wagler), Crosshill; Stephen (Rosemary) Ropp, Brunner; Donald (Laurie) Ropp, New Hamburg; James (Mary Ellen) Ropp, Monkton; Larry (Susan) Ropp, Lucknow; and Andrew (Wanda) Ropp, Brunner. She is also survived by 43 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren. Other survivors include her brother, Daniel (and Mary) Wagler, Stratford; and sisters: Marie (Earl Bender), Crosshill; Vera (the late John Dyck), Bancroft; Esther (Roy Sheerer), Millbank; Deborah (Joe Zehr), Millbank; and Florence (Andres Bergsma), Rosedale, BC; sisters-in-law: Viola Wagler, Wellesley; Annie Ropp, Lisbon; Esther Gerber, New Hamburg; Adeline (Elmer) Erb, Millbank; Barbara (Joe Kennel), New Dundee; brother-in-law, Milt Roth, Altona, Manitoba.

She was preceded in death by her daughter: Miriam, her sister: Eileen Wagler, and two brothers: Omar and Norman Wagler.

The funeral was held on August 15 at the Cedar Grove Church, with Emmanuel Jantzi, Melvin Roes, Arthur Gerber, and John Byler serving. Burial was at Cedar Grove Cemetery beside her daughter Miriam's grave, who predeceased her three days earlier.

**Stoltzfus**, Elsie L, 69, of Gap, PA, died at the home of her sister, Susie King, July 10, 2008. She was born Oct. 21, 1938, daughter of Ben and Hannah (Lantz) Stoltzfus.

She was member of Pequea Amish Mennonite Church.

She is survived by her parents and a sister and a brother. No funeral details were reported. The burial was in the Millwood Church cemetery.

**Wagler**, Miriam Edna, 51, died at St. Mary's Hospital, Kitchener, ON, on August 8, 2008. She was born November 13, 1956, in Kitchener, ON, the daughter of Elmer and Edna (Wagler) Ropp.

She was a member of Cedar Grove A.M. Church.

On July 15, 1978, she was married to Murray J. Wagler, who survives. Their children are: Sara (Thomas) Jantzi, Warren, ON; Luke (Martha) Wagler, Lavigne, ON; Robert (Julia) Wagler, Heidelberg, ON; Philip (Sheila) Wagler, Wellesley, ON; Kerri, Renita and Alan at home; and

six grandchildren. Other survivors are her father, Elmer Ropp; brothers: Laverne (Elaine) Ropp; Stephen (Rosemary); Donald (Laurie); James (Mary Ellen); Larry (Susan) and Andrew (Wanda).

Miriam Edna's mother passed away August 11, 2008.


The funeral was held at Cedar Grove A.M. Church on August 12, with Arthur Gerber officiating. Burial was in the Cedar Grove Cemetery.

**Yutzy**, Sylvia, 82, died at her home in Decatur, IA, on Aug. 29, 2008. She was born Dec. 10, 1925, in rural Thomas, OK, daughter of the late John E. and Edna (Yoder) Yoder.

She was a member of Leon Salem Mennonite Church, Leon, IA.

On Nov. 23, 1944, she was married to John F. Yutzy. He died in 1997. Two children were born to them: Edna (and J. Paul Miller), Decatur, IA and Raymond and Bertha (Helmuth), Kalona, IA. She had seven grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren.

Others who preceded her in death were her brother, David Eli; and brothers-in-law, Amos Stutzman, Gordon Hershberger; Herman Yutzy, and Raymond Yutzy.

The funeral was held on Sept. 1, with Monroe Gingerich, Marvin Kauffman, and Norman Troyer serving. Burial was in the Salem Mennonite Church Cemetery. 

*The Hutchinson News* reports that the two largest school systems of the county have become very intentional about recognizing positive behavior of students. This may include a phone call or a note to parents to express appreciation for how well the child seems to be doing. Earlier such contacts were about some discipline-related problem.

Isn't it interesting that their discipline problems have been cut by 50%? Let us hope that church leaders already know the value of this principle.

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"For all its strengths the United States has some alarming signs of ill health. With less than 5% of the world's population, we have 25% of the world's prisoners, more than China and Russia combined. We consume half of all the prescription drugs in the world and yet our overall health ranks lower than most other developed nations.

"In every major city, homeless people sleep under bridges and in parks. Our leading causes of death are self-inflicted: alcohol, sexually-transmitted diseases, stress-related illnesses, drugs, violence and environmental cancers. Obviously, politicians have not solved all our problems." (Philip Yancey in *Chris-*

*tianity Today*, 9-08)

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Mennonites from Kalona, Iowa, are regularly involved in ministry to inmates at the Oakdale prison near Iowa City. On one occasion some Mennonites cringed when it was announced that a scientist from the state university would be bringing the message. They were pleasantly surprised when the speaker brought a meaningful message from Psalm 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God..."

A Mennonite attending, Gordon K. Miller, questioned the speaker afterward how his views allow him to be employed at a state university. He explained that origins are a very small part of scientific study. He also mentioned that his tenure does provide some job security. He further explained that a rather small percentage of scientists accept the view of Darwinistic evolution. But this is a private matter and is general knowledge in the academic community. There are issues of job security and scholarly prestige at stake. He also said that many of them joke among themselves about the lack of scientific credibility for Darwinism. They apparently give lip service to this flawed theory in order to have their work published and to keep government grants coming.

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Energy independence has be-

come a familiar theme in political dialogue. The fact that the United States imports large quantities of oil from nations that are not particularly friendly is considered a potential risk to national security. I was recently surprised to learn that the U.S. is reportedly exporting petroleum products at record levels. Gasoline, jet and diesel fuel exports are 31% higher than a year ago. The explanation is that the price of oil is set by a worldwide market. U.S. oil becomes the property of big oil companies and is sold to the highest bidder.

It is apparent in this day of big government that big oil is even more powerful guarding their “bottom line.” (Gleaned from Kathy Moore, *The Hutchinson News*, 9-2-08).



The “Emerging Church” is a term that has not meant much to me. John U. Lapp, Gordonville, PA, heard Bro. Ray Harnish, who has studied the subject extensively, treat the subject on two parts. We, especially leaders, would do well to pay serious attention to this current movement. Their intention is to include all faiths (not only Christians) into one religious body. These messages are available in either cassette tape or CD from Calvary Cassettes, 2698 Keefer Road, Chambersburg, PA, 17201. Phone: 717-264-2595.



A kind reader has sent me a book

on a related subject: the title: *Deceived on Purpose* by Warren Smith is a play on words from the title: *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. The book by Smith is published by Mountain Stream Press, P.O. Box 1742, Magalia, CA, 95954-1794.

The title conveys the double meaning that it is possible to be deceived about “purpose” and that some deception is intentional. Author and pastor Warren Smith was at one time a sincere participant in the New Age movement. His Bible study led him to understand that Jesus Christ of the New Testament was a different person than the New Age Christ. With his background, he is able to discern subtle ways in which the New Age movement is pursuing its agenda toward inclusion of all faiths under “the umbrella” of a New Age. This includes a “New Spirituality” and a “New Christ.” Ultimately, those who refuse to accept the new identity, “will be selectively expelled from the human race.” This reminds us of 2 Thessalonians 2.

There may well be many sincere people who are being influenced by the New Age movement. This book can be helpful in clarifying important issues.

I am still in the process of trying to work through information on the above subject that has come to my attention in recent weeks. I may offer further comment in a later column.



Let us remember that materials written by humans should be evaluated against the ultimate authority, God's Word.

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Some readers will remember that the Kansas Board of Education was in the national news when a majority mandated that Intelligent Design should be included in the public school's science curriculum. This resulted in major embarrassment and controversy in education and academic circles. After another election, the new board was able to delete this embarrassing requirement.

The editor of *The Hutchinson News* recently warned that the present board configuration could revert back to its former balance. He entitled his editorial: "Not Yet Safe." A reader offered the following response to the editorial:

"The August 7 editorial 'Not Yet Safe' makes an interesting assumption: Intelligent design as an explanation of origins contradicts good science. The editor fails to clarify just how this actually works.

"I believe the following questions are pertinent to the issue:

- Is this primarily a religious issue or is it also a question of honest scientific inquiry?
- How is Darwinism different from atheism?
- Is it scientifically credible to as-

sume that popular opinion is the final word?

- Does the teaching of Darwinism in public schools produce a youth culture that we idealize?

- What would be lost to acknowledge an infinite God whose infinity is not subject to scientific explanation?

- Why do opponents of intelligent design feel so threatened by allowing debate in the public arena?

"Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) is fondly remembered for his outstanding contribution to science and health-related issues. His discovery of bacteria is the reason we can buy pasteurized milk. But his unpopular notion that doctors should wash their hands between examination/treatment of patients was not accepted. Honest scientific inquiry put him at odds with the mainstream scientific community of his day. At his death, he was a lonely, rejected man.

"We do well to remember that truth is not finally subject to popular opinion or personal preference.

"True scientists need not feel threatened by a God who is central in terms of our origin and future. We can ill afford to ignore Him now."

Freedom of the press is thank-worthy. Let us remember that it can be a useful avenue of Christian witness. —DLM



# Ministers' Meeting Messages—2008

*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.*

## 6. The Gospel of Peace

*Elmer J. Miller, Goshen, IN*

The basis for this topic comes from Ephesians 6:13-15. Verse 15 says: "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." The Amplified renders it: "And having shod your feet in preparation to face the enemy with firm-footed stability, the promptness produced by the Good News of the gospel of peace." The Gospel of peace is to enable the Christian soldier to not be overcome by the enemy. Would it suggest, perhaps, that the Christian's stance may be not so much *delivering* blows to the enemy but *absorbing* blows as he stands on the truth?

A certain element of idealism goes with us as we go out to battle the enemy. We plan to overcome and be victorious. We will do great things. Where does our non-resistant stance come in? For the Christian in this warfare, is there room for non-resistance in that? We are not just to stand and face the enemy. When I was approached about taking this topic, Bro. Howard Kuhns said to me, "We are not interested in

trying to solve the problems between the United States and Iraq." He further invited me to speak about situations facing our churches. I admit that in light of some of the things we are facing as a constituency, I could weep. I sometimes say to myself, "This is just not right! Lord, what's wrong? What's happening?"

Perhaps some here are wounded. While we are assured the final victory, we lose some skirmishes. In depression, a person is angry. Striking back is tempting. Let me read from James 4:1-3 from the NIV: "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." This speaks about the basic human affliction: the heart that

is deceitful and desperately wicked. The Apostle Paul said that in his flesh was nothing good.

My wife and I live near Gospel Echoes headquarters. They send out many Bible courses to inmates in prisons, and so they need graders. We have done some grading and have found it very challenging. We were instructed not to become emotionally involved with these inmates. We are to sign our first names only and to add no address, telephone number or anything more! Presently we are doing only Elkhart County jail. We might average eight or ten lessons a week. Most are men, but some are women.

Oh, the hopelessness these people face! In response to a recent question, "What are some of your greatest fears and worries?" one of them said, "I worry when I get out of here. I'll be leaving here. I have no money. No family. No home. No job. No place to go. I'll soon be released from prison."

I can hardly imagine that, but multitudes in our land are incarcerated. They may write to us as graders, "What would you recommend? What can you do to help me?" So Norma and I have the task of trying to give some encouragement. It may take us an hour to do one paper. We try to use the Scriptures. We try to help them fight their battles. Most of us here, because of our upbringing, face

battles that are quite different from those in prison that I have described. We may even feel, "We have it made. We're on the Lord's team. We're on His side—the winning side."

Some of these men and women have accepted the Savior, but they're starting at a different point because many of them have little background experience in Christian living. So we try to encourage them because they have been overcome time and again by a very real enemy, Satan. A man wrote recently, "I had a family. I got out and couldn't handle it. I went back to drinking and lost everything." He knows he lost the battle because of his own wrong responses.

Our greatest battle is here--within each of us. What is out there affects me, but I must face what's in here. Why do we have church troubles and family troubles? It's not because of Iraq or Afghanistan! It's because of the struggle going on in here.

At one point I was involved in helping a number of other congregations. This helped me to see myself as I see others. As I pondered these things, I have often gone to Genesis 4, where I see the "Cain/Abel Syndrome." In that situation there was unfairness and envy. Anger! Violence! Death! Curse! It was definitely a downward trend! In our own constituency sometimes when there is a parting of the ways the same things (except death) are

involved. We deal with church splits, trouble on the bench, problems in families, and personal struggles.

Deacon Glen Miller and brother-in-law Sam Bontrager from Woodlawn Church are working exclusively with our Old Order friends, men and women, who come to Oaklawn for counseling care. They are kept very busy. Many people seem to get wounded in the battle of life. Any chosen life style is subject to some battles. It is amazing what's happening: All kinds of abuse. Broken homes. Families in turmoil. Churches in strife. Glen and Sam have dealt with entire congregations.

What might be some of the reasons for conflict among us? When it's others, we tend to think it's because of ill will or hatred. When it's me, "It's because I am standing for righteousness and truth and doctrine. I can't go along with it any more! I must take a stand for principle. I don't want blood on my hands. I must get this thing right." There is probably some truth in all of these reasons. But when it comes to problems on the bench, I wonder how often it actually is about doctrine. Is it not usually about personalities? We can make all kinds of excuses. There may be personal injury, such as, "I don't have any personal voice in the matter; I'm going to make myself heard." Not long ago, someone in leader-

ship was dealing with a situation in which some people wanted to leave the church. Abruptly they decided not to leave. They said, "We're going to stay and fight! We will prove our point!" Offenses! Personal injury! "I will be heard."

"What about the future of our families? It is for my children's sake. I must get out of here." My wife and I are not strangers to such thinking. In 1961 we made such a move. We didn't want to expose our family to what we were exposed in growing up. I say that with all due regard to our parents who were fine, Christian people. We loved both of them. But I could tell you some horror stories of things done in near innocence in our courtship. So we went to Woodlawn. I have never been sorry about that. We also know that it didn't solve all our problems. We now have one son who is not attending church. He is "a good fellow." He is a gifted person and likes to come home, but he didn't stay with the church. We often give his name for prayer in our Wednesday evening meeting.

What is the Gospel of peace? It is the fruit of the Spirit. It is a gift of God. Paul's writings often mention peace. Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God..." It is an inner quality of the mind and spirit. Romans 8:6 says, "But to be carnally minded is

death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 14:17 says, “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” It is a controlling motive of life in moral and spiritual matters. It is a wholesome fear of displeasing God. It is a right relationship with God and man in every area of life.

The Gospel of peace must come in this order: peace with God (thus, peace within ourselves); then, peace with others.

In standing for peace, we need to stand for the reputation of God. Someone has said, “The world will believe in peace only when the church demonstrates that peace is possible.” They can rightly say, “Oh, yes, you’re non-resistant, but what’s happening in your church?” If we are fighting and carrying on, they won’t believe we are non-resistant. It does not win the battle to which we are called.

Conflicts among the people of God bring shame and a dark shadow upon the work of Christ. Jesus was very clear that we are to convince the world of who we are [and who He is] in John 13:35: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

“Stand in the face of adversity. It may be the chastening of the Lord.” (Simon Schrock) Just because you run away from discipline does not

mean that you have run away from the fire. Oftentimes it is the fire of the Lord who is trying to get our attention. Sometimes we need to take it patiently, even though it’s difficult for our sinful nature, especially if we would naturally come out swinging. I might blame my mom. She was Swiss and they speak frankly. It has been difficult for me to learn to stand up and yet shut up.

Stand in the cross. Philippians 2:5-11 shows us how. The battle is in our hearts. This is why our sisters are just as much involved as the brothers are. Many times, when there are problems in the church, the sisters talk too much. In one congregation I was asked to help with there seemed to be lots of problems on the bench. One thing I suggested was that in ministers’ meetings the wives would not be there. After that, things began to settle down.

Some pointers: (From Francis Schaeffer, on how to handle personal conflicts)

- Never come to differences with other Christians without genuine regret and tears.

- Consciously demonstrate a see-able love for others.

- Be ready to suffer personal loss in order to win others.

- Go with a genuine desire to solve a problem rather than to win the argument.

•Join hands with brothers and sisters to strengthen our appeal for peace.

Let us note the three R's of the peacemaker: Repentance, restoration and reconciliation.

In repentance, we must be willing to own our wrongs. We must be willing to say, "I was wrong," ask for mercy and maintain a sincere spirit of humility. When we go make peace and set wrongs straight, people can tell what spirit we come in. If we come with a chip on our shoulder, we will not be effective.

In restoration, genuine forgiveness is the goal, saying in essence, "You are set free; I will assume the load, the inconvenience, and the shame." Thus we set the person free and restoration can take place. As in the case of the prodigal son in Luke 15, there is celebration in being found. In reconciliation, someone said that carrying "mutton over the mountain" is not very poetic but it is necessary.


I find inspiration from 2 Corinthians 5:18. "...God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation." John Howard Yoder wrote: "The Gospel of peace is that all men being loved of God are also loved by me." So the good news is: the war is over!

Peter Miller lived near Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in the time of the

Revolutionary War. Michael Wiedeman, who lived close by, was a super patriot. He harassed Peter Miller and his non-resistant friends. Michael and his friends burned down Peter's barn and destroyed his horses, cattle and other personal property. Peter did not retaliate. The war went on and Wiedeman was accused of being a British spy. When Peter Miller heard that, he walked 73 miles, because he no longer had a horse, to Valley Forge to appeal to George Washington for the life of Michael Wiedeman. When Peter had presented his case, George Washington said, "I would gladly dismiss the charges against your friend, but I cannot because there is evidence against him."

Peter responded, "He's not my friend; he is my bitterest enemy. I am here because I care about him and I believe the charges are false." He pled for Michael's life [and pardon was granted.—PLM]

We are Mennonites. We don't bless our boys to go and destroy the enemy. We stand for peace, but I raise the question tonight: Brother and sisters, are we peacemakers? If we are peacemakers, there will be peace.

Paul said, "**Finally brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you**" (2 Corinthians 13:11). 

# Freedom in Christ

Steven R. Kooistra, LaGrange, IN

**S**tand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)

My son bought a puppy that loves to wander the neighborhood. The neighbors have made it clear that the dog would be shot if caught on their property again.

Out of love for the puppy, we tied her up. There she spends her days longing to run free. The other day as I was petting her, I said, “You could run free if you just stayed home.” The absurdity of that statement hit me even as I was saying it, but it is true that “there is freedom in law.” The puppy could have the run of our property and a wonderful relationship with our family if she would stay within the confines of the property.


In our Christian life we may feel like we are on a chain. The church’s standards, traditions, and expectations seem to tie us up into a joyless spirituality. Some call it a yoke of bondage. The truth is that a church’s

restrictions that are based on scriptural principle are designed in love to keep us “home” when our natural tendency is to wander into sin.

Christ has set the boundaries of His kingdom in abundant places. We, as children, are free to explore every inch of that kingdom. We can relax in our relationship with Him and with each other. However, we violate that freedom when we step outside the boundaries. He sanctifies us and calls us to separated living inside His kingdom.

Even if our dog were trained to stay on our property we would still sometimes need to chain her. The church’s expectations must exist in the freedom of Christ. We submit to the church’s restrictions out of love for the Lord, the church, and brothers and sisters in Christ. In love there is no bondage, just the privilege of relationships—the “home” of community.

There is freedom in the law of Christ.

[From *Beside the Still Waters*, August 31, 2008. Used by permission.] 

**The best time to read the Bible is every day.**

## *Persecution in Today's World*

*Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA*

Unregenerate society is not friendly to God or His people. There is a conflict between blood-washed saints and the unbelieving world. We have different goals, purposes and eternal destiny from that of the world. In America, we have had many years of religious freedom. However, this is not the case in many lands across our troubled world. And we don't know how long we will continue to have this freedom.

“Persecute” means “to afflict or harass constantly so as to injure or distress; oppress cruelly.” (Webster) It carries these ideas: “to follow after; suffer; to drive away.” (Strong) Indeed, God's children have suffered from the cruel reproaches and sharp arrows of persecution since the fall of our first parents.

Jealousy is murderous. “...Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous” (1 John 3: 3:12).

Jesus described the situation this way, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you...If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;...” (John 15:19, 20).

“Two members of Gideons International were arrested in Florida for handing out Bibles on a public sidewalk. The charges against them were dismissed, but the authorities have again brought charges against them under a different statute. Are we ready to be persecuted for the cause of Christ? And even doing things that make Satan want to persecute us?” (*Sword and Trumpet*, July, 2007).

“The Assyrian International News Agency reported that a 14-year-old boy, Ayad Tariq, was working at his job in Baqouba, Iraq, maintaining an electrical generator, when a group of Muslim insurgents walked in and asked him if he was ‘a Christian sinner.’ Ayad responded, ‘Yes, I am a Christian, but I am not a sinner.’ The



Muslims yelled at him, 'Dirty Christian sinner!' they grabbed him by all four limbs and beheaded him while yelling 'Allahu akbar! Allahu Akbar! Allah is great!' (*Sword and Trumpet*, January, 2007).

According to <http://www.persecution.inchristian;AsiaNews.it>, Hindu militants used Christians' Christmas celebrations of 2007 as an excuse to launch a large-scale attack on Christians across Orissa state in India. It was reported earlier this year that 95 churches and 730 Christian's homes were burned. Hundreds of families were displaced to refugee camps. Many were forced to Hinduism. In one church in Jargi village, 41 of 45 families in the church converted. Hindus forced many to drink cow urine—a Hindu initiation rite. This wave of destruction and persecution has rapidly spread to other states.

On January 16, 2008, some 100 Hindus attacked 2500 Christians who were holding an open-air meeting. They beat them mercilessly with swords and clubs and lobbed petrol bombs, burning their tent to the ground.

A more recent attack occurred on September 14, 2008. The All India Christian Council reported: "In Orissa, 50,000 Christians were dis-

placed. Thirty-five people were killed, including two pastors (other figures were higher), and over 4,000 Christian homes were destroyed by arson."

According to other reports, over 27,000 are living in refugee camps, in very primitive conditions worsened by heavy rains. Diarrhea and disease have already begun to spread. Large numbers of believers have been forced from their homes with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. They have fled into the forests but are not allowed to return to their homes unless they renounce Christ. A Mennonite organization is sending individuals into these places with cash (to send supplies is not advisable due to security risks) to buy food and water. Authorities have falsely accused Christian leaders of bribing people to become Christians. The chief government official of Karnataka is quoted as saying, "If Christians would stop converting, this would not be happening!" While the authorities keep on talking about forced conversions, they are not able to validate their accusations with any substantial proof.

These trials certainly remind us of the words in Hebrews 11:38, "Of whom the world was not worthy;

they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”

Missionaries are asking supporting churches to pray and stand with our brothers and sisters in India:

- Intercede for the protection and health of believers

- Pray for the violence to stop and for peace to reign.

- Pray that the believers would show the way of Jesus as they pray for their enemies.

- Pray that the perpetrators would come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.



## helpers at home

### *An Attitude of Gratitude*

*Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC*

**B**eginning the day with an attitude of gratitude sets the course of action not only for me but also for my family. I can awaken with a whole list of things to complain about or I can begin the day with a spirit of thankfulness for the good gifts God has given me. Life is not always easy or fair. If it were always fair, no one would need to experience hunger, abuse, homelessness, war and other tragedies. I do not know why God has chosen to place me in a country of prosperity, given me a family that loves and cares for me, or the opportunity to be a Christian. As I begin to count my blessings, the list is endless. God has blessed me with so much; does He hold me

more accountable?

Several years ago, we were at our oldest son's house in Buffalo, New York, for Thanksgiving Day. Their family is involved in a ministry to refugees and had invited one of the families to share Thanksgiving Day with us. Many of these dear people come from refugee camps in war-torn countries and arrive in the United States with not much more than the clothes on their backs. After we had enjoyed a delicious turkey dinner together, our son looked at Abdulum (not his real name) and said, "Abdulum, you have been in the U.S. now for one year, can you tell us what has impressed you the most in this time?"

I expected to hear him express

gratitude for all the material things he had received. However, Adulum thought a little then he said, “The lack of time to pray has been our greatest struggle. We work hard and long to pay our bills but we don’t like we did in Ethiopia. When I get down on my knees I think of other things I must do so I jump up and my wife tells me, ‘Abdulum, get back down and pray more.’” He went on to say how people tell him what he must teach his children, how they must be potty trained, when they must begin to talk and walk and it makes him feel weary to do everything that is expected of him. I have thought a lot about that conversation and I wonder if in our country of plenty we have forgotten how to pray and have lost perspective on what really is important. Does our business come from worrying about things that really do not matter? Do we long for more rather than being grateful for the bounty with which God has blessed us?

### **How Can I Develop an Attitude of Thankfulness?**


Remember to refuel. We must spend time in God’s word and develop a meaningful prayer life so our spirits can be renewed and refueled. Taking time to study and applying the Word to our daily problems and concerns enables us to meet the challenges of the day. Interceding for oth-

ers in prayer not only blesses those we pray for, but changes our attitudes and gives us a spirit of gratitude for our blessings.

Stay focused. Many times we become so bogged down with all that we have to do each day that we forget to focus on *why* and *for whom* we’re really doing it. We do all for the glory of God and for those we love, whom God has entrusted to our care. Many times, thinking about our workload is worse than actually doing it.

Count your blessings. Try thinking positive thoughts. Make a list of your blessings. Look at the list whenever you’re tempted to be negative. Compare with those who have less than you do. Sing as you work. Write out verses of thanksgiving. The Psalms are full of them. Express your thankfulness to others.

Regain the wonder. Look at life through the eyes of a child. Regain the wonder of life. There is much to enjoy. Learn to find pleasure and contentment in your daily work, your home and those you love. Tell them you love them. Enjoy what you are doing and do things you enjoy. Learn to relax even if not everything is perfect. Be yourself. God created you with a plan and a purpose.

May your thanksgiving celebrations be the expression of a heart overflowing with gratitude. 

## Does Jesus Love Me?

Anita Yoder, Ligonier, IN

I've been singing "Jesus Loves Me" songs as long as I can remember, but I seem to have a hard time believing that Jesus actually likes me. I'm not the quiet type. More than the other sixth graders, I do things that get me into trouble. So for that I often get disapproving looks from the teacher, as well as from my classmates.

I know that Jesus died on the cross for my sins and all that. I'm ashamed of how envious I've been of others who can always act right. I've been noticing that the harder I try, the worse it gets.

The other day, I was reading to my niece. As she paged through the Bible story book, she happened to stop at the picture of Jesus at the Last Supper. "Look! Who's that man leaning on Jesus? Is he His favorite?"

"That's John, I believe," I answered.

She studied the picture for a long time. "I'd like to be somebody's favorite, wouldn't you?" she asked.

I turned to the next page and changed the subject. Yet, I couldn't

help thinking about it. John must not have had my type of personality. Later in Sunday School, our class was noting the disciples' argument about who would have prominence in His kingdom. Even one of the mothers joined in. Jesus rebuked them for their pride and mistaken ideas.

Then I raised my hand and asked, "Then how did John become His beloved disciple?" A good discussion followed. Our teacher explained that John apparently was related to Jesus. Jesus had called James and John "The Sons of Thunder," indicating an honest relationship. The more frankly personal Jesus was with John, the more John could trust Jesus to tell him the truth.

Maybe I can believe that it's alright for Jesus to see the parts of my personality that I dislike. I shall be confident and honest with Jesus. Could it be that by admitting and confessing my unsanctified feelings to Jesus that that in itself opens the way for me to find assurance that Jesus likes me? In that case, I know I love Him.



*Dear Youth,*

A youth reader asks a good question this month about our level of anticipation for meeting with the people of God.

Church attendance can be more than a duty. Church attendance should be a delight.

But...delighting in church attendance is not necessarily a good thing. Many people throughout history have delighted in religious activity but have done so from totally self-serving motives. In Isaiah 58:1, God says, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression..."

Then in the next verse God observes this about the Israelites, "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to

know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching God..."

A minister recently made this thoughtful remark: "The older I get the more convinced I am that any activity not motivated by love is not worth doing!"

As you read over this month's responses, consider what motivates you to stay away from the people of God as well as what motivates you to drive those few (or many) miles for another meeting at church.

Thank you to this month's contributors. —EE

*response from our readers ...*

*This month's question: (from a youth reader in Ohio)*

**Numerous Christians, especially in countries where persecution is prevalent, risk their lives to meet with other believers. Why do we so often not want to go to prayer meeting or even church on Sunday? What can we do to stimulate more desire and enjoyment for church services?**

*I have often wondered about this issue myself. Why do so many of us*

*almost never fail to show up for youth socials and sports events, but find it so easy to give an excuse for why we weren't at prayer meeting the other evening or the last Bible study? And why, do we not WANT to come to church? I'm afraid if we think church is boring, our spiritual life will tend to be kind of "boring" too.*

*If this happens, our priorities are most likely in the wrong place. God can and should be our top priority.*

*He is the sole reason the church exists. After all He did for us, we should be overjoyed to come to church with other fellow believers to praise and worship Him.*

*I wonder how all this looks to God. He is longing to bless us and fill us, and yet we don't want to come because we think it's boring or because we think we have something more important or more interesting to do. It makes me feel kind of sad just to think about it.*

*So what can we do? The first thing we can do is re-arrange our priorities and put God at the top of the list. If we truly have Him first in our lives and keep His commandments, we will almost certainly want to go to church.*

*Travis Mast, Strawberry, AR*



When we do not have time or the desire to go to church, it may mean that we are saying we don't need the brotherhood. We can live a Christian life by ourselves. But, as a matter of fact, we cannot.

Work can prevent us from going because we think our work is more important than the things of God. This is a dangerous state to be in because we need the brethren to help us in our Christian life. I believe if I wouldn't go to church, I would lose out in my Christian life. I get a boost when I go to church. And, not only that, I also need to be there for the church and the brotherhood. They need us just as much as we need

them.

What can we do to stimulate more desire and enjoyment for church services? We, first of all, can pray to God for desire to go to church. We can go to church even if we don't feel like going. We must make time to go, otherwise we will lose out in our Christian life.

In Hebrews 10:25, we see that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as some do, but we are to exhort (build up) one another and especially so as we see the day of our Lord Jesus Christ approaching .

*Lill King, Parksburg, PA*



*Could it be that we do not have enough love for each other as a church body? Maybe we do not have enough love for God and his Word. I believe that if we as Christians are truly sincere about living our lives for God, we will desire to be among other Christians. We will have a thirst for fellowship with other believers.*

*Some people go to church because of tradition. It's a good tradition, but not a good enough reason for going! Do I go to church expecting a blessing from God, to be enriched spiritually, and with a desire to encourage my friends? Do I go with the spirit of humility and meekness, willing to let God change something in my life?*

*Persecuted Christians get together not because of tradition, peer pressure, or for fun. They must do it for a very worthwhile reason, if they are willing*

*to die for their faith. I think it all comes down to one point: Do I love Jesus? Really love Him?*

*Amy Gingerich, Leon, IA*

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Is church still church? The early followers of Christ established churches for teaching, for fellowship and encouragement, for the observation of communion, and for prayer. (Acts 2:42)

Throughout the New Testament more purposes for the church are given, such as: ministering to the needy, and most importantly, spreading the good news of the Gospel to the lost (James 1:27; Acts 1:8).

1 Corinthians 12 refers to the global church as being God's body. In essence, the church should be doing what Jesus would be doing if He were physically on earth. How many of these things are actually happening in our churches today? Is church still church?

*Christopher Miller, Millersburg, OH*

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*If we don't want to go to church, we aren't focusing on God anymore. We've turned that focus on us and what we want for ourselves.*

*We put what we want first instead of what God would want. We've taken the whole church togetherness for granted. We have our priorities messed up and the only way to fix that is to dig into God's Word and study*

*it and we will find the desire to go to church to learn more about him and to worship Him. Also getting enough sleep Saturday night would help our wakefulness on Sunday morning. The author of Hebrews warns us to "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together..."*

*"To neglect Christian meetings is to give up the encouragement and help of other Christians. We gather together to share our faith and strengthen one another in the Lord. As we get closer to the day when Christ will return, we will face many spiritual struggles and even persecution. Difficulties should never be excuses for missing church services. Rather as difficulties arise, we should make an even greater effort to be faithful in attendance." (Taken from the Life Application Bible)*

*Melissa Hostetler, Utica, OH*

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Life for us is too easy and too busy. It's easy to have the attitude that church is just another activity that can be skipped "if something more important comes up." If we do not enjoy spending time alone with God, we probably won't enjoy spending time worshipping God with other Christians. I think it is a personal choice. We can choose to enjoy church or we can choose to be lazy and get as little as possible out of going church.

*Aaron Mast, Las Delicias, El Salvador*



# THOUGHT GEMS

Think what others ought to be like; then live like that.



Be careful about choosing your friends and even more careful about changing them.



Be like the tea kettle: When it's up to its neck in hot water, it still sings.



Parents who start child training by giving in may later come to the place of giving up.



If your Christianity doesn't work where you are, it won't work where you're going.



It's not what's in your wallet that makes you thankful; it's what's in your heart.



Be thankful in times of difficulty; a knife is not sharpened on a piece of velvet.



Gratitude is the spring from which most other virtues flow.



A grateful heart has good manners.



Friendship is hardy; it grows in adverse circumstances.

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