



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

Galatians 6:14

DECEMBER 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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They Can't Come Home for Christmas

Sadie King, Mifflin, PA

"They can't come home for Christmas,"
A mother sighs and stands.
She looks out through the window,
A tea-towel in her hands.

She tries to hide her feelings;
She's looking far down the lane,
And remembers how she's longed all year,
It seems to have been in vain.

Singing songs and reminiscing,
It's all so right and good.
The grand and glorious feeling,
The love, the warmth, the food!

"They can't come for Christmas,"
The clock now seems to know.
It's tickin' sad and slow,
"They're not a comin', No!"

And so returning from her gaze
The mother bakes some more.
Of pumpkin bread and pies and treats,
Like she'd have guests galore.

Her heart is fixed,
Her desire is not for herself.
She'd rather please the Master,
And seek another's wealth.


Her neighbor friend who's there, alone,
Whose house is dark and still.
Will welcome her and not refuse
When she her cup does fill.

So if your family's grown and gone,
Off to some distant shore,
They've gone to tell some precious souls
About the Savior's love once more.

And though your guests at home are few,
This special time of year,
Just rest assured the Master knows
And sees each falling tear.

And so we pray that God will bless
The seeds that have been sown,
That hearts be touched and souls be won,
That far and near His will be done.

May we then give our hearts anew
To Christ, the King of Kings,
He left His home to give His life.
Our life, our all to Him we bring.

Then when the tempter tries his best
God's work to criticize,
Through faith in Jesus we will win,
And meet "our family" in the skies. 

Out of Darkness into Light

As we come to the shortest day of the year in the northern hemisphere, we also approach Christmas. On December 21, when the days begin to lengthen, a splendid foreshadowing of good news occurs: It's Christmas time!

In winter, darkness dominates the land. Just three months before Christmas, on September 21, we pass fall equinox which gives us equal time for day and night. While early fall days are often mild, they get steadily shorter and we note in November and December that the warmth of the sun and the long, bright days of the summer are slipping farther and farther away. Winter's cold, dark nights keep tightening their grip.

Finally, on December 21, the sun passes directly over the Tropic of Capricorn and begins its trek back north. Four days later (some would place it on January 6, which makes it 16 days after winter solstice), we commemorate the most remarkable birth on Planet Earth. Even though the exact date of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem seems to be lost in antiquity, the impact of his birth is so important it seems appropriate to pause and thank God for it.

This is not a discussion of how to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is, however, a plea not to let His birth become commonplace or to make it of equal importance to yours and mine.

I regularly give my birth date when I report to the doctor's office. Apparently they are making sure that the right Paul Miller is applying for treatment. That's understandable. In many ways, however, the time of my natural birth seems quite insignificant.

However, the fact of the birth of Jesus Christ is of monumental importance! Just think about several differences for us if He had not come:

- The mess of human sin would have no clean-up plan.
- We would end life with a scream of terror or a moan of despair.
- We could have no hope for heaven or a brighter tomorrow.

But He did come! For those who believe in Him, the grave has lost its paralyzing dread. We accept Jesus' love and provision for salvation. We live in the hope of His coming again. We realize that even though we may face sufferings and life-threatening difficulties, none of these can take away our

prospects for heaven, that beautiful home Jesus has prepared for all those who yield their lives to Him.

No, my birthday is not very important. When I think of my arrival as a baby, I do appreciate, however, the fact that my parents welcomed me into their depression-era family when they already had nine children. I ponder with appreciation the fact that neither parent smoked, drank, or used harmful drugs. I'm glad, too, that they didn't turn a blind eye when I was naughty. And I'm especially grateful that my parents had a family altar every day in which we read the Word of God and prayed together.

As I look back, I think my second birthday (the new birth) has greater significance than my first birthday. In my fifteenth year, when the night of sin pressed upon me, I turned to Jesus. Then His light fell on my path and set me on a path of joy. Surely, nothing can take away the significance of that life-changing decision!

“Oh, what a wonderful, wonderful day,

Day I will never forget.

*After I'd wandered in darkness away,
Jesus my Savior I met.*

Oh, what a tender, compassionate friend,

He met the need of my heart;

Shadows dispelling, with joy I am telling,

He made all the darkness depart.


Heaven came down and glory filled my soul,

When at the cross the Savior made me whole.

My sins were washed away and my night was turned to day.

Heaven came down and glory filled my soul.”

-John W. Peterson

Just as God's special star guided the wise men to Jesus, so the Good News of Jesus' birth (as well as His teachings and healings, His suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and His coming again) lights the pathway we must take to find Jesus! When we find Him, we discover that He was keeping track of us the whole time we were looking for Him. Hallelujah! —PLM 

It's easier to form good habits than
to reform bad ones.

Re: DLM's Style of Writing, Observations, (Oct., p. 19)

In my opinion, the criticism was unnecessary.

Leona Troyer, Plain City, OH

• • • • •

Dear David,

I have often thought to send you a word of appreciation for timely comments and/or news items as a faithful contributor to *Calvary Messenger*. "Observations" is usually the first item of interest for me when this little periodical arrives. In case you don't understand, I like it.

I understand very well what you write. A writer's efforts are not only words strung together; they are a part of your "signature." For example, we recognize the writings of C. S. Lewis and A. W. Tozer by their own unique style.

For that matter, each of the New Testament writers presented the Word of God by inspiration, yet somehow God was satisfied to have the flavor of each writer's personality come through in the way they wrote. Note the Gospel of Matthew, written by a Jew to his own. He stresses the law and yet includes Jesus' call to a higher court, "but I say unto you." Luke the physician writes with the warmth of a family doctor and presents the altogether human side of Jesus.

For contrast, check the writing of

Peter: short, choppy sentences written by an unlearned (i.e., uneducated) fisherman versus the writing of Paul "a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee" educated and it shows in the way he wrote—long, flowing sentences. Was either one less inspired because his writing style differed? I doubt it. I'm quite sure both are of equal value.

As to the charge of lacking simplicity, are we to write in the form of our first Alice and Jerry primers? (Like, "Look, Alice, look; See Jerry run.") A. W. Tozer in *The Set of the Sail*, had something to say about our institutions of higher learning and their efforts of making clones out of individuals. Uniformity was their goal, at all costs. He used the legend of the Greek bandit, Procrustes as an example. Procrustes made his victims lie on a certain bed. If they were too short, he stretched them. If they were too long, he lopped them off. Old Procrustes would have uniformity, regardless.

Tozer says, "I am forced to conclude that some persons cannot profit from their educational opportunities beyond providing them with a few items of information they might not otherwise acquire; a college course does them little good. Their years of enforced study leave them without wisdom. Yet our educators continue to apply their Procrustean ruler to each new generation, stretching and cutting till they achieve a uniformity Mother Nature obviously never intended."

Regarding forthrightness, I'm assuming he misinterpreted your gentle tact and courteous manner for a lack of forthrightness. Does he suggest a subjective approach from an opinionated old man?

Be assured that your efforts are appreciated and your writing understood.

Your friend,

Jerry Yoder, Auburn, KY

• • • • •

In response to the Observations column. I have been reading those for many years and I enjoy them very much. Your writing is well understood and I would have no suggestions!

Maybe college life and farm life are quite different. The fact of not being critical is a blessing in itself. When you get the point across, what more

do people want?

Please keep writing.

In Christian love,

Edward Hilty, Gladys, VA

• • • • •

My good friend,

Well, just keep on writing. Your Observations column is and has been very forthright and well-worded reading.

I confess to being a little annoyed by your occasional reader's comments. May I suggest that he should seek something more rewarding to do?

On the plus side, the countryside is turning very beautiful. The trees are turning and God's handiwork is seen all around.

Pray for me and God bless you,

Adin Kaufman

(97 years old)

New Philadelphia, OH



ANNOUNCEMENT

YOUR PRAYERS, PLEASE!

Floyd Stoltzfus, principal of Calvary Bible School at Calico Rock, Arkansas, requests the prayers of this readership. The faculty and staff earnestly desire our prayers for wisdom and strength for the new term of Bible School. They look to God as they teach and inspire our young people.

The 2009 term starts on December 29, 2008, and is to include three terms (12 weeks) of Bible study, fellowship, discipleship, and progress in the Lord. This request includes also the challenge of staying well, of noting the needs of the whole CBS family and of bringing glory to Jesus Christ as more than 100 people daily live in close togetherness.

It is encouraging to note this request and to realize that these valiant workers in God's vineyard undertake their work in the strength of the Lord. Let us remember to pray for them. **Our prayers are an investment in the church of today and tomorrow!**

—PLM

ANNOUNCEMENT

“Would you be willing to join forces in making sure the patients can receive the medicines they need so badly?” (Quote from Dr. Jana Nisly, AMA Mission Clinic in El Resbaladero, El Salvador)

Please notify the LaVerne Millers if you are traveling to El Salvador (or Guatemala), and could possibly take medical supplies along for the clinic. The Millers are willing to ship them to travelers anywhere in the U.S. if sufficient time is allowed for shipment.

We're not asking travelers to leave other important items at home to carry these supplies, but would like for travelers to take them, who would otherwise bring less than their allotted one-hundred pounds of checked luggage. The clinic will reimburse the travelers if there are luggage fees incurred in taking these items.

**LaVerne and Rebecca Miller • 13807 W. Illinois Ave.
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Fond Memories of an Old Coat

John Swartz, Petersburg, WV

It was blue. I don't mean it was sad. Although it may have made folks sad to look at it. At least my wife sort of thought so. More about that later.

Blue isn't a bad color. But old tends to be. Maybe I should start at the beginning.

A dear old brother died. He had this coat of one color that had served him well for many years. Too good to throw away, his widow was sure. But none of the neighbors cared for it. Knowing my tendencies, they offered it to me.

I gladly accepted. A long coat.

Below my knees. It even came with a bonus. In each pocket was a large, worn mitten, easily remedied by my wife's patching skills.

It served me well for years. Warm, cozy, and reassuring against West Virginia mountain bluster. Wind, however strong, just couldn't penetrate. A friend told me the fabric was probably ironwool, whatever that is. Sounds right.

It never wore out. But its welcome did. The Bible says husbands are to love their wives. So one day I made a little fire outside and burned it, ironwool and all.


I still miss it. Wish I could have at least sent it to Romania. But it was far too used for that. Although it surely would have kept somebody warm.

That was years ago. But I got to thinking about this recently. What was the problem with this blue coat? Looks. It rated A-1 in functionality. But we as a people have the money to buy what is esteemed proper, even if what we already have is serviceable.

I suppose you'd prefer my reminiscing not to end in moralizing. But

it sort of bugs me. I wonder if we wear out a tenth of our clothes before we get or make something new to stay in style, look "nice," or maybe just for that satisfied feeling.

My current long, warm coat, probably a few-dollar deal from a used clothing store, has moth-eaten designs on the sleeve. My wife still loves me. And vice versa. Maybe another fire—sometime.

[Submitted for publication by Elmer D. Glick, Slanesville, WV.] 

The Impact of Video Technology—Part One

(On the Church and the Christian Home)

Henry Blank, Madison, VA

[from a message preached at Faith Mission Fellowship, Free Union Virginia, Submitted by Nathan J. Yoder]

I will focus on the impact of visual images that are available in several types of technology. Not everything I say is inspired, but I want it to be Spirit-led. I will quote from different sources, some of which are non-Christian. It is interesting what the world has to say about technology.

Some positive aspects of video technology

I think documentary-type DVDs and films about the lives of missionaries and other notable characters are worth watching. Bible stories dramatized and brought to life offer value. Others show important events

in history, science presentations like Moody Bible science films, and other good films. There is even good fictional drama out there, even though this has limited value. Christian teaching on video series holds great potential for good. (Examples: marriage, evangelism, and others) Are good videos to be used for relaxation? Possibly so.

I respect those who do not use them because of all the difficulties in finding only good material. I have sometimes also wondered if it's worth all the trouble of deciding what's good enough to use. I have decided that, if it's handled carefully, it can

be a useful resource for a Christian church and its homes.

The Negatives

I will actually spend more time on the negative aspects:

For one reason, the positive is easy to see. The negative is much more subtle and harder to see. Searching through the vast amount of video technology that's out there, can be a treacherous mine field.

Malcolm Muggeridge had a long career in the media and came to Christ later in life. He wrote the book, *Christ in the Media*. He said, "The media have indeed provided the devil with perhaps the greatest opportunity accorded to him since Adam and Eve were turned out of the Garden of Eden." I think he's right. The media gives the devil access to Christian homes and lives of Christians and churches. Most of the videos available today come from Satan's turf (secular media and Hollywood productions, for example), unless we're talking about Christian films, of course.

I am concerned about the naiveté of Christians in approaching this subject with carelessness, perhaps, and asking, "What's wrong with it?" "It's just a film." Or, "It's just entertainment and good fun." These are things we must *not* say. We as Christians must recognize the tremendous power the media wields in shaping our value systems and our world

views. If we refuse to acknowledge that, I'd say we're in big trouble. I use the term "media" to refer to more than just newspapers, radio and television, but the whole array of visual, electronic technology available to us. This includes television, computers, internet, videos, iPods, the new smart phone, video cassettes (now nearly extinct), DVD's, (now being replaced by the Blue Ray), and much more that is undoubtedly on the horizon. So I refer to all the visual media.

We may say that TV doesn't affect us, but now all of what has been on TV can be accessed on one's computer with high-speed internet. The same thing can be said for some of the new cell phones. I see significant differences between having DVD and having commercial or cable television. For one thing, it is easier to control the content of a DVD. If you turn on a TV, you put yourself at the mercy of the programmers and the advertisers, with all kinds of immorality, immodesty, and sensuality hitting you through the commercials. The programs are skillfully designed to keep you watching for the rest of the story, after the commercial, or the next time the program is on. In these ways it is harder to control the content of television. It is easier to screen and regulate a DVD.

If we use technology for business purposes, we might ask, "Is it more

important to get ahead in business, or to spend time with our families?” And: “What if spending time with my family cuts into my profits? Which is more important?” Depending on one’s value system, he will answer those questions differently.

Our values may be compared to a pair of glasses. For example, an atheist’s “glasses” cause him to look at the same world we do, but he sees things quite differently, because he has a different world view. We see the work of a God Who created the heavens and the earth. The atheist doesn’t. The media is relentlessly telling us in a hundred different ways about what is acceptable, what is beautiful, what is important, what is true and what is worthwhile—and *what is not*. I would argue that all of us are susceptible to this kind of influence, according to how much we expose ourselves to it.

Alpha and Beta Waves

Our brains generate and operate with measurable electric current, (perhaps up to 10 watts). Four different types of electric waves are produced as your brain is functioning. Two of these, called brain waves, are the *beta wave* and the *alpha wave*. *Beta waves in the brain are produced when the brain is in an active state. When we are in a relaxed or meditative state, researchers tell us the brain produces alpha waves.*

An article published in 2007 theo-

rizes why television is so powerful in shaping how people think. In 1969 Herbert Krugmann, an educational researcher, monitored a person through many trials and found that after less than one minute of television viewing, the person switched from alpha waves (passive) to primarily beta (active) waves when he picked up a magazine and started reading. These researchers observed that too much time spent in the low alpha wave state inherent in watching TV can cause unfocused daydreaming and inability to concentrate. Researchers have also said that watching television is similar to staring at a blank wall for several hours. This is sometimes referred to as “brain fog,” which can come from prolonged watching of any video technology. We may notice it when we need to shake our heads to get back to reality after such a time. Researchers tell us that at those times our brain waves have changed to the alpha wave state. I have found from personal experience that this passive state is less pronounced when I watch educational or documentary films than when I watch a drama in which characters act out a story and I get caught up in the emotional aspects of the story. I think that is so because our brain waves tend to go into a deeper alpha state in such situations.

This earlier research also indicates that most of the brain parts responsi-

ble for logical thought tune out (after about one minute) during television viewing. We need to think about the ramifications of that. Furthermore, the researchers have found that in the alpha wave state the brain is in a relaxed state that heightens suggestibility. This indicates that when we sit to watch a film of entertainment, our brain quickly goes into a more passive state and the part of our brains that is responsible for logical thought kind of shuts down and our minds move into a state where we're more easily influenced by the power of suggestion. Think about that! The part of us that is to take every thought into the obedience of Christ has mostly shut down. It's switched off and we become much more susceptible to subtle suggestions of what we are watching.

This research becomes even more powerful in the case of children, who naturally are very impressionable (open to suggestion). They imitate readily. This research says that our advertisers have known about this phenomenon for a long time. They know how to take advantage of this passive, suggestible brain state of the TV viewer. The advertisers don't need to use subliminal messages. The brain is already in a receptive state ready to absorb suggestions. Within just a few seconds of the television being turned on, all advertisers have to do is flash a certain brand across the screen in an

attempt to make the viewer associate the product with something positive. That is the frightening suggestibility TV delivers.

From that research let us look at some of the effects of video technology. Let us consider the educational value of a film. *I believe that DVD's and video films have very limited educational value.* I found out through my teaching experience that not much of what I wanted the students to learn happened when I showed them a film. I found that the facts I hoped the students would master were not mastered because they had mostly turned off logical thought. The truth is that reading a book is a much better way of retaining information, because when we read, our minds must be active. If the mind becomes passive, learning and logical thought slows down or stops.

Do videos have educational value? Yes, they do, but I have found that if we show a film to students and we want them to learn, an advance guide or work sheet yields much more learning.

Performance in School

How does video and television affect the child's performance in school? One thing researchers have found is that children who spend a lot of time in front of a television screen do not progress as well in school. The research is clear on that. It's not hard to see why. It is related to the

ability to concentrate. But what is even more alarming is that during the time span between infancy and age 12, while the child's brain is rapidly developing, lots of passivity alters the brain development of the child. The American Pediatric Association now actually recommends that children up to two watch **zero** minutes of videos, because it can be really harmful to brain development. After two years, they say from one to two hours a day, maximum, are permissible. For a parent to ignore that fact seems absolutely negligent and even sinful. These conclusions are based on the fact that when the brain goes into this passive, alpha wave state, it hinders the child's development of language and reasoning ability.

Not only does it affect them while they're watching, but also long term. These fast-moving images that allow children not to think actually demand that they do not think. If we decide that we should think while we are watching this film and if we stop and think while we do so, we miss what comes next. Thus we are not allowed to think or to ask questions. We must stay glued or we'll miss something. The net effect of prolonged exposure to video technology is training the child not to ask questions, which alters their ability to reason as they grow. How can we expect our children to read and study and comprehend God's Word and to

rightly divide the Word of Truth after they've been mostly exposed to video devices instead of books?

Boredom

Another problem with video technology is boredom. When we were children, we spent time outdoors. Our parents didn't buy a lot of toys. We improvised and made do with imaginative, creative toys. We find that today's child often is often not interested in outdoor activities, in general. Many children today would rather be inside playing a video game or watching a movie. They may be interested in making their own toys, but lack the needed creativity because they haven't been cultivating creative brain activity.

With these electronic devices, they quickly become bored. I see a definite link between videos and boredom. Why are they linked? Ann White in the article, "Turn off the TV; Turn on Life," said, "Many children have become habituated to television by their parents who desire a break from their children's activity and attention." If you have videos in your home, that is a tough one for you, especially mothers. When you're tired, it may be tempting to turn on some video and they will sit there mesmerized and transfixed for an hour and you don't have to worry about them. It is very difficult to balance in your home. White says further, "The short-term benefit of a quiet, mesmerized child

may actually lead to a greater dependence on adult supervision by creating children who are less capable of amusing themselves. By supplanting the imaginations, creating fast-paced pictures and transforming active minds into passive recipients, **TV teaches mental lethargy.** For a child raised on hourly doses of TV boredom is a common component of later childhood. In refusing to use TV during the pre-school years, many parents may save themselves from constantly having to create amusements for their children.”

So the visual images supplant the word pictures and make so the child does not need to use his imagination as he does when he reads a book. If the pictures are there, all he needs is to watch, while the mind is in an alpha state.

Control of Imagination

Ravi Zacharias, speaking from a Christian perspective, said about television, music and the imagination: “Two of the most powerful forces in the world today are music and television. Music and the visual have the capacity to bypass reason and go straight for the imagination. When you listen to something by word, your imagination remains sovereign on it. But when a picture is given to you that imagination becomes sovereign over you.” Zacharias further says, “If anyone can conquer

my imagination, he has conquered me. God has made us in His image and we are meant to be reflectors of that image. Instead we have allowed our imaginations to be assaulted by a multiplicity of stimuli today resulting in a triumph over the imagination. Appeals to the will and to reason are too direct and meet with autonomous pride and sensibility of each life. But appeals to the imagination can bypass the will and reason and hold captive the conscience. This is why music and television are such powerful forces that have the potential of circumventing the guardians of the soul.”

Conscience means “with knowledge.” When we have a conscience against something this means that our conscience has been informed with the knowledge that a certain thing is wrong. Our conscience can only be effective in keeping us from going into sin if our conscience has been correctly informed about right and wrong so that we are able to evaluate the thing in front of us in light of the knowledge we already have and we make an informed decision. That requires thinking and reasoning. What do you think happens to the conscience when the reasoning and thinking functions have been regularly turned off in front of a screen?

to be continued...

marriages

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

Brenneman-Yoder

Bro. Joseph, son of Henry and Vera Brenneman, Rochelle, VA, and Sis. Michelle, daughter of Glenn E. and Pauline Swartzentruber, Grantsville, MD, at Maranatha Church for Mt. View Mennonite Church, on Sept. 4, 2008, by Jerry Yoder.

Miller-Mast

Bro. James, son of Leroy and Carolyn Miller, Leitchfield, KY, and Sis. Robin, daughter of Jonathan and the late Margaret Mast, Bloomfield, MO, at First Baptist Church for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church on Sept. 5, 2008, by Melvin Troyer.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. Daryl, son of Freeman and Maudene Miller, Bloomfield, MO, and Sis. Kendra, daughter of Steve and Marilyn Yoder, Bloomfield, MO, at First Baptist Church for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church on August 15, 2008, by Melvin Troyer.

Schrock-Gingerich

Bro. Jonathan, son of Edna and the late Adlai Schrock, Colon, MI, and Sis. Myra, daughter of Melvin and Elsie Gingerich, Topeka, IN, at Woodlawn A.M. Church, Goshen, IN, on August 2, 2008, by Steve Miller.

Yoder-Frantz

Bro. Mark Anthony, son of Paul L. and Naomi Yoder, Oakland, MD, and Sis. Angela, daughter of Bradley and Diane Frantz at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church for Mt. View Mennonite Church on Sept. 6, 2008, by Jerry Yoder.

Yoder-Graber

Bro. Justin Allen, son of Truman and Marietta Yoder, Lincoln, MO, and Sis. Nettie Marie, daughter of Phil and Edith Graber, Seneca, SC, at Hopewell Baptist Church in Seneca, SC, for Foothills Mennonite Fellowship, on June 28, 2008, by Truman Yoder, the groom's father.

Yoder-Stoltzfus

Bro. Jacinto, son of Pablo and Eunice Yoder, Matagalpa, Nicaragua, and Sis. Kendra, daughter of Simon and Joyce Stoltzfus, Taylorsville, NC, at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church for Dayspring Christian Fellowship, Taylorsville, NC, Sept. 13, 2008, by Sanford Yoder.

Yoder-Wagler

Bro. Terry, son of Ivan and Rosemary Yoder, Lexington, IN, and Sis. Rachel, daughter of Bill and Janet Wagler, Summersville, KY, at First Baptist Church for Summersville Mennonite Church on October 3, 2008, by James Hershberger.

cradle roll

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

Barnhart, Matthew and Heidi (Keller), Lincoln, MO, third child, first dau., Cayla Joy, Mar. 24, 2008.

Beachy, Darrel and Joanna (Mast), Stanardsville, VA, third child, first dau., Jacquelyn Rae, Sept. 24, 2008.

Chupp, Daryl and Elaine (Nissley), Sturgis, MI, fifth child and dau., Aysia Delayne, Oct. 20, 2008.

Coblentz, Nathan and Regina (Hochstetler), Hicksville, OH, third child, second son, Cameron Grant, Sept. 12, 2008.

Eby, Ernest and Cathy (Horst), Mountain View, AR, first child and dau., Carmen Joy, Sept. 16, 2008.

Hostetler, Charles and Jessica (Keller), Lincoln, MO, second child and dau., Sarah Dawn, June 1, 2008.

Horning, Leon and Jennifer (Burkholder), Lincoln, MO, first child and son, Adrian Brent, April 12, 2008.

Kuhns, Tim and Joan (Schrock), Arcola, IL, twins: fourth and fifth children, second and third daughters, Sandra Dawn and Sonya Jewel, Oct. 3, 2008.

Lapp, Ed and Rita (Miller), Quaker City, OH, third child and dau., Madison Brooke, Oct. 7, 2008.

Miller, Lester and Twila (Gingerich), Middlebury, IN, fourth child, second dau., Alayna Marie, Sept. 23, 2008.

Miller, Lowell and Martha (Miller), Summersville, KY, first child and son, Ethan Robert, Oct.13, 2008.

Miller, Ronnie and Anne (Kuepfer), Quaker City, OH, eighth child, second son, Lincoln Bradley, Sept. 29, 2008.

Miller, Verlin and Sharon (Byler), Maysville, MO, first child and son, Derek Paul, Oct. 7, 2008.

Overholt, Ronald and Marcia (Schrock), Lincoln, MO, fourth child, third son, Landon Lariat, April 22, 2008.

Schrock, Donnie and Joanna (Yoder), Lincoln, MO, second child and dau., Shianne Brooke, Nov. 17, 2007.

Stoll, Marlin and Marietta (Miller), Summersville, KY, first child and son, Donovan Mark, Sept. 28, 2008.

Stoltzfus, Mervin and Katy (Troyer),

Advance, MO, first child and dau.,
Shawna Lynne, Oct. 10, 2008

Stutzman, Ethan and Julia (Miller),
Bloomfield, MO, second child, first son,
Kylan Jeremy, Sept. 18, 2008.

Swartzentruber, Lester and Miriam
(Brenneman), Chesapeake, VA, fifth
child, fourth dau., Monica Grace, Oct.
12, 2008.

Whitt, Lee and Miriam (Yoder),
Montezuma, GA, ninth child, fifth dau.,
Angela Grace, Sept. 23, 2008.

Yoder, Michael and Heather (Hender-
son), Aroda, VA, third child, second dau.,
Holly Lynn, Sept. 20, 2008.

Yoder, Truman and Marietta (Yoder),
Lincoln, MO, sixth child, second dau.,
Marianne Marie, Oct. 1, 2008.

o b i t u a r i e s

Renno, Sylvia N., 86, of Belleville, PA,
died on Oct. 2, 2008 at her home. She
was born at Belleville, Oct. 18, 1921,
daughter of the late David H. and Jemima
(Peachey) Renno.

She was a member of Valley View
A.M. Church.

Surviving is a sister, Sadie L. Stein, with


whom she was living. Also surviving are
many nieces and nephews. Sylvia did
housework for many people and was a
nursing assistant at Lewistown Hospital.
She will be missed by many because of
her kind ways, her gifts and for being a
prayer warrior in the church.

She was preceded in death by three
brothers: Pius K., David Rudy and At-
trenis J. Renno and one sister: Miriam
B. Peachey.

The funeral was held at Valley View
on Oct. 5, with Joseph Peachey and Ezra
Peachey ministering. The burial was in
Locust Grove Cemetery. Eli B. King, Jr.
was in charge of the committal.

Yoder, Durrel Lavon, 7, died from
injuries sustained in an auto accident at
Rochelle, GA, on July 26, 2008. He was
born Dec. 14, 2000, son of Brady and Lu-
ann (Weaver) Yoder, Montezuma, GA.

Survivors beside his parents include
two brothers: Devon Ray and Lyle Brady;
one sister: Vanessa Kay; paternal grand-
parents: Paul and Carol Yoder; maternal
grandparents: Daniel and Linda Weaver,
six great grandparents, a number of aunts
and uncles, and 16 cousins.

The funeral was held on July 28, 2008,
with Irvin Yoder and Donny Swartzen-
truber serving. Daniel Yoder officiated
at the committal, with the burial in the
Montezuma Mennonite Cemetery. 

More people find their way to heaven by foot-
prints than by guideposts.

This is being written on October 20, 2008. Yesterday we had communion at Center Church. It was a real blessing to commemorate the price of our redemption. It is a good time to renew our commitment to the Lord of the Church and also to the local body. We are well aware that the Lord Himself instituted this sacred practice on the evening before His illegal arrest, mock trial with insults and injury, all leading to His cruel and reproachful death on the cross.

Included in the seven sayings from the cross, is: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." The intensity of His suffering and humiliation did not cancel His reason for coming but rather fulfilled it. The Jews with Roman consent carried out their hateful deed, not realizing that their wicked intentions played into the hands of our sovereign God. (1 Corinthians 2:8) Thank God that our spiritual enemy is not all-knowing, but God is.

Reviewing the events of His suffering, we say, "How unjust! How wicked!" How true, but let us be reminded that He "was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities...and with His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

The bread and the cup (the fruit of

the vine) are symbols of the broken body and the shed blood of Christ. The word *wine* does not appear in any of the Gospel accounts of the institution of the ordinance of communion.

• • • • •

Three of the Gospels include the Lord's introduction of the first communion service. The Apostle Paul was not there. Is it not interesting that he writes to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:23-34) a report including the origin and purpose for communion? The purpose quite simply is to do this in remembrance of Jesus and to seriously examine ourselves, realizing the seriousness of partaking unworthily. This is a well-known passage in which I had missed one very significant phrase until recently.

Saul of Tarsus is not mentioned in the Gospels. He is first mentioned in Acts 7:53, when Stephen, the first Christian martyr was stoned to death. He quickly went from being a approving bystander, to making havoc of the church...and committing men and women to prison. (Acts 8:3). In chapter 9, Saul met Christ on the Damascus Road. After his conversion he was frequently referred to as Paul. Not only did Christ meet him on the

Damascus Road. He also validated his apostleship by filling him in on some things that had happened while he was still Saul of Tarsus. Paul later explained it this way: “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you” (1 Corinthians 11:23a). This is another reminder that Paul’s writings are to be taken seriously. To fail to do so has serious implications and consequences. (2 Peter 3:15,16).



I received a taped message by Dean Taylor, giving his life story. This came from Calvary Cassettes, 2968 Heefer Road, Chambersburg, PA 17201.

Dean married his high school sweetheart. Both of them enlisted in the U. S. military. It turned out that eventually they were stationed in a beautiful, remote valley in Germany. Their big disappointment was that the location did not provide TV access. What now? How were they to cope with something that was so significant to their life? There were not many options, but they could read. So they did.

Their reading included serious attention to the Bible. They were startled to discover what Jesus taught about our response to mistreatment. This was new to them. They decided to seek an explanation from the chaplain. The chaplain’s response did

nothing to satisfy them. They came to the place that they felt that the only honorable thing for them to do was to seek release from the military as conscientious objectors. This is an eventful part of the story.

Since listening to this message, I have become aware that this pastor has written his life story in book form. It is available from Scroll Publishing.



Because of questions that have come to me I have decided to read two popular books by Rick Warren: *The Purpose-Driven Life* and *The Purpose-Driven Church*. In addition to the title mentioned last month, *Deceived on Purpose*, another book, *Faith Undone* (by Roger Oakland) has been brought to my attention. *The Sword and Trumpet* (July/August, 2008) has a two-part selected article on Warren’s writings.

Some additional materials have come to me voicing concern about the influence of this “purpose-driven” teaching. Several reasons for this concern are the widespread acceptance of Warren’s teaching. Well-known leaders have endorsed this message. It is estimated that up to 30 million “purpose-driven” books are in circulation.

Here are a number of considerations that I hope will be helpful to people

who have an interest in this matter:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13 teaches us to: “know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord.” It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to really know a person who does not live and worship with us, no matter how colorful and influential he may be. To assume such a person to be worthy of our loyalty is risky at best.

- We are to: “Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.” This is a helpful safeguard against being unduly influenced by any human being, Warren and myself included.


- Author Warren’s writing is easy to read and has many practical ideas for church organization and function. He uses Scripture quotations very freely.

- Critics point out that many of these quotes are selected to further

the author’s viewpoints rather than paying attention to the context and basic meaning of the passage cited.

- A major concern of the critics is the evidence that Rick Warren has many ties to people who are clearly considered “New Age.” I see New Age as definitely spiritual but not Christian.

- The emerging church is also seen as an important part of this movement. The priorities of this movement are to be inclusive of all faiths rather than to be doctrinally sound.

- I do not feel right to denounce the “purpose-driven” movement as altogether wrong. But there are many reasons to be cautious. To give priority to the Bible with human commentary is much safer than to be drawn to a colorful, persuasive person that we really don’t really know. -DLM 

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Annual Beachy Amish Ministers’ Meetings are scheduled March 24-26, 2009, D.V., hosted by Sunnyside Mennonite in Sarasota, Florida.

“NOTE THAT THIS IS ONE WEEK EARLIER THAN USUAL.”

Committee chairmen and organizations who plan to make a presentation during the business sessions, please e-mail Brother Lester Gingerich at lesterandsarah@juno.com to reserve a slot on the agenda. Please give approximate length of time needed for your presentation.

—Paul A. Miller

Maintaining Good Unit Relationships

Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA

Among those who have had experience in mission work it is generally conceded that personnel problems among missionaries are often cause for the greatest concern and are also the most difficult to solve. Just because people offer themselves to serve the Lord in a voluntary service unit and are accepted and commissioned does not mean that they leave behind them their weaknesses and unpleasant habits and that they arrive at their station fully sanctified. There may be conflicts due to quick tempers, jealousy, and suspicions. The attacks of the enemy may come upon our weakest points. If there is contention sticking up its head above the muddle there is pride somewhere. A wise man stated, "Only by pride cometh contention..." (Proverbs 13:10). It has been said among Protestants that more missionaries return home because of relationship problems with other missionaries than for any other reason. I do not believe, however, that that is true among our conservative Mennonite missions.

In Philippians 2:7 and 8, the Apostle Paul notes the downward steps of humility in our Savior, the Lord Jesus:

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It is ours to choose and embrace this attitude of mind. Actually, if we disobey this divine exhortation we may be overtaken with a frightful, devilish pride which is highly poisonous and spreads like disease. Jesus "emptied Himself" of His former glory and stooped in utmost obedience to die as a sacrifice for our sins. ("From the throne of highest glory, to the cross of deepest woe.") What a great condescension and pure humility! What can we do more for our precious Lord Jesus than to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice and, if at all possible, as much as depends on us, let us resolve to "...live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:1,18)

During the colonial days of early America there was a community called the Ephrata Cloisters in Ephrata, Pennsylvania. Today the buildings built by this religious sect are maintained as a museum. As you enter some of the buildings and go from room to

room inside, you have to stoop to get through the doors. The occupants were to remember that God commands us to be humble. The builders may have had a good idea. Who of us does not need to be reminded to be humble? But is it enough to stoop and walk with head bent low?

It has been said that true humility is not *thinking less of myself*, but rather *thinking of myself less*. Instead of degrading myself I forget about myself. I bid farewell to any desire for personal glory. I dethrone self and consider the fact that our “old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative.” Let us never forget that our old selves were crucified with him on the cross that the tyranny of sin over us might be broken—for as long as our flesh is on the cross and not on the throne, we are victorious over the power of sin. “And if we be dead men with him we can believe that we shall also be men newly alive with him” (Romans 6:6-8 Phillips).

Why maintain good unit relationships? 1). As a fallen race, we are naturally selfish. Selfishness brings some real threats to unit life. (Such as pursuing personal plans and projects rather than the goals and policies of the mission organization, failure to comply with mission standards and decisions, and failure to overcome personal habits that are offensive to others.) 2). According to Scripture,


God’s work is hindered if there is a breakdown of relationships. (John 17:11, 21-23; 13:35).

When will there be good unit relationships? 1). When we stop comparing ourselves with others. This is an acute temptation, especially in closely structured unit life. Theodore Yoder writes: “When we live for Christ’s glory there is no more worrying about my reputation. Nor do I need to cudgel myself because of perceived lack of brains, ability, and charisma. Instead, I trust that whatever Christ asks me to do, He will give me the ability to perform. If I am truly humble, I accept the fact that God has made me what I am.” Paul tells us, “...they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (1 Corinthians 10:12b. 2). When the fruit of the Holy Spirit is abounding in my life, criticism is less threatening to me. Correction is more receivable. Communication flows freely. I allow others the freedom of being themselves. I notice the needs of people. My witness is more effective. When good things are accomplished, it doesn’t matter who gets the credit.

How do we maintain good unit relationships? 1). Develop pure, wholesome communication. Use the other person’s first name. Talk respectfully and kindly. 2). The unit

leader needs to communicate mission goals, such as personal growth in unit members, schedules, community outreach, and fitting into and building up the national church. 3). Unit members must express appreciation to the unit leader, share personal interests and grievances kindly, informing those in charge when leaving the premises and what time you plan to be back. 4). Do more than your share of the work.

How do we communicate? We communicate with words, with our eyes, with voice tone, and with gestures. Oh, the far-reaching effects of

helpful words of comfort and praise! Hurtful words blame, degrade and bring shame. Silence may indicate defiance, preoccupation, or an unforgiving spirit. Silence may be intended to drive the wound of hostility deeper into the other person's heart. When you are in a trying situation and something grinds on you, discuss the matter. Do not jump to quick conclusions. First gather the facts. Test your words with Galatians 5:22, 23 and I Corinthians 13. Confess your wrongs. Forgive again and again. And, keep filling the other person's cup of tea. 

helpers at home

Peace and Joy at Christmas

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

The angel's message to the shepherds as they watched their flocks of sheep out under the starlit skies in Palestine many years ago was "on earth **peace**, goodwill toward men." The New International Version says, "on earth **peace** to men on whom his favor rests." We live in a time of unrest: wars, terrorist attacks, inflation, and a recent slump in the economy. In spite of the negative news we are hearing daily, the angel's message still speaks **peace** to those who experience God's favor. We are called on to exemplify the message of **peace** in our own lives

so we can share it with our families and others around us.

Christmas is a wonderful time to express **peace**.

The angel came to Mary, the mother of Jesus, with the surprising news that she had been chosen to be the mother of the Messiah. Mary did not panic, but responded with acceptance and resignation. God chose to bring **peace** to this world in the form of a newborn baby carried in the womb of a virgin. I remember the deep joy I felt being pregnant with our first child during the Christmas season and considered Mary and her joy in

carrying the Christ Child.

I believe Mary loved and rejoiced in her unborn baby in spite of the negative response of Joseph (at first) and others around her. Doctors tell us that a baby needs to feel loved in the safety of the womb and surely, God prepared a womb that would love His own beloved Son. Mothers, you are given a tremendous responsibility to care for the child God has entrusted to your care. Babies come into the world with unique personalities and needs. Your child may even have physical disabilities or emotional disturbances, but God knew about and planned for that child, even in the womb. (Psalm 139:13-16)

Love and accept each of your children as a gift from God and ask Him for wisdom to guide them. We also express **peace** in our acceptance of our station in life. It may include a husband and children or we may be childless, single, widowed or even divorced. Let us use every opportunity we have to share the message of **peace** this Christmas season.

Christmas is a beautiful opportunity to spread **joy** to our family and community.

The angel's message also spoke of **joy**. "Fear not, for behold, I bring you tidings of great **joy** which shall be to all people." We who have heard the Gospel message all our lives may not understand the **joy** which comes

to those who have lived in darkness and suddenly experience the light. The shepherds were so joyful that they told everyone they met about the coming of the Messiah. Are we spreading the Good News to our neighbors and friends?

I need to be joyful before I can share that joy with others. I believe Mary was a joyful mother or God would not have given her that awesome responsibility of caring for His Son in the formative childhood years. I believe she found **joy** in providing for the physical needs of an active, hungry, inquisitive little boy. Mothers, our children are forming character as they observe our outlook on life. My attitudes affect my countenance and words. It is hard to be joyful when I am thinking negative thoughts. **Joy** comes from thinking on things that are edifying, from being contented with what I have, and from spending time in God's Word.

Christmas is a good time to spread **joy**. Let us not become so stressed with the much preparing for a special time for our families that we lose the simple **joy** of reflecting on the message of Christmas. Think of ways that you and your family can be involved in bringing **joy** to those less fortunate, lonely or grieving during this Christmas season.

Express the angel's message of **joy** and **peace**.



The Miracle of Light

Anita Yoder, Ligonier, IN

The city of Bethlehem seemed heavy with an impenetrable darkness. Life was commonplace and unpromising in this city with drab, sun-baked, clay huts along narrow streets. Ordinary people lived in its hills and valleys.

The overall picture meant oppression to the Jews, who were virtual slaves to the pagan Romans. They lived under Herod's heavy hand and he seemed to do little for his subjects except raise their taxes.

Joseph and Mary couldn't find lodging at the inn, because the city had been overrun with droves of strangers who carried the burden of these heavy taxes. The only lodging available for the young couple from Nazareth was a lack-luster cattle shed.

Socially, also, they were left out in the dark.

Who could have predicted that darkness would have its final say that night?

The holy child's birth was marked

by the glow of "the glory of the Lord" (Luke 2:9) and a message from heavenly beings. The shepherds, who looked upon the child, were amazed to see the child of promise. Joseph and Mary no longer felt isolated, but understood that God was there with them.

The wise men came from a distance somewhere east of Bethlehem, indicating that they had studied the heavens and noticed the bright star which they perceived as heralding the birth of a king. Thus they correctly interpreted the news of the Christ child's birth. So they brought Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh—and worshipped him.

The most powerful force in the world was not darkness, but what God was doing quietly, almost secretly, in an unexpected way, and in a surprising place. It was a miracle of light and hope that was alive in the hearts of the faithful.

Praise God, **that hope is still alive** today!



Dear Youth,

Have you ever read a story in the Bible and wondered why people back then acted the way they did? In Genesis 34, there is a story about Jacob's children and the interaction they had with their neighbors. As I read this story, it is hard to imagine people being so base. But

response from our readers ...

Betrayal

A little girl. Innocent and beautiful as a rose. She learns to trust those who've been put over her. There isn't any darkness in her life. All is sunshine and flowers. She is loved.

Suddenly life as she knows it, is shattered. Betrayed! Pain. Confusion... they are her path to be trod now. Gone is her innocence; gone is her love of life. Her trust is shattered. Little girl dreams are broken.

Her father has molested her. He has betrayed her trust. The man who could have been her hero, is now the killer of her reason to live.

"God, why? Why?" She cries, "Jesus, why didn't you stop him? How is it worth following you now? I'm scared!"

Thoughts of suicide now come to her. "It's not worth living anymore."

then...it's hard to imagine people today being so base as well. Recently some young ladies studied this chapter and wrote a response. These responses remind us that regardless of our lineage, the "thoughts of our hearts are only evil continually," unless they are changed by the Christ of Calvary. —EE

Her father tries to make himself feel better by trusting her with things. But all that comes is hate and anger from the child.

Years go by. She feels like no one will ever want to marry her. She's ruined and feels orphaned. Where is love?

It's been a tough road. All she can think about is, "God may be like my father." Jesus gently pursues her. "Love...God, what is love?"

Then comes Someone. He's gentle and kind, all-powerful, the father figure she's dreamed of.

He responds, "I'm love. I'll be your Hero. I'll be your Father. I'll be your all. Come to me."

She runs to Him and He cradles her. She's in the fields of lilies. She sees beauty; it's different from her experiences as a child, but in God's

mercy, He makes all things beautiful. He teaches her to look at her earthly father and forgive him.

God tells her, “Vengeance is mine. I will repay. Do not fear.”


Compromise

As Hilda went about her daily house work, she couldn't help but think of the things she would do that afternoon. Her mom had told her that she could have the afternoon off, so Hilda had decided to go visit her friend, Susan, in town. She was burdened with her friend's spiritual condition and she desperately wanted to show her all the Christ-love she could. With these thoughts still at the forefront of her mind, she finished up her duties at home and left for town.

Hilda and Susan spent a great afternoon together, and even Hilda thought it seemed like Susan might be starting to show a bit of interest in spiritual things. Near the end of the afternoon, Susan's brother, Ken, came home. Hilda immediately noticed how good-looking he was, and she was secretly delighted at the way he seemed to notice her. The remaining

fifteen minutes of Hilda's visit flew by quite rapidly and soon it was time to go back home.

The next forenoon while she was again doing her daily chores, she received a text from an unfamiliar number. She soon discovered that it was Ken. She replied to the text, since she figured that was probably the most courteous thing to do. But before many months passed, Hilda realized that she and Ken exchanged frequent texts, and that Ken was almost always around when she visited Susan.

To make a long story short, Ken and Hilda kept seeing each more and more of each other until they finally decided that they loved each other too much not to get married. Her parents, of course, were very sad, and wondered where they had gone wrong. Hilda had seemed like such a promising Christian girl. They somehow seemed to forget that innocent friendship with the “daughters of the land” had drawn their daughter deeply into the ways of the world. 

***Happiness can be easily overlooked
when it's free.***

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Abbreviations identify sectional features: (M) Meditation; (P) Poem; (BR) Book Review; (Ed) Editorial; (MA) Mission Awareness; (MM) Ministers' Meetings Message; (Obs) Observations; (HH) Helpers at Home; (Y) Youth Message; (JM) Junior message; (RR) Reader Response; (G) Guest Writer.

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Every man's friendship is worth more than his hatred.



The reason history repeats itself is because many people don't listen the first time.



The worst poverty is not when a man has nothing but when he does nothing.



An act of nobility from you may turn the tide of another person's life.



Too many like law and order only when they can lay down the law and give the orders.



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Love with insight beats love at first sight.



A self-made man tends to admire his maker.



The older a man gets, the less open space he has in his medicine cabinet.

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