



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

Galatians 6:14

JANUARY 2009

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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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On Becoming a Teen

Elmer Schrock, Stuarts Draft, VA

Some time in the wonderful days of your youth,
In the depths of your heart you will hear
A voice that's so still and so small—yet the truth
From the God we must all learn to fear.

As your muscles grow big and your grip gets strong,
And your body grows sturdy and tall,
Your heart and your soul for your Maker will long,
For the God who is over us all.

You had waited a time for His voice to be heard,
To your parents you were loving and true.
They guided the way that is taught by God's Word,
And showed you just what to pursue.

Your friends should be chosen with wisdom and care,
Like them you likely will be.
Their influence on you help determine to where
You will travel on life's stormy sea.

So heed to that voice as soon as you hear
That call from the Father above.
Heeding not voices that sound strange to your ear,
But yielding yourself to His care.

While your body is changing from a boy to a man,
Remember to give it good care.
Feed it right. Keep it clean. Bad habits withstand.
Choose your thoughts and your words with great care.

Remember the needs of the man in your heart,
And nourish and feed him God's Word.
Amazingly, wonderful things He'll impart,
As you trust your whole life to the Lord.

In Jesus there's life that eternal will be,
In life's forenoon you turn with your heart.
Surrender to Him; from sin clear and free,
While you trust Him His grace to impart.



Shepherds of God's Flock

The Prophet Jeremiah in chapter 23 saw into the future and identified a King who would “reign and prosper,” and who would “execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jeremiah 23:5).

Praise God! That King was born about 600 years later. Just when He will come again and execute final judgment is not clear, but we can be sure that, when He does, He will do so with total justice.

As we place our trust completely in Him, we will not be disappointed, according to Romans 9:33 and 10:11, but will want to praise Him forever. He alone is worthy! Praise God that all of these statements are simply factual—no exaggeration!

Shepherds and Sheep

Before Jeremiah explained his vision for the future of God's people, he offered wise insights for shepherds of God's flock. He pronounced woes upon “pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture.” Indeed, His face is set against those who cause destruction in the flock.

True shepherds (pastors) feed and care for the sheep. But sick sheep, like sick people, don't always respond well

to good, tender care. When that happens, and when a shepherd has diligently and patiently done everything he can, the Good Shepherd does not hold him responsible for the loss.

Sheep are largely at the shepherd's mercy, but a true shepherd will not take advantage of that. A true shepherd will be *as kind as possible*. He will *lead* rather than *drive* the flock. He will keep a sharp lookout for predators and accept the “sheep's” help identifying dangers that lurk around them.

Cowardly pastors are unwilling to face bad news. Such men need to consider the consequences of always seeking the easiest way through difficulty. When sheep “graze on the husks of the world,” a true shepherd is concerned to have them stop making poor food choices. But he is also diligent to provide the nourishing Word of God and lead the way to good, clean, refreshing water (John 4:13, 14).

God said He would gather the remnant of His flock out of lands where He had driven them (v.3), so we can see that He is actively involved in shepherding. We must seek to coordinate our efforts with His. Furthermore, this passage says that:

•God will make them fruitful in their homeland. (v. 3)

•God sets up shepherds over them which feed them. (v.4)

•God's flock need not be fearful or dismayed. (v.4)

Shepherds of Men

Let us all (whether ordained or not) give our influence to the sheep to respond positively to the Good Shepherd, Who gave his life for the sheep.

Let us who are ordained remember that human shepherds are "made of the same stuff" as the sheep they lead. Therefore, let us:

•Take heed to ourselves. (Acts 20:28)

•Be good examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:3)

•Feed the flock of God. (1 Peter 5:3)

•Declare all the counsel of God. (Acts 20:27)

•Refrain from being lords over God's heritage. (1 Peter 5:3)

•Take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghost makes us overseers. (Acts 20:28)

It's a tall order but let us take heart, because: "He who calls [us] is faithful, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24 NKJV).

• • • • •

Martha and I had the privilege of being in Thailand for the first three weeks in November at IGo (Institute

for Global Opportunities) in Chiang Mai. My assignment, given by Val Yoder, principal of the institute, was to teach I Corinthians. One hour a day for three weeks is not enough to plumb the depths of that epistle, which has been called "a straight letter to a crooked church."

Twenty-one deeply-committed, conservative Anabaptist students are still (11-24-08) finishing their school work, in that school committed to evangelism—both in the classroom and in practice. Thus the students regularly participate in ministry opportunities. They plan to finish this year's work in time to be home for Christmas.

One member of the class was a Christian refugee from elsewhere in Asia. For security reasons, we do not reveal his identity. Let us appreciate the many freedoms we have in this land. Let us also "work while it is day, for the night comes when no man can work."

After I had assigned brief essays as part of class work, it dawned on me that these compositions were excellent material for publication. Thus, I got permission before making a copy for future use in Calvary Messenger. Expect some excellent writing. The first two essays appear right after Reader Response in this month's issue.

—PLM 

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

Change your writing style? Forget it! Our family ranges in age from 54 to 16 and each one opens this magazine to "Observations" first.

Stephen Miller, Belle Center, OH

• • • • •

Dear Ones,

"Observations" is one of the few items that I read as soon as it arrives. I appreciate the choice of subject and the manner of writing.

Please do not change it in any way.

Isaiah 52:7

Francis Olweiler, Elizabethtown, PA

• • • • •

I will say that "Observations" are the part I always read, even if I don't read any other part. I find it well-written, easy to follow, and articulate. I have commented to others in times past how well David uses words to

communicate and how I admire, appreciate, and enjoy his skill in communication....

Robert Wall, Perkins, OK

• • • • •

I was blessed in reading the October, 2008, *Calvary Messenger*.

Concerning the "Observations" writer, I find no fault with his writing. I enjoy it and covet his gift. The cantankerous attitude and unforgiving spirit which too many of us have had to do with is possibly the cause of many church splits.

The articles maintaining Bible principles and practices with uniformity in wearing unconventional dress give expression to the principle of separation from the world. Admonitions are never old till the need for them has ceased. Do Scriptures like Jeremiah 9:25, 26 apply today? Help!

Eli M. Yoder, Millersburg, OH 

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Orlando King

Harrison, AR/Chiang Mai, Thailand

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the focal point of Christianity! Because He lives, we also have life!

The opening verses of 1 Corinthians 15 provide us with four points of that foundational truth:

Christ died for our sins.

He was buried.

He rose again the third day.

He was seen of more than 500 brethren.

The historian Josephus in Book 18, chapter 33, said: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for

he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”

Numerous people have tried to disprove the resurrection of Jesus Christ. One such man was Simon Greenleaf. He was one of the founders of the Harvard Law School. In trying to disprove the resurrection, he used the same rules that he would have used in examining evidence for any other case in a court of law. He concluded that the resurrection has the most evidence of any event in history. As a result of the overwhelming evidence, Greenleaf came to faith in Christ.

To the challenges of skeptics, Simon Greenleaf asks only that they give the evidence for the resurrection the same judgment they would give to any other case. He wrote, “All that Christianity asks of men on this subject is that they would be consistent with themselves; that they would treat its evidences as they treat the evidence of other things; and that they would try to judge its

actors and witnesses as they deal with themselves, with each other, and with the surrounding facts and circumstances and let their testimony be sifted, as if it were given in a court of justice, on the side of the adverse party, the witnesses being subjected to a rigorous cross-examination. The result, it is confidently believed, will be an undoubting conviction of their integrity, ability, and truth... Either the men of Galilee were men of superlative wisdom, and extensive knowledge and experience, and of deeper skill in the arts of deception, than any and all others, before or after them, or they have truly stated the astonishing things which they saw and heard.” (pp. 46 and 53, in *The Testimony of the Evangelists*.)

It is eyewitness historical records that tell us Jesus really did die, in three days, resurrected, and over a period of 40 days was seen of more than 500 people. Skeptics still refuse to believe it, and instead make up hypothetical ways to explain it away. That the disciples stole and hid Jesus’ body and then lied about it, claiming He rose, is one of the common hypothetical theories skeptics come up with.

Here are a few simple questions to see if this theory stands up to logic and scrutiny:

If Christ did not resurrect from death, why were the disciples—so scared and timid before Jesus died—now fearlessly preaching that Christ arose and were now even willing to die, if they had just made it up?

How could they have pulled this off with the tomb being guarded by the Romans like it was and having to move a stone that weighed as much as two tons?

Why would the disciples portray such a poor picture of themselves in the Gospels other than for the fact that they told the truth?


Why would 3,000 people convert in one day if His resurrection was not well known?

Apparently, some in the church at Corinth questioned whether Jesus was resurrected and also with what body they would one day be raised. Paul writes that the body dies in corruption and is raised in incorruption; it dies in weakness and is raised in power; it dies a natural body and is raised a spiritual body.

All this evidence raises this ques-

tion: If we cannot believe the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, why should we believe the evidence for any other historical event?

Paul said that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ did not rise. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then our faith is vain, we are still in our sins, and “we are of all men most miserable!” [most to be pitied - NIV]

The closing section of 1 Corinthians 15 gives a triumphant conclusion to Paul’s discussion of the resurrection of Christ and our promised resurrection. Verse 58 summarizes his conclusions with clarity and inspiration: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” 

The Deeper Meaning of Headship

Name withheld by IGo student writer

I never realized to whom women are supposed to be in submission until reading Harold S. Martin’s commentary on I Corinthians today. I thought it referred to a wife’s submission to her husband, but now I believe it is much broader than that. Women in general are to submit to men. Submission is the reason we cover our heads! Realizing this fact has made this passage come alive in an entirely new way to me. The principle of headship has become much

more beautiful to me.

First of all, to whom am I to submit? Paul addressed this letter specifically to a group of believers. Thus, we conclude that this principle of submission refers primarily to believers. Definitely, I am called to respect men, but I am not called to submit to all male figures outside the church. So, primarily, I cover my head because of my submission to my Christian brothers.

This principle is so powerful! It definitely goes along with what

I'm learning about respecting men my age. For some reason, the idea of submitting to other men in my life sounds fulfilling—possibly because it's a God-given desire. It opens up a whole new realm for the reason for the head covering. We were created for the man. My role in life is to help men along. I don't have to be super woman or some accomplished career woman in the business world. I can be who God created me to be: a helper. I am fulfilled as I try to make the lives of men successful.

How is this practical? How can I, as a single woman, encourage and stand behind a man who is not my husband in a wholesome, godly way? How can I encourage him and cheer him on? How can I by my influence encourage him to be a true man—strong, yet tender? How can I help him strive for purity, truth, and the best in life? How can I do these things without becoming domineering? I want to help the men (especially my peers) in my life to have true success in life.


This is possible only as I am the woman of character God is calling me to be. It's possible only as I give each man, no matter who he is or how he acts, the respect he needs. Furthermore, it's possible only as I realize life is not about me—but about bringing glory to God and honoring others.

There are some powerful examples of women in the Bible who used their

influence in amazing ways: Take, for example, Mary, the mother of Jesus. Because of her urging, He turned water into wine at a wedding feast. Or take Manoah's wife, who calmed Manoah down after they had seen an angel, saying they would not die. What about Deborah? Because of her influence, the nation of Israel was freed from Sisera's iron-fisted rule over them. Timothy's mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, were key persons in influencing Timothy to become a man of God.

Here is where I must do a heart check. I want my men friends to be drawn closer to God when they are with me. How am I doing? Am I encouraging personal growth and helping them pursue their God-given drives and callings—their manhood? Or do I promote my own agendas and flaunt myself so they give me their attention instead of giving it to God?

The reason for the head covering? To show my submission to authority. If a non-believer asks me the reason I wear "that nun-looking thing," I explain the reason behind the sign, but if I don't live out the reason, what does that do to my testimony? God's name is not to be mocked. Others will be turned off at this cheap kind of Christianity. My life will simply be words without actions.

"Help me, God, to be the woman with real character, beauty, and depth that You are calling me to be." 

Have a Great Fall

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Traveling through western Pennsylvania, I saw a sign that said, "Have a Great Fall." It was November. The "fall" referred to the current season.

The Bible speaks of a great fall. The man who built his house on the sand was said to be a foolish man. As to the house, the Teacher said that it is represented by him who hears the Word of God and doesn't do it. The calamity that followed the rains, wind and floods beating upon the house concluded with the punch line of the parable, as He said, "It fell, and great was the fall of it." Now that was a great fall!

An old, well-known children's poem goes:

*"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall;
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All the King's horses and all the
King's men,*

Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again."

The picture that goes with it has an egg perched on a wall. Somehow, it had arms and legs. Its tumble isn't pictured, but the imagination is satisfied by an egg splattered on the

sidewalk below.

Neither of these mental images presents anything desirable. Indeed, having a great fall is the opposite of experiencing peace, progress, or prosperity.

Satan had a great fall through pride; Goliath had a great fall in his presumption; Nebuchadnezzar had a great fall in his obstinacy; Herod had a great fall in his pompous boasts and was eaten alive by worms; and Judas had a great fall in his betrayal of Christ.

Sodom and Gomorrah's fall was great; and so was Jericho's and in A.D. 70, Jerusalem. Later Rome, the greatest city of the Roman Empire, also had a great fall. Much more recently, Hitler's Germany fell and the Soviet Union fell and took down with it its oppressive brand of Communism.

All of these "falls" were irreparable—broken, shattered, crushed, never to be mended.

A one-liner from my old English book said, "In Adam's fall, we sinned all." Now, that was the greatest fall of all time. Adam's fall into sin plunged the whole human race over the preci-

pice of righteousness and into the abyss of sin. (*abyss*=bottomless gulf; anything too deep for measurement. *New World Dictionary*)


Fortunately, God had mercy and made Adam's fall redeemable. Jesus said, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Luke 20:17, 18). Falling upon this stone (Christ Himself) results in a brokenness that brings forth new spiritual life. When one fails to fall on that Stone, that Stone will some day fall on him. The grinding to powder has reference to total loss in the final judgment and the attendant suffering in hell. By contrast, falling on that Stone in personal repentance causes the stubborn will to be broken. The selfish impulses are broken, the lustful tendencies are broken, and the carnal self is broken. In that moment, in a decision of abandonment of the self will to the will of Christ, *it happens*.

But it does not happen once for all. Our lives may take on some parasitic tendencies of carnality and worldliness that must be broken. The shell of selfishness and carnality must be broken. When these reappear, the

armor of self-justification must be broken again. The cloak of religious pride, the pride of possessions, of one's station in life must be broken. We must fall on that Stone. Broken.

People hesitate, manipulate, and castigate others to avoid the personal crisis of falling on that Stone. Self will dies hard, but healing cannot take place without brokenness. *Falling* on the Living Stone and being *broken* results in a life that is *great*.

In an illustration of brokenness, Jesus spoke of the planted seed sprouting in the soil's darkness and dampness. First, the seed dies. The new life from the germ within the seed causes new life to spring forth. A new stalk grows different from the seed. Finally, the fruit comes forth in greatly increased quantities of the seed sown. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:24,25).

The Bottom Line is that falling on Jesus is not a situation of loss but of increase. Increase and spiritual gain come from dying to self. Greatness rises out of brokenness, sometimes in this life, but always in the life that is to come. 

The Fourscore Mile Mark

Elmer Schrock, Stuarts Draft, VA

[Written some time ago in recognition of Elmer's brother Alvin's 80th birthday. The Schrock brothers are both widowed ministers. These verses were shared at the Golden Ager's Retreat, held at Penn Valley Christian Retreat, Sept. 5-7, 2008.]


Eighty years are past and gone, with memories galore;
Joys and sorrows, work and play, have filled the days of yore.
You labored long to meet the needs of wife and children dear.
You labored also for their souls, so fruit their lives would bear.

You heard the call of God to preach--a different kind of toil,
Planting seeds of Gospel truth in human, mental soil.
The years rolled by, how short they were, but rich with grace and joy.
The children came, and then they went, to serve in King's employ.

Each child a place in life has found where God would have them be.
The fruit of faithful parenthood, they serve God faithfully.
Time leaves its marks; it brings some change--some joyful, cheering, glad.
But sickness, sadness, pain and death have also made us sad.

The passing of companions dear brought loneliness and pain.
That loss, so hard for us to bear, brought them eternal gain.
And God is good; He means it well when pain and partings come.
Provisions for eternal joy fill that eternal home.

Take courage, Brother, view the goal in this your eightieth year.
It's God who has your future planned; what comes you need not fear.
We know not how long 'twill be before that summons sounds
For us who still are serving Him; we know His grace abounds.

We'll wait, we'll work, we'll serve and live for Him who died for all;
To him we trust our time, our souls--till we hear that last call.
In Jesus Christ lies all our hope; the anchor of our soul;
In heaven we'll praise and worship Him when we have reached our goal. 

Jury Duty—Or is It?

Verlin Miller, Rio Linda, CA

My heart sank a bit when I read the bold print, “Jury Summons.” In smaller bold print were the words, “Failure to appear to this summons will subject you to a fine, a jail term or both.”

This being my first summons, I began asking others what to do. I endured many courtroom stories and listened to many reasons that others have used to be excused from jury service, but I was still searching for Scripture on which to base my personal answer to the judge.

Following are several points that helped me understand that serving on a jury is not for me:

The Two Kingdom Concept. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world...” As part of Christ’s kingdom, we live by a higher standard than that used in the court.

Vengeance does not belong to us. As Christians, we are to love our enemies, bless them who curse us, and do good.... We respect and honor the civil leaders. A reminder that even children can learn is:

Pray (for our leaders)

Pay (taxes)

Obey (laws)

The civil leaders’ job is different from ours. Romans 13 says, “The powers that be are ordained of God...” and their job is to “execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”

The unequal yoke. Being yoked with the court system and other jurors is in violation of 2 Corinthians 6:14. The

bond between jurors is obvious if you listen to a jury visiting in the hallway. After all, they have left their jobs and families for days or weeks to listen to this case together and to come to a conclusion. Imagine making a decision with the world’s people, using the world’s value system.

Judging guilt or innocence. One of the questions on the questionnaire I was to fill out explained, “The judge will instruct you that you are to determine guilt or innocence according to the law regardless of whether you agree with the law or not. Are you able to do this?”

It brings up some difficult questions: Could I call an abortion legal? Could I call direct Bible teaching “discrimination”?

Now for a few words of encouragement: If we say we aren’t part of the same kingdom as the government, then we must be consistent. How about voting? Do we allow ourselves to be yoked with unbelievers in business and pleasure?

On the trial that I had been asked to serve as a juror, we were told that the case was estimated to take about a month. Imagine what would happen if every 18 months your church could ask you to leave your job for a month to voluntarily serve Christ’s kingdom “full time.” Many jurors gladly do it as their duty to their country. And you? Are you gladly doing your duty to the kingdom you are a part of?



Handle Criticism as Christ Would

Lee Keele, Hutchinson, KS

As a minister of the Gospel of Christ, I am not unfamiliar with the fact that all of us who walk in the Spirit are going to face our critics—sometimes daily.

There will be some who do not appreciate our particular brand of theology. Some will not agree with our interpretation of Scripture. Some will think we are too conservative or liberal, too this or that.

And what is truly frightening to me is that much of the criticism we face comes directly from those in our own local congregation of believers. This is tough stuff.

I have learned about criticism the hard way. I learned the hard way because I was once a critic who took things to a dangerous extreme. I have not always been loving in my presentation of the truth. And quite honestly, I still struggle with it.

On the flip side of the coin, I have had my own share of criticism that I did not receive well. Sometimes, I let anger and bitterness set in and started doing what we all do when we let the flesh kick in and we kick the Spirit out. I started boiling, blaming, and even bludgeoning people with my version of the will of God.

But many of us have discovered a way to handle criticism that models the Spirit of Christ:

First of all, listen to your critics. It's true that they may or may not be walking in the Spirit of Christ. In fact, they may at times be pompous and prideful, harsh and hateful, inflicting pressure

or pain. But at the end of their attitude lies one remarkable fact: They may also be right! So put aside the need to judge their motives and weigh the facts. Is their criticism justified even if their delivery is all but graceful?

Second, adapt and move on. You see, Jesus faced His fair share of critics. Sure, He had His outright enemies. But even among His closest friends were those who thought He should do things a certain way. Like so many of us, they couldn't keep their mouths shut and they simply had to tell Jesus how it was supposed to be. But through it all, Jesus listened, loved, or rebuked when necessary—but He never let them get Him off course.

Third, when you think you have to be a critic of someone else, check again, again and again. If it is necessary to criticize someone else's doctrine or method, do it with a spirit of humility and love, always seeking the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Those who are in Christ walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh. Nothing that anyone throws at us needs to faze us at all, because we are set free from having to view people through the eyes of the world.

In short: Listen, adapt if necessary, and move on with humility. Yes, walk by the Spirit even down the paths of criticism.

[From *The Hutchinson News*, Oct. 18, 2008. Used by permission of Lee Keele, senior minister at Crossroads Christian Church, Hutchinson, KS.]



The Blessing of Trials

Name withheld by writer

Today I did a very foolish thing,
I'm sure most folks would say;
I had a very foolish thought,
When I knelt down to pray.

My body was so very tired,
Yet I was wide awake.
So there's really no excuse,
To make this gross mistake.

As I was talking with the Lord,
And He would talk to me;
I had to wonder without Him,
Where really would I be?

Had it not been for the trials that
God sent upon my way;
I really wonder just how far
I might have gone astray.

For trials are a part of life,
And troubles come we know,
At times our cup of sorrow seems
To nearly overflow.

But I am sure that it is so,
If life were full of ease,
And we could merely coast along
And do just as we please.

Then very soon our soul would, too,
Begin to lose its grip.
And from that solid Rock of Christ,
Our feet would tend to slip.

And so as I was kneeling there,
With teardrops on my face,
I thanked the Lord for saving me,
And for His tender grace.

And then I did—I really did,
In fullest honesty;
I thanked the Lord for sending all
Those trials unto me!



marriages

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

Beachy-Wray

Bro. Arlin, Amboy, IN, son of Marvin and Carolyn Beachy, and Sis. Kayla, daughter of Marcus and Jenny (Wurm) Wray, were married at Bethany Church, Kokomo, IN, Oct. 18, 2008, by Marvin Beachy.

Mast-Yoder

Bro. Randall, son of Thomas and Linda Mast, Nappanee, IN, and Sis. Eden, dau. of Steven and Jennifer Yoder, Bourbon, IN, at Maple Lawn Church, on Oct. 20, 2008, by Thomas Mast.

Mullet-Coblentz

Bro. Terry, son of Marion and Tena Mullet, Sugarcreek, OH, and Sis. Janette, daughter of David and Lorene Coblentz, Sugarcreek, OH, on Nov. 15, 2008, at Maranatha Fellowship Church by Paul Leroy Miller.

Yoder-Beachy

Bro. Joshua Larnell, son of Wilbur and Kaylene Yoder, Goshen, IN, and Sis. Megan Elizabeth, daughter of Lonnie and Delilah Beachy, Plain City, OH, at

Shiloh Mennonite Church for Haven Fellowship on Nov. 22, 2008, by Lonnie Beachy.

Yoder-Schlabach

Bro. Matthew Allen, son of Elmer and Delilah Yoder, Uniontown, OH, and Sis. Laura Marie, daughter of Stanley and Arlene Schlabach at Maranatha Christian Fellowship, Sugarcreek, OH, for Pleasant View Church, Hartville, OH, on Nov. 1, 2008, by Homer Zook.

Yoder-Swarey

Bro. Rudy, son of Ben and Annie Yoder, Belleville, PA, and Sis. Amanda, daughter of Aaron and the late Mary Swarey, Allensville, PA, at Locust Grove Mennonite Church for Pleasant View A.M. Church, Belleville, PA, on Oct. 10, 2008, by David J. Peachey.

Yutzy-Kuepfer

Bro. Titus, son of Lester and Rachel Yutzy, Nickerson, KS, and Sis. Sherilyn, daughter of Lorne and Grace Kuepfer, Hutchinson, KS, at Maranatha Mennonite Church for Center A.M. Church, Oct. 25, 2008, by David M. Yoder.

**God does not ask us to be successful;
He only asks us to be faithful.**

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Dwayne and Kristina (Peter-sheim), Stanardsville, VA, fourth child, second son, Carson Patrick, Nov. 16, 2008.

Byrum, Shane and Lucy (Miller), Crossville, TN, presently serving at Faith Mission Home, third child, second son, Troy David, Nov. 11, 2008.

Gerber, Joseph and Rhonda (Kuepfer), Millbank, ON, third child, second son, Jalon Richard, Sept. 8, 2008.

Horst, Clifford and Carolyn (Erb), New Hamburg, ON, fifth child, third dau., Chloe Renae, Nov. 10, 2008.

Kauffman, Ervin and Edna (Yoder), Belleville, NY, second child, first dau., Shanda Kylie, Aug. 19, 2008.

Kaufman, Phineas and Martha (Beiler), Wytheville, VA, fourth child, third dau., Tonya Roxanne, Oct. 24, 2008.

Lapp, Dave and Ruth (Lapp), New Holland, PA, fourth child and son, Arlan Joel, Sept. 25, 2008.

Mast, James and Marcie (Yoder), Caneyville, KY, first child and dau., Andrea Rose, Oct. 3, 2008.

Miller, Arlen and Naomi (Summy), Stuarts Draft, VA, first child and son, Travis Scott, Sept. 13, 2008.

Miller, Brian and Sherilyn (Miller), Partridge, KS, fourth child, first son, Bryant Drew, Nov. 2, 2008.

Miller, Kenneth and Rochelle (Miller), Canon City, CO, sixth child, fourth son, Ian Patrick, Nov. 20, 2008.

Miller, Lavern and Ruth (Yoder), Stuarts Draft, VA, second child and son, Micah Lavern, Oct. 18, 2008.

Miller, Richard and Mary (Glick), Oriskany Falls, NY, eighth child, sixth dau., Teresa Janae, Sept. 9, 2008.

Miller, Robert and Jeanie (Yoder), Newcomerstown, OH, seventh child, third dau., Katelyn Edna, Sept. 18, 2008.

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

Mullet, James and Donna (Hess), Newcomerstown, OH, fourth child, second dau., Jenna Kay, August 18, 2008.

Plank, Delmer and Carol (Yoder), Bastrop, TX, third child, second dau., Vicki Renae, Oct. 4, 2008.

Raber, Gary and Lois (Overholt), Clarkson, KY, seventh child, fourth son, Theodore Emerson, Oct. 17, 2008.

Schrock, Ivan and Nicole (Miller), Manassas, VA, first child and son, Kaden Ty, Oct. 12, 2008.

Sharp, James and Joyce (Hostetler), Belleville, PA, second child, first son, Marcus Robert, Sept. 22, 2008.

Stoltzfus, Abner and Marlene (Stoltzfus), Honey Brook, PA, second child and dau., Amanda Faith, Sept. 30, 2008.

Stoltzfus, Lyndon and Jessica (Miller), Concord, AR, first child and dau., Reagen Leigh, Oct. 24, 2008.

Stoltzfus, Merlin Jacob and Katrina Joy (Lapp), Gap, PA, first child and dau., Liesel Ellen, Nov. 4, 2008.

Stoltzfus, Reuben and Rachel (Miller), Mifflinburg, PA, sixth child, second dau., Bethany Grace, Aug. 21, 2008.

Stutzman, Leon and Wanda (Bontrager), Wellman, IA, fourth child, second dau., Brooklyn Jade, Sept. 8, 2008.

Swartzentruber, Wendell and Mary (Beachy), Montezuma, GA, first child and dau., Laurel Rose, Oct. 14, 2008.

Troyer, Harold and Larissa (Zaikova), Belleville, PA, second child, first dau., Dasha Rochelle, Oct. 20, 2008.

Troyer, Jason and Holly (Mast), Pulaski, TN, fourth child, third son, Glenn Montae, Oct. 16, 2008.

Wagler, Mervin and Wilma (Wengerd), Cottage Grove, TN, twins, first and second children, sons, Jeffrey Ryan and Jeremy Bryan, Nov. 2, 2008.

Yoder, Calvin and Rebecca (Pifer), Hutchinson, KS, third child, first son, Evan Friedrich, Nov. 19, 2008.

Yoder, Cephas and Tracy (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, first child and son, Connor Lavon, Nov. 19, 2008.

Yoder, Eugene and Amy (King), Partridge, KS, third child, second son, Anthony Eugene, Nov. 6, 2008.

Yoder, Luke and Christina (Beiler), Middlebury, IN, first child and son, Isaac Bradley, Nov. 20, 2008.

Yoder, Steve and Charlene (Miller), Bakersville, OH, second child and son, Kenyon Eric, Oct. 25, 2008.

Yoder, Timothy and Julie (Brovont), Sarasota, FL, first child and son, Caleb Dean, Nov. 8, 2008.

Yoder, Timothy Wayne and Wilma Marie (Yoder), Uniontown, OH, fifth child, third son, Kendall Lavon, Oct. 16, 2008.



ordinations

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

Bro. Steve Adams, 41, and **Bro. Steven Gerber**, 34, were ordained as ministers at Fair Haven A.M. Church, Milverton, ON, in a double ordination, on Oct. 26, 2008. Preordination messages were brought by Samuel Nisly, Hartselle, AL. The charges were given by Melvin Roes, who was assisted by Arthur Gerber and Ornon Bauman in giving the charge to Bro. Steve Adams. Bro. Melvin was assisted by Aaron J. Jantzi and Laverne Ropp in giving the charge to Bro. Steven Gerber. Others in the lot were Rodney Lebold, Daniel Byler, Derek Jantzi, and Jonathan Ropp.

Bro. Alfred Beachy, 31, was ordained as deacon on Oct 26, 2008, at Belvidere Mennonite Church, Belvidere, TN. Preordination messages were given by Dale Heisey, Costa Rica. The charge was given by Stephen Beachy, assisted by Dale Heisey and Benny Byler. Matthew Hostetler was also in the lot.

Bro. Larry Hershberger, 44, Dundee, OH, was called by unified voice of the church and ordained as minister at Bethel Fellowship, Millersburg, OH, on Oct. 26, 2008. Preordination messages were given by Ernest Stoltzfus, Perry, NY. The charge was given by Bill Mullet, assisted by Phil Miller and Ernest Stoltzfus.

Bro. Marcus Kauffman, 44, was ordained as minister on June 8, 2008, at Kempsville Mennonite Church, Virginia Beach, VA. Preordination messages were given by Ivan Beachy, Free Union, VA. The charge was given by Donnie Breneman, assisted by Eli Kauffman and Fred Miller.

Bro. James Mast, 28, Caneyville, KY, was ordained to the office of deacon at Cedar Springs Amish Mennonite Church, Clarkson, KY, on Oct. 19, 2008. Preordination messages were given by Dale Heisey, Costa Rica. The charge was given by Jim Yoder, assisted by Melvin Troyer and James Hershberger. Floyd Yoder and Eddie Nissley were also in the lot.

Bro. Joe Morris, 46, and **Bro. Thaddeus Thayer**, 33, were called by voice of the church and ordained in a double ordination service as ministering elders for Cimmaron Christian Brotherhood at Perkins, OK, on Oct. 19, 2008. The charge was given by Ernest Strubhar, assisted by David M. Yoder and Paul L. Miller.

Bro. Titus Troyer, 27, was called by voice of the church and ordained as deacon on Oct. 26, 2008, at Belvidere Mennonite Church in preparation for projected outreach. Preordination messages were given by Dale Heisey, Costa Rica. The charge was given by Stephen Beachy, assisted by Dale Heisey and Benny Byler.

Hostetler, Braden Tyler, 3, died in a power-take-off accident on Oct. 17, 2008. He was born at Kokomo, IN, July 22, 2005, son of Delbert and Lavera (Herschberger) Hostetler, of 3465 E. 1100 S., Amboy, IN 46911.

Surviving are his grieving parents and two brothers: Blake Austin and Brice Lynn. Other survivors are grandparents: Andy, Jr. and Barbara Herschberger, Greentown, IN; and Lester and Delores Hostetler, Kokomo. Great grandparents surviving are Ervin and Esther Herschberger, Arthur, IL; Rosa Herschberger, Simon and Edna Otto, Kokomo, IN; two uncles, ten aunts, and ten cousins.

The funeral was held Oct. 20 at Bethany School, Kokomo, with Darlton Bontrager, Ronnie Graber, and Marvin Beachy serving. Burial was in the Christner Cemetery.

Huyard, David J., 79, of New Holland, PA, died at his home Sept. 18, 2008. He was born Sept. 27, 1928, son of the late Isaac and Ada (Peachey) Huyard.

He was a member of Pequea A.M. Church, Narvon, PA.

On Nov. 8, 1951, he was married to Naomi Beiler, who survives. Also surviving is one daughter, Martha, Mrs. Joel Martin, New Holland; four grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by a sister: Mary Stoltzfus and brothers: Sylvan and Isaac Huyard.

The funeral was held at the Pequea Church.

Mast, Andrew J., 90, of Nappanee, IN, died at Miller's Merry Manor, Wakarusa, IN, on July 31, 2008. He was born June 29, 1918, son of the late Jacob and Sarah (Chupp) Mast.

He was a member of Maple Lawn A.M. Church, Nappanee.

On Nov. 21, 1944, he was married to Ann Hochstetler, who survives. Also surviving are three sons: Marvin (Carlene) Mast, Tualatin, OR; Allen (Norma) Mast, Goshen, IN; Ernest (Debbie) Mast, Richmond, VA; four daughters: Mary Carpenter, Nappanee; Miriam (Brian) Hartman, Wakarusa; Mattie (Mark) Chupp, Nappanee; Naomi (Aaron) Yoder, Leesburg, IN; 14 grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Other survivors include a brother: Emory Mast, Sarasota, FL and a sister, Elizabeth (Levi) High, Sarasota, FL.

He was preceded in death by a son, Joe Mast; five brothers: Joseph, Levi, Edward, Eli, and David Mast and a sister, Mattie Kauffman.

The funeral was held on Aug. 4, with Paul Yoder, Thomas Mast and John Mast serving. Burial was in the Maple Lawn Cemetery.

Miller, Lydia D., 90, of Kalona, IA, died July 27, 2008. She was born Sept. 16, 1917, daughter of the late Daniel and Barbara (Miller) Gingerich.

She was a member of Sharon Bethel A.M. Church.

On Oct. 15, 1949, she was married

to Harley H. Miller, who died in 1999. The children surviving are Marlin Dale (Mary Mast) Miller, and Mary Helen, both of Kalona, IA. Other survivors include seven grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

The funeral was held July 30, at Sharon Bethel Church, with Delmar Bontrager, Jacob Yoder, and Gabriel Beachy serving. Interment was in the North Gingerich Cemetery, rural Kalona.

Raber, Rachel (Lapp), 91, died April 28, 2008, in Hartville, OH. She was born in Uniontown, OH, Oct. 16, 1916, daughter of the late John and Lydia (King) Lapp.

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

She was married to Alvan E. Raber on Dec. 7, 1939. He died Jan. 8, 1989. She is survived by six sons: Lavern (Mary) Raber, Hartville; Henry (Martha) Raber, Bremen, IN; Lester (Marietta) Raber, Sarasota, FL; Eli Ray (Jan) Raber, Oregon City, OR; John (Mary Ann) Raber, Hartville; Walter (Mary Louise) Raber, Sarasota, FL; three daughters: Edna Marie (Willie) Miller, Antrim; Laura Jane (Earl) Sommers, Hartville; Ruth Ann (David) Yoder, Hartville; 30 grandchildren and 61 great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, three daughters: Ina Anderson, Mary Emma Raber, and Phoebe Fay Raber; three brothers: Alva, Andrew, and Isaac Lapp; four sisters: Rebecca Overholt, Elsie Raber, Sarah Yoder and Ina Troyer.

The funeral was held May 2, with

Homer Zook officiating. Burial was at the Walnut Grove Cemetery.

Sommers, Miriam, 56, died Oct. 27, 2008, after a brief illness at Aultman Hospital, Canton, OH. She was born Feb. 17, 1952, in Hartville, OH, daughter of John and Katie (Beachy) Sommers.

She was a faithful member of Christian Fellowship, Minerva, OH, influencing many lives in various ways, including as a teacher and missionary in Belize, C.A. and Kenya, Africa.

She is greatly missed by her family and friends. Survivors include her parents; six brothers: Joseph (Sharon) Sommers, New Franklin, OH; Mervin, North Canton, OH; Eli (Barbara) Sommers, Hiddenite, NC; Paul (Mary) Sommers, LaSource, Haiti; Willis (Marlene) Sommers, Salisbury, PA; Reuben (Miriam) Sommers, Salisbury, PA; and three sisters: Martha, Minerva, OH; Mary (Freeman) Byler, Middlefield, OH, and Marlene, Minerva, OH; 41 nieces and nephews and 18 great nieces and nephews.

The funeral was held on Oct. 30, with John H. Miller II and Joel Gingerich serving. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Elsie L., 69, of Gap, PA, died in the home of her sister and brother-in-law, Susie and Chris King. She was born Oct. 21, 1938, daughter of the late Ben and Hannah (Lantz) Stoltzfus.

She was a member of Pequea A.M. Church. In earlier years she often taught Sunday School. She had worked as a

local garment factory worker.

Surviving are one brother: Leroy (Sarah) Stoltzfus, Ephrata; three sisters: Susie (Chris) King, Gap, PA; Anna Mary (David) Huyard, Harrisonburg, VA; Ruth Ann (Jacob) Esh, Willow Street; one sister-in-law, Sadie (Jonas) Stoltzfus, Gap.

She was preceded in death by her parents; a brother, Jonas Stoltzfus and a sister, Lydia Stoltzfus.

The funeral was held at Pequea Church with Jonathan Stoltzfus, Floyd Stoltzfus and Mel Zook serving . Burial was in the Millwood Mennonite Church Cemetery

Stoltzfus, Jonas K., 93, of Ephrata, PA, died Nov. 1, 2008. He was born August 15, 1915, son of the late Amos J. and Rebecca (King) Stoltzfus.

He was a member of Pequea A.M. Church, Narvon, PA.

On Nov. 24, 1942, he was married to Anna Mary Lapp. She predeceased Him. Three children survive: C. Ivan Stoltzfus, Honey Brook; Verna Mae (Jesse) Stoltzfus, Morgantown; Barbara (Frank) Boccagno, Myerstown; five grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were brothers: Isaiah, Fred, Amos and Elam; sisters: Anna Stoltzfus, Katie Miller, Sylvia Glick, and Lydia Smoker.

The funeral was held at Pequea A. M. Church.

Zook, Amos L., 88, died of a heart attack on Oct. 19, 2008. He was born July

9, 1920, in Lancaster County, PA, son of the late Amos L. and Rebecca (Beiler) Zook.

He was member of the Mine Road A.M. Church, Gap, PA.

On Dec. 5, 1940, he was married to Linda N. Yoder, who is deceased. Surviving children are L. Marie, married to the late Emanuel Yoder, Dundee, OH; Rhoda M. (Mose) Stoltzfus, Denver, PA; Edwin L. (Ruth Smoker) Zook, Leola; Esther C. (David Z.) Glick, Gap; Dorothy L. (Elmer) Glick, Slanesville, WV; Roy E. (Kate Glick) Zook, Willow Street; Ray A. (Rae Lynn Callahan) Zook, Conestoga; Lillian I. (Gary) Burkholder, Rochester, IN; Paul A. (Miriam Miller) Zook, Abbeville, SC; Mark W. (Fannie Mae Beachy) Zook, Burgettstown; J. Elvin (Dianne Ash) Zook, Lancaster. Also surviving are 44 grandchildren and 69 great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were Julia Ann Beiler, Samuel E. Zook; three grandchildren; five siblings: John, Emanuel, Jonas, Mary, and Elizabeth Zook.

The funeral was held at Weavertown A.M. Church.

Zook, Emma S., 75, of Mifflin, PA, died at home Oct. 16, 2008. She was born March 28, 1933, at Belleville, daughter of the late Simon J. and Susie (Bawel) Peachey. Emma was lovingly cared for by her daughter, Amy, since having a stroke in May of 2004.

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

On Nov. 13, 1952, she was married to Mark L. Zook, who preceded her in death March, 2001. Their ten surviving children are: Susan (Harry) Yoder, Aroda, VA; Loretta (John) Hostetler, Reedsville; Norman R. Zook, Mifflin; Lucy (Enos) Kurtz, Adams, NY; Rosa (Marvin) Nisly, Hutchinson, KS; Wilma (Daniel) Stoltzfus, Lewisburg; Marcus J. Zook, Mifflin; Mary G. Zook, Burgettstown; Jesse M. Zook, Mifflin; and Amy C. Zook, Mifflin. Other survivors are 64 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by one son, Delmar E. Zook, Dec. 30, 2001, and one grandson, Andrew James Zook, Sept. 26, 1982.

She is survived by three brothers: Eli, Ezra, and Sylvanus Peachey, all of Belleville; and two sisters: Malinda, Belleville; and Amelia Graber, Fort Wayne, IN.

The funeral was held at Valley View Church Oct. 20, with Enos Kurtz, Ezra Peachey, Eli King, Jr., and Matthew Peachey serving. Earl Peachey was in charge of the committal at Locust Grove Cemetery.



observations

Nebraska enacted a “safe haven” law that was designed to keep unwanted newborn babies from being dumped into trash bins or other dangerous places. The law failed to specify an age limit. This oversight has allowed parents to abandon near-

ly three dozen children including some as old as seventeen. Included in this number are teenagers from several other states. Nebraska state legislators met in special session on Nov. 14 to address this unforeseen parental problem.



The Wichita Eagle (1-14) reports that in Kansas more than 850 children await adoption. Nationwide that number is 129,000.



Tradition is a neutral word. To the Christian this simply means that the value of a given practice may be determined in light of the authority of the Word. The Scriptures remind us repeatedly that a long-standing practice becomes a serious hindrance when it is held to be more important than the Word of God. There are other dangerous attitudes involving traditions.

Let us remember that good traditions are to be appreciated and preserved. Dangers with traditions are two-fold: One is to assume that a practice, especially an old one, is always unworthy of preservation. Another faulty attitude is to assume that a new practice is better simply because it is new. (2 Thessalonians 2:15.)

The word “culture” is not found in the King James Version of the

Bible. But to me, it has a very similar meaning to “tradition.” Both have reference to the collective practices of specific groups of people. The common danger with these terms is the human tendency of attaching importance to either the definition of culture or tradition meanings that compromise the Word and the Spirit of Christ.

It seems unfortunate that some people seem very open to certain new practices of worship because our older pattern is seen as “just cultural.” To be willing to examine a new practice with the same standard as an older practice would give evidence of wanting what is right above all else.

Twin foundation stones are simply these: God’s word is truth and Jesus Christ is Lord. (John 17:17; Philip-pians 2:11) Any tradition or cultural practice should pass this basic examination. 1 Corinthians 15:58 reminds us that stability without stagnation is a worthy and realistic ideal.



Since the above item was written, *Mennonite Weekly Review* (11-24-08) reported that there are about 100 different cultures in the global Mennonite family.

We are not called to referee the lifestyles of people with whom we have no connection. But to be salt and light is a Christian ideal in any

culture. The renewed mind (Romans 12:2) should be willing to “be as different from the world as the world is different from the Bible.” (This quote is not original with me, and I don’t know where I got it.)



The election is over! Now is a good time to reflect on what it means to be in the world but not of it. A book that has come to me is entitled: *Electing Not To Vote*. Nine authors fill 125 pages from a variety of backgrounds, offering a variety of reasons for not taking part in national elections.

A local brother was questioned about this matter. He explained that before the election he prays that God would overrule. After the election, he prays for those who have been elected.



To have our plans suddenly interrupted can be helpful for us to pause, reflect and perhaps realign or sharpen our focus. When this column was partly written, we had such an experience. Hence the remainder of this exercise will take the form of a journal rather than the usual “bits and pieces” comments on various topics from a Christian perspective.

In recent weeks, my wife, Mary, has experienced varying levels of discomfort from day to day. With family counsel it was decided that

she should have a thorough examination. Our appointment was set for Nov. 14 at Galichia Medical Group in Wichita.

A week or so earlier we got word that our sister-in-law, Magdalena Beachy, 84, had suffered a massive aneurism which raised the prospect of funeral plans in Iowa. We would certainly want to be with her large family during this special time.

After Magdalena died, funeral plans were made for Monday following Mary's Friday medical appointment. It appeared to be easily possible for us to take in both events.

But Mary's examination revealed a restricted heart valve. Any plans other than hospitalization were deemed medically unacceptable. First, they would want to get her body strong enough to survive major surgery.

After eight days of medical monitoring and various measures to address her need for more stamina, the day for surgery arrived. The anesthesiologist informed us that the procedure is considered high risk.

After surgery, the surgeon was pleased at how well Mary came through the three-hour ordeal. We were relieved and very grateful. We wrongly assumed that the rest of recovery might be uneventful. Late that afternoon, we learned that the surgeon was concerned that there

was some bleeding which raised the possibility that Mary would need to return to surgery. This concerned us greatly. God answered the prayers of the church (informed by our phone relay) and an unknown number of others. Additional surgery was not needed.

At this writing (11-26), she is still in ICU (intensive care unit). The medical staff is pleased with how Mary seems to be doing. She is receiving excellent care. The little daily improvement is encouraging. At present, the road to recovery may be fairly long. But we rest in the Lord's faithfulness.

I wish to share several things about this experience with our readers:

-The prayer support and care of family and friends has been overwhelming. A common denominator of the human family is our mortality. Serious illness is a fresh reminder of that fact. This experience has renewed our awareness of the value of fervent, united prayer. The body (church) of Christ has many members. When one member suffers, others feel it and offer emotional and prayer support.

-To observe the manner in which the people here at the hospital work together for a common cause could be a valuable object lesson for many churches. The common cause is

quite simply the welfare and comfort of the patients. The patient's visiting family members are also recipients of their good will.

-The medical staff includes a Chief of Staff, who did Mary's surgery. There are many levels of staff under him. The chain of command seems clearly defined. Employees generally work with cheerful enthusiasm. They seem to go the extra mile to meet the needs of the patients.

-Sanitation is very important. There is zero tolerance for the presence of any known, unfriendly bacteria. "Spiritual bacteria" can also multiply rapidly and do untold harm.

Louisa Schmucker, a nursing student from Cedar Crest, put me in touch with a man scheduled for by-pass surgery. He had lost out in his relationship with the Lord. After some time of sharing with him from the Word, he prayed a prayer of commitment to the Lord. His operation went well and he was released soon after his surgery, apparently at peace with God.

People who have family in surgery are together in a waiting room. A mother and her seventeen-year-old son were one such contact. They im-

mediately impressed me as persons of faith. Eventually, the son shared this testimony: He said that as an adolescent he was extremely self-centered and ill-mannered. At one point his behavior was considered criminal. He was expelled from school, but the offended teacher was kind enough that he escaped prison. Confined to his home and separated from his peers, Tom Akers began to have serious thoughts. The short version is that he became a new person in Christ. As a result his parents began attending church. The mother is now a serious Christian.

We feel tremendously blessed by the large number of people who have shown their love with kind expressions and prayers.

The medical staff here generally seems "tops" to us, in terms of training, technology, and attitude. But God keeps reminding us that neither our Christian friends nor the medical persons are ultimately in charge. He reserves that place for Himself.

[As we go to press, (12-3-08), David and Mary wish to continue to be in your prayers. Mary hopes she may be permitted to come home later this week. —PLM]

—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

The Impact of Video Technology—Part two

(On the Church and the Christian Home)

Henry Blank, Madison, VA

Rational Thought

Muggeridge quoted the following lines from William Blake:

*Life's dim window of the soul,
Distorts the heavens from pole to pole.
And goads you to believe a lie,
When you see with and not through the eye.*

God has designed to see *through* the eye, not *with* the eye, that is: to see with the conscience. Television and video screen have the ability to bypass the conscience and actually goad us into believing a lie by inducing us to see only with the eye without the conscience. So we must be very careful what we set before our eyes. The Psalmist did not have television,

but he understood the power of the visual to impact the soul. He said, “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes” (Psalm 101:3).

TV and Socialization

I got the following quote off a secular website: “Sociologically speaking, television is regarded as an agent of socialization because television has power to potentially teach distinct values and norms culturally and individually. In many cases, what is viewed on television or video is what helps us to shape our opinions, beliefs, and values outside the family influence.”

This raises this question: Why does a video do such a poor job of teaching facts and yet is so effective in passing

on values? How do children learn values from their parents? For the most part, we believe this happens through passive learning, by what is “caught” rather than by what is “taught.”

Krugmann said, “Much of what is taught by the mass media involves passive learning, which is caught rather than taught, especially among young television viewers.” Why so? I believe it’s because of the suggestibility factor. When the brain becomes passive, we become readily influenced by the power of suggestion. No one is more susceptible to that suggestibility than children are. Their minds are like sponges and they tend to imitate what they see. So every time a child sits in front of a video his world view, to some extent, is being shaped by the values, the morals, the opinions and the beliefs of the creator of that film. This also applies to you and me as adults, to a lesser extent. While there is potential for good, there is also tremendous potential for harm.

False Values

The dilemma we face in this is, as one writer put it: “The values, assumptions, and world view of television programming and most of the videos that Hollywood produces is in almost every way diametrically opposed to the values and assumptions and the world view of historic, Judeo-Christian tradition.” Even

videos that have mild labels on them often contain subtle messages that are diametrically opposed to Christian values. Take, for example, the humanistic idea of the power of believing in yourself. That is a frequent and recurring theme in children’s videos. That is anti-God.

Sensuality and immorality are promoted even in “G” and “PG” ratings. An amazing occurrence of rebellion and disobedience to parents in children is treated as being alright. The viewer is even made to understand by the end of the film that the child actually makes the right decision in being disobedient and that the parent was actually wrong. The parent may see how wrong he was and ask for the child’s forgiveness. Thus rebellion is portrayed as something positive. If we accept such scenarios, we forget what God says is to be done about rebellion and may even pass it off as a joke, when God compared it to the sin of witchcraft.

Another thing that is common is if the father is present, he is often portrayed as the dunce, or at least ineffective as a father. The mother, by contrast, has it very much together. She is the dominant one, handling everything well. Why is that? I think the devil is behind it and he has an agenda to work against scriptural roles for husband and wife. Satan hates God-appointed roles and is try-

ing to destroy the work of God. I was oblivious to this for a long time.

There is also often a spiritualism present that is foreign to Christian faith. Magic, occultism, and sorcery are common themes now. It is supposedly good against bad, but it may use good magic against bad magic. You might be surprised at how many Christians recommend such films as being good for Christian families to watch. The symbolism is lifted up as the struggle of good against evil, and that there is much to be learned from it. Take the Lord of the Rings trilogy or even Harry Potter. Many Christians are watching this and saying, "This is great stuff!" A friend of mine in a conservative Mennonite church, said, "You ought to see this movie trilogy, 'Lord of the Rings.'" So I took his advice and my wife and I sat down to watch it. Well, we got part way through it, but the darkness and the oppression that came over me as I was watching that film is hard to describe." I felt I had to stop the film. I said, "I cannot deal with this stuff!" I felt a darkness that I cannot fully explain.

I believe that there are only two sources of supernatural power. The Bible says that we gain God's power primarily through prayer. Any other way of accessing supernatural power is of Satan. Occultism, necromancy, sorcery, white or black magic, and

divination are all power that is not of God, but of the devil. How can a Christian hope to gain anything good from what the Bible says is accursed? There is something about a video that has a subtle way of deceiving people. Many Christians are being deceived by this. Sorting through all this stuff that's being put out there for our children to watch is a tremendous challenge. I don't know how to do it well.

Hollywood films place us on Satan's turf. But many of the videos of Bible stories have complete distortions and misrepresentations of biblical accounts. Why is that? It may not make the story any more interesting. Is there some sinister motive behind it? Even though it's a Bible story, we can't just assume that it's something we want our children to see.

Christian Drama

Then there are Christian dramas. Some of them have a good story line and a good message. But in some of them sin is treated lightly. We come across disturbing immorality. Finding the kind of videos that are consistent with our values can be a tremendous challenge.

Fantasy

The dangerous aspects of fantasy are also very real with exposure to videos. Muggerridge calls television the greatest fabricator and conveyor

of fantasy that has ever existed. He's probably right. From his own experience, Mugeridge points out that documentary films and news stories are not even close, in most cases, to reality. He has been behind the scenes and has worked on it and knows what happens there. He quotes another source: "Nothing is so beautiful, nothing is so continually fresh and surprising, and so full of sweet and perpetual ecstasy as the good. No desert is so dreary, monotonous, and boring as evil. But with fantasy it's the other way around. Fictional good is boring and flat, while fictional evil is varied, intriguing, attractive and full of charm."

And so...

I think Christian films and videos have a place in a Christian home. You and I must make informed decisions about what we bring into our homes. We must allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in making these decisions. And, very importantly, we must be accountable to the brotherhood on these matters. If we say, "I have the maturity and good judgment to make these decisions by myself," I say to you, and I say it respectfully: "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26). I know my own susceptibility and don't trust my own heart in these matters. In Hebrews 3:13, it says, "Exhort one another daily while it is called today

lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Arthur Leonard Griffin in his book, *God's Time and Ours*, writes this, "Satan tempts us not that we might engage in positive evil, but simply accept the fact of evil, learn to live with it, come to terms with it, and maintain a discreet silence in the presence of it." Television and video has the power to desensitize us to evil and to get used to the presence of sin. Maybe you're a stronger man than I am. But I know that I'm susceptible to the deceitfulness of sin. For a long time I was blind to these things in our own home. God was trying to get through to me, but I wasn't listening.

God got through to me when He gave me a message to preach one Sunday morning that spoke to me through the story of Achan in Joshua and how Achan took things in Jericho which were forbidden. The silver and gold was to be dedicated to the temple treasury, so he was actually stealing from God. He was not sentenced to die because he stole from God, but because when he took the Babylonian garment which was an accursed thing that brought a curse on himself. In that message I pointed out that we as fathers, especially, can do the same kind of thing if we allow and bring into our homes things that God says are accursed.

In the same way we can bring harm and great damage into our homes. I mentioned videos that contain sensuality, violence, spiritualism, occultism, or rebellion—all things that God hates and that God says are accursed.

God used that message to convict me. After that message, we went home and cleaned house and had a bonfire and sat down with our children and explained to them why some of these videos had to go. What hit me like a ton of bricks was when my son said to me, “Dad, when you were preaching this morning, I was

thinking of some of the videos we have at home.” I was blinded, but my son could see it. That hit me hard as I realized that not one of us is exempt from the deceitfulness of sin. We need each other. In Romans 15:14, we are given this truth, “And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

[From a message preached at Faith Mission Fellowship, Free Union, VA. Submitted for publication by Nathan J. Yoder.]



Denver Days

Elmer Gingerich (with the help of his wife, Lavina)

Mountain View, AR

The official looking letter arrived in the mail, containing the grim command to “present yourself for Armed Forces Physical Examination to the Local Draft Board.” The summons explained where to meet, with the hour of reporting to be 4:45 a.m., January 2, 1964. Further instructions followed in fine print, such as, “if you fail to report for or submit to this examination...” definitely conveyed a no-nonsense air.

There were informational questionnaires to fill out for me, now almost 21 years old, who was “found fully acceptable for induction into the Armed Forces,” with the number 12-42-43-4, my official Selective Service Number.

Mail service was amazingly swift back

then and within a few weeks communication was satisfactorily completed between the local board, the Mennonite pastor, parents, the Personnel Director of St. Luke’s Hospital in Denver, Colorado, and last, but not least of my concerns, my betrothed, to whom I was planning to be married in April!

An older brother in the family, plus other young men already serving in the 1-W program in several hospitals in Denver, helped pave the way in securing a job. One letter stated, “We have already reached your age group for induction into the Armed Forces. The local board must receive a letter IMMEDIATELY from the employer in Denver, CO, a Selective Service System form signed, and

an application of Volunteer for Civilian Work filled out..." which let us know it was urgent to get a job lined up without delay.

They graciously held my file until Thursday, February 27, 1964. However they wrote, "If we have not heard from you by that time, your file will be mailed to State Headquarters for assignment."

Fortunately, wedding plans were not confirmed very far in advance in those days, making it quite easy to change the date to one month earlier. So it was that wedding invitations were mailed out for March 14, 1964, and it worked out just as well for our marriage as it would have a month later.

We got a letter in due time from the State Director of Selective Service of Denver, Colorado, confirming my acceptance as a New Registrant for the Civilian Work Program. I always went by the Selective Service number, with the date of employment to begin as April 6, 1964. Included was this solemn note to our Local Draft Board in Indiana, "Should he (Elmer) leave our employment before completion of the two year program, you will be notified."

It is possible that with the correct procedures we might have been excused from serving in the 1-W program with my becoming a married man. However, with the blessing of parents and the church, we felt God would have us go ahead and serve two years at St. Luke's Hospital in Denver.

With few apprehensions we sorted through our wedding gifts and personal belongings, storing some and packing necessities into our little Studebaker Lark. We headed for Denver, two weeks after our wedding day.

In retrospect, we feel humbly grateful to God and His angels who must have been hovering over us in our blissful ignorance! City life was new to both of us, and we were rather naïve concerning adjustments we might face. After all, we felt God had led us there; we had each other and there were many other 1-W's serving in the twenty-plus hospitals in Denver, including two couples from our home church: Woodlawn, Goshen, Indiana. What more could we ask for?

Like any newlyweds, we eagerly unpacked our things and a little upstairs apartment became home for us. Initially, I worked as an orderly "on the floor" and then in the surgery department, becoming acquainted with elevators and locations to deliver large carts of food trays to various floors. At that time the hospital had a total capacity of 449 adult beds and 60 bassinets for babies.

We soon became aware that not everyone in this world is as honest and trustworthy as the people we grew up with. Although we attended several sessions of 1-W orientation back in Elkhart, Indiana, we were quite unprepared to be firm enough with salesmen who delighted in presenting their enticing demonstrations to these gullible newcomers. We were grateful for the sound advice of the 1-W counselor, a Mennonite man living in Denver, plus suggestions from the Better Business Bureau.

Other adjustments included learning always to keep our house and vehicle locked, saving dimes to do the laundry at a nearby Laundromat, budgeting our limited wages to buy groceries (there was no way to have a garden), pay house rent (\$65-\$75 per month), and eventually pay doctor and hospital bills upon the arrival

of our first child.

We enjoyed many things about our new setting. With the weather being consistently sunny in Denver, we took advantage of it and often escaped to the nearby mountains for a picnic or just to explore God's handiwork. Being young and energetic, we found many diversions from our work and city environment, visiting places of interest and making use of several attractive parks.

There were 1-W's in the city from a variety of "peace" churches, including Amish, Beachy, Conservative Mennonite, Conference Mennonite, and even some from non-Mennonite groups.

The Holdeman Mennonites had a married couple who served as houseparents for their large group of 1-W's and had their own place of worship on Sundays. We attended their services a number of times, but were more regularly present at the Glennon Heights Mennonite Church pastured by Ed Miller, who lived in Denver with his wife Ethel and family of boys. They seemed to find joy in ministering to the 1-W's in the area.

We were often invited into church people's homes for meals, and the ladies did "caring things," such as hosting baby showers for the 1-W couples who were miles away from family. We found ourselves experiencing warmth in that church fellowship...small wonder that many 1-W's chose to stay in Denver and become part of this church whose membership was made up largely of former 1-W's

With a number of other couples and singles from Beachy churches from various places living in Denver, we organized some activities of our own. Taking turns, we hosted this group in

our homes, meeting weekly when our schedules allowed it. We also tried to befriend the young Amish boys living in the city by inviting them to our apartments for meals and fellowship. They often lived together in groups with little or no supervision.

We owe much to Brother Henry Yoder, a minister from Thomas, Oklahoma, who was appointed by the larger ministerial body to be the 1-W coordinator for the western area. He took his responsibility seriously and encouraged ministers from the western states to visit Denver once a month.

When those visitors came, we got together for a worship service and often meals. Bishop Amos Nisly came from Kansas several times to conduct a communion service for us. Our parents and church family from home communities were also faithful in staying in touch, not by phone calls or e-mails, but by handwritten letters and personal visits. We may never know how much this kept us accountable during this time.

As we look back now, we feel those two years were definitely a good experience for us. It gave us some practical experience in standing for something different from the people around us. Because we were not alone as a 1-W couple, we were able to fellowship frequently with a peer group of like-minded people and that helped steady our spiritual values. Also some structured way to visit the 1-W people by responsible ones from the Beachy churches was an important element in our spiritual safety. If there should be a military draft in the future and some kind of alternative service, these are important safety factors that should be remembered.



Amy and Her Dolls

Verda Glick, Santa Ana, El Salvador

Amy Hackenberger always knew that she had been adopted. Even as a little girl, she had an intense interest in El Salvador, the land of her birth. She wanted to help Salvadoran children, but didn't know how to do it. At the age of twelve, she read *The Doll Hospital*. After reading that book, she knew exactly what she wanted to do. She began collecting and fixing dolls. She cleaned them, sewed dresses for them, and made heart-shaped tags that said, "Jesus Loves You" to hang around their necks. Later, toys for boys were added to growing collection. But how would she ever get them to El Salvador?

Then one Sunday her substitute Sunday School teacher read a story to the class. She said it had been written by her husband's aunt, who lives in El Salvador. Amy was excited! She had a link to El Salvador at last! Soon after that she and her mother started corresponding with me. Later, at their request, I began looking for Amy's birth mother. A little more than two years ago, Cruz del Pilar Gavidia wept with joy when she learned that her long-gone daughter was alive and well and wanted to meet her.

Last month Amy's parents, Scott and June Hackenberger, brought her

(now 17 years old) to El Salvador to meet Cruz and her family. Dolls shared their places in the suitcases with stuffed animals, trucks, and tractors that Amy had collected over the years. Now her best memories of the trip are the five days she spent with her Salvadoran family and the day she gave out her dolls.

At the charity hospital in Santa Ana, we went from bed to bed in all the pediatric wards. Amy made so many sick children happy that day! One little girl clung to her mother with tears streaming down her cheeks. She did NOT want to stay in the hospital to have the operation she needed. When Amy gave her a doll with golden hair, the little girl stopped crying and a happy smile lit her tear-streaked face. She let her mother put her down, and she started cuddling her doll. Other little patients sat in their cribs playing with their tractors and teddy bears.

Amy still had dolls and toys left over when she finished at the hospital, so we went to the rehabilitation center. It's hard to describe the joy she brought to the crippled children, their mothers, and the therapists. Later, her birth mother and half brother helped her distribute toys in a school near their home. All together,

Amy gave out 78 dolls and stuffed animals, 60 trucks and tractors, 24 balls, and 200 packets containing coloring books and crayons.

Amy's back home now and has already started a new collection of toys to bring on her next trip to El Salvador. She's looking forward to seeing again the happy smiles on the faces of sick and handicapped children. If you have toys or dolls you would like to give up for adoption, you may send them to Amy's doll hospital at the following address:

Amy Hackenberger
c/o Scott Hackenberger
RR#2 Box 214A

Thompstontown, PA 17094

Besides her doll project, Amy has another interest in mind. She would like to help prepare other Salvadoran adoptees for their "reencuentros" (first meetings with their biological families). Will you pray that God will lead her and show her how to prepare to do this?

I would also like to ask you to pray for three other Salvadoran adoptees. Esther, Martha, and Rosa would like to meet their birth mothers, but those investigations are very difficult for lack of information. God can do ANYTHING, even leading us to people who seem impossible to find. He is a great God!



helpers at home

Trusting God for 2009

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

I am a woman. God has placed over me an umbrella of protection. That protection comes as I stay within God's order of authority: first God, then Christ, and then man. However, God also gives me responsibility to protect and provide for the children He placed in my care. This may be by birth, adoption or other means, such as step or foster children.

I believe we women probably deal with the issue of trusting God for the future in a different way than men do. A man is concerned about providing for the family through his job, his finances, and his spiritual resources.

A woman tends to be concerned about her child's safety, physical health, emotional security and spiritual needs.

Trusting God for our families does not end when the last child leaves home. Responsibility and concern increase as spouses and grandchildren are added to the family unit.

Other areas of a woman's life require trust. A single woman carries the concerns of providing financial stability. I must also consider my health and my future as I grow older. The world and national outlook are rather dark at this time. We have been

saddened by the terrorist attack on India in recent days. We realize that such an attack could also happen here. Is it possible not to worry or fret? It helps to realize that “worry is thinking about things we *cannot* change, concern is thinking about things we *can* change.”

The Psalmist in 91:2b mentions God as, “my God, in Him will I trust.” The big question for me then is: Will I trust God in 2009?

Trusting God for my family

I remember the different times in which I especially worried about our children when they were small. When our two oldest boys were toddlers, we lived by a creek and I feared they would fall in and drown. Later we moved to Belize and I worried about the poisonous snakes. Many other situations in our lives caused me to worry. Finally, I realized that I need to trust God. I memorized Romans 6:1 and 2, replacing the word “sin” with “worry.” Every night, I repeated these verses before I fell asleep. I praise God for victory as I repeated these verses many times over the years. I also learned that God loves my family more than I do and that He wants what is best for them. We mothers must do all we can to protect our children but when it is out of our control, we must trust God.

Trusting God to meet my emotional needs


A woman’s emotional needs are unique. We go through different cycles

of life and sometimes we do not even understand ourselves. Hormonal changes affect us. We tend to expect others to meet our needs. This may include husbands, friends, and even our children. Demanding causes pressures and frustrations in our relationships. God is saying to us, “Trust Me; I am all you need.” I do not imply that we do not need family and friends. Neither am I saying that we should not be available to help each other. Rather, we must not demand others to supply what only God is able to provide.

Trusting God for difficult situations

Can I trust God for the difficult situations that come into my life? This may include wayward family members, children with special physical or emotional needs, relationship problems, my own health or the health of a loved one. We have probably all experienced pain (physical or emotional) at one time or another in life. We do not want pain and suffering.

Let us remember that God sees our pain and He cares. He also sees our tears. He puts our tears in a bottle, according to Psalm 56:8. I believe He is waiting to pour the bottle out in blessings over our heads. These blessings do not always come in the way we expect, but they may enable us to better encourage others in their situation.

I want to trust God and allow Him to use me in 2009. Will you join me? 

Live With No Regrets

Anita Yoder, Ligonier, IN

“Guess what, Sis!” Carl burst into the kitchen with a wide grin. “I’ve got a life motto.”

“A *what?*” Shelly turned to face him.

“A life motto,” he repeated.

“How did you come up with that?” she asked, astonished.

“Well, today in school Bro. Andrew told us to take a piece of paper and instead of Language Arts, we’re gonna do something different. He told us to write down three or four groups of words, verses or mottoes that we like—that motivate us. I sat a while and then I wrote something you told me to do recently when I almost let Skippy, that root-eating fish, die. ‘Always ask an authority on the subject, remember? I bought that fish and didn’t feed it, thinking it didn’t need any food. I found out I was mistaken and they actually swim in circles, even while they are dying slowly.’”

“Yeah, what else did you write?” Shelly asked, interested.

“I wrote down, ‘Live, Love, and Laugh’ ‘cause I like to do that. Then I happened to think about Grandpa dying and how I didn’t go see him that last time just because I was too lazy to get dressed and go with Mom and Dad. He died and I didn’t have a chance to see him alive that last time, so I wrote ‘Live With No Regrets.’ Bro. Andrew told us think about what we had written and choose the one that means the most to us. I picked the last one, ‘Live With No Regrets.’ He told us to keep it as a life motto and write it out in our notebook and think about it daily.”

“So I’ll ask myself, ‘Which I will regret? Doing it or not doing it?’ And whichever one I’d regret—that’s my answer,” Carl looked thoughtful.

“That should make your decisions really easy, don’t ya’ think?” Shelly asked.

“If I don’t forget it, it will,” Carl acknowledged.



Facts do not cease to exist when they are ignored.

Dear youth,

Have you ever thought about how much love you have for strangers? This month's writer addresses an issue that

deserves some long, hard thinking.

God's blessing to you as you love your neighbor in 2009.

—EE

Who Do We Love?

Javan Lapp, Gordonville, PA

While visiting historical Anabaptist sites in Europe this past summer, I was taken aback by many European Christians' attitudes towards Muslims. I heard snide comments about the number of Muslims that are moving into Western Europe and the way this has stiffened the competition for employment. I wondered why Muslims could not be viewed as fellow human beings made in the image of God. I wondered why Muslims moving into Europe could not be seen as an excellent opportunity to reach them with the good news of Jesus. But then, I realized, that often I do not respond in love for other people either.

Sometimes our own American Mennonite communities value and defend our subculture so much that we have a hard time loving those of a different ethnic background. This is especially true of groups whom we see as a threat to our own survival in the local community—be they Arabs, Indians, or Mexicans. This grieves

me, as does the fact that racist jokes and fear-spreading stories full of lies about America's new President-elect have circulated in our Mennonite communities.

Our suspicion of other ethnic groups, however, is not only a result of our concern about our Mennonite subculture. We have found it easy to define ourselves as Americans who have much at stake in a less ethnically diverse America. Thus we see multiculturalism (racial, religious, or cultural diversity within a demographic area) as a detriment rather than a blessing. It is amazingly ironic that such suspicions should be coming from a people group, who up until the last half century, were clearly ethnically German, even in language.

Perhaps it would be good to ask ourselves what our involvement in American culture wars reveals about our allegiances. How can a people who have religious reasons against saying the Pledge of Allegiance really care whether or not the mention of deity gets included into such a pledge? If

we join others in treating Muslims or Hispanics with suspicion or disdain instead of the love of God, who are we really serving? Who are we really worshiping?

All of us need to guard carefully against an idolatry of self which leads to arrogance and an attitude of superiority. Yes, it is possible to be arrogant about our relationship with Christ. Reality should teach us that knowing Jesus makes a person more compassionate, more caring, and more loving toward others.

This is why it is inconsistent when Christians use degrading and violent language to talk about atheists, evolutionists, or liberals. Discrimination always begins by labeling a group of people as not being as good as we are. The way of Christ, however, makes us the servants of all men.

This summer I, along with a group of others, had the opportunity of visiting a Muslim mosque and being involved in a lengthy dialogue with an imam. Such interaction may scare some of us, but my question was: *How can I love this man?* The approach we took was not one of debate or of trying to prove the other wrong. We tried to avoid labeling him with everything we'd heard about Muslims and what they typically believe. Instead, the group I was with listened to him. In learning to appreciate him, his deep faith (although misdirected) and the strength of his convictions, we were

able to disagree in love. Both Christians and Muslims alike left that interaction having learned more about the other. In fact, the imam told us that he wished all Christians were like us.

After that encounter, I was forced to ask myself whether my Christianity was something which boosted my American Christian identity, or whether my Christianity led me to respect the value of other people. What message do people get if we say we love them, but at the same time, our attitude reeks of "I'm so glad I'm not like you are"? What is wrong if our Christianity leads us to defend the values of right-wing, white, middle-class America?

Affirming that we worship the one, true God is quite different from worshiping Him and Him alone. Often when we look honestly at our attitudes toward our neighbors, we discover some scary realities about who we worship in addition to the one true God. When we establish limits on who we love, care for, and show mercy towards, we join the pious young man who asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"

Jesus' answer to us is like His answer was then that loving our neighbor cannot be limited to people who are like us, who share the same ethnic or political identities, or who make us comfortable. If our verbal allegiance to the Father of Jesus leaves us treating our neighbor differently than Jesus did, it is time to evaluate how many gods we are worshiping.



THOUGHT GEMS

God never imposes a duty without giving time and strength to perform it.



It is interesting that economy in size means LARGE in soap and small in cars.



We won't go far without enthusiasm, but we won't go far if that's all we have.



Never give to others an excuse that you would not be willing to accept from them.



Children in homes of poverty usually get only two food choices: "take it" or "leave it."



Strange how when you argue with a fool, he's probably doing the same thing.



A fool and his money are soon parted.



When you bury the hatchet, don't mark the burial site.



Some think they are generous who freely give advice.



Two people won't hate each other if they both love God.

(USPS 767-160)
Calvary Messenger
2673 Township Rd. 421
Sugarcreek, OH 44681

Periodicals