



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

Galatians 6:14

MARCH 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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Editor: Paul L. Miller
 7809 S. Herren Rd., Partridge, KS 67566
 Ph/Fax 620-567-2286
 paulmiller@bttskynet.net

Assistant Editor: Elmer D. Glick
 RR 1 Box 49-C, Augusta, WV 26704
 elmerg@frontiernet.net

Associate Editor: David L. Miller
 P O Box 73, Partridge, KS 67566

Contributing Editors:
 Simon Schrock
 Enos D. Stutzman
 Aaron Lapp

Missions Editor: Floyd Stoltzfus
 186 Skyline Dr., New Holland, PA 17557

Youth Messages Editor: Ernest Eby
 4812 Hwy. 5, Mountain View, AR 72560
 ec.eby.ar@gmail.com

Junior Messages Editor:
 Mrs. Anita Yoder
 10393 N 1100 W, Ligonier, IN 46767

Helpers at Home Editor:
 Mrs. Mary June Glick
 1080 Return Church Rd., Seneca, SC 29678

Circulation Manager/Treasurer:
 Mark I. Beachy
 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW
 Dundee, OH 44624
 markbeachy@afo.net
 330-852-2982

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GOD

Ruth Yvonne Yoder, Holmesville, OH

Who has measured out the waters
In the hollow of His hand?
Who has called together seas
And let appear dry land?

Who hung the earth on nothing?
Created darkness from the light?
Set in motion years and seasons?
Dividing the day from the night?

Who fashioned every creature?
Who caused the rain to fall?
Who set the rainbow in the cloud?
It is God—who made us all!

God Almighty then remembered
Our great need from Adam's fall.
His dear Son He sent to earth,
To bear the sins of all.

O, ye brethren and dear sisters,
Do you believe in Jesus Christ?
He's the one who shed on Calvary
His blood to pay the price!

[With adaptation by the editor] 

Good Sports

Paul indicated to Timothy that “bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things” (1 Timothy 4:8). Do these comments of Paul touch the youth sports scene of our time?

As you analyze the two following statements, do you see them as being closely connected to each other?

1. Even though the rest of the economy has slowed down significantly and more American families than ever live below the poverty line, the insanity continues of awarding professional athletes multi-million dollar annual contracts.

2. “The ABC A.M. Church youth group is planning a volleyball game on Friday evening, from 7:30 to 10, with refreshments afterward at the church.”

Some time ago, I asked for reader response on another issue. I must have asked the wrong questions,

because I got no written response. This time I’m trying to make my thoughts clearer by asking only very basic questions. These are my questions:

• *How is participating in local, low-competition, non-professional sports different from involvement in professional sports?*

• *Does support for church youth recreation contribute to an obsession with professional sports?*

• *What constitutes a wholesome level of interest in sports for Christian youth?*

• *How should deeply-committed, Christian youth balance sports with outreach activities?*

Please give this some thought and put it concisely in writing. I need to hear from you no later than April 20. I hope to share readers’ thoughts in the June issue of *Calvary Messenger*. Thank you!

—PLM 

*Kind words may be brief,
but their echoes are endless.*

Re: The Impact of Video Technology, Dec. '08 and Jan. 09

Dear Bro. Paul,
Christian greetings....

Some comments on the articles: "The Impact of Video Technology." Many dangers were presented about using videos, TV, and films. Quotes from the article: "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 have the power to desensitize us to evil and get used to the presence of sin."

In light of these statements, as well as the teaching of the Scriptures to avoid and abstain from all appearance of evil, and the leading of the Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, "Christian" films and videos do not have a place in the Christian home. The articles state otherwise, which is misleading and contradictory.

In His service

Lehman Martin, Worthington, IN

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Re: Who Do We Love? (Youth section, January, '09)

Hello, Brother Paul,
Greetings of peace....

I enjoy reading *Calvary Messenger* with its interesting and easy-to-read format. There's something for young and old....

I want to comment on the article by Javan Lapp, "Who Do We Love?" This is an area that we as 21st century Anabaptists will have to address should we desire to progress and be effective.

There is a subtle prejudice among various Anabaptists toward others whose color, religion, ethnic background, or culture is different from ours.... Notice I did not include the word "race." In Acts 17, Paul underlines the creation principle of one blood, with many shades of color caused by varying amounts of pigment in the skin—but still all one blood.

Allow me to suggest two ways in which we will need to respond to this article and this problem: In the words of the late John J. Overholt, in his introduction to the *Christian Hymnary*:

#1 – This demands a return to sanity, (*resipiscenta*: a growing wise again), a total change of mind, purpose, opinion, inclination, attitude, and direction, a thorough brokenness and yieldedness before God, and a casting of ourselves

unreservedly in obedient faith upon Jesus Christ our Lord.

#2 – We must return to our first love (Revelation 2) to better love God and our neighbor, we will need to move forward in unconventional courage, (“offensive,” if you please, versus “defensive”) and break down the walls of prejudice and dis-ease” (or disease?), through adopting children of color, cultivating personal friendships, inviting them for meals in our homes, attending their social functions and visiting their churches to sing and preach and encourage the things that remain. When is the last time we visited a congregation of people of color?

This will be one of the topics at the March 13-15, 2009, third Annual Anabaptist Identity

Conference, to be held at the Tourist Mennonite Church, Pinecraft, Sarasota, Florida. These meetings can be listened to on the phone conference line. Please call 941-342-1325 or e-mail us: hsofgrace6550@yahoo.com for more information. This year’s speakers include: John D. Martin, David Graber, Matthias Overholt, Jason Gingerich, Dean Taylor, Chester Weaver, and others.

May God bless you and your ministry.

For Christ and souls,

Nathan Overholt, Sarasota, FL 

the bottom line

The Middle Class—Part One

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Proposition: The church should increase the number of people in the financial middle class.

The Bible speaks encouragingly of the poor, and warningly to the rich. There was likely a much smaller percentage of the middle class in early American times. With some exceptions, most of the people were poor in many time periods of the past.

The promise of peace and prosperity in America attracted people by droves.

Many sold what they had and spent it for passage to the New World. Some came as indentured servants. Those, first of all, needed to work to pay off their trans-Atlantic excursion.

Colonial America soon became known as the one place on earth where the platform of government, industry, commerce, and employment were modeled after Bible principles. Not so much because the focus was on becoming a Christian nation,

but rather because those ideals were fair and equitable and the founding fathers were determined to turn away from monarchy and aristocracy to a new democracy.

Peace prevailed. Prosperity resulted. The rise to middle class was in place. The work ethic was strong. Honesty and thrift caused the rise to be sustained. Godly virtues were instilled with earnestness in the next generations.

The industrial revolution of the early 1900's excited a new era of prosperity and *ease*. For centuries, prosperity (having enough) and peace (contentment) were enough. Then the quest became the drive for prosperity (large assets) and ease (time off to enjoy the good life).

In too many cases, the Christian Church has also gradually traded the quest for prosperity and peace for the worldly model of prosperity and *ease*. Elevating people to the financial middle class has made it possible. What was exceptional for the rich in 1929 is now considered acceptable—even desirable—among many Mennonites in 2009. Expensive homes, fancy cars, a sporting life, and pleasure pursuits are earmarks of the life of *ease*.

The life of ease and *the life of peace* are not the same. Peace brings contentment. Ease brings restlessness. The life of ease always looks for more. It is the Solomon agenda: try

everything new under the sun.

What the proposition stated at the beginning of this article was that an expanding middle class is desirable for the Christian Church. The rich are open to helping the poor. The poor are inclined to work; frugality and thrift are valued for their own sakes and to help the poor who are not able-bodied, or had larger losses. The middle class can “go it on their own.”

In the caste system in India, the rich still control those in a lower caste. In some other countries the rich subdue the poor and intend to keep them that way. Some repressive governments have risen in power and control through subjugating the poor.

Christianity and governments who have administered favorably under timeless Bible principles have given rise to the development of middle class majorities. Civil governments have contributed to making opportunities to raise the standard of living. When this is coupled with the Christian church's application of social and financial principles, a further rise in the standard of living is realized.

Consequently, there has been a significant increase among both the Amish and Mennonite groups of rising to *upper middle income* levels. This rise has brought on the specter of a class above the middle income group. They are THE RICH

by American definition.

John Wesley was instrumental in the conversion of many people to Christianity. He observed that when a man becomes saved, his wealth and goods increase. It happens by work and thrift, and sensible and godly living. It affects both ends—how money is earned and how it is spent.

Quite frequently, some in government assume social ills can be remedied by setting up more taxes for the rich in order to give more to the poor. Every generation discovers by trial and error that it is not quite that simple. Some journalists are saying the welfare system tends to keep poor people poor, with welfare creating “a holding pen for the poor.”


Laws make funding welfare obligatory, recipients may soon see it as entitlement (their birthright). The rich think the poor receive their portion by law from government welfare without working for it. The rich pay their taxes. Their conscience is relieved. The rest is theirs to amass through investments.

One of the larger challenges for us is to direct our people into reasonable

and responsible stewardship; especially now, when employment and business are in a reduction mode.

When will the down turn bottom out and turn up again? No one knows. We cannot reach back into history to find a parallel to these times.

It is time to re-think our status as middle class, upper middle class and rich Christians. It is time to re-evaluate our current life style. We certainly should not despise the poor. But neither should they despise those who have more. God can use us all for good.

The Bottom Line is that the middle class in the church has done inestimable good in these last two generations in local growth through Christian schools, church expansion, relief work, and mission witness. Secular media is saying America must scale down its life style to avoid national bankruptcy. We have tremendous, unprecedented opportunity in our Gospel witness to take the lead in a realistic adjustment of our own life styles. It may well be that doing so is the key to avoid our own spiritual bankruptcy. 

One way to adjust the ego is to read the “help wanted” ads and realize how many of those jobs we could not do well.

I Laughed Aloud

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

While waiting for a traffic light to turn green, I glanced at a front-page article in the conservative newspaper I had just purchased at CVS. In bold letters the article proclaimed, “President Bush’s Approval Rating Holds Steady.” It further reported that the president’s approval was holding with the public at about 31%, which cast doubts on the prospects of massive Democrat gains on Election Day (November 4, ’08). I laughed out loud to myself. I doubt that it was really that funny, but what made it seem funny was that earlier that morning, I had read in a liberal newspaper: “President Bush’s Overall Rating Hits Another Record Low.” It commented, “Twenty-eight percent disapprove of the way he is handling his job.”

What was funny about that? Depending on which paper I read, I get a positive impression, and depending on which paper I read, I get a negative impression. Which paper was reporting the facts? Which one was telling the truth?

My mind went to a proverb I have been trying to practice. “The first to plead his case seems just, until another comes and examines him”

(Proverbs 18:17 NASB). Amplified states it like this: “He who states his case first seems right, until his rival comes and cross-examines him.”

Then I thought of situations we face in church life that really are not funny. Offenses arise in our relationships with other believers. We redeemed sinners still offend each other even in our own fellowships. We still do some rather selfish things. We treat each other in ways that appear wrong to those looking on. Often comments of others are not heard in the way we thought we meant them.

It is not unusual for conflicts to arise between two people. In fact, it happens often. Each one feels right about his view, his behavior and his response. Each one feels his perception of a given situation is the right one.

I hear an emotional account from one side of the conflict that is told according to that person’s perspective. Soon I feel sympathy, and maybe a little anger toward the supposed offender. I think: *How could a Christian treat a fellow believer so inconsiderately? What was that person thinking?*

This changes dramatically when I

follow the principle of Proverb 18:17. When I hear the account from the other person I may no longer have such a clear-cut analysis. What does become clear is that truth is seldom one-sided. The scope and size of the offenses and conflicts are often very serious. They are not laughing matters.

I'm trying to remember to withhold judgment. Hastily taking sides without hearing and considering the other side can cost a good relationship. Taking one side at the expense of the other will likely weaken all relationships involved, but attempting to find the real truth of a two-sided issue can enhance relationships. On the other hand, if neither side wins in their argument of how it was and no agreement is reached, we risk losing relationships on both sides. That is not a laughing matter. There are actually plenty of stories about preachers and the decisions they made in haste.

When politicians or neighbors we aren't fond of do not meet our code of behavior and ethics, we can let our emotions get in the way of rational thought. Let us not form opinions and attitudes from the first person to make his case. The news media reports stories from their perspective. Those they report on also have their side of the story, which could change the picture immensely.

Even a best friend gives his side of the story. That is when it is tempting to take sides and get emotionally involved on behalf of your friend. That is when you really need to examine the other part of the story.

Several important principles to remember when someone delivers a bad report are given in Scripture:

"He who gives an answer before he hears it is a folly and a shame to him" (Proverbs 18:13 NASB).

"Do not go out hastily to argue your case; otherwise what will you do in the end, when your neighbor puts you to shame?" (Proverbs 25:8 NASB).

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:19,20 KJV).

Three things are helpful in resolving a conflict:

Be quick to listen. Listen to the offended. Hear the hurt and the offense.

Be slow to speak in agreement. If you are to be involved, do not pass judgment until the offender has been heard. Be quick to hear both sides and slow to voice judgment.

Anger from either side will do little to bring a righteous resolution. It complicates reaching any resolution at all.

Abraham Lincoln is quoted to have

said, “So hard it is to have a thing understood as it really is.” How true!

Human nature is reflected in the two newspapers. We tell the story the way we want it to be heard. We see and tell things through our experiences and opinions. We like for

others to agree with us. However, the Scripture calls believers to a higher level of truth telling. Taking sides without hearing the pain of the other is not a laughing matter. Truth-telling must be taken seriously.

[Written on Sept. 19, 2008.]



Insights Regarding the Woman’s Veiling/Covering

Linford Bontrager, Goshen, IN

The veiling or covering, as taught in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, is an important symbol instituted by God. This symbol is to express a spiritual principle and to remind His children of fundamental truths which are effective and have been established for His glory and for our happiness, success, and blessing. The truths shown include authority, headship order, submission, and protection.

The long hair [“uncut” –PLM] serves as a natural covering. In this passage, however, verses 5, 6, 7, and 13 speak of another covering. In these verses, if the hair is to be considered the covering, it makes no sense, grammatically. Verse 6 would be saying, “...if a woman does not cover her head (has no hair), then she should also have her hair cut off (hair that isn’t there).”

The veiling or covering of a

woman’s head (with long hair) is a sign or symbol that manifests the government of God. The veiling should be recognized as having spiritual significance. It is not to be worn for fashion, warmth, or occupational protection. It speaks of divine authority structure. It testifies that He is supreme and that the church (both male and female) are submitting themselves to God’s government. It says: “I accept God’s appointed position for me. I am under the authority of another.”

The phrase “because of the angels” indicates that the veiling is for all time and is not just cultural (for the Corinthian time and setting). It bears a strong testimony to the angels, both God’s and the fallen angels. God’s governmental order is being displayed to angelic majesties. Angels are not all-knowing, therefore God sometimes

uses outward symbols for angels to see and realize an otherwise invisible reality. They often operate by signs. God's holy angels minister on behalf of and for the good of His children, the saints of all time. Satan, however, despises and persistently opposes the matter of the woman's head covering. It puts him to shame. God's obedient children are doing what Satan failed to do: submit to God's authority.

In His death and resurrection, Jesus disarmed principalities and powers. He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it (Colossians 2:15). Thus Satan is constantly reminded of his defeat at the cross.

A woman covering her head is making a public display of this victory. Satan hates for the church to observe this ordinance and will do all he can to stop it. It is a visible sign and reminder of his failure to block the plan of salvation (1 Corinthians 2:8). It also speaks of the Lord's continued workings in and through His beloved bride, the church. See Ephesians 1:18-23; 3:8-13, especially verse 10.

God wants His governmental headship principles to be exemplified by the sisters of the church as a testimony to the world and the heavenly powers. What a privilege and blessing women have in this responsibility to show God's governmental system. The church

is the bride of Christ. The woman, a type of the church, does not cover her head merely for herself, she does it representatively. She represents the church—both male and female—before God. She typifies the Bridegroom (Christ) and Bride (the Church) relationship.

The headship veiling does not rest on superiority or inferiority. It speaks of God's headship arrangement. **Jesus, the Son of God, is submissive to the Father in function, but is equal to Him in nature and essence. Likewise, also wives are submissive to their husbands in function and administration, while being equal to them in moral and spiritual nature.** (Galatians 3:28). [Note also 1 Peter 3:1-7, especially verse 7. -PLM] God's government or headship structure between the genders is a matter of sphere and place, not of quality, personal value, or importance.

God's commands are for our well being and when they are followed, we are in position to receive His greater blessing. When the headship veiling is not practiced, it is similar to ignoring baptism or communion. Instead of thinking of their observance as "religious bondage," we may observe them simply as an expression of true spiritual freedom that comes with simple obedience to His Word.

In such obedience, He gives us a glimpse into some of the mysteries

and ways in which He protects His faithful children from the enemy. Furthermore, it is important that we live a life that is in accord with what it symbolizes.

We recognize and conclude that God intends and desires that the teaching of the headship veiling is to be observed by His people till Jesus returns.



Raising Teenagers

Ethlyn Young, Cayo, Belize

As mothers of teenagers, we must recognize the big responsibility God has entrusted to us. Daily we must cry out to Him for wisdom as we seek to guide our children in His way.

When do we begin training? At birth, or even before. Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it;” and Ephesians 6:4 instructs us to, “...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Deuteronomy 6:7 shows us the importance of consistently teaching our children in our everyday living. Although our children may grow up in a godly home with Christian parents and a good school, difficulties will come because we live in a sinful environment.

Ways we can help our teens:

- Keep the lines of communication open—good communication begins at birth.

- Give them your full attention.

- Be sensitive to their needs. You don’t need to be your children’s “buddy” but the adult figure and mentor in their life.

- Don’t take their cares lightly. Teenagers are sometimes adults and sometimes children. To your teens, each situation is serious.

- Listen. Sometimes we get busy; however, take time to allow them to talk. Don’t interrupt; you’ll have your turn to talk. They especially like to talk when they come home. Reserve that time to listen. Don’t be “too tired” even if the hour is late.

- Be consistent. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. Set your standards and live by them.

- Do not argue with them.

- Do not bend or break your policy or rules. When you do, teens interpret this as giving in and they will expect you to keep giving in.

- Teens should not make weighty or major decisions alone. Guide them into making wise decisions.

Spending *time* with your teens

must be a priority. Training your children is more important than earning bread!

•Spend quality time with your children:

- sew with them
- go fishing with them
- go shopping together
- cook with them (sons, too! 😊)

Whatever you choose to do together, make it time *well spent*.

Give them lots of work and responsibility.

•Offer praise! When our children fail, we are ready with correction, but too often when they do right, we fail to note it.

Support the authorities that are over your teens. Never allow your teens to speak disrespectfully about them. Adults can be wrong, but if you side with your children against their authorities, they will eventually turn against you.

Never allow your children to think they don't need to obey church authorities. Support your church leaders; it will pay off in the end.

Parents, when things go wrong, don't just sweep them under the rug. Don't be afraid to say,

“I'm sorry; I failed.” By seeking forgiveness, you pave the road for right relationships.


Tell your children you love them. Give them lots of hugs. Show affection. If they don't find it at home, they will go somewhere else for it.

Teach them the seriousness of dating. Talk about what to look for in finding a marriage partner. Be open and frank when answering their questions.

•Show an interest in their lives.

•Pray! Prayer has much to do with your child's future. Pray with them. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Teach by example. More is caught than taught. If you want to see your children dress modestly, you must dress modestly. If you want your children to love God's Word, they must see you enjoying God's Word. If you want to be a prayer warrior, they must see you pray.

[Submitted by Marian Stoltzfus, who wrote the article from notes taken in a women's workshop in Hattieville, Belize. Marian said she was blessed in hearing it and wanted readers of Calvary Messenger to share in the experience. Ethlyn Young speaks from experience as a mother.] 

Some parents seem to forget that other people have perfect children, too.

Darkness and Light

A. W. Tozer

There are two degrees of darkness, according to our Lord: First is the darkness that is absolute—where there never has been any light. That is the darkness of the heathen. But the second is another degree of darkness and more intense—the darkness that follows rejected light.

What the combined forces of hell can't do, the church can do.

Love of money, love of the world, unconfessed iniquity, private sins that no one dreams we have—these are destroying the Church of Christ.

These are the words of the Savior: “When the light that is in you turns to darkness, how great is that darkness!”

(Adapted from *The Tozer Pulpit*, Christian Publications, Harrisburg, 1967, p. 25, 26.)



Chosen—Why?

A. R. Tippett

The concept of Israel as the chosen people does not imply a certain divine favoritism, as some seem to think, but *an opportunity of grace, a calling that involved the assumption of the servant role among the nations.* It

was the fact that they had interpreted themselves as special objects of God's favor, and rejected the servant role, that led to their own rejection.”

[From *Church Growth and the Word of God*, 1970.]



As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.

marriages

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

Helmuth-Yoder

Bro. Conrad Duane, son of Raymond and Esther Helmuth, Somerville, TN, and Sis. Amy Darlene, daughter of Tim and Treva Yoder, Whiteville, TN, at Oakland, TN, for Whiteville Mennonite on Aug. 1, 2008, by LaVern Eash.

Helmuth-Wengerd

Bro. Nevin Earl, son of L. J. and Rosemary Helmuth, Whiteville, TN, and Sis. Christina Marie, daughter of Simon and Clara Wengerd, Whiteville, TN, at Henderson, TN, for Whiteville Mennonite on July 11, 2008, by LaVern Eash.

Schlabach-Martin

Bro. Norman, son of Leroy and Betty Schlabach, Guthrie, KY, and Sis. Doreen, daughter of Lowell and Laurie Martin, Auburn, KY, at Franklin Mennonite Church, Auburn, KY, Nov. 29, 2008, by Lavern Eash.

Troyer-Miller

Bro. Stanley, son of Melvin and Lois Troyer, Advance, MO, and Sis. Melissa, daughter of Howard and Catherine Miller, Bloomfield, MO, at Second General Baptist Church for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church on Nov. 7, 2008, by Melvin Troyer.

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Brian and Valerie (Stoltzfus), Auburn, KY, second child, first dau., Elizabeth Cheyanne, Aug. 19, 2008.

Beachy, Darius and Rosalia (Quevedo), Barboursville, VA, first child and dau., Chloe Natyah, Dec. 26, 2008.

Beiler, Michael and Darlene (Zook), Ronks, PA, first child and son, Miguel Jose, Dec. 12, 2008.

Bontrager, Dan and Dorcas (Coblentz), Linneus, MO, second child, first dau., Diana Amanda, Jan. 18, 2009.

Byler, Joseph and Dianne (Overholt), Franklin, KY, second child and son, Charles Duane, Dec. 12, 2008.

Chupp, Mitch and Rita (Gingerich), Irwin, OH, fourth child, second son, Reid Jenson, Jan. 10, 2009.

Hershberger, Conrad and Esther (Koop), Stuarts Draft, VA, third child, first dau., Margaret Jewel Faith, Nov. 7, 2008.

Jantzi, Vernon and Jennifer (Mullet), Milverton, ON, fourth child, third son, Landon Eric, Jan. 12, 2009.

Kauffman, Anthony Lewis and Jody Lynn (Riehl), Bird-in-hand, PA, fourth and fifth children, second and third daughters, twins, Megan Lynnelle and Melanie Leanne, Jan. 22, 2009.

Kauffman, Mark and Rosanna (Raber), Millersburg, OH, fourth child, second son, James Jay, Dec. 26, 2008.

Kensinger, Caleb and Jessica (Yoder), Sarasota, FL, second child and son, Michael David, Jan. 19, 2009.

Kuepfer, Jeff and Rhoda (Wagler), Luc-know, ON, seventh child, third dau., Hannah Rose, Jan. 12, 2009.

Kuhns, Vernon and Carol (Kauffman), Sullivan, IL, third child and dau., Jamie Nicole, Dec. 7, 2008.

Mast, Jason and Jessica (Miller), Mountain View, AR, first child and son, Justin Odell, Dec. 30, 2008.

Mast, Merlin and Catherine (Miller), Bolivar, TN, second child, first dau., Caroline Alta, Nov. 3, 2008.

Mast, Stephen and Heidi (Yoder), Advance, MO, fifth child, second son, Matthias Allen, Dec. 31, 2008.

Miller, Jason and Anna (Troyer), Quaker City, OH, third child, second dau., Candence Anne, Nov. 6, 2008.

Miller, Jerrel and Karen (Swarey), Stuarts Draft, VA, twins, second and third daus., Helen Patrice and Allison Pearl, Dec. 28, 2008.

Miller, Virgil and Matilda (Nissley), Freeport, OH, third child, second son, Harrison Virgil, June 4, 2008.

Nisly, Arlyn and Brenda (Nisly), Partridge, KS, fourth child, second son, Jariah Mitchell, Jan. 23, 2009.

Nissley, Wayne and Sharon (Miller), LaRussell, MO, fifth child, second son, Garth Micah, Dec. 31, 2008.

Overholt, Tim and Joyce (Troyer), Adairville, KY, presently serving in Haiti, fourth child, first son, Thaddeus Clay, Dec. 1, 2008.

Stoltzfus, Elvin and Dorothy (Schrock), Honey Brook, PA, sixth child, third son, Alexander Joseph, Jan. 5, 2009.

Stutzman, Paul and Carol (Miller), Arthur, IL, third child, first dau., Janae Lynne, Dec. 7, 2008.

Yoder, James and Anna (Hostetler), Middleburg, PA, third child, second dau., Hope Renae, Dec. 5, 2008.

Yoder, Joel and Estela (Orellana), Shipshewana, IN, fifth child, fourth dau., Emily Elizabeth, Jan. 28, 2009.

Yoder, Keith and Julia Ann (Stoll), Whiteville, TN, first child and dau., Jenna Lee, Aug. 14, 2008.

Yoder, Randall and Serena (Sommers), Free Union, VA, third child, second son, Elisha Randall, Jan. 18, 2009.



ordinations

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

Bro. Devon Miller, 31, Brookfield, MO, was ordained to the ministry on Sept. 28, 2008, at Locust Creek Mennonite Church. Preordination messages were brought by Leroy Kauffman, Burkesville, KY. The charge was given by Rudy Overholt, assisted by Leroy Lapp and Leroy Kauffman. Sharing in the lot were Eddie Troyer, Dan Helmuth, and James Weaver.

obituaries

Troyer, Melvin, 80, of Sugarcreek, Ohio, died at his home after an extended illness on Dec. 15, 2008. He was born at Sugarcreek, son of the late Lester M. and Katie (Troyer) Troyer.

He was a member of Maranatha Fellowship Church, Sugarcreek.

On Dec. 4, 1952, he was married to Alma Yoder. She survives.

Survivors are five sons: Merle (Jan) Troyer, Sarasota, FL; Edwin (Frances) Troyer, Millersburg; John (Ruth) Troyer, Mark (Freda) Troyer, and Martin (Millie) Troyer, all of Sugarcreek; three daughters: Nettie (Collier) Berkshire, Chiang Mai, Thailand; Elmina (Steve) Miller, Millersburg; and Bethany Troyer, Sugarcreek. Also surviving are 23

grandchildren; four great grandchildren; five sisters: Emma (Allen) Sommers, Tennessee; Alma (Monroe) Beachy, Mattie Schlabach, Malinda (Roy) Mast, and Laura (Jacob) Hershberger, all of Sugarcreek; and two brothers: Menno Troyer of Ashland and Lester Troyer, Jr., of Stone Lake, WI.

He was preceded in death by a son, James Troyer and a daughter-in-law, Debbie Troyer.

The funeral was held at Maranatha Fellowship Church on Dec. 18, with Paul Leroy Miller officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Clara Mae (Plank), 81, of Yoder, KS, died Jan. 6, 2009, at her home. She was a victim of cancer, having the first bout with it in 1990, the second in 1997, the third in 2001, the fourth in 2006, and this being the fifth during which she lost nearly all her eyesight, but was grateful and cheerfully committed her condition to God. Clara was born at Garnett, KS, on June 19, 1927, daughter of the late Samuel and Katie (Yoder) Plank.

She was a member of Cedar Crest A.M. Church, Hutchinson.

On May 15, 1947, she was married to Enos C. Yoder. He survives. Their three surviving children are: Glen W. (Clara Mae) Yoder, Haven; Katherine Huffman, Ottawa, KS; and Ivan (Pamela) Yoder, Yoder, KS; also five grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Other

survivors include a brother: Roy (Donna) Plank, Yoder, KS, and two sisters: Fannie (Dean) Yoder, and Elizabeth (Dale) Kauffman, all of Middlebury, IN.

A son, Wayne, preceded her in death in 1980.

The funeral was held at Cedar Crest on Jan. 9, with Lee Nisly, Daniel Nisly and Paul L. Miller serving. Eli Yoder served in the committal at the burial in West Center Cemetery.

Zook, Leah, 84, of Gordonville, PA, died Dec. 7, 2008. She was born Nov. 10, 1924, daughter of the late Benjamin and Fannie (Zook) Fisher.

She was a member of Summitview Christian Fellowship, New Holland, PA. She enjoyed gardening and piecing comforter tops for charity.

On Nov. 13, 1947, she was married to Isaac K. Zook, who died in January, 2008. Surviving are: five children, Aaron (Leah Stoltzfus) Zook, Ronks; A. Daniel (Susan Zook) Zook, Leola; Leon (Sarah Lapp) Zook, Gordonville; Anna Ruth (Andy) King, Honey Brook; Elmer (Susie Stoltzfus) Zook, Clymer; 36 grandchildren; 13 great grandchildren; brothers: Amos (Dottie) Fisher, Leola; Christ (Paulette) Fisher, Mt. Joy; sisters: Sarah Dake, Pennsboro, WV; Emma (Orie) Koerner, Chicago, IL; Ruth Schrock, Loman, MN; Lydia (Leon) Martin, Leola, and Eva (Robert) Hershey, Oxford.

She was preceded in death by sisters: Mary Nestlerode and Annie Swarr and a brother, John.

The funeral was held on Dec. 9 at Summitview Christian Fellowship with burial in the church cemetery.

observations

In these times of economic/political uncertainty, it is important to be established in the things that will outlast all earthly systems and structures.

Brian Yoder writes an article in Mennonite Air Missions, (Jan.-Feb, 2009), entitled "A Time to Hope." He says 2009 presents a greater degree of uncertainty than many years before it. The economy still has not found a bottom. Jobs are scarcer, loans are harder, and prices are higher. Inauguration Day brings changes that add to the uncertainty. "Because of hard times, people hunker down to weather the difficulties as best they can, but Christians have reason to look up because their redemption draws nigh."

"We have hope not because of what we see, but because of who we know, not for the promise of a stimulus package but because of the Author of a Perfect Bailout Plan...."

We have "a living hope that does not waste time griping about

circumstances, but glories with the promise of something beyond. Hope is able to rise up, step out and be strong. Hope does not stop giving when giving is tough.” (With permission of Editor Urie Sharp.)



The following thoughts are gleaned from an article in *Christianity Today*, (Dec., 2008). This is a study of how much American Christians give. What could they give? Why don't they?

- More than one out of four Protestants give away no money at all.

- Economists sometimes view recessions as necessary purging of excessive behavior.

- The average median annual giving for an American Christian is \$200. About 5% of American Christians provide 60% of the money churches and religious groups use to operate.

- Larger income generally results in more debt rather than increased giving.

- The money given by the people in the pews is largely spent on people in the pews. Only about 3% of the money donated to churches goes to help non-Christians.

- Pastors are reluctant to address the subject because it is so closely tied to their salaries. The study found that pastors themselves are often not great models of generosity. This may well

contribute to their reluctance.

- Some people remember that God loves a cheerful giver. If buying a more expensive home or car makes it more difficult to give cheerfully, they will cut back on giving until it is cheerful.

- Martin Luther is quoted as having said: “A man’s pocketbook is the last piece of him to be converted.”

- Percentage of giving was higher from 1920 to 1985 than it has been since that time.

Regular giving should be a matter of intentional obedience, a joyful expression of expressing thanks to God.



The above article struck me as very informative and thought-provoking. It made me wonder how an in-depth study of our readership would look. We do well to keep several basic stewardship principles in mind:

- Stewardship reminds us that we are ultimately accountable to the Master Owner of the universe for our stewardship.

- Our stewardship is expressed not only in how much we give, but also in how much we keep, and why. To give cheerfully and as the Lord prospers are clear scriptural directives.

- Methods of generating income should be examined under the search light of Christian ethics as taught in

the Word.

- God-given ability varies a great deal from person to person. The persons with greater ability to give can be a tremendous blessing to the work of the Lord when it is accompanied by a corresponding sense of stewardship. Jealousy at another's financial success should not be once named among us.

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As we observe the present scene in light of recent and earlier history, there are reasons to be profoundly grateful. There are also reasons for serious concern.

- I am grateful for parents and other ancestors who sincerely lived their Christian faith.

- I am thankful to be a member of a leadership team that is unified on the basic issues of life in the Christian church.

- I am also grateful for the other team members who are significantly younger than I. They are therefore able to carry major leadership responsibility and are kind enough to let this old servant participate in a limited and diminishing role.

- The awareness that the One who has been "our dwelling place in all generations" (Psalm 90:1), is the God of history who will bless faithfulness in future generations.

- I am fully persuaded that the Lord

of the past, present and future has made ample provision that I may "finish my course with joy." This does not mean that we should turn a blind eye to obvious needs. The message of Scripture does include: "reprove and rebuke" along with patient teaching (2 Timothy 3:16).

Memory and observation both remind us that we are not immune to the perils of apostasy. I believe there is a fairly normal pattern that gradually leads people to abandon basic foundational guidelines in favor of cultural pressures.

A first step in apostasy is to conclude that a clear directive in New Testament teaching does not apply to us. This makes a visual, practical expression optional. Thus, secondly, disregard or disobedience becomes permissible. A third step is that to abandon the practice is no longer optional or permissible, but obligatory. The basic flaw in such a scenario is that two basic foundation stones were not kept in focus: The authority of the inspired Word and the lordship of Christ. By God's abundant grace let us renew our commitment to faithful obedience without apology and without arrogance.

• • • • •

I am aware that the above sentiments are not new to this column. It is common knowledge that older people

tend to repeat themselves—sometimes in tiresome proportions.

I find it interesting that Paul referred to being repetitive in Philippians 3:11 without apology. He said that he was repeating things for their safety. Repetition is a useful teaching tool. The better the response, the less repetition is needed.



How would we respond to suddenly learn that there is a highly-contagious, deadly virus at large. Sometimes it attacks suddenly. More likely the early stages of infection are low-key and subtle. Immunization is available free of charge but is optional.

A report from George Barna (poll taker) reports some startling findings.

- More than half of all professed Christians believe that some non-Christians will go to heaven.
- Nearly half of those interviewed do not believe in the existence of Satan.
- 71% of American adults interviewed say they are more likely to develop their religious beliefs themselves than

to accept a defined set of teaching from a particular church.

The list of findings could be extended a great deal. Question: What is the virus referred to above? In a word: Individualism. It is taking one's own way instead of turning in repentance to follow the Lord. It is the mistaken assumption that *independence* is better than *interdependence*. It is the false notion that human intelligence alone can reach God. It is unwillingness to submit to and identify with a body of believers.

Most of the individualism that we encounter is not as extreme and obvious as the Barna survey shows. But in reality, many church problems stem from the same roots.

To accept God's prescribed immunization not only protects us from the deadly virus, but also keeps us from spreading the infection to others. We are free to choose. Right choices bring blessing and freedom. We are not free, however, to evade the consequences of wrong choices.

—DLM 

THE GREATER A PERSON'S GIFTS, THE MORE BECOMING HIS MODESTY.

Ministers' Meeting Messages — 2008

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

8. The Truth War

Charles Hamilton, Harrison, AR

Let us never underestimate the power of blessing we can be in one another's lives. That is part of what the family of God is for. As I stand here and look out over those hoary heads, I bless you brethren for the way that you have helped, blest, and taught me over the years. I also look out over this group and I see young men that I taught in Bible school, who are now ministers and bishops. That is the power that God has put into the church that makes it possible for us to bless one another.

I desire to bring this message with love and integrity, as we address the truth war. In relation to Christ's victory, our victory is assured. It is finished. We must recognize that though the victory of Christ is finished and sure, we must also come to grips with the fact that victory is not a foregone conclusion in my personal life and in the life of my congregation. I share with you out of the burden of my heart.

As we look at what's going on around us it is as a brother said to me some time ago, "You know, Charles, it's a waste land out there!" I don't think it exaggerates the situation to say that we are living in a time of crisis of historical proportions for us as the church of God. I believe things are happening in our time that will change the course of history. The weight of those choices and decisions rests on our shoulders. The decisions we face will bear eternal consequences for our church and our children.

For many of us, this is frightening and confusing. This place of conflict and crisis, however, is not a new place. Many churches and constituencies have stood in this place before us. Now it's our family and our church. Now it's our battle. That military analogy is a bit hard for us as a nonresistant people to relate to. We have a lot of baggage associated with the terminology of war and warfare. Brethren, we must by the grace of God come to grips with the times in

which God has called us to serve.

I don't have many answers. My heart desires that we might honestly assess where we are in this war for truth. Can we do that? Come, let us reason together.

Is the state of the church you are a part of today successful and healthy? Sometimes as we face reality, things don't look very healthy. Jesus speaks to that. He said, "They that are whole, need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Luke 5:31). If you say, "Things look healthy and good to me," I don't think Jesus has anything to say to you. The ones into whose lives God can speak are those who have needs they acknowledge.

We must determine what God's patterns and purposes are, especially in relation to truth for us today. We will be successful and healthy as we embrace God's provisions. God's ways and patterns are not haphazard but clear.

The letter to the Ephesians was not originally divided into chapters and verses. We actually find sections about standing on God's truth that are more extensive than verse 14 in chapter 6. In 4:11-15, we actually find God's pattern in relation to truth. This portion is exegetically progressive: one thought built upon the next one and the next one.

We have been hearing encouragement to unity. The Bible

sets a goal for this: Till we all come in the unity of the faith. One of the foundation stones of success we possess is the unity of the faith. This is not simply a matter of believing in a vague, generalized sense. The Word of God is based on a unity of the faith that is based upon a common understanding of and commitment to God's Word. Oneness in fellowship is impossible unless it is built upon a common commitment to truth. We will never experience true, biblical unity apart from doctrinal integrity.

As an Anabaptist people several features of our faith make us distinct. One distinctive we bring to the table is *Christianity as relationship*. Here is something for us to ponder: Our greatest strength can also be our greatest weakness. We can try to achieve unity on a human level. For example, we enjoy acknowledging relationship's like: "He's Strawberry Dave's Amos married to Chicken John's Emma." A real question for us today is: Is that biblical unity? Unity that is built on family, on background, on economic goals, on geographical location—is that biblical unity? NO!

May God have mercy when we find ourselves sacrificing truth on the altar of family relationships! For truth that places demands for change on me, that's a declaration of war. When we study the Old Testament,

we see it come through over and over that the gods of the cultures surrounding Israel were constantly influencing the children of Israel to worship them. If you ask, “What is the god of our culture?” many of us would say it’s materialism. I don’t believe that’s true. The god of our generation is individualism and independence. Materialism is only the incense with which people worship the god of individualism. Do you suppose we are exempt from the pressures of such worship?

If you want to find out what gods somebody is worshipping, don’t ask them. Blaspheme their god. You will find out very quickly at whose altar they worship. Soon after we came into the conservative Anabaptist setting many years ago, as we would say in Arkansas, “We was just green as a gourd.” We were trying to sort through some church standards for our congregation. We were talking about different things and I don’t remember exactly what was under consideration. It was, as I recall, some matter of clothing. My wife and I were amazed and pleased that people would actually talk about such matters. It was new for us to be making Gospel decisions and setting Bible standards. But the process got interrupted when a sister objected and said: “We can’t do that. I’ve gotta’ be me!” That was the beginning of the

light coming on for me. I thought to myself, *If you’ve gotta’ be you, what am I doing here?*

“Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). We live in a generation that is absolutely unprecedented in its level of education, sophistication and access, don’t we? I am not talking about a problem that’s out there. I speak of what’s right here in this room. How many of us have at this time some one in our congregation attending college or university? I will not ask you to raise your hands, but if I would, I think the truth would surprise us.

When our children were small, we took them to Branson, Missouri, which seems to have a hillbilly theme for everything. We took our sons there one day where a man asked our kindergarten sons if they had any education. My son gave him an answer that surprised and amused us, “No sir, we’re home schooled.”

Brethren, I am not necessarily anti-education. I have a little myself. I spent some time in university. I have also ridden a motorcycle at 115 miles per hour and I have played with matches. But by the grace of God, I’m still here.

This generation that is so well-

educated, so sophisticated, and has so much access, has fallen into more foolishness in the name of Christianity...It amazes me how things have changed in 20 years.

I have a benchmark in my life where I started from an adult perspective. The changes I have seen in [standards] and in people are amazing. This is important to me. One of the most personal verses I have in Scripture is Psalm 119: 111 "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart."

We are here today assessing our situations. As we reach back into our text verse, we find that the first word is the controlling verb and the first word is "stand." This speaks not just about where we are, but the ground that we hold. It gives us the clear indication of someone trying to push us off that spot. Stand therefore! There are voices around us from without and from within that are trying to push us away. The word of God is: Stand therefore!

We need you dear older brethren. Be not weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not. I know how hard and discouraging it can be. Don't give up! Stand! Stand your ground!

Another strength we Anabaptist people bring to Christianity is obedience. Christianity is not simply

a legal transaction that happens in the great court of heaven in which we are given passports stamped: *To Glory*. Rather there is an ongoing process of following that is part of the Christian experience.

In the past our focus on obedience has been applicational. I say unashamedly, "God bless it!" I believe, however, it has too often been weakened by being an application without a clearly expressible theology behind it. I believe our applications are biblical, but we have too often failed to provide a clear, definable theology. We should pray that God will raise men up that will do this.

This is nothing new. If we study the history of our people, we discover that it has happened in history before. When the Anabaptist movement was new, the focus and relationships were real, but when the pressures of society began to bear in on the church, God raised up men, notably Menno Simons, who gave a clear theological basis for the things that the church was teaching and doing. It was not meant to change what the church would teach. It was to express what the church believed and taught, to express decisions that had been made and were being made.

This is Anabaptism in its purest form. We need a theological framework for choices and decisions grounded in the truth. We must have a common

understanding and commitment to the Word of God that work out in very real and practical ways.

Some of you might feel that I am now going from preachin' to meddlin'. Let me give you three examples:

The first is technology. We need a clear theological framework to decide what we will do and what we will not do; what we will accept and what we will not accept. I am not a "technophobe." Hold me accountable for the following statement: The choices that we make in the next 20 years in relation to technology will be some of the most defining choices of this generation!

What does Psalm 101:3 say? "I will set no wicked thing before my eyes." Was that spoken only to a pastoral people who had the care of sheep in a Middle Eastern country? Could that possibly apply to us? "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

In 1 Corinthians 6:12, we have another angle to consider: "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." I have never heard the addictive nature of technology addressed. Are these technologies addictive? I'm not sure. I've never had a computer. I have had a television. I found that TV is not

just entertainment; it is addictive! How we can make a good case for having internet access while not having TV and radio in our homes? If self-restraint, accountability and blocking is all it is, I can do all of that with TV.

There is one difference: We never figured out how to make money from TV. "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:10).

The question of divorce illustrates our tendency toward applicational focus instead of principle focus. By and large, our theology on divorce and remarriage is sound and biblical. I think we have lost out in our stand by taking what Joseph Webb wrote in his book, *Till Death Do Us Part*. I appreciate some aspects and insights in that book, but I think he has a flawed theology about marriage. We understand that marriage is covenant-based and from that we can build a biblical theology of marriage that will serve us well.

Let us note in Philippians 3:14-16 the biblical basis for church standards. The reverse is also given in verse 19 for those who refuse them: "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly

things.” The word for belly is the word we would use for “heart.”

Speaking the truth in love is the key. In the Greek the thought is given that the truth is the foundation of my life. That is what I am building on. As we look around us, we see rubble. In war, there are casualties. Ezekiel 13:14 is a sobering verse in a sobering chapter: “So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundations thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

Do we see the crumbling that is going on around us? Do we see the rubble that is strewn over the landscape? This crumbling reveals our foundations. God is revealing our foundations. If the rubble is different from what you thought you were building on, that proves that the heart is deceitful. Let’s not forget that when God reveals our foundations, it is a mercy. It is only a judgment when we fail to respond in humility and repentance.

To have our loins girt about with truth includes reproduction of the faith. If people come in and see good foundations, they will prosper. It also affects our children. They know that



mission awareness

Personal Evangelism

Floyd Stoltzfus

Evangel” means good tidings. It has the same meaning as “gospel.” The suffix “ism” refers to a doctrine or teaching. Thus, evangelism is the doctrine of the Gospel. It is the proclamation of good tidings to a lost world.

Personal evangelism is an effort of a saved person to bring an unsaved person to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Someone has said, “It is one hungry beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.” Personal evangelism seems to be the most effective method of winning the lost. It

is the method that was often used by our precious Lord. It appears that He won the twelve disciples by personal contact. After His ascension event, he arrested Saul of Tarsus in this way. It was probably the pre-incarnate Christ who met Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden after they had sinned. The Lord asked them four specific questions which was often His approach while on earth.

It was “the angel of the Lord” who was often identified as the second person of the Triune God, the Lord Jesus who appeared to Hagar in the

desert and told her to return and submit herself to Sarah. Later, Hagar was personally encountered when she was thirsty. This time her son, Ishmael, was with her. God opened her eyes to a well of water where her thirst was quenched. Centuries later, there was another woman who was spiritually thirsty. This woman met the Lord Jesus, also at a well. Her thirst was quenched by drinking from the living water when Jesus made Himself known to her.

“Every Christian should consider it the highest honor and greatest privilege to assist in the growth of the kingdom of God by personal effort in individual soul-winning. He should also realize that not only is it his privilege to thus work for God but also a most solemn responsibility rests upon him to do so. This is Christlike: ‘For the Son of God is come to seek and to save that which was lost’ (Luke 19:10).

“It is not possible for every Christian to be a preacher or a teacher of the Gospel. These are special gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon certain believers as it has pleased him. But there is no Christian, however humble or insignificant he may feel himself or others esteem him to be, who is not appointed by the Spirit to be a winner of souls.” (*Personal Soul Winning*, William Evans)

Every term at Calvary Bible School the students go to a city, community, or town(s) to share the Gospel of Jesus

door-to-door, along the streets, or outside a supermarket, if permission is granted. The following is a part of the orientation that is given to the students prior to this scheduled ministry:

Some people are best led to God by building a relationship with them. As we show love to them, they become attracted to the God we serve who is changing us into his likeness. This is sometimes called “**Friendship Evangelism.**”

Some of us believe in friendship evangelism, but rarely if ever open our mouths. In some cases, we become like them rather than having them become like us. We must become people who are willing to initiate conversation with people in our society. The Gospel needs to be declared through our mouths as well as through our lives.

Examples of people groups who can be witnessed to through friendship evangelism:

Employers, Fellow employees, Relatives, Customers, Vendors, Store clerks, Neighbors, Children clubs, The aged, Summer Bible School, Muslims, Jews, People who are not Christian

Friendship evangelism is a good way to evangelize, but it is impossible for us to be friends with everyone who does not know the Lord.

If every person in our state, country, and world is going to hear the Gospel, we as Christians are also going to need to be involved in “**Pre-Friendship Evangelism.**”

According to one study, unbelievers need to be witnessed to an average of seven times before they are ready to commit their lives to God. Don't get discouraged if all you seem to do is plant seed.

Jesus did both friendship and pre-friendship evangelism. The apostles did both and many Christians have done both for the last 2,000 years.

The questions we need to ask ourselves is "Am I willing to take my place in this long line of faithful Christians who have involved themselves in these kinds of witnessing? Am I willing to do both kinds of evangelism for my Lord, who did so much for me?"

Examples of ways people have done Pre-Friendship evangelism:

Knock on doors; take children or babies along as this often softens people's hearts.

Stand at four-way stops and pass out tracts or CD's to those passing by.

Stand on street corners and talk to people who are walking by.

Contact Wal-Mart in your area and see if their "fund-raising policies" allow you to distribute free Gospel CD's.

Go to bus or metro stations and talk with people who are waiting for their ride.

Sit down with people at a city park and strike up a conversation about their work.

Do open-air preaching or singing and give people an invitation to accept the Gospel.

Make a commitment to talk to one person about the Lord every time you go shopping.

Make a commitment to pass out a certain number of tracts or CD's per month for a whole year.

Put letters or tracts in helium balloons.

Put an ad in the newspaper for, "Committing one's life to the Lord Jesus Christ." Include your phone number.

Mail "Reaching Out" magazines to people in your town. Get them personalized with your church name.

Put up tract racks in your town. Regularly check on them and rotate stock with new titles.

Invite locals to a hymn sing, chorus program, Christmas program, Outdoor Journey to Bethlehem, Thanksgiving dinner, Sunday lunch, or youth program.

Bike or walk regularly through your local village and wave and smile at people as you meet. Pray as you walk or bike. Stop and begin conversations with those whom God leads you to talk to.

Need passion for witnessing? Go where there are lots of people and stand there and pray for all those that go by, until you can't hold still but are urged to talk to someone that is lost.

Can't talk? Stand at an intersection, point to your heart, clasp your hands, and point to God.

Use any other method the Lord lays on your heart.



A Cheerful Mom

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Proverbs teaches us that a merry (or cheerful) heart is like good medicine. I am sure we have all experienced the effects of feeling revived after spending time with a cheerful person. A cheerful person is positive and radiates a happy outlook to those around her. Naturally, there are times when we do not feel well or may have been the recipients of bad news or have a heavy heart for other reasons. At these times, we may not feel happy but we can still have a positive outlook because of Jesus in our hearts.

Our children are watching us and unfortunately (or fortunately) they are patterning their responses to life by what they observe in us. I believe this is true also for grandmothers. What reaction does your child see in you when your husband walks across the clean floor with dirty boots or your child spills a glass of milk AGAIN?

Can I smile and answer the endless questions of a four-year-old, or laugh at the corny joke of a mis-

chievous little boy? The list could go on. Does my reaction spell LOVE or does it tell my child that he or she is a bother to me?

I know mothers are busy people and it is hard to take time to just have fun with your children, but let me assure you, you will remember those times when your children are grown. Grandmothers, you can build memories with your grandchildren, NOW.

Let us look at five ways to have fun with our children or grandchildren:

Spend time in the kitchen with them.

Preschoolers love to help. Fill the sink with warm, soapy water and let them wash dishes. It may take a while and the dishes might not be perfectly clean, but does it matter this time? A piece of dough and small rolling pin will occupy their fingers. Let them stir the batter. Older children can chop vegetables, shape bread or rolls. Recently, I taught my eight-year-old granddaughter to mix and roll out flour

tortillas. She does a great job. Work with the children; do not nag or scold, but teach them to do the job well.

Mealtime should be a happy time.

I have read that very few families sit down together to the table for meals anymore. I hope it is not true in our families. I believe it is a tradition that needs to be preserved. Mealtime should be a happy experience, not a time to nag and complain. It should be a time of sharing happy nuggets from the day, of giving children a chance to express themselves. Good manners should be encouraged and taught by example. It could be a time to learn about other countries (and even preparing food from those countries). It should be a time to laugh together.

Play games together.

Most children love to play games. Games are a good learning experience. A certain amount of competition is healthy although parents may need to help children be kind, and to be good winners and good losers. Young children like to play Memory and simple board games. Even grandmas like to play dominoes (our specialty just now). Outdoor games, baseball, soccer,

basketball, or Frisbee—there are so many games for Dad to teach his children at the same time he teaches them to be good sports.

Plan for special times together as a family.


Special times can be as simple as taking a walk. It could be a treasure hunt, or giving a child a list of things to find, such as a feather, a red flower, or whatever. This is a great idea for grandmas. Pack a picnic lunch and eat in the backyard. Try camping in your living room on a cold wintry night. Eat hot dogs, toast marshmallows, and snuggle together in blankets on the floor. Go to your local zoo. There are many things you can do with your children that take little or no extra money.

Learning can be fun.

Mothers and Grandmothers, we have so much to teach! Children love to learn new things. We teach by reading to the children. We teach small children to write their names, to learn numbers and letters. I have enjoyed teaching my four year old granddaughter this past year to recognize numbers, to color inside the lines, and so on. The older grandchildren love when I do crafts with them. We can teach them to sew, crochet, embroider, knit, and paint.

We can teach geography, history, (inauguration of our first African-American president recently was a historical highlight), and missions, domestic and foreign. Finally, yet importantly, we teach our children

the knowledge of God and the principles in His Word.

Are you a cheerful mother/grandmother? Cheerfulness can be developed. It will make a happier family. Your children will bless you for it. 

junior messages

God's Tug

Anita Yoder

Mark surveyed the tangled mess in his hands. Today he planned to fly his kite. It took him some time to untangle the string and wrap it around the tin can he held in his hand.

The kite was really his older brother's. He remembered how much fun they had playing with it. "Kevin, I have this kite ready to soar. Do you want to come along and help me with it?" Mark asked his younger brother.

"Okay, sure! But Paul always helped you with it before. Do you think you'll be able to get it up?"

"I think so. Come, let's walk over to the park;" Mark responded, "the sky is clouding over and the sun isn't shining now but just feel that strong wind. At least, we'll give it a try."

Stopping at a park bench, Mark tried to lay the kite down on it beside

him, but the wind whipped it away. "Here, Kevin, hold this till I tell you to let it go." Mark got the string ready to unroll. "Now, let it go! Whee!"

The kite flew higher and higher. "Where is it?" Kevin said excitedly.

An older gentleman nearby watched as the strong March breeze took the kite on up. His gaze traced the string until he lost sight of it in the low-lying clouds. "Son," he said jokingly, "I see the string, but no kite. Maybe you don't have a kite at all. Maybe it's gone."

"Oh, yes I do!" Mark smiled, "I can feel its tug." They stood scanning the sky while the clouds kept the kite out of sight.

"You know, Boys, that's how God is. It's a mystery beyond our sight, but God is real. We feel the power of His pull on us," the old man mused

with a smile.

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A PENPAL, PLEASE!

Dear girls,

Hello, my name is Trina and I am 11. My birth date is May 19, 1997. My parents are John and Angela Stoltzfus. I have two brothers and two sisters: Annalisa (9), Vanessa (7),

Trevor (5), and Jonathan (3).

My hobbies are reading, baking, sewing, and swimming. I would like a twin or penpal soon, around 11 or 12, please!

See ya,

Trina Stoltzfus

2529 Valley View Rd.

Morgantown, PA 19543



youth messages

With Whom Are You Running the Race? - Part Two

Ernest Eby

(In last month's issue we considered how the Christian race differs from the typical foot race. In this issue, we will consider some similarities and differences among those of us who profess Christianity. For the sake of clarity, the word "Christian" as used in this article will refer to those who profess Christianity. "Kendra" is a member of a Beachy church.)

Kendra grew up in a conservative Anabaptist community. As the saying goes, "More is caught than taught." Kendra assumed during her growing up years that if someone really wanted to be a dedicated Christian, they would join a conservative Mennonite church or something very similar. No one ever said it in so many words, but that was the message she picked up from adult conversations. A few months ago when Kendra wrote, she

had some big questions. In short, here is her story:

In the community where Kendra lives there is a woman who is in need of salvation. Kendra, concerned about the woman's plight, set out to woo her towards Christ. Eventually Kendra took the woman along to church, only to discover that her Mennonite church was a "stumbling block." The woman was not at all impressed with conservative Anabaptist customs that would be expected of her if she joined

Kendra's church.

Meanwhile, an evangelical couple from a local Protestant church also got involved. This couple had a strong marriage and well-trained children. They were compassionate and understanding. Their church did not require people to do things that may seem simply cultural. Obviously, this couple was Christian. Kendra's big question is, "Why do Mennonites think of themselves as the only right ones, when there are neighbors like this couple who surpass Mennonites in their care and concern for the lost?"

Perhaps you have had similar questions. Maybe you've wondered, "Where do I fit in? What kind of Christians are we anyhow? With whom am I running the Christian race? With whom *should I be* running the race?"

Let's explore these questions further. The *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life* poll conducted in 2008 reveals that Americans are approximately 32% Evangelical Protestant, 19% Mainline Protestant, 24% Catholic, and a remaining 3% represent minority Christian groups. According to these statistics 78% of the people in the USA are Christian. The one belief that nearly all Christians have in common is their acknowledgement of Jesus

Christ. This may be the only thing on which all Christians can agree.

The largest subset of Christians in America consider themselves "evangelical." This word is derived from "gospel" or "good news." An "evangel" is the bearer of good news. The word evangelical can be used broadly to refer to anyone who espouses the gospel of Christ and believes in the new birth. Evangelicals believe that being a Christian is a personal choice—not something that one can obtain through his parents or through religious rites. When used broadly, the term evangelical includes most of us.

Let us now look at three evangelical viewpoints:

The majority of Protestant evangelicals in America believe that salvation comes to anyone who calls on the name of Jesus and asks Jesus into his heart. Most evangelicals who espouse this view of salvation assume that anyone who testifies to a born-again experience or a relationship with Jesus Christ can be certain of an eternal home in heaven. I've read quite a few books by these authors and have learned lots of helpful things from them. I've learned more about myself, how to relate to other people, and how to grow in my relationship with God. But I've noticed that evangelicals with this

worldview reject the view that to have hope of eternal life, Christians must walk in repentance and holiness.

They reject the idea that Christians should question their salvation if they take pleasure in habits that are detrimental to spiritual growth. They reject the idea that if Christians return evil-for-evil on a personal or national level, it is a step towards eternal destruction. They reject the idea that a Christian woman should experience guilt, if she swaps her husband for someone else's. They avoid the idea that all Christians are called to invest their extra time and resources in the kingdom of heaven. If they hear someone teaching that the commands of Jesus and the apostles must be obeyed literally, they write the person off as legalistic or believing in a "works salvation." Interestingly, many of these same people take literally commands such as "Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus" and "Lift up holy hands," but react to any worldview that calls for biblical obedience requiring a change of lifestyle. This watered down view of salvation and the Scriptures allows Christians to embrace anyone who claims new life in Christ as a brother or sister in the Lord. By espousing a "Romans only" view of Kingdom entrance requirements and minimizing Jesus' own words about

joining the Kingdom of Heaven, many Christians who are taught this world view will some day hear these shocking words: "I never knew you."

This predominant evangelical worldview has made inroads into the thinking of many mainstream and conservative Mennonites. *Its inroads into our circles is evident by our frequent failure to live the radical teachings of Christ and our hesitancy to warn those who are not living according to the will of God.*

I beg God's mercy on those who have adopted this popular evangelical worldview. I cannot conscientiously link arms with those who promote killing other human beings and who counsel people to swap marriage partners. To do so would mean compromise. Even if I could maintain my own speed, racing with these folks would mean subjecting my posterity to a way of thinking that would be disastrous.

Are you racing with people that espouse a worldview similar to the one I just described? If so, I beg you to ponder a few questions: Are you sure that God will be satisfied with your level of commitment to His Word. Are you sure that you can pull these folks along with you, or will these evangelicals slow you down, and keep you from reaching the

finish line when the trumpet blows?

2. A second Christian Protestant worldview is held by evangelicals who believe that if a person is truly saved, there will be evidence of personal holiness. Sometimes this worldview is called Christian fundamentalism.

Fundamentalist sermons and seminars tend to promote godly living and conformity to the principles of God's Word. These folks reject the idea that a person can be living like godless society and claim salvation. While much of fundamentalist teaching is refreshing to people who want to obey God, there are major parts of it that do not mesh well with Anabaptist and early church views of salvation and the Scriptures. Because this group believes that it is impossible to lose one's salvation; anyone who is living a life of sin is believed never to have been saved. Since, according to their view, it is impossible to fall away from grace, many struggling and backslidden Christians are led to believe that they were never saved. This teaching causes unnecessary turmoil for sensitive Christians who are unsure whether or not they were ever saved.

For those who are not following Christ, but are confident that they were saved, this teaching inspires denial of their personal root sins. Admitting to personal failure would

mean admitting they were never saved. Fundamentalists emphasize doctrinal accuracy and de-emphasize brotherly love. In their zeal for sound doctrine many of them are quick to judge other interpretations of Scripture as heresy. Their defense of sound doctrine is so strong that to date, there are a reported 33,800 Protestant denominations. Each denomination believes they hold the most accurate doctrine.

Since much of their worldview is rooted in reformed theology, many of them believe it is possible for Christians to hold dual citizenship: "God and country." They believe that the Sermon on the Mount is not applicable for all of a Christian's actions today. Their tolerance for militant attitudes seems to encourage a judgmental spirit in the way they relate to other Christians. Some even anticipate the day when they and Christ will judge the world in righteousness.

This less predominant evangelical worldview has also had a lot of effect on conservative Anabaptists today. While some of their teaching has encouraged us to greater godliness, their method of handling the Scriptures has exposed us to erroneous views of how Christians should deal with sin and how Christians should work through

differences in the brotherhood. By adopting erroneous views of justification and sanctification, we frustrate the sincere and harden the deceived. By adopting erroneous ideas about brotherhood relationships, we fragment and isolate just like our contemporaries.

Within the last 40 years, conservative Anabaptists have fragmented into nearly 50 constituencies. Rather than emphasizing doctrinal accuracy, practical application of the Scriptures is our historical emphasis. Consequently, our divisions and isolations tend to be based on practical rather than doctrinal issues. Rather than humbling ourselves and learning from each other, we are growing accustomed to having numerous Anabaptist constituencies represented in the same geographical area. Isolation and fragmentation are becoming so common that serious attempts at reconciliation are rarely pursued.

With whom would you be running? Are you convinced that your application of Scripture is superior to the application of other committed Christians? Are you content to live near other dedicated Christians without learning from them? Are you content with the church of Jesus Christ being represented by multiple “dealerships”

in the same local area?

If so, may I ask you a few questions? How is the church of Jesus Christ going to prosper if its members are in competition with each other? How will the world be attracted to Christianity if Christians are comfortable with self-righteous attitudes? How will the church grow and prosper if she justifies her weakness and sneers at the practices of other committed Christians?

Because the two previous worldviews have had so much influence on our thinking, it's understandable that many conservative Anabaptist youth are disillusioned. Much of the teaching to which our youth are exposed, more closely resembles the teaching of Protestant evangelicals than the teaching of the early church and our Anabaptist founders.

Ideas produce consequences. If we dilute our preaching and teaching with erroneous Protestant theology, we will likely experience the same consequences they do. If you are disillusioned with conservative Anabaptism as you observe it, I invite you to consider a third worldview that is in many ways similar to the early church and the early Anabaptists.

This third evangelical worldview is promoted by men and women who believe that salvation comes through

an obedient love/faith relationship with Jesus Christ. Unlike viewpoints one and two, this third worldview places heavy emphasis on following Christ and a commitment to brotherly love. People with this view do not search the Scriptures legalistically to find excuses for sensual living. Neither do they use the Bible to develop a legalistic code of behavior. They treasure the Scriptures as God's personal letter in which He reveals Himself to His children and guides them to eternal life.

Christians with this worldview see ungodliness in a person's life as stemming from a number of problems. Perhaps the person was never saved. Perhaps the person is a babe in Christ. Perhaps the person was once saved but is now falling away from grace. This third view of salvation allows its adherents to relate in a variety of ways. They can warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, and be patient toward all men. Their message to babes in Christ is to continue growing in the Lord. Their message to those living in carnality is warning of the judgment to come. Judging who is saved and who is not, is left in the hands of the Lord.

This group of evangelicals believes that entrance into the kingdom of heaven must be carefully considered.

Though they teach the importance of the new birth, they are also concerned about helping people bring forth fruits unto eternal life. Among other things, these evangelicals believe that Jesus' teaching about evangelism, brotherly love, and material possessions, must be taken just as seriously as His words about swearing of oaths, divorce and remarriage. Admittedly, this view of salvation and the Scriptures is difficult to keep alive from one generation to the next. If this worldview is not believed and lived, there is a gradual drift toward Christian worldviews that require less sacrifice, less love, and less commitment. Thankfully, we have on record many writings from the early church, early Anabaptists and other faithful groups. We can compare our understandings of the Scriptures with their writings and decide what set of consequences we want for ourselves and our descendants.

Our personal view of salvation and the Word of God is largely the combination of ideas that we learn from other people. The people with whom we race are the ones who shape our view of truth and reality. This is why it is so important that we carefully choose our racing companions. Next month we will consider what it means to collectively press for the prize.



THOUGHT GEMS

When you don't want to do something, one excuse is about as good as another.

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Some of the "food for thought" being dished out these days can cause mental indigestion.

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The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.

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Noting humor in a situation is a bit like changing the baby's diaper: it doesn't fix anything permanently, but it improves things for a while.

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Church life would improve if more people would "stand on the promises" instead of merely standing on the premises.

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On the sea of matrimony, the hand that rocks the cradle seldom rocks the boat.

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The peace of God: tranquility without tranquilizers.

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The man who boasts of an open mind may have a cranial vacancy.

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If we all profited by our mistakes, why aren't there more millionaires?

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