



Calvary messenger

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

Galatians 6:14

MAY 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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Secure Within

Michaella K. Race, Grove City, MN

There is a place of quiet rest,
Where I alone with God may be,
Within His arms—there I am blest
With peace amid the stormy sea.

Held in His tender arms of love,
Communing with my God in prayer.
I know my blessed Lord above
Shall always safely hold me there.

When storms shall then upon me rise,
I'll run to God for perfect calm.
Secure within, time always flies,
With peace amid the storm for balm.

My blessed Savior rules I know,
The tempest of the stormy sea.
And as the wild gale winds blow,
He's made a place secure for me.

The loving arms of my Father,
Bring rest and peace so full to me.
Secure within they hold me there,
Far, far above the stormy sea.

Secure within His arms I'm held,
Though all around the storm does rage.
Engulfed in peace 'til overwhelmed,
This all my doubts and fears assuage.



What is Enlightenment?

Virgil Schrock, Boyd, WI

Humanism, including the Christian kind, holds to the view that claims of salvation through Christ alone are arrogant, restrictive, and offensive to the intellect. These are also the people who claim that the Creation and the Flood, if they occurred at all, were somehow different from the record in Genesis. They are open to other suggestions of attempting to explain the origins of the universe and the history of man, but they tend to humor or ridicule any truth whose source is the Word of God.

They may claim that their openness to all suggestions about the origin of the universe is borne of humility; that they do not wish for prejudice and superstition to guide their search for truth; that they are open to truth from any source and are willing to embrace new evidences and new interpretations of truth, even when the evidence is tentative and the interpretation is speculative, if the source of this new truth is not the Word of God.

Through the centuries learned men have believed much ignorance and superstition. The Greek philosophers,

from whom modern democracies learned governance, believed the myths of ancient idolatry. Learned men have taught many strange beliefs about the origins of the universe, the earth, and man. The wisest men in society have taught superstition and idolatrous myths about how the human body works and what causes sickness and death. Even today, medical students are sometimes told that half of what they are being taught in medical school will eventually be found to be false. The problem? They do not know which half.

Some who profess Christian belief know that searching for truth in skepticism and superstition is futile, but because they desire acceptance from the cultured, they construe finding truth as not really important. They say the important thing is the journey, by which they refer to the search for meaning and truth.

Surely humble people are open to an honest search for truth. And searching for truth is one of the most noble of all human pursuits. However, the real arrogance is rejecting truth. We were all once presented with

truth because God showed it to us, but there are things about truth that we do not naturally like.

One of the most evident truths is that man and mankind needs to be saved. We and our society are far into the process of destroying ourselves and our world. The alarms raised about the crumbling structures of economy, ecology, and culture have often been offered suggested solutions. Some of the solutions seem to come from the same minds that worshipped the myths of Greek idolatry.

The solutions in the Word of God are realistic and complete. God has created this world and He will some day destroy it.

God has created us. We rejected Him, but He moved in love toward man and mankind to bring us to Himself in the sacrifice of Christ. This is the Gospel and it is our work, but few of the learned of this world receive it.

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Now a word from your regular editor:

In March I raised four questions about sports. So far I have received only one written response. I could quit trying to get more, but I sensed from some remarks to me at ministers' meeting in Florida (including one commitment to write) that a number of readers would likely have helpful comments on one or more of the four questions I raised. I think I should wait to publish reader response until I have a more significant number of responses.

Here are my four questions again:

1. How is participating in local, low-competition, non-professional sports different from involvement in professional sports?
2. Does support for church youth recreation contribute to an obsession with professional sports?
3. What constitutes a wholesome level of interest in sports for Christian youth?
4. How should deeply-committed Christian youth balance sports with outreach activities?

I leave this urgent, coded message with you. **“Eye knead two here from ewe!”** God bless you! —PLM 

Study the Bible to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy.

*The annual Christian Youth Fellowship meetings
for 2009
are scheduled to be held July 24-26.*

The reports of the five area meetings held in July, 2008, indicate God's blessings were abundant in spite of smaller numbers in attendance in several districts. We praise God for His continued faithfulness and commend our youth for their part in making these meetings a success. Certainly recognition is also due to the hosting communities for their hard work in planning enriching programs and providing unselfish hospitality. May we continue to work together to make these meetings successful. Let us prayerfully look to God in anticipation of more good things at the meetings this summer.

The districts and their meeting locations for 2009, the Lord willing, are as follows:

North East	Mine Road Amish Mennonite Church, Kinzers, PA
North Central	Plainview Gospel Fellowship, Guys Mills, PA
North West	Woodlawn Amish Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN
South West	Faith Mennonite Fellowship, Lott, TX
South East	Belvidere Mennonite Church, Huntland, TN

Donald J. Miller, Hutchinson, KS

Chairman, Annual Christian Youth Fellowship Meetings



“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

Prayer

Larry Gembicki, Cleveland, OH

Soon after I decided to serve God, I read a short booklet by Jack Chick, called “The Next Step.” I believe it said something like this, “Now that you’ve become a Christian, you need to do three things: (1) Read the Bible (2) Go to a Bible-believing church (3) Pray.” I think most of us have the first two down pat, but many of us struggle with the third one.

The first two, as important as they are, don’t really take much effort on our part. Even if we don’t read the Bible at home, if we attend Sunday School, we will, in many churches, systematically go through the Bible every seven years or so. It should give us a fair grasp of what the Bible teaches. Going to church doesn’t take much effort on the part of most of us, because there’s not much else to do on a Sunday morning. Furthermore, we get to see our relatives and friends.

Prayer, on the other hand, takes some effort. I believe for that and other reasons, prayer is often neglected. Most of us do *not* have a clear grasp of what prayer is. Most of us think it’s just an opportunity for us to ask God for things we want.

Probably few of us have even read a book about prayer.

Prayer is communicating with God. It is not only talking but listening. It is spending time with God. It is getting to know God. It is learning to recognize His voice. It is establishing a relationship with Him as we fellowship with Him.

It’s sort of like a human relationship. We have to spend time with people in order to get to know them. We not only talk to them, but also spend time in listening to them. We enjoy their presence. It’s good to talk on the phone, but it’s better to talk face to face. One-on-one communication is better than talking in a group setting, if the object is getting to know someone.

God wants an intimate relationship with each of us. He wants to spend time with us and wants us to spend time with Him. He wants us to be still and know that He is God. He wants us to speak but also to listen for the still, small voice He sometimes uses in speaking to people.


It’s sort of like reading books about Abraham Lincoln. You could read a bunch of biographies about him, about the way he lived, and about

his exploits and you might think you really know him. But if you had lived with him like his wife did and spent many hours with him, you would know him a lot better than that person in history you've read about, but never met.


I think that is much the way it is with God. Many of us read the Bible and think we know all about God. Reading and studying the Bible is good. But, in addition to that, if we really want to know God, we need to spend time with Him. The more time the better! The Bible says we are

to pray without ceasing. God wants a close relationship with every one of us.

Let's not just learn *about* God. Let's learn *to know* God. Let's cultivate a close relationship with Him. It really pleases God when we spend time with Him, not just to get something from Him, but because we love to spend time with Him. As lovers enjoy time together so we enjoy spending time with Him.

We learn to love Him who first "loved us, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). 

ANNOUNCEMENT

Volunteer host and hostess needed at Menno-Hof. One-month and one-year term beginning May, 2009. Duties include hosting visitors and other assigned tasks. Housing and small stipend provided. Contact LeRoy Mast, Box 701, Shipshewana, IN, 45665. Phone: 260-768-4117. lmast@mennohof.org 

Minister's Meeting Messages — 2008

This is a condensation of the final 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.

10. I Am an Ambassador

Truman Yoder
Lincoln, MO

I am blessed to note that our host churches have adolescent boys

parking cars. Young people are not only the church of tomorrow; they are the church of today. In 1 Corinthians 12: 26, Paul wrote, "And whether one member suffer, all the members

suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” That’s brotherhood! I sense a spirit of brotherhood here.

There’s something about the times we’re living in, that ministers, or ambassadors, are under attack like never before. That may be because of the position God has called us to. Even though our struggle is not over, the battle is won. We are not sent as ambassadors to represent ourselves. We are ambassadors for and unto God! We stand in the front lines. We’re not there because we have put ourselves there. We have been called with a holy calling and are ordained of God. It says in 2 Timothy 1:9, that we were called before the foundation of the world.

We must never think that any of us is beyond stumbling. In 1 Corinthians 10:12, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Let us ministers pray for one another. We may think falling is something that could never happen to this or that person, or to myself, but let’s take heed lest we fall. We could fall. Let us also not glory in another’s iniquity. Let us pray for them.

How unusual! Paul was an ambassador in bonds! How can that be? He was chained, perhaps between two soldiers. He, fearless

and undefeated, writes this letter of encouragement to the Ephesians and to all future generations. Men are placed in bonds for many reasons, but Paul was in bonds for the Gospel.

Paul asks them to pray for him that he might be able to speak the Word of God fearlessly. He had a message to give. Many times God chooses our circumstances and we may pray that God would relieve us, when we should be praying that God’s will be fulfilled in our place and situation. Sometimes an ambassador is placed in a hard spot, in which he cannot see why. God may have chosen that situation for a test. I will not ask you tonight, but I wonder how many of you would choose to be placed between two Roman soldiers in shackles and chains.

When we have baptism at home, I always ask them if they would be willing to suffer and die for the name of Jesus Christ, if it should come to that. That is saying more than, “I’m going to be a good church member.” This comes down to the grass roots of true Christianity. Are we going to stand? I believe we are going to see some hard times, if the Lord tarries. We’ve enjoyed living in America. I’m not a doomsday prophet, but I see the handwriting on the wall, as it were. We have One who promised to be with us.

Hebrews 4 describes Him as a high priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who was tempted as we are, yet without sin. He has gone the way before us. The way may not be easy, but His grace is sufficient.

An ambassador is appointed to represent one country to another. A Christian ambassador is a missionary. He has a high calling that places him on the front line of combat, not just in diplomatic contact with foreign government authorities. His deployment comes from God. An ambassador speaks not his own message, but the message of the country he represents. He represents the King, namely Jesus.

Our message is very urgent! Let us give our message with dignity and diplomacy. We are begging for Christ. We give the truth of the Word in love.

We have all been citizens of a strange and hostile country. God has called us out of that darkness into light. He calls us to separation from the world and now has also sent us back into the world with a message of life. As aliens and strangers of earth, we are to seek to reconcile the world to God. He made the perfect propitiation, because He is the perfect sacrifice. He was wounded for our transgressions. He

rose again for our justification. He has ascended into heaven to make intercession for us. He's coming again for our glorification. As His ambassadors, we should live our lives in consecration to Him.

An ambassador belongs to the one who sends him out. Without that understanding, we are not faithful ambassadors. We need to understand who owns us. 1 Corinthians 6:20 says, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Jesus said in John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." We belong to One who shares His resources with us. We have a connection with the Holy One who sends us out. That calls for regular prayer.

The ambassador's power can be compared to a magnet. The more it is used, the stronger it becomes. It is imperative for an ambassador to intimately engage daily with God. It is not enough to say we belong to Him. If we are not empowered, it will be evident.

If we think we are too busy to pray, let's look at what Jesus did and said. In Mark 1:35, "And in the morning,

rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” When His disciples caught up with Him, they said to Him, “All men seek thee.” That is the life of a public servant. The phone rings, the doorbell rings, and after services, someone wants to talk. Even though Jesus didn’t seem to have time to pray, He made time to pray. He got up early and found solitude.

If we think we are too busy to pray, we should think of this: “We are too busy not to pray. We must pour ourselves out as oil before the altar. In Matthew 14: 23, we notice that Jesus also prayed at the end of the day.

If we only pray as if to say, “Now I’m done with that ritual,” we haven’t really connected. For the ambassador to be effective, he must connect with God in fervent prayer. Prayer is not always easy. At times, it is a struggle. We are to travail in prayer. It says in Romans 8:26 that the Spirit intercedes for our infirmities, when we don’t know what to pray. When God knows we mean business, He will open up His storehouse of resources to us.

I have committed myself to pray for the people in our congregation by name each day. Recently I shared a need with a brother in another state. Before we hung up, he offered to pray

for me over the phone. I appreciated it very much.

The effectiveness of our ministry hinges on our understanding of what it means to belong and to be connected. Isaiah was not ready to go out and work for the Lord until he had that encounter with The Holy One. After a seraphim took tongs and lifted a red hot coal off the altar and with that touched Isaiah’s lips, then and then only was he ready to go and speak. He sensed that his iniquity was taken away. We need those times of cleansing and chastising. Isaiah’s response was, “Here am I, send me.” Isaiah did not say that in a haughty or arrogant way. He wasn’t jumping for the chance, but he had a call from the Lord on his life. He accepted that call with utmost humility.

The ambassador’s call exists for the purpose of his work. We can get involved in many other things. Sometimes we must leave our comfort zones. We may need to eat strange food we don’t really care for. We must deny self.

An ambassador is a 24/7 ambassador. I say that with some trepidation. God is infinite; we are finite. The plural ministry helps to keep us in check. We may, at times, have more zeal than discernment. We need the “cross-reference” of a plural ministry or we may burn out.

How effective is a burned-out vessel? Stretching is good, but we must be careful in those things. Even though ships are safe in harbor that is not what ships were made for. They were made to traverse deep waters.

Many things are vying for our allegiance. The worthy ambassador gives his sender undivided allegiance. He is stripped of many comforts and much baggage. When Jesus sent out the 70 in Luke 10:4, He sent them out with only the bare essentials. Many things can distract us and work against effectively fulfilling the purpose for which we were sent.

We are sent to reconcile men to God. We like to speak to our congregations about good things: eternal life, redemption, salvation, but we must also speak about impending judgment.

The messenger's walk must coincide with his talk. Often our theology is correct, but to "flesh out" that message is a greater challenge. It is better not to say anything than to have our walk not match our talk.

The ambassador has the delegated authority of the one who sends him out. I realize that can be taken to an extreme, yet the ambassador must go with some authority, even while he is also under authority. We have only the authority that God gives us. Our respect for delegated authority will keep us from abusing authority.

Men enjoy power. If we become aggressive, instead of using appeal, dignity, and respect for the other person, we will not clearly depict the love and mercy of God. Authority that does not line up with the Word of God causes confusion and devastation.

Psalm 85:10 says, "Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Mercy without truth brings a compromising situation. Truth without mercy can be very abrasive. At those times when mercy and truth come together righteousness and peace "kiss" each other. That's the formula for us.

There are strange fires out there. Where does that leave us? Not everybody that says they are preaching the Gospel is doing so. In 1 John 4:1, we are told to try the spirits or the message of the ambassador.

Freely we have received, freely let us give. Once when civil authorities tried to shut the apostles down, they said, "...we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). The heart of the ambassador is to be motivated by love.


As the ambassador is given more responsibility he is also given greater accountability. Violation of that responsibility thus also brings greater consequences.

Our message will not always be

appreciated. Sometimes it is received with hatred and hostility, but we must continue to preach the Word.

In Isaiah 55:11, it says, “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing wherein I sent it.” It is not up to us to control the acceptance of our message as ambassadors

of Christ. We are results-oriented people. We want results now, but that is up to God. We just need to be faithful ambassadors.

We do not understand what real bliss is until we’re ushered into heaven, where we will be with the holy angels and the Father. Praise God! Let’s be faithful ambassadors until He comes. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” 

The Power of the Scriptures

Clayton Weaver, Bastrop, TX

Paul reminded Timothy, “... from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). The Scriptures have the power to bring us to the understanding and experience of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:17 points out that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. We see a remarkable example of this in Luke 24:21 where two of the disciples were walking unknowingly with Jesus of whom they spoke. The amazing thing is that they had been acquainted with Jesus in person and “trusted that it had been He which should have

redeemed Israel,” yet they did not understand that salvation, until Jesus “opened to them the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27, 45-49).


As Peter preached to the multitude in Acts 2, he did not first undertake to lead them to a salvation experience so they could understand the Scriptures, but he preached the Scriptures which revealed Christ Jesus as Lord. Conviction resulted and conversion followed. The Scriptures made them wise unto salvation.

James 1:17 says we are to, “Receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.” 1 Peter 1:23 points out that we are “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God

which liveth and abideth for ever.”

Paul, in Acts 17:2-3, “reasoned with them (the teachers in the synagogue at Athens) out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen from the dead and that this Jesus, whom he preached is Christ.”

The psalmist David says in Psalm 138:2, “thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name.”

Let us worship our great God in spirit and in truth, as we with patience and comfort of the Scriptures grow in faith, look to the future in hope, and serve Him in love. 

Yield Not to Temptation

Eli A. Yoder, Stuarts Draft, VA

When Christ went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray with His disciples on the night before His crucifixion, He wanted them to stay awake with Him. They were so tired they fell asleep. So He said to them, “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

Even Jesus’ disciples’ spirits were willing but their flesh was weak. We, too, need to be on the lookout for Satan’s snares at all times. We know of people who started out right, but fell.

A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Picture a man ready to do some work from a platform hanging from a chain. When he steps on the platform, it collapses and the man falls to the ground, all because of one faulty link. That’s how it may be in our Christian walk of life. We may have a lot of virtues, but if we have one weakness that has never been conquered

we can expect disappointment. Let’s just remember that “fair weather Christians” may not have what it takes to stand in hard times. Jesus said, “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23).

Lot was faithful as long as he was with Abraham, but when Lot moved toward Sodom, he lost out. Very few Christians remain faithful when standing alone. That’s one reason we need to be part of a fellowship of true believers and the family of God.

If we lack victory, let us look into God’s Word. There are many wonderful promises. Psalm 34:4 and 6, say, “I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried, and the

LORD heard and saved him out of all his troubles.” Isaiah 41:10 says, “Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” The Bible has the answer to all our problems.

A lady came to a minister and said she has a real problem with temper. She said, “It’s worse than it was five years ago. Do you think this is wrong?”

The minister answered, “If it’s worse now than it was, something is drastically wrong.” She asked if there was anything she could do to get victory over this. The minister said, “As soon as you realize you have been angry with someone, you need to tell him you are sorry and that you know it was wrong and ask for his forgiveness.”

She said, “Oh, I wouldn’t want to do that.”

The minister replied, “Of course, you don’t want to do that, but you’ll never experience victory until you treat it as sin and make restitution.”

Another lady had a problem of exaggerating. She told a minister that people accuse her of misrepresentation. She too, wanted to know if and how she could overcome this. The minister said, “The next time you realize you have exaggerated something to a person, go tell that person you lied and ask him to forgive you.” The lady replied that she would not want to call

it lying. The minister answered that an untruth is a lie and will need to be treated as sin and repented of before she can overcome it.

Let’s not forget that anything that is not fully true is a lie and that no liar will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. (Revelation 21:8) If we are to represent Christ in letting our light shine and be useful in building up the Kingdom of God, we must be overcomers.

We have many warnings in the Bible, such as 1 Corinthians 16:13, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” Here’s another: 2 Corinthians 11:3, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

There are also many wonderful promises we can claim as we fully surrender our lives to Him. Ephesians 6:11 says, “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, “There hath no man temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Paul also makes this simple, practical comment, which will keep us out of a lot of trouble: “Abstain from every appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).



marriages

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

Hershberger-Lengacher

Bro. Aaron, son of Chris and Linda Hershberger, Guys Mills, PA, and Sis. Lisa, daughter of Lavern and Mary Lengacher, Centerville, PA, at Plainview Gospel Fellowship, on Feb. 28, 2009, by Willard Hochstetler.

Kauffman-Yoder

Bro. Linfred, son of Eli and Rose Kauffman, Hartselle, AL, and Sis. Rose, daughter of Donald and Julia Yoder, Rutherford, TN, at Berea Mennonite Church, on March 20, 2009, by Steve Yoder.

Miller-Byler

Bro. Jason, son of Ervin and Ruth Miller, Titusville, PA, and Sis. Esther, daughter of Urie and Martha Byler, Saegertown, PA, at Plainview Gospel Fellowship, on Feb. 7, 2009, by Ervin Miller.

Miller-Weaver

Bro. David, of Hartselle, AL, son of Alvin and Malinda Miller, Lavelle, WI, and Sis. Valerie, daughter of Leonard and Joyce Weaver, Hartselle, AL, at the First United Methodist Church in Hartselle, for Emmanuel Mennonite Church on March 4, 2009, by Millard Yoder.

Stoltzfus-Beiler

Bro. Merlin Wayne, son of Wilmer

and Emma Stoltzfus, Leola, PA, and Sis. Marie Rose, daughter of Vernon and Elizabeth Beiler, Paradise, PA, at Weavertown A.M. Church for Mine Road A.M. Church, on March 28, 2009, by John U. Lapp.

Troyer-Hostetler

Bro. Dennis Edward, son of Abe and Esther Troyer, Sugarcreek, OH, and Sis. Cindi, daughter of John Dean and Karen Hostetler, Plain City, OH, at United Bethel Mennonite for Haven Fellowship on March 20, 2009, by Lonnie Beachy.

Wagler-Witmer

Bro. Dallas, son of Sam and Margaret Wagler, Odon, IN, and Sis. Jodi, daughter of Larry and Barbara Witmer, Montgomery, IN, at Bethel Mennonite Church for Mt. Olive Mennonite Church, March 28, 2009, by David Yoder, Jr.

Yoder-Wengerd

Bro. Joash, son of Lonnie and Violet Yoder, Lexington, IN, and Sis. Loretta, daughter of Daniel and Dorothy Wengerd, Summersville, KY, at First Baptist Church for Summersville Mennonite Church on Nov. 21, 2008, by James Hershberger. [This is a correction of the report given in February, 2009. I apologize for the error. -PLM]

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Clayton, and Twila (Yoder), Bastrop, TX, fifth child, fourth son, Kenneth Melvin, Feb. 28, 2009.

Beachy, Gene and Kristina (Bontrager), Middlebury, IN, first child and dau., Kerra Jean, Jan. 30, 2009.

Beachy, Leon and Edith (Miller), Belvidere, TN, third child and dau., Deborah Ranae, March 15, 2009.

Beiler, Matthew and Yvonne (Summy), Paradise, PA, third child, first son, Durren Marlin, March 13, 2009.

Bontrager, Cameron and Monica (Hochstetler), Goshen, IN, second child and son, Jayse Anthony, Feb. 25, 2009.

Brenneman, Jonathan and LaRonda (Kuepfer), Virginia Beach, VA, fourth child, second dau., Jennica Grace, March 22, 2009.

Byler, Paul and Rose (Yoder), Vanleer, TN, seventh child, fifth son, Aaron Eugene, Feb. 10, 2009.

Eicher, Reuben and Rosina (Miller), Belvidere, TN, third child, first son, Weston Brent, March 14, 2009.

Fisher, Leroy and Rebekah (Miller), Mifflin, PA, third child, second son, Isaiah Mark, Feb. 10, 2009.

Glick, Wayne and Teresa (Graber), Paw Paw, WV, fourth child, first son, Curtis Wayne, Feb. 11, 2009.

Hershberger, Joseph and Leanna (Miller), Nickerson, KS, fifth child, second son, Charles Joseph, March 16, 2009.

Hershberger, Paul and Cynthia (Miller), Partridge, KS, fifth child, first son, Russell Paul, Feb. 28, 2009.

Hostetler, James and Maria (Beechy), Goshen, IN, first child and son, Tristan Cade, Feb. 3, 2009.

Jantzi, Ronald and Jennifer (Mullet), Milverton, ON, fourth child, third son, Landon Eric, Jan. 12, 2009. (This is a correction of an earlier announcement.)

Kauffman, Sheldon and Joann (Bontrager), Guys Mills, PA, fourth child, third dau., Katy Leigh, Feb. 4, 2009.

King, Lee and Barb (King), Honey Grove, PA, fourth child, second son, Devin Michael, Oct. 8, 2008.

Knepp, Abraham and Janelle (Wagler), Montgomery, IN, third child and son, Jenson Abraham, March 16, 2009.

Kurtz, Joe and Dorcas (Stoltzfus), Laurelville, OH, sixth child, fourth dau., Abrielle Grace, March 10, 2009.

Lamon, Brad and Jennifer (Miller), Clarkson, KY, fourth child, third son, Asher Paul, Feb. 20, 2009.

Lee, Chad and Kimberly (Ligus), Mooringsport, LA, sixth child, third dau., Anna Miriam, Jan. 29, 2009.

Mast, Keith and Linda (Stoltzfus), Honey Brook, PA, sixth child, fifth dau., MaKayla Lynn, Feb. 8, 2009.

Miller, Johnny and Katie (Stoltzfus), Swanton, MD, seventh child, fourth dau., Leanna Beth, Nov. 3, 2008.

Miller, Josh and Edna Mae (Miller), Frankfort, OH, sixth child, second dau., Shania Faith, April 1, 2009.

Miller, Marlin and Hannah (Schrock), Linneus, MO, fifth child, fourth son, Joseph LaMar, Jan. 15, 2009.

Miller, Philip and Joanna (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, second child and son, Kendall Jay, March 4, 2009

Overholt, Lewis and Marge (Wagler), Oskaloosa, KS, third child, first dau., Anna Joy, Mar. 11, 2009.

Overholt, Steven and Kaylene (Wingard), Montezuma, GA, tenth child, fifth dau., Marietta Lanae, Feb. 11, 2009.

Schmucker, William and Rosina (Miller), Partridge, KS, second child and son, Stuart William, March 3, 2009.

Schwartz, Dave and Martha (Esh), Frankfort, OH, seventh child, second son, Brent Andre`, Feb. 25, 2009.

Stauffer, Lawrence Lee and Julia (Weaver), Sturgis, MI, third child and son, Adam Lance, March 10, 2009.

Sinn, Timothy and Regina (Yoder), Oskaloosa, KS, first child and son, Michael David, Feb. 6, 2009.

Stoltzfus, Allen and Joanna (Gingerich), Levels, WV, sixth child, third dau., Kilmrey Sue, Dec. 30, 2008.

Stoltzfus, Clayton and Naomi (Stoltzfus), Gordonville, PA, second child and son, Adrian Cole, March 2, 2009.

Stoltzfus, John, Jr. and Angela (Miller), Morgantown, PA, sixth child, fourth dau., Jaquelyn Merril, Feb. 2, 2009.

Stoltzfus, Wilmer and Thelma (King), Clarkson, KY, ninth child, fifth dau., Marnita Ruth, March 2, 2009.

Troyer, Jerald and Janice (Petre), Frankfort, OH, first child and son, Bryson John, Feb. 25, 2009.

Wagler, John and Susan (Summy), Leon, IA, fifth child and dau., Alyssum Ruth, March 9, 2009.

Yoder, Andrew and Judith (Swartzen-truber), Montezuma, GA, third child, second dau., Kaylee Ann, Feb. 19, 2009.

Yoder, Marlin and Brenda Sue (Stauffer), Centreville, MI, fourth child, third dau., Alexis Ryanne, March 3, 2009.

Yoder, Marlin and Anna (Raber), Cedar Creek, TX, third child and dau., Hilda Renee, March 8, 2009.

ordinations

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

Bro. Nathan Fisher, 30, was ordained by lot as minister at Shade Mountain Christian Fellowship, Jan. 20, 2009. Preordination messages were given by Merv Lapp and Earl Peachey. The charge was given by Raymond King. Daniel Fisher, Nathan's brother-in-law, was also in the lot.

Bro. Phaylon Schrock, 33, Middlebury, IN, was chosen by lot and ordained as minister on March 8, 2009, at Fair Haven A. M. Church, Goshen, IN. Preordination messages were brought by Lee Nisly, Hutchinson, KS. The charge was given by Wilbur Yoder, assisted by Lee Nisly and Steve Miller. Myron Miller was also in the lot.

obituaries

Mishler, Harvey, 89, died Feb. 24, 2009, at Goshen, IN. He was born Dec. 15, 1919, at Nappanee, IN, son of the late John and Emma (Schmucker) Mishler.

He was a member of Fair Haven A.M. Church, Goshen.

On Nov. 13, 1941, he was married to Leatha E. Miller. She died March 31, 2007. Eight children survive: Arlene Hershberger, Elkhart; Sharon (Verton) Coblantz, Goshen; Betty (Joe) Borkholder, Goshen; Carolyn (Enos) Yoder, Middlebury; LaMar Mishler, Goshen; Samuel (Roberta) Mishler, Syracuse; Stephen Mishler, Plymouth; Wayne (Mary Ellen) Mishler, Goshen; 14 grandchildren, and 15 great grandchildren. Also surviving are three brothers: Joe (Mary) Mishler, Ft. Wayne; John Mishler, Goshen; and Mose (Freida) Mishler, Seymour, MO.

Preceding him in death were three sisters: Mary Lambright, Elizabeth Mishler, and Katie Maust and two brothers: Daniel Mishler and Samuel Mishler.

The funeral was held at Fair Haven Church on Feb. 27, with Wilbur Yoder officiating. Burial was in Thomas Cemetery, Goshen.


Yutzy, Kira Mary, 3, died of Hib influenza, Feb. 26, 2009. She was born Feb. 6, 2006, in Lancaster County, PA, daughter of Merlin and Mary Lou (Glick) Yutzy of Ronks, PA.

The Yutzy family are part of Mine

Road A.M. Church, Gap.

Surviving siblings are: Marlea, 5, Anna, 10 months. Grandparents are John U. and Rachel Glick, Kinzers, PA and Edwin and Mary Yutzy, Plain City, OH. Kira will be missed by many others-aunts, uncles, cousins and other friends

of the family.

The funeral was held on Feb. 28, at Calvary Monument Bible church for Mine Road Church, with Daniel Lapp, John Glick, and Jason Smoker serving. Interment was at Mine Road Cemetery, with Alvin Stoltzfus in charge. 

observations

It is common knowledge that teenagers and senior citizens are more accident-prone on the highway than other age groups.

The explanation commonly accepted is that the young person's manual skills are not matched by corresponding caution and good judgment. The older person's reflexes have slowed and mental alertness is likely diminished.

Whether we are teenagers or seniors, to cultivate an awareness of these factors should make us less accident-prone.

Our manner of driving does say something about our personality and the level of our maturity. Some teenagers reflect remarkable maturity by their driving habits and other character and personality traits. The person who is always in a hurry will pay more for fuel, tires and maintenance than those with gentle, easy-going driving habits.

The reason I got started on this track is something reported in *U. S. News and World Report* (2-09-09). Technology is now capable of

providing an in-car camera device that allows concerned parents to look and listen to their teen-aged driver from the home. Since 2007, the device has been a key component of American Family Insurance's Teen-Safe Driver program available in 19 states.

It is quite a breakthrough! Blessed are the parents whose teenagers can be trusted without such close oversight.

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Mrs. Taylor is an elderly widow that lives here in Partridge. I often see her at the post office where we both pick our mail. She lives alone and enjoys visiting with the postmistress or other patrons.

We recently met her at the family-owned IGA store in Nickerson, 12 miles from Partridge. She explained that she has been buying her groceries there for a long time: "They were the only business that sent flowers when my husband died."

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Former United States Surgeon General Everett Koop is now 92. In 1988 he had a health situation that left

him a quadriplegic. Surgery restored the use of his limbs. Had he lived in England under socialized medicine, he would have been nine years too old to qualify for the surgery he needed. It saved his life and gave him another 21 years of mobility.

He regrets that the United States seems to be moving toward socialized medicine where the government makes the decisions that are now worked out between patient and doctor. (*World* magazine, March 14, 2009)



In 1990, Randy Alcorn was a young pastor, author and pro-life activist. An abortion facility sued him and won a court judgment against him.

He said, "I told the judge that I would pay anyone anything I owed them, but one thing I wouldn't do was hand over money to people who would use it to kill babies." So the court ruled that one quarter of his salary as a pastor would be garnished to satisfy the court judgment.

There was only one way to prevent garnishment: If Alcorn made minimum wages. So he began taking only minimum wages. His book royalties now in excess of \$4 million are donated to Christian ministries. (*World* magazine, March 14, 2009)



A law maker in Washington was expressing his concern about the vast sums of money the new administration is spending. How much is a trillion dollars? He says that if 1,000 dollar bills were stacked

to total a trillion dollars, the stack would be 68.9 miles high.



The British Humanist Association (BHA) with the support of prominent atheist Richard Dawkins launched a "No God" Advertising campaign on U. K. buses. The message is large and legible: "There is probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy life." (*Creation* magazine, March-May, 2009)

To acknowledge our need of God and give ourselves to Him is an effective remedy for worry. This is yet another evidence that God's enemy, Satan, is becoming increasingly bold and desperate because he knows his time is running out.



A company that sells Heat Surge heaters employs Amish men and women to make cabinets. Their aggressive advertising includes repeated full-page ads of the work place where the cabinets are being made. It is obvious that the company considers the name Amish and corresponding photos to have value in the market place.

The Sugarcreek Budget, (3-2-09), Editor's Corner has a letter from B. J. Dominic, Pulaski, WI, addressing this issue. He reports that the company has been running half-hour television advertisements on Sundays. Telephone operators are ready to take orders on the Lord's Day. Mr. Dominic thinks this is a serious distortion and compromise of basic Amish ideals. He appeals

to church leaders to give the matter appropriate attention.

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Isn't it interesting that some people are eager to be identified with non-conformed Christians when there are financial benefits? But their interest appears to be purely materialistic with no effect on lifestyle.

Manual skills and good workmanship are traits that do have some customer appeal. But that is different than trying to enhance appeal by attaching a religious label to a product. Most products are religiously neutral.

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Mr. Redden, a visitor in a recent Sunday morning service was saying how much he appreciated the service—especially the singing. He said that it had been three or four years since they had last visited and that they need to come more often. (The Reddens' son, Mike, is a member at Center Church.)

Mr. Redden went on to say that he has been to many church services, but this is absolutely the "singiest" church he has ever attended. Since he is an accomplished piano player, it was interesting to hear him say, "You don't need instrumental accompaniment"

Are we to conclude that instruments are helpful to compensate for deficiencies in congregational singing?

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I am not one who understands rudiments of music very well. I do

enjoy helping to sing. I can tell the difference between harmony and discordant tones.

There is a beautiful analogy here of life in the body of believers. Harmony does not come from everyone sounding the same notes—over and over. Neither does it come from those who might feel free to invent their own sounds without regard for basic rudiments.

Life in the congregation is much more than singing. Ideally it is a harmonious blending together of different gifts. When there is serious disharmony, someone is not paying enough attention to the "rudiments." (The Word of God)

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It occurs to me that the above comments merit some additional discussion. A goal of harmony and unity alone is not enough. Unless there is the basic guideline of unchanging truth, unity will settle to the lowest common denominator.

As a senior member of our leadership team, these principles become very practical. Seniority is respected, but not idolized. I do have opinions and feel free to express them. But an unwillingness to hear others could well be a sign that I am no longer useful to the body. The mistaken assumption that my individual judgment is better than that of the collective team would amount to a poorly disguised case of self-centeredness and misguided sincerity.

—DLM 

“Idol” Expectations

Elmer Schrock, Stuarts Draft, VA

An unfortunate turn of events starting with Israel's disobedience rendered faith ineffective. After the Philistines had soundly defeated Israel several times, Israel, instead of seeking God's counsel, decided to take the ark of God and the two attending priests to the battlefield to make sure they got a blessing from God. They expected Him to honor their misguided confidence in that act, which would help them gain the victory! Their venture, however, resulted in another severe defeat in battle, the capture of the ark and the death of the priests involved.

The Bible states that these defeats were allowed by God because of their sins. Though Eli had warned his sons, the priests were using their priestly assignment for selfish ends. Hophni and Phineas were causing Israel to sin. The result was that the ark of God was in enemy hands.

The Philistines were delighted with the valuable booty they were taking home. They put it into a safe place next to their god, Dagon.

It was a strange situation. Dagon sat proudly on his pedestal, heretofore unrivaled by any other deity. Dagon

was never dissatisfied with where they put him. He served the Philistines well. He never brought evil or hurt on his subjects. He did not become discontented with his self image. Holding a mirror in front of his face did not produce a longing for a shorter nose, smaller ears, or a stylish beard and mustache like a neighboring god had. Dagon never complained about his looks. He was contented!

On the other hand, when his admirers offered their unanswered prayers, they gave Dagon a real break. They did not hold him accountable for his ineptitude. They blamed other issues when their crops dried up, even as they earnestly prayed with severe bodily contortions and dances for much-needed rain.

Dagon had the endorsement of the Philistines as the god of the century, until two soldiers brought a strange-looking box with angelic figures on its top. They treated it as they would any highly-treasured spoils from battle. They placed it right beside the pedestal on which Dagon was perched.

The angelic figures did not flutter their wings. Nor did Dagon turn his

head to observe the intrusion. Each passively and silently “stayed put.” None showed signs of life. Since it was Dagon’s habitation, he should have extended a welcome to the box. But it was not his way to be easily awakened to another’s presence. He was of a stoic makeup and was not given to emotional responses.

Unknown to Dagon’s caretakers, the box was different. It is not God’s habit to visit idol temples. But here was an opportunity of a lifetime. It seems that God might have had a bit of a smile as He hovered near the angelic figures. In the darkness there was silent movement. Suddenly, as God did something, Dagon tumbled to the floor like a chunk of lead. Had God just said? “Fall, you false god!” or did He look at Dagon and sneeze--or puff in his face? Or did He silently reach over and poke Dagon in the ribs like his worshippers did when they asked him for blessing or assistance? Whatever God did, it worked.

The next morning the worshippers came. They must have wondered who had trespassed in the night. They may have checked the door and found it still locked. How strange! Dagon was not noted for sleep-walking. Nor had he ever before made a misstep and stumbled. Anxiously and reverently, they restored Dagon to his perch,

thinking the matter was settled.

But not quite! The next morning, not only was their beloved god on the ground, he was also ruined. His hands were broken off. His head lay off to one side. He was helpless and quite dead! Then the Philistine lords began to put two and two together. They decided that the god of Israel had visited their pagan temple, wrestled with their god and soundly defeated him. What were they to do?

Did God wear an expression of amused satisfaction as He saw their confusion? It was not enough just to defeat their famous god. Wherever they parked the strange box, people got sick. They moved it from city to city. In each location, people died of strange diseases, and some of the survivors got tumors. Some Philistines died. Finally, they decided they had better send the ark back to Israel where it belonged.

When the ark came back, Israel was ready to abandon their disobedience and seek God’s counsel as Samuel spoke God’s Word to them. Then God prospered them again.

How often do we, like Israel try to invoke God’s blessing with a Bible reading, a devotional, or a prayer on a situation God was not planning to bless?

Perhaps it’s in a ball game with both sides praying for victory. It puts God

on the spot, because He knows that to bless one side with victory means the other side will be given defeat. He loves both teams equally!

Or a business man utters something that is more a superstition than a prayer: He asks God to let his business prosper, even though he does not observe the Golden Rule in his business dealings.

In church decisions, we may ask God's blessing on an activity or a change in policy that is a grief to Him, another step away from Him and closer to the fallen world. We adopt a practice from the world (or compromising believers) and weave it into the fabric of church life!

God's blessing, spiritual victories, defeating Satan and the world are not won by superstitiously taking our sacred things like Bibles and mini-prayers into those situations that God did not plan and cannot bless. Israel was trying to destroy their enemies in the geographical battleground, but the real enemy was the idolatry in their own hearts. Right in the midst of their disobedience and rebellion, they dared to attempt partnering with God by taking the sacred ark onto that unholy ground and invoking His blessings on their activity. **It didn't work!** Nor should we expect His blessings on activities that He does not plan for His people,

the church.

In response to our "Why?" when something fails or brings negative results, He may have to say, "My reason for being silent is because you are ignoring My Word about those issues that are slipping: like proper observance and practice of headship principles (1 Corinthians 11:1-16), or compromising your opposition to the use of the radio and TV, or engaging in time-consuming and costly sports competitions!

"It was not My Spirit's suggestion that you expand your business or farm that has become a burdensome drag on your spiritual life. Those extravagant vacations really were not what I meant when I said, 'Come ye apart and rest a while.'

"Young people, that 'life-of-the-party' boyfriend/girlfriend you were warned about is not what I call an equal yoke. (2 Corinthians 6:14) Because your mini-prayers about that ritzy pickup truck were so self-centered, I could hardly hear them. Your groaning under the burden of debt is not the liberty I want for you have in Christ. You claimed liberty to do what you please, but I want you to be set free from selfish ambitions and freedom to do things My way!"

Today's idols are not as passive, silent, dead, or motionless as Dagon was. They may come in the use of

electronic devices that convey the filth and corruption the world loves so well. They pipe in the garbage to the eyes, ears and hearts of anyone who gives them opportunity. When God's people listen to these sounds from a "safe" distance the trustworthy ways of maintaining the essentials of the faith can seem boring and outdated.

Discontentment grows as they look out among the more daring people and see how they do church. Then issues that should not change are tolerated, then embraced and then compromise sets in!

We dare not, however, be closed to improvement. Sometimes change is necessary for faithful growth.

Let us make sure that these changes foster growth in the perfection of Christ. In Deuteronomy 12:30, **"Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? Even so will I do likewise."**

To inquire after and to fellowship freely with folks not upholding "the whole counsel of God," often loosens scriptural convictions with the influence traveling the wrong way. But in the midst of that compromise, "the show of church" goes on. What

would He say to us? Perhaps He would say, "Strengthen the things that remain" (Revelation 3:2)

Is the church in danger of becoming unsettled and tottery as "crossless Christians" criticize and mock the quaint notions of the disciplined church? Compromising believers may playfully taunt the faithful, by saying, "Come on. Lighten up! Everybody needs a little fun. Let's turn up the music and be happy."

If God's people watch and listen and trail along behind them (if by one year or fifty years) as they whine, twist, pluck, and twang their way in their pursuit of entertainment and happiness, if we try to adopt their styles, even using Gospel lyrics, will we be able to appreciate holy joy instead of such noise? As the music takes over the message of their songs and the image of Christ fades because of the emerging and overshadowing image of the world, the purity and witness of the church shrinks and fades into performance and form, instead of worship and testimony!

The Head of the church stands off in the shadows weeping, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, (church of the 20th and 21st century), how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" (Luke 13:34).

Unlike Dagon, many idols today are not concrete, but are abstract ideas and concepts that play on the imagination. They provide material for fantasy and make-believe. While God's people should be service-minded, too many get caught up in the spirit of materialism, secularism, play and fun. Modern idols *do* make demands of their servants. They rob them of their time with God, to help neighbors, to just be with family, to help on disaster and relief projects. The Saturday night activities may absorb mental energies needed to worship on Sunday morning. Some find that it's hard to soar with eagles on Sunday morning when they've hooted with the owls most of Saturday night. It is hard to focus on the will of God when obsessed with the latest sports events, electronic playthings, or demanding secular involvements.

Idolatry today is still alive. Secular consumerism soils God's people with the stuff of the world. Missions and outreach suffer lack of funding and personnel because we do not leave the world's toys where they belong. We are too easily persuaded by clever ads. Their trinkets and trappings promise us the ultimate in happiness. So our funds are siphoned off into the marketplace and our energies evaporated into pleasurable

nothingness--and God's projects suffer!

The message from Sinai stands as firm as ever: "**Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**" Does modern idolatry provoke God to jealousy? What are his emotions when He sees His people carried away by the dumb idols of our times? His jealousy is not rooted in the competition with the devil for the souls of men, as much as in His sorrow for what His people will have to suffer for their bad choices.

The drift is gradual. It destroys conviction a little at a time. But we continue to ask for God's blessing anyhow, in spite of compromises! It is said that Nikita Krushev told President Kennedy, "We will bury you so gently, you won't even know you are dead." Is that what is happening to the church today?

At an early age, Jesus asked, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Whose business are *we* about? Are we advancing His kingdom with the resources He has loaned to us, or are we using them for the gratification of our own ambitions, preferences, conveniences, and pleasures? To have our Father's approval and blessing, **we must be about our Father's business**, invoking His blessings on that which He *can* cheerfully bless!



Brother Ricky's Testimony

Ricky Wright, Jackson, GA

[Bro. Ricky Wright was a fellow teacher at IGo (Institute for Global Opportunities) in Thailand (November 3-21, 2008). While he seemed to have things right, I never sensed that Mr. Wright considered himself to be always right. His humility was a blessing and I asked him to write his testimony for the readers of Calvary Messenger. Ricky denies any family connection to Orville and Wilbur. Read and enjoy! -PLM]

I was raised in a Baptist home. My parents consider themselves Christian folk, even though they admittedly didn't always live out their faith as members of a local congregation. For most of my life, we five boys (of whom I was Number Four) were sent to church. For a time they actually went to church with us boys.

During one of those times, I felt the Lord call me in a very special way. I still remember the preacher preaching about a "God-shaped void" in every man, woman and child. He made sure to tell us only Jesus could fill that void. As is the custom in the Baptist Church, I went forward during the invitation and took the pastor's hand and shared with him my desire. He asked me a few questions; I gave my testimony to him, and he prayed with me, and we asked Jesus to come into my heart and be my Lord and Savior.

A week later, on a Sunday night,

I was baptized. This was a big thing, because I couldn't swim! The baptistery was filled with water to at least four feet deep. Did I mention that I was in second or third grade? I was not tall enough to walk to the pastor. It was going to be like Peter walking to Jesus. I was supposed to step on some crates and walk to the pastor, who would then help me. The problem was that when I started out in the water, the number of people in the congregation so surprised me that I took my eyes off the crates and missed one. I sunk below the surface of the water and panicked. By the time the preacher got to me I had already gone under three times. Well, this was a Baptist Church, so he did it again—officially!

I wish I could tell you that from that day forward to today, I've walked with the Lord, but that's not true. One thing that the Baptist Church does very well is evangelize, but one thing they do rather poorly is disciple believers.

Some of their failure is, I believe, the “once saved, always saved” doctrine that they so vehemently preach. It’s not because they don’t offer discipleship training; they do. But, if we are going to be with Jesus forever, no matter how we live the rest of our lives, why should we grow and learn more of Him today? Furthermore, if we are going to be with Jesus for all eternity anyhow, why find out so much about Him now?

God led me in various ways throughout my childhood and youth. When I started dating Maria, I began to really grow in my walk with the Lord. She invited me to go to church with her, which was easy, since we both attended a Baptist church. But then she asked me to read the book of Ruth and discuss it with her. Now up to that time I had been reading the Bible only in preparation for Sunday School lessons or Sword Drills! The thought of reading my Bible simply for the sake of reading it was new. But, in order to impress this young lady whom I wanted to get to know better, I decided to read it. I’m not sure she knew what she did when she offered me that challenge, but I couldn’t stop with Ruth. I had to read, comprehend and discuss more and more—and that desire has not yet abated, Praise the Lord!

Then we were blessed with children and their welfare was paramount in

my mind, heart and spirit. So I had to get serious about God’s Word. I wanted, above all else, for my children and wife to be with me forever. That meant we would have to raise them according to The Book. In order for this to happen, I would have to know more about it than they. Then I read *Pilgrim’s Progress* and I was scared that they might be led away by the world’s allurements. I sought out everything I could think of to share my faith and walk worthy of imitation for my children.

I wish I could tell you that I did it perfectly, but that’s not true. As a matter of fact, two of my children have turned their backs on God. Why? I cannot tell you. I don’t know. But I will never give up my desire to have them return to the Lord and to walk in His ways. We keep a line of communication open. We pray for them often.

In about 1987, I suffered from my second heat stroke in as many years. It knocked me down. I was pushing myself too hard and God was making me slow down! For two weeks I could do very little except sit and sip Gatorade. During that time I read *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*. My faith was challenged to the core! The questions that crowded my mind were overpowering to my spirit! How could I go on promoting Baptist teaching? How could these churches

that I had attended all my life teach such a dangerous doctrine as “once saved, always saved”? These martyrs could have continued their lives here on earth simply by mouthing a few simple words—yet they refused! Why?

Their testimony was that if they said words of allegiance and worship to Caesar they would be denying their Lord. To deny their Lord would place them in danger of hell fire and they would miss the opportunity of kissing the hand that was nailed to a cross for them. So, instead they strengthened their families, said their goodbyes, and willingly suffered and died for their faith in Jesus Christ!

The stage was set. I just didn't know where, how, when, or with whom it would continue. I began questioning some of--what I considered dangerous doctrines to my pastor friends. I didn't get a lot of response from them. My pastor finally suggested if I couldn't accept the Five Points of Calvinism that I should find another church.

So we visited the Nazarenes. We had a good time worshipping with them, but we couldn't quite agree on several doctrines they teach, namely the second blessing and the role of women in church leadership.

About this time we got a burden to home-school our children. We attended several home-school seminars and book fairs and decided

on CLE (Christian Light Education) curriculum. We felt unprepared and unqualified to teach the curriculum, so we enrolled in the teacher's training at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

We didn't know much about Mennonite people, other than what we had heard from Denny Kenaston's family series. Just before this week of teaching was to begin my father died. We left the funeral in Georgia and drove to Harrisonburg. The folks at CLE were unaware of what we had just been through. We were assigned to stay for that week in the home of Lloyd and Alma Hartzler, strangers to us.

While we were there, I saw Bro. Lloyd avoid a fight. I saw him allow himself to be verbally abused and his home disrespected, and yet he still shared the message of Jesus in a loving voice and calm demeanor! I had never known such restraint in my life.

It was a hard week, yet I was refreshed and encouraged. That week I purchased a copy of *Martyr's Mirror*. I have since read it more than three times—cover to cover!

About a year later we searched out Hephzibah Mennonite Church. When we found it, there was no one there, not even in the pastor's study. No one was working on the grounds at all. I had a little prayer and covenanted with God to return some day when people were gathered

to worship.

Several weeks later, we went. After the service, I planned to make good my promise to my little girl to buy a happy meal at McDonald's. Instead, Sister Naomi Huber made us go to their house for lunch! What a wonderful day we had at the house of Ornan and Naomi Huber! They tried to reduce the children's disappointment in missing their happy meals by loading us down with blueberries, raspberries and just about anything else they could get on our little Toyota pickup truck.

The people at the Hephzibah church were always hospitable and we enjoyed

the fellowship. Finally, in 2004, Maria, Tiffany and I were received into the fellowship at Lighthouse Mennonite Church.

The Lord has led us to minister and teach a number of times in Haiti since 1999. In November of 2008, our lives were enriched to overflowing by serving with your editor in Thailand. God is faithful, even when we are not, and much more abounding in grace than this old sinner (saved by grace) ever deserved. But that is not the story we all should be telling.

Who is God's church? Let's try, "The Church That Jesus Loves!"



mission awareness

A Boys' Camp in Ireland?

Melvin Glick, Seneca, SC

Dunmore East is a small fishing village on the southeast coast of Ireland. There has been a group of Amish Mennonites in this area for the past 17 years. A meeting house and school were built in 2002. Dan Yoder and Ed Yoder are the pastors, with the congregation having about 25 members. Several other families attend regularly.

The small church school has had requests at different times from parents and social workers to teach boys that

had difficulty learning in the public schools. Teaching these students opened our eyes and hearts to the real need for some kind of help for troubled boys. We wished for a better way to provide for these young people's needs. It was the birth of our vision for a boys' camp in Ireland.

Although historically Ireland was covered with trees, by 1900 only one percent of the country was forested. The government addressed this problem by forming a forestry board with the

goal of woodland expansion. Their main methods were planting fast-growing conifers (cone-bearing trees) and later clear-felling them, and the profits support further afforestation. Today forest covers about nine percent of Ireland. (Pennsylvania is 59 percent forested.)

The Irish Forestry Board is named Coillte (kweel-chuh) which means Forest in the Gaelic language. They own and manage most of the forest land, and so the most probable location for a camp would be on a conifer plantation they manage. It seems God led us to a likely section near the Comeragh Mountains, and we sent a proposal to Coillte on January 30, 2009. At present, we are asking for a short-term lease which will allow us space to build a campsite and operate a day program. A residential camp would require a longer term agreement, or purchase. We pray that God would lead us to these steps in His time.

One of the effective ministries to young boys in the last half century in North America has been the wilderness boys' camp program.

I believe Menno Simons' definition of true evangelical faith would include assisting parents with behavioral challenges with their adolescent sons.

In our conservative Mennonite quest for mission engagement in

Ireland the obvious question for boys' camp enthusiasts is whether or not such a camp would work there.

With a Mennonite mission/church already present in Ireland, the Irish culture has already been engaged to some degree. Add the heart of Dan Yoder for behaviorally challenged boys dating back to his experience at Faith Mission Home. The enthusiasm of staff at Bald Eagle Boys camp also enters the picture, as well as the readiness of the Amish Mennonite community in Ireland to support such a project.

Given the often long process of starting a boys' camp in the US, would starting a similar camp in Ireland be even more difficult in the Irish culture? Possibly.

In August, 2007, a meeting was held at Bald Eagle Camp in the interest of a boys' camp in Ireland. There were 12 attendees including reps from Bald Eagle, MIC, and other interested parties. A wide range of applicable scenarios related to starting a camp on the other side of the ocean in another culture were discussed. Yet the consensus seemed to indicate that the group was ready to attempt it by the providence of God. The motion was made to have Wes and Karen Sensenig move to Ireland for research should Bald Eagle be willing to release them. MIC offered to support them

for one year.

Wes and Karen moved to Ireland in October, 2007, under the auspices of MIC with Wes teaching school and doing camp research on the side.

In June, 2008, during an MIC delegation visit to Ireland, Dwight and Joanne Martin (Bald Eagle board chairman) arranged their vacation in Ireland to participate in a meeting with the local church brethren. This meeting served both to solidify the vision and to give direction on how the camp might come to fruition. A board structure was implemented that would have both Bald Eagle and MIC provide one member from their boards plus an appointee by each. The fifth member would be provided by the church in Ireland. They resolved to have the board members chosen by September.

In December the new board met for the first time in Ireland. Several days were spent in walking and evaluating the several possible accesses to the Comeragh mountain range, organizing the board as well as all the other factors that enter the picture of such a colossal undertaking.

At this point in February, 2009, the camp does not have the permits it needs to enter the mountains.

Due to the difficulty of obtaining the various permits and the newness of operating a camp in the Irish

culture, the camp will be started as a day program meaning several boys will come to the residential center for a day's activities. Hopefully as time goes on and more confidence is shown toward the camp program it can gradually develop into a residential camp.

More camp staff will be needed as the program develops. Wes will serve as a supervisor. Nathanael Yoder, who has lived in Ireland for the past 13 years, will also be on staff. Nate and Ruth have two sons and will move out to the camp area when his full-time participation is needed. The anticipated camp location is approximately one hour from Dunmore East, the Amish Mennonite community. More staff from North America and EU countries will be needed as chiefs (counselors).

If you know of committed Christian fellows from either North America or the EU countries that you feel would apply themselves to this type of disciplined VS please let us know. Those from North America should have boys' camp experience.

[Melvin Glick is the secretary of Missions Interest Committee. He was appointed to serve as a board member of Comeragh Boys Camp as a representative of MIC. This new venture should be on our prayer list.

—FS] 

A Devoted and Willing Heart

Mary June Glick

I am a mother. Many of you who are reading this are mothers. The second Sunday in May is a special day for mothers. We look forward to the telephone calls, cards and visits from our children. We often speak of a “mother-heart,” which refers to a woman who loves a child with the love of a mother. A mother-heart is *devoted* to the child. She loves spending time with her child. She is *willing* to work hard, long hours for the sake of the child. Love motivates her. God uses women who have a *devoted* and a *willing* heart, a heart motivated by love to serve Him.

A Devoted Heart

When I think of a devoted heart, I think of the sisters, Mary and Martha. They were good friends of Jesus. Jesus was coming to their house for dinner. However, when Jesus arrived Martha was so busy preparing a feast for their special guest that she did not have time for friendship and fellowship with Him. To make it worse, she got angry with Mary for not being out in the kitchen with her. Mary was sitting at Jesus’ feet enjoying warm companionship

with her beloved friend.

I remember a time we were traveling and had arranged to have supper with friends. I was especially anticipating the visit because I was expecting good fellowship with a friend of a kindred spirit. She had prepared a wonderful meal. However, she was so busy with the preparation that there was no time for the sharing I had anticipated. Now I have had many visitors in my lifetime and doubtless there have been disappointments for them, too.

Women all know there is work to do when we have guests at our house for a meal. We have probably all sympathized with Martha at times: we’ve had a busy day, unexpected interruptions and are too stressed to enjoy our visitors. Maybe we should serve simpler meals and “delicious” fellowship.

Jesus rebuked Martha because she had gotten her priorities mixed up. He said Mary had chosen “the better part.” I believe Jesus desires our fellowship. When we, like Mary, take time to sit at Jesus’ feet and talk with Him, not only will our priorities and responsibilities fall into their proper

place, but also we will be refreshed and encouraged. Fellowship with Jesus requires time.

It is true we can talk with Him any time we go about our daily work. I believe we should set aside time to be alone with Him with no distractions from anyone. I like to keep my Bible, a devotional guide, and a notebook and pen in a basket. During the winter, the kitchen table becomes my quiet corner, in the summer it is the porch. It is difficult for busy mothers and may not always be possible but be sure to find those moments that work best for you. God will bless you as you give him a devoted heart.

A Willing Heart

Some time ago, I heard a message taken from Exodus 38. God commanded Moses to find those who had a willing heart to bring offerings and assist in the building of the tabernacle. My heart rejoiced as I noticed that it especially refers *to the women*, whose hearts stirred them up and to those who were wise hearted. They willingly did whatever they were able to do.

Our work is so much easier when

we do it willingly. Sometimes we hear people refer to their lot in life as though it were so hard; they must just struggle to accept it. I believe God will give us grace as we willingly accept where we are. A woman's daily work is so much easier if she does it willingly. It may be washing dirty diapers, scrubbing the kitchen floor, cooking endless meals or sitting in a rocking chair.

Helping at sewing circle, teaching a Sunday school class, or cleaning the church building looks like a big job. It is your turn to take a meal to a shut-in or a new mother. Your husband may be ordained to the ministry and your life as a minister's wife looks difficult. You have a large family of small children or you do not have any children.

I remember many times when I worked unwillingly and I remember the difference it made when I worked willingly. Not only was I a happier person, but those around me were happier, too. Let us encourage each other to exercise a willing heart.

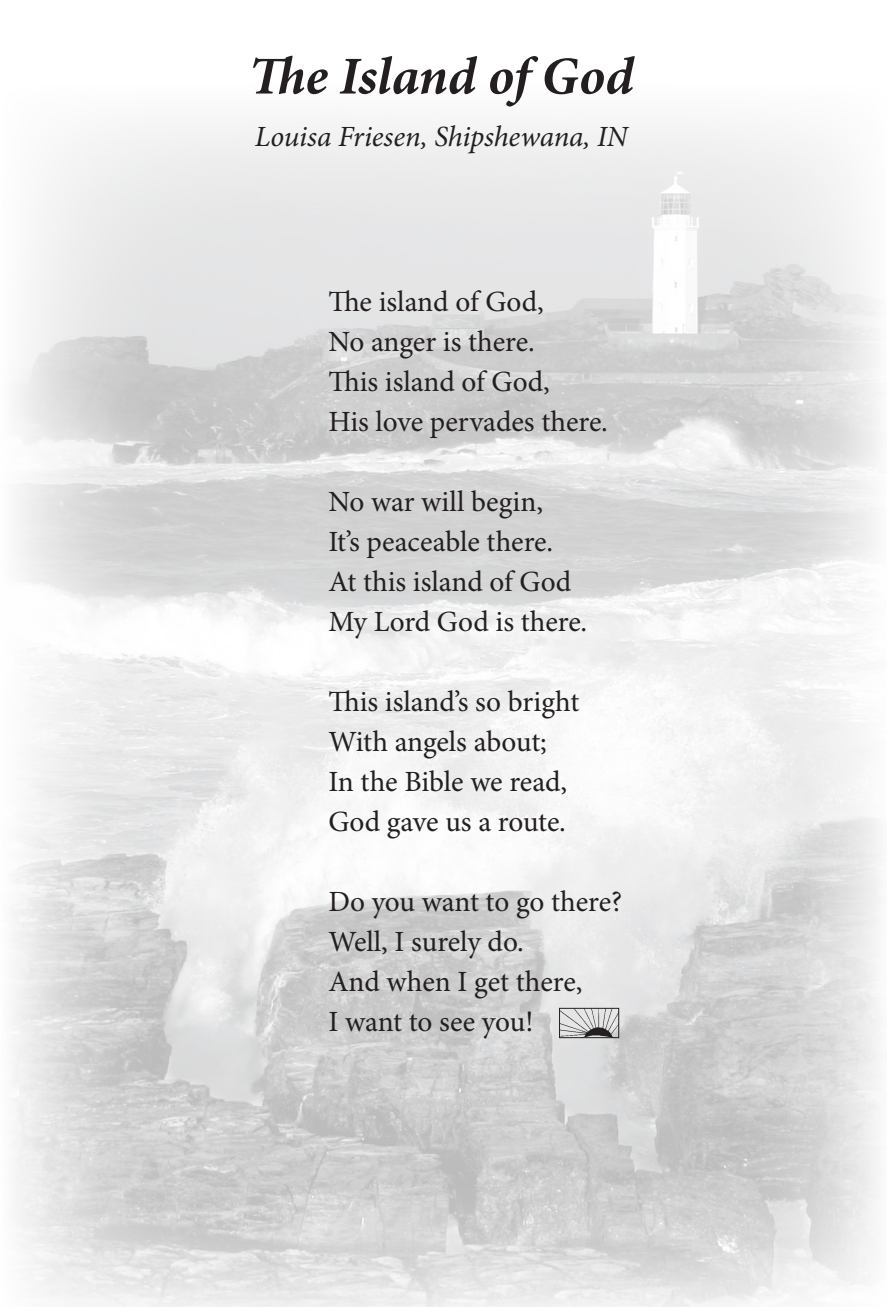
A devoted and willing heart brings glory to the One who created us.



If people speak evil of you, live so that people of character don't believe them.

The Island of God

Louisa Friesen, Shipshewana, IN



The island of God,
No anger is there.
This island of God,
His love pervades there.

No war will begin,
It's peaceable there.
At this island of God
My Lord God is there.

This island's so bright
With angels about;
In the Bible we read,
God gave us a route.

Do you want to go there?
Well, I surely do.
And when I get there,
I want to see you!



To Text or Not to Text?

Ryan Shetler, Hutchinson, KS

Many young people across the world now participate in the activity of text messaging (texting) each other with their cell phones. At first consideration, you would say there is nothing detrimental about it. What could possibly be wrong with sending messages by typed words as opposed to calling someone? Many people have embraced it wholeheartedly, as they will most new trends, while others have frowned on it with suspicion and questioned its wholesomeness as a way to communicate.

Can it really convey the same meaning and carry the feeling and emotion that normal conversation does? Does it cheapen relationships, causing them to be superficial? Is it actually any different from normal conversation? Furthermore, does the time spent texting while with other people lessen the quality of the time spent with them?

Statistics show that youth, aged 13-20, are sending and receiving an average of 10,000 text messages each year. It is easy to see that most youth our age are seriously abusing this technology. But what does that mean for us who are actually concerned about the stewardship of our time?

Text messaging is a convenient method of communication, but for many it has become a pastime. These people base their relationships on it, use it to create a virtual reality, and waste their time in empty conversations, causing interactions in their relationships to be little more than skin deep.

This poses a question: Should we as Christians tenaciously grasp it with both hands because of its convenience, or should we avoid it altogether because of what it can do, negatively, to relationships?

Texting is a terrific way to carry on short conversations, but since it is so easy to overuse, everyone should exercise care in how frequently they text.

Technology is tricky. One day, it can be a very useful servant and the next it can become a cruel master. This brings us to the first caution: the time spent on it in group settings. One of the great things about this technology is that you can easily communicate with so many people in so little time, right?

Many people spend so much time in their multiple artificial realities they have set up for themselves that they barely have time to be whole

people in actual reality. It is not right to cheat your friends and family of the time that you spend with them by constantly texting other people. Essentially, it says to them, "I wish I were somewhere else." I am not referring to the incidental sending of several messages to friends over the course of longer time spent with others. What I am talking about is the rampant text message conversations that some of my friends have with multiple people while trying to spend quality time with a larger group.

I struggle with texting sometimes when I am not really participating in the conversation. Since this can be a personal problem, effort should be made to engage in conversation or whatever is happening in the group at the time. Mere boredom is not sufficient excuse to detach from reality by texting.

Time is also a factor when on the job. By all means, do not become worried about the thirty seconds you paused to answer that text and whether or not it should count off on your time card. But when you consistently allow your phone to come before your work, then please at least take it into account on your time card. Your boss is not obligated to pay you for a full day's work if you spend lots of time texting. This is simply dishonest. Not only does it take the time you actually spend texting, it also hinders efficiency

because you must try to remember exactly what you were doing before you answered the message. It is an issue of time. If you are answering several text messages a day, there is not a huge need to alter the time on your card. However, if you are answering text messages throughout the day, you should make some compensation for that time spent or maybe you should simply consider making text messaging a smaller part of your life.

Another reason to avoid excessive texting is the propensity it has to cause superficial relationships. For myself it is nice to text a friend occasionally to find out what is going on in his life. It can be unhealthy, however, if the majority of communication in a relationship is via text message. When the basis of a relationship is through texting, it can quickly turn into something impersonal and therefore, not worth nearly as much.

Sometimes, for example, when you have numerous friends in various places, it is simply the most convenient way to stay in touch with each other. Make sure, however, that it is not texting that is the basis of your relationship. Think of texting rather as a way to sustain an existing relationship that is already good but is difficult to maintain in another manner.

In relation to this subject, it is especially important to avoid


excessive texting people of the opposite gender. I have seen and heard of numerous instances where fellows and ladies have gone too far with their communication and it caused hurt feelings on both sides. I have found the following statement to be true for me and have heard similar things said by others: “People often write things via text message that they would not say if they were with that person face to face.” This is so right. Rather than actually facing the person and honestly interacting, a person is robotically punching in replies to every text that comes in.

I am not at all saying that it is a wicked and ungodly activity to text anyone of the opposite gender. While texting could be perfectly acceptable in making plans for an activity, definite care must be taken to prevent unhealthily close relationships or the types of relationships that end up with both parties getting hurt. If you honestly think it is acceptable to text someone of the opposite gender, would you also consider it acceptable to sit down and talk with that same person as often as you text each other throughout the day? My point is evident. If talking often with a person of the opposite gender would be

unhealthy, communication via text messaging is no better.

In conclusion, text messaging can be a very useful tool for communication, but it can also be a cruel tyrant. Texting can take up quality time from your family and friends, affect your efficiency at your job, and cause shallowness in your relationships. This said, with the technology we currently have, we are just as able to bless others as well. When a person is down in the dumps, a text message letting him know you are praying for him can be very encouraging.

Moderation is an appropriate theme in the life of the Christian. Texting in moderation and in the proper context is a great way of communication. But, however handy technology is, it completely loses its value when it controls us. Will we allow text messaging and other electronic communication to invade every facet of our lives like it has done to American society? Or will we, as Christians, exercise self-control and harness technology in a way that honors God and blesses others?

[This article was written at Calvary Bible School in March, 2009, as a submission for the class, *Christian Writing and Expression*.] 

This Month's
QUESTION

How can people know whether the path they are taking through life is leading them where they hope to arrive? —EE

THOUGHT GEMS

If half your wishes came true, your troubles would probably double.

• • • • •

Acting without thinking is like shooting without aiming.

• • • • •

In times of prosperity men ask too little of God. In times of adversity, they ask too much.

• • • • •

Giving good advice does not qualify as charity.

• • • • •

It seems that everybody wants to live a long time, but nobody wants to get old.

• • • • •

The real spirit of conversation resides in building on someone else's observation, not on overturning it.

• • • • •

Success consists not in what men attempt, but in what they finish.

• • • • •

Some are so restless that they don't feel at home at home.

• • • • •

Some folks are as proud of their ancestors as if they were responsible for them.

• • • • •

A man's clear conscience has more to do with restful sleep than does a good mattress.

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Periodicals