



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

Galatians 6:14

**AUGUST 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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## *Affliction's Glory*

*Juanita Stover, Hegins, PA*

*Dear Lord, I am discouraged; I cannot understand  
Why You have brought this trial and chastened with Your hand.*

*It seems to be so very contrary to Your will  
That all things work together and bring some goodness still.*

*I feel I can't go on, Lord; the cross is much too great.  
The path is thorned and rocky; I sink beneath the weight.*

*The stillness brought an answer: "Dear child, just place your trust  
In My o'er-ruling power and do not be so crushed.*

*"My Shepherd's heart is burdened; I do care for My own.  
And I have ne'er intended for you to walk alone.*

*"My presence shall go with you and I will give you rest.  
My grace will be sufficient and equal to each test.*

*"Your mortal eye—it cannot see the good I have in store;  
Nor how things work together though purging may be sore.*

*"For all this light affliction, but for a moment's time,  
Is working far exceeding eternal weight sublime."*

*Joy cometh in the morning! To Jesus I will cling,  
Then by His grace I'll conquer and with the angels sing!*

[From *The Eastern Mennonite Testimony*, June, 2009.  
By permission of the author.]



## *Neither Do I Condemn Thee; Go and Sin No More*

**I**t is easy to be out of balance in our response to evil. We tend to be either too soft or too hard.

Jesus prayed about our exposure to evil and said, “I do not pray that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” So He obviously did not plan for Christians to live in isolation.

Let us not, however, let that become excuse for judgmental, unloving, and unredemptive solutions to situations of need. When we face a bad situation, we have several options. One option is to condemn those who sin. Perhaps we fear that if we do not, we will weaken and eventually participate in their sin. Sin is contagious and it is prudent to take time to think carefully lest, through rushed judgment, we make a decision we will later regret.

Let’s say my brother disappoints me. He stumbles into gross sin. How am I to feel? Am I foolish to think he can ever be worthy of my trust again? If it were me that failed, I would appreciate willingness to trust me again. I don’t think it’s wrong for me to think,

“There but for the grace of God, go I!” Nevertheless, placing such a situation on probation has appropriate caution and wisdom in it.

I note from my prison ministry experiences that the longer a sinful lifestyle continues, the more difficult it is to change. The legal system responds to this phenomenon by being rather “cut and dried.” If a person chooses badly several times (just like three strikes in softball), the man is “out” (a failure).

I take courage and direction from Jesus’ conversation with the woman who was taken in the very act of adultery and brought to Him in John 8:1-11. He did not sympathize with those whose fingers were itching to stone her. He calmly invited those among them without sin to start the execution process. No one started, in fact, everyone promptly left and things got very quiet.

The woman’s sin was very serious. Jesus recognized that, unless she repented, her sin would bar her from heaven. He dealt with her as a person of worth. He offered her forgiveness. Finally, He gave her this challenge:

“Go and sin no more.”

Can we imagine the difference Jesus’ forgiveness made for this woman? When she was brought to Jesus, she stood condemned to death by stoning! Then, all of a sudden, she was free from condemnation and able to leave. What a contrast!

Her accusers were eager to judge and condemn her. Their attitude stands in stark contrast to Jesus’ gracious words which brought her “up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set her on her feet on a rock, and established (her) goings” (Psalm 40:2).


Another lesson stands out: Not everyone who came to Jesus received His grace. The rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-27 came up and enthusiastically inquired about what he could do to inherit eternal life. Jesus spoke differently to his need than He did to the woman taken in adultery. He told him to sell everything and to give the proceeds to the poor. A few moments later, he shuffled away, his needs still unmet. He hugged to himself that which he

loved best—his riches and his good opinion of himself. He could have lost his sins and found his Savior. Instead, he clung to his riches and went away sad.

These two cases also illustrate that Jesus lets people make their own choices. Jesus’ example shows us that when a person chooses badly, we don’t need to condemn them. When Jesus beheld the young man of wealth and prestige, He loved him. Jesus’ perfect love, however, does not take away man’s freedom of choice. The poor, rich man made a choice he regrets to this day, unless he changed his mind later.

Apparently the perfect Son of God loved everyone He met. Let us learn good lessons in these contacts of Jesus and muster a Christlike attitude toward needy situations around us. When we “weep o’er the erring one” and “lift up the fallen,” we cannot save them, but we are authorized to point them to “Jesus, the mighty to save!”\* Hallelujah, what a Savior!

—PLM

[\* from “Rescue the Perishing,” by Fanny Crosby, 1869.] 

**He who has no fire in himself  
will not warm others.**

## reader response

**Re: How We Got Our Bible**, June, page 30.

In the June 2009 *Calvary Messenger* you fell down on your job by allowing backbiting. By this I mean allowing the comment about Westcott and Hort being “Mary worshippers” to stand on page 30 without checking on it.

Could you please send me quotations of either Westcott or Hort in context that show this? I happen to have an article by Westcott on Mary. I would be interested in having information opposing the impression I get from that article, which is the opposite of Mariology.

Please send me that brother’s “homework.” If not, may I consider this as blatant gossip? Shouldn’t you apologize to the readers for exposing them to backbiting without at least an

editorial note?

Please let us be more careful how we speak of others, especially the dead who cannot defend their names.

Joy, grace, love, and peace from God our Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ,

Name withheld by request

*[Editor’s comments: I cannot supply the requested information. I simply condensed and presented David Graber’s sermon as I do other sermons with this word from Scripture: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). It seems to me that a speaker might be quite disappointed to have significant portions of his message deleted. I heartily agree, however, with this writer’s plea to be careful in how we present others’ viewpoints, lest we fail in accuracy and charity.]*



## the bottom line

### *That Liberal Bent*

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

**O**ur current president has apparently not assumed a liberal bent for the sake of politics. His personal ideology is liberal. To him, that makes sense. Our previous president had a more conservative bent, yet, under his leadership, the masses became

disillusioned and voted for change.

The present administration’s liberal political views quickly rose to the surface in the arena of abortion, gay marriage, giving more rights to the lawless, choosing a Supreme Court justice and even greater monetary excesses. This new liberal-minded

agenda is alarming to many of us. Where does it stem from? Where might it take us?

Nominal Christianity has also had a liberal bent for the last 40 years in a shift away from a solid biblical foundation. The most serious issue in Christendom 45 years ago was whether the Bible (all of it) is inspired of God, inerrant, and fully trustworthy for faith and practice. The liberals in the church were chipping away at some doctrines here and some principles there.

Now they have moved away from, “What does the Bible say?” to “What did the writer of Scripture mean?” New presuppositions came from higher schools of learning. Some of it was imported from the big-time names in Europe which seemed to have given way to agnosticism, which says we can’t be sure as to what God really intended.

Those liberal views infiltrated theological circles, influencing speculation, then the imagination, and were embraced by persons with highly-rated scholarship, who were articulate, speaking and writing with supposedly superior academic credentials. It is assumed by the biblically-illiterate masses that what they say is true because it comes from those pinnacles of academic thought.

It used to be that liberalism in

the church was easily identifiable by how one chose to dress and “do” his/her hair. That still stands, but the more alarming cancer of liberalism cannot speak out from a biblical base on divorce and re-marriage, on women preachers and pastors, on issues of non-resistance and church-and-state issues, on professional sports, on decadent music and erotic entertainment, on drinking alcohol, and on provocative dress.

Some churches go beyond these violations of Scripture and allow unrepentant homosexuals to be accepted in church membership and communion to even accepting such in the pulpit in the name of Christian freedom.

All of the above stances are first tolerated, then more-or-less accepted. At that point, there is only a half step to full and official church acceptance. Naturally, those then will need to be defended by “brotherly love,” followed by giving them room to express their deviant and corrupted life style as being “natural,” “God’s gift,” “different,” and “diversified.”

This liberal trend in the nominal western church has taken root, grown into many off-shoots, and brought forth corrupt fruit. Jesus said, “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree

that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:18-20).

What does this condition in the nominal church have to do with the liberal bent in government? We should hardly think it strange if our government takes on a liberal stance in its sphere. But Jesus said that Christians are the salt of the earth. This salt has, in some respects, lost its savor. For example, most of the 400+ men and women in the U.S. Congress are members of some church. Their influence is becoming less and less discernible in preserving traditional Christian values.

We appreciate the liberties and opportunities in our land and regret the perceptible movement away from those values that have contributed to making ours a country of blessing above most, if not all, the peoples of the world for the last 200 years. We should not assume that ours will always be a land of freedom and opportunity, if we abandon biblical values.

Liberal views always seem to find plausible ways of justifying desired choices. This is also true in our own

Beachy Amish churches, as well as other conservative Anabaptist churches.

Liberalism rises in thought, then in expression and promotion, then in unashamed action. To be sure, there have also been some movements toward a more faithful application of God’s Word. But the larger movement seems to be toward less application of God’s principles. The liberal bent is toward cultural accommodation with personal choices leading the way.

**The Bottom Line** contains a sobering fact: liberalism tends toward disintegration and eventually toward self-destruction. Those churches which seemed to be leading proponents of liberalism and change in the past exhibit that. Usually they have in several generations reverted to formalism and ritual. They have suffered huge losses in membership. Many of their youth have become “unchurched.”

Conditions in conservative Anabaptist churches must not reflect the liberalism of currently dominant political agendas. God gives His wonderful wisdom to the soul that asks for it.



*True patience is waiting  
without worrying.*



# ***Christ Brings Healing to the Brokenhearted***

Ernest Witmer, *Choice Books of Southern California*

*(With adaptation by the editor)*

*[The following newsletter article refers to personal experiences that are obviously difficult to bear. It rightly draws on our spiritual resources as children of God. The method of counseling used here seeks to honor the One who came to carry our sorrows. It is simply that of God's trustful children drawing on His resources. God invites us to cast all our cares on Him. (1 Peter 5:7) There is, however, a different problem that sometimes comes with helping people in this way: It is the pressured recalling of repressed memories which may produce false memories of abuse and thus implicate innocent people. I believe actual abuse can typically be remembered with painful clarity without such methods. Too much effort in extracting repressed memories may bring up false memories. That is why I believe we must be very careful with these methods, lest we fail to fulfill the law of Christ as we attempt to bear each others' burdens. (Galatians 6:2). Let us prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:21). -PLM]*

**W**hen we lived in Minnesota, we'd attend Promise Keepers. Now we attend the Choice Books retreat. The big difference is that normally Rachel and the girls can attend this one, too. This year, however, it was again back to just the boys and me. Rachel was inclined to stay at home after having been gone for six weeks. Carita couldn't take off from work, and Kristi was spending time with a family at International Falls, MN, from where we moved last year.

Yesterday, in church, I spoke on

how Christ brings healing to the wounded. The biblical text was Jesus' own testimony of how the Lord had anointed Him to heal the brokenhearted...to set at liberty them that are bruised. I weep for the many bruised and broken hearts across the country. Many women in America have been sexually abused in one form or another. Sadly this holds true for Christian women as well. And it's not just women who've been hurt in this way. Recently I've been made aware of the many young men in this generation who've been violated

at some point in their lives, too... even by clergy. Don't start shaking your finger because this horror is no respecter of denomination. And for those who are agnostic, hold your peace, for your sect is guilty too... only you have no Healer.

Woundedness comes in many forms. Rather than using loving discipline through spanking, children are many times physically abused when their parents can hold back no longer. Self-righteous socialites throw their weight around through subtle forms of social and psychological abuse. In desperate consternation and confusion, both liberal and conservative church elders use emotional and even spiritual abuse to coerce their views on others. Pastors abuse church members and members abuse pastors. It's pathetic and insecure and, of course, never effective. People are devastated and divided and their lives are strewn across this country like so much wreckage.

But along comes Jesus. And as He proved in documented history, still today He is the only real Healer for all this mess. He says, not to unbelievers, but to those who have already chosen to follow Him in trust, "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take Me as your remedy and you shall find

rest for your souls. For my direction is what you were designed for, and My burden is light compared to what you're carrying on your own."

Back when I was first ordained to the ministry, one of the presiding bishops who introduced me (along with several others) at the convention that summer, said: (I believe he was quoting someone else) "When you ordain someone to the ministry, you lessen his chances for heaven." Now I'm not sure about the theology of this, but I can personally attest to its implication. There have been times when I have been very low emotionally, and most of my encouragement came through encouraging others. There were times when my soul would struggle to the point of wondering if anyone would care if I wound up in hell, in fact, sometimes it felt like that's where they would rather see me. And these were brethren—fellow pastors, of the same denomination.

So I know what it feels like to struggle. And that's what makes the healing power of Jesus so precious. Jesus makes it possible to forgive. And forgiveness is the only way to heal!

Forgiveness doesn't come by having someone shaking his finger in your face and telling you, "You must forgive!" No, forgiveness comes by

allowing Jesus to enter the pain of your heart and having Him speak peace to “the waves in your soul.”

Nor does peace come by denying the pain. When we only allow ourselves to feel an inch deep, that’s how deep our forgiveness will be... only an inch. The rest of the pain we will act out toward others in all kinds of distorted ways, while all along denying its existence. Many prefer to live that way...hurting others in the process. But when we allow ourselves to feel the full depth of the pain that is there, it is to that depth then, that we can forgive! It is full and deep and real. That’s the way Jesus heals.

Shortly after my father died several years ago, I was sensing a desperate need for my Father’s strength. In the wee hours of the morning, I lifted up my hands toward heaven and cried out to my Heavenly Father to give me a picture of myself in my relationship to Him. Immediately I saw myself sitting on my Heavenly Father’s shoulders and the words of this song came to mind:

“You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains;

You raise me up to walk on stormy seas.


I am strong when I am on your shoulders;

You raise me up to more than I can be.”

The precious strength and healing and courage that came to me from Jesus at that moment will always be fixed in my heart! But it would never have come, if I had not asked HIM to come to me at that critical moment. You know, we always teach our children to pray to Jesus. But then, too often, when we become adults we become faithlessly skittish about such intimacy with Him.

Our daughter, Kristi, has also experienced the healing power of Jesus. One evening as she was particularly struggling in her soul because of the brain tumor God has allowed her to have, I encouraged her to pray with me and ask Jesus to give her a close relationship to Himself. God gave her the mental picture of herself on the cross beside Jesus and He was crying with her. It changed her attitude toward her condition and healed her heart of the frustration she was feeling.

We praise God also that her tumor has stopped growing and, in fact, has reduced in size—something the doctors did not expect. Hundreds of others have felt the healing touch of Jesus in their lives—in every way—spiritually, emotionally, socially and physically. He says to us, “I [still am] the Lord that healeth thee.”

Invite Him into your pain! 

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The Anabaptist Identity Conference, held in Sarasota, Florida on March 13-15, 2009, was recorded by Anabaptists Live, an organization in South Carolina that has undertaken the generous distribution of materials pertaining to historic Anabaptist values. While they accept donations, these CDs are not priced. To get an audio copy of this educational and inspirational conference, send your order to:

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(features their business, a family project)

### **The following is a list of the 18 CDs of the 2009 conference:**

1. Sports and the Christian – Dean Taylor
2. Coping with Church Standards – David Graber
3. The Quiet in the Land – John D. Martin
4. Coping with Church Politics – David Graber
5. Music: Heart vs. Art – Matthias Overholt
6. Abortion/Birth Control – Thomas Miller
7. My Testimony (family planning) – Joerg Klein
8. Pilgram Marpeck – John D. Martin
9. Fight, Right, or Flight? – Chester Weaver
10. Marriage – Covenant or Love? – Dean Taylor
11. Repentance as a Way of Life – Chester Weaver
12. Coping with Church Membership – David Graber
13. Hear Without a Preacher? – Chester Weaver
14. Exodus en Masse – Why? – Jerry Hoover
15. Anabaptist Racism & Prejudice – Jason Gingerich
16. Contemporary Music in the Church – Dean Taylor
17. Gospel Economics and Reality – John D. Martin
18. Bonus CD – Songs of Faith II – Overholts and others

**In 2008, a similar conference produced 19 CDs.  
It is available with the following titles:**

1. The Genius of Anabaptism – Edward Kline
2. Shooting Our Wounded – Chester Weaver
3. Anabaptists Enduring Persecution – Edward Kline
4. Practical Solutions for Technology – David Graber
5. Pietism and Its Extremes – Part 1 – Jerry Hoover
6. Why Are We Different? – David Graber
7. Anabaptist-Reformed Reconciliation? – Edward Kline
8. Pietism and Its Extremes – Part 2 – Jerry Hoover
9. Redemptive Gossip? – Chester Weaver
10. Jesus, Anabaptists & Economics – John D. Martin
11. “I Don’t Need You” – Chester Weaver
12. Anabaptism: A Theology of Hope? – John D. Martin
13. Angry, Silent Men – Matthias Overholt
14. Anabaptist Civil War? – Chester Weaver
15. Non-Anabaptist Background – Kai Steinmann
16. Non-Resistance – John D. Martin
17. Multi-Generational Faith – Jerry Hoover
18. Happy Clappy vs. Chosen Frozen – John D. Martin
19. Bonus CD – Songs of Faith – The Overholt Singers

Order singles or complete sets. Cassette tapes and MP3 files are also available by request.

Surely many readers appreciate this service and will accept this brother’s generous offer. Abner Riehl says: “Lots of needs; one great big God; a few ideas; a few conversations; a little time, a few pieces of equipment – combining all the above, allows us to make this offer.” Bro. Riehl makes further comments: “Time appears to be the most limited component required here. So please be patient with us; we are not finished with this work or this website. New features will be introduced as the Lord prospers and time allows. If you know of any good messages or would like to help, please contact us.”



# A Compelling Reason for Rigorous Training of the Mind

John Piper, Author

I was reading and meditating on the book of Hebrews recently, when it hit me forcefully that a basic and compelling reason for education—the rigorous training of the mind—is so that a person can read the Bible with understanding.

This sounds too obvious to be useful or compelling. But that's just because we take the preciousness of reading so for granted; or, even more, because we appreciate so little the kind of thinking that a complex Bible passage requires of us.

The book of Hebrews, for example, is an intellectually challenging argument from Old Testament texts. The points that the author makes hang on biblical observations that come only from rigorous reading, not light skimming. And the understanding of these Old Testament interpretations in the text of Hebrews requires rigorous thought and mental effort. The same could be said for the extended argumentation of Romans and Galatians and the other books of the Bible.

This is an overwhelming argument for giving children a disciplined and rigorous training in how to think an author's thoughts after him from a text—especially a biblical text. An

alphabet must be learned, as well as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, the rudiments of logic, and the way meaning is imparted through sustained connections of sentences and paragraphs.

The reason Christians have generally established schools where they establish churches is because we are a people of THE BOOK. It is true that THE BOOK will never have its proper effect without prayer and the Holy Spirit. It is not a textbook to be debated; it is a fountain for spiritual thirst, food for the soul, a revelation of God, a living power, and a two-edged sword. But none of this changes the fact that apart from the discipline of reading, the Bible is as powerless as paper. Someone might have to read it for you; but without reading, the meaning and the power of it are locked up.

Is it not remarkable how often Jesus settled great issues with a reference to reading? For example, in the issue of the Sabbath, He asked, "Have you not *read* what David did?" (Mathew 12:3). In the issue of divorce and remarriage He said, "Have you not *read* that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female?" (Matthew 19:4). In the issue

of true worship and praise He said, "What is written in the law? Have you never *read*, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise?'" (Matthew 21:16 NKJV). In the issue of the resurrection He said, "Did you never *read* in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone?'" (Matthew 21:42 NKJV). And to the lawyer who inquired of Him about eternal life He said, "What is written in the law? What is your *reading* of it?" (Luke 10:26 NKJV).


The apostle Paul also gave reading a great place in the life of the church. For example, he said to the Corinthians, "For we are not writing any other things to you than what you *read or understand*. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end" (2 Corinthians 1:13 NKJV). To the Ephesians he said, "...He made known to me the mystery (as I wrote before in a few words, by which, when you *read*, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)" (Ephesians 3,4 NKJV). To the Colossians, he wrote, "Now when this epistle is *read* among you, see that it is *read* also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise *read* the epistle from Laodicea" (Colossians 4:16 NKJV). Reading the letters of Paul was so important that he commands it solemnly: "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be

*read* to all the holy brethren" (1 Thesalonians 5:27 NKJV).

The ability to read does not come intuitively. It must be taught. And learning to read with understanding is a lifelong labor. The implications for Christians are immense. Education of the mind in the rigorous discipline of thoughtful reading is a primary goal of school. The church of Jesus is debilitated when His people are lulled into thinking that it is humble or democratic or relevant to give a merely practical education that does not involve the rigorous training of the mind to meditate on and derive meaning from difficult texts.

The issue of earning a living is not nearly so important as whether the next generation has direct access to the meaning of the Word of God. We need an education that puts the highest premium under God on knowing the meaning of God's Book, and growing in the abilities that will unlock its riches for a lifetime. It would be better to starve for lack of food than to fail to grasp the meaning of the book of Romans.

"Lord, let us not fail the next generation!"

[From John Piper in *Desiring God*, "Thoughts on the Significance of Reading," July 13, 2005. Toll Free: 888.346.4700. Submitted for publication by Betty Yoder, Hutchinson, KS, an experienced primary teacher. Used by permission.] 

## marriages

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

### **Coblentz-Hochstetler**

Bro. Timothy, son of John and Amanda Coblentz, Hicksville, OH, and Sis. Charity, daughter of Willard and Janetta Hochstetler, Hicksville, OH, at Hicksville Mennonite Church for Hicksville Christian Church on May 2, 2009, by Willard Hochstetler.

### **Graber-Zook**

Bro. Weston, son of Raymond and Laura Graber, Amboy, IN, and Sis. Esther, daughter of Leon and Mary Zook, Chesapeake, VA, at Great Bridge Presbyterian Church for Kempsville Mennonite Church on May 30, 2009, by Donnie Brenneman.

### **Kauffman-Raber**

Bro. Norman, son of Paul and Carolyn Kauffman, Woodburn, IN, and Sis. Rose, daughter of Henry and Miriam Raber, Hicksville, OH, at Hicksville Mennonite for Hicksville Christian Church, on June 6, 2009, by Willard Hochstetler.

### **Knepp-Miller**

Bro. Wendell, son of Ervin and Mary Knepp, Loogootee, IN, and Sis. Michelle, daughter of Nathanael and Gloria Miller, Partridge, KS, at The Father's House for Word of Life, Hutchinson, KS, May 1, 2009, by LaVerne Stoltzfus.

### **Kuhns-Kauffman**

Bro. Jeremy Derril, son of Dave and Dawn Kuhns, Sullivan, IL, and Sis. Sara Marie, daughter of Willard and Lydia Mae Kauffman, Arcola, IL, at Sunnyside Mennonite for Trinity Christian Fellowship on June 20, 2009, by Noah Knepp, Jr.

### **Jantzi-Ropp**

Bro. Charles, son of Peter and Linda Jantzi, Gowanstown, ON, and Sis. Melanie, daughter of Larry and Susan Ropp, at Lucknow Presbyterian Church for Whitechurch A.M.Church on May 30, 2009, by Arthur Gerber.

### **Miller-Byler**

Bro. Devon Dean, son of Marvin and Katie Miller, Centerville, PA, and Sis. Dorthea Ruth, daughter of Urie and Martha Byler, Saegertown, PA, at Plainview Gospel Fellowship, on June 6, 2009, by Ervin Miller.

### **Miller-Helmuth**

Bro. Bruce, Westcliffe, CO, son of Nathanael and Gloria Miller, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Beth, daughter of Crist and Ruth Helmuth, for Skyline Mennonite Church, Canon City, CO, on June 27, 2009, by Ken Miller.



### **Troyer-Gingerich**

Bro. Ervin Troyer, Plain City, OH, son of the late Eli and Barbara Troyer and Sis. Anna Gingerich, Plain City, OH, daughter of the late Levi and Sarah Gingerich, were married at United Bethel Mennonite Church for Bethesda A.M. Church on June 6, 2009, by Elmer Stoltzfus.

### **Troyer-Nisly**

Bro. Leon, son of Paul and Barbara Troyer, Bourbon, IN, and Sis. Andrea, daughter of Larry and Barbara Nisly, Hutchinson, KS, at Maranatha Mennonite for Cedar Crest Church, on June 20, 2009, by Lee Nisly.

### **Wagler-Hoover**

Bro Murray, son of Emma and the late Allan Wagler, Millbank, ON, and Sis. Hannah, daughter of Cleason and Salinda Hoover, Aylmer, ON, at Cedar Grove A.M. Church, on June 13, 2009, by Arthur Gerber.

## **cradle roll**

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

**Beiler**, John and Linda (Yoder), Wytheville, VA, fourth child, second dau., Kianne Janae, June 3, 2009.

**Burkholder**, Scott and Suzanne (Troyer), Bourbon, IN, second child, first son, Brice Carlson, May 29, 2009.

**Chupp**, Glen and Katherine (Yoder), Free Union, VA, (home address: Watkins, MN), fifth child, second son, Isaiah Harvey, April 27, 2009.

**Eash**, Kathy, Purdin, MO, second child and son, Kadrian Jeffrey, August 12, 2006. Received for adoption June 1, 2009.

**Eicher**, Marvin Joel and Gina (Herhsberger), Millersburg, OH, third child, second son, Isaiah Daniel, June 7, 2009.

**Holbrook**, Steve and Stephanie (Enck), Gympie, Queensland, Australia, seventh child, fourth son, Joshua Lee, March 24, 2009.

**Kauffman**, Ben Ray and Christina (Plank), Lovington, IL, fourth child, second son, Aaron Matthew, June 5, 2009.

**Lapp**, Ivan and Naomi (Lapp), Ephrata, PA, fifth child, fourth son, Timothy Ryan, May 28, 2009.

**Lapp**, Nathan and Fern (Stoltzfus), Cedar Creek, TX, sixth child, third son, Laramie Jerrell, May 6, 2009.

**Miller**, Merle and Monica (Miller), Eden Valley, MN, fifth child, second dau., Joleen Neoma, June 17, 2009.

**Overholt**, Alan and Shirley (Beachy), Adairville, KY, first child and son, Kendrick Jose', May 21, 2009.

**Ropp**, Michael and Monica (Eash), Monkton, ON, first child and son, Dominic Sean, May 20, 2009.

**Steckly**, Sharon and the late Ronald (who died Feb. 6, 2009), Millbank, ON, ninth child, sixth son, (one son deceased), Jason Ronald Scott, March 24, 2009.

**Stoltzfus**, Lavon and Melissa (Troyer), Dundee, OH, first child and dau., Nicole Joy, April 15, 2009.

**Wagler**, Dave and Hannah (Yoder), Lyndon, KS, first child and dau., Karla Dawn, June 8, 2009.

**Wagler**, Gerald and Esther (Stoltzfus), Montgomery, IN, first child and son, Stephen Emerson, May 7, 2009.

**Wagler**, Lester and Lois (Overholt), Lyndon, KS, third child, second son, Edward Rudy, June 17, 2009.

**Washburn**, John and Amanda (McCary), Montezuma, GA, fourth child, second dau., Katherine Elise, Feb. 25, 2009.

**Yoder**, David Lee and Heidi (Cross), Montezuma, GA, first child and dau., Melody Joy, April 28, 2009.

**Yoder**, James and Elsie (Yoder), Paris, TN, first child and dau., Victoria Alisa, May 21, 2009.

**Yoder**, Lawayne and Grace (Miller), Oskaloosa, KS, first child and dau., Cheyenne Grace, May 23, 2009.

**Yoder**, Michael and Miriam (Dueck), La Estrella, Costa Rica, fifth child, third son, Kevin Timothy, May 12, 2009.

## ordinations

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

**Bro. Kevin Yoder**, 40, of Whiteville, TN, was ordained as minister at Whiteville Mennonite Church on March 8, 2009. Preordination messages were brought by Jim Yoder. The charge was given by Lavern Eash. Mark Yoder was also in the lot.

## obituaries

**Graber**, Mary, 86, of Bloomfield, IN, died after a lengthy illness, May 21, 2009, at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Levi and Sara Mae Miller. She was born in Daviess County, IN, Feb. 25, 1923, daughter of the late Amos and Lydia (Eicher) Graber.

She was a member of Believers Fellowship A.M. Church, Worthington, IN.

On Jan. 27, 1942, she was married to Eli Graber, who died July 4, 2006. Surviving are eight children: Magdalena (David) Graber, La Russell, MO; Alta (Henry) Knepp, Loogootee, IN; Sarah Mae (Levi) Miller, Bloomfield, IN;

Herbert (Odie Billington) Graber, Odon, IN; Cletus (Dorothy Lengacher) Graber, Bangor, CA; Roman (Mary Ann Glick) Graber, Bloomfield, IN; Omer (Dinah Graber) Graber, Montgomery, IN; and Vivian (Samuel) Martin, Waynesboro, PA. Also surviving are 50 grandchildren and 122 great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, her parents, two grandchildren, four brothers, and two sisters.

The funeral was held at the Fair Haven A.M. Church, Loogootee, IN, on May 24, with burial in the church cemetery.

**Marner**, Simon Leroy, 86, of Abbeville, SC, husband of the late Ruth May (Hockaday) Marner, died at his daughter's residence in Renick, WV, June 24, 2009. He was born March 19, 1923, in Elkhart, IN, son of the late Jacob and Mary (Hostetler) Marner.

He is survived by seven daughters: Mary Catherine (Ezra) Byler, Renick, WV; Sylvia (Levi) Troyer, Springboro, PA; Wilma (Diedrich) Fehr, Cross Hill, SC; Darlene Kauffman, Grantsville, MD; Barbara (Martin) Wengerd, Hadley, PA; Naomi (Rod) Stoll, Wheatland, WY; Christina (Brian) Gerber, Walnut Creek, OH; and eleven sons: Raymond (Magdalena) Marner, Due West, SC; Paul (Kathy) Marner, Berlin, OH; Matthew Marner, Dover, OH; Eugene (Pauline) Marner, Cochran, PA; Dale Marner, Jamestown, PA; Abraham (Sadie) Marner, Dover, OH; Norman Marner, Jamestown, PA; Albert (Sadie) Marner,

Weatherby, MO; Ivan Marner, Dover, OH; Fred (Christina) Marner, Dover, OH; Eli (Arloa) Marner, Abbeville, SC; 71 grandchildren; 48 great grandchildren; two brothers: Robert and George; and two sisters: Pauline and Ruby.

Funeral and burial services were held on June 27, at Cold Spring Mennonite Church, Abbeville, SC, with Merl Beiler and Ernest Hochstetler serving.

**Troyer**, Alvin A., 77, of Millersburg, OH, died Dec. 13, 2008, following an extended illness. He was born in Holmes County, Oh, April 16, 1931, son of the late Albert and Lovina Troyer. He was a farmer.

He was a member and former pastor of Bethel Fellowship Church.

On Dec. 13, 1956, he was married to Effie Yoder. She survives. Also surviving are seven children and their spouses: Dave and Freda Troyer, Martinsburg, OH; Paul and Betty Troyer, Millersburg; Linda and Reuben Beachy, Millersburg; Marie and Tim Miller, Sugarcreek; Joann and Jake Coblentz, Sugarcreek; Jerry and Rosann Troyer, Millersburg; and Larry and Myrna Troyer, Millersburg; 20 grandchildren; a brother Jonas (and wife Edna) Troyer, Millersburg and a sister, Esther Miller, Martinsburg.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Julie Miller and a sister, Katie Yoder.

The funeral was held on Dec. 16 at Bethel Church with Bill Mullet serving. Interment was in the Bethel Cemetery, with Paul Weaver serving.



Older persons are sometimes told that issues of the present must be evaluated by the younger generation. The implication is clearly that older persons are not able to think clearly. Clarity is somehow reserved for those who consider stability of practice unworthy of serious consideration.

Younger people are certainly entitled to participate in the process of decision-making. But when decision makers are closed to voices of more experience it does not bode well for stability in the body of believers.

Younger persons would do well to be aware that the path to seniorhood is much shorter than it seems when one is young or middle-aged.

I am well aware that for this senior to address such a subject is to run the risk of not being taken seriously. My reason for this mention is not because of personal experience, but rather a more general concern.

Let's be thankful that sound thinking, sound practice and sound doctrine do not grow old and feeble. But by God's design these can endure from generation to generation. "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good."

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How important is Sunday morning worship to you? Is it alright to plan a weekend at the lake an hour or two from home and simply miss church at home? How about spending Sunday morning on the road returning home from an action-packed weekend at a wedding or some other important event?

If it is true that this sort of thing is increasingly common in our circles we need to sit up and take notice.

Sunday morning travel for funerals may occasionally be necessary, but I wonder if our priorities are right if vacation time and being back for work are more important to us than Sunday morning worship services.

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Michael Coren, columnist and broadcaster speaking at Canadian Mennonite University is quoted in *Mennonite Weekly Review*, 3-30-09: "If the pope would announce that he condones homosexual marriage, the media would say, 'Bravo!' But when he says that marriage is meant to be between a man and a woman, the media says, 'Shut up!'"

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The cookbook, *Fix It and Forget It* by Phyllis Pellman Good appeared for months on the New York Times best

selling list. Good has recently written another book, *Fix It and Enjoy It*. Mayo Clinic (Rochester, MN) staff have analyzed each recipe for its nutritional value and recommended whether or not it fits within Mayo's Healthy Weight Pyramid Guidelines. (MWR, 3-30-09)

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Emergency rooms at hospitals cannot legally refuse treatment to people needing health care. Some people who do not have resources for other methods of treatment make a habit of visits to emergency rooms.

From 2003 to 2008, nine people made 2,678 visits to such a facility at Austin, TX, at a cost of \$3 million to taxpayers and others. Eight of the nine have drug abuse problems, seven were diagnosed with mental health issues and three were homeless. (*The Hutchinson News*, 4-2-09)

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When President Obama spoke at Notre Dame's commencement, two dozen seniors refused to attend their own graduation. They said a Catholic school shouldn't honor a pro-abortion politician who opposes traditional Catholic teaching.

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Congressional lawmakers are looking at taxing sodas and other sugary drinks as a way of paying for pending health care reform. The

rationale is that such drinks are a major cause of obesity (overweight) and related health problems.

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Pastor Toby Slough of Argyle, TX, began telling attendees earlier this year that they should take from the offering plate as they have need. The initiative has helped spark a church-wide spirit of generosity that has resulted in the giving of half a million dollars to various charities and individuals over a two-month period.

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According to a study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life more than half of Americans raised in staunchly agnostic or atheistic households have as the *New York Times* phrased it "defected to the faith." Some of those youth acknowledged that they had unmet spiritual needs. (The four preceding news items are from *World*, 6-6-09.)

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A three-year-old girl woke up while her parents slept and began to play on the computer. How she managed to bid on an earth mover that was being auctioned is not altogether clear. But she bought it for \$15,000. Her parents were able to cancel the transaction. (*World*, 6-20-09)

The moral of the story is that for children to have unsupervised

access to computers is not a good idea. It is likely to cause damage not measurable in dollars and cents.



To mention church rules is to invite a variety of responses. Why is it that different people respond so differently to the same guidelines? One person may find them needlessly restrictive and legalistic. Such a person typically does not realize that to be under obligation to imitate cultural mainstream is also legalistic.

There is also the possibility of placing too much value on such things. Conscientious support of body expectations is logical for a serious-minded Christian. But this should not be confused with or substituted for the only righteousness that God recognizes, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. When permissibility is the only consideration for our conduct it is doubtful that we are free indeed. However, an unwillingness to support practical expressions of Christian principles as agreed upon by the body of believers is a sign of ill health. It is likely caused by the “virus” and “infection” of individualism.

Persons who have been born again desire to follow the Lord faithfully. To be members of a body is God’s provision for fellowship and for receiving the blessing of differing gifts. The individualist experiences

self-imposed spiritual dwarfism.

Let us thank God for the privilege of joyful participation in the lives of a body of believers. Without this the journey would be lonesome and unstable.



It was not a typical graduation setting in which 28 men received degrees from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The recipients are inmates at the Mississippi State Penitentiary. The school in New Orleans offers similar training to prisoners in Louisiana, Georgia and Florida.

Sometimes persons encounter hostility from fellow inmates for taking such a step. The class includes persons who are serving life sentences. One inmate is quoted as having prayed as follows: “Thank you for forgiving us the crimes that we have committed, that we might be agents of change right here in this prison.”

Their training includes Bible study, preaching, evangelism, and counseling. One of the prisons report that the incidents of violence decreased from 500 to 100 within one year. Some of the trainees are being moved to other prisons and assigned leadership roles in ministry. (AP, *The Hutchinson News*, 6-13-09)



Jay Pitzer, 54, is a professional financial advisor from Hutchinson, KS. When he recently filed for bankruptcy, the local newspaper gave him front-page coverage accompanied by a long article discussing the larger issue of personal bankruptcy filings. The article states that 62% of all such filings in 2007 were caused by medical problems.

Pitzer had medical insurance, but he also had major health problems. This included the removal of a cancerous kidney in 1994. In 2005, he was diagnosed with acute leukemia. Today he is in complete

remission, but medical costs not covered by insurance were simply overwhelming.

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Scott City is a town of some 4,000 population located in western Kansas. A local resident commonly called Mrs. Demo recently died at age 110. She was married in 1926, but had been a widow since 1958.

She is remembered as having been very energetic and well-organized. She ate well-balanced meals and never had an illness. At 110, her body was apparently worn out.

– DLM 

## *Minister's Meeting Messages — 2009*

*This is a condensation of a message preached at the annual ministers' meetings, held on March 24-26, 2009, at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Florida. The complete set of cassette tapes or discs is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA, 20136, for \$45, postpaid.*

### **3. Cultivating the Gift**

*Nathan Yoder, Free Union, VA*

When I was boy growing up in the back side of the Midwest in Minnesota, we grew some crops of corn and so on. We cultivated. My earliest recollections are of a little “putt-putt” Model B John Deere, with a front-mount cultivator. We drove carefully.

*Here Bro. Ivan Beachy came to the platform with a gift sack and announced, “Bro. Nathan, here’s gift for you.”*

*Nathan stammered, “But, I’m busy, Bro. Ivan, I...”*

*Ivan persisted, “But this is a gift for you.”*

*Nathan paused, “I think I have something more important to do right*

now.”

*“This is a gift from God, a very important gift,” Ivan explained.*

*“Oh, it’s from God? OK, perhaps I should look at it then” Nathan relented.*

*Ivan said, “Please open it now.”*

*Nathan looked inside and read, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. A Bible?”*

*Ivan further instructed Nathan, “Would you open it and see what God’s will is?”*

*Nathan opened the Bible and exclaimed, “Oh, the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.”*

*Ivan then asked for a response to part of the ordination vows, “Bro Nathan, are you willing, by the grace of God to accept this gift and to be a faithful minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?”*

*“By God’s grace, I will.” Nathan responded. Ivan returned to his seat and Nathan continued:*

This changes everything. I was cultivating corn.

[Nathan then noted other aspects of ordination vows]: “Are you willing to accept this service and by the aid of His Holy Spirit to give yourself to the work of the Lord as a faithful minister of the Word in His church? Upon this confession and these promises which you have now made before God and

these witnesses, I herewith charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and dead at His appearing and His kingdom. Continue thou in these things, for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.” What am I to do now? Cultivate the gift? Then I must leave the corn.

We shall divide this topic into two segments: Accepting the gift and cultivating the gift. When we think of accepting the gift, we may ask, what is the gift? Romans 6:23 says that “The gift of God is eternal life...” That is one aspect of the gift. Romans 12:6 reminds us that there are differing gifts for each one of us “according to the grace that is given to us.” The word *grace* in that verse is the word *charis* and the word *gifts* is linked to the word *charisma*. The giving of grace and the giving of the gift carrying out that gift is very closely related. 1 Corinthians 12:4 teaches us that there are diversities of gifts. Our gifts vary from one to the other.

In 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul instructs Timothy to stir up the gift of God, the charisma that is given to us. Charisma includes unction. It includes not only the gift that is given, but also the result (the exercise) of that gift. It includes the call to the office and the ability that it requires to faithfully carry it out.



A gift implies relationship. I don't expect to get a gift from a stranger on the street. I'm not surprised to get a gift from my good wife, sometimes. I know she loves me. When I was at Calvary Bible School, we were apart for a time and sometimes the mailman brought me a gift or a card from her. I knew she was thinking of me. Let us relate that to the way that God loves us and how He gives us His gifts to build up the church.

In 1 Timothy 4:14, Paul says to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee...." I am challenged with the thought in Matthew 22:1-14, in the wedding scene in a king's family and where those who were invited made light of it. The phrase "made light of" is the same phrase that is translated "neglect," where Paul says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee." We could accurately translate that to say (1 Timothy 4:14), "*Don't make light of the gift that has been given to us.*" The gift is given for a purpose. We must not neglect it or make light of it.

In cultivating the gift, I thought of the parable of the sower in Matthew 13. There four soil types are given. We usually think of hearts and responses, but suddenly I saw four pastors.

*The Wayside Pastor* rejects the gift. That's how I first responded when Bro. Ivan came up here. "I don't have time. You dialed the wrong number.

You're at the wrong place. It's not for me. I can't do it and I won't. I refuse. I'm not cut out to be a pastor. It's not my gift." We can refuse it.

*The Thorny Pastor* accepts the gift. The seed sprouts, but it bears no fruit because there are so many other things crowding it out. Thorns, weeds, other obligations and situations enter in and the gift, though it is received, this pastor is so busy with other things that it limits fruitfulness.

*The Stony Pastor* accepts the gift and the seed grows readily for a while. But there is no real depth there. There are blooms; this pastor may admire the gift. This pastor flourishes quickly. He seems to ask, "Did you notice me?" Pride causes quick growth without depth. When the pressures of life and ministry come, it perishes and vanishes away.

*The Good Pastor* accepts and becomes the gift. We have the gift. We begin to read and to preach and to exercise this gift. But at the same time, we are still plumbers, farmers, builders, teachers, and whatever else we are. May it ever be that way! I cannot offer anything that would favor or propose a salaried ministry. The dilemma is simply that we are busy at what we are doing. We are genuinely farmers or businessmen or whatever. We strive for proficiency in those callings.

We may fairly ask, “Am I a farmer who preaches, or a preacher who farms?” I think there is an eternity of difference in the two. I’m trying to learn this lesson and confess that I have a long ways to go.

It is good to compare ourselves with the Good Shepherd. In Isaiah 40:11, it says that the Messiah “shall feed his flock like a shepherd.” If He does it that way, we should make that our goal, too. “He shall gather lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” This verse is found between two verses with content that seems unlike that of shepherds and sheep. The previous verse says, “Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.” It describes the power of God.

In the verse after the shepherd verse, Isaiah asks, “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” It speaks of the greatness of God. So between these two powerful aspects of God, we have this shepherd concept. We serve a great and powerful God, who

can do anything. Yet, He is called the Good Shepherd in John 10. In Hebrews 13, He is called the Great Shepherd. In 1 Peter 5, He is called the Chief Shepherd. Let us follow this Shepherd.

When we are given the gift, it is sometimes gets in the way. Yet, we know we must not put it aside. We might even be tempted to say, “Some gift this is!”

Let us ponder the Good Shepherd and look at how He relates to us. He is Lord. His Word is law. He is righteous. He is altogether holy. He is Leader. He is Captain. What He says is what matters. His Word is truth—non-negotiable. We don’t discuss what He ought to say or to have said. We agree to His edicts. We become partners with Him. In a similar way, we have a leadership role in our flock. We provide a connecting link, but not in a heavy-handed way. We are to “take the oversight thereof” (1 Peter 5:2). The Bible uses concepts like *rule*. We must be careful how we apply that. It has the idea of *going before, of leading, and of serving*.

There is also this dimension: our Shepherd is not only our Lord, He is our Brother. He enters into the work with us. This horizontal relationship is symbolized with love, commitment, relationship, brotherhood, and servanthood. In

His great power, He takes the lambs in His arms and gently leads those that are with young. We will never do better than when we do the same. Our people can feel that same motivation that our Heavenly Shepherd has toward us, if we live it.

Jesus said, “I am the Good Shepherd” (John 10:11). The word *am* is important. Let me illustrate: Some people do things that farmers do, but they aren’t really farmers. I can play ball, providing there’s a kind pitcher. If he pitches them nicely and I happen to swing at the right time, I can hit a ball, but I’m not a ball player. I can boil water; I can make an egg sandwich, but I’m not a cook. There are people who can saw boards and nail them together, but they are not carpenters. Some people do good deeds and go to church on Sunday like Christians do, who tithe like Christians should, but they are not Christians. There are even those who father children, who are not fathers.

I think I should take this to the next step and ask: Are there even some who have been ordained to preach who are not really pastors? Or do we [they] just do some of the things that pastors do? Jesus didn’t shepherd just for something to do. He shepherded because there were no other alternatives. He was [is] a shepherd.

A real shepherd eats shepherd’s food, reads shepherd’s publications, writes shepherd’s letters, keeps a shepherd’s journal, works a shepherd’s day, dies a shepherd’s death, because he can do no other—he is a shepherd. I think it’s possible for us to do some of the things that pastors do and not be pastors. When Peter and John were called on the carpet for what they were doing in Acts 4:19 and 20, they said, “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” They said, in essence, “The things we saw and heard have been so indelibly ingrained upon our hearts that when we open our mouths to speak, that’s what comes out. We’re sorry, but that’s the way it is! We just *are* apostles.”

We have heard an excuse like this, “I can’t cook because I wasn’t born a cook.” We have also heard things like, “He’s just a born teacher.” I have a problem with that. I have seen ten babies born, but I have never seen preachers *born*. No farmers, cooks, or teachers, either. But I have seen those babies *become* teachers and cooks. And brethren, God can take us, weak and human though we are, and make us pastors! What an exhilarating concept! God is able to do that. We

can become pastors as that becomes the compelling passion of our life.

Back to the seed illustration, the seed that drops onto the wayside stays on the wayside until it's picked up by the birds. But the seed that is put into the soil becomes part of the soil. It disintegrates and becomes part of the soil. It loses its identity in the soil. As the call becomes us, it dissolves within us until we are the call. Only then will the gift begin to become what God wants it to be.

As we consider cultivating the gift, we must give attention to reading, exhortation, doctrine, and meditation. In Luke 4:14-29, we find that our Savior included these elements in His teaching in the synagogue at Nazareth.

In the Scriptures we have these words, "Have ye not read?" I was amazed to find some form of those words no less than eleven times in the four Gospels. In Matthew 19, they came to our Lord with a question on divorce. His question to them (verse 4) was, "Have ye not read?" Some days later, in Matthew 21:42, a question arose on Jesus' whether or not He was the Messiah. Jesus asked them, "Did ye never read in the scriptures?" Some time later, people came to Jesus with a question about life after death and the resurrection. Jesus answered this question with

a question, "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read...?" I believe that when we have problems that perplex us, He may be asking us, "Have ye not read?" We are to look into the Word of God.

Some people say they don't like to read or study. The Bible says give attention to reading. In the classrooms of today we are seeing a dramatic decline in our children's interest in reading. Several weeks ago, I noted a publication (I think *FCM Informer*) that had the lead article saying we are raising a generation of non-readers. We could ask here today, how many of you have read a good book in the last several weeks—or months—or years? How many of you have read this good book through from cover to cover? I am amazed when I ask that question at Calvary Bible School, that people who profess to be people of the Book, but have not read it all.

Today our people like to watch. I saw a cartoon one time where a teacher in distress cut off the front of an old television set and came into his classroom holding it in front of himself, looking through that TV screen, hoping to get his students' attention.

*What shall we read? Are you familiar with history? In preparation*

for this topic, I picked up *The Martyrs' Mirror* and looked at some of the things in history there. I have read in *The Martyrs' Mirror*, at times, but never all of it. Daniel Kauffman's *Doctrines of the Bible* and J. Sidlow's Baxter's *Explore the Book*, and many more, are well worth our time. I caution us about the dangers of light reading. It is very easy, especially with book clubs. All you need to do is keep a credit card number on file and the books keep coming. Many of those books are good, but many of them are light and will not take us where we want to go.

Give attention to *how* we read. We should read specifically and carefully. A man was riding in his motor home for the first time and the holding tanks got full. He read in the manual how to empty them, but he mistakenly read that his air tank needed to have the pressure raised to 105 pounds then to open the valve and release the pressure. He missed the point. The instructions said, 10.5 pounds. You can imagine that his experience was not a happy one. I submit to you that many people are missing important points in this Book. They're missing whole sections and biblical principles.

Give attendance to exhortation. This involves interaction with an individual or a group. Many portions

of the Bible encourage us to exhort one another. Hebrews 3:13 says, "Exhort one another daily while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." We owe that to one another. This concept is given a broad range of usages. In Matthew 5:4, it says, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be 'exhorted.'" (comforted or paracleo) The idea of exhortation is coming alongside, caring deeply for, of weeping with--not boxing people's ears, not always correcting them.


In Luke 15, when the prodigal son's older brother would not go in, it says his father came out and exhorted him. This was stronger than that of comforting. He came out to instruct, to reason with, and to encourage him to come in and welcome his long lost brother. In Luke 8, Jairus came to Jesus and *besought* Him to come and take care of his daughter. Here the word is much stronger. He is practically begging. In Titus 2:15, it used in even stronger way: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." Here exhortation is dealing with error.

In Nehemiah 13:25, Nehemiah had instructed the people to stop doing business on the Sabbath day. They continued to do it. He told the offenders to stay outside the city

gate and the people were to not to let them in. That went on for a few weeks. After they persisted, he said, “I contended with them, and cursed them and smote certain of them and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons,” and so on. He gave them very strong exhortation! In other words, he stood right smack in their way. He said this is not going to happen here! Brethren, there comes a time when exhortation takes a strong form. May God give us wisdom to know how to apply appropriate exhortation!

Give attention to doctrine. Here is one sentence from the introduction of the book, *Doctrines of the Bible*: “In this critical age of liberalistic

and modernistic tendencies and positions that characterize so many present-day theologians and institutions of learning, it is very essential indeed that the Church have a work of vital doctrines that rings clear and is free from the blasting influence of these false teachings.” Copyright, 2009? No, 1928! Is there anything new under the sun? The battle we are in, the things we face have all been faced before, just in different ways.

The gift has been given to us. We have accepted it. Neglect not the gift. Let the gift become you. “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). 

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### **Re: Ministers’ Meeting Business Session, 2009 Notes**

Bro. Paul A. Miller reports that he handed out business meeting notes that he later found to be deficient in important details. He would be glad to send more complete notes either by snail mail or e-mail. His mailing address is:

Paul A. Miller  
6890 SR 515  
Millersburg, OH 44654

His e-mail address is:  
[trailmiller@hughes.net](mailto:trailmiller@hughes.net)

## Australian Christian Brotherhood

Jason Kauffman, Gympie, Queensland, Australia

Australia! To many people, it is just a country far away. Some may dream of visiting there some day. To others it may be thought of as the strange land of kangaroos, boomerangs, koalas, dingoes--and Aborigines. While it is a country of interesting people and fascinating animals, it is much more. It is also a place of great need. Australia is quite stable economically, so it doesn't necessarily need material aid. But it definitely needs two things: the Word of God and people who serve Him in sincerity and truth.

Australia is the driest continent in the world with hardly any rainfall at most places, especially in the interior known as "The Outback." While we can do little about the ongoing drought and minimal rainfall, there is something we can do. We can help bring the needed showers of blessing that are missing in the lives of most of Australia's population.

This is where Australian Christian Brotherhood is attempting to make a difference. While we do not anticipate great, earth-shaking revival through

our endeavors, we are attempting by the help and grace of God to bring about increase in the Kingdom as we plant and water the seeds of God's truth and as we labor with God to bring about increase for His glory.

Our mission statement says:

***As God leads and provides, we intend:***

***•to propagate the faith "once delivered to the saints,"***

***•to minister to needs of believers and unbelievers with "agape," God's unconditional love,***

***•to labor together with God and our Australian brethren to establish biblical churches.***

The seeds of interest that started this outreach in Australia came in the 80's and 90's during the time that William McGrath visited Australia and found here some interest in the Anabaptist faith. It was through his vision that some time later the Montezuma A.M. Church (Georgia) assumed the responsibility of providing support and fellowship for the believers that had been identified in Australia. For a number of years a minister

would go to Australia a few times a year to provide encouragement and to serve communion to the faithful ones there.

As time went on, the Australian believers felt there should be a greater level of Anabaptist presence in their land with someone living among them. It was with this vision in mind that Ervin and Pauline Yoder from Paris, TN, went to Australia to live there. They spent 16 months in Victoria, which is in the southern part of Australia. After they returned to the U.S. it was again a number of years before anyone from the mission lived here.

It seemed to the Montezuma A.M. Church that the work had developed to a point where the choice was either to get more involved or to abandon the work entirely, as it was more expense and effort than could be efficiently be handled by one church.

Thus the Australian Christian Brotherhood mission was formed with a number of churches responsible for its organization and charter. While it is not under any certain church or affiliation, it is directed by a mission board with brethren from various conservative Mennonite churches.

Soon after the charter of ACB,

Melody and I with our young family were asked to consider moving to Australia to walk alongside the believers here with the goal of establishing a biblical church. We “shifted” to Australia in the summer of 2003, with a commitment to stay for an indefinite length of time.

Australia is a difficult country to migrate to unless the components of education, wealth, and relative youth are merged into a resume of attractiveness to the growth of their country. Unfortunately, for this country boy from Georgia, I had the dilemma of having only one of those credentials: that of being fairly young. Even now, after almost six years of visa renewals and work restrictions, we still do not have the visa we would like to have: permanent residency. However, it appears to be within reach soon.

We are blessed and encouraged to have a second family from the States giving assistance to the church. The Steve and Stephanie Holbrook family from Georgia now lives here. Steve is being sponsored by a local brother to work in his manufacturing business.

While this church building ministry has been difficult at times, it is also rewarding to see conviction formed and relationships established



among the believers here. Some of the difficulties we have faced have no doubt been self-inflicted, but others have been the result of these believers here never before having the privilege of seeing brotherhood concepts operating in a church. This has been (and still is) a new concept to many.

An older brother once told me that all their lives they have been rebelling and standing up to various authorities, whether it be family, church, school, or even government. Now when they come to a church setting and are asked to submit to one another, it takes a brand new way of thinking.

One of the results of the independent and individualistic mindset is the challenge of getting the brethren to come together in unity in various issues and ideas. We also have needed to look at issues through the eyes of those who did not grow up in conservative Mennonite settings and be willing to work with them accordingly. I believe this is one of the strengths of any mission endeavor, regardless of cultural variations. Sometimes this attitude will move us out of our comfort zone which can be good for us.

While it is not necessarily the goal of this mission to import a

certain model of the various church affiliations and patterns, it is the intent and desire to establish a church fellowship based on the Scriptures and the applications as held dear by early Anabaptists.

It has been rewarding to see the growth in brethren as they are introduced to such doctrines as non-resistance, non-conformity, modesty, headship and the wearing of the headship covering, along with other aspects of Kingdom Christianity. This kind of Kingdom Christian is almost as rare as the AB blood type—rare yet very valuable in the kingdom of God!

There have been a lot of growing pains to bring our church to where we are today. It is very encouraging and rewarding to see an infant church emerging in spite of difficulties and disappointments. Just knowing that there is a church where people— young and old—are being baptized, where communion is served, where brethren's feet are being washed both figuratively and literally, and where individuals are learning the concept of true brotherhood, is invaluable.

I am sure most mission endeavors have their ups and downs. We have certainly not been exempt from times of discouragement and wondering what we are accomplishing in God's

Kingdom.


We work with a number of families in which either the husband is unsaved or complacent and backslidden. While this is nothing unusual, it is very tedious to find the balance for the wives and children committed to obeying God while also honoring husbands and fathers who are spiritually insensitive. Our vision is to instill within the children of these dysfunctional families a sense of worth. We hope and pray that a godly seed will begin to bear fruit for the Kingdom as these children grow up!

Our ministry encompasses a variety of activities. Literature distribution has been a tremendous blessing to the recipients. *The Seed of Truth*, *Reaching Out*, *Calvary Messenger*, CLP Sunday School papers, and other publications regularly go out. We also maintain a website where people can subscribe to free literature and also order wholesome books from our online book shop.

Every year, the first weekend in September, we sponsor a Bible conference in a weekend of fellowship and teaching for families and

individuals from all over Australia. This has proven very worthwhile. We have been bringing in a guest speaker from the U.S. to teach on a variety of practical subjects such as family, church, relationships, and the Sermon on the Mount.

Our latest venture is distributing an Anabaptist curriculum to various home schooling families around the country. We have a small warehouse where we stock CLE curriculum. This warehouse is attached to the chapel we use for Sunday services on the six-acre property the mission owns. Weekends are usually busy with various people and families staying all day Sunday, as well as some overnight stays. While this can be almost overwhelming at times, it is an excellent time to visit with them and look into the Word of God for answers and application to various issues.

While this is only a glimpse into the work of ACB in Australia, we do thank you for your interest and prayer support. I have adopted the following verse as my own: "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27). 

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## Loving Deeply

Mary June Glick

**W**e live in a hurting world. These are troubled times. We do not need to be very old to know that life is not fair. A small child comments to his mother, “That’s not fair!” when an older child is allowed to do something that he may not do. Fairness is our right—or is it?

We have all read accounts of war, famine, starvation, abuse, murder—the list goes on. Our lives may have been directly involved in these or other catastrophes and we may have made the same comment “Life is not fair.”

Such inequities seem to cause many people to ask, “Where is God?” Ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, we live in an unfair world. Their choices have affected us. We choose how we will respond to the unfairness we experience.

God has blessed me with the assurance that He will not leave any of His children alone regardless of the enormity of the *unfairness* we experience.

Where is God? He is with us in the midst of our pain. God is preparing us for Heaven. The trials of life give us a longing for our Eternal Home.

God also desires his children to respond with love and compassion to those who are experiencing difficult situations. He wants me to be alert to the circle of my responsibility, those people I can touch. I believe that circle is often much wider than I care to admit. We may prefer not to be involved in another person’s suffering. We may say, “Well, it’s not really my problem.” However, when Cain killed his brother Abel, God came to him and asked, “Where is thy brother?” Do we respond like Cain did, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Women have many opportunities to minister to people that are hurting. I would like to think mostly about those people within our church and community who are longing for someone to come beside them and feel their pain. Many times, they only need assurance that someone cares and understands. At other times, we must become involved in practical ways that may include giving of our resources, such as financial aid or our *precious* time, which is often most difficult. First, let us look at ministering within our church family and to others in our local church.

To the widow:

The Bible tells us in James 1:27 “to visit the widows in their affliction.” Now I have never been a widow, but have had opportunities to observe many widows through the years. I would guess that one of their biggest struggles is loneliness. Not only do they miss their companions, but they also miss the fellowship with other couples. It is often easier to stay at home than to try to fit in with a group of old friends. Many older widows do not drive any more, so they spend their evenings at home. I remember as a child my parents spent many Sunday evenings and other times visiting the widows. Visiting is not as common among our people today.

How can you get started? You could take a fresh loaf of bread or a plate of cookies to your widow friend. Do you allow time to talk with her? She may long for a good conversation. Invite her to your home for a meal. Provide someone to accompany her to a wedding or other special event. Go with your husband to her house to be “fix-it man” for an evening. Allow her to talk about her husband, about her feelings and longings, her loneliness. Most of all—be a friend to her.

To the woman who has lost a child by death or miscarriage:

Losing a child is one of the most devastating experiences that can come to a woman. The child the mother carried within her own womb and with whom she bonded

soon after conception is taken from her.

If the child was older, he or she was loved and cared for daily. The death may have been sudden such as an accident or after a lengthy illness. The departed child leaves an empty space in the heart and home which nothing else can fill.

Miscarriage or a stillborn baby evokes a similar loss—that of empty arms that long to be satisfied. The mother is pregnant one morning and awakes the next to a complete change of dreams and hopes for the future. It leaves her with changes in her body to cope with.

As a caregiver, you may not know what to say, but you can be there for her. Let her know you care. Offer to care for the older children or take in meals. Send flowers and cards. After the death of a child, you will want to stand with her for months and even years. Talk about the child if she wants to talk, pray with her, and love her.

In a miscarriage or a stillbirth, a mother may feel that no one understands or relates to her grief. Let her know you care. I am glad that we respond differently to a miscarriage than we did in my younger days when we simply did not talk about it. You can be an instrument of healing to your friend who experiences the loss of a child.

*(To be continued next month)* 

## A Storm

*Marlee Friesen, 12 years old, Shipshewana, IN*


'Twas a regular day by the sea Galilee,  
But a storm was a-brewin' far across the lea.  
A thing would happen that night on the sea,  
The Master's good miracle was soon to be.

The people were gathered to hear Jesus speak,  
By night He was tired; He needed some rest.  
To find just a boat to cross over with no leak,  
To escape from the people would be quite a test.

The Master was tired—in the back He did sleep,  
Then the wind started blowing the waves were a-leap.  
Like a raging and bellowing bull it still kept  
The boat in its fists, but Lord Jesus still slept.

The frantic disciples said, "Master awake,  
The boat—it will sink us, our lives it will take,  
So Master come save us before it's too late,  
We soon will be dead if we sink at this rate."

The water was coming; the boat it did fill,  
Then all of a sudden, He said, "Peace be still."  
The wind did stop blowing; the waves ceased to mill,  
And all was so quiet, so peaceful, so still.

When we have such tumult inside, we must lay  
Our storms upon Jesus—He'll take them away.  
He'll leave there instead such a peace that will stay,  
Lest we should turn from the light to the gray. 

*Dear Youth,**This Month's*  
**QUESTION****Is it consistent for a Christian who promotes “two kingdom” theology to become mentally and emotionally attached to a favorite political party?*****Anabaptist Activists****Ben Byler, Huntsville, AR*

**C**onservative Mennonites do not get involved politically. They do not vote and they do not hold office. They have convictions against political involvement because they believe Christians, as members of God's Kingdom, should not take part in any earthly kingdom.

These are our stated beliefs. Do we live like we have a conviction against political involvement? As stated, we do not vote or hold office, but many become emotionally involved in the political process. Even though we do not vote, some are strongly interested in the politics of the world around us.

Mennonites who become emotionally involved in elections feel they have extenuating reasons to do so. Sometimes they believe one candidate is Christian and should be supported. Or, one candidate is so un-Christian that they feel he should be opposed.

Emotions ran especially high in the presidential election of 2008. Congress was already controlled by Democrats, and mainstream Christians considered Mr. Obama worse than the average liberal. Amish Mennonites joined in the anti-Obama hysteria in far too

many cases. Some did so by spreading rumors that he was Muslim, some questioned his citizenship, and some felt that he was the antichrist. Those who spread these rumors were as politically involved as most registered voters. They talked and worried their way into a mental froth. To all appearances, they laid aside their Heavenly citizenship for a few months.

Many Anabaptists have accepted the theory that making godly laws is a good way to bring about moral change in a nation. Every time a law passes with which they disagree, they subconsciously regret their convictions against voting and wonder why God does not heed their heartfelt prayers in behalf of a particular candidate or party.

Are there consequences that conservative Anabaptists are experiencing as a result of this dualistic world view?

First of all, their status as conscientious objectors to war is in jeopardy. If their behavior shows they are mentally a part of the American political process, American authorities have reason to require them to take part in the defense of American

interests. By joining a political cause Anabaptist activists show they are part of the kingdom of the world. This negates their claim to being solely loyal to the heavenly kingdom.

Another result of becoming politically active is a loss of focus on “witnessing” as a world-changing force. Too often, conservative Anabaptist activists are more concerned about keeping the laws of their country moral than they are about witnessing for Jesus. They seem not to realize that legislating morality is futile. Morals must be changed from the bottom up. As Anabaptists they should concentrate on bringing their neighbors to Christ, not on forcing them to behave in a moral manner. Moral change comes from the inside out.

Christians have an interest in politics without becoming emotionally entangled in the process, but they must have a certain amount of detachment. This detachment is attained by a realization of their purpose on earth. If they understand that having a relationship with God is more important than earthly possessions and freedoms, politics become nothing more than an intellectual interest. No human law can keep a committed Christian from serving God.

What causes conservative Anabaptists to become blind to the superfluity of politics?

Sometimes Anabaptists are very attached to their possessions and root for the candidate who promises to keep their taxes low. Low taxes are a blessing, but they are not big enough reason to give up citizenship in the

Kingdom of heaven by becoming active in earth’s kingdom.

Anabaptists like to believe they abstain from political involvement, but emotional involvement is as much of a problem for their worldview as voting would be. Many never come to this realization. They fervently tell God which political party should come into power, then are bitterly disappointed when their candidate does not live up to his campaign promises. This disappointment only reinforces their belief that “What this country needs is some good leadership!” These activist Anabaptists eagerly anticipate the next change in power and as the election nears, Sunday morning church conversations frequently center on the latest political news. While they are spending energy on pointless political press releases, their neighbors are sliding down the slope to hell. The lost souls around them need a helping hand to get to Jesus, but the people best suited to help have both hands full of editorials and Gallup polls. They are so concerned about changing the nation that they miss the personal interaction that holds the best hope for real change in this nation.

Those with convictions against voting should have convictions against activism as well. Some voting U.S. citizens are more separated from this world than Conservative Mennonites who worry but do not vote. They should not be activist Anabaptists either.

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



# THOUGHT GEMS

Because the accent is on youth these days, the stress is on the parents.

• • • • •

Work is the meat of life, pleasure the dessert.

• • • • •

It is impossible to make wisdom hereditary.

• • • • •

An excessively fast talker: One who talks 150 words a minute, with gusts up to 200.

• • • • •

Gratitude: the greatest of virtues and parent of most others.

• • • • •

Ulcer victims are members of the “fret set.”

• • • • •

Truth may be clear as a bell, but it’s not always tolled.

• • • • •

People who hold their tongues have less trouble holding their friends.

• • • • •

The best thing for parents to spend on their children is time rather than money.

• • • • •

One thing every married couple should save for their old age is each other.

• • • • •

If thoughts could be read, faces would probably be redder.

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