

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

Galatians 6:14

**OCTOBER 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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## *In Our Possession*

*Lydia Hess, Chambersburg, PA*

We have a Guide Who walked the way  
To Calvary one gloomy day.

We have a Strength Who bore the cross  
Of weighty wrongs and massive dross.

We have a Balm Who met with thorn,  
And whip, and nail, and spear—and scorn.

We have a Peace Who waged a war  
With woe and fate, despair, and more.

We have a Source Who drank the cup  
Of bitt' rest dregs and misery up.

We have a Cause Who could create  
Unbounded love midst seething hate.

We have a Resident Who dwelt  
With every pang our hearts have felt.

We have a Light Who sensed the plight,  
The total depths of trial's night.

We have a Friend Whose mournful cry,  
“My God, my God,” met no reply.

We have a Life Who gladly cried  
“ ‘Tis finished!”—bowed His head, and died.

We have a Liberator Who  
Succumbed to earth's cold prison, too.

We have a Victor Who arose  
And conquered over all his foes!

[From *The Vindicator*, August, 2009. Used by permission.]



## Comfort Ye My People

**T**o be human is to be subject to great sorrow. When we would comfort those in sorrow, sometimes we can find good words. At other times we may find ourselves simply “weeping with them that weep” (Romans 12:15). Both kind words and sympathetic tears bless those who grieve.

### Comfort

When we find ourselves wanting to give comfort, yet hardly knowing what to say, it is no disgrace to say little or nothing. We should not avoid those in sorrow because we don't know what to say. If, in obedience to God, we go beyond our comfort zone, we may find Him giving us something worth saying. In John 14, Jesus makes comments about the Holy Spirit that speak to this need:

- In verse 16, He promises to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to us.

- In verse 18, the Holy Spirit comes as a friend would comfort an orphan.

- In verse 26, He calls the Holy Spirit a comforter.

The Holy Spirit stands by the child of God. If we lean on the Divine Teacher for wisdom, we need not stand back in silence and gaze. More helpfully, we can step forward, offer a heartfelt hand shake, express sympathy, and give assurance of our prayers.

### Encouragement

The same verb that is translated “comfort” is also translated “encourage.” Let's encourage when we have opportunity to “lift up the hands that hang down” (Hebrews 12:12a). Encouragement from a friend lightens a burdened heart.

*Comfort* is a keynote of the Messianic Prophet, Isaiah. Isaiah opens Chapter 40 with these well-known words: “‘Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,’ saith your God.” Encouragement (enriched comfort) is described in Isaiah 61 (the passage from which Jesus quoted when introducing His mission on earth in Luke 4:16-22). Let us highlight gems from the opening verses of Isaiah 61: **“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted...To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness....”**

God sent Christ to minister to others, and He would have us attempt more than just showing up at a time of grief. He would have us also encourage those we stand with. He allows hard times to come upon His children (Hebrews 12:6) and He wants us to help each other when

that happens.

### **Courage to Forgive**

A situation calling for comfort and encouragement is reflected in the obituary of (page 19) and tribute to (page 4) Stephanie Ann Wingard in this issue of *Calvary Messenger*.

About 13 years ago, when Stephanie was three or four, Martha and I attended a wedding in west central Oklahoma at Thomas and stayed in the home of Stephanie's parents, Olen and Emily Wingard. One thing that stands out in my memory from that overnight stay is that little Stephanie was having a very hard time in obeying her parents. Olen carefully and patiently persisted in his fatherly duties to bring her to willing compliance.

Stephanie went through childhood and matured into adulthood. No doubt, during her growing-up years she needed further help in making good decisions. Thankfully, she made the all-important, life-changing decision to receive Christ as her Savior and Lord some six months before her passing.

Her death at age 16 seems most unfortunate and yet certain facts remain:

- No one can bring Stephanie back.

- Life goes on--even when it is hard to put one foot ahead of the other.

- God gives courage through friends who come to comfort those bereaved.

- God has ways of making us homesick for heaven.

- God gives us encouragement as we stand on the promises of His Word.

The many who came to visitation and viewing and the estimated 900 attending the funeral were deeply touched by this tragedy. At the funeral, Bishops Truman Yoder and Donny Swartzentruber drew our minds to our sovereign God who comforts us in our times of deepest need.


Bro. Donny, an uncle, sought to encourage the sorrowing by leading the way for them to take a big step in the long journey of healing. He invited the young man to the platform who was with Stephanie in the accident that resulted in her death. Knowing that even a wrongful death law suit could not bring Stephanie back, he prayed for him and invited the bereaved family (both immediate and extended) to indicate their willingness to forgive. This opened the way for the young man, numb with grief and regret, to express gratitude for the family's forgiveness. It made us all realize that not just *one*, but *two* families were sorrowing deeply.

God equips us to stand valiantly with those who grieve. He comforts us in all our tribulation, *not* so that we may be *comfortable*, but "so that we may be *able to comfort* them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Corinthians 1:4 Italics mine.).

• • • • •

The layout person at Carlisle Printing called me today (8-24) and said that he had failed to indicate the correct month on the pages inside the September issue, but that issue was already printed. I accepted his apology. Now I must also give you

readers my apology. I had opportunity to note that inaccuracy when the proofs came to me for final approval. I missed it. I'm very sorry!

We chose not to add the cost of printing a re-run. We hope you understand. —PLM 

## *Our Good-bye to You, Dear Stephanie*

*Emily Wingard (Stephanie's mother), Thomas, OK*

So full of life, beginning to bloom,  
Your fragrance wafting through each day,  
The commitment you made to Jesus, the Son,  
Was your desire to keep in every way.

You came as a baby we held dear to our hearts,  
Our gift from God, so precious to us.  
Little did we know how short those years,  
You'd be snuffed so quickly from our lives.

Your first smile, your first laugh,  
The first crawl and then the first step.  
"Da-da" was your first word,  
'A daddy's girl' right from the start.

As a little tot it didn't take long to know  
That your love for horses was real.  
A dream come true was yours for sure,  
When Ginger came riding into view.

Tyler will miss giving you his ornery tease,  
And Sawyer giving you a hard time.  
They loved you so much, you could tell,  
By the way they looked up to your life.

Dallas adored the attention from Big Sis,  
He loves animals and music, just like you.  
At times, while you the violin would practice,  
Out came the harmonica as he tried to keep up the tune.



You dreamed of playing the violin long into the years,  
Along with many other instruments.  
But more will be missed in your talent of singing,  
As you harmonized in alto and high tenor.

The goals you had set in the past week or two,  
Had absolutely amazed me!  
The electives you chose for your junior year,  
Was 'way more than they needed to be.

Even the last trip to the library showed,  
You wanted to learn all you could while you can.  
But alas, the biggest decision of all you chose,  
Was granted the day you were called home!


In the past year or two, the friends you made were so many,  
You loved everyone completely and treasured each memory.  
The excitement bubbled forth as you spoke of all the happy times,  
And your truest friends were held so dear, as you trusted them in kind.

Your talents were many and the future held potential,  
As you gave it your hundred percent.  
But we'll miss the smiles and laughs most of all,  
As 'round the table we'll reminisce.

The memories of you are so precious indeed,  
We're awed at the way you touched lives.  
We'll take one day at a time; Thank God for you  
Through all of the tears try to go on and to smile.

God picked a bud just beginning to bloom,  
It's blooming for sure in Heaven we trust.  
And while your fragrance lives steadily on,  
We'll remember to live like it's our last.

-Missing you and loving you so much it hurts,  
Mom and Dad, Tyler, Sawyer, and Dallas

[This was read at the funeral, giving the estimated  
900 people a glimpse of Stephanie's family's great loss.] 

## Faith is Hard

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Who said faith in God is easy?

Faith is hard stuff. My circumstances are quite unusual. I am told I just need to have faith in God. Preachers say it. Healthy people say it. People who are well-to-do say it.

Hearing people preach and teach Sunday school and give a testimony makes faith sound easy, like preventing bad things from happening or providing a quick fix to the undesirable. Note the following opportunities for faith:

Here is a middle-aged man with cancer. He treats it for three and a half years, spends \$180,000 and still dies.

Or take the man who is unsuccessful in business. He borrows \$90,000 for start-up costs. Soon he learns that he needs another \$50,000 for upgrades for the sake of efficiency. Within a year the economy takes a nosedive and he ends up daily losing money he never had.

A widower is attracted to a certain lady whom he wishes to befriend. He prays and fasts and agonizes before the Lord. When he finally contacts

her to make his wishes known, she isn't even willing to negotiate. She tells him she is simply not interested.

A young couple is sincerely dedicated to God. They make unreserved commitments to God and earnestly ask Him to have their desires granted. After 11 years, they are still childless.

In every case above these people claimed an unwavering faith in God. They did all the right things preachers and Sunday school teachers and Christian witnesses said they should do: *Claim God's promises; express faith in God; get rid of selfish desires; then just relax in Him and see God work things out.*

Days and months and years go by. No change. Nothing happens. Faith and prayers and doing all the right things seem to make no difference. Sometimes, things seem to get worse.

"Faith is the answer," they say. "Faith lays hold on God's storehouse of blessing. Faith touches the heart of God. Faith coupled with earnest prayer moves the heart of God." We



do all these and nothing changes for the better. To add another dimension of stress, a man from a distant community comes to give his testimony at the Sunday evening service. His prayers were answered. He suffered much and saw glimpses of heaven when they thought he was dying. He testifies of God's grace and healing. God provided a miracle for him. We may be tempted to give up and ask, *What about us?*

We hear of a business man in bad financial shape. He gets a lucrative contract and in four years is out of debt and prospering. *What about me? Am I not worthy of such a turn around?*

A widower finds and marries a wonderful widow. He attributes his good fortune to faith in God and waiting on him. *What about me? I gave it all over to God and all I got was rejection and setbacks.*

One couple who has a wonderful testimony of faith and patience before God are asked to give their lovely testimony here and there. They had been childless for seven years. Their faith in God was not always strong in regard to their situation. But over time, God has given them five lovely children. *What about me? Why does faith work so grandly for others, but not for me?*

Perhaps we need to remind

ourselves that faith in God is not always easy. It is not a quick fix, a sure remedy, a predictably desirable outcome.

The measure of faith is not dependent on stupendous results, even miraculous ones. The variables in the people of genuine and vibrant faith are beyond academic analysis. Human reasoning is inadequate in coming up with appropriate explanations of how some are blessed with evident answers to prayer, while others (who would seem to be even more worthy) are seemingly passed over by God.

This brings us to the point of this article: If everyone were granted his request based on his faith, faith would be easy. But since most of us do not receive awesome answers from God, then having faith in God is simply not an easy matter. Faith in God is hard at times.


The Bible says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). The rewards are promised, but without saying whether it is in this life or the life to come. Could it also be that we have already often been rewarded by God in this life and failed to see it? No doubt, God has given us rewards for our faith and we

missed recognizing it and thanking Him for it. Such rewards were not the big, headline-making type by which someone in a distant state calls on us for our remarkable testimony.

Paul was noted for his thorn in the flesh. Job was outstanding in his faith toward God. He said, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego told the powerful king that their God is able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, but if God should choose to have them burn, they would still not bow to the idol. The result was up to God. God preserved them in the flames even though the King was not willing to spare them.

Faith is hard at those times when having faith does not make sense. “Claiming faith in God no matter

what” should not be held forth as an easy way out of tough times. It links us with God who controls all things for our good. Faith may actually thrust us into the challenge of waiting on God. Sometimes it would seem as though our hard times make faith in God our only option. And that may be our loving Heavenly Father’s plan. No wonder, then, that faith seems hard.

*The Bottom Line* is that faith in God was never intended to make life easier or more glamorous. The heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 faced extraordinarily tough choices. Choosing God’s way was not easy. The reality of victory and overcoming huge obstacles in life is no different for us today. Living by faith in God is not intended to make life easy, but to make it right—and worthy of God’s approval. 

## ANNOUNCEMENT

**The 2010 Annual Beachy Ministers Meeting will be hosted by the Fair Haven and Woodlawn congregations, from April 6-8, 2010, Lord willing, at Fair Haven Amish Mennonite in Goshen, IN. Committee chairmen and mission representatives who need time slots in the business meeting or display tables, please contact Brother Wilbur Yoder no later than December 31, 2009, at [wilkayyoder@maplenet.net](mailto:wilkayyoder@maplenet.net), or 574-533-4728.**



# The Chocolate-Colored Purse

Author unknown

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights..." (James 1:17).

My wife lifted the chocolate brown purse from the table and examined it. The top flap brought memories of another purse she once used. "Awkward," she murmured, and set it back.

"Just take it." She looked up to see a lady approaching. "Just take it. I need to get rid of my stuff!" My wife hesitated. She didn't want the purse, but neither did she want to be rude, so she accepted the gift with a smile and left the yard sale. After looking at the purse again at home, she tossed it into a closet. Her old purse may be ragged, but she determined not to exchange it until she found the *right purse*.

For the next few months, my frugal wife kept watch for the *right purse*. But yard sales, bargain shops, and even some better stores couldn't satisfy. She remembered the freebie in the closet, but dismissed it. *A little more time. That's all*, she thought.

Eventually, time ran out. The old purse became more ragged until one day the strap broke. Reluctantly,

she dug the chocolate-colored purse out of the closet and began filling it. She felt discontent rising. "No," she said to herself. "I can be content with this purse." Her determination to find the right purse gave way to a new determination: being content with the purse God had already provided.

One day I spotted it on her desk. A gold label on the side said *Gloria Vanderbilt*. "Getting stylish, Honey?" I teased.

She smiled. And then told me how she actually liked it. The setup is so handy and I even like the color. It's surprising how this purse is actually a blessing. And just think. At first I didn't want it."

But God had another surprise waiting.

I was at my desk one evening when I heard her come in. I turned to see a bewildered look on her face. In her hand was money. "Look. Three hundred dollars!"

"From where?"

"The purse! It had another pocket."

I quizzed her about the yard sale. But it happened almost a year ago in a city with over half a million

people. She couldn't even picture the neighborhood. I imagined us going from house to house, knocking on doors and holding up a purse.

"Never mind," I said. "We can't return the money."

We prayed, and it became clear what to do. In our prayers that month was an elderly couple with health problems. Their finances were tight. This money was the answer.

Looking back, it's easy to see that the *right purse* was *right* in our home. It makes me wonder, how many other *right things*, *right people*, or *right solutions* are waiting to be discovered today, simply by exercising contentment.

[From July-August 2009 *News Release*, Copyright 2009 Christian Light Publications, Inc. Used by permission.] 

## *The Higher Ethic*

*Chester Weaver, Lagrange, IN*

**W**e know what we are against. We are against sin, the world, and all the unfruitful works of darkness. Practically, that means we are against pride, immorality, selfishness, idolatry, and the exploitation of people. We are against cheating, stealing, lying, and falseness in all its forms. We abhor war, adultery, cruelty (especially torture), rebellion, the occult, and the forces of political coercion. In fact, we erect rules and standards among ourselves to see to it that we remain free of these things we are against. We are really against these negatives!

What are we *for*? Simple logic demands that if we are *against* something, we must be *for* something

else. What is that? What do we promote, work for, encourage, give our energies to, seek, and assist our offspring to love? What is the bottom line of what we promote?

It is quite easy to be so focused on what we are against that we fail to sharply focus on what we are for. In fact, the practice of *against* creates a vacuum into which something will rush. A vacuum invites something to fill up the void. A syringe with the piston pulled back will suck air if it is in air, water if it is in water, gasoline if it is in gasoline, and milk if it is in milk. The vacuum must be filled.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a solid unit. Jesus is against sin. The Gospel teaches all men to repent of personal sin, but the Gospel is also

solidly in support of filling our lives with Jesus Christ. “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2). What is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God?

Do we know as much about this perfect will of God as we know about what we are against? I propose *that we do not*. I also propose that the crises the Church is facing in our day are largely because we have not given ourselves sufficiently to this perfect will of God. We have not talked about it enough. We have not preached about it with passion. We have not modeled it consistently.

Where it has been modeled, good fruit is already in evidence. Just as Jesus did, the good modelers do not trumpet their modeling. The blessing of the Lord is so obvious that it needs no trumpet. The open eye and heart can see it.

Anabaptist history includes an element which is often lost in the midst of the story of people, places and persecutions. We get so caught up in the drama of the story that we fail to see the motivation for the drama. And to be quite honest, not all Anabaptist history portrays people living out the “good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Early

Anabaptists too were struggling humans just like we are today.

Precisely, what is this good, acceptable, and perfect will of God? Jesus taught us that only doing that which anybody else can do, such as saluting friends and loving those who love us does not represent perfection. See (Matthew 5:46-48). So it must be something higher than that. This higher thing has been called **The Higher Ethic** by Anabaptists in more recent times and **The Commands of Christ** in former times. In one way or another, the burden is the same.

### **Loving Enemies**

Let's start with the most familiar Higher Ethic. All men know that loving enemies is not natural. But Jesus said we are to do it as if it were the normal thing for His followers to do. And as a people we have done that in many commendable ways for nearly 500 years. Our record is not perfect but we have the familiar image among us of Dirk Willems rescuing the thief catcher. Would to God that while we are on the stage of human history we could stand on the shoulders of our forbears and do even better than they! It is just so natural to hate one's enemies! Loving requires the active power of Christ living, moving, and controlling us from within. The divine must be at work.

## **Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is closely related to the above. People do not naturally forgive the hurts and injuries thrust upon them by insensitive people. People naturally think in terms of justice and fairness, of punishment for wrongs. Children operate from a strong sense of fairness. But sooner or later we must all come to terms with life not being fair. People simply are not always fair with other people; people tend to be selfish--thus the need for forgiveness. Forgiveness is the complete release of the offender; the opposite of justice and fairness. Jesus was very pointed on this one, saying that if we do not operate in this way, God will not forgive us either.

## **Humility**

Jesus was also very pointed about humility. He said, "Unless you become like little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." See Matthew 18:1-6. He said that whoever *does* humble himself as a little child, is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Again humility is not natural; pride is natural. We all know what it is like to think, "Me first!" "I say to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (See Romans 12:3). To prefer others above ourselves is very unnatural.

An adult becoming "childlike" seems backwards and yet, that is exactly what Jesus did by coming to earth according to Philippians 2.

## **The Golden Rule**

Note that Jesus does not give the Golden Rule in the negative: not doing to other people what we do not want them doing to us. Jesus presents the positive: doing to others what we would like for others to do to us. Where is the limit to this? How much good can we do for others? Are we blind when we do not see the opportunities to bless others? Are we selfish? And yet Jesus' words remain, "Treat other people the way you would like to be treated." If even a cup of cold water is rewarded, are we jostling to offer the cup? How many cups are too many?

## **Good Samaritan**

When asked who his neighbor was, Jesus gave the story of the Good Samaritan as the answer. He concluded by telling the questioner (and us today), "Go and do thou likewise." Who is needy whom I can help? Again the priest and Levite illustrate the natural response of finding excuses *not* to help in the face of need. The needy come in all forms: the financially needy, the emotionally needy, the spiritually needy, the physically needy, the lonely, the despairing, the rejected, the hurting,



and the outcasts. Where do the needs end? How can I help? How many am I allowed to help?

### **Self Denial**

Once again Jesus is pointed: If you try to save your life, you will lose it. If you deny yourself and take up your cross, you will find your life. See Matthew 16:24-27. In other words: If we serve self, we have everything to lose. If we serve Christ, we have everything to gain. But that is not natural for us. Naturally we are very good at watching out for ourselves. We are all too ready to seize the advantage for ourselves when the opportunity presents itself. Jesus teaches that people best serve themselves by serving Him and by serving others, not themselves. Jesus modeled self-denial perfectly and history has quite a few examples of others who have done quite well, also.

More could be added to illustrate the Higher Ethic, but let these be sufficient for now. We have enough opportunity with the above to more than fill the vacuum created by being against sin. The commands of Christ are clear. But we could use practice. Would to God that we could experience a “rush to the bottom” in

enthusiasm for practicing what Jesus taught is really important!

Are conservative Anabaptists against sin? Of course! But are we more proactively *for*, more extensively *for*, more completely *for* the Higher Ethic that Jesus taught? The opportunities for the practice of the Higher Ethic absorb some of the Rivers of Living Water that issue forth from Anabaptist bellies. Praise God for this practice, this modeling! To be honest, some Anabaptist bellies appear to be dry today.

But for those who have it, the rivers are gushing forth. Those lives illustrate the Living Power of God. Sin is more than conquered while the power of God is at work. The Higher Ethic opportunities will continue as long as God allows the earth to stand. Why would anyone choose to waste his/her time with the dying prospect of sin?

Would to God that we would each experience the spiritual fullness that automatically accompanies the practice of the Higher Ethic! Is that why the Anabaptist movement had such power at its beginning?

How much spiritual impact can we make?

***Those who ignore health in the pursuit of wealth, usually wind up losing both.***

## marriages

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

### **Miller-Petre**

Bro. Caleb, son of John and Esther Miller, Somerset, OH, and Sis. Dorcas, daughter of Chester and Myrtle Petre, Mt. Perry, OH, were married at Light-house Memorial Church for Emmanuel Fellowship on August 7, 2009, by John A. Miller.

### **Miller-Yoder**

Bro. Joseph D., son of David J. and Effie Miller, Shreve, OH, and Sis. Lisa Jolene, daughter of Bennie and Rhoda Yoder, Holmesville, OH, at Messiah Fellowship on July 25, 2009, by Nathan Yoder.

### **Otto-Wagler**

Bro. Joshua Albert, son of David and Miriam Otto, Crossville, TN, and Sis. Regina Mae, daughter of Thomas and Sadie Wagler, Trout Creek, MT, at New Life Fellowship Church, Thompson Falls, MT, on August 21, 2009, by Homer Zook.

### **Overholt-Kuepfer**

Bro. John, son of John and Linda (Troyer) Overholt, Minerva, OH, and Sis. Heidi, daughter of Lorne and Grace (Nisly) Kuepfer, Hutchinson, KS, at First Baptist for Center A.M. Church, on August 8, 2009, by Leonard Overholt, grandfather of the groom.

### **Yoder-Gingerich**

Bro. Shadd, son of Floyd and Betty Yoder, Leitchfield, KY, and Sis. Karin, daughter of Jim and Ada Gingerich, Advance, MO, at First United Methodist Church for Crowley's Ridge Mennonite Church on August 7, 2009, by Melvin Troyer.

### **Yoder-Kuhns**

Bro. Matthew Lavern, son of Wilmer and Rosemary Yoder, Sullivan, IL, and Sis. Julie Ann, daughter of Edwin and Leona Kuhns, Sullivan, IL, at New Life Tabernacle for Trinity Christian Fellowship, on August 22, 2009, by Dannie Diener.



## cradle roll

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

**Bawell**, Omer and Johanna (Shiley), Cottage Grove, TN, second child and dau., Leanna Yvonne, July 21, 2009.

**Beachy**, Emery and Ida Mae (Yoder), Belvidere, TN, fourth child, second dau., Veronica Mae, August 6, 2009.

**Beachy**, Ervin and Elizabeth (Zook), Lewisburg, PA, second child and dau., Rebekah Anne, August 2, 2009.

**Beachy**, Nathan and Joy (Stoltzfus), Dover, DE, fourth child, third dau., Alys Faith, March 17, 2009.

**Beachy**, Walter and Ramona (Miller), Millington, MD, fourth child, second son, Zachary Ray, August 25, 2009.

**Chavarria**, Jonathan and Sherri (Yoder), Rosebud, TX, second child and dau., Kendra Shanae, July 8, 2009.

**Coblentz**, Mark and Naomi (Miller), Flemingsburg, KY, fourth child, third son, Adam Blake, August 15, 2009.

**Fisher**, Gene and Charity (Stoll), Abbeville, SC, first child and dau., Allison Brooke, May 25, 2009.

**Fisher**, Matt and Violet (Overholt), Abbeville, SC, third child and dau., Keri Elayne, May 7, 2009.

**Gerber**, Douglas and Darlene (Steckly), Linwood, ON, first child and son, Dwayne John, August 16, 2009.

**Hochstetler**, Barry and Karen (Helmuth), Hicksville, OH, third child, second son, Evan Dale, July 9, 2009.

**Hostetler**, David and Miriam (Yoder), Howe, IN, third child, second dau., Justina Joy, July 28, 2009.

**Kemp**, Jonathan and Rebecca (Knepp), Loogootee, IN, sixth child, third dau., Corena Joy, August 2, 2009.

**Mast**, Robert and Amanda (King), Montezuma, GA, second child, first dau., Kelsey Mariah, August 21, 2009.

**Miller**, Jonathan and Sherri (Beachy), West Jefferson, OH, fourth child, second son, Adrian David, August 6, 2009.

**Nisly**, Rod and Sylvia (Miller), Nickerson, KS, eighth child, fourth dau., Katie Suzanne, August 18, 2009.

**Nissley**, Elam and Nina (Yoder), Paris, TN, fifth child, fourth son, Grant Josiah, July 31, 2009.

**Overholt**, Matthias and Sarah (Mohler), Sarasota, FL, first child and son, Amadeus James, August 2, 2009.

**Stauffer**, Roger Neil and Phyllis Elaine (Schmucker), Sturgis, MI, first child and dau., Abigail Cheyanne, July 22, 2009.

**Stoll**, Darris and Karla (Yoder), Abbeville, SC, fourth child, first dau., Caia Nadine, August 4, 2009.

**Stoltzfus**, Nathan and Martha (Byers), Mifflinburg, PA, fifth child, fourth son, Jared Lavon, July 5, 2009.

**Stoltzfus**, Paul and Naomi (King), Mifflin, PA, (presently serving at Faith Mission Home), second child and dau., Samantha Faith, August 8, 2009.

**Wagler**, Lavern and Ruth (Wengerd), Paris, TN, first child and dau., Melody Dawn, August 22, 2009.

**Weaver**, Thomas and Elaine (King), Summersville, KY, eighth child, fifth dau., Cynthia Elaine, June 23, 2009.

**Wickey**, Brian and Darla (Yoder), Hutchinson, KS, second child, first son, Kyle Ray, July 30, 2009.

**Yoder**, Kenneth and Luella (Schrock), Arthur, IL, third child, second dau., Cortney Rochelle, August 10, 2009.

**Yoder**, Lavern and Anita (Kline), Danville, AL, second child and dau., Audria Brooke, August 9, 2009.

**Yoder**, Lawane and Esther Fern (Helmuth), Sturgis, MI, fourth child, third son, Kevin Wayne, July 8, 2009.

**Yoder**, Melvin and Amber (Bontrager), Harrison, AR, first child and dau., Kayla Marie, July 17, 2009.

**Yoder**, Nathanael and Ruth (Byler), Waterford, Ireland, third child and son, Levi William, June 18, 2009.

**Yoder**, Reuben and Mary Lynn (Smucker), Malta, OH, second child and son, Jackson Ben, August 13, 2009.

**Zook**, Anthony and Judith (Yoder), Wytheville, VA, first child and son, Jamin Alex, August 30, 2009.

## ordinations

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

**Bro. David Beiler**, 41, was ordained as bishop on May 10, 2009, at Shekinah Christian Fellowship, Middleburg, PA. Preordination messages were given by Jonathan Stoltzfus, Narvon, PA. The charge was given by Ray Byers, assisted by Jonathan Stoltzfus and Ernest Stoltzfus. George Stoltzfus was also in the lot.

**Bro. Raymond Fisher**, 41, of Greenville, TN, was ordained bishop at the Greene County Mennonite Church, Chuckey, TN, on August 16, 2009. Preordination messages were brought by Stephen Beachy of Belvidere, TN. The charge was given by John Smucker. Roman Kauffman was also in the lot.

**Bro. Delbert Hostetler**, 30, was ordained to the ministry at Bethany Fellowship, Kokomo, IN, on June 28, 2009. Preordination messages were given by

Daniel Bontrager, Shipshewana, IN. The charge was given by Marvin Beachy, assisted by Howard Kuhns and Elmer Miller. Also in the lot were Kenneth Graber and Larry Schrock.

**Bro. Leland Wagler**, 39, of Odon, IN, was ordained as minister at Mt. Nebo Mennonite Church, Newberry, IN, on July 26, 2009. Preordination messages were brought by John Mast. The charge was given by Eugene Eicher, assisted by Henry Hershberger and John Mast. Leonard Stoll and Mervin Mast were also in the lot.

## obituaries

**Byers**, Nathan, 62, of Middleburg, PA, died at Geisgener Medical Center, Danville, PA, on August 7, 2009. He was born August 18, 1946, son of Miriam (Miller) and the late Daniel Byers.

He was a member of Shekinah Christian Fellowship, Middleburg, PA.

On June 28, 1969, he was married to Sara Bricker, who survives. Also surviving are three sons: Laban (Jolene) Byers, Middleburg; Isaac Byers, Wakarusa, IN; and Thomas (Jessica) Byers, Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA; three daughters: Ellen (Ernie) Schrock, Culpepper, VA; Joanna (James) Burkholder, Wakarusa, IN; and Becky (Dan) Mast, Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA.

The funeral was held on August 11 with George Stoltzfus, Ray Byers, and Dave Beiler serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Hershberger**, David E., 94, of Fredericksburg, OH, died August 15, 2009, at the home of his daughter and family, William and Esther Beiler, Gap Mills, WV. He was born at Trail, Ohio, on Sept. 29, 1914, son of the late Eli E. and Fannie (Troyer) Hershberger. His distant forebear, Christian Hershberger was among the first Amish to arrive in America. Christian was among those who came by the sailing ship, the Charming Nancy. These pioneers formed the first Amish church community in America in 1737 in Berks County, PA.

David was a member of Peniel Fellowship Church. He was a minister who served for 12 years at Mt. Zion A.M. Church, Stuarts Draft, VA; and 19 years at Peniel Fellowship Church, Holmesville, OH. David preached his last sermon at 94 years of age at Gap Mills, WV.

During World War II, David served in Civilian Public Service in firefighting and maintaining Skyline Drive from the base camp near Luray, Virginia.

On Feb. 5, 1942, he married Fannie Mast. She died in 1994. Their children are: James (Betty) Hershberger, Stuarts Draft, VA; Esther (William) Beiler, Gap Mills, WV; Nathan, Fredericksburg, OH; Dorothy (John) Beiler, Swanton, MD, and daughter-in-law, Martha Hershberger, Holmesville, OH; also surviving are 19 grandchildren and 24 great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were one son, Stanley Hershberger, and one grandson, Wesley Dean Hershberger; four brothers and five sisters.

A funeral was held at Gap Mills, WV, on August 16 with a second service on August 18 held at Peniel Fellowship Church, Holmesville, OH. Nathan Yoder and David Miller served. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Hochstedler**, Rebecca (Mast), 78, died at her home in rural Arthur, IL, August 24, 2009. She was born Feb. 6, 1931, at Arthur, IL, daughter of Andrew and Lydia (Schrock) Mast.

She was a faithful member of Pleasant View A.M. Church, Arcola, IL. She will be missed and fondly remembered for her cheerful disposition and willingness to help friends and neighbors.

On Jan. 29, 1953, she was married to Omer J. Hochstedler, who preceded her in death in November, 2007.

She is survived by a daughter: Marjorie (Ira) Herschberger, Arcola, IL; and a son, Dale (Lucinda) Hochstedler, Mocksville, NC; 13 grandchildren, nine great grandchildren; one brother, Fred (and Mary) Hochstedler, Mifflinburg, PA; two sisters: Sovilla (Elva) Gingerich and Anna (Joni) Plank, both of Arthur; two sisters-in-law: Mary Ann Mast, Arthur; and Lois Mast, Carmi, IL; one brother-in-law, Abe Gingerich, Arthur.

She was preceded in death by four brothers and one sister.

The funeral was held at Otto Center for Pleasant View Church on August 27, with Howard Kuhns officiating. Burial was in Pleasant View Cemetery.

**Humes**, Herman Ray, 85, of Esperanza Village, Cayo District, Belize, died July 10, 2009. He was born Jan. 9, 1924, son of Jana Carretela and James Humes. He was preceded in death by six brothers and one sister, and is survived by one sister residing in the U.S. He has a host of nieces and nephews, and is also survived by one uncle, Lucio Carretela, as well as two granddaughters.

In 1965 he was married to Alma Maud O'Brian and had two children, Elaine Humes and Larry Humes. In 1992, after Alma died, he was married to Lucy Alvarez and later adopted Sulma Humes as his daughter.

Herman Humes was a member of the Holiness Temple church in Esperanza Village, then he later joined the Nazarene Church in Esperanza Village. In 1996, he became a member of the Cayo Christian Fellowship Mennonite church.

Herman Humes was an outspoken and outgoing person and everyone knew him as a hard-working man who, despite his handicap (a birth defect: no fingers on his right hand) was able to handle any job and do it well. In his lifetime, he worked as a chiclero worker, a sawmill worker, and finally as an employee of Friesen Hatcheries in Spanish Lookout.

In 2000, Herman was diagnosed with prostate cancer. From then on, his life changed drastically. His health slowly deteriorated and little by little took away his strength.

In his earlier years, he was not a God-fearing man but in the last 11 years of his life his perspective changed when he gave



his life to the Lord. He may not have been loved by some, and the events in his earlier life left some regrets. He made mistakes, but don't we all? Yet he made the greatest decision any human can make and turned his life over to God. He will always be remembered as a great friend, husband and father.

[Submitted by Sulma Humes.]

**Wagler**, Noah Melvin, 66, died at University Hospital, London, Ontario on July 29, 2009. He was born May 22, 1943, son of Emma (Zehr) and late Allan R. Wagler, in Wellesley Township.

He was a member of Cedar Grove A.M. Church.

On Sept. 12, 1970, he was married to Anna Mae Kuepfer. She survives. Their two children are Rhoda (Jeffrey) Kuepfer, Lucknow, ON; and Jennifer (Willis) Martin, Drayton, ON. Also surviving are seven grandchildren. Other survivors include: sisters, Ruth Wagler, Newton; Erma (Ervin) Horst, New Hamburg; Shirley (Wayne) Erb, Milverton; and Elaine (Ronald) Gerber, Newton; brothers: Mervin (Wanda) Wagler, Wellesley; Murray (Hannah) Wagler; Millbank; Mark (June) Wagler, St. Charles; and Wayne (Dianne) Wagler, Milverton.

Preceding him in death were a sister, Laurene; parents-in-law, Sarah and Lorne Kuepfer, sister-in-law, Miriam Wagler and nephew, Mark Albrecht.

The funeral was held at Cedar Grove on August 2, with Arthur Gerber serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Wingard**, Stephanie Ann, 16, of Thomas, OK, died in an accident at Lott, TX, July 26, 2009. She was born at Weatherford, OK, Oct. 17, 1992, daughter of Olen and Emily (Helmuth) Wingard.

She attended Zion A.M. Church. Her parents treasure the memory of her recent commitment to Christ and her growing love for Him. She attended a number of different schools in obtaining her grade school education and was currently enrolled in high school courses at home.

Beside her parents, she is survived by three brothers: Tyler, Sawyer, and Dallas; by maternal grandparents, Jacob and Laura Jean Helmuth, Sarasota, FL, maternal great grandmother, Treva Slabaugh, Nappanee, IN, and many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her paternal grandparents, Elmer and Clara Wingard, Thomas, OK, uncle and aunt, Jason and Eileen Knepp and their three children, Heidi, Andrew, and Ivanna.

The funeral was held on July 30, at Pleasant View Mennonite Church with Kevin Schrock, Truman Yoder and Donny Swartzentruber serving. Youth who had attended the Youth Fellowship Meetings in Lott, TX, where Stephanie had just participated, provided some special singing. Burial was in the Zion Cemetery, with John Nolt conducting the committal.

**Yoder**, Ervin H., 90, of Meyersdale, PA, died August 19, 2009, at Meyersdale Medical Center, following a short illness.


He was born May 9, 1919, son of the late Henry and Amanda (Swartzebruber) Yoder.

He attended Swan Meadow School, Gortner, MD. In his youth he accepted Christ was a man of prayer. At his death he was a member of Mt. View Mennonite Church

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Mary Anna (Bender) Yoder, who was born May 29, 1924 and died Dec. 2, 1975; siblings: Alvin; Fannie, wife of Roy Yoder; Amelia, wife of Ray Yoder; a step-daughter, Angela (“Penny”) Keefer, and a great granddaughter.

He is survived by his second wife Arletha (Zehr) (Bender) Yoder [they were married June 30, 1990]; children: Loretta, wife of David Steinhauer,

Clayton, DE; Leona, wife of Loren Bender, Meyersdale; Arliss Yoder and wife, Janet, Greencastle, PA; Merlin and wife, Carol, Bittinger, MD; step-children, Arlin Bender, Waterloo, NY; Alvis Bender, Castorland, NY; Alfred Bender, Lowville, NY; Addison Bender, Conrath, WI; and Alma (“Tammy”) Lehman, Lowville, NY; 20 grandchildren, 45 great grandchildren, 25 step grandchildren, and 17 step-great grandchildren.

By Bro. Ervin’s prior request the funeral included an evangelistic message and was held on August 23 at Maple Glen Mennonite church with Philip Moser, Jerry Yoder, and David Steinhauer serving. Burial was in the Maple Glen Cemetery, with Menno Yoder in charge of the committal. 

## observations

**M**artin Gray, a teenager in 1943, was captured in Warsaw, Poland, and shipped with other Jews to the death camp at Treblinka. He was chosen for work detail instead of many others were who were immediately marched to the gas chamber. He labored on several work crews before being assigned to the excavating pit—the mass graves where thousands of bodies were buried daily.

Martin soon learned that those who worked on his crew were themselves killed after a few weeks. The Nazis

planned that no one should be left alive to tell the outside world. Martin managed to escape by tying himself underneath a truck with belts, then hiding in a load of clothing on a train. He left the train to urgently warn his fellow Jews. To his great disappointment, he was not taken seriously. (*Good News*, July/August, 2009).

This item raises the question of how well we are heeding the fulfillment of end-time prophecies: a growing secular, anti-Christian mindset in our country: unprecedented

national debt, international financial stresses, growing moral decadence and violence, and escalating conflict in the international community. Such reminders should be helpful for us to keep our spiritual house always in order. Our future is secure only in safekeeping with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

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A highly-respected and gifted teacher of 20 years is quoted as saying that students now have a lot more trouble paying attention in class than when she started teaching. “I now have to jump around and be more dramatic just to get the students to look at me. I also have to ask a lot more questions to try to keep them involved. Length of lessons is much shorter. If the lesson is going to take a while, I have to give them a break.”

Not surprisingly, research studies show an adverse effect in reading skills among students who watch a lot of TV.

Some researchers think that watching TV instead of reading may adversely affect a child’s brain development. (From *Thinking Out Loud*, by Kit Pharo) Kit is a cattle rancher from Cheyenne Wells, CO. His newsletter regularly includes items of interest to Christians.

Our opposition to having TV in our homes seems well-justified

to me. But more recent inventions bring potential problems of a similar nature. Let us look to God for His grace and wisdom to make a response that is fair to the dear people of His congregations.

Is it not interesting that there are a growing number of people without Anabaptist background whose serious Christian faith leads them to conclusions and practices out of step with mainstream? At the same time it is sad when people who should know better decide that fitting in is better than following Christian principles and avoiding ungodly practices of cultural mainstream.

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A local brother recently addressed a mid-week topic entitled: “Overeating, a Weighty Matter.” He is a member of Cedar Crest, but both Center and Arlington congregations requested a re-run.

Marvin Miller, 30, moved to Kansas with his parents and siblings from Paraguay in 1997. He enjoyed “fitting in” with North American eating habits including fast foods and soft drinks. But he was disappointed at some point to notice that he had become 60 pounds overweight. When he tried to exercise he found out that strenuous exercise was more than his overweight, out-of-condition body would tolerate. So he

resolved to change his eating habits and other life-habits. He says it took him about three years to get rid of the excess weight.

At this writing (August, 2009), health care reform is very prominent national news. There is growing public and legislative resistance to the President’s push to finalize a thousand-page document that many legislators have not read, let alone understood all of the fine print.

I contacted Traci Hansen, who has carefully researched a synopsis of this lengthy document. The following is reported from page 430, lines 11-15: “The government will decide what level of treatment you will receive at the end of life.”

In *The Hutchinson News* (8-11-09), an editorial points out that obesity has become the single biggest reason for increased health care costs. In 2006 about 34% of adults were classified as obese. In 1994, it was 23%. In 1980, it was 15%. The top health issues related to obesity are diabetes, heart disease, and several kinds of cancer.

The final sentence of this editorial follows: “We need a giant culture change in America and it won’t be easy.”

Any thoughts on how non-conformity should apply here?

With the above comments, let

us remember that diabetes, heart disease, and cancer sometimes occur in the absence of obesity. Heredity is seen as an important factor.



A growing number of people anticipating major surgery are considering various options before operations. Such considerations recently led two men from Tennessee and Georgia to Wichita, Kansas for their surgeries to save money.

We recently visited a non-local relative who has an extremely rare condition that required specialized surgery. The operation was successfully performed in Tijuana, Mexico by surgeons from Mayo Clinic. The cost of \$75,000 sounds high until we learn that the same procedure would have been approximately \$300,000 in the U.S. This relative is of the opinion that the surgeons received the greater part of that amount.

The Contreras Clinic in Tijuana is making serious effort to attract the patronage of plain Anabaptists in the U.S. Many people seem to feel that the savings more than justify the travel expenses necessary to go there. Of course, this is not an option for emergency situations.



Researchers from the Netherlands did a study with 93 pregnant women


to determine when unborn babies can hear, remember and taste. Their conclusion is that the unborn are capable of those senses sooner than had been established earlier. This means that with the present laws it is legal to abort babies who already have such abilities. (*World*, 8-15-09).

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Some of our older readers will remember the 1950's when the Brunk Brothers from Virginia had tent meetings in many of our communities. Their motto was: "The Whole Gospel for the Whole World."

I was reminded of that concept as I read an article in *World* (8-1-09). The following paragraph is ascribed to Richard Land: "We have an obligation and a responsibility to live a whole gospel before the world out there. The idea that there is a social gospel

and a spiritual gospel is an invention of the devil. There is only one gospel and it is a whole gospel for a whole people. It is blasphemous to go out and feed the hungry and not tell them about the bread of life, or to seek to house the homeless and not tell them that in our Father's house are many mansions, or to give water to the thirsty and not tell them about the rivers of living water. It is also a denial of the incarnation to go preach the gospel and ignore the fact that people are hungry and thirsty and homeless. We are to do both."

An additional quote: "I've talked to some Cuban Christians who are very ambivalent about ending the embargo because they say that if the embargo ends a lot of what will come into their country from America will be very harmful to their families and their faith." —DLM 

## *My Prayer Was Answered*

*Author unknown*

I asked for strength that I might achieve; He made me weak that I might obey.

I asked for health that I might do greater things; I was given grace that I might do better things.


I asked for riches that I might be happy; I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men; I was given

weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life; but in receiving eternal life I can enjoy all things.

I did not receive anything exactly like I asked and hoped for, and yet-- **my prayer was answered.**

[Adapted from *Partners in Prayer*, Union Rescue Mission, Wichita, KS, Sept, 2006. See James 4:2,3.] 

# Minister's Meeting Messages — 2009

*This is a condensation of a message preached at the annual ministers' meetings, hosted by Sunnyside Mennonite Church 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.*

## 5. The Minister as the Man of God

*Ray Stutzman, Plain City, OH*

Just before Jesus ascended back to heaven, He said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, in Judea, and in the uttermost part of the world" (Acts 1:8). That is the call to each one of us. As we think of the minister as the man of God, this applies to all believers—men and women of God. A minister is to carry the message from God from his heart to the heart of the people.

As we note the Old Testament, we find that various prophets and patriarchs were referred to as men of God. Paul addressed Timothy as a man of God, a minister. It seems to refer especially to a person who is selected and ordained to carry God's message to the people. It does not denote rank, but identification. We are to be God's representatives to bring a message from the heart that He has in His Word to the heart of the people.

We seem more ready to give God's

Word as correction, as instruction in righteousness, as reproof, but woe is us if we do not give it and apply it as doctrine.

We are His purchased possession, so the call that He gave to us and the claim that He has on us are not to be separated. If we walk away from the call, are we walking away from the claim? The call that He gives is to everyone personally, whether or not he is called to the ministry. Most of us here have been called and ordained to the ministry. That call is beautiful.

We were over in Kenya several years ago for several ordinations. Kenya is a rugged country. We have more creature comforts in America than they do, but they have some beautiful tea fields. Those tea fields are cleaned up, trimmed, well-kept and maintained.

But the most beautiful sight I saw there was when native brothers were ordained to the ministry.

God has a call and a claim for each one of us. When He calls me to a work, He not only claims me because He bought me with His blood, but He claims me also like an e-mail with



an attachment. In order to get the full message, we must click on that attachment. Our call is attached to the claim and our claim is attached to the call.

We must believe that our call is from God. Sometimes when we face pressures from within the church, we tend to wonder, "Is this call really from God? Is it really intended that I have all this pressure? Am I really called for such a time as this?" When God calls us to the ministry, He knows exactly what it's going to be like. He doesn't call the qualified, but He qualifies the called. He has a greater portion of grace for that call than anyone needs to face the pressures that come.

He gives us the Word that we might also be perfect. We are given grace to live holy lives and everything we need to withstand any pressures that come upon us.

The fact that the Word is inspired by God reinforces the fact that the call is from Him. It makes preaching a lot easier when you thank God for trusting you with His eternal Word. Thank Him for the gift. For most of my young years, I worried about being in the ministry. I was a very shy person. But I found out that when I began to thank God for the gift of proclaiming His will to His people and for entrusting it to me, the whole picture changed. No, it isn't always easy, but we are to immerse ourselves

deeply in the call and the claim.

Make it a priority. Sometimes we must decide between family and church. We need godly wisdom and discernment to know how to prioritize our obligations. Let us always make the ministry a higher priority than our occupation.

Don't get derailed. One man started a godless congregation with no religion attached. No personal commitment is required. The people come together to learn how to show compassion to their neighbors, to be kind one to another and to do good deeds. God is left out of the picture. I finally threw away the article, even though the falsehood is obvious. Many more subtle things come along than such rubbish. It is so far off that I suppose it presents little threat to our churches.

To immerse ourselves in the call and the claim requires that we stay close to the Word of God so we can better connect with the Author of this book. When I read something I tend to connect with the author.

What is the opposing force we face? I find the greatest opposing force is the same seed that the serpent planted in Eve's heart. I call it the seed of *individualism*. It militates against the brotherhood, the church, against church authority, and against the Word of God. I believe it's a threat to the church and the leaders of our day. We are faced with a severe infestation

of individualism that opposes authority. The church has been shaken and challenged, but the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God.

We have something that is much more stable. Individualism caters to one's own thoughts and ideas over those of the brotherhood. When we walk away from the call under the pressures of the call and claim, what are we proclaiming? I do not refer here to the changes and transitions that come with aging.

I don't know how many of you have toyed with the idea of quitting, but I have. I have come to the conclusion that God is greater than all the pressures we ever face. I have come to the conclusion that God is sufficient for every need. I am not primarily a servant of the church, but a servant of God. To immerse myself in this call gives me the stamina to preach "out of season," with all long suffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2).

Individualism is a seed that is still growing in our day. It is important to have strong leaders (fathers) in our homes. In God's plan for the church, He has called leaders to be ordained to convey the Gospel message. To leave the application of Scripture in the hands of fathers only in our homes is hardly a completion of God's plan. We are all needed. To leave it solely in the hands of fathers dilutes what God wants for

our churches and basically takes the man called and ordained by God out of the picture.

We must focus on eternal values and be set apart for God's use in the home, church and community. Paul admonishes Timothy to flee the lust for money. He says nothing about amounts, but that he must flee the idea of a greedy pursuit after money. Jesus said we cannot serve God and mammon. We do need to provide for our families. We need to earn an income. We need to work so we can eat. We need money to function. But Paul warns Timothy to flee from the greedy pursuit for gain. He requires us to check and see who has the top-most claim on our lives.

Our world's in a mess. If you want a stimulus plan, look at the Bible. It will bail you out. It will even give you bonuses that are legitimate. The financial crisis and the instability of the world in which we live are largely brought on by a greedy pursuit of riches and possessions. Wall Street, the big corporations, and insurance companies cannot provide us with security through money. If we find our security there, we will flop. The Word of God is the only thing that is secure.

You say we must put food on the table. But this speaks about what happens when the pursuit of money claims us. Many people have lost their jobs and their savings. You

might be caught in the middle of that. We do, however, have something in our hands that will never go into a recession or depression. This will endure for all generations. People who thought they were prepared and had money in savings for the next generation—now it's gone!

I think that we are actually in a financial *depression* right now, but can't seem to bear to call it what it is for fear of throwing people into a panic.

This Word will endure to all generations. It contains the message we are called to bring to the heart of people. The Word is supreme. It's got the meat and all the toppings. When you order a **supreme** pizza, you look for everything, don't you? We are to fill our minds with eternal values. This sets us apart to usefulness wherever we are.


We have a call to live the life of Christ. In James 1, he introduces himself as a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. I wonder if we sometimes put too much primary emphasis on being servants of the church. We must first of all be servants of God, then servants of the church. It's matter of where our supreme loyalty lies. The church is not my master—God is! Sometimes we are tempted to make moves that are less than ideal because of pressures from the church. God is our Master.

Our *accountability* is to God, but our *responsibility* is to the church we are called to serve. I thank God that, although there was a time when I was not God's man, He spared my life.

We are "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:17). In order to be full of the Word, we must be empty of self. **No man who is full of himself can preach the Christ who emptied Himself.**

While the temptation of the serpent was individualism, the message of Christ is self-sacrifice and servanthood. We can expect opposing pressures to our work. It is not pleasant. I would not feel comfortable in a church that faces no opposing pressures. This pressure is a sign to me that we're doing something right.

The serpent wanted Eve to take a look at it: "Are you sure God has said, 'Don't break off from that tree'?" Individualism today may say: "We know what's right and wrong, let's make our own choices and decide for ourselves in spite of what the man of God and the Word of God say: Make your own choices."

Only as we acknowledge that we are servants of the Most High can we continue to preach faithfully. Let's just remember that God's call and His claim are inseparable, lest we become discouraged and walk away from God's call in the face of opposing pressures. 

# *Is the Practice of Separate Seating Worth Preserving?*

*Fred W. Miller, Cabins, WV*

**T**o help us answer this question, let's consider the value of the practice. Looking at various facets of this subject may help us understand why conservative Mennonite churches have historically practiced separate seating for men and women.

## **Quality of Worship**

Ever since Cain and Abel brought their offerings to the Lord, God has been seeking acceptable worship from those who truly love Him. Can a man concentrate on God and His Word without distraction while sitting behind or beside someone else's wife? It may become even more difficult when kneeling for prayer.

Separate seating contributes to sanctified thinking and moral purity. A mother taking her baby out of the auditorium can more discreetly slip past several women than past several men. How is a youth, who may be struggling with impure thoughts, expected to worship when sitting behind a couple who are publicly displaying their affection for each other?

Separate seating contributes to worshipping with four-part, a capella singing.

## **Family Togetherness**

While families may understandably enjoy sitting together, isn't separate seating more considerate of others? In a congregational setting, shouldn't our choices enhance brotherhood, rather than family relationships? How beautiful it is to see a mingling of ages, such as when a young person intentionally sits with a lonely senior.

Some may feel that a child's behavior improves if he sits with both parents. If the child is taught submission to parental direction at home, and parents indicate before the service with which parent the child is to sit, there will be no need for the child to beg for the other parent during the service.

## **Consideration for Singles**

Separate seating indicates consideration for widows, widowers and for the unmarried. In a worship service where women sit with women and men sit with men, the isolation of these single people disappears as they blend in with the rest of the congregation.

## **Welcoming Visitors**

Would visitors, unaccustomed to separate seating, really feel more

welcome if we practiced mixed seating? I have observed with interest how readily some of these couples have voluntarily chosen to sit with those of their own gender.

### **Exceptions**

In certain circumstances, sitting together as a family may actually be desirable. Churches which practice separate seating generally make exceptions for weddings, funerals, and outdoor meetings.

### **Scriptural Principles**

Only by applying Bible principles will we preserve them. While the Bible does not speak directly about seating for worship, it gives principles which we may well apply to this subject:

“All things are lawful...but all things are not expedient” (1 Corinthians 10:23).

“When ye come together..., let all things be done unto edifying” (1 Corinthians 14:26).

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

“Be thou an example of the believers...in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12)

“Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

### **Personal Choices**

Since our church (Southeastern Mennonite Conference) does not have

a ruling on seating for worship, does this mean we may do as we please? It does mean we will each need to make a choice in this matter. Our choices, in turn, will influence others either to exercise their personal preferences, or to deny self-interest for the spiritual welfare of our brotherhood.

While we dare not judge those who practice mixed seating, we do well to consider carefully the values of separate seating before we abandon this practice.

Do we really want to follow those churches which have discarded separate seating? Why is it that when separate seating is abandoned, kneeling for prayer and observing the holy kiss have a way of disappearing also?

Perhaps we should remember that the admonition to “Let all things be done decently and in order” was given in the context of propriety in worship. God is honored when each worshiper contributes to an atmosphere of godliness, reverence, and order.

While sitting separately for worship is only a small part of preparation to worship God, it may help preserve the values of our church for the generations which follow.

[From *Life Lines*, July-August, 2009. Submitted by Ernest Hochstetler, Abbeville, SC. Used by permission.]



# When ANGER Strikes

David Hertzler, Milford, DE

**B**etsy had done it again! When Doug came home from work, there was her bicycle right in the middle of the driveway. He had asked her a hundred times, it seemed, to put her bike away when she was finished riding it. Now there it was again, blocking his way. Anger boiled up inside of him.

Doug knew he was angry. He had learned to recognize the warning signs of anger. When he felt his jaw tighten, his fists clench, and his heart start to pound, he understood what it meant. In that moment of anger Doug realized he had three choices. It was almost like buying a car. Which choice would serve him and his family best?

He could **express** his anger. It would feel good to hurt someone, to let off some steam. He could yell at Betsy, throw her bike into the lake, or kick the dog. He had done things like this before, and his family wouldn't be surprised if he did them again. But he knew he would be sorry afterward.

Or he could **suppress** his anger. Pretend he wasn't angry. Be quiet and withdrawn. Stay calm on the outside even if he was boiling on the inside. Bottle up the feelings and put the lid on tight. Maybe the anger would go away. He had suppressed his anger lots of times. Somehow it seemed better than exploding. But now his children were starting to do the same thing to him. It was pushing

them apart, and it hurt. Doug knew this was not a healthy way to handle his anger.

But there was one more choice. He could **confess** his anger. This is what Doug decided to do. Bowing his head, he prayed, "Lord God, I am really angry. Please help me to hold back my anger and stay in control. Help me to do and say things that will help, not hurt."

Then Doug got out of the car, moved the bicycle, got back into the car and parked it. Inside the house, he greeted his family. Calling his daughter to him, he said, "Betsy, I found your bicycle in the driveway when I came home. Do you remember what I told you about the bicycle?"

Betsy did remember. Then Doug said, "I was very disappointed and angry when I saw your bicycle. But I told God about my anger. I asked Him to help me do and say the right thing. Now what do you think we should do to help you remember to take care of your bicycle?"


"I'm sorry I left it in the driveway," Betsy said. "I won't ever do it again, I promise!"

"I believe you are sorry," Doug said. "But I don't think simply saying 'sorry' is strong enough to help you remember. Here's what I will do. If I find your bicycle in the driveway again, I will put a lock on it for a week. You will have to do without it until the lock

comes off. Do you understand?”

Betsy understood. Doug held her in his arms and they both prayed. God would help them with their forgetfulness and anger. Trust was restored,

and they were at peace again.

[From *Today's Native Father*, Issue #159, Summer, 2009. Published by Northern Youth Ministries, Dryden, ON. Used by permission.] 

## mission awareness

# Fasting and Prayer—A Tool for the Field (*Part One*)

*Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA*

**T** rue prayer is a deep heart cry to God Almighty expressing in desperation our unworthiness to come before Him. Prayer is not just getting from God what we want but being in harmony with our Heavenly Father. The Greek word “proseuchomai” embraces all that is included in the idea of prayer: thanksgiving, asking, and intercession.

The biblical definition of fasting is simply, “to abstain from food.” In Matthew 6:16-18, there are several things Jesus taught on this subject: 1) “But thou, when thou fastest.” It is not “if” but “when.” We must arrange and plan a time for prayer and fasting. 2) “Anoint thine head.” Fasting is to be set apart for a holy and specific purpose. To deprive ourselves of food may have physical benefits, but that incentive is not true fasting. We must devote ourselves to God and worship Him. 3) “Wash thy face.” Do not fast with a gloomy, sad face, but wash,

dress, and appear as usual. Fasting is to be done in secret. It is between the believer and God. And then, what blessings and rewards God pours into our lives!

I am blessed with the Gospel of Luke. He was a physician who was interested in detail. Luke is especially impressed with Jesus’ teachings on prayer and its practice, but not all are in conjunction with fasting. Some of the following accounts are also insights of others who prayed.

Prayer and fasting give release to our spirit to magnify the Lord. “And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior...” (Luke 1:46,47). Let us pay special attention to “doth magnify” and “hath rejoiced.” Joy can be released from deep inside our spirit when we are willing to magnify the Lord in our soul. *The Magnificat* is rich with Old Testament imagery including promises of Christ’s coming.



Prayer and fasting increases our spiritual alertness in discerning the signs of the times. It may keep our senses keen in old age, if God so wills. Simeon had this experience and blessed God, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, ... Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against” (Luke 2:28-32, 34b). Oh, how we need a discerning spirit in these perilous times! Jesus did not chide His disciples for asking for “the sign” of the end of the age. In fact, Jesus gave us many signs of His second coming in Matthew 24 and other Scriptures. He told us of an increasing **deception** (Matthew 24:5, 11, 24). There will be **disaster**. “There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places (Matthew 24:7). **Death** because of hatred toward God’s children is another sign. “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” (Matthew 24:9). I understand there were more Christians martyred in the last century than in all the previous centuries since the time of Christ. Along with that is the sign of **defiance**. “And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another” (Matthew 24:10). Cruelty and lawlessness seems to be

increasing even among rural church people, not to mention what is happening throughout the world. There is **departure**. “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). The Apostle Paul comments on this as a clear indication of Christ’s coming in 1 Timothy 4:1, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

Prayer and fasting give us opportunities for service. Anna “served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2: 37b,38). We notice that prayer and fasting is a service. Anna worshipped, worked, and witnessed. This brighter sign of Christ’s coming came from Anna because of her close walk with God. She spoke of Jesus to all those who looked for redemption. That is **diligence** in spreading the Gospel. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). Today there is a great effort among God’s people even in adverse conditions to speak and spread the good news of the kingdom. Friends, these signs are upon us now. Jesus is returning.

Prayer and fasting increases spiritual strength to resist the devil (Matthew 4:1-13). Just because we fast and pray does not guarantee less temptation. We learn a simple lesson from our precious Lord Jesus in overcoming Satan. Quote Scripture to him.

Prayer and fasting helps us discern God's will in seeking direction. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued there all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and he chose twelve, whom he named apostles" (Luke 6:12,13). During the process of an ordination and sending out missionaries, the people of God will

want to be in fervent prayer and fasting. Even in small decisions, such as in making purchases, this exercise is a blessing.

Prayer and fasting moves God to action in sending out laborers into His harvest. "...pray ye therefore the lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2b). Here we have a special prayer request. Jesus could send out workers without our prayers. But Jesus has committed the task of evangelism to His disciples—including us. He makes the supply of workers dependent on our prayers. How solemn is this responsibility!

The harvest is ripe. We must act now!



## helpers at home

### *Loving Deeply – Part 3*

*Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC*

**L**oving deeply those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord is a challenge that Jesus gives to His followers. It may be especially difficult for those who have grown up in Mennonite homes. We have learned to be the "quiet in the land" and to let our light shine by our actions, rather than words. Maybe we have done what Jesus says in Matthew 5:15: We have lit a

candle but we have hidden it under a bushel.

However, I believe Amish and Mennonite people do make good neighbors. We reach out to meet people's physical and material needs, but we are probably more hesitant in reaching out to meet the spiritual and emotional needs of the heart. God will bring opportunities to us, if we are willing to get involved. Our lives have been sheltered from

much of the sin and suffering of the world around us. Many ministries include interaction with children. As we enter into the hearts and lives of others, we open ourselves to pain and misunderstanding, not only from those we wish to help but also from others who may misunderstand our motives.

### **Elderly women or widows**

There are so many ways to reach out to the elderly, first, by simply spending time with them, listening to their stories, and assisting them in various ways. They may need someone to take them to the grocery store or to the doctor, pick up prescriptions, and so on. They will enjoy vegetables from the garden or a plate of home-cooked food.

Your church could organize a “secret sister” program. Each woman chooses an elderly woman for a year, visits or gives a gift or card each month. Once a year there is a special banquet and you choose a new secret sister.

We have been a part of churches that hold an annual “widow’s supper.” Christmas time or Mother’s Day is a good time for this. It makes opportunity for special things like decorations, little gifts for the women, and lots of good fun and fellowship along with an encouraging Gospel message.

### **Assisting in community projects**

Some communities offer opportunities for women to become involved, such as at a youth center, women’s shelter and such. There are programs available to help women who have experienced abortion or abuse. These programs may require training. When we become involved in this type of intensive counseling, we also need to be aware of legalities that may be involved.

Less stressful projects could be assisting in your local thrift stores where you will make contacts in the community. Food banks and soup kitchens are opportunities that could include your family. Some women choose to serve those behind bars.

What if we would open our church kitchen and teach cooking skills to women in the community? I believe this could be a great blessing.

### **Opening our homes for ministry**

Opening our homes is probably one of the most effective ways to reach those in our own community. Invite your neighbor for a cup of tea or a time of Bible study. I have enjoyed many a “cuppa” tea with a friend around my kitchen table over the years.

As we share with others, they need to see a transparency in our lives and know that we truly care about their problems. I remember especially one dear friend and neighbor who told me

that she could talk to me because she knows I have problems, too.

Practical acts like taking food at a time of sickness and death are opportunities of getting into people's homes. Many people are alone at such

times and will welcome your visit.

**God delights in a willing heart. If you truly desire to reach out to others, He will bring people and opportunities into your life.**



## junior messages

### *The Music Played*

*Anita Yoder, Ligonier, IN*

**T**he best players had been selected. Music played a soft welcome. Flutists and harpists added to the richness of the sound. Suddenly, it became louder and more powerful.

“Obey the King’s orders!” it seemed to say. Three men remained standing, while everyone else bowed to the image the king had made.


“You fellows,” those closest may have whispered, “just get down here with the rest of us. You don’t really need to bow down to this idol. We’re praying to God down here. Nobody has to know it. Do you want to be charred? Do you know how horrible and painful that would be?”

“What are you thinking?” others may have hissed. “Don’t do something you’ll regret. The consequences have been spelled out for you. You’re embarrassing us and making us all look weird and ridiculous. Come on, there is still time to kneel. The music

hasn’t stopped yet.”

But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego did not bow in worship to the statue that honored King Nebuchadnezzar. They refused to compromise and try to blend in. They were not afraid of his anger, but trusted God with their lives and had confidence in His ability and greatness.

This is a Bible story. Their position statement is found in Daniel 3:17 & 18: “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

Their answer to the king is recorded in history for us to read. Your life is a modern-day story and will also make history some day. When the music of each day’s activities has been played, what will your life story be? 

## Why Waste A Good Problem?

*Caleb Gingerich, Greenfield, OH*

The difference between good problems and bad problems is how we respond to them. Our responses to problems in life are what make us who we are. Problems can turn boys into men. Problems are an occasion to grow, and a chance to mature. Problems are painful, and not fun. If a problem comes our way, we may as well make the best of it. Problems are wonderful opportunities. Don't waste them.

Each person has different problems. Some problems are personal struggles, circumstances, or personality quirks. Not everyone experiences something like the death of a family member. Small aggravating problems happen all the time. When we focus on the bad side of our problems, we tend to get discouraged and feel sorry for ourselves.

Working in a metal repair shop, we see many components that have problems, parts that are cracked and broken. We weld the pieces back together, and guess what—that part is tougher than before. Problems may seem to break us. If we respond well to problems, God welds the pieces of our life back together and we are sturdier than before.

We had an incubator at home and we watched numerous chicks hatch. We wanted so badly to help them, yet we dared not. A hatching chick has a good problem. It strains for hours getting out of its shell. If you would remove the problem (the shell) the chick would die. The chick needs to struggle to live.

Now imagine us as the chicks. We are in an incubator, the world. God sees us struggling and straining with a shell. Sometimes we are overwhelmed and it seems we won't make it. God watches us and wants to help. He will help us, not by removing the problem, but by giving us strength. Don't give up.

Take heart! Problems are one of God's ways of making us stronger and more mature Christians. Why waste good problems?

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### **Words: A Matter of Life and Death**

*Glen Beachy, Winfield, PA*

Words are everywhere. Every day we read, write, and talk using words for hours at a time. We think in words and word pictures. Exotic words tickle our imaginations. Normal words float around us like dust. We can't escape

a world filled with words, and that's a good thing.

Words are powerful, with enormous ability for positive or negative influence. Words can tear down or build up. They erect castles of belief and conviction or speak the simple influence of a mother cooing to her baby.

Words convey thought. They can be like huge, thunderous waves crashing onto black, jagged rocks. They can be soft and gentle, like a deer and fawn feeding together in a sun-dappled meadow. Words bring beauty and energy, filling us with joy and excitement. They bring darkness and doubt, chaining us in dungeons of gloom and despair.

Words carry life-changing capability. The words we see, hear, and use on a daily basis drastically affect the health and fervor of our lives. Words possess so much importance that we cannot safely ignore their place in the things we focus on. Every word that is given the right to hold a position where it will be seen or heard by anyone should be carefully considered. Words, when arranged in the proper order, tell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. If we change the words and their

order, they may tell a crude joke.

There are two things God will judge us for when we reach heaven: our actions, and our words. Each word we speak and write is being recorded. Knowing this, we are responsible to make sure every word we allow into the world, whether on paper or speech, carries a message that can be exposed without regret the day we die. This is impossible to accomplish on our own. James 3:8 says, "But the tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." A biblical character, David, realizing the futility of controlling his words, carried his problem to the only one who could help him. In Psalm 141:3, he says, "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

The choice is ours: we can dismiss the importance of words, we can struggle to guard our speech and writing, or we can take our universal problem to God and ask Him to filter our words, before they reach the ears and eyes of our friends.

*(Both of the foregoing articles were submitted to a class in "Christian Writing and Expression" at Calvary Bible School.)*

*Next Month's*  
**QUESTION**

What are some practical ways youth can apply Galatians 6:6? **"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."** —EE





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Periodicals

## THOUGHT GEMS

New ideas are sometimes about as uncomfortable as new shoes.

• • • • •

Good intentions die unless they are executed.

• • • • •

Prejudice is a wall of fear built on the sands of suspicion around a place of insecurity.

• • • • •

A person of little character takes pleasure in cracking a big whip.

• • • • •

Possible epitaph for a hypochondriac: "I told you I was sick!"

• • • • •

It's easier to fight for principles than to live up to them.

• • • • •

Tears are the safety valve of the heart when too much pressure comes upon it.

• • • • •

When tempers grow hot, Christian testimony grows cold.

• • • • •

Don't spend all your money and when you have silver in your hair, you may have gold in your purse.

• • • • •

Daylight Saving Time is based on the ancient idea of lengthening a blanket by cutting off one end and sewing it on the other end.