



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

Galatians 6:14

FEBRUARY 2010

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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.

Calvary Publications, Inc., is a non-profit organization, incorporated in the State of Ohio, for the purpose of sponsoring, publishing, and distributing Christian literature. The board is elected, one member annually, by the ministers of the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches, at their annual spring meeting.

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Material for *Calvary Messenger*, marriages, births, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles—send to the *Editor*. Other Material—mail to their respective *Editors*.

Subscriptions, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to **Circulation Manager**. **When you move**, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

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Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications, 2673 TR 421, Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$8.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$24.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$7.00 per year to individual addresses. Renewal \$4.25 when you also give a 1-year gift subscription at \$4.25. Second class postage at Sugarcreek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW, Dundee, OH 44624.

Alone?

Steven Wayne Heatwole, Rosthern, SK

I walked alone, alone at night,
My heart was sad, my eyes were dim.
I walked alone till morning's light
Began to dawn on earth's broad rim.

I walked alone, into the dawn,
Alone, alone, nowhere to fly.
Who cares? My thoughts continue on,
I turn my face toward the sky.

I feel the warmth of sun's first rays.
The sun? The SON! God sent His Son!
My troubles all begin to glaze,
As dawn reveals the loving One.

I'm not alone! I have a friend!
He's always been right by my side!
With Him by me my troubles end,
Oh, Jesus, please with me abide.

Alone? No, not alone! He is here!
Together now we face the dawn,
And watch the sun rise high and clear.
Oh, thank You, Lord, my burden's gone!

[From *The Northwest Ambassador*,
Nov.–Dec., 2009. Used by permission.] 



Virtue Can Become Vice

Sometimes more is not better.

Love for one's homeland is good. It does little good to degrade "the bounds of our habitation." Let us appreciate our earthly homes, whether we live on mountains, hills, plains—or wherever. Let us note positive aspects of cold arctic regions or hot tropical climes. Many of our readers reside in neither of these, but live somewhere in the western hemisphere and fondly call it "Home, Sweet Home." Such contentment is different, however, from that of regarding one's homeland above any other so that we think we are better than others. When Adolf Hitler embraced the idea of a German master race, that satanic lie was responsible for the cruel persecution and death of millions of people, including clergy and Jews. A proper love for one's homeland is good, but too much can result in tragic disrespect for others. Passionate nationalism can make us willing to wage warfare against our fellow men all of whom were created in God's image. (John 18:36)

Courage in adversity is right. Trials come to one and all. The cowardly may shrink from trials by

escaping into alcohol, recreational drugs, overwork, excessive play, or some other idolatrous pursuit. Brave souls face the winds of adversity and march on in the battle of life with determination, which is noble and right. But the person who never considers the need to pause and listen to a word of brotherly counsel or caution is sure to end up in the wilderness of *unteachableness*. God wants His children to relate with people who share common goals and find life in brotherhood. If brotherhood is to be life-giving, no one may place himself so far above his fellows so that he no longer hears them. He who is not willing to listen to brotherly concern, has moved from steadfastness to stubbornness and has extinguished most of the good he could do for his fellowman. (James 2:8)

Loyalty to leadership is excellent. Church leaders rightly enjoy loyal support from the flock. Such loyalty is good and right. (1 Thessalonians 5:12,13) The Lord Jesus also asks for our loyalty. In fact, He asks for our *highest* loyalty. In the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians

3:3-11) destructive divisions resulted when the noble quality of loyalty degenerated into “pick my favorite preacher” at the expense of supreme loyalty to the only One worthy of such devotion—the Lord Jesus, who gave His life for us all. We have heard it often, but it bears repeating: **If Christ is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.** (Acts 4:12)

Willingness to suffer for Christ is noble. He who is not willing to endure hardship, may as well not report for Christian duty. Faithfulness brings hardship and such suffering is never easy. Martyrdom holds no appeal for the fainthearted. Asceticism, however, is a different matter. It is chosen self-abnegation for the wrong reasons. When we choose more hardship to produce more godliness we are choosing human effort that works at cross purposes with God’s work in our lives. God disciplines us to make us holy. (Hebrews 12:6) Man creates hardship for himself to gain favor with God. (Colossians 2:23)

Both love and truth are needed. The need is not for “either/or.” It’s “both/and.” Like a team of horses, the twin virtues of love and truth must pull together for progress. If one pulls far ahead of the other, progress lags. Notice how two of the seven churches in Asia in John’s Revelation illustrate truth about keeping these

twin virtues both moving ahead.

The church at **Ephesus** (2:1-7) was commended for their works, their labor, their patience, their unwillingness to bear those who are evil, and that they tried those who falsely claimed to be apostles and so on. Virtue apparently became vice *when they left their first love.* We must stay alert and ask divine enablement if we are to keep truth and love in balanced focus. John, the beloved disciple, called on the saints in Ephesus to repent and do the first works to restore that balance. (Revelation 2:5; note also 1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

The church at **Thyatira** (2:18-29) was also commended for their works, charity, service, faith, and patience. *But they took patience too far.* This church allowed a contemptuous Jezebel free rein to spread her low morals and her disregard of the apostolic edict of refraining from meats offered to idols. The resulting pressure on the faithful ones at Thyatira elicited this encouragement from the Lord Jesus: “Hold fast to what you have till I come” (2:25 NKJV). The Absolute Ruler of the earth rules at the end with a rod of iron (2:27). His servants must also rule, but not exactly like He does. Christian pastors, as servants of Christ, are to rule with the twin

virtues of compassion and diligence. (See 1 Peter 5:3 and Romans 12:8)

“Enough is enough and too much is too much.” Such a statement, so simple it insults our intelligence, nevertheless applies to Christian faithfulness. A measured quantity of seasoning adds pleasant flavor, but too much seasoning makes food inedible. Let us seek God’s wisdom in practical matters, for **when we**

overdo a good thing it is no longer good. (1 Corinthians 7:31)

Whether it is by our love for the homeland, our courage in suffering, our loyalty to human leaders, our willingness to suffer for a good cause, our diligent defense and promotion of God’s truth—or whatever it is, let us be wise and apply charity and vigilance. Let’s not let virtue become vice! —PLM 

reader response

Re: The Holy Spirit and Hymns

I do not believe in sitting at the liberal campfires to be indoctrinated with the worldly sickness of contemporary worship and singing. Why are we trying to silence the Holy Spirit? There have been 1,000 years of biblically-inspired English hymns.

In Germany, the theologically-trained pastors preached a defective, crippled faith. However, the common people supported their personal faith by singing their old hymns. When the old hymns are discarded, ignored and considered expendable, a lukewarm faith takes its place. Because of this, the church is robbed of a long-proven

blessing for propagation of Bible faith and support of God’s Will.

God’s Word and His divine will are the richest blessing that we can accept for the church. The old hymns are an excellent way to imprint sound, biblical doctrine in the hearts of church members. Read 1 Corinthians 14: 8, 12, 26, 33, and 40.

We also need to use new, Bible-inspired hymns that are faithful to the old hymns in poetry, reverence, and the heart-touching type of old hymn tunes, that are faithful to the Holy Spirit’s inspiration and pleading.

Wilmer D. Swope, Leetonia, OH 

The key to contentment is to realize that life is a gift—not a right.

Michael Sattler—Author of First Anabaptist Confession of Faith

Edwin R. Eby, Greencastle, PA

Michael Sattler was an early Anabaptist martyr. He was born in Stauffen, Germany, about 1490. Michael entered the Benedictine Monastery of St. Peter's near Freiberg, Germany, where he probably became its Prior. During the 1520's, Michael left the monastery. This was probably due to theological differences and disgust over the depraved lives of the monks and priests. Little is known about his early life or even his education although records of court discussions during his later trial show him as intellectual and well versed in the Scriptures and able to handle discussions of the Scriptures fluently.

Shortly after leaving the Benedictine monastery, Michael married Margaretha, a former Beguine (a nun following the rule of St. Benedict). This action was heresy for a monk and nun who had committed their lives to celibacy (abstention by vow from marriage). Because of the program to eliminate such heresy from the region by Ferdinand I of Austria, Sattler and

his wife fled to Zurich, Switzerland, in 1525. There they met and joined the Anabaptist brethren. Michael was present at the Third Disputation in Zurich on November 6, 1525. This disputation was the separating point between Zwingli and his Bible students who had asked their Bible teacher to reject infant baptism and the Catholic Church as unscriptural. Zwingli for selfish political agenda refused and said, "The officials of the church will make the decision." Zwingli then officially (under penalty of law) forbade Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz to preach. Michael was expelled from the Catholic Church on November 18, 1525.

Michael went to Strasbourg, France, and stayed with Wolfgang Capito, a German humanist who became a leading reformer. During his stay with Capito, Michael discussed theology with his host. They disagreed on several points including infant baptism. Sattler's experience with Protestant reformers was somewhat different from that of the Swiss Anabaptists in that his disagreement over infant baptism did

not cause animosity between himself and his friends. In a letter written after he left Strasbourg, Michael referred to them as “his beloved brothers in God.” After Michael’s execution, Capito described him as a “dear friend of God.”

In February of 1527, a group of Anabaptist brethren met in the town of Schleithem, north of Zurich near the German border. In that meeting, a document was drafted listing seven articles on which they agreed. Michael was the principal author of these articles known as the Schleithem Articles of Faith. This document is considered the first Anabaptist confession of faith. It was so widely circulated among the Anabaptist brethren in the region that Protestant reformers in Switzerland felt the need to respond to the work. By late summer of 1527, Ulrich Zwingli had published a document titled “Refutation of Anabaptist Tricks” in an effort to refute its teachings.

The Schleithem work was not a systematic confession of faith, but it did address seven major issues upon which the Anabaptist brethren agreed. The seven articles addressed baptism, the ban, the breaking of bread, separation from the world, the role of pastors, the sword, and the swearing of oaths.

Michael was a young man of only

37 years in March of 1527 when he and his wife were arrested, tried and convicted of heresy soon after the drafting of the Schleithem Confession. On May 20, 1527, as a result of this conviction, Michael was taken to the town marketplace in Rottenburg and tortured. The judge had passed sentence on him that a piece was to be cut from his tongue. His sentence also included that red-hot tongs be used to rip pieces from his flesh, twice at the marketplace, and five times while tied to the cart on the way to the place of execution.

At the marketplace, Michael’s tongue was cut out although not enough so that he could not speak at all. He was then taken outside the city and tied to a ladder with a sack of gunpowder tied to his neck. He prayed for his persecutors. He prayed also, “Almighty, eternal God, thou art the way and the truth; because I have not been shown to be in error, I will with thy help on this day testify to the truth and seal it with my blood.” He was then pushed into a large fire. As the ropes around his hands burned away, Sattler held up two fingers as a signal to his group to show them he was confident about his fate and prayed, “Father, I commend my spirit into they hands.”

Margarthea, Michael’s wife was then severely coaxed by friends to recant.

However, she told them she would not deny her God and said she had wished to die alongside her husband in the fire and join him in heaven. Margaritha remained steadfast and two days after Michael's execution was drowned, often called "the third baptism" by the authorities.

Michael stands as a monument in the lineage of faithful Anabaptists holding Jesus Christ as preeminent.

Although Michael's involvement, authoring, and formulation of the Schleitheim Articles were principal arguments leading to his condemnation and death, these articles were a forerunner to later written articles of faith, unifying groups in their beliefs. They helped solidify principles of early Anabaptist belief and practice.

THE SCHLEITHEIM ARTICLES

We agree:

- To baptize only those who make an adult and voluntary confession of faith in Jesus Christ.
- To adopt the ban to keep order among fellow believers
- To conduct a communion in memory of Christ, not as a sacramental mass.
- To administer the Church separate from the power of the State.
- To have congregations choose their own pastors.
- To reject the sword as outside the perfection of Christ.
- To swear no oaths of loyalty.

[From *The Pilgrim Witness*, Sept., 2009. Used by permission.]



A Faithful Family

Anonymous

The account is given of a family who was serious about their Christian walk of life and faithful in their witness to the community. When asked what they believed was the reason for their faith and practice, the answer was, “A love for truth and daily communion with God through Bible reading and prayer.”

What really puzzled the man was when the father said, “I have never missed a church service or Sunday school in 23 years.” Then he went on to say, “My wife has a perfect record for 11 years and our daughter has been at the evening service every Sunday for eight years.”

The man was astonished and thought, *What is the matter with this family anyway? Don't they ever have company on Sunday to keep them away from church? Don't they ever get up tired on Sunday mornings? Don't they ever have headaches or colds, or nervous spells, or feel too tired to attend church? Don't they have a tape player, so they could listen to good sermons at home? Don't they ever have anything more interesting to do, like reading a good book?* The man's thoughts rambled on: *Don't they ever*

get disgusted with what their minister preaches? What's the matter with this family anyway? And why are they so happy and cheerful?

This account reveals how little it takes for some people to think they have a good reason for not attending worship services.

Hebrews 10:25 says, **“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”**

Many times the very service we thought we were too tired to attend or did not feel like attending, was the one we needed the most to inspire us to press on, or to encourage us in our spiritual life. At other times the topic or message was just what we needed to help build conviction and strengthened our confidence in the church's doctrine and practice. Had we missed that service, we would have missed out on a very important time of building.

To have a clear understanding of the Bible and to understand its teachings requires faithful attendance. When our priorities are in line with God's Word, we will find very few legitimate

reasons for not assembling ourselves with the saints for worship and Bible instruction.

Most of us can testify to experiencing a real blessing when we went to a church service even when we did not feel like it at the time. It would seem that the more services a person misses, the less he feels the need of regular attendance. When we are irregular, the risk increases of becoming indifferent to needs in our own life.

May we never be deceived thinking

we can disregard the command to assemble regularly for church. We can be thankful if we have had parents who saw the importance of faithful church attendance and saw to it that we went with them whenever there was a church service. May we as parents also see the importance of being punctual, showing how important it is to meet with God and the body of Christ.

[Adapted from *The Northwest Ambassador*, Nov.-Dec, 2009. Used by permission.] 

Cultural Relativism

Excerpted from William D. Gairdner, The Book of Absolutes

Cultural relativism [all cultures are equal; none are superior] has been central to modern thinking and political life for the past century. We can think of it as relativism applied to groups of people. It argues that *what is believed or practiced as true, or right, or wrong for any culture is whatever that culture believes or practices as true, or right, or wrong.* Clearly, this is a complete departure from the idea central to Western civilization until very recently that the discovery of universal truths ought to be the aim of everyone. That the beliefs and practices of some people and cultures are primitive,

cruel, bizarre, undeveloped, or even sick and therefore, by implication, in need of correction or healing or elimination—perhaps by contact with a superior culture—was simply taken for granted. But in the early twentieth century...anthropologists, almost as a group, suddenly did an about-face and abandoned the search for *universals* altogether. In its place they began preaching (that is the right word) about the vast range of *differences* between all peoples and cultures, moral systems, beliefs, and practices, taking the surprising view that *one culture is as good as another....*" (page 29). 

Seeing What You Want to See

From Friday Church News

One of the most interesting examples of how man can see what he wants to see and of how a man's will affects his mind and vision is the case of Percival Lowell, who died in 1916.

Lowell was born into a wealthy, high-society family in Boston, graduated from Harvard, was a brilliant mathematician and successful business man, traveled widely in the Far East, learned several languages, and kept company with many affluent, influential people. Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published when Lowell was a boy and he accepted the theory of evolution wholeheartedly.

His imagination was stirred by Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli's book in 1893, *Life on Mars* and of the report of channels on Mars. He saw this as proof that life exists on Mars and [for some reason] concluded that the Bible is wrong.

Lowell set out to bring this evidence home. He used his wealth to construct an astronomical observatory with a 24-inch telescope in the American West, near the Grand Canyon. It

was completed in 1894 and from then until his death 22 years later, he studied Mars and published his reports and books about Mars.

Eventually he "saw" and named 700 canals on The Red Planet and came to believe that the Martians were building these canals in an attempt to save their planet. He deduced many fascinating details about the lives of the Martian aliens. Buried near his telescope, Lowell left his wealth for the study of our solar system and its evolution.

There is a problem: In the 1970's, when NASA's Viking space vehicles orbited Mars, and actually landed and roamed around on it, no canals were found. How did Lowell see canals? Apparently he wanted to see them.

The same phenomenon exists for Darwinian evolution. The doubtful mind wants to see evolutionary evidence so it confidently announces its presence when in fact such evidence is almost completely missing.

[Gleaned from "Hite's Home Mission Outreach" newsletter, Palmyra, PA]



Trying times are not the time to quit trying.

Diamonds and Coal

Larry Gembicki, Cleveland, OH

A diamond is the hardest substance known to man. It is a stone that is almost pure carbon. Diamonds are formed by the heat and pressure of the earth on fallen trees. The diamond is pure carbon in the form of crystals.

Often diamonds are found around ancient dead volcanoes where at one time the heat and pressure of the earth was very great. Nature has subjected the diamond to such tremendous heat and pressure that it is clear and bright and sparkling. The polished diamond is the most desired of all precious stones.

Coal

Coal is made of trees, ferns, and other foliage that fell to the ground and decayed. In some places, coal is still in the first stages of formation. This first stage takes place in swampy, wet areas called bogs. A bog is like a swamp. Sometimes in a bog a wet, brown substance can be found that looks more like wood than coal, but it is really the first stage in the formation of coal. This substance is called peat, and it burns with a very hot fire after it has been dried.

The next stage in the formation of coal is called lignite. Like peat it is brown and moist, but unlike peat it need not be dried before it is burned.

Bituminous coal is the next stage and it is much harder and blacker than peat or lignite. This is the first of these materials that actually looks like coal. Bituminous coal is easy to set on fire and it burns with a much hotter flame than either peat or lignite. It is better in some ways than peat or lignite, but in other ways it is not as good. For instance, peat and lignite are clean and burn with very little smoke, while bituminous coal is very dusty and gives off clouds of black, oily fumes when it is burned.

The next stage after bituminous coal is cannel coal. This is the kind of coal people often use in their stoves and fireplaces.

The last stage in the formation of coal is anthracite or "hard coal." This is the hardest and blackest kind of coal. It is not easy to set afire, but it burns for hours, gives off great heat and is almost smokeless. People like to use it for heating their homes because it is the cleanest coal.

The only difference I see between a piece of coal and a diamond is the heat and pressure that is missing in the formation of coal.

Heat and Pressure and You

Have you been under a lot of heat and pressure in your life? Maybe you grew up in a dysfunctional family.

Maybe you have been abused and made fun of. Maybe you didn't have many friends. Maybe you weren't very popular. Maybe you weren't very attractive or athletic. Maybe you weren't very smart and didn't get good grades in school.

Maybe things just weren't normal around your house. Maybe you were the victim of a tragedy in your household. Maybe your parents didn't love you or you didn't feel

their love. Maybe they didn't hold you and tell you that they loved you. If these things apply to you, don't be discouraged. God might be fashioning a diamond.

Coal is certainly useful. We need coal. If your life up until now has been sort of crazy, don't be discouraged. You just might be becoming something much more precious than coal. You just may be *a diamond in the rough*. 



OR



Darkness

W. Tozer

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

How does Christianity destroy itself in a given generation? It destroys itself by not living in the light, by professing a truth it does not obey.

[Excerpted from *The Tozer Pulpit*, Christian Publications, Inc., Harrisburg, PA, 1967.] 

Creation Continues

Anne Yoder, Gordonville, PA

Tender plants stretch toward maturity
straining towards light. After blindly groping below
drink deeply,
finding energy for new life.

Straining towards light, after blindly groping below
The darkness, souls who seek Jesus
Find energy for new life.
He speaks. The Light dispels the confusion

of darkness. Souls who seek Jesus
see dawn break on the pathway as
He speaks the Light, dispelling confusion.
Listen to His voice and you will

see dawn break on the pathway as
tender plants stretch toward maturity.
Listen to His voice and you will
drink deeply.

*(Author's note: This is a pantoum, a Malay form of
interlocking poetry in which each line is repeated.)* 

marriages

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

Stoltzfus-Stoltzfus

Bro. Michael, son of Wilmer and Emma Stoltzfus, Leola, PA, and Sis. Cynthia, daughter of Lester and Hannah Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, PA, at Spring Garden Church for Summitview Christian Fellowship, on Dec. 5, 2009, by Elmer Stoltzfus.

cradle roll

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

Graber, Donnavon and Elana (Miller), Honey Grove, PA, (presently serving in Israel with C.A.M.), first child and son, Hanock Laël, Dec. 2, 2009.

Hostetler, Glenn and Kristina (Mast), Cottage Grove, TN, third child, first son, Weston Lee, Dec. 6, 2009.

Miller, Daniel and Cristine (Hostetler), Cottage Grove, TN, eighth child, seventh son, Donny Jay, Nov. 16, 2009.

Miller, Jonathan and Heather (Yoder), Chesapeake, VA, second child, first son, Johann Miles, Dec. 1, 2009.

Miller, Jonathan and Mary Kathryn (Yoder), Cottage Grove, TN, fifth and sixth children, (one stillborn), twins, fourth son, Kendall Shawn and second

dau., Kendra Dawn, born 13, 2008. Adopted Dec. 14, 2009.

Miller, LaVon and Twila (Yoder), Partridge, KS, third child, second son, Reginald Anson, Dec. 27, 2009.

Miller, Loren and Marcia (Swarey), Stuarts Draft, VA, second child and son, Brandon Elliot, Oct. 9, 2009.

Nissley, Stanley and Rose (Weaver), Henry, TN, second child, first dau., Rosaley Leann, Nov. 12, 2009.

Schmucker, Abner and Angela (Nisly), Partridge, KS, fifth child, fourth son, Adam Gregory, Dec. 22, 2009.

Sensenig, Wesley and Karen (Schrock), Waterford, Ireland, first child and dau., Caitlyn Brooke, Nov. 18, 2009.

Stoltzfus, Chester and Rebecca Jane (King), Honey Brook, PA, ninth child, seventh dau., Victoria Dawn, Dec. 2, 2009.

Stoltzfus, Jonas B., Jr., and Debbie (King), Honey Brook, PA, seventh child, fourth son, Adrian Shawn, Oct. 19, 2009.

Thayer, Matthias and Martha (Kauffman), Dyke, VA, fourth child, third son, Nehemiah Lemuel, Nov. 14, 2009.

Wagler, Milan and Grace (Beachy), Cottage Grove, TN, fourth child, second son, Derek Lynn, Oct. 23, 2009.

obituaries

Stoltzfus, Anna Mary, 66, died in a vehicle accident Nov. 19, 2009. She was born in Lancaster County, PA, Aug. 11, 1943, daughter of the late C. N. and Mary (Blank) Stoltzfus.

She was a member of Weavertown A. M. Church, Bird-in-Hand.

On Nov. 15, 1962, she was married to Levi K. Stoltzfus. He survives. Also surviving are six biological and two foster children: Alma (Nathan) Riehl, Himrod, NY; Mary Ann (Amos) Mast, Narvon; Mervin (Pauline) Stoltzfus, Nappanee, IN; Linda Stoltzfus, Catlett, VA; Sara Ellen (J. D.) Stoltzfus, Leola; Latoya Morton, Coatesville; and Jonathan Rogers, of the home; 18 grandchildren; three foster grandchildren; two step grandchildren; siblings: Hannah (Amos) Stoltzfus, Perry, NY; Fannie (Daniel) King, Gordonville; Elam (Marian) Stoltzfus, Ronks; Elmer (Rosie) Stoltzfus, Ronks; Sara (Stephen) Petersheim, Lancaster.

Preceding her in death was son, Nathanael in August, 2004, late husband of Juanita, now wife of Sam King, Mt. Joy; and a grandson, Damien Stoltzfus.

The funeral was held at Weavertown on Nov. 22, with Dave Stoltzfoos, Lloyd Beiler, and John U. Lapp serving. Mervin Lapp officiated at the burial in Weavertown Cemetery.

observations

Pending health care reform has been a prominent news item for many months. This is being written on Nov. 18, so it is possible that important changes might have been effected by the time it reaches our readers.

Roscoe J. Douglas has been a health insurance salesman since 1972. He wrote an article for *Southern Farm and Livestock Directory* (12-09) that I find interesting. Following are brief excerpts from this source:

-In 1972, an individual could buy health insurance for about \$5-\$10 a month. Today, Blue Cross premiums can exceed \$700 per month and over \$1700 for a family. The author has seen many premiums over \$2,000 per month.

-A large percentage of bankruptcies are caused by unpaid medical bills.

-Our health care system is profit driven. If the profit motive were removed, it would curtail research for life-saving cures.

-Over half of the total dollars spent on health care are spent in the final few months of a person's life.

-According to the American Medical Association there are currently 10,000 people in a persistent vegetative state being kept on life support.

Sometimes I wish there were an

advisory board prepared to give helpful counsel to our people in matters of health care, especially on end-of-life issues. Such a group should see the value of the prayers of faith and anointing with oil.

To see medical orthodoxy and possible alternative remedies as complementary rather than antagonistic would be evidence of unbiased thinking. Such a body should be aware that the profit motive can occur in either field to an extent that ethical integrity is compromised.

It is good to be reminded that human life is frail. Health care can be very expensive. Spiritual health and eternal life cannot be bought with money and are freely offered to us through Jesus Christ.



Cody Lorange is seriously committed to church planting in Chicago. Its 9.6 million people speak 147 different languages that are officially documented by public schools. It has been said that Chicagoland is a gateway to the ends of the earth. Efforts to bring the Christian Gospel to some of these people are apparently fruitful. (“Newslines,” *Sword and Trumpet*, 12-09)



I just got off the phone where I paid my phone bill with a credit card. The person who took my call tried

to interest me in additional services. I told him we don’t have television. I added, “Maybe we’re deprived; what do you think?”

He answered, “I think you’re enriched.”



Center Church is on the Every Home Plan for *Calvary Messenger*, *Sword and Trumpet*, and three Pathway periodicals. This decision is based on the notion that not only are we interested in our immediate circle, but we can learn from others. The December issue of *Sword and Trumpet* had four articles that I wish were available to this readership:

“What’s the Big Issue?” by Simon Schrock. This article notes the far-reaching and tragic effects of ignoring the authority of the Word in our decision making and life style.

“Social Networking” by Tim Auker. An excellent caution on the wrong or over-use of the internet. Though I have essentially no computer savvy, it is easy to see that access without inner controls is not only a big waste of time, but can also do serious damage.

“Steps to Revival in the Church” by Harold S. Martin. This very insightful article includes six points:

- We must embrace biblical authority.
- We must be aware of human

depravity.

-We must resolve internal conflicts.

-We must practice ethical behavior.

-We must downplay sports and television.

-We must experience repentance for sin.

“The Sanctifying Shepherd” by John McArthur. This article is a fresh reminder that none of us have a monopoly on God’s truth. McArthur’s view of the Christian’s relationship to culture could have been written by a conservative Anabaptist. “It’s not about how clever you can be to reach the culture by looking like the culture, because then you’ve just opened the sewer and let it seep in.” The following outline from that article explains what we need to understand, if we are to cope effectively:

- The power of the flesh.
- The power of the world.
- The power of Satan.
- The power of Scripture.
- The power of the Holy Spirit.
- The power of confrontation.
- The power of example.



Community columnist, Dan Deming for *The Hutchinson News* wrote a column on gratitude the day before Thanksgiving. It includes the following: “If you have food in your

refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head, and a place to sleep, you are richer than 79% of those in the world. If you have any money in the bank and in your wallet and some spare change somewhere, you are among the top 8% of the world’s wealthy, since 92% have less to live on than you do. If you have never experienced the danger of battling the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture or pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 500 million other people in the world. If you can attend worship services without fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death, you are more blessed than three billion people in the world. Be sure to give thanks.”



Moses was a man with a vision and a call. He acted on it and killed the offending Egyptian. But his action was ill-timed and misguided. His zeal was not tempered with wisdom. As we know, he had to flee for his life.

His kindness to the daughters of Jethro at the well earned him the respect of their father. He became his son-in-law and was “promoted” to herding Jethro’s sheep.

Forty years later, God visited Moses at the burning bush. His earlier misguided zeal had changed to a misguided reluctance. It is amazing how 40 years’ experience with sheep on the backside of the desert had

changed him. Sometimes young people with great vision would do well to review the early chapters of Exodus.



Bro. Philip Stoltzfus sent me an interesting article about jeans. Jeans were introduced in 1873 and were well received by laborers and miners. In the 1930's and 40's, stars like John Wayne and Gary Cooper wore them, making them more a symbol of individualism and toughness than work. In the 1950's, teens and young adults wore them as a symbol of rebellion and protest toward the establishment. People wearing them were sometimes refused service in restaurants. In the 1960's as the counter culture and hippie movements grew, so did the popularity of blue jeans.

The article identifies blue jeans as uniquely American. They are practical, durable and versatile. The likes of James Dean and Elvis Presley have made the wearing of jeans trendy, sexy, and desirable.



To devote space to something as superficial as clothing may seem questionable. But the Scriptures are clear that clothing should be modest and not extravagant. Such principles can be applied with some variety of expression. A growing church will have members in various stages

of development and stability. To provide specific guidelines is a needful safeguard against assimilation into cultural mainstream that reflects no awareness of Christian principles.



An advice column in *The Hutchinson News* recently included comments from a teacher of high school graduates. The teacher reported that they had many young women wearing tight clothing and abbreviated to the point of inappropriate exposure of skin. The teaching staff decided to approach the problem with firmness and humor. They reminded the students that were preparing to enter the work world that they would need to learn to dress in a way that does not distract others. They requested that students dress in a manner that is respectful, including wearing sweaters over their T-shirts. The guidelines were well-received.

Several teachers had signs in their rooms: "No cleavage." This effort reminds us that our choice of clothing is not only a personal matter, unless we have no contact with other people.



Germany's highest court has upheld a ban on most Sunday shopping, overruling laws enacted in 2006 that allowed stores in Berlin to operate 10 Sundays a year. The German Constitutional Court noted that

Sunday as a day of rest was not only based on Christian tradition, but also served a vital societal function by giving workers a day off and giving families more chances to spend time together. (Religious News Service, *Mennonite Weekly Review*, 12-14-09).

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While world leaders were in Copenhagen addressing concerns about global warming, columnist Pat Buchanan wrote a related column in *The Hutchinson News*. (12-20-09)

In April, 1992, scientists world-wide issued a statement in response to the global warming theory that is now front-burner news in the political world. Since 1992, 4,000 scientists, including 72 Nobel Peace Prize winners have signed on. The following is excerpted from their statement: “We do forewarn the authorities in charge of our planet’s destiny against decisions which are supported by pseudo-scientific arguments or false and non-relevant data.”

It is true that the ice pack has noticeably decreased in the northern polar region in recent times, but has remained unchanged for the last decade. Meanwhile, the ice sheet in Antarctica is nine times as large as its northern counterpart. During the winter freeze the Antarctic ice covers roughly twice the size of Europe.

Satellite images show that since the 1970’s the ice covered area has increased at the rate of 100,000 square meters per decade.

The concluding statement follows: “Global warming is cyclical and has been stagnant for a decade. There is no conclusive proof that it is manmade or that it is harmful to the planet.”

Having reported the above, I believe that it is good stewardship not to exploit or waste the earth’s non-renewable resources. Aside from consideration of climate change, there are other good reasons for us to safeguard against polluting the air that we breathe or the soil from which our food supply comes.

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Paul Schrock reported in *Mennonite Weekly Review* (12-21-09) on research he has been doing about the Civil War. When President Lincoln was urged to force Mennonites and other peace groups into the army, he responded as follows: “No, I will not do that. These people do not believe in war. Such people make poor soldiers. Besides, the attitude of these people has always been against slavery. If all people held the same views about slavery as these people there would not be a war.” He further commended them as honest people and excellent farmers. They would make a better contribution in that role than with guns.—DLM 

Minister's Meeting Messages — 2009

This is a condensation of a pre-sermon message given 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 CDs is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA 20136, for \$45, postpaid.

8. The Supremacy of the Word

Adin Troyer, Sugarcreek, OH

In thinking of the Word as supreme, we find this definition helpful: “the greatest authority or power, holding the highest in rank, in degree, greatest, utmost, highest in quality, last and final.” That’s the Word!

In Revelation 3, the words are given by the true and faithful witness, the Amen. This means it is given by the one who has the last word to which nothing can be added. AMEN!

The Word is supreme because it is inspired by Almighty God. It is nearly impossible to overemphasize the importance of the doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. On this doctrine stands the entire edifice of Christian truth.

In Psalm 11:3, the writer asks, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” The answer is not given, but it is “Nothing.” These foundations will not be destroyed, thank God! If we surrender the doctrine of divine inspiration, it is like a

rudderless ship on a stormy sea at the mercy of every wind that blows. The enemy has been hurling his darts at this doctrine down through history. He made his first attack in Genesis 3, “Yea, hath God said?” He’s still doing that today. Every available weapon in the devil’s arsenal has been employed in his determined and ceaseless effort to destroy the Word of God.

In early days the attack was by destroying the Bible. Now it is often done differently. It is done in the name of *scholarship*, by men who pose as friends and champions of the Bible. Much of the theological activity is an attempt to discredit and destroy the authority of the Word of God. Thus multitudes are cast on the sea of doubt. But I’m so glad that we have a sure word of prophecy, the eternal absolutes in our hands. It is the word of the Living God.

Like God Himself, His Word is supreme. There is more hope of a sparrow pecking away a 13,000-foot granite Mt. Rainier, close to Seattle, Washington, than for finite man

to do away with the Scriptures. In Psalm 119:89, it says, "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." That's a long time! Matthew 24:35 says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, **but my words shall not pass away.**" What you have right here in the Bible is more solid than this old globe that you're sitting on. This earth will pass away.

In Isaiah 40:8, we have this beautiful verse, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: **but the word of our God shall stand forever.**"

I believe in the doctrine of the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. I believe it is authentic in its matter and authoritative in its counsels, and inerrant in its original writings. It is the only infallible rule for faith and practice for our day. When it says ALL, that means it is fully inspired, every word was supervised by the Holy Spirit of God. If it's God-breathed, it is infallible, authoritative, binding, and complete. He did not say to James, "You forgot a certain word." He did not say to Jude, "I had another chapter for you to write but you didn't get it done!" He didn't say to Peter, "I had another sentence for you, and you didn't write it!" He wrote everything He wanted us to know. We have a complete revelation from Almighty God. We are glad for that!

In Romans 15:4, Paul wrote, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." The writers of sacred scripture wrote for the needs of their time and the Holy Spirit made so that those same truths are effective for our needs. These are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

In 1 Peter 1:10 and 11, it says, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Can you imagine how they might have written something and said? "I wonder what this means." They were overruled and guided by the Holy Ghost as they wrote these truths.

In 2 Peter 3:15, Peter notes the authority of Paul's writings thus: "... even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you."

Paul also testifies in Galatians 1:11 and 12, how he received the doctrines he taught: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was

preached of me is not after men, For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Christ speaks of the three Old Testament divisions that authentically present God’s truth in Luke 24:44, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.” How else but by the Holy Spirit can this be true?

One of the most convincing proofs and arguments for the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ regarded it as inspired. That blesses my heart to no end! Read Matthew 19:4, 5; 22:29; 23:35; Mark 7:13; Luke 24:44; John 5:39; and 10:35. In those verses He repeatedly asked, “Have you not read?”

He also said, “Search the scriptures.” And, “It is written....” And, “Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures.” And, “The Scriptures cannot be broken.” In all of those statements, Jesus is referring to the Scriptures. Some people say that the Word of God gives no testimony that it is the Word of God. But Jesus recognized the Scriptures as the Word of God. In Mark 7:13a, He said to the scribes and Pharisees, “Making the word

of God of none effect through your tradition....”

When Jesus made reference to Old Testament narratives and records like the Creation and The Flood and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and many other incidents, He treated all of them as the authentic Word of God. That ought to convince all of us fully and encourage our hearts that this is a Word from the living God. We have His eternal absolutes in our hands and we can preach these absolutes with authority!

It is sufficient as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. The Scriptures do not have to be supplemented from any other source because this revelation is complete, sufficient, and relevant for all our needs because the needs of human lives do not change from Adam to contemporary man. What we have in our hands tonight is God-breathed, supernatural, powerful, and miraculous.

Greed and lust do not change. Sin is sin whether it shown by a Herod or a Hitler. The results of sin have not changed since Paul wrote in Romans 6: 23, “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” So the message of the Bible is supreme, as God Himself is supreme. It is infallible truth. It is the same yesterday, today and forever.

The Word of God is supreme in its life-giving message. No other book in the world can make you wise unto salvation, if you have faith in Christ Jesus. In Romans 1:16, Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” In 2 Peter 1: 3 and 4, Peter notes, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” These promises are as good today as the day they were penned.

Jesus gave us a promise in John 11:25: “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” You can take that promise and give it to a poor lost sinner and if he believes it he can be saved! These are promises of God!

This Word has power to take us from darkness to light, from blindness to sight, from sickness to health, from bondage to liberty, from death

to life, and from the broad way to the narrow way. Thank God for the power to make such radical changes! He is able to do it, if the returning prodigal pays heed. It is instruction in righteousness. It is a light in darkness. It can teach us what we need to know. It can point out everything we are to believe. It can explain everything we need to do. It can show us what we are—poor lost sinners by nature. It can show what God is like—perfectly holy. It can show us the great giver of pardon, peace, and grace—Jesus Christ! It is the only book that can do it.

Applied to the heart, the Word can work a marvelous change. It can make the drunkard sober, the unchaste become pure, the thieves become honest, and the violent-tempered become meek. It can wholly alter our course, turn us right-about-face, causing worldly people to seek first the Kingdom of God, cause lovers of pleasure to become lovers of God, and instead of living by sight, live by faith. It has been done down through history, it is still being done in our day, and it shall be done till Jesus comes! That’s the only way! We can do it by the power of God.

Some modern theology avows that there is no judgment, no wrath, and no condemnation and that all souls will eventually be saved. Since men

are not lost, what's the use of preaching? This compromising of the saving message of Christ is certainly not the teaching of the Bible! The whole teaching of the New Testament is summed up in Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." That's narrow truth.

Many people don't like that. They think there are many ways to get to Glory. I have some questions for such people: Did you know that all truth is narrow? Mathematical truth is narrow. If you don't believe that, you will find yourself in trouble with the bank, with your business, and the IRS. Scientific truth is narrow. Historical truth is narrow. The whole purpose of the courts and the jury is to arrive at that narrow truth. If I'm liberal, broad-minded in my history, I might believe Julius Caesar and Alexander could have lived at any time, not the narrow dates historians give me. Biblical truth is no less narrow than other truth. In the days of Noah, there was no salvation outside the ark. Noah preached to these people but they didn't believe and were lost. When Moses was instructed to prepare to leave Egypt, there was no deliverance for those not under the blood. They were lost. In our day, the same narrow truth still stands. That

message works. By the grace of God, let's preach it.

The commissions of Christ are recorded in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20 and Acts 1. All are mandates to the disciples of Christ to make converts of the whole human race. They took the Gospel to Jerusalem, to Samaria, to Caesarea, and to Antioch. In Antioch, there were mission efforts by Barnabas and Paul. The substance of their message was always that men are sinners who are lost and must repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved. John the Baptist and Jesus held forth the same message in the Gospels. The Apostles effectively gave the same message in the book of Acts. That's the only way to come. Everyone everywhere must turn in repentance and believe this life-giving message that is supreme that knew no limits and no compromise. When these first apostles and missionaries of the cross confronted the Roman Empire with that message, they refused to dilute it. They came right out and preached this truth to them. Rome was liberal and broad-minded and especially so in religion. They were open to the worship of all gods. As Rome conquered one nation and province after another, the Emperor brought their god to the city and any new god was to be worshipped by these subdued

peoples. That god found its place in the Pantheon. All gods were brought together there. Why did the Roman Empire persecute the Christians if they were so open-minded? Because they believed in the supremacy of Christ and His Word and that it was the only life-giving message. It was supreme. If a Christian would take one pinch of incense and place it on the fire that burned before the image of the Emperor, he would be given life and liberty. But they were willing to die rather than do that. Why not bring Jesus Christ in among all the other gods? No. They were willing to seal their testimony with their blood rather than compromise the truth that Jesus Christ is supreme. We need to do the same.

The Word is also supreme in its life-preserving message. The word of God makes us wise for salvation, but it also makes us wise for the preservation of salvation. We need the beautiful word, *doctrine*. Paul said to Timothy, “Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine, for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.” We must take heed unto the doctrine. We need to read doctrine, study doctrine, think doctrine, believe doctrine, practice doctrine, exhort with doctrine, teach doctrine, preach doctrine, adorn the doctrine, and continue in the doc-

trine. What God has joined together, (doctrine and practice), let us not put asunder!

When Peter preached on Pentecost, he said, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” That may sound strange because we cannot save ourselves, yet there is something in salvation for us to do. Why does he say, “Keep yourselves in the love of God”? We can do our part in our salvation by taking heed to ourselves and to the doctrine of the Word. The Word has a life-preserving message. It is *profitable* for doctrine. What are your people hearing from you? The Word is what saves men. Fill your messages with the Word. People have a hunger for the Word.

The Word is also for reproof and instruction in righteousness. I don’t find it in you and you don’t find it in me, but we find it in the Word of God. It is relevant. It is up-to-date. We don’t need to catch the spirit of the age. We must seek to correct the spirit of the age.

There is more than “maybe’s” and “hope so’s” in the Bible. On matters of life and death and heaven and hell, I do not want to guess. I want to be sure. We’re glad that we have an eternal, absolute Word from Almighty God. He has spoken in these last days by His Son.

Why is all this given? The Bible is

the chief means by which men are built up and established in the faith. It is given so that we may be completely equipped to fight the enemy. You need the word of God like a soldier needed a sword. Without it, he was acting stupid and reckless to go into battle. Likewise, we are not prepared to fight these giants that come against us. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.” “Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.” “Desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.” “Sanctify them through they truth; they word is truth.” On and on the Scriptures tell us through this Word we can built up and strength-

ened, and sanctified and set apart for the glory of God. We can be preserved unto His heavenly Kingdom.

Vance Havner once said, “Seemingly the people of God in America are doing everything but praying and studying their Bibles. They can plan programs, promote rallies, raise money, exalt personalities, play softball, and many other things with the best, but they can’t seem to get people to study their Bibles. They use every method to get them to come to church Wednesday night, Sunday night, everything from films, entertainment, soup-to-nuts. But they will never be faithful until they learn to have the breakfast of champions: The Word of the Living God!” 

Earthly, Sensual, and Devilish

John Paul Raber, Millersburg, OH

Suppose this title makes us think of people who are covered with tattoos, members of motorcycle gangs, who dress or undress indecently, and even Halloween displays. Yet these words appear in the epistle of James describing people who profess Christ. How can that be? Many times evils in church settings are known by other names, but James lays it bare. He calls it what it is—evil.

Consider with me the first few

chapters of the writings of the first bishop of Jerusalem. The Epistle of James is a concise commentary on the proofs of faith. His summary is given in this well-known statement: **Faith without works is dead.** But really, his whole epistle bears out that truth. It beams a spotlight on our attitudes and actions in the church. James is concise and specific about our response to life.

James, possibly a half-brother to Jesus, begins by identifying himself as

a servant of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.; He doesn't refer to his lofty credentials or pedigree.

What do trials and joy have in common? James opens his epistle by saying trials can and should bring joy. He also clarifies where temptation comes from. Don't blame Grandpa or Dad. He says every man is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by *his own* lusts. It doesn't get much plainer than that.

In Chapter Two, he aptly points out that favoritism is sin. Partiality in the church is based on the common faulty basis of the value of someone's character: financial affluence. Affluence should never be the deciding factor in appointment to position or influence in the church. He says that those who do this are become judges of [or *with*] evil thoughts.

We commonly associate evil thoughts with, for example, witchcraft or pornography, hate or Halloween. James says being picky about who you want to see up front in a service is entertaining evil thoughts. I think we can safely say that this goes much further than just where we seat people in church. It probably also involves clannishness, cliques, and even leaders who use the "buddy system," and where counsel is evaluated on the basis of who gave it. Regardless how

we dress it up, James called it evil.

From Verse 14 on, James focuses on how we can tell what one believes. It is very simple. We can tell by what one does. He makes his point by referring to Abraham, who fulfilled Scripture when he actually *did* what God said he would do. Think about it. If Abraham had not responded and actually done what God said he would do, he would have made God look like a liar. Is that not what religious people do when they profess Christ but don't do what the Bible says God's people do?

God calls Jesus "The Prince of Peace." How does that make God look when professing Christians fight and bicker? Remember that doesn't make a God a liar; it only makes Him appear to be untruthful. James further says that faith without works is dead, even when it describes church people.

Chapter Three is a graphic commentary on the tongue of man. He says an uncontrolled tongue defiles the whole body, sets on fire the course of nature (unsanctified and unpleasant) and the source of such a fire is hell itself. We believe that when he speaks about the tongue, he refers to what we say about God, people, and the issues of life. He uses a simple illustration to depict the tongue: a well. When there is

sweet [potable] water in the ground, it will not be bitter when it is drawn and tasted. When the tongue causes strife in church, the water is bitter. And James says the source is hell. That is strong language, but it is Bible. If we find ourselves on the wrong side of this issue, the Bible is not at fault—we are.

In 3:13, James calls for wise men to consider his words. He doesn't keep us guessing how we are to tell who they are. He tells us they are those who out of their good conversation demonstrate their works, which is synonymous with faith, with meekness and wisdom. He then contrasts that with its opposite:

But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is EARTHY, SENSUAL, and DEVILISH.

Here is a summary of what he is pointing out:

Being partial is earthly. This means that our decisions are based on temporal things: money, honor, and the whole list of what Satan offered Jesus, if He would fall down and worship him. If we have bitter envying and strife, we are earthly. Current religious writers often identify an evil called materialism. I agree. We should fight materialism. It destroys

spirituality. But James equates bitter envying and strife with materialism. It is the selfish pursuit of our goals, based on what pleases us the most.

Being partial is sensual: This word is commonly connected with immorality. That's true, but James says that bitter envying and strife is also sensual. So when there is strife among God's people, the motivation is no nobler than when sensuality is expressed in immorality. What people are doing is making decisions based on what feels best to them, whether it is immoral or wrong decisions in church life.

Being partial is devilish: We may associate this word with a heavily tattooed person, or evil Halloween displays. It usually applies in such cases, too, but James says when God's people fight, it is devilish. He is not speaking of literally fighting, but by verbal conflict and by our actions toward each other. He makes it clear that when this happens, it does not come from heaven. He classifies it as materialistic, immoral, and demonic, but the King James Version uses these words: *earthly*, *sensual* and *devilish*.

Jesus once told the hateful Jews that the kingdom would be taken from them and given to people who bring fruits of a peaceable kingdom. According to the tenor of the Bible that fate will not be confined to Jews,

but to all those who reject the rules of Christ's peaceable kingdom. Is it not logical and biblical to think that the foremost rule of the Prince of Peace will be peace?

Jesus said that is how people will know that we are His disciples, when love reigns among us. It only seems sensible to conclude that when it does not, people will not be convinced that we are subjects of God's Kingdom, in which the Prince of Peace reigns.

The prophecies about Jesus, and God's birth announcement of His Son are not mere suggestions or

hints. They are positive statements. Remember Abraham fulfilled Scripture when he did what God said he would do. Are we going to fulfill Scripture or are we going to have to be labeled: earthly, sensual, and devilish?

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of those that make peace” (James 3:17,18). 

Emotions

William Wilberforce (1759-1833)

Anti-slavery Champion of England

We can barely look anywhere in the Bible without finding abundant proof that God wants us to experience a faith that includes our emotions. Love, zeal, gratitude, joy, hope, trust (each one of them mentioned in the Bible) were not given to us to make us weak; instead, we are even commanded to experience these emotions as part of our faith's duties. They are an integral part of the worship that is acceptable to God. 

***Diets are for people who are thick
and tired of it.***

I Will Not Doubt

Annie Johnson Flint

[A meditation of comfort for those whose prayers are answered with God's fatherly "No, beloved child, I know why I must deny what you so earnestly desire. Some day you will understand."]

I will not doubt, though all my prayers return
unanswered from the still white realm above.
I shall believe it is an all-wise Love which has
refused things for which I yearn;
And though at times I cannot keep from grieving,
yet the pure ardor of my fixed believing
undiminished shall burn.

I will not doubt though sorrows fall like rain
and troubles swarm like bees about a hive.
I shall believe the heights for which I strive
are only reached by anguish and by pain.
And though I groan and tremble 'neath my crosses,
I yet shall see through my severest losses
the greater gain.

I will not doubt though all my ships at sea
come drifting home with broken masts and sails.
I shall believe the Hand that never fails,
from seeming evil worketh good for me.
And though I weep because those ships are battered,
Still will I cry while my best hopes are shattered,
"I trust in Thee!"



What a Privilege!

Joetta Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA

[Joetta, our daughter, served as a nurse in Paraguay with Amish Mennonite Aid for seven years. Most of her time was invested at Luz y Esperanza Clinic where thousands of babies were born in the last nearly 40 years. Her service in the last year and several months found her also busily occupied and challenged in the La Belleza Colony, some 60 miles inland from the clinic. Several years ago the residents of La Belleza, who were formerly Amish, requested spiritual help and ministerial assistance from Luz y Esperanza Mennonite Church. A missionary family and several single women with AMA were sent to La Belleza. A church was established and a clinic building was erected to serve the people in the colony and the surrounding (very poor) communities. Deep joy and fulfillment accompany serving “as to the Lord” in the station God has placed you. –FS]

My most exciting job was being a nurse in the backwoods of Paraguay. You never knew what would happen next. One weekend I remember especially illustrates this. It started on Saturday morning designated for office visits and vaccinations.

By 7:30 a.m., the clinic was buzzing with activity. The first patient was a teenage girl expecting her first baby. Challenge number one: She spoke only Guarani, the heart language of Paraguayans. So I got out my notebook where I translated from Spanish to Guarani the questions I needed to ask. We made out fine until she started asking me questions. Our secretary, who knew Guarani, was glad to help out. Challenge number two: This was

her first prenatal visit, and her baby was due any day. In order to encourage prenatal care in this community, we subtracted a certain amount from their delivery fees for each prenatal visit. But in an area steeped in poverty and ignorance, changes of this nature take time.

The second patient had been at the clinic several times before, plagued with anxiety attacks. I listened to her story of how her father had died four months earlier. She, in accordance with her Catholic beliefs, wore only black since that time. This was not working out well for her because wearing black caused her heart to beat too fast. That day she decided to wear a different color. Then her heart felt fine.

A lady who thought she was in labor arrived next. It turned out to be a false alarm, so she returned home. All this time, families were streaming in for vaccinations. The sound of crying babies filled the clinic. The crying would soon stop when each unfortunate “victim” was presented with their reward—a lollipop!

Around mid-morning a horse and cart drove up to the front door with a man stretched out in the back of the cart. We went out to see what was going on. He seemed to be in great pain, so we transported him by wheelchair to one of the beds in the clinic. We talked with the family and the patient himself and were told that suddenly that morning he had back pain to the extent that he was unable to walk. I treated him with pain medication and he walked out several hours later.

Toward evening, a neighbor man arrived, guarding his injured thumb. He had hit his thumb with a hammer, and the pressure building up under the nail was driving him nearly crazy. I heated the tip of a paper clip until it was red-hot then used it to burn a hole through his thumbnail. The hole allowed the built-up blood to escape, greatly relieving his pain.

Just as he left, some brothers brought in their distraught elderly mother. She had Alzheimer’s disease and was refusing to take her medication. She became so agitated that they, in desperation, brought her to the clinic. For

about 45 minutes, she went on and on to me about all her troubles, with huge tears running down her cheeks. I finally got her convinced to swallow a pill to calm her down. The family was grateful. I was, too.

On Sunday morning, as soon as the sun was up, I heard a cycle drive up to the clinic. Like I said, we always wondered, *What next?* This time it was an elderly man with respiratory distress due to heart failure. I admitted him, and started him on oxygen and some medications. Soon he was breathing with less difficulty.

Around 2:00 p.m., the teenager that had come for her first prenatal check-up the day before showed up again. She was lying on a mat on the back of an ox cart. Her husband jumped off and handed me a precious little bundle—her baby! The baby had been born at 1:00 a.m. Now thirteen hours later, they had brought her because the placenta was not yet delivered. We whisked her into the exam room. I started an IV and the problem was soon taken care of without further difficulty.

As I lay in bed that night, my heart was full of thankfulness to God. He had given me strength during these busy days. He had given me wisdom when I cried out to Him to show me how to treat each patient. And he had given me the privilege of serving these people and showing them His love.



Loving Your Child

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Birth is a miracle. In childbirth, a woman becomes a mother. As the mother looks down at the newborn baby in her arms, she feels instant connection to this helpless baby. The love springing up in her heart for this child overwhelms her. She has carried him for months and feels that she knows this little one. A mother holding her adopted child for the first time will experience a similar sense of awe and love.

Fortunately, a new mother is not able to see into the future and does not know the joy or pain this child will bring to her. Just this past weekend, we heard about a 20-year-old young man who was killed in a snow mobile accident. As I thought about the grief of his mother, I asked myself, "Would it be easier not to love?" Of course, we know the answer, "Even though to love may hurt, it is worth the pain."

A child needs love. He needs to know his parents love him. We think of the many children in the world today who feel unloved because the mother is so conflicted that she does not know how to express her love. We

grieve for such children. So how can a mother show love to her child?

1. *Identify with each child.*

Each of our children comes to us with different emotions, abilities, and personalities. We cannot treat them all the same. We must ask God to show us the pattern for each child individually. Then we can relate to them accordingly. Learn to know your child's strengths and weaknesses. What do they enjoy, or what troubles or irritates them? Sometimes it is only a small habit or tone of voice that we use that upsets our children. Listen to them and hear their concerns. Be quick to apologize and say, "I am sorry."

2. *Remember how you felt.*

Sometimes we forget that we were children. Put yourself in their shoes. Try to understand how it felt when a friend betrayed you, or children made fun of your clothes--or whatever. Empathizing with your child's joys and struggles will go a long way in keeping communication open between the two of you. Talk about your childhood and admit that you make mistakes, too. Share yourself with your child.

3. Plan surprises.

Love your children by sharing surprises with them. Read a story before they ask for it; make a favorite dessert just for fun; use the best china and celebrate something while they are napping. Fix up the toys with a tea party or make a farm with Legos. (You will have a bonus, too, because they enjoy playing.) Prepare a picnic supper even in winter; play a game with them; fix hot chocolate with lots of whipped cream. Use your imagination and plan SURPRISES.

4. Choose your battles carefully.

At times, mothers realize they are saying “No” much of the time. There are times we must say “No.” However, some things really do not matter. For instance, which dress to wear--or whatever. It is easy to say “No,” then change your mind when you realize it really does not matter. However, children need to learn that “No” does mean “No,” so choose your battles wisely.

5. Teach your child about God.

You may think that is just basic for Christian people. However, I believe it takes effort for a mother with a busy schedule to teach her children well. We begin when they are babies by singing and praying with them. As they grow older, read and tell Bible stories to them. Even small children enjoy having their own Bibles to carry to church. Pray specifically with your child for needs in their lives and in others. Rejoice together for answered prayer. Show by your attitude that Sunday is a special day. Teach them reverence for God’s house. Enjoy a living relationship with Jesus yourself, and pass it on.

As I look back over what I have written, I realize that this could also apply to grandmothers. Grandmothers, let’s purpose in our hearts to come alongside these busy young parents and assist in teaching and loving their children.



junior messages

Who Is Your Captain? (Part two of two)

Anita Yoder, Ligonier, IN

Pastor Rosales had asked Jose to invite everyone in the village to the special meetings their mission church was having. Jose had encountered a loud

rapping noise and fiercely barking dog that frightened him greatly. Even his dog, Capitan, (Spanish for “captain”) had run away. Should he go back?

Jose could not forget that house for the next couple of days. What if it were true that someone living there needed to know about Jesus? If he didn't go, no one would ever find out. He wouldn't need to tell Pastor Rosales about it. At night, he had trouble sleeping. There seemed to be a voice that said, "Who is your captain? Am I or are you depending on 'Capitan' to protect you when you are afraid?"

Several nights later he lay awake again. A verse came to his mind that he had just learned and recited, "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee," found in Psalm 56:3. The Sunday School teacher had explained it to him by using the story of Peter on the boat with Jesus. When Peter trusted Jesus he could believe that he'd be taken care of. So into the darkness Jose whispered, "Jesus, I believe you can protect me. I believe You can be my 'Capitan!'"

The next day Jose woke up with a start. Today he had something to do. "Come on, Capitan, we're going back to that house with the barking dog and loud, rapping noise. Today I'm not running away and neither are you."

Knock, knock, knock. Jose waited. So did Capitan. Again there was a loud rapping noise and a dog

barking. Jose stood and waited very bravely till the door was opened by a woman who stood there smiling. "Wait till I tie up the dog," she said.

Jose stepped inside. An old man sat in the corner of the room. "Why did you knock and then run away?" asked the man. "You see, I'm crippled and I could not come to the door. I make this noise so my daughter knows I need something."

"I'm very sorry; I came to invite you to come to our church's special meetings next week."

Then the old man began to cry. "You have come in time. I'm not going to live very long anymore, and as you can see, I cannot come to your church."

"Oh, but I'm sure Pastor Rosales could come over here this very day. Would you like to talk to him?"

"Tell him to come soon!"

"I'll run and see if he can come right away."

As Jose hurried away his heart felt light and he felt like singing. How glad he was that he had gone back to that house. Pastor Rosales was right. Someone did need Jesus very much. How glad Jose felt that he had listened to the quiet voice that overcame his fear and made Jesus his Captain.



What Does Your Church Allow?

Kaylene Bontrager, Arlington, KS

A big issue we as conservative Mennonite youth are dealing with is the role of church guidelines. Some individuals place them on virtually the same level as the Ten Commandments, while others basically do what they want, apparently seeing rules only as vague suggestions. Church guidelines are a very touchy subject for many people.

What right do ministers have to govern my life? Do we have to follow the rules even when they don't make sense to us? What if we lack personal convictions concerning the forbidden? What if they are just put there by "tradition-worshipping" ministers whose goal in life is to make us miserable? Wouldn't it be better to skip these old, legalistic rules altogether and begin focusing on the heart? These are some of the questions that I would like to discuss.

1. What right do ministers have to govern my life? Way back in Creation, God set up the leadership totem pole. Wife obeys husband and husband obeys Christ. It's really that simple. Ministers are simply another

step in the arrangement. They are accountable to God for our souls. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). This dimension makes their job a very serious one. What we take for over-protectiveness may be exactly that; they don't want to take any chances.

2. Do we have to follow rules that don't make sense to us? What if we lack personal convictions concerning the forbidden? To answer this question, we will return to the ministers. Do they force new members to join the church? This can be a trick question. Typically, we are baptized and join the church we are attending somewhat by default. However, joining the church is still our choice and we know the rules before we join. If we know we will not support these guidelines, why do we join? This dimension turns church membership into a test of commitment. Will we follow through on the rules as we promised, or will

we decide they do not apply to us?

3. What if the rules are put there by “tradition-worshipping” ministers whose goal is to make us miserable? This is something I have heard a lot. Why is it so important to follow tradition? Some things we practice do not necessarily make us better people. However, does that make it wrong? Is tradition really so bad? Few of us seem to understand the tremendous safety in tradition. While there can definitely be a time for change, bucking tradition simply because it is tradition, seems childish. Even though the rule may be entirely from the past, inapplicable to us today, will it hurt us to obey simply for the sake of harmony? Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

4. Wouldn't it be better to skip these old legalistic rules altogether and begin focusing on the heart? This is a valid question. Wasn't the saying, “Major on the minors and minor in the majors” invented for modern-day Mennonites? Many

churches are so caught up in disputes over rules that they are completely missing the big picture. However, until church members are willing to submit themselves to each other, this will continue to be an issue. We all want a church full of people who think and act just like we do and forget that we need everyone else to balance our views. Someone once said that if you are serious about changing your church, start loving those people that drive you to frustration. Once we have people who are happy with the setting they are in and are supporting each other to the best of their abilities, I think we would be amazed at what we could get done.

In conclusion, let's grow up! Let's become people who build unity instead of discord. Let's become known for peace instead of conflict. Most importantly, let's put away our selfishness and serve God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

[Submitted for Christian Writing and Expression class at Calvary Bible School]



Next Month's
QUESTION

Integrity in America appears harder to find as each year goes by. This blight on our society can easily rub off on Christians who are not alert. What integrity tests face those near your age, and how can youth help each other pass these tests?

—EE

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

“Easy” is the enemy of diligence.

• • • • •

Speak when you are angry and it will be the best speech you will want to forget.

• • • • •

If your Bible is dusty, that does not mean it is dry.

• • • • •

When we die, we leave behind us all that we have and take with us all that we are.

• • • • •

The surest way to make it hard for your children is to make it too soft for them

• • • • •

The Christian life is a pilgrimage, not a sight-seeing tour.

• • • • •

You can't hide from God by missing church.

• • • • •

Conscience gets poor help from a public-opinion poll.

• • • • •

It's easy enough to shoot a songbird; it's not so easy to produce his song.

• • • • •

It is better to do good than merely to talk about it.

• • • • •

If you acknowledge when you're all wrong, you're all right.