



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

Galatians 6:14

JUNE 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, Sugar creek, 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 Sugar creek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW, Dundee, OH 44624.

God's Symphony

Katrina Byler, Middlefield, OH

A high note here, a low note there,
One somewhere in between.
A cricket's chirp, a frog's deep croak,
A bubbling, gurgling stream.

The tinkling laughter of a child,
A soft hum of a bee.
The steady beat of horses' feet,
A breeze within a tree.

Each single note a natural strain;
Each chord a natural chime.
Each waterfall and crashing wave
Brings meter, rhythm, rhyme.

A thunderclap that shakes the skies,
Rocks plopped into a pond.
Explosion of an avalanche,
'Cross mountains and beyond.

In happy silence falls the snow,
And gold sunflowers bloom.
In thoughtful silence butterflies
Emerge from their cocoon.

What will it be, one note or two,
Or maybe even three?
How will God choose to make complete,
This awesome symphony?

*[Submitted for Christian Writing and Expression
class at Calvary Bible School, 2010.]*



“It’s *Not* About Us!”

Several years ago, Martha and I had the privilege of traveling with our youth chorus on a ten-day, eastern U. S. singing tour. These young people also spent a day at the Creation Museum near Cincinnati, Ohio. We were blessed and encouraged because the young people seemed eager to take the baton of faith and carry it with joy.

On this trip, these 35 men and women sang with youthful vigor in a number of prisons and churches. The response in prisons was enthusiastic applause. Encouragement was the keynote of churches. But whether they were applauded or encouraged, the youth freely said, “It’s *not* about us!” The second half of that statement was naturally: “**It is about Jesus!**”

A meaningful church service has the same emphasis. The singing, the Scripture reading, the sermon, and the testimonies bring the sincere worshipper to Jesus. We preachers should be willing to refer to ourselves in our preaching, but when we do it too much, we seem to say, “It is about us!”

We must not hold ourselves aloof from our listeners either. Obviously, we cannot make meaningful eye contact with the ceiling or the

windows. If we fail to “reach out” to our listeners, our words become as “sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13:1).

What Shall We Preach?

Isaiah asked a good question in Isaiah 40:6. His question? “What shall I cry?” (Luther’s German: *Was soll ich predigen?* asks: “What shall I preach?”) The heavenly response was clear: “All flesh is grass and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.” The heavenly messenger spoke with finality, “the word of our God standeth forever.” The prophet was not to exalt man, but God.

Anointed preaching is characterized by three things: **It acknowledges man’s need, it draws on the Word of God, and it exalts Jesus!** Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up..., will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). While this referred to Jesus’ impending crucifixion, it also applies to Christian testimony.

Jesus Teaches about Greatness

One day in the second year of Jesus’ earthly ministry, He took three of His disciples, Peter, James, and John, up onto the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9). When they came back down, I suppose the other disciples were wondering, “What happened

up there?” (vv. 9, 10) Perhaps the privileged three said, “We are not permitted to say. Later we may, but not now.” The discussion that followed took a negative turn (9:30-37). The question they discussed was about which of them would be greatest. I think they may have been embarrassed when Jesus asked what they were discussing. (9:33) Then things probably got really quiet.

Jesus had been showing them many wonderful truths about how to live well. He made it clear that living well doesn't happen by pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps. There is nothing wrong with wanting to succeed. After all, no one in his right mind wants to fail. But the secret of true greatness escapes those who want it for how it can boost their own importance, wealth, or influence.

The Price of True Greatness

Greatness in Jesus' Kingdom is not given as raw honor, but as opportunity. Thus the poor can be as great as the wealthy; the obscure as well as the popular. *True greatness is humble willingness to serve.* Anyone can be great except he who makes it a point to be great. “A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small package.”

Jesus found a teachable moment to clarify His viewpoint. He brought a little child and set him/her in their midst. Taking the child in His arms, he showed them how precious these dependent ones are. He spoke of

the value of receiving a little child who is unable to give recognition or reward. Then He interpreted His actions: *Whoever receives one of these little children in My name, receives Me.* (v. 37)

When they start an opening bid low, some auctioneers say, “Let ‘em all in!” Jesus does that, too. He lets everybody in. In the auction business, however, one person is willing to pay more than all the other bidders. Not so in the Christian life where everyone who is willing to pay “the price” may “buy” Jesus' eternal treasures. Even though the price is high, the poor in spirit can pay it. Jesus' treasures are available to all who “open their wallets,” and ask Jesus to take out whatever it takes to make His will their own.

Fellow ministers, is our message mostly about Jesus? If it is, it will draw people to Him. If it's mostly about us, it will starve men and women, and boys and girls who come to church hungry for the original soul food, heavenly manna.

Humility may refer to itself, but not in glowing terms. Pride tends to bring itself into stories of “success” for self or “failure” for others. It is when we honor Him and others and humbly and sparingly refer to ourselves that God gets glory. **“Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.” (1 Peter 2:17).**

–PLM 

Pronunciation item:

How was that again?

I wish we could correct the frequent mispronunciation of the word “pastoral.”

Perhaps it’s merely the transition between using “ministerial” and “pastoral.” I sometimes hear “pas-TORE’-ee-uhl.”

Pronunciation: PASS’-tuh-ruhl

Function: *adjective*; from pastor, herdsman.

1. of, relating to, or composed of shepherds or herdsmen.

2. of or relating to spiritual care or guidance, especially of a congregation.

Paul A. Miller,
Millersburg, OH



the bottom line

Driving Patterns

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

On my way to Oklahoma, I drove through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, I noticed most drivers going 72-73 mph in 65 mph speed zones. For some reason, they slowed down a bit until after they were past the radar gun.

Then came Missouri with a speed limit of 70 mph. We went with the traffic at 73-74 mph. God gave us two eyes—one to look forward, the other to look back. Right?

Finally we crossed from Missouri into Oklahoma. The speed limit? 75. I could see it at a distance. Another sign just below it said: “No Tolerance.” What? I thought all states grant some

tolerance over the posted speed limit on interstate highways. What could they mean by “No Tolerance”?

Unfortunately, on this trip my cruise control quit working. I found I could not drive 75 consistently. I was either over or under. The only way I could safely drive in this “No Tolerance” state, was to be content to always be under 75—around 72-73.

Even though I drove all the way through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois at 70-73 and enjoyed it, I was frustrated with it in Oklahoma.

Can anyone help me understand why an egotistical, driven man like me could much more enjoy a

65 mph speed limit *with* tolerance than a speed limit of 75 with “No Tolerance”?

• • • • •

One lovely spring day I was preparing ground for planting. My daughter lived in our rental house at the far end of our home farm. As I went by with the 18-foot land finisher and cultipacker, I waved at my three grandsons and they waved back at me.

Driving away, I looked back to see these three wonderful boys. All three were standing at the very edge of the lawn by the field. All at once, Jordan put one foot out onto the freshly worked soil. The other two promptly did the same. Then they looked back at their house. No one seemed to see them and they were none the worse for what they had done.

Some time later, I asked Sharon if she had told the boys to stay on the lawn and not to step into the field. She said she had, but why did I ask? Well, stepping forward with one foot and looking back indicated such a probability.

Prohibition always creates an attraction. The human tendency is to overstep some prohibition and declare to ourselves the illogical need for “them” to be “that strict.”

“ *Somehow, the world assumes that law has built-in tolerance levels that can be used as an escape option.* ”

Dabbling in the forbidden and seeming to get away with it is a cheap way of attempting to experience grace and freedom.

Somehow, the world assumes that law has built-in tolerance levels that can be used as an escape option. The same idea is transferred to the Bible and God. Numerous exceptions are made with impunity toward both man and God. Even the serpent said, “Yea, hath God said?” Today many Christians ask, “Does God mean what He has said?” in a tone of voice that wants to conclude with: “Probably not.”

The Bottom Line is that the same pattern of bypassing man’s laws are frequently also attempted toward God and His Word. Dabbling in the forbidden and seeming to get away with it is a man-devised way of attempting to experience grace and freedom, but is rather guilt and bondage.

[Isn't it interesting when children's responses become instructive to adults? —PLM]



Two-Legged Truth

Chester Weaver, LaGrange, IN

God's truth walks on two legs. It always has and always will. Walking on two legs remains a miracle of the living. The dead no longer walk.

Even natural law testifies to two-legged truth. Offspring of the living requires both male and female becoming one. Flowing electricity requires both positive and negative terminals. Production happens when both work and rest are kept in balance.

What would happen with all work or all rest? What would happen with a wire connected to a negative terminal only? What would happen with only a female progenitor? Nothing.

Just so, God has ordained the same order in spiritual matters. He moves, He works, He blesses when two truths synergize. For some reason, He refuses to bless when only one leg is in place. When both legs are absent He is not even present.

The following diagram puts these truths into perspective.

For many long years, both legs were absent. The Roman Catholic Church had no concept of synergizing truth. The Church believed that it owned the Truth and dispensed it as the Church saw fit.

Then Martin Luther discovered the

doctrine of justification in the Holy Scriptures. Many rejoiced in the new liberating truth. But even Martin Luther lamented that the morals of Europe declined under Lutheran theology. Something was wrong.

The Anabaptists rejoiced that Luther got the one leg in place. But they insisted that the Scriptures taught something more than just justification. The Anabaptists said that unless obedience to Christ is evident, faith is not real. Salvation is not just an abstract head-and-heart matter; salvation is also a concrete obedience matter. Lack of obedience indicates a lack of love for Christ. Because they believed that, the Anabaptists were labeled legalists and preachers of works righteousness. But they held their ground because the Scriptures are clear on the matter.

It is time to review this two-legged truth. It is time to heal a broken leg. If one leg is not healed, eventually the other leg will become diseased as well. In time, both legs can be amputated. How well can a person get around on two amputated legs? Or on one leg for that matter? By contrast, a healthy man can walk effortlessly and can run

far on two legs.

Let's check our "legs." When we hold one of the following truths without equally holding the other, we are crippled. We might deny it. But we are in danger of losing the other also. When both legs are supporting equal weight, God's blessing is there. In fact, the truth only reproduces itself when both of these legs are in place. The church *only* reproduces herself when *both* of these legs support equal weight. She fools herself when she believes otherwise.

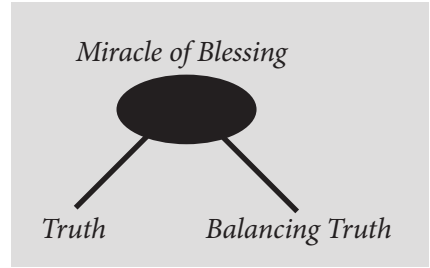
Dead men do not walk. Crippled men hobble. Amputees must be fitted with awkward prosthetics. Normal healthy men walk effortlessly and confidently.

Spirit-filled men are Spirit-filled because they have this matter right. Spirit-filled churches are Spirit-filled because they have this matter right. The blessing of the Lord is obvious. It cannot be denied.

Whenever an individual is limping spiritually, hobbling spiritually, or not getting around at all, one of two things is true: either he is spiritually dead or he is out of balance. The same is true for churches.

Whenever an individual is prospering spiritually or a church is prospering spiritually God is there pouring in His power and grace. He is performing a constant miracle. Life

is reproducing itself. Live men are running on two legs!



Following is a partial list of pairs and balancing truths. Can you add more?

Loving God	Loving neighbor
Faith	Works
Mercy	Truth
Belief	Obedience
Nonresistance	Nonconformity
Individual	Group
Emotion	Intellect
Inner experience	Outer behavior
Worship	Service
Spirit	Structure
Defensive	Offensive
Principle	Practice
Meditation	Proclamation
Private	Public
Sense of need	Sense of confidence
Waiting	Striving
Praying	Working



You Used to Be Beautiful

Robert Stauffer, Pennington, MN

A composite treatise with love

There was a time I looked upon your countenance and it was lovely. A peace was there that I hadn't seen among women of the world who often appear haunted by sadness between moments of gaiety. The peace on your countenance told of having received the Lord Jesus into your heart and knowing He reigned there. The light in your eye reflected the hope in your heart. It was not unlike a girl in love with a man, and I assumed you were in love with the Man—Christ Jesus, and nothing He asked of you was too hard.

I guess the world would not understand the paradigm from which I write. When you were veiled, as taught in the Scriptures, there was a beauty about you the world does not have. Your hair, neatly arranged, harmonized nicely with the symbol of your covered head, indicating that you accepted your place under authority. To what would you have attributed the glow and joy on your countenance, except it was the Lord who indwelt you very being?

Oh, how refreshing was your modest demeanor. It was safe to be around you. I don't even remember what you wore, but I recall with gratefulness that it was a wonderful thing to be in your company without having to be as

much on guard with my thoughts as when I meet a worldly girl. To see you have the courage to dress modestly was something I admired in you. Had you known the disgust in my mind and the danger to my soul I felt when a girl tried to be coy and seductive, then you might have understood how your modesty and simplicity of dress was a beautiful thing to me.

I appreciated you for being real with the colors and tones God gave you. Paint might do great things for houses, cars, and machinery, but even as a young man, paint on a woman indicated something less than desirable to me.

• • • • •

But something happened! What was it? What in all that the world has to offer ever turned you aside from the beauty you once had? What did you really gain by plucking your eyebrows? You lost something when you took off your veiling and modest apparel. Were you aware of that loss? Apparently you were, for in their place you now cut and color your hair and frequent the jewelry counters. Who knows the amount of time you now spend painting your body day after day? I don't understand what painted toenails do for you or anyone

else, for that matter. The paint you wear has taken away from the beauty you once had. As you sought after the glamour of the world, you have lost something beautiful.

How is it, furthermore, that you have become as a jewel of gold in a pig's snout according to the writer of Proverbs? Are you aware of how I see men looking at you? Do you perceive how I have to avert my eyes when you appear in your defrauding attire? I no longer feel safe around you.

The beauty the world admires is most often linked with youth, passion, and lust. As age takes its toll, such beauty fades and requires more paint and many embellishments to make up for the perceived loss. The beauty I am writing of certainly is attractive in youth. But this beauty grows in the fertile soil of an on-

going, obedient relationship with the Lord. It comes from within and is a precious thing to behold in your countenance and your walk in life.

Oh yes, I know all too well that the world would not understand where I am coming from. But I hope you remember from where you have fallen. Have you found sweet fellowship in trying to look like worldly girls? Have the changes you made deepened the peace you once had? I hope to stir up in you the First Love which I think you once had. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is still of great price in the sight of God. Women who reverence God and His Word still have a beauty which far surpasses that of the world.

[From *Young Companions*, January 31, 2010. Used by permission.] 

ANABAPTISTS LIVE ANNOUNCEMENT

Bro. Abner Riehl will send at no cost any or all of the CD's produced in Sarasota, Florida, at the Anabaptist Identity Conference on March 12-14, 2010.

For a list of speakers and topics, refer to March Calvary Messenger, page 29.

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The Road to Anarchy

Daniel Martin, Denver, PA

All roads take us from one area to another. Road signs inform us of the direction we are headed, the legal speed limit, as well as things that we will soon see if we continue on the road we are on.

Most normal people have made mistakes while traveling from one place to another and know what it is like to turn around and go back. Mistakes like that are temporal and insignificant, yet they are so similar to the mistakes we make on our spiritual pilgrimage.

The prefix “an” means *not* or *no* and “archy” means *rule* or *ruler*, so put the two together and we have “no rules.” Merriam-Webster says anarchy means “an absence or denial of any authority or established order.”

In Deut. 4:5-9, we see Moses’ plea; in Deut. 5:1-21, we have God’s law. In verses 22-27, we see the people’s response, and verses 28-29 show God’s response.

There are moral steps that lead to anarchy. The children of Israel took those distinct steps.

The way of thinking with biblical morality asks, “What does God want us to be doing to honor Him?” The focus is not on us or me. The essence of this step is realizing our

accountability to God. The thing that restrains us from sin is the judgment of God, the fear of God and His commandments. Biblical morality is making choices based on God’s Word and will.

The following three steps lead to **individualism** at its worst. And *the only thing that will bring us back to biblical morality is repentance.*

Consensus morality is a step away from God where we focus on our group’s preferences to make a decision vs. the Bible’s directions. The focus changes from God to us and what we believe is right for our circumstances. This way of making decisions is not all bad, however, generations may thus lose God’s laws that He has established. In 1 Samuel 8:1-7, we have the elders’ consensus; in v. 19-22 is what we may say; and in Deut. 20:1-4, is what God said. Consensus morality asks, “What must we be doing to please our peers?” We want to be like everyone else. The thing that keeps us from sin is the fear of what others are going to think of us if they find out what we did.

Pragmatism is doing what is most practical and what makes sense for us to be doing. The essence of this system of thought is all about

what I think vs. what we believe, as in consensus morality. The focus changes from us to an individual basis. In 1 Kings 12:26-33, we find “I think,” and in Deut. 12-13 we find what God said. Expedience is what we will not do if it doesn’t help us get what we want. So with pragmatism almost anything is permissible. It’s every man for himself.

Hedonism is found in 1 Kings 21, where King Ahab looked outside and wanted a vineyard because it pleased him. Hedonism carries a strong desire for pleasure. The focus changes from how I think to how I feel. In this sad category we will find those who will manipulate or kill us to get what they desire. They live their lives based on feelings, and do what is most pleasurable. The only restraint from sin is acute pain and discomfort.

These are not the only people in danger. There are many people who will miss heaven by eighteen inches; their head is right, but their heart is not. Pray for those of us who have found smooth sailing in the journey, because we also could fall asleep while traveling to heaven. Pray for wisdom that we could discern when a U-turn is needed in our own lives. We need to urge each other on, for fear we will lose the vision of our early forefathers. If we are too busy to hear the cry of the lost, then we are indeed too busy, and we are also

on the road to anarchy. But praise the Lord, U-turns are still allowed.

Anarchy itself is found in 2 Kings 17:7-23, and what God says is found in Deut. 11:1, 26-28. With anarchy (no rules) there is nobody who will tell me what to do! We will do what makes us feel really good. The essence of thought is no longer “we feel,” but “we will.” It is the heart of Satan himself coming out. Absolutely nothing restrains such from what they want.

If we were deceived, would we know it? The world around is in shambles (just read the news). It did not happen overnight. There are many small steps that slowly led to demoralizing the sanctity of human life. These things are to be expected and much worse as the day approaches. What small steps are we taking that will make it easy for our children to live a simple Christian life that honors God’s principles? The more complex our lives are, the harder it will be to hear His still, small voice.

May the Lord help us to maintain our focus and stay strong in biblical morality, lest we fall asleep and drift towards anarchy.

[From “Youth to Youth” in *The Mid-Atlantic Informer*, Feb., 2010. Slightly edited and used by permission. Bro. Martin is 20 years old, who has an important message for youth and for us all.]



Truth's Final Word

Darlene Miller, Linn, MO

While Bethlehem lay sleeping, unaware,
Truth was born.
Truth was wrapped in swaddling clothes,
Laid in a manger,
And welcomed by a menagerie of lowly beasts;
And no one knew.
No one, save the lowly few who kept watch over their flocks, on nearby hills.
No one, except the lowly couple from Nazareth who was chosen
For this moment,
Who had endured the scorn and ridicule of those who thought
They knew truth, but who believed a lie.

Truth walked the dusty paths of Galilee,
Worked in a carpenter's shop,
Endured the injustices and complexities of human life.
And no one knew that Truth walked in their midst,
No one, but the lowly fishermen
Who dropped their nets at the call of Truth;
No one, except the hated tax collector
Who surrendered all when Truth beckoned;
No one, save the few who simply and humbly believed that
This WAS Truth.

Truth healed the sick,
Brought sight to blind eyes,
Forgiveness to sin-sick souls;
And no one knew.
No one, save those who saw their need and were made whole.

Truth spoke,
And by those words many felt the sting of conviction.
Despising the light that was being shone
In the dark corners of their lives.
They sought to discredit Truth,
But always their craftily-laid snares came back to trap them.

Finally, Truth stood in the halls of justice (such justice as man imparts)
To face the ultimate irony, the question,
“What is Truth?”
And they knew not that Truth stood embodied before them.

Then Truth was beaten,
Mocked,
And nailed to a cross.
And Truth held His peace,
For He knew Who would have the last word.
The “powers that be” rejoiced, for they believed,
Mistakenly, that Truth was silenced, crushed, eradicated.
Allowing them the freedom to resume
Their petty, pious, and privileged lives
In peace.
But little did they know!

For truth cannot be put to death forever.
Cannot be sealed in a tomb,
Though legions of angels stand guard.
Through the darkness of Friday,
And the hopelessness of Saturday.
Truth rested His case,
While those who had hoped and believed,
Now mourned and questioned.

Then came Sunday!
Glorious Sunday!
And Truth triumphed over death!
Flowers bloomed, birds sang, and angels rejoiced,
Still there were few who knew.
But those who knew the Truth
By Truth were freed.
They conquered fear,
Their tongues were loosed
And many believed!
Thus the few became, by power of the Truth,
The Kingdom that turned the world upside down.
And many knew; for Truth arose!
And THAT is the final word!



marriages

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

Bontrager-Ropp

Bro. Lyle, son of Richard and Ella Bontrager, Topeka, IN, and Sis. Shirley, daughter of Duane and Leora Ropp, Hutchinson, KS, at Maranatha Mennonite Church, Hutchinson, for Word of Life Fellowship, on April 3, 2010, by Glenn Yoder.

Christner-Stoltzfus

Bro. Jesse, son of Tim and Wilma Christner, Fairfield, MT, and Sis. Lillian, daughter of Aaron and Anna Stoltzfus, Gap, PA, at Spring Garden Church for West Haven A.M. Church, on Dec. 19, 2009, by Lee Stoltzfus.

Coblentz-Petersheim

Bro. Kevin Lee, son of John and Amanda Coblentz, Hicksville, OH, and Sis. Rebecca Anne, daughter of Paul and Naomi Petersheim, Oakland, MD, at Cherry Glade Mennonite for Mountain View Mennonite on April 10, 2010, by Jerry Yoder.

Dyck-Swartzentruber

Bro. Abe R., son of Jacob and Tina Dyck, Milverton, ON, and Sis. Beulah Ann, daughter of Donny and Bertha Swartzentruber, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church, on Feb. 13, 2010, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Hostetler-Troyer

Bro. Bruce, son of John Dean and Karen Hostetler, Plain City, OH, and Sis. Amber, daughter of Joel and Ruby Troyer, Benton, OH, at Gospel Haven Church by Dennis Mullet.

Mast-Yoder

Bro. Kenneth Ray, son of Alton and Mary Ellen Mast, Flintville, TN, and Sis. Mary Jo, daughter of Leslie and Verda Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on March 27, 2010, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Miller-Yutzy

Bro. Jeff Miller, Fairfield, MT, son of Freeman and Maudene Miller, Advance, MO, and Sis. Kelly, daughter of Phil and Lois Yutzy, Hutchinson, KS, at The Father's House, Hutchinson, KS, for Cedar Crest A.M. Church on April 24, 2010, by Lee Nisly.

Nissley-Schrock

Bro. Sanford, son of LeeRoy and Lydia Nissley, Catlett, VA, and Sis. Renita Kaye, daughter of Gary and Mary Schrock, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on April 10, 2010, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Stoltzfus-Stoltzfus

Bro. Jared, son of Jonathan and Lydia Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA, and Sis. Carmen, daughter of J. Omar and Carol Stoltzfus, Oxford, PA, at Pequea A.M. Church for Mine Rd. A.M. Church on April 3, 2010, by Alvin Stoltzfus.

Wagoner-Stoll

Bro. Josh, son of Mark and Terri

Wagoner, Swanton, MD, and Sis. Emily, daughter of Ed and Ruby Stoll, Bloomfield, MO, at First General Baptist Church, Bloomfield, MO, for Crowley's Ridge Mennonite Church by Melvin Troyer.

Weaver-Yoder

Bro. Ryan Daniel, son of Daniel and Linda Weaver, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Rebecca Diane, daughter of Elmer and Rosanna Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on March 6, 2010, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Yoder-Yoder

Bro. Timothy Wayne, son of Marvin and Bertha Yoder, Montgezuma, GA, and Sis. Gina Rose, daughter of Nelson and Brenda Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite church on Jan. 30, 2010, by Donny Swartzentruber.

cradle roll

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

Alimowski, Marek and Sarah (Overholt), North Port, FL, second child and son, Rafael, April 5, 2010.

Beiler, Ernest and Elmina (Stoltzfoos), Gap, PA, fourth child, first son, Elliot Caiden, March 17, 2010.

Beiler, Paul and Rosanna (Lapp), Free Union, VA, fifth child, third son, Jeriah Noah, March 25, 2010.

Brubaker, David and Doris (Peachey), Deansboro, NY, first child and dau., Serena Kay, April 11, 2010.

Eicher, Norman and Emily (Miller), Belvidere, TN, second child and son, Kendall Devon, April 30, 2010.

Fisher, Elvin and Saralynn (Esh), Honey Grove, PA, third child, second son, Ryan Christopher, April 27, 2010.

Gingerich, Jared and Larita (Miller), Martinsburg, OH, first child and dau., Nicole Destiny, Feb. 2, 2010.

Gingerich, Joseph and Rhoda (Stoltzfus), Dyke, VA, third child, first son, Lincoln Riley, April 9, 2010.

Glick, Dwayne and Rosie (King), Perry, NY, sixth child, fourth dau., Kristina Joy, April 3, 2010.

Glick, John D. and Martha (Stoltzfus), Philadelphia, PA, first child and dau., Kiana Evelyn, April 20, 2010.

Hostetler, Arlin and Elsie (Kauffman), Belleville, PA, second child and dau., Kaylene Ella, Feb. 24, 2010.

Hostetler, Edwin and Esther (Yoder), Auburn, KY, tenth child, fourth dau., Karina Grace, Jan. 19, 2010.

Hostetler, Eric and Shannon (Stoll), Martinsburg, OH, third child, first son, Dakota Eric, Nov. 2, 2009.

Kauffman, Enos and Joann (Miller), Bloomfield, MO, sixth child, fifth son, Derek Kyle, April 5, 2010.

Kauffman, James and Joanna Grace (Yoder), Bittinger, MD, seventh child, fifth dau., Jalissa Grace, March 31, 2010.

Kauffman, Norman and Rose (Raber), Grabill, IN, first child and dau., Allison Nicole, March 19, 2010.

King, Marvin and Kathy (Stoltzfus), Wyoming, NY, seventh child, fifth dau., Carmen Nicole, April 29, 2010.

Knepp, Jerald and Jennifer (Stoltzfus), Middleburg, PA, first child and dau., Shohanna Rayne, Feb. 22, 2010.

Kuepfer, Darryl and Susan (Gerber), Millbank, ON, tenth child, sixth dau., Anne Renae, April 9, 2010.

Kuhns, Ron and Cindy (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, second child, first dau., Madison Brooke, Feb. 26, 2010.

Mast, Joseph and Anita (Miller), Crossville, TN, second child, first son, Javon Paul, March 12, 2010.

Mast, Mahlon and Rebecca (Mast), Auburn, KY, fifth child, second son, Philip Wayne, March 4, 2010.

Miller, Craig and Rachel (Kuepfer), Thailand, first child and son, Bomani Leon, April 14, 2010.

Miller, Darryl and Renee (Hochstetler), Utica, OH, fourth child, third son, Ian Bradley, March 25, 2010.

Miller, Jacob and Regina (Yoder), Kalona, IA, fifth child, third son, Weston Dean, March 8, 2010.

Peachy, Joe and Andrea (Beachy), Russellville, KY, first child and dau., Teylor Jo, March 15, 2010.

Schmucker, Levi and Angelene (Bontrager), Langdon, KS, second child and dau., Cassie Ida, March 29, 2010.

Stutzman, Elwyn and Rhonda (Hackman), Davenport, IA, second child and son, Kyler Luke, Jan. 5, 2010.

Swartzentruber, Ronald and Lisa (Yoder), Oakland, MD, first child and dau., Larisha Rose, April 14, 2010.

Yoder, Steve and Carolyn (Fisher), Mifflintown, PA, fifth child, third dau., Carmen Grace, April 13, 2010.

Yoder, Tim A. and Ruth (Miller), Lewisburg, PA, second child and son, Micah Timothy, March 22, 2010.

Zook, Andrew and Wanda (Byers), Middleburg, PA, third and fourth sons, Alex Matthew and Austin Michael, April 6, 2010.

ordinations

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

Bro. Carl Gingerich, 35, was ordained minister at Shady Lawn Mennonite Church on April 25, 2010. Preordination messages given by Marvin Kauffman, Leon, IA. The charge was given by Elmer Gingerich, assisted by Mark Gingerich and Michael Mast. Robert Byler, Ernest Eby, and Johnny Stoltzfus were also in the lot.

Bro. Wilbur Gingerich, 42, Arthur, IL, was ordained as bishop at Trinity Christian Fellowship Church on March 14, 2010. Preordination messages were brought by Eugene Eicher, Grabill, IN. The charge was given by Dannie Diener, assisted by Eugene Eicher and Homer Zook. Ernie Gingerich and Mervin Yoder were also in the lot.

Bro. Aaron Peachey, 60 and **Bro. Bob Peachey**, 37 (father and son) were both ordained as pastor/elders, stewards of the Lord for Christian Believers Fellowship, Lewisburg, PA. Paul A. Miller, Sugarcreek, OH, brought preordination messages on February 27 and 28. The ordination charges were given by the local ministerial team on March 28, 2010, at Millmont Mennonite Church with Ed Landis, Lancaster, PA, and David Fisher, Shaver's Creek, PA, ministering the Word.

obituaries

Bontrager, Willis R., 60, died March 25, 2010, as a result of a heart attack. He was born on Jan. 24, 1950, son of Ray and Ella (Miller) Bontrager in Tuscola, IL.

He was a member and minister (since his ordination on Oct. 25, 1981) of Pleasant View Church in Arcola, IL.

On June 12, 1971, he married Esther Byler in Dover, DE. Those left behind to mourn and hope are his wife, Esther; three sons and two daughters: Melody, married to Clifford Schrock, Harrisonville, PA; Matthew, married to Lacy Havrisiuc, Suceava, Romania; Amber, married to Melvin Yoder, Harrison, AR; Aaron and Andrew, at home; seven grandchildren. Other survivors include his parents, three sisters: Marie (Dan) Kuhns, Arthur, IL; Ruth (Gary) Kuhns, Tuscola, IL; Judy (Darrell) Herschberger, Tuscola, IL; Kenneth (Goldie) Bontrager, Sullivan, IL; and Ernest Bontrager, Arthur, IL.

Willis loved his family, his call to the church and school. He served on Missions Interest Committee and had no greater joy than to hear that his "children walked in truth."

The funeral was held on March 29 at Otto Center with Howard Kuhns officiating. Others ministering were Alvin Stoltzfus, Oxford, PA, and Bill Mullet, Sugarcreek, OH. Burial was in the Pleasant View Church Cemetery.

Eichorn, Ellen, 32, wife of Howard Eichorn, Harlan, IN, died at her residence on April 9, 2010. She was born July 26, 1977, in Stuarts Draft, VA, daughter of Nelson and Lydia Peachey.

She was a member of Fellowship Haven Church, Woodburn, IN, where her husband serves as deacon. She was a diligent helper to him in that work, effectively serving where there was need. Her desire was that Christ be glorified in her life as well as in her death.

Howard and Ellen were married on May 24, 2002. Surviving are Howard, and two daughters: Audrey (7) and Hadasah (4). Also surviving are her parents, Harley and Lydia Yoder; two brothers: Nathan, married to Joyce (Miller), Greeneville, TN; and Joshua Yoder, Nuremburg, Germany. Two grandparents surviving are Ben Peachey and Sara Ann Yoder, both of Stuarts Draft, VA. She was preceded in death by her birth father, Nelson Peachey, in 1980.

The funeral was held on April 11, at Cuba Mennonite Church with Gene Eicher, Tim Eicher and Delbert Schlabach serving. Paul Leroy Miller served in the committal at the Fellowship Haven Cemetery.

Gingerich, Jacob M., 86, of Kalona, Iowa, died at Leon, Iowa, Jan. 16, 2010. He was born in Johnson County, Iowa, March 25, 1923, son of the late Mahlon and Maggie (Miller) Gingerich.

He was a member of Sharon Bethel Church.

On Feb. 12, 1948, he was married to Dorothea Graber, who survives. Their children are: Earl and Diane Gingerich

of Iowa City; Inez and Mark Houk of Spokane, WA; and Maynard and Carol Gingerich of Riverside, IA. Also surviving are ten grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were seven siblings: Katie Mast; Ollie Hochstetler; Lizzie Gingerich; Linus Gingerich; Iva Gingerich; and Maynard Gingerich.


The funeral was held on Jan. 20, at Sharon Bethel Church with Delmar Bontrager and Jacob Yoder serving. Burial was in the church cemetery, with Gabriel Beachy in charge.

Yoder, Kathrine, 91, died Dec. 27, 2009. She was born on Geauga County, Ohio, Jan. 20, 1918, daughter of the late Harvey D. and Fannie (Hershberger) Byler.

Katie was a member of Montezuma Mennonite Church, Montezuma, GA.

On Dec. 17, 1940, she was married to Melvin L. Yoder. He died in 1991. To this home were born five sons and three daughters: Verna, wife of Freeman Wingard, Montezuma; Olen, married to Lena Overholt, Minerva, OH; Linda, wife of Larry Kauffman, Marshallville, GA; Harley, married to Lisa Whitt, Montezuma; Fannie Carol, wife of Paul E. Yoder, Montezuma. Three sons preceded her in death: Raymond, Melvin Lloyd, and Allen, Husband of Emma Wingard, Montezuma.

Survivors include 34 grandchildren, 64 great grandchildren and one great great grandchild; one brother Clarence Byler, Virginia Beach, VA; and one sister, Verna Yoder, Abbeville, SC.

The funeral was held on Dec. 31, with Donny Swartzentruber officiating. 

The annual Ministers' Meeting was ably hosted near Goshen, Indiana, by the Fair Haven and Woodlawn congregations on April 6-8, 2010. This has been an annual event since 1968. It is interesting to note that it is now just over four decades since those first ministers' meetings, which were first held 41 years after 1927, when the first Beachy church was formed in Somerset County, PA, under the leadership of Bishop Moses Beachy.

I was not involved in the early efforts to begin these meetings, but there was then some concern that the widespread support of congregational autonomy would not result in an unfortunate gradual disconnect and fragmentation. At that time, both mission boards (MIC and AMA) had been in place about 15 years. This meeting became a suitable forum in which they could report to the constituency that elects them.

Since that time several additional boards have been elected. A very large number of para-church ministries have also developed. Many of these ministries like to give reports to the gathered body of ministers.

One feature that underscores the

passing of time and transition of leadership is the introduction of newly-ordained brethren. This year there were 23 such men. Of those who were assigned speaking topics, there were six that I heard speak in public for the first time.

I am told that the Holdeman group regularly reports the names of those who are deceased since their last meeting.

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Our people have been very intentional about maintaining congregational autonomy as opposed to centralized control. Since 1997, there has been a five-member Bishop Committee elected that is authorized to highlight concerns and bring them to the gathered body of ministers for further deliberation. Their hard work is to be appreciated.

It becomes clear once more that effective safeguards against world-ward drift do not exist in a particular structure or system. It exists in the hearts of faithful followers of the One who declared "My kingdom is not of this world" and the One who prayed for our sanctification through the truth of His Word. (John 17:17).

To be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a

peculiar people who are called to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, can be realized as we individually and collectively follow the Lord with honest hearts. The first and greatest commandment is still to really love God, and the second one is to love our neighbor as our self.

• • • • •

Retention is a term that has come into common usage in church circles. It has to do with how many young people continue in the church of their upbringing. Generally speaking, those considered mainline with liberal theology and a culturally integrated lifestyle are losing many young people. While those with more biblical teaching and practice make a better showing, this issue is an important concern in conservative Anabaptist circles.

It is understandable that young people do not want to blindly receive whatever is handed to them. We frequently hear that young people want to have some sense of ownership in what they believe and practice. Recently a middle-aged father spoke of his own journey through that period of his life.

Ownership is important. In business life, ownership can come in at least two different ways. We can buy something by paying for it

with our own money. We can rightly claim it as our own. To be given a gift is another way of possessing something. We can claim a gift for our own even though we had nothing to do with making it available. This is true whenever a person receives a gift or inheritance left to him or her. It is also graphically illustrated when we receive the free gift of salvation. It would be unspeakably tragic for a person to refuse that gift simply because he had nothing to do with its formation.

This does not rule out that young people can ask valid and honest questions. They can also be prideful and self-centered. The man referred to above found blessing and freedom in his willingness to embrace a gift and claim ownership of it, even though it was not of his own making.

Blessed are young people who feel free to ask questions with honest and humble hearts. Their presence is a valuable asset to any body of believers.

Ministers and parents do well to pay attention to what young people are trying to communicate. Young people do themselves a favor to remember that their parents have already traveled the journey through Youthville. Their own future as parents to young people may be much closer than it seems.

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Weddings are joyous occasions. The prospect of a new life together, plus the vows “as long as you both shall live” create an atmosphere of joy and solemnity that is unique to the occasion.

Generally speaking, weddings in our circles have become large gatherings. I have not given much attention to the financial cost of a typical conservative Anabaptist wedding. I was startled to find out that the average cost of a U.S. wedding is reported to be \$28,000. This is one time when being well below average seems preferable.

To celebrate the importance of marriage with many friends is certainly in order. But while weddings are an event, marriage is a journey. There is no indication that the high cost of weddings assures a more stable and long-lasting marriage. May the Lord help us to have a clear vision of Christian weddings and marriages that are symbolic of Christ and His beloved bride, The Church.

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To read through the Old Testament tells us a great deal about God and us humans. God is always God and is able to regulate the outcome of conflicts contrary to all human expectations. He honors faithfulness, but does not ignore idolatry. And people have a

strong tendency to quickly forget and turn to idolatry and intermarriage with people described as pagan.

Samuel’s godly character was not embraced by his sons who took bribes and perverted judgment. This was one reason that the people demanded to have a king like the nations around them. Unfortunately, godly characteristics are not automatically passed from one generation to the next.

A willingness to learn from sacred history, from more recent church history, from current events, and from the larger church community can be helpful to persons who are committed to faithfulness.

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Messenger of Truth (4-21-10) includes information about Methuselah that I found interesting. Methuselah lived for 243 years during Adam’s lifetime. He died the year of the flood. This need not mean that he died *in* the flood. His life overlapped with Noah for 600 years. Abraham’s father, Terah and Noah’s life spans overlapped for 28 years before Noah died. Methuselah was the son of Enoch who walked with God and was taken up to God when he was 365 years old. (Genesis 5:21-23)

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Mode of baptism continues to be an issue of which honest Christians

have differing opinions. I recall having heard Amish deacon, Peter Wagler (1885-1957), quote someone saying that the small amount of water applied by pouring could not possibly wash away sin. Bro. Pete said, "That's true, but neither could all the water in the ocean do that." I think he was saying we do not believe in baptismal regeneration.

The "buried with Him" in Romans 6 seems to offer strong support to those who favor immersion. Perhaps the most vocal and oft-used defense for applying the person to the water is that *baptism* is said to mean *immersion*.

Early in my Christian life I felt that from a scriptural perspective that immersion would seem preferable to affusion. I no longer feel that way. George R. Brunk I includes a discussion on mode of baptism in his book, *Ready Scriptural Reasons* that has influenced my thinking. His points of discussion include the following:

- In baptism prefigured in OT anointing, washing, and so on, invariably is the substance applied to the person, never the reverse.
- Outdoor baptisms in sacred history state that both the baptizer and the recipient were in the water. (A person in our tour group in 2000 witnessed a baptism in Jordan River

where the recipient received water applied to his head from the hands of one who administered the ritual.)

- To spiritualize the teaching in Romans 6 is necessary for our crucifixion and death to make sense. By the same token, death and burial also need to be spiritualized to be consistent.

- To insist that baptism means immersion is not borne out in NT usage. 1 Corinthians 10:2 states that the children of Israel were all baptized, but they were not immersed. The Egyptians who followed were immersed, but not baptized. I checked eight translations besides King James Version. All use some form of *baptize* in this passage. I also checked in Strong's Concordance and found that to baptize "*with water*" is commonly used. I did not find any place that to baptize "*in water*" is taught.


For the above comments to distract from the basic necessity of repentance from sin and surrender to the Lord and Savior who alone can give us eternal life would be truly regrettable. However, an awareness of what the Scriptures teach on the subject is helpful, especially if we are approached with a view that seems to us a case of misguided sincerity.



One of the problems in writing this

column is the time lag from writing to publication. But national health care reform has survived bitter opposition and the president has signed it into law. It was interesting to receive an article from *The Goshen News* and pertinent snippets from the internet that the Amish are exempt from the new law.

(Courtesy Harvey J. A. Miller)

It will be interesting to see how other conservative Anabaptist groups will relate to this exemption. I consider this news thankworthy, giving hope that our local plan, together with other localities, could also be recognized. —DLM 

Adolf Hitler's Beliefs

In 1937, Hitler ordered all German children into government schools.

Here are some things Hitler said:

- “The youth of today is ever the people of tomorrow. For this reason we have set before ourselves the task of inoculating our youth with the spirit of this community of the people at a very young age, at an age when human beings are still unperverted and therefore unspoiled. This Reich stands, and it is building itself up for the future, upon its youth. And this new Reich will give its youth to no one, but will itself take youth and give to youth its own education and its own upbringing.”

- “He alone who owns the youth, gains the future.”

- “How fortunate for leaders that men do not think.”

- “It is always more difficult to fight against faith than against knowledge.”

- “Make the lie big; make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.”

- A song sung by Hitler Youth:
“We are the joyous Hitler youth,
We do not need any Christian virtue.

Our leader is our savior.

The Pope and Rabbi shall be gone,
We want to be pagans once again.”

[From *The Gospel Trumpet*.] 

It costs more to say “No” to God than to say “Yes!”

Finding the Right Church

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

A group of fellows were discussing church. Their church wasn't what they thought it should be. It was not the perfect model of perfect Christians. What then? If the church isn't what it ought to be, join another one—right? There are over 300 brands to choose from. Why not explore and see which is nearest perfect and has no problems? How about that?

A young man once told me his girl friend wasn't satisfied with her church. There wasn't another one around that was satisfactory either. Then what? Start a new one? None of these alternatives seem to be the right answer. There must be another way.

Many young Christians are confronted and entangled with these questions. Often out of reaction to something in our background, we become sure our church isn't the right one.

Young people have taken lessons from older adults who join and rejoin in search for the right church where souls are being saved. We seem to have a built-in instinct to want to rally behind wherever the action is. This sometimes becomes

the deciding factor of who the right church is. Action and perfection are two different things! This calls for a decision on deeper values. For me, I've given up on the search for a perfect church. Why?

First, each group is made of about the same stuff. They are human beings. Holy as some say they are, they still show their human colors. I have been in many kinds of churches and personally listened to the problems of their members. When all the boiling is done, they have human conflicts. The issues they split over are almost uncountable.

Second, the search for the perfect church would keep one occupied for life. Then when life, which is like a vapor, is all over, it will have been spent looking for the right church with the right people to suit our taste. Many Christians waste their lives going from church to church. The devil could bring a class of demons for lessons from the strife and confusion this has caused as they go. There must be a more valuable search for us.

Third, we youth missed the real question in our upright discussions of finding a perfect church. We failed

to ask ourselves how to become the perfect person to make the perfect church. There is the crucial point—becoming the right kind of person. It isn't finding the right church, but being the right kind of person in the church.

My concern is that I am becoming the right person. After all, I am part of the church, and it is foolish for me to push all the blame of imperfection on others. So the real task for each individual is to seek to become the person God meant for us to be when He created us.

Now my real task is to start being everything I think a church ought to be. Better yet, reach to become what Christ wants His church to be. When this begins, fulfillment and purpose of life take place. Then the person becomes an optimistic, happy child of God that lives with enthusiasm for Christ. He will not be a negative person who sees everything everyone else does as doom and gloom, who can hardly wait for God to pour out judgment on the "sinners" around him.

There are a few things involved in becoming the right church. If I want a church that isn't always having trouble, I'll have to be a peacemaker instead of a trouble maker. If I'm not part of the solution, I am part of the problem. If my church is to be

a mission-minded church, it must begin with persons like myself. That is the way I have found it. It must begin with me. It means to stop complaining about others and go to work yourself. Those who cry the loudest are often working the least. Instead of expecting others to be the model church, my challenge is to personally become that model.

Where do we go from here to be the church? First, we must center our attention on being the right kind of person. We best become that by giving up our selfish desires and giving our life to Christ and His cause. As the Bible points out, "present your bodies a living sacrifice." I must sacrifice my will and do His will.

Second, we work to be persons through whom God's love can flow to others. Our goal will be to become a giving person, giving of oneself, love, compassion, talents and blessing to others. We'll ask, "What can I *give*?" not "What can I *get*?" "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Invest your life in people.

Third, I'll be Christian during conflict. Instead of blaming others for the conflict, let me first check out myself to find a trace of the problem. Conflicts will be there. Accept the challenge to work through them,

not around them. I must be willing to ask, give and receive forgiveness. I'll go sin hunting in my own woods first.

Fourth, to be the church, I must practice a meaningful ministry. God doesn't call His children to a ministry of tearing down the character and ministry of his fellowman. I don't recall reading in the Bible of a ministry of criticism, like some Christians keep nursing. We must do something constructive where we discover a true purpose for ourselves and give encouragement to others. Cheer up and smile, the work of Christ is the greatest and highest calling in the world.

Finally, joining the church isn't a free ride to glory. It is a public expression that now I am standing with God and His people. It has a commission to keep. Keeping that commission should be my aim.


Instead of joining and "unjoining" in search to find perfection, consider what you can do to help your fellowship become the church. *How can I become the best that God wants me to be?* Tell God, "From this day forward I'm Yours. I'll do Your will

and yield to Your Word. Make me the kind of person You want me to be." When a person starts becoming his best for God, that question of finding the right church becomes smaller and begins to answer itself.

To me, being the church is to stop searching and start building, stop complaining and start working, stop grumbling and start witnessing. In my experience, church happens in the present as I give myself to investing in persons for Christ's sake.

Now why do I say all this? Perhaps some time you will find yourself discouraged with your imperfect church. You may feel that the last straw is about to break, and you've "had it." Try giving of yourself. You no doubt wish to be a victorious, cheerful, giving person. That is the kind of life Christ called us to in the first place.

To me it is not in *finding*—but in *being* and *giving*. Try it. You'll be glad you did.

[From *Calvary Messenger*, May, 1972. Selected by Menno Nisly, Hutchinson, KS.] 

We will never win the world to Christ with spare cash.

Reward: A Motive for Faithfulness

Floyd Stoltzfus

John and Barbara Glick are serving under Amish Mennonite Aid in Kenya. They left the shores of America and their seven adult sons a little more than a year ago. According to their weekly newsletters, John and Barbara are busy in the routines of missionary life, such as rising early to join others of the unit in butchering chickens, getting stuck in the mud while driving to church, hosting the annual Christian Believers Fellowship ministers' conference, battling the heat in a ten-hour power outage, or preparing a Sunday morning message—all make life interesting, fulfilling, and dependent on God.

To all missionaries and servants of the Lord Jesus—take courage! Too often we get so over-occupied in *doing* rather than *being* the right people. We become worried and burdened with “much serving” rather than “needful sitting” at the feet of Jesus to hear His Word. Both gifts are blessings to the church by the Spirit. “But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42). “But love ye your enemies, and do good and

lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great...” (Luke 6:35). “...behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

I trust that the following article will touch you with reverence toward God to be faithful in little things. Then God can entrust you with much and reward you in the life to come.

Heeding the Cry of the Orphans

John E. Glick, Kisumu, Kenya

“The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow” (Psalm 146:9).

Kenya in East Africa has a population of over 40 million people. Of these, an estimated two million are HIV positive. HIV/AIDS is responsible for leaving vast numbers of children across Kenya without one or both parents. The loss of a parent has serious consequences for a child. Some are driven to streets to work or beg for food. Many continue living with the surviving parent or some other family member, but this can create hardship for those who try to help these unfortunate children. Access

to food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education may be very limited for them. Many of the people in rural Kenya are subsistence farmers. They often have difficulty raising enough crops to provide food year round.

It was into such a setting that God brought a man named Pius Obonyo. Pius was born in 1964, in the town of Kericho. He was his parents' firstborn and their only son. From the age of 13 to 23, he lived in Nairobi, the capital city, where he worked and went to school. Eventually, he moved back to his homeland in the Lela area. One day, in 1989, a young lady named Pamela was visiting relatives close to Pius' home. Pius and his mother were also there, and later his mother recommended Pamela as a potential marriage partner for Pius. A visit was made to Pamela's family which is several hours' drive from Lela. An agreement was reached for Pius and Pamela to get married. Some time later, Pius paid a dowry of two cows and 1,000 shillings.

God used a tragic experience in their married life to prepare Pius' heart for the work God had for him. On December 3, 1991, they both went out to work in the field, leaving their one-year-old child in the house. When they returned later in the day, their house was on fire and their young child died in it. This was not the only difficult experience in their lives. Because of some cultural

superstitions about a house fire, they began to face pressure from some in the community to move away. They found a house to rent in the town of Ahero and moved there. Shortly before the birth of their son, Sam, the landlord locked them out of that house and they had to find another place to stay. After a year in Ahero, they moved back to Lela.

Another trial occurred in 1995 after Pius had found a job as guard for a Catholic church. Many public places in Kenya have armed guards at the entrance or throughout the building. The building Pius and another man guarded was broken into and robbed. Pius was falsely accused and spent ten months in prison. The other guard eventually admitted to being involved in the robbery, and Pius was set free. After that, he never again worked as a hired laborer.

Even though some had opposed them, following the loss of their house and child in the fire, not everyone treated them unkindly. In fact, many in the community had given encouragement and assistance to this young and bereaved couple. After some time, things began to stir in Pius' heart. He sensed a responsibility and desire to somehow compensate the community for the support that was given them in their time of grief and loss. This led him to become involved as a community health worker. In Kenya, where

disease is rampant, he began giving teaching on prevention and control of HIV and other health problems. He got some training to become more knowledgeable about these matters. But still, he wanted to do more.

Being aware of many needy orphans in the area, he and Pamela decided to take several orphans into their home. Though they had little income, Pius was determined to provide for these young children and give them a good home. As word spread about the care these orphans were getting, more came and the work grew. When his father tried to discourage him from becoming so involved, Pius replied that if God wanted him to do it, no one could block him. In 1997, something else happened that would change the course of Pius' life. He met Mark Kuepfer, missionary pastor at the Ahero CBF (Christian Believers Fellowship) church. Mark invited him to attend their services. At that time, there were some bad reports out about CBF churches. They were being called "blood suckers" and "devil worshippers." Pius' curiosity was aroused. One Sunday morning he decided to see for himself what this church was like. He got there late and sat in the back. He listened attentively as the pastor preached on "The devil and his works." *Now why, if they were devil worshippers would the pastor be refuting the works of the devil?*


The next Sunday Pius was back, this time arriving early. His hunger for truth was being satisfied. He continued attending the Ahero church, but for some time he did not tell his father or wife where he was going. After some weeks, he had a desire to host the church's Wednesday Bible study and approached his family about it. With their approval, Bible study was held at the family's dala (homestead), and his father was impressed by the teaching. Some time later, when Pius returned from an extended trip to Mombassa, he found that Pamela and his father were also attending CBF. On October 11, 1998, Pius was baptized and became a member at Ahero, with Pamela following him the next year.

Sometime during those years Elmina and Frieda Stoltzfoos, as well as other mission personnel, were made aware of Pius' work with orphans. They became interested in helping to give support and made others aware of the need. Even after the Stoltzfooses returned to America, financial support continued to be given for the orphans under Pius' widow's and orphan's group. Under this program orphans are placed into the homes of guardians, many of whom are widows.

It was also during this time that Agape Development Ministries was formed. Agape operates under Amish Mennonite Aid and is supported financially by Christian

Aid Ministries. One of its programs supports orphans, using money from donors in America. Many orphans in the Elmina group now receive support from Agape. Widows who are guardians also benefit from this program. Agape currently provides food, clothing, soap, and school supplies for over 1600 orphans in Kenya, with more waiting to get on the program. About 200 of those supported are in the Elmina organization. The rest are divided into a number of groups and are under the supervision of CBF members. Pius Obonyo is administrator of the Elmina

organization and has 20 orphans in his home. Eight of these are on the Agape program. The others he personally supports.

Because of caring people like Pius, as well as financial supporters from America, many orphans are now having their needs met while living in the homes of their guardians. Many who would otherwise be in dire need are receiving food, clothing, and education. They are also receiving spiritual nurture in the CBF or other churches. God's name is glorified and His kingdom is being enlarged because of those who have heeded the cry of the orphans. 

helpers at home

Now is the Time to Communicate

Mary June Glick

Father's Day is the time to communicate to your earthly father your love and appreciation for him. I assume since you are reading this column, you are a grown woman. Your father is in midlife or in his older years. As a child, you admired your dad and it was not difficult to express your love. Dad could not make mistakes. However, I hope you are confident and assured of his continuing love.

Now is the time to express your appreciation for those many hours of

hard work providing for the family's physical needs and the spiritual direction he gave you, the fun times you enjoyed together, the laughter, and the tears he shed on your behalf. Do not wait to thank him until it is too late. Plan to visit, send a card, or call him on Father's Day.

Take him with you on an outing; go fishing or take him somewhere that holds a special interest to him. Go out for lunch together. Offer to do some work around the house. Give him a hug and tell him you love him. If your

relationship with your earthly father has not been healthy, do all you can to build or rebuild your relationship. Ask for forgiveness for failures on your part and offer forgiveness where appropriate to him. Pray that God will heal any breaks in your relationship.

Communication is very important in family life. Good communication enables us to work through the problems that arise in everyday living and working together. Communicate with your father. Love makes good communication possible.

I recommend the following efforts for building a good relationship with your husband:

Be honest

Total transparency with one's husband is vital to building a strong marriage. Do not try to manipulate him or hide things from him. Tell him what you need or want. Do not expect him to understand without an explanation.

Listen to him

Listen to his stories about his day and his work. Try to understand what he is really saying. Be sensitive to his needs. His needs are as important as yours are. Sense when he is hurting, maybe he had a bad day at work, was misunderstood, or has financial pressures. He needs hugs and kisses, too. Take interest in the things he

enjoys. Develop common interests.

Don't nag

Accept him as he is; do not try to change him. Pray instead. Don't be overly concerned about what others may think of him. Avoid crying to get your own way. I know we women are more emotional, especially at certain seasons of life, but let's not use tears as weapons.

Accept his advice

Do not become defensive if your husband shows you an area where you need to change or grow. Find out what he enjoys about you or does not appreciate. Ask him for advice.

Compliment and praise him

You might try giving him one compliment a day. Thank him for the work he does around the house, for caring for the children, providing for the family, and so on.

Share together in spiritual things

This will probably be different for each couple. However, do pray together, go to church together, and share your faith with each other. Ask forgiveness and freely give it to your partner. Do not hold grudges.

In summary, communicate love and respect to the two most important men in your life—your father and your husband this year on Father's Day. Then keep on giving it to them for the rest of the year.



Lydia and the Healer – Part One

Grace Klewin, Age 12, Thorp, WA

The night was dark and stormy, a fierce wind howled around the house. Inside, in the dark, lay a girl listening to the screaming of the wind, the beat of the rain, and crashing of the waves on the Sea of Galilee. Her thoughts were not on the tempest outside, nor were they on how cold she was, lying there with only a thin blanket to cover herself. She was thinking of her father, who had died in a storm much like this one. His boat had been found a few days later, washed up on the shore a few miles away—empty.

As she lay in the dark, her throat tightened and tears filled her eyes. *Why did God let it happen?* The rain continued on, pounding the walls, not allowing her to sleep.

Lydia lay restlessly, wishing she could close her eyes and just let rest come. But it didn't. Instead, she thought of how after her father died, no one treated her the same—no one, that is, except Tirzah.

Tirzah, her best friend, was also twelve years old. Her father was one of the rulers of the synagogue and Tirzah could ask her father for almost anything she wanted. But there was one thing that Tirzah did not have

and Lydia did: Lydia was healthy and strong, but Tirzah was often sick. Just yesterday Mother had told Lydia that Tirzah had fallen ill, so there would be no visiting her friend for a while. Still, the girls were friends, even if their lives seemed so different from one another.

The rain slowed down slightly and the wind quieted. Then, it stopped. All became silent outside and Lydia sat up straight on her cot. Why had the rain stopped so suddenly? Why had the waves calmed to a gentle lapping? She stood up and the worn brown blanket fell around her feet. Quietly she stepped up to the window. Pushing the leather latch up, she swung it open and looked out. She saw the black sky and the stars shining in their exact places. They all twinkled at her and reminded her that God was watching over her. Maybe, she thought to herself, maybe God stopped the storm. It comforted her to think that, and she climbed onto the cot and pulled the cover over herself. This time when she closed her eyes, sleep came.

The sunlight splashed in through the window and made a bright square of light on the dirt floor. Lydia sat up

and swung her legs off the bed. She walked over to the window and put her foot in the square of light. The sun warmed it and made her feel all warm and cheerful inside. Smiling, she walked out of the small room and into the courtyard. Mother sat by the fire stirring a pot. She looked up when Lydia came in and smiled at her.

“Did you sleep at all last night?” she asked her daughter as she gathered jars to be filled at the well.

“I guess I did, but not really until the storm passed or stopped, or whatever happened to it.”

Her mother grinned and nodded her head. “Well, I guess it’s a mystery. Your father thought maybe it had to do with, well anyway, it doesn’t really matter.” Her mother stopped abruptly and continued working as if nothing unusual had happened. Lydia shook her head; she never would get used to her mother acting so strangely, and well, she still wasn’t sure about this father stuff. After her own father had died, Lydia’s mother had gotten married to another man from their village. He was her father now but Lydia still didn’t like the idea of someone taking her own father’s place, even though Mother had told her he wasn’t taking father’s place, and that she still could remember her old father.

Lydia had hated how Mother had said, “old father” but she had tried

not to let anything show. After all, it wasn’t like this father was unkind; he was just different. It was a bit like believing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God!

Lydia shook her head as she picked up the water pot to be taken to the well and placed it on her head, and with her other hand she picked up another pot. Her mother smiled as she walked past.

“Don’t forget to get water for Veronica, dear.” Lydia nodded, trying not to let the pot tip over. “Oh, and...” her mother called, “you’re a good daughter. Now that all your sisters are married, you’re a big help to me.”

Lydia blushed as she turned away. Mother always said she was shy and she always got embarrassed, too. Maybe that was one of the reasons why she didn’t really love her new father. He was always so open to new ideas and to Lydia there was nothing she wasn’t afraid of. Like Jesus being the Messiah! He hadn’t actually said it like that, but that’s what it had sounded like to Lydia. There had already been so many false prophets. Who knew what to believe?

She watched as her feet made little puffs of dust as she walked. She bent down to refasten her buckle on her sandal and realized it broke. The stitching had come undone and the strap bounced loosely as she walked along. She could stop by Uncle Matthias’ shop to ask him to fix it.

Lydia hastened her step as she neared the well. She could hear the women and girls talking and they sounded excited.

As soon as she reached the group, Julie turned to her and asked, "Have you heard?"

Lydia raised her eyebrows, "Heard what?"

Julia smiled as if she had a big secret, "Well, you know the storm we had last night?"

"Of course," Lydia thought to herself, "who wouldn't?" But instead she nodded, "Uh-huh."

"Well, I heard that Jesus was out in a boat with his disciples and the boat was about to sink and Jesus told the storm to stop. He told it to stop and it did!"

Lydia's eyes grew round, "Really?"

Julia nodded and looked smug, "Yep."

Could it really be true? Lydia's thoughts raced, *Could Jesus really have done it?* She remembered thinking about God stopping the storm, but if Jesus really was God's Son, couldn't he have stopped it?

Lydia stepped up to the well and filled her jars. "And that's not all," Zimrah said, her brown curls bouncing, "I heard he's coming here!" There was a chorus of "oohs" and "ahhs" coming from everyone gathered around and soon everyone was asking questions.

Lydia turned to go, her mind

spinning. "Jesus was coming to her village today? I need to talk to Tirzah," she decided as he made her way down a back alley. Soon she was at the top of the staircase that led down to the small house underneath Uncle Matthias' workshop, where Veronica lived. Veronica wasn't an old woman, but because she was always sick, she looked stooped and old.

Lydia went down the stairs carefully and set one of the pots down. They were very heavy and Lydia's arms were tired. Lifting up her free hand, she knocked on the old wooden door and waited to hear Veronica's voice. "Is that you. Lydia?"

Putting her head against the rough wood, she answered back, "Yes, it is; I have your water."

Lydia heard coughing from the inside, then, "Come in."

Opening the door quietly she stepped into the half darkness. "How are you doing?" Lydia asked as she set the pot down with a thud.

Veronica didn't say anything and Lydia wondered if that was a good or bad sign. Just as she was about to ask again, Veronica pushed herself up in bed and asked, "Did you hear any news at the well?"

Lydia rolled her eyes to herself; sometimes she got tired of telling Veronica everything that was going on in town. Oh, well, she would tell her about Jesus' coming, that would

satisfy her. But as soon as Lydia told her, Veronica's eyes lighted up. "Oh please," her hands trembled as she spoke, "please take me to see Him; I know He can heal me!"

Lydia stared in shock; did this woman really think that Jesus would heal her? After she had spent all her money on doctor visits? And even the best doctors couldn't help her!

She shook her head. "Um...I think Mother needs my help today." Lydia turned away as she saw Veronica's eyes fall. She didn't want to let her down like this but Lydia couldn't imagine taking Veronica to see Jesus. She knew it was just her shyness getting in the way. "I guess I should go now." Once out in the sunshine, Lydia sighed. Why did she feel so guilty? It wasn't really her responsibility to care for Veronica.

After arriving home, Lydia didn't feel better. Her imagination ran wild...what if Veronica died...just because she had been too shy to take her to Jesus? Lydia stopped her work; what had she been thinking about? It was about Veronica dying if she didn't take her to Jesus. She had found herself believing that Jesus would heal Veronica if she came to Him! Because she thought otherwise, Veronica would die. Lydia scolded herself silently as she worked, normally she would ignore what

people said. But she was beginning to believe that maybe some of it was true! Well...if someone asked her, of course, she would say it was all nonsense. But what if He really was the Messiah?

She dismissed the thought as soon as it came to her. It couldn't be true. *But what about all the miracles?* Stop! She commanded herself. Why couldn't she just quit thinking about it?

"Excuse me." It was later that afternoon and Lydia stood beside her father's pottery. "Um...can I go to Tirzah's house? Mother said to ask you."

Her father looked up and smiled, "If she doesn't have anything for you to do, I suppose it's fine with me."

Smiling, Lydia called out, "Thanks" and ran out the door.

Lydia, Mother called from the other room, "Please come here a minute." Lydia stopped outside the door; she was impatient to get going. "Don't be disappointed if Tirzah is still ill," her mother paused for a moment, "Well, what I am trying to say is don't get your hopes too high, you might not get to see her...last time, I heard, she was pretty sick."

Lydia nodded and hopped on one foot, "Can I go now?"

Mother smiled, "Of course, Dear."
(To be continued)



Christian Writing Submissions

Selah

Marilyn Brenneman,
Virginia Beach, VA

*“I am the Lord: that is my name”
(Isaiah 42: 8).*

A spirit hushed into quietness is a rare punctuation mark in a life of run-on sentences. We talk constantly but have neglected the art of conversation. Frantically pursuing meaning, we find ourselves left only with activity. But perhaps that is the point of our search.

We are afraid of stillness. Restless, our spirits pursue something to fulfill us, but we don't know what it is. We only realize we must keep moving or the silence closes in on us. Terrified of that possibility, we fill the pauses with words.

Why are we afraid, seemingly desperate to keep quietness at bay?

Our twisted independence causes us to believe that if we don't do it ourselves, change won't happen. But our questions must be answered. Groping for words, we try to clutch the haunting within. Seeking to

grasp the intangible, we run to action, books, and people, anything to keep that agonizing quietness away. Silence feels like someone invading our personal space—but nobody is there.

Silence means emptiness, pain. Loneliness stalks us through silence, leaving us helpless in a place of no control and no answers. Perhaps silence is painful for us because we do not know its Author.

I am the Lord: that is my name.”

The Author of silence names Himself. When He tells us His name, He compels us to recognize His authority. This knowledge forces us to stop running, to be quiet before God.

“Be still and know that I am God.”

Trembling, we offer the sacrifice of all that is us and all that is not. Vulnerable, we lie with our pain, fear, questions, brokenness, and need—transparent before almighty Lord. In that surrender, infinite tenderness and infinite power embrace us in the silence of God. Our only response in the face of such

Love is silent worship.

Words do not reach the deepness of God.

Selah.

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Ultimate Power Personified

John Miller, Partridge, KS

I tremble before God. God is all-powerful. He can destroy entire nations; He annihilated the Egyptians by His breath in the Red sea. With fire and brimstone, He eliminated Sodom and Gomorrah, those wicked cities. It is never safe to treat God impudently. He defines ultimate Power. I tremble before that ultimate power.

In my trembling, I worship. I have little choice. It was God who said, “Be created!” and it was so. It was God who led the nation Israel from Egypt into Canaan by the might of his hand. It was God [in Christ] who died, then conquered death. When I

honestly consider Him who defines ultimate power, I adore Him.

Yet, God is a person. He reasons, feels, thinks, judges, and most importantly, communicates, all of which constitute personality. Throughout the Scriptures, God is portrayed as a speaking Deity. God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God said, “Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” And it was so. The Deity is a personal being—the Almighty is a person—the Almighty talks with me.

Drawn to relationship with Ultimate Power, I can’t turn away. He longs to know me, and to be known by me. It is an awesome thing to personally know an incomprehensible God; to regularly enter into His presence, and to make myself known.

[The foregoing compositions were submitted for Christian Writing and Expression class at Calvary Bible School, 2010.]



Accepting good advice increases one’s ability.

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

God gives us memories so we can have roses in December.

• • • • •

A good sport can play a game as if it were just a game.

• • • • •

Only those who have questions about their manhood must boast about it.

• • • • •

The bitterness of poor quality lingers long after the sweetness of a cheap price is forgotten.

• • • • •

What we don't owe won't hurt us.

• • • • •

An ounce of mother is usually worth more than a ton of clergy.

• • • • •

Delayed obedience is disobedience.

• • • • •

To fail to deny ourselves is to deny Christ.

• • • • •

Aim for perfection—half right is also half wrong.

• • • • •

A man without courage is like a knife without an edge.

• • • • •

Don't wail on the scale if you cheat when you eat.