



# Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

APRIL 2023

Meditation	
<i>Screened Out</i> .....	1
Editorial	
<i>Broken Body</i> .....	2
Reader Response	
<i>Observation Reflections</i> .....	5
The Bottom Line	
<i>The Test of Righteousness (Is Manifested in Doing)</i> .....	7
The Freedom of Forgiveness Received (Part 1) .....	9
I Saw a Beautiful Thing	
<i>That Blessed Walker</i> .....	13
Marriages .....	14
Cradle Roll.....	14
Obituaries .....	16
Observations .....	17
Weddings, Funerals, and Ai .....	21
Prisoner Number 71.....	25
Eight Ways to Kill Brotherhood .....	26
Mission Awareness	
<i>Jesus Is Alive</i> .....	27
A Woman After God's Heart	
<i>Songs in the Night</i> .....	30
Junior Messages	
<i>Saved From a Mad Man</i> .....	33
Youth Messages	
<i>Just a Little Chat (Part 2)</i> .....	34
Thought Gems .....	back cover

## Calvary Messenger

April 2023

**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.

**Board of Directors***(Calvary Publications, Inc.)*

Matthew Raber, Chairman  
 Mark Webb, Vice-Chairman  
 Enos D. Stutzman, Treasurer  
 Galen Stutzman  
 Nathan Fisher

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.

This periodical is digitally available at [calvarymessenger.org](http://calvarymessenger.org).

**Editor:** Aaron D. Yoder  
 5188 W. 825 N., Leesburg, IN 46538  
 Ph: 574-646-2123; Fax: 800-956-7850  
[calvary.messenger.19@gmail.com](mailto:calvary.messenger.19@gmail.com)

**Contributing Editors:**  
 Simon Schrock, Enos D. Stutzman,  
 Aaron Lapp, Ronald J. Miller

**Missions Editor:** Floyd Stoltzfus  
 3750 E. Newport Rd.  
 Gordonville, PA 17529

**Youth Messages Editor:** Josh Kooistra  
 2445 Rough & Ready Rd.  
 New Concord, OH 43762  
[cm youtheditor@gmail.com](mailto:cm youtheditor@gmail.com)

**Junior Messages Editor:**  
 Mrs. Mary Ellen Beachy  
 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd.  
 Dundee, OH 44624  
[maryellenbeachy@icloud.com](mailto:maryellenbeachy@icloud.com)

**Women's Editor:**  
 Mrs. Susan Schlabach  
 7184 W. Henry Rd., Ripley, OH 45167  
[skschlabach@gmail.com](mailto:skschlabach@gmail.com)

**Circulation Manager/Treasurer:**  
 Enos D. Stutzman  
 7498 Woods West Ave.,  
 London, OH 43140  
 Ph: 614-460-9222  
[enosnmary@gmail.com](mailto:enosnmary@gmail.com)

Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$12.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$36.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$11.00 per year to individual addresses. With a renewal at \$12.50 for 1 year, you may use a 1-year gift subscription free. Second class postage at Sugar creek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 7498 Woods West Ave., London, OH 43140.

## Screened-Out

How can a close-knit family connection come unraveled,  
Though each of us remains at home, and none of us has traveled?

For though we have no private planes, and cannot teleport,  
Our distance is increasing from using a new passport.

Four of us seven now possess a portal of our own;  
The younger three access the public screen, for lack of phone.

I walk by as my brother young types in his “sesame,”  
And plunges through to binge. I stop and plead, but helplessly.

He knows not what he does (as he wanders into its glow)  
To his attention, to his brain—I wonder if I know.

Bodies inert, we spend our time in worlds which supersede,  
Which makes assembling for a meal, cross-cultural indeed.

And we're unsatisfied with gifts (including Him God gave us);  
Portal amid the portal-worlds, O Christ, the Sheep-Door, save us.

*[Name withheld]* 

## Broken Body

*“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me”* (I Corinthians 11:24).

This was not the normal way to take a baby home. A dear brother, who had walked this way before me, was driving as we went home from the Baptist Hospital in Asuncion, Paraguay. At the hospital, with my wife, was this dear brother’s wife and another close friend. They were staying with my wife while I took our baby girl home for her funeral. After arriving at our house, I clearly remember the look of death on our infant daughter’s face as I laid her on the bed. Several of the nurses and friends from the clinic\* took the responsibility of preparing and dressing her before she was placed in the tiny casket.

At the end of the funeral service the next day, I looked at little Katrina one more time as I tucked her in for the only and final time. After the casket was closed, I picked it up and followed the same path to the cemetery that another father had carried their infant son just two

weeks earlier. The sound of hollow thuds still ring in my ears as clods of earth hit the rough box as the grave was filled in.

Now there were three fresh mounds of red earth in the corner of this church yard. The first one was larger than these last two baby graves. A young man, almost a teenager, had died in a tragic house fire earlier that year.

Many of you readers have your own stories of death of loved ones. Some, at the normal end of life, are peaceful and more normal. Many others, though, are unexpected, seemingly untimely and tragic.

Outside of Jerusalem a quiet group remained behind. His enemies and mockers had left after confirming that He indeed had died. Most of His disciples had fled. This death was too unexpected, untimely, tragic, and very disappointing. None of us has ever seen this kind of death, even though our sin is why His body was bruised and broken. Our minds often block out what it really was like, this death on a cross—cruel, excruciatingly painful, and on exhibit for all who passed by to see.



In the last hours of the day, “Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came... And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre” (Mark 15:43a, 46). Joseph took Him down. We can only imagine, as artists have, how he did that. I fully expect that Joseph was bloody after lovingly removing his Saviour from the Cross. A broken Body indeed! Son of God, Son of man, Divine Sacrifice, Supreme Love, and all that for you and me!

I can only imagine what went through the disciples’ minds the following year when they likely followed Jesus’ example at the end of their Passover meal, breaking bread and remembering His broken Body! They drank from the cup, the new testament in His blood—the Blood that was shed for us and saves us from our sin. They remembered! If after 30+ years, I can still see in my mind the look of death on our daughter’s face (there was no embalming, no hiding death) and can hear in my mind the thuds of the clods of earth hitting the wooden box, what was it like for the disciples? “*This do in remembrance of Me.*”

I Corinthians 11:23, “*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:*

24 *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

25 *After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

26 *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”*

Thank you, Jesus Messiah, Savior and Lord, for Your death on the Cross and shedding Your Blood that covers my sins! And thank you, Father God, for raising Jesus from the dead and forever taking away the sting of death! Thank you and Amen!

-AY 

\* *Luz y Esperanza*



## Announcement

### Single Ladies Seminar

August 4-6, 2023

### *Building Your House*

*"The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands."*

PROVERBS 14:1

The Design— *Catherine Kipps, Aroda, VA*

Building Relationships— *Allison Payette, New Paris, IN*

Money Matters— *Valerie Steiner, Plain City, OH*

Women in Leadership?— *Chelsea Good, Logan, OH*

Embracing Loveliness— *Delores Mast, Whiteville, TN*

Walking With the Master Builder— *Dorcas Peachey, Belleville, PA*



**Location:**

*Deeper Life Ministries  
5123 Converse Huff Rd,  
Plain City, OH 43064*

*For more information or  
to register, please contact*

*Deeper Life Ministries:  
(614) 873-1199 or [info@dmlmohio.org](mailto:info@dmlmohio.org)*

## Announcement

### Soldiers of the Cross 2023

May 26-June 4, 2023

in Holmes County, Ohio

*A week of evangelism teaching and training that includes going out  
into the community and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.*



*For more information call:*

*Jay Stoltzfus (330) 473-5445*

*or [soldiersofthecross2@gmail.com](mailto:soldiersofthecross2@gmail.com)*

*or go to our website, [www.sotcross.com](http://www.sotcross.com)*

*Call for information on family accommodations*

## Observation Reflections

The input on conscientious objectors to war in the February issue was eye-catching. The quote of President John F. Kennedy regarding the conscientious objector to war's prestige is especially fascinating. Perhaps I will venture a few comments.

Many conscientious objectors during WWI experienced some very torturous and abusive situations by the military while being faithful to Jesus' teaching of nonviolence and loving your enemy. See the newly released book, *American Midnight*, by Adam Hochschild.

Because of these abusive WWI situations, diligent efforts were made to get something better into place prior to another war. It seems that the Quakers (Friends), the Church of the Brethren, and the Mennonites, also known as the Peace Churches, working collectively together appealed very extensively to the U.S. government for the creation of CPS. The government finally approved the CPS (Civilian Public Service) program and brought it into being for WWII. My father as a young man was drafted and pressured to join

the military but instead remained a faithful Christian and successfully began serving at Camp Luray CPS Camp as a conscientious objector to war. Maintaining the fire roads leading from the Skyline Drive in VA was termed work of national importance by Congress. There were numerous gifted ministers, such as B. Ralph Hosteter, who visited camps and helped the CPS boys understand the nonresistant position more fully. The boys had some richly rewarding Christian experiences while at CPS camps. Different ones commented they wouldn't take a million dollars for their enriching experience but wouldn't give one dollar to repeat it.

The 1-W program had the advantage of having houseparents at some locations which was very helpful in nurturing the COs. There had been ongoing inhumane treatment of patients in mental hospitals. It is thought that one of the greatest contributions of the 1-W boys was the humane treatment that resulted because of the exposure of the abusive treatment of patients prior to the 1-W boys' arrival. Drastic changes for humane treatment soon


followed.

A question that can be raised, is military participation service? Is killing one's fellow human service? If not, perhaps it would be helpful to not use the term "military service." For the Christian, service is to help people as Jesus would want us to, **not** kill them. Even a non-Christian would not seem to be serving his fellow human by killing them. It would seem appropriate for peace-loving Christians to intentionally use a term such as "military participation" and avoid using the term "military service" when writing or speaking even though it is commonly used by general society. This discretion would seem to be consistent with Christian discipleship and teaching non-violence and Jesus' way of expressing love of our fellow human.

We seek to be together in Christian unity. Church divisions under some circumstances are seen as regrettable. However, I was greatly impressed by a bishop's response when I asked him what his thoughts are about the people starting a new church and making some very negative accusations and derogatory remarks about him? His response, "I think they will start a new church and God

will bless that church." As a young person with searching questions, I was wowed. Maybe that bishop was old-fashioned but his godly response greatly elevated him in my mind even though I was not a part of his church. Another person commented that each church, in spite of divisions and even with their differences, often reaches out and has people being blessed and becoming part of their church that would not have been reached otherwise. Someone said be careful to not be church thieves. The harvest fields are open for potential new converts. May we be faithful cohesive builders within the church congregation of which we are a part. May we seek to appreciate our collective Anabaptist family of churches even though we may have some minor distinctives.

I greatly admire those who had the innovative thought of establishing the CASP program. God's blessings to the youth and all involved and their Christian benevolent extensive contributions to fellow humans in need.

James D. Hershberger  
985 Augusta Farms Road  
Stuarts Draft, VA 24477  
540 292 4882 



Correction can help, but *encouragement* can help far more.

CALVARY MESSENGER



## The Test of Righteousness (Is Manifested in Doing)

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

*“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (I John 3:10, 16).*

Love has a very broad application, beginning with the relationship in the home and then to each other in the family of God. That naturally moves on to brotherly fellowship, even to possibly laying down our lives for the brethren. This is true especially in some foreign countries. From there, John applies it to the sharing of earthly goods with those who lack the necessities of life, in which we might share with tithes and offerings, and sacrifice some of our time or some practical conveniences.

Love toward God results in obedience. One who obeys God will pray; but it is possible to pray and not

obey as some people evidently do. One who obeys God will believe in God, but it is possible to claim faith and not obey God as some people rather obviously have done.

Satan is by profession a deceiver, specializing in producing lies. Truth is a great means of defense against his lying and deception. A heart unstable in regard to truth can be tricked into falsehood. We think of these four ways by which an unstable heart can be tricked.

1. Our hearts can deceive us, causing a wrong belief.
2. Our hearts can divert us, causing us to be led astray.
3. Our hearts can condemn us, causing a stricken conscience.
4. Our hearts can destroy us, causing confusion, unbelief, and bitterness.

An overly sensitive conscience can condemn a person when he really should be experiencing peace with God. By contrast, a callous conscience can claim assurance

despite having sin in his life.

If you are discouraged, obey God's Word.

If you are confused, obey God's Word.

If you are anxious and worried, obey God's Word.

If you lack joy and are unfulfilled, obey God's Word.

If you are angry, bitter, or feel rebellious, turn to God and His Word.

If lust is a problem for you, turn to God and His Word.

If you are envious, jealous, or greedy, turn to God and His Word.

If you are irritable toward others and unthankful, turn to God and His Word.

If you need direction and strength, obey God's Word.

If you need faith along with trust, obey God's Word.

If you need hope and purpose in life, obey God's Word.

If you need sweetness and love, obey God's Word.

If you need grace and resolve, obey God's Word.

If you need wisdom and discernment, obey God's Word.

If you desire eternal life, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved from sin and hell.

John said that these affirmations

in his epistle are not some new commandments. These matters of doing what is right are old, proven, valid, and still-in-effect commandments. The test of personal righteousness is evident by those who do that which is right in all of life. John says it was illustrated by Cain and Abel (3:11-15).

This is the message of the Bible which was given to us by God. All people, regardless of race or background, have experienced all that God has delivered to us as being true. Satan will try to chisel away at these foundational principles of the plan of God for the ages, to damage, destroy, and cause people to die a sure death, going down in a circular disobedience. Loving God and obeying Him is within our reach, being possible and practical.

Blessed be His worthy Name forever and ever. Amen.

**The Bottom Line** is by Brother John himself as he says in I John 3:17-18. *"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."*

*[Adapted from my new commentary on I John. A.L.]*



# The Freedom of Forgiveness Received (Part 1)

*Joel Kime, Lancaster, PA*

In the fall of 1991, just 11 months after passing my driver's license test, I had been driving with no accidents and no tickets. Basically, I thought I was the best driver in the nation. I remember how much fun it was trying to push the limits. My parents' drive to church, for example, took about 15 to 20 minutes; I did it once in eight. It was a video game to me rather than the responsibility it should have been. As I said, I hadn't gotten into any trouble; no tickets for speeding, no accidents because of recklessness, although I had a few close calls. But don't we all? On Sunday, November 3, 1991, I went to church with my family and couldn't wait for it to be done so I could rush home, shovel down dinner, and leave to play football with the guys from church, our Sunday afternoon tradition. After lunch, my brother, Jeff, and I hopped into my parents' early 1980s AMC Concord station wagon. Yellow with imitation wood grain paneling on the sides, it is a model hardly seen anymore. We picked up his friend, Chad, my friend, Dave, and sped over to Lancaster Christian School for the game.

I knew the back way to LCS very well because my brother, sister, and I attended there through eighth grade. Part of that back way took us south on Kissel Hill Road just to the east of Lancaster Airport. It was a beautiful fall day, cool, clear, and crisp. I clearly remember driving on the section of Kissel Hill Road between Millport Road and Oregon Road. As I came over the crest of one small hill, I hit the gas, and we felt the car lurch into high gear. Sounding like I knew what I was talking about, I made some inane comment about the car "doing well today because it hit third gear at 70 mph." Dave, who hadn't yet put on his seatbelt, responded that he'd better do so! Little did he suspect that his caution might have saved his life. As he fumbled with the belt, I saw an Amish buggy about 100 yards in front of us in our lane, heading the same direction as we were. I said to everyone in the car something like, "I'm going to blow by these guys." I thought I was so incredibly cool.

I stomped on the gas again, now doing about 70-75 mph, and steered the car into the left lane to pass the buggy. As we raced closer to the buggy, I will never, ever forget seeing

the nose of the horse turn out in front of me. Instantly, I knew they were trying to turn in front of me. I hadn't looked for, nor had I seen their turn signal or the small country road they were attempting to turn left onto. Instinct took over as I pounded the brake pedal with my foot. The brakes locked, and the car skidded forward, tires screaming. We smashed into the buggy, and I heard the POP of my windshield shattering into tiny pieces of glass. The buggy flew over the top of the car, and we rumbled to a stop in the field to the left. My hands, gripped tight to the wheel, were streaming with blood, but only from shards of windshield glass that grazed my knuckles. I still have a tiny scar in between two knuckles on my left hand, a constant reminder that basically nothing happened to me.

Dave never quite got his seatbelt buckled. When I hit the brakes, he grabbed the shoulder belt and held on with both hands. The belt locked and swung him around like Tarzan, and his left shoulder hit the windshield. Possibly his shoulder, but maybe the buggy, broke the windshield. Other than soreness, though, neither he, Jeff, nor Chad were hurt. Dave's father, who visited the scene that evening after it was cleared, later told us that the skid marks from the car quite visibly ran

off the road, missing a telephone pole by about 12 inches. It all happened so fast; I do not even remember seeing a telephone pole.

After making sure everyone in my car was okay, I tried to open my door, but the collision had jammed it shut. Just then, an Amish man came running up to our car yelling frantically, "Does anyone know CPR? Does anyone know CPR?" At 17, I was the oldest in the car. I think Dave had a bit of training, but we were not prepared for what we saw after we got out. We walked to the crash site and saw the Amish man holding the crumpled pile of what looked like his mother. She was severely injured, convulsing, and definitely missing teeth. I told Jeff and Chad to run to the nearest homes, which in that area were all farms, to find a phone and call 911. They sprinted across the fields, so riveted on getting to a phone that my brother never even saw the Amish lady. He remembers that the fields were recently plowed, making his trek as though he was running sluggishly on a sandy beach. It was a very frustrating prospect when all he wanted was to get to a phone as fast as possible. My brother's race to the phone was the first instance of many in which I realized the extreme pain my sin had brought not only to the Amish family but also to my family.

Imagine being a 13-year-old, running with all your might to get to a phone to call 911 because your older brother had caused an awful accident? Dave and I stayed and flagged down cars hoping someone might have a mobile phone, which at that time was still a rarity. I tugged at his shirt in desperation, saying something like, “What do we do?”

### **Immediate Aftermath**

My dad and I sat in the back seat of the police cruiser—eventually, cars stopped, and a policeman and an EMT/ambulance crew came to the scene. That was a huge relief for me. A family friend who was driving by picked Jeff up from the scene and dropped him off at our home. He was the first to inform my parents, and together with my dad, returned to pick me up. On their way back to the accident, from a distance they could see the car in the field and the unrecognizable buggy. Imagine the dreadful feeling of driving to the scene of devastation that your son caused. How that must have felt for my dad! I don’t remember much except fear and an overwhelming desire to tell the truth and to get what I knew was a weighty burden off my back, as my dad and I sat in the back seat of the police cruiser. The officer gave my dad and me a few moments alone after I had blurted

some initial details. We assumed he left us to ourselves then so that we could go over the details of the story together, possibly to come up with a spin that didn’t make me so culpable for the accident. Although I knew it was horrible, I told him exactly what happened, even the fact that I was going at least 70 mph. They were able to confirm that later anyway by the length of the skid marks. I came to find out in the coming weeks that the officer was really impressed with my honesty. At the time, I was simply scared to death of any further trouble. Lying was not an option. I didn’t know if I was going to jail, the local juvenile detention center, Barnes Hall, or some other awful place. But the cop let me go home with my dad, clearly stating that there would be a follow-up.

I’ll never forget what my dad said in response to my rather tepid apologies as we drove away, “You’ve been through enough. We’re not going to make it worse for you.” He was right, and I’m very glad for it. It was already bad and about to get worse. When we arrived at our house, less than five minutes away, my mom met me at the door. I must have spent the next half hour just crying on my mom’s shoulder. As the news got out, many family and friends showed their love and support by



coming over to do nothing and everything at the same time: be there. The friends from church whom we were on our way to meet, stopped their football game and came over, dirty and disheveled from the game. Gradually, a herd of my school and church friends migrated to our house to show support. That in itself was meaningful because I had rarely attempted to mix these two groups of people. I think they even prayed together.

As I was huddled with my friends in my basement, my parents called me upstairs to my bedroom to tell me that the police officer had just called with a report about the Amish lady who had been taken to the hospital. Due to permanent brain damage, she needed life support to stay alive. Since the Amish don't believe in life support, she died that night in the hospital. The horrible news began to pile on me. The Amish lady, the officer told us, wasn't the mother of the man. It was his wife. More than that, it was his newlywed bride, and they had been on their honeymoon. They had only been married for five days; he was 21 years old, and she was 19. Traditionally, November is the Amish wedding season. They were on their customary Amish honeymoon travels, visiting a few days in one relative's home, then

moving on to another and another, and so on. Amid that bliss, she was dead, and I had killed her. It was, and still is by far, the worst day of my life. My mother recalls that she held me crying in her arms while my dad and brother sat next to me on the bed, and my nine-year-old sister, Laura, was convinced I was going to jail! Eventually, everyone left our house, but God and I talked long into the night.

The next day my parents allowed me to stay home from school, and one of my friend's parents let him stay with me. He picked me up, and we watched Monty Python videos to get our minds off the disaster. In the middle of *Live at the Hollywood Bowl*, my parents called. They had found out from my uncle, who had connections in the Amish community, that the viewing was going to be that day, and they told me that I was going. It was extremely frightening news. Yet, it signals the depth of my parents' character. I know my dad later told people that it was the hardest thing they ever had to do. As a parent of a six and five-year-old now, I can hardly imagine what I would do if I was in their shoes. How would I handle this horrible thing my son had done? How responsible would I feel? And what would my reaction be? Step by step, through

the process of dealing with my sin, my parents did everything right. In a world where so many want to shift blame, especially when their children mess up, my parents stood by me and guided me through handling

this situation in a God-honoring, responsible, and truthful manner.

-To be continued

*Joel Kime serves as pastor at Faith Church in Lancaster, PA.*



## I Saw a Beautiful Thing

### That Blessed Walker

*Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS*

For years, she had attended the meetings with her husband, eager for fellowship. Now a widow, she came with a daughter and son-in-law to the annual ministers' meetings. During the break between sessions, I stood on the fringes of the large foyer, watching as clusters of people gathered, shifted, and dissolved.

Across the room, I noticed her.

Carefully threading her way through the multitude, she was mindful of her unsteady gait and her precious cargo. Two grandchildren alternately walked alongside and climbed on her walker, fussing about whose turn it was to ride. The boy, perhaps three, helped himself to the drink securely seated in the cup holder. Now and again, their voices—high and thin—declared their frustrations, but Grandma

continued serenely.

What captured my heart that day? It was not the joy of meeting old friends and making new ones, but seeing children at ease with the walker and Grandma's slow steps. I admired the grandma who was content to have her progress slowed, her space filled with children's chatter, unflustered and gracious.



*That, my friends, is beautiful.*



## marriages

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

### Miller-Miller

Bro. Kristen, son of Curtis and Lorene Miller, Hutchinson, KS, and Sis. Arlene, daughter of John and Frieda Miller, Hutchinson, KS, on February 18, 2023, at Center Amish Mennonite Church by Dwight Miller.

### Miller-Stoltzfus

Bro. Laramie, son of Titus and Sharon Miller, Fairland, OK, and Sis. Kayla Stoltzfus, daughter of Jacob Jr. and Orpha Stoltzfus, Moulton, AL, on February 11, 2023, at First Baptist Church for Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Hartselle, AL, by Wayne Nisly.

### [Correction-Tobin-Troyer

Bro. Robert, son of William J. Tobin and Mildred Tobin, Sugarcreek, OH, and Sis. Krista, daughter of Syl and Betty Troyer, Dover, OH, on September 10, 2022, at Messiah Amish-Mennonite Church, by Phil Miller.]



## cradle roll

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

**Beachy**, Marcus and Angie (Miller), Kalona, IA, third child, first son, Tyson Luke, August 29, 2022.

**Blades**, Emery and Melody (Helmuth), Fredonia, KY, fourth child, third daughter, Alivia Taylor, January 9, 2023.

**Chupp**, Daniel and Jana (Miller), Grove City, MN, seventh child, second daughter, Khloe Grace, February 9, 2023.

**Eicher**, Roy and Twila (Kauffman), Fredonia, KY, first child and son, Kylon Brent, February 7, 2023.

**Glick**, Manny and Sarah (Fisher), Morgantown, PA, eighth child, seventh son, Jedidiah Paul, February 15, 2023.

**Helmuth**, Caleb and Rebecca (Yoder), Milford, IN, first child and son, Harry Edward, November 16, 2022.

Never does the human soul appear so *strong* and *noble*  
as when it foregoes revenge and dares  
to *forgive* an injury.

-E. H. CHAPIN



**Hostetler**, Chris and Donna (Martin), Auburn, KY, fifth child, third son, Wendell Trace, February 1, 2023.

**Martin**, Julian and Kathy (Auker), Abbeville, SC, fourth child and daughter, Emersyn Skye, January 29, 2023.

**Mast**, Carson and Carmen (Overholt), Russellville, KY, third child, second son, Tylen Zane, February 13, 2023.

**Mast**, Enos and Joanna (Bontrager), Falkville, AL, sixth child, third son, Delmar, November 11, 2022.

**Mast**, Lyle and Donna (Bechtel), Concord, AR, fourth child, third son, Elliot Reed, February 14, 2023.

**Miller**, Sterling and Erika (Byler), Hutchinson, KS, first child and son, Kaiden Cole, February 13, 2023.

**Peachey**, Josh and Bethany (Yoder), Richmond, KY, second child, first son, Jackson Cole, February 11, 2023.

**Schlabach**, Marcus and Alyssa (Miller), Beach City, OH, second child and son, Myles Everett, February 11, 2023.

**Stauffer**, Toby and Isabelle (Zimmerman), Paint Lick, KY, second child and son, Isaiah Todd, January 31, 2023.

**Stoltzfoos**, Cliff and Trina (Zook), Coatesville, PA, fifth child, third son, Bryson Elliot, February 20, 2023.

**Stutzman**, Jonathan and Irene (Miller), Conneautville, PA, fifth child, fourth daughter, Gianna Kate, March 4, 2023.

**Suarez**, Titus and Charity (Yoder), Hartselle, AL, fifth child, second daughter, Kate Victoria, December 22, 2022.

**Troyer**, Leon and Andrea (Nisly), Bourbon, IN, fifth child, third son, Micah Rhys, January 3, 2023.

**Wenger**, Dallas and Jenny (Peachey), Paint Lick, KY, first child and daughter, Brittany Rayelle, January 12, 2023.

**Yoder**, Joshua and Darlene (Albertson), Bluffton, IN, third child, first daughter, Annette Elizabeth, February 9, 2023.

**Yoder**, Micah and Janita (Peight), Danville, AL, first child and daughter, Addison Rae, January 23, 2023.

**Yoder**, Terry and Rachel (Wagler), Lexington, IN, fifth child, third daughter, Kaleigh Jane, January 28, 2023.

*Correction-*

**Showalter**, Weston and Heidi (Miller), Newcomerstown, OH, fifth child, fourth daughter, Chloe Elise, November 13, 2022.



**Gingerich**, Dorothea, 98, died August 17, 2022, at Pleasantview Home in Kalona, IA. She was born October 24, 1923, in Etna Green, IN, to Peter and Emma (Mullet) Graber. On February 12, 1948, she was united in marriage to Jacob M. Gingerich at her family home near Etna Green, IN. The couple moved to rural Riverside, IA, in 1948 and were blessed with three children.

Dorothea loved people. She made lifelong friends in first grade, in her Sharon Center neighborhood, her church, her egg route in Iowa City, and at Pleasantview. She enjoyed gardening, tending to flowers, quilting, crocheting, cooking, and baking and was known to be a wonderful hostess. Most of all Dorothea loved her family. She was baptized in her youth and was a member of the Sharon Bethel Church.

Dorothea is survived by three children: Earl (Diane), Iowa City; Inez (Mark) Houk, Spokane, WA; Maynard (Carol), Riverside; 10 grandchildren: Ethan Gingerich, Aliese Gingerich, Jonathan (Marjorie) Houk, Brandon (Virginia) Houk, Mahlon (Laura) Houk, Ashlee (Derek) Whittington, Chase (Angie) Gingerich, Clinton (Hillary) Gingerich, Collin (Charity) Gingerich, Cameron Gingerich; 10 great-grandchildren; two sisters: Ruth (Joe) Graber, Spooner, WI; Susie (Homer) Hershberger, Leon; brother, Paul (Anna) Graber, Campbell Hill, IL; brother-in-law, Eli Kuhns,

Etna Green, IN; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Jacob, four siblings: Mary (Olen) Schrock, Amanda Kuhns, Martha Kaufman, Ralph Graber; nine sisters-in-law and nine brothers-in-law.

The funeral service was held August 21, 2022, at Sharon Bethel Church with Delmar Bontrager, Leighton Yoder, and Jacob Yoder serving. Burial followed in the Sharon Bethel Cemetery.

**Yoder**, Louis S., 90, of Belleville, PA, passed away on January 26, 2023, at his home. He was born June 12, 1932, to the late John D. Jr. and Annie M. (Spicher) Yoder. On March 5, 1959, he married his wife of 63 years, Naomi Yoder, who survives at home.

Also surviving are his children: Leora J. (Michael) Yoder, Belleville; Fern Y. (Freddie) Brooks-Parsons, Stuarts Draft, VA; Vernon R. (Nancy), Belleville; Twila J. (Clayton) Beachy, Perkins, OK; daughters-in-law, Lavina Yoder (Edwin), Mifflinburg; Twila Yoder (J.D.), Belleville; 21 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by a sister, Mattie St. John, IN; and a brother-in-law, Ellis Ressler, OH.

He was preceded in death by sons: Edwin, John, Philip; son-in-law, John Brooks, and a sister, Sadie Ressler.


Louis was a farmer. He was involved with Blue Ridge International for Christ



where he helped to drill water wells for the people of Haiti. He also served five years with Faith Mission Home in VA.

He was a member of Valley View Amish Mennonite Church.

The funeral service was held January

30, 2023, at Valley View Amish Mennonite Church with Loren Yoder, Earl Peachey, and Matthew Peachey officiating. Interment followed at Locust Grove Cemetery. 

## observations

In February of this year, US officials began tracking a balloon in the sky as it passed over parts of Alaska and Canada. Later, General Glen VanHerck, commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command said that this balloon was over 200 feet tall and its composition and hardware weighed “in excess of a couple thousand pounds.” It was traveling at an altitude of approximately 60,000 feet which put it higher than commercial air traffic. The craft was further scrutinized as it re-entered US air space where western Montana and Canada share a border. Over the next several days, it continued its trek across the US mainland. Shortly after it cleared the coast of South Carolina, US forces shot it down over shallow water from which the remains were retrieved. It was widely reported that the balloon belonged to China. This incident sparked intense discussion in this country both in the halls of

government and around the “water coolers” in the workplace. Several details seem noteworthy in this discussion.

- China did indeed claim ownership of the craft but insisted that it was simply a balloon designed to gather weather data, and it had drifted off course. Not many folks in the US seemed particularly sympathetic to that explanation.

- The balloon was equipped with some type of surveillance equipment that was evidently powered by enough solar panels to keep it functional and aloft for a long time.

- The flight path of the balloon over the US was in the vicinity of various sites that are considered to be sensitive because of their military significance. This included areas from which the US is capable of launching intercontinental ballistic missiles as well as various nuclear installations.

- The balloon had enough navigational capabilities that it was

able to slow down and linger as well as to modify its course.

- Some folks in America seemed to be quite confident that the balloon should have been brought down much sooner. As is often the case, it could be observed that the strength of opinion was often inversely proportionate to a person's grasp of the situation. Many also felt that more decisive and prompt action would have been taken if the last presidential election would have turned out differently than it did.

- About the time this whole incident was unfolding, US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, was scheduled to make the first visit by a US Secretary of State to China since 2018. A stated purpose of this visit was to smooth diplomatic relations between the US and China. Due to the complexities surrounding the balloon incident, the trip was called off. It remains to be seen if this results in a mere postponement or a cancellation.

- Something occurred that doesn't happen very often in today's partisan political climate. The US House and Senate came together and unanimously condemned China for sending this surveillance balloon over the US.

- The Chinese government, unsurprisingly, expressed dismay at this gross overreaction by the US to

this inadvertent development.

- Details regarding exactly what this balloon was designed to do, and how capable it was, are not widely known as of this writing. It might stay that way.

This event occupied a pretty good chunk of the media cycle for a time. International spying and surveillance is by its very nature covert. It makes me wonder about the various types of surveillance that are being employed that we don't know about. It seems almost superfluous to say, but it makes quite a bit of sense, that the US is keen to shine a light on the "covert" surveillance of China while keeping its own efforts in this regard under wraps.

I discussed this very briefly with a brother in church recently. I found his thoughts and perspective helpful.

It is reported that the US took measures to limit the capability of the balloon to harvest data while it floated across the US mainland. This is referred to as "jamming" the communications system. It is also reported that the US preferred the cushion of a water landing to preserve the physical condition of the equipment and the quality of intelligence that they hoped to recover from the craft. It is significant that the planned diplomatic visit of a US dignitary to China was scuttled

because of the incident. It seems like a really good time to remind ourselves that the Christian's primary posture with regards to national and international affairs should be one of prayer for those involved in, and charged with, making decisions. Could we agree that a prayerful response is much more Christlike than the reflexive responses of hand-wringing, celebratory fist-bumping, and armchair criticism?

• • • • •

Within the last week or so, we've received word of the death of four different people. Each of them was from a different state and they ranged in age from 54 to 88. The timing of each one was a surprise. I'm reminded that life is short and seldom do those who die receive much advance warning. I'm also reminded that life isn't the end of all things for the believer. Those who die in the Lord experience a glorious beginning!

But as long as we are here, we will continue to deal with a certain amount of sickness and imperfection. This is sometimes a direct result of sin and sometimes it is the result of the fact that sin and its destruction have been with us since the Fall.

My wife recently read Philip Yancey's book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, in which the author was musing about what was recorded

about Jesus' life in Scripture. Yancey thought there were about 36 recorded miracles in the gospels. It's true we don't know how many others were performed, but it is a bit surprising to me that there weren't more recorded. Furthermore, Yancey ponders, as I've wondered, "What about the people whom Jesus didn't heal?" The account at the Pool of Siloam and others hint that Jesus encountered others with physical ailments and limitations who weren't healed. Why?

I'm pretty sure I'll have to wait to find out with certainty why, but we do have several clues. When Jesus was asked whether it was a man's own sin or that of his parents that caused him to be born blind, Jesus replied that it was neither, but so that God would be glorified. Furthermore, illness gives us ongoing and uncomfortable reminders that there is something more basic and important than to experience comfort and good health here and now. God has a variety of ways that He could employ to call us home to be with Him. None of us wishes to be sick. But it is a comfort to know that if a child of God dies as a result of illness, it is through this avenue that the Lord receives His children unto Himself.

• • • • •

Greater Idaho is an organization that promotes an idea that has

been building a bit of steam in both Idaho and eastern Oregon in the last couple of years. The idea that is being examined is that 13 counties in eastern Oregon would withdraw from Oregon and join Idaho. The geographic block in question represents approximately two-thirds of Oregon's land area. If it was added to Idaho, this would make Idaho as large as neighboring Montana and twice as populous.

Many folks in both states understand that eastern Oregon and Idaho share more ideological affinity than eastern and western Oregon do. Mark Simmons, former Oregon House Speaker, wrote in an opinion explaining the need of this move to those in Idaho... "We are dismayed by the manner in which Oregon government has marginalized our values and villainized our resource-based livelihoods..." Some folks refer to Oregon's west coast as the "left" coast. So far, out of the 13 counties discussing this move, 11 have voted to advance this process and the other two have not yet voted. If this would actually come to pass, it would first need to pass both states' legislatures and the US Congress.

While a lot of receptivity exists for this to move forward, not everybody thinks it is a good idea. Idaho House Minority Leader, Ilana Rubel, says,

"I think we're on a path to civil war if we keep going down this path. We have got to learn to get along better and work together better. The answer cannot be to carve up the country and redraw lines that have been in place for a century or more just so we can only be surrounded by people that perfectly agree with us."

The Greater Idaho movement is far from the first such discussion in the country. Similar discussions have been promoted in both California and Texas in recent years. Some feel it would be preferable if California would withdraw from the USA and form its own country. On a smaller scale, political parties have redrawn voting districts at opportune times when it is seen to advance their political agenda. This is referred to as gerrymandering.

• • • • •

In Gary Miller's book, *Church Matters*, he likens ideologically diverse elements in the church to the bones and muscles in a physical body. He makes a good case for why we need both the structure and strength that the skeleton offers and the agility and progress that the muscles provide for the body to function as it was designed. The skeletal and muscle systems actually work in beneficial tension with the other.

But alas, too often God's people

have had discussions like those in Oregon and Idaho and prefer to subdivide along ideological lines rather than reap the benefits that

result when God's people commit to relationships with those who hold perspectives that bring balance to our own.



## Weddings, Funerals, and Ai

*Simon Schrock, Fairfax, VA*

In the last full week in December 2021, I attended the visitation and funerals of two very good friends and precious brothers in the church. Along with these two brothers, we had expressed our faith and joy in serving our risen Lord, experiencing many joys and some disappointments over the years at Faith Christian Fellowship. Needless to say, I was grieving deeply and needed touches of God's sustaining grace. God did dispense His grace through the preaching, singing, and tributes during the services. This was followed by many graceful, encouraging, and comforting words from friends to "keep on keeping on." However, as weddings and funerals often go, there were disappointments on display by attendees that required another measure of grace from God to handle them in a godly way.

In days following I remembered a devotional by Marie Yoder in *Senior Moments With God*. She related an experience Esther had when she attended her aunt's funeral.

"As a youth she loved going to the Mennonite church where revival fires burned and many rose to dedicate themselves to God. Then her family moved out of the area, and now 35 years later she returned for her aunt's funeral. There she missed seeing familiar faces of saints she admired. (Later she saw their names inscribed on tombstones and understood they went to meet God.)"

"Before the service began, Esther sat in the pew of the remodeled church surveying her surroundings. While some people appeared to be in the spirit of worship, the appearance on many was not like that of former times. Most women's head coverings had given way to cut and styled hair, earrings dangled and sparkled. Wedding bands and other jewelry flashed among the congregation. The atmosphere had changed. Where are these people going?"

"As Esther and her husband mingled with the family, she learned that one cousin married a divorced man. Another cousin was dating a



divorcee. She saw her own brother with friends, introducing his second wife and the daughter of his first wife. The daughter's mother was still living. Another relative who had three wives and tired of each one helped sing 'Shall We Gather at the River.' What a mixed-up situation, thought Esther. Do I know who I am and where I'm going? After she returned home, she knew the Bible was her true reference point."

This closely describes some of my own disappointments in attending weddings and funerals, like seeing a couple whose appearance once reflected belonging to a church that is not conformed to the fashions of this present sinful world. The disappointment comes from seeing the couples' departure of biblical guidelines for living and replacing them with the fads of the culture of this "untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Gone is the biblical head veiling and replaced with the sparkling wedding ring. The husband also blends in with the world's culture with a large bright-colored neck tie and ring on the finger. And like Esther observed, seeing friends divorced, remarried, and unfaithful to their marriage vows. What a mixed up situation and still singing hymns. Reminds me of Israel, who "feared the Lord, and served their graven images"

(II Kings 17:41). "Dear God, I need your grace to be respectful in this atmosphere."

On the other hand, there were many of the faithful walking in God's Word who administered many touches of God's grace through words of encouragement.

In the days after the funerals, my Bible and devotional readings were like God was providing His grace, comfort, and light shining on the path forward. My daily Bible reading was in Genesis. I read about Lot and Abram departing from each other. At the departing, one chose to go east and the other toward the west. Lot chose to journey toward Ai. Abram journeyed towards Bethel, called upon the Lord, built an altar there, and worshiped God. This devotional commented on Genesis 12:8 how Abram communed with God. Those comments were like a beam of light shining on a rough and discouraging path. Bethel was considered to be a symbol of communion with God and Ai being a symbol of the world.

Lot chose to journey toward Ai, the symbol of movement toward the world. Later in Genesis 13:12 it states that Lot "*pitched his tent toward Sodom*" where the men "*were wicked and sinful before the LORD exceedingly.*"

Here Abram's name was changed

to Abraham. He placed his faith and trust in the promises God had given to him. *“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”* (Genesis 12:3). All families of the earth were blessed when Messiah Jesus came to earth and was born *“a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”*. Hebrews 11 gives 11 verses (8-19) about Abraham’s faith in the words from God. His heart was steadfast on obeying all the words he received from God. Therefore, today we can rejoice in the fellowship which God provided through Jesus, and with Abraham who looked for *“a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* We are a people who live as *“strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”*

What about those disappointments that surround us today? It appears there is a ready willingness by some to embrace and quote the positive promises of the Bible while neglecting and explaining away the negative promises like *“they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* Like Lot, their heart is tilted more towards Ai than Bethel. They claim God’s grace but fail to embrace and obey His commandments for living in this present world.

My memory takes me to part of a poem I once heard.

One ship sails East,  
And another West,  
By the self-same winds that blow,  
‘Tis the set of the sails  
And not the gales,  
That tells the way we go.

Like the winds of the sea,  
Are the waves of time,  
As we journey along through life,  
‘Tis the set of the soul,  
That determines the goal,  
And not the calm or the strife.

-Ella Wheeler Wilcox

What can the faithful do in such a mixed-up church culture? David, when fleeing from Saul’s anger and scheme to kill him wrote, *“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do”* (Psalm 11:3). Then in Psalm 37 he gives an answer with six steps to help keep our sails set in the right direction.

**1. Fret not** (verse 1). The sequel to fret is to be angry, vexed, and upset. The continual venting of one’s anger can become contagious poisoning. This reminds me to be on guard about stewing over something I can’t really change that will rob me of my joy in the Lord which is my strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Our joy in the Lord is also contagious. Let’s freely

spread it to others as we set our sails to maintain our joy.

**2. Trust in the Lord** (verse 3). Lean on Him. He is a stable post we can lean on with confidence. Matthew 6:33 has become my post of leaning to start my day. *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* For me, this means reading His Word and having a prayer time before checking for emails or reading the bad news for the day.

**3. Delight thyself in the Lord** (verse 4). David expressed a joy that was firmly fixed in his heart. *“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart”* (Psalm 40:8). *“Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight”* (Psalm 119:35). With delight his heart (sail) was set on doing God’s will and living by His commandments. He stood out wholeheartedly for God. Ask yourself, is practicing God’s precepts a burden or a delight, embarrassing or real joy? It appears to me many see it is more of a burden than a delight.

**4. Commit thy way unto the Lord** (verse 5). In Philippians 4:6 believers are admonished to not be anxious, but to bring our concerns, cares,

and requests to God. *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God”* NAS. We are further blessed with the invitation of *“casting all your anxiety on Him”* (I Peter 5:7 NAS).

**5. Rest in the Lord** (verse 7). This brings us to resting our prayer requests with the Lord. This is accompanied with these promises and blessings, *“He cares for you”* (I Peter 5:7 NAS). *“And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:7 NAS). What a blessing to set our sails toward God and be at rest.

**6. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath** (verse 8). When situations and events don’t go my way, I can choose to become angry and respond in a wrathful way. However, I need to remember *“the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God”* (James 1:20).

We’re sailing through waves of evil winds with a deceptive religious atmosphere where love has grown cold. Set your sail toward God and sail with Jesus. He said, *“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved”* (Matthew 24:13).



# Prisoner Number 71

Sierra Wagler, Atwater, OH

I was in the innermost prison, and I was just a number. Everyone referred to me as “Number 71.” I was a murderer, and I knew that eventually the penalty would be death. I was sitting there, rotting away, waiting for my death sentence. There were only five cells in the innermost prison and every time the outer gate rattled, each cell occupant stood at attention, hoping that he wouldn’t be the unlucky prisoner. I had heard many prisoners being dragged away, never to return.

I was sitting in my cell when I heard the rattle of the outer gate. I held my breath as the footsteps came closer, and then my heart leaped into my throat as my gate jingled and opened. A light streamed in.

“Get up, Number 71!” a voice rang out loud and mean.

I stumbled to my feet knowing that death was only a few hours away. Rough hands grabbed me and yanked me out into the corridor. Then keys unlocked my handcuffs, and I knew that I was being prepared for death.

The soldier pushed me and I fell. I was weak from no exercise. I scurried to my feet as I tasted blood in my

mouth.

“You’re free! Now scat!” The man pushed me out into the light.

*No! This was some cruel trick. It had to be! No murderer was ever released free of cost! Then I saw Him. A man with blood and sweat running down His face. People were scowling and yelling at Him. Probably another murderer.*

I turned back to the soldier to see what the reason was for all this. “He’s taking your punishment, and you’re going free.” He scowled as if I was the scum of the earth.

I froze suddenly as the Man turned to look at me. His eyes held no bitterness—only love. “I love you,” He mouthed. I looked away, unable to stand in the gaze of pure love.

*No! He didn’t know me! For all He knew I had murdered his wife and children. I saw in His eyes something so pure that I knew no murderer could have. He must not be a murderer.*

I was pushed along in the crowd out of the city and up a hill. A few hours later the crowd was gone, and it was only He and I. His breathing was ragged as He said, “I forgive you, Number 71.” He drew His last breath

and died.

Thunder roared and lightening tore through the sky. I fell to the ground and cried, "Forgive me, Lord, for I have murdered once again!"

"Barabbas, I forgive you." It was not an audible voice, but it spoke to my heart as an overwhelming peace engulfed me.



## Eight Ways to Kill Brotherhood

Caleb Crider, Strasburg, VA

**D**on't be like Cain, the Bible says (1 John 3:12). While we wouldn't murder a fellow church member, we might do other things that kill the spirit of brotherhood. This list is gleaned from 1 John.

### 1. Hide secret sins.

But John says, "*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John 1:6, 7).

### 2. Consider yourself mostly perfect and never confess.

But John says, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*" (1 John 1:8).

### 3. Become bitter against your brother or sister.

But John says, "*He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him*" (1 John 2:9-10).

### 4. Slip into worldly ways of thinking.

But John says, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (1 John 2:15).

### 5. Talk big, work little.

But John says, "*But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth*" (1 John 3:17, 18).

**6. Accept teaching and information without discernment.**

But John says, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

**7. Be a receiver, but not a giver.**

But John says, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” (1 John 4:11).

**8. Downplay obedience.**

But John says, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments” (1 John 5:2). The author of 1 John was once known as a “son of thunder.” Whatever Jesus had in mind when He gave John that nickname, we know that Jesus changed John, and He can change us too.

*Reprinted from Life Lines, January-February 2023. Used by permission*

*[Selected by Paul L. Miller]*



Raised voices lower esteem.  
Hot tempers cool friendships.  
Loose tongues stretch truth.  
Swelled heads shrink influence.  
Sharp words dull respect.  
  
-WILLIAM A. WARD

**mission awareness**

# Jesus Is Alive

*Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA*

Some years ago many citizens in England earnestly supported Prince Charles’s intention

to change the oath he would take upon becoming king. His change involved deleting the small article



“the”. Historically, it read “Defender of the faith.” Prince Charles justified this change of only omitting one small word “the” because England was becoming a multi-cultural and multi-religious nation of Muslims, Buddhists, and more. The argument was based on the false idea that all religions worshipped the same God.

“The faith” is a rooted spiritual basis for the total composite of Bible truth. There is reason why the epistle of Jude was placed at the end of the New Testament (just before Revelation). Jude was evidently planning to write a less urgent doctrinal letter on “*the common salvation*” but was moved by the Holy Spirit to pen this urgent warning and exhortation to “*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (verse 3). Brother Jude defends the Christian faith as being unchangeable and solid.

One of the cardinal doctrinal errors of the apostate Christian church is the denial that Jesus Christ arose from the dead. But it has been stated that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ could win in the case of any court trial. Luke emphasizes the fact of Jesus’ resurrection as “*many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3). Infallible means unmistakable. We have the marvelous witnesses of His disciples after His resurrection:

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary; Peter; Cleopas and his friend walking to Emmaus; 10 disciples (Thomas is missing); 11 disciples, a week later Thomas believes; seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee; 500 brethren at once; James, the Lord’s brother; again the 11 disciples at Jesus’ ascension; Stephen at his death; Apostle Paul (three times); and John on the isle of Patmos.

This reminds me of the Hebrew writer, “*And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of...*” the testimony of thousands of Christian martyrs, your personal testimony, and the testimony of those who are converted in seeing and hearing the living Christ through visions and dreams.

I trust the following biblical quotes by the late Dave Hunt\* “in Christ Jesus” will inspire you like it often has inspired me (taken from the *Berean Call*). “All that sinful man can ever have in God must come only in and through Jesus Christ, the virgin-born seed of the woman. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all*’ (I Timothy 2:5-6). The New Testament phrase “in Christ Jesus” occurs repeatedly and in numerous other declarations without that exact phrase but reiterates the same

truth: *'justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus'* (Romans 3:24); *'the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'* (Romans 8:39); *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ'* (Ephesians 1:3); *'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them'* (Ephesians 2:10); *'But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ'* (Ephesians 2:13); *'According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord'* (Ephesians 3:11); *'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God'* (Philippians 1:11); *'I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus'* (Philippians 3:14); *'But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus'* (Philippians 4:19); *'... the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus'* (II Timothy 1:1); *'Who hath saved us, ...according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began'* (II Timothy 1 :9); *'Hold fast the form of sound words,... in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus'* (II

Timothy 1:13); *'Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus'* (II Timothy 2:1); *'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit'* (Romans 8:1) and there are more.

“Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ are essential to salvation. Therefore all religious efforts, prayers, and good deeds are vain in receiving God’s blessings. Yet the blessings we receive through Christ Jesus do not flow automatically without faith and even effort on our part. The Christian life of victory is not simply imposed by God’s sovereign power apart from the believer’s faith and obedience as *'laborers together with God.'* We can do nothing but by the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit. At the same time we must give ourselves willingly and wholeheartedly to the grace of God.”

It is also an inspiration to read I Corinthians 1:1-10 where something is mentioned of Jesus Christ in every verse. Verse 30 is an outline and a capstone to the rest of this epistle: *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."*

“The faith” (the sum of Christian

belief) was handed down through the generations, even to us. May we take diligent care and effort in passing the glory of these gems of gold, the holy

Scriptures and the beauty of holy living to our posterity.

*\*Used by permission (Dave Hunt was a faithful witness to Catholics)*



## A Woman After God's Heart

### Songs in the Night

*Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH*



I shift carefully in my bed for what feels like the fiftieth time, not wishing to disturb my deeply-slumbering husband. I admit, though, that his soft, sleeping vibrations are a slight annoyance to me at this moment. It reminds me that dropping off to sleep (or staying asleep) can be a normal event for some people and not something to be agonized over and prayed about. Seemingly, they have little to do with the process, and it just happens to them! I will myself to keep from glancing toward the obnoxious red numbers on the alarm clock as they taunt me with the advancing hour. At other times, I think hours have passed, but when I look, it's only been minutes. I'm losing perspective, I think. I hope I'm not losing my mind. But one thing for sure, I'm losing sleep.

I felt so drowsy just minutes ago

while reading a book and reached for hope that maybe tonight would be different. But when my head hit the pillow, it was as if an army of brain activity charged toward me to keep me brightly alert. My thoughts bounce back and forth between resignation and worry, but the default path often leads to anxiety about not being able to sleep. And then these additional troubles are heaped onto my mind—the conversation with a sister that left me hanging. A child's choices. Might that mole be cancer? Difficulties in a relationship that are too hard to talk about. Will certain individuals ever walk in truth? The demands of tomorrow feel overwhelming by themselves. What will happen to me if I can't sleep?

Nighttime reflects the darkness in my spirit, and the enemy takes me on a wildly-spinning merry-go-round with dread. I tremble between

desperation over the hard things in life and the persistent march of the alarm clock and my need for sleep. I yearn for an unconscious deliverance from this struggle. Things that in the daylight are of minor importance suddenly take on monstrous dimensions.

Are you with me? Have you been here? God has bumped around with me quite patiently on this journey with insomnia. I used to think it was my problem, and it was up to me to fix it. But the more desperate I became, my nighttime woes persisted even more.

• • • • •

I Samuel 3 says that as a youth Samuel did not yet know the Lord, so he didn't recognize this voice that called out to him. For obvious reasons God chose the stillness of the night to get their attention. In the quiet, there is no peripheral racket to distract us. The stage is set for a holy encounter! It says, the "*word of the Lord was precious in those days.*" They didn't hear directly from Him very often. Might God feel like we rarely hear from Him?

How often we long for more God-time and uninterrupted time to meditate on Who He is and His sufficiency. What if we began to see our sleepless moments as an invitation from God to see with

new perspective and to hear with Samuel's ears? Wives often long for more one-on-one time with their husbands, like when courting, for example. We wish for more focused time with less competition from our children and careers. That's our pursuing Bridegroom, as well. He longs for a more intimate relationship with each of us who sometimes gets overwhelmed with the clatter and chatter and wish for some peace and quiet. Can we with young Samuel respond, "Talk to me, Lord, I am listening?" It took Eli three times to catch on to what was going on in that sanctuary where the lamp of God burned. It took me too long, as well, to identify Whose voice called me through insomnia.

Insomnia points to our own inability to produce this sleep comfort we so desperately crave. Truly, the ability to sleep is a gift from God. It provides a nightly opportunity to trust God to supply our needs. Psalms says, God gives His beloved sleep. Elsewhere, He says that if we dwell in the secret place of the most High we won't fear the terror by night. In Ezekiel 34, it offers that when the Shepherd keeps the flock, the sheep can even sleep in the woods.

Job 7 paints the dismal heartbreak of leaving God out of the (sleep) picture. He speaks of tossing until

dawn and about nights of misery. In Proverbs we're told that our father and mother's teaching will watch over us when we lie down and talk with us when we wake up! In chapter 3 it states that if we keep sound wisdom and discretion we won't be afraid and our sleep will be sweet. In Psalm 119, he purposefully stays awake so that he can meditate on God's word. Jesus Himself invites us to *come to Him and He will give us rest.*

King Ahasuerus couldn't sleep one night and asked for the chronicles to be read wherein he ended up honoring Mordecai, much to Haman's chagrin. And right there Haman's plot to destroy the Jews turned on its head. I reflect on the role insomnia played in this miraculous story of God's supremacy.

I am not suggesting that insomnia is a spiritual problem. A variety of physical imbalances may actually be causing sleeplessness. Sometimes with a few lifestyle changes, it can be addressed fairly effortlessly. If the problem persists, a doctor's advice may be helpful.

But when we allow an *anxious spirit* to assault our nighttime hours, we allow the enemy to take advantage of our physical weakness. Darkness outside somehow only heightens feelings of hopelessness inside. Issues that feel overwhelming at night take


on normal proportions at sunrise. When we give ear to wrong voices during those dark and quiet hours, that's when the trouble begins.

If anxiety ruts are worn deeply in your nighttime thinking patterns, take hope! You can train your mind to hear God in the middle of the night. Perhaps many of you have developed your own successful strategies. I'll share a partial listing of my toolbox for dealing with insomnia and aids to hearing the Voice Samuel heard.

Avoid these in the evening: screen time, caffeine, food, and conversation about difficult subjects. Turn the alarm display away from you if it bothers you. Drink chamomile tea. Keep an herbal sleep-aid at your fingertips, just in case. Restrict daytime naps, choosing fresh air and a brisk walk instead. Use a weighted blanket or room-darkening shades.

For your mental and spiritual hygiene, quietly review mentally the verses you've been memorizing. Sing to God in your thoughts. Choose a song or two that you can quickly page to in your head when the enemy wants to invade your blank moments. Pray for everyone you can think of. Talk with God about things you've wanted to talk to Him about but couldn't find the time. Refuse to wrestle with hard issues. Tell your mind what to think. We are not a

victim of our thoughts, we actually get to choose what to think. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit and in our sleepless moments, we can give Him our exclusive attention. God's

Word says it's a safe place and sweet. He waits to give us songs in the night. "And in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life" (Psalm 42:8). 

## junior messages

# Saved from a Mad Man

*Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH*

**O**n a quiet summer evening after enjoying supper with his wife and small children, Mark drove the short distance to our neighbors to get our weekly supply of fresh farm milk. As he was rounding a curve on the country road, he was left of center and swerved to give a fast-traveling vehicle enough room on the gravel road.

When he stopped at the barn, he noticed that the same vehicle had turned around and pulled in right beside him. Mark could see the driver was upset and very mad—steaming mad.

The irate man got out of his vehicle and stormed over to Mark's gray minivan. Mark rolled down his window.

"Why were you hogging the road like that? I can't stand it when people act like that on the road." Curse

words spewed out of his mouth. Meanwhile, he was pulling on brass knuckles.

Mark knew the man wanted him to get out and fight. He just sat there silently but was sending desperate prayers to God for help and protection.

The man ranted on.

Mark hadn't realized he had so badly hogged the road, but he stayed in his vehicle and apologized. "I am sorry, sir. I am sorry. I didn't mean to run you off the road."

The mad man shook his brass knuckles at him. He leaned in, closer to Mark's open window and spit full in Mark's face.

The man turned to stomp back to his vehicle. Mark called after him, "God loves you, sir."

The man got into his vehicle and roared off.




Mark's hand shook as he wiped the spit off his face. He got out of his vehicle and filled his gallon container with milk. His heart was overflowing with gratitude that the strong arm of God had kept him safe. He never saw that angry man again.

Proverbs 15:1 says, "A soft answer turned away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger."

Will we speak kindly when

someone is upset and throws harsh words at us? We need God's help every day, at home or wherever we are.

*"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them"* (Psalm 34:7).

That night Mark praised the Lord again and again for His protection from the mad man. 

## youth messages

### Just a Little Chat – Part 2

*Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH*

Over the next few days, both Dave and Brad thought a lot about their meeting. Brad's family wasn't at their home church on Sunday since his cousin was getting baptized. They didn't have a chance to see each other until Wednesday after prayer meeting, and that is where we find them now.

"Hey, Brad, how is your week going?" Dave questioned after prayer meeting was over.

"Oh, it's been pretty good. We're staying busy, but we're almost caught up." Brad replied.

"That's great! We missed you at church on Sunday. How was the baptismal service?" Dave asked.

"It was a little different, but it was

a nice service. Carson had some buddies around from out of town for a volleyball tournament. They didn't get to bed till late and slept through about half the service. I was a little embarrassed for them."

"What did your uncle James think about that?" Dave queried.

"I dunno," Brad answered a bit sheepishly, "I don't know that he saw Carson till after the service since he came late with his buddies. His sister Lisa said she hadn't seen him much at all this past weekend but had heard him come home late Saturday night."

"That's too bad," Dave replied, "I'm sure they were disappointed."

"I don't know if they were, but I was." Brad mumbled. "Their church

sits together as families, and I figured he'd be supportive of his sister and be there sitting with his family. They are the only two children, and I thought he'd put some effort into showing support for her even if he was tired. I guess he had other priorities. I went back and talked with him after the service, and I feel like if I hadn't gone back to talk to him, he wouldn't have bothered finding me. We used to be so close." Brad let out a sigh of frustration. "He's just not like he used to be."

An idea struck Dave, "Are you available Saturday morning again? Dad has weekend meetings in Ohio, and Mom is going with him, so I will be at home alone. I'm not the greatest cook in the world, but I do make some mean scrambled eggs, and we could cook up some sausages and stuff—and coffee, lots of coffee. Whaddaya think?"

"I think I'm free, but let me check with my parents and make sure they don't have something planned that I don't know about," said Brad.

"If it's okay with them, you can come over after youth on Friday and spend the night. The guest room is empty, and you're welcome to stay over. I'm pretty sure my parents won't mind. I'll let you know if they say otherwise."

"It's Bible Study at Levis this week,

right?" asked Brad. "I think your idea sounds like fun. I hope it works out that I can come. I've been thinking a lot about our last conversation, and I'd like to ask you some other questions."

Friday soon rolled around and it had indeed worked out for Brad to go to Dave's house after youth that evening. It had been a nice evening with the Bible Study having good participation and discussion. After the fellas got back to Dave's house and went inside, Dave put on a pot of coffee and then hollered from the garage, "Hey, Brad, do you want sausage links, sausage patties, bacon, or some combination of that tomorrow morning?"

"Uhhhhm, let's do links and bacon," Brad answered. "I'm not picky though, so if you want something else I'm fine with that."

"Deal," said Dave emerging from the garage with a couple of frozen packages that he stuck in the sink. "We'll be eating good tomorrow!"

As the two young men sat down in the living room with mugs of coffee, Dave decided to dive right in. "So what have you been thinking about and wanted to ask me about?" he asked Brad.

Brad hesitated a moment and then replied, "I had something in mind, but something from the study tonight

got me thinking. We talked about the rich man and Lazarus tonight, and there were definitely different ideas on money among our youth. Now the last time we talked, you mentioned that when a church has conflicting views in doctrine, is not united in vision, and focuses more on superficial love, they are often shallow. At least I think that's what you said."

"Yes, I think it was something like that," said Dave. "So what's the question?"

"If that is true," Brad continued, "what effect does it have on a church when there are differing views on business, making money, and wealth in general?"

"Ah, yes," Dave replied. "My dad and I talked about this recently—the effect of money on the church. Gimme a sec to recall what he said." He gazed thoughtfully into his coffee mug. "There are a lot of different ways that differing views can affect the church and the brotherhood. Take, for instance, Brother Vic. He spent years on the mission field. In doing so he has sacrificed many of the best 'money-making years' of his life. When he did finally return from the mission field, he was in a difficult financial situation. His views on money and the accumulation of wealth were very different from

others in the church as a result of his experiences and exposure to life in poorer countries. Meanwhile, Brother Harold never went to the mission field. He runs a successful business and invested his money wisely. He is what a lot of us would call wealthy, but he is also very generous and quick to quietly support the various mission groups, even the one that Bro. Vic and his family has served with. He and his family live well, but not extravagantly. He is willing to spend for quality and knows the value of a dollar. So, which one has a more proper view of money?" Dave asked.

"Uh, probably Vic? No, wait... Harold? I dunno, they often seem to have differing opinions on how the church should spend its money." Brad struggled to come up with a good answer.

"True, and how often does that stop them from coming to a good compromise?" Dave responded. "Occasionally, yes, but often their differing views, when combined, help come up with a balanced solution. We both know there's a big difference between what Harold drives and what Vic drives. But as long as that isn't their focus, then I feel it's fine. The problem is if Vic resents Harold's wealth that God has entrusted to him and judges Harold's purchases and

way of life through the lens of what he (Vic) has experienced, Harold might start looking down on Vic because his financial situation might make it look like he doesn't have good money management skills or is lazy. In reality, Vic simply developed different priorities as a result of his experiences. There are deep ditches on each side of the topic; the love of and drive for wealth at the cost of our families and relationships, and the pride in being poor because supposedly it's 'more holy,' and then constantly judging those who are better off than we are. Those attitudes toward money will cause divisions in a church in a heartbeat."

"I see your point," Brad said thoughtfully, then he yawned. "Just because they differ in opinion doesn't mean that it has to drive them apart. Neither of them are wrong, and both of their views have their strong points. I just get super annoyed when people who don't have much money judge how those that do use theirs. I feel like we are just kinda 'middle of the road' when it comes to finances, and it bothers me when I hear other people talk."

"One thing to remember, and this applies to more areas of life than money," Dave replied. "A book I read recently talked about 'according to knowledge.' So much of what we

are responsible for is 'according to knowledge.' Now hear me out. We as Christians are all at different places in our spiritual lives. We have had different experiences that influence the way we view certain things. Being on the mission field and seeing people working to survive often changes how a person views wealth. A mistake I made in the past may color how I view something that someone else might see as harmless. God speaks through the Holy Spirit and convicts us of things. Others might not be as far along in their walk with God, and God hasn't revealed things to them. A young Christian isn't expected to be as spiritually mature as someone who has been a believer for 40 years. The Christian life is a journey—it's not a sprint."

"That's a lot to think about," Brad said with another yawn. "I'm ready to hit the sack. How about you?"

"Definitely," Dave responded with a yawn of his own. "See ya in the morning. Breakfast at 8:00?"

"Sounds like a plan to me!" Brad replied as he dragged himself out of his chair. "Last time you and I met I had to get out of bed before breakfast!"

"Uh-huh," Dave nodded with a wry grin. "You need to go to bed before your jokes get worse."

*To be continued*



(USPS 767-160)  
Carlisle Printing  
2673 Township Rd. 421  
Sugarcreek, OH 44681

Periodicals

## THOUGHT GEMS

The essence of generosity is self-sacrifice.

.....

There is no excellence uncoupled with difficulties. -OVID

.....

Encouragement after censure is as the sun after a shower.

.....

The awful importance of this life is that it determines eternity.

-WILLIAM BARCLAY

.....

He has the right to criticize who has the heart to help. -ABRAHAM LINCOLN

.....

A large percentage of defeats comes from people who  
have the habit of making excuses.

.....

He who lives without discipline is exposed to grievous ruin.

-THOMAS À KEMPIS

.....

Curious people ask questions; determined people find answers.

.....

Experience is not what happens to you, it is what you do  
with what happens to you. -ALDOUS HUXLEY

.....

Few things are as contagious as enthusiasm.