



CALVARY MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

SEPTEMBER

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Purpose of Calvary Messenger is:
 To propagate sound Biblical doctrine;
 To stimulate a deeper study of God's Word;
 To anchor and fortify the faith of Christians;
 To point lost and dying souls to Christ the Savior;
 To welcome prodigals back to the fold and family of God;
 And to help defeated Christians find victory in Christ Jesus.

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Editor: Paul L. Miller
 7809 S. Herren Rd., Partridge, KS 67566
 Ph/Fax 620-567-2286
 paulmiller@bttskynet.net

Assistant Editor: Elmer D. Glick
 RR 1 Box 49-C, Augusta, WV 26704
 elmerg@frontiernet.net

Associate Editor: David L. Miller
 P O Box 73, Partridge, KS 67566

Contributing Editors:
 Simon Schrock
 Enos D. Stutzman
 Aaron Lapp

Missions Editor: Floyd Stoltzfus
 186 Skyline Dr., New Holland, PA 17557

Youth Messages Editor: Ernest Eby
 4812 Hwy. 5, Mountain View, AR 72560
 ec.eby.ar@gmail.com

Junior Messages Editor:
 Mrs. Anita Yoder
 10393 N 1100 W, Ligonier, IN 46767

Helpers at Home Editor:
 Mrs. Mary June Glick
 1080 Return Church Rd., Seneca, SC 29678

Circulation Manager/Treasurer:
 Mark I. Beachy
 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW
 Dundee, OH 44624
 markbeachy@afo.net
 330-852-2982

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A Journey

Corrie Troyer, Medina, NY

The road that I've been traveling quite a while,
Is long and steep and rougher every mile;
And gone my song and joy, my peace and smile,
"Is this your plan for me?"

I've climbed; I've fought the battles day and night,
And I have nothing left—no strength, no might.
No courage left to face the foe and fight,
"Dear Lord, what shall I do?"

Ahead of me I glimpse a mountain wall,
I cannot scale it, what if I should fall?
Unto my failing heart it's much too tall,
"My God, is this Your will?"

My body throbs with pain; I cannot go on.
I've cried until my strength is almost gone.
"Oh, have You left me now, distressed, undone?
My God, reach down and help!"

"Dear Lord, You've said, 'I am the only Way,'"
And sobbing, broken, at Thy feet I lay,
Reach up and grasp the hope of coming day;
There's nought else I can do.

Amidst the sorrow, toil, the stress and strain,
While walking through my grief, my deepest pain,
If I look up, I glimpse through lashing rain,
The face of One I love.

And know that some day storm and wind will cease,
Give way to quietness and settled peace,
To perfect rest and blessed, sweet release,
And until that glad day,

I place my life into the Shepherd's hand,
Believing that my journey has been planned,
And know, undoubting, some day, I shall stand
Where tears are wiped away!



Washing Feet

In a communion service many years ago, I had the privilege of having my feet washed by Bro. Bill Rae from Deer Lake, Ontario. Bill grew up with superstition and fear. He was taught that unless animistic spirits are appeased they will harm you. Through the witness and ministry of Bro. Alvin Frey, Bill opened his heart to Jesus. When he repented and believed, his outlook was transformed to freedom and joy. I remember Bro. Bill best for how tenderly he washed my feet.

Recently, when I read Harry A. Ironside's thoughts on foot washing in John 13:1-17, I thought back on that experience in the late 1960's. Here are kernels of Ironside's insights, with my comments:

Some seem to wash other's feet with cold water. The cold water of indifference and self-interest offers no comfort. An unsympathetic heart that has not faced its own needs and been softened by repentance tends to treat others with cold tolerance, or disdain, or even a holier-than-thou attitude. Such a chill blesses neither the giver nor the receiver.

Some seem to wash other's feet with hot water. Disgust, anger,

unforgiveness and hostility are like hot water. Such emotions come from getting stuck in real or imagined injustices of the past. Unresolved feelings keep one from reaching out to others with mercy. Those who plunge others' feet into "hot" water may, nevertheless, congratulate themselves for how faithfully they obey the Lord.

Some seem to try to clean other's feet without water. Impatient people tend to think they know just what the other person is thinking and needing. They assume they know best, so they speak plainly—bluntly. They "scrape" mercilessly, taking "skin with dirt" instead of approaching others with insight and sympathy. Their intended helpfulness typically does more harm than good.

Fortunately, some use warm water to wash other's feet. Compassion tenderly washes away dirt with "warm" water. Gentle hands and caring eyes note splinters, blisters and bruises. Mercy takes an interest in misunderstandings common to walking through life on earth. Comforting others' feet conveys a sense of care like that of earnest prayer for others. I think Jesus must

have used warm water when He humbly washed His disciples' feet after the Last Supper, a few hours before "He gave His back to the smiters."

Literal or Figurative?

Most professing Christians accept the practice of *literal* baptism with water and *literal* partaking of the bread and cup of communion, but somehow avoid *literal* foot washing.

Today's ritual foot washing in America is, admittedly, mostly symbolic. We generally don't wash each other's feet for the sake of cleanliness or sanitation. We do it rather because Jesus did it for His disciples and asks us to follow His example. (John 13:1-11) Furthermore, it symbolizes and strengthens our love for each other and reminds us of how much we need each other in the body of Christ.

Jesus invites us to do as He did. (John 12-16) If we love Him, we gladly accept His invitation. Granted, compliance with this command of Jesus does not compensate for neglect of any of His other commands.

As baptism cannot replace repentance and faith, and as communion cannot replace love for and surrender to Christ, so foot washing cannot replace unselfish regard for our brothers and sisters. *These three ordinances are simply*

outward expressions of inner realities which Jesus imparts to His Bride. At the Last Supper, Jesus clinched His object lesson with, "If you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

Love is the Key

Jesus washed His disciples' feet because, "...having loved his own,... he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1b). Merely washing a brother's feet does not make us loving. Love that blesses comes from God. Kindly washing each others' feet provides a meaningful way to reach out to our brother/sister, if Jesus' love has been "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost..." (Romans 5:5).

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue [only], but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

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In January, 2010, I wrote in *Calvary Messenger* that a law suit had been filed by a student who attended Poplar Hill Development School (a residential school in NW Ontario) in the late 1960's. Last year (some 40 years later—hoping for a large monetary settlement) this student brought false charges against me and our staff for alleged abusive treatment of him. Here is a current (8-5-10) update of that situation: **Since submitting a written defense,**

I have heard nothing more. Thank you for your prayers!

While this is inconclusive, it appears that the issue has been either resolved without my further involvement or dismissed as unworthy of further deliberation. We are tremendously relieved and deeply grateful! Who can explain how that some, who are

falsely accused, are further hounded while others are not? We live in a fallen world of unpredictable justice.

God is sovereign. It is true as my elderly friend Noah Nisly once declared, "God knows His business!" That's good enough for me. To Him be all the glory!

—PLM 

reader response

Hats

Jake Byers, Stoystown, PA

After reading your comments about Reader Response being open to a wider range of opinions in the July issue, I feel moved to send these comments to you.

Why has wearing a hat been dropped to a large extent in recent years? Are there sound reasons for *not* wearing a hat? I also ask, Are there sound reasons for doing so?

First, we will consider physical reasons and benefits. Many doctors agree and recommend that hats should be worn. They tell us that in cold weather much body heat escapes though the scalp and much more if no hat is worn. They say that this contributes to more colds, flu, and pneumonia. The doctors also tell us that going hatless in bright sunshine contributes to more skin cancer

about the face.

What seems more serious to me is the fact that when I was growing up serious church people wore hats. All churches had hat racks and men were not properly dressed without a hat. Where did that start? President Kennedy (1961) was the first president of this country to go without a hat at his inauguration. Of course, the practice was going away before that or he would likely not have done so. However, I believe he caused the practice to become much more popular and by now it is the fashion of the world to go without a hat. [A fairly recent fad among some people, however, made the bill cap almost "unremovable," even indoors. -PLM]

Back when the worldly-minded church men wore hats, the more

conservative brethren wore full-crowned black hats. This was earlier true of all branches of Anabaptists. In my time, when you saw our men in town, you knew they were “plain people.”

Just why are we now willing to go without the hat when history indicates so consistently that the faithful wore them? The Pilgrims are all pictured with tall, black hats. Dirk Willems who rescued his pursuer from icy water is always pictured with his hat on. Martyr’s Mirror gives the account of a brother (Hans Haslibacher) who was being prepared for beheading. He threw his hat on the ground nearby and said, “If I am a faithful follower of Jesus, my head will roll into that hat when this is done.” And it did so. In Daniel 3:21, we read that those faithful young Hebrews were cast into the fiery furnace with their hats on. (Note in

margin: “turbans.”)

I believe the underlying cause for not wearing a hat is simply because other people do not do so. It has become the fashion. The black hat is one of the more visible and identifiable marks of a separated Christian. Scriptures like 2 Corinthians 6:16,17 and Romans 12:1,2 speak plainly about separation for the Christian.

May I ask each of us men to consider this question: Why go without a hat? If there is good reason for *not* wearing hats, why did we wait until the fashion world dropped it before we did so? Every reason or excuse for putting away the hat can be used just as readily for the putting away of the plain coat, the cape dress or any other distinctive practice we believe becomes a faithfully separated Christian.

[Slightly condensed and edited.]

—PLM] 

the bottom line

Real Men Don't Read the Directions

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

My wife went to Michigan to be with her children for one week, then down to Goshen to be with her mom for a week. I was pleased with myself for my self-sacrificing for her pleasure. Pleased, I say, until breakfast time came around. Any time you have a

daily task to fulfill, time goes fast. Right?

My short breakfast list includes orange juice. The pitcher was full when she left. After eight days, the pitcher was empty. Eating breakfast alone is sad enough, but doing without orange juice is sadder yet.

“Oh,” she says, “just (why do the ladies always preface recipes with ‘just’?) open the can of frozen concentrate, dump it in the pitcher, and then ‘just’ put in three cans of water.”

Somehow the “just” became “unjust.” This orange juice is far from what Esther makes. It is little more than colored water. (how many more days until Esther “just comes home?") The day afterward, I took the pitcher out of the fridge and in the bottom I see an inch of “orange cream.” I stir the contents. Ah, wonderful orange juice! Richer now and fuller than when Esther makes it herself. I wonder why?

Even though the directions say you should stir it, who needs directions when a self-made man can learn by his own experience?

During this time, I met a man with this quote on his shirt. It said, “Real men don’t read the directions.” Some one-liners are both humorous and ironic at the same time.

The Bible says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7).

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding” (Proverbs 3:13).

“He that refuseth instruction hateth his own soul: but he that heareth

reproof getteth understanding” (Proverbs 15:32).

The Bible places a premium on knowledge. Knowing precedes wisdom. Wisdom helps to make right choices. Right choices make good use of time, strength, and resources, which are the essence of life.

Some men travel, scarcely consulting a map or stopping to ask directions. It must be something in the male genes. This old adage still applies for men who lack understanding—“When all else fails, read the directions!”

Some men follow a “gut” feeling and foolhardily do the inadvised, wrong thing. It turns out to either a carnal thought or foolish ambition that drives them to a costly mistake.

Some men have a “but” feeling. The “but” in this case is where counsel and better knowledge is given. They are the self-made type, who would do all things by their own smarts. But they think of themselves as exceptional and end up exceptionally foolish.

Some men have the “rut” feeling. This kind makes similar mistakes over and over. They neither learn by doing, by counsel, nor by reading any instructions. It is the height of folly to do the same thing over and over again and expect different results.

God’s assessment of wisdom and progress is still being accomplished


by men and women who do read His Word and follow His direction. God's principles are timeless and worldwide in scope.

Real men are wise men. Wise men are readers of God's Word. Sincere readers make faithful leaders. Able leaders are needed in all facets of home life and church life. Businesses flourish when informed persons are utilized.

A well-educated preacher gave a sermon at a Sunday-evening service. After the service, he was meeting people as they were exiting. One man said to the preacher, "God can't use *all* of your knowledge." He replied, "My good man, don't you know that God can't use *any* of your ignorance?"

Ignorance is both cheap and unhandy. Conventional wisdom used to say, "Ignorance is bliss." The bliss evaporates quickly when errors are made that turn out to be both embarrassing and costly.

"What you don't know can't hurt you," has been proven wrong countless times. And yet people quote such gems almost as though they were found in Scripture.

The Bottom Line is that real men do read the directions. They read maps, owner's manuals, and the Bible. Not merely as a matter of duty or as a good-luck charm, but rather to be duly informed in the issues of common sense and divine wisdom. 

Fellowship in the Tire Shop

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

The Bible reminds believers to rejoice. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). Love rejoices "in the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6).

It was one of those hot and sweaty summer days in Northern Virginia when people often shed too much clothing and immodesty goes rampant. I was waiting at the tire shop while new tires were being installed on my car. While waiting in the cool

office area, I noticed something a bit unusual, but outstanding, worthy of rejoicing: A neatly and modestly dressed lady.

I quickly discerned that she was not the "outward adorning of plaiting the hair or of wearing of gold or of putting on of apparel" type of lady. She displayed a spirit of "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter

3:3-4). Her hair was neatly put up and covered with what was clearly not fashionable headgear. Her attire was modest, clearly non-conformed to the culture and gender specific. *Ah, I thought, I must congratulate her and let her know it is encouraging to meet a modestly dressed stranger.*

Expecting some brief fellowship and maybe encouragement for one another, I gave a compliment with appreciation for her modesty. I recognized her covered head by asking if she wore it because of what the Scripture teaches. She affirmed my speculation.

About that time, her husband stepped up and joined in the conversation. My expectation of a little Christian fellowship was short-lived. He wasn't particularly interested in fellowship. His interest was to make sure my understanding of the doctrine of God agrees with his. He quickly interjected a question relating to God. *Do I believe God is three persons, or is there only one God?* It was evident that he referred to the "Jesus only" teaching. The question was given in a rather forceful and persistent tone. My response did not exactly match with his beliefs. The approach turned argumentative. The rejoicing in the Lord quickly evaporated with the heat I felt coming on.

Unfortunately, the Scriptural admonition to "let your moderation be known to all men, the Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5) was not readily evident. Moderation is also known as gentleness. I did not feel a gentle and moderate inquiry, but a forceful attempt to set me straight right there in the tire store. Instead of our conversation adorning "the gospel of God and our Savior in all things" (Titus 2:10), it turned into an embarrassing situation. It signaled that this was not expedient and the conversation ended. I went on my way with two new tires and a disappointed spirit.


A non-argumentative conversation like Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well would have been more beneficial. Jesus engaged the woman in conversation by asking for a drink of water. She was surprised that a Jew would ask for a drink from a Samaritan, "For Jews have no dealing with Samaritans" (John 4:9). The woman recognized that when "Messiah cometh, which is called the Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things." Jesus responded, "I that speak unto thee am he" (v. 25, 26). Because of this conversation "many Samaritans of that city believed on him for the sayings of the woman which testified, He told me all that I ever did" (v. 39). This encounter

led others to believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

I embrace Anabaptist theology and doctrines that are not popular in “mainstream” churches. I hold convictions on teaching of Scripture that is overlooked or neglected by most “Christian” groups. I frequently have opportunity to discuss Christian faith with strangers. It may be in a parking lot or beside a newsstand where I stock books. I’d like to practice meeting strangers with the spirit Jesus demonstrated that day. Maybe a non-confrontational discussion will give the Holy Spirit more freedom to bring a person to faith in Christ, or encourage believers to a closer and more obedient walk with God.

Believers differ on a lot of issues. When it comes to Bible prophecy (eschatology) there are about as many views as there are persons in the circle of discussion. Who benefits when one’s view is stated with such certainty that it raises blood pressure? The subject of Scripture translations can become a heated debate whether in the tire shop or Sunday School class. I have witnessed intense and vigorous expression on the issue. I do

not recall any winners coming from heated and emotionally-charged exchanges on the subject. I do recall preaching a sermon and quoting a sentence of Scripture from several translations. After the service a stranger told me it was a good sermon, but I polluted it by quoting from a translation other than the one he held as authentic. It was a quick and forceful expression of what he believed, and he was quickly on his way with no healthy exchange.

Years ago, Brother David L. Miller explained the phrase, “The Lord is near” with the illustration that children playing in an adjacent room will be aware that a parent is just around the corner and hears what is going on: *A parent is near*. Whether it is a conversation in the tire shop or church basement, I want to learn to approach disagreement with moderation, gentleness, and forbearance. I want to remember that the Lord is near and work to make such conversation adorn the Gospel of God and let the Holy Spirit do his work. I do *not* want my strongly held convictions to block possible fellowship in the tire shop. 

Modesty: The triumph of mind over flatter.

Things I Have Learned

Anthony Miller, 18 years old, Partridge, KS

Here at my graduation from high school, I offer a few words of advice that would have helped me at 14, when I was starting high school:

1. Keep your priorities straight and keep a proper focus. God cannot be second in your life; He must come first. You can trust Him to control your whole life. Trust Him in every area and put your relationship with Him first. He does not disappoint. Don't be afraid to walk in faith. He will tell you, if you trust Him to, what you should be doing and how you should proceed. Obey Him promptly if you want to avoid sorrow and regret. Don't hesitate to ask Him for the things you want. However, don't ask for humility unless you mean it! You will never regret time spent in Bible reading and memorization. Read the Proverbs daily and take them to heart; memorize them.

2. Family should come second. Don't be afraid of getting close and then staying close. Don't think that pushing your family away will accelerate your journey to adulthood. Stay close to them and involve them in your life. You will need their encouragement and support. Your

family loves you.

Honor your parents. I can recall only a few times when I went against my parents' advice—not authority, not commands, but advice—and did not regret it. Always obey your parents, but even after you don't need to obey them anymore, follow their advice. I am so glad that God helped me to realize relatively early that parents are God's gift to teenagers. What could be better for a teenager with self-confidence and decision making issues (all teenagers have them) than two people with years and years of experience, who have lived with you your entire life, who know you better than anyone else in the world, who love you very much, and who are honored when you ask them advice.

Ask their advice; then follow it. Don't be embarrassed of them, but honor them. Also honor your fathers, those who came before you. Learn about them; learn from them. Don't forget your heritage, but remember the things your fathers suffered for their faith. I have an amazing legacy of faith, one that goes back about 400 years to the time of the early reformers. I have been told that I

take too much pride in my heritage of faith, but I don't think that is possible.

Realize that diligence is a treasure. Proverbs 12:27 says, "The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is [a] man's possession." Be diligent especially to use your mind. Explore new ideas, read difficult authors, think about what you read; don't just put books through the mill, ("in one eye and out the other,") but process every idea in light of Scripture.

Diligence is truly valuable. Again and again Proverbs contrasts the diligent man with the sluggard, pointing out the poverty and misery of the sluggard and the health, happiness, position of influence and wealth of the diligent.

I wish also to note several things I am thankful for, and for the lessons God has taught me, despite my slowness and stubbornness to learn.

I am very, very blessed. I live in a land where wealth and freedom are commonplace and taken for granted. I have two parents who love each other and who have been faithful to each other their entire lives. I have six siblings. I was able to grow up out in "the boondocks" with plenty of space to explore and be a "kid." I was blessed with parents who home schooled us. I am very thankful that

I was home schooled for several reasons:

- I was allowed to go at my own pace. I wasn't inoculated against learning at age six by being forced to do things too advanced for me. Instead, I was allowed to learn to read when I was ready. I was raised in a house with books and more books, because my dad loves books. So naturally, I loved books too, and still do, which has helped me greatly in my studies.

- I wasn't exposed to negative peer pressure in school. I wasn't obsessed with being cool or getting into cliques, and I wasn't beaten up or called names for being a little "nerdy." In other words, I might even seem "unsocialized."

- I'm also thankful that my parents let me venture outside the home for part of my high school education. It was good for me to take online classes and to attend Pilgrim Christian High School for two classes, as well as to go to Hutchinson Community College.

- I'm thankful for all my teachers, especially my grandpa, who taught me Bible and German. Last, but not least, I'm thankful for my church family.

[This speech was submitted for publication by Paul Yoder, a fellow-worker of Anthony's.]



Believer or Disciple?

Corey Yoder, Osceola, TX

A believer says, “I can be rich in possessions of this world and still have God.”

A disciple says, “I have left all to follow Jesus.”

A believer says, “I need to stand on God’s truth with no compromise.”

A disciple says, “Jesus is the truth. I stand with Him. He needs no defense.”

A believer says, “I need help to keep things in order.”

A disciple says, “I have surrendered all to Him; here I am.”

A believer says, “If that’s the way this church is, I’m out of here.”

A disciple says, “What can I do to help resolve the problems here?”

A believer says, “Brother, you need to stop doing that or else...”

A disciple says, “How can I show you God’s heart? Will you walk with me as we learn how to gaze on Jesus?”

A believer says, “Oh well, there’s not much I can do—he says he has peace doing that.”

A disciple says, “I need to spend time interceding to God for him and redemptively exhort him to true surrender and obedience to God.”

A believer says, “I had a weak

moment, was discouraged because of _____ and had a little fall.”

A disciple says, “In my weak moment I made a conscious choice to turn to sin instead of to Jesus Christ, and for this I repent.”

A believer says, “It seems like no one else is doing it, so why do I have to?”

A disciple says, “Though all go astray, Jesus is my life. I cannot and will not deny Him.”

A believer says, “God wants me to have a happy life.”

A disciple says, “I have no life. I’ve forsaken my life and my right to be happy.”

A believer says, “God wants me have a fulfilling life.”

A disciple says, “There is no fulfillment outside of Christ.”

A believer says, “Show me where the Bible says I can’t.”

A disciple says, “Show me more of the heart of God.”

A believer says, “How sanctified do I have to be to satisfy God?”

A disciple says, “Sanctify me completely, O my God!”

A believer is quick to make excuse for sin. “It’s my weakness, you know.”

A disciple will confess his sin and walk with Jesus and continue to be changed by Christ.

A believer has something to hide. He's afraid of transparency. He rarely opens His personal life up.


A disciple welcomes the light and loves transparency. He has discovered the joy and freedom of having his personal life open.

A believer's chief concern is, "What price do I have to pay?"

A disciple's chief concern is, "How will this affect the testimony of JESUS?"

A believer talks only about God's mercy and love, expecting God to understand his unwillingness to yield his heart to truth.

A disciple realizes that God will not bend His truth for any man.

[Submitted for publication by Ernest Strubhar, Perkins, OK.] 

Courage or Cowardice?

Janet Yoder, Lott, TX


The other day while I was shopping an older lady came over to me and wondered if she could ask me a question. I said, "Sure."

This was her question: "About ten years ago, my son moved to another state. There's a Mennonite church in his community. All the ladies dressed like you. They wore these long dresses and they were very different from the rest of the world.

"Three weeks ago, I went to visit my son and I was shocked at what I saw! The ladies are wearing these short skirts and low cut blouses. It seems

like they're trying more and more to fit in with the rest of the world. So I would just really like to know—is this what's happening in your churches these days? If you people give in to the ways of the world, well then, the rest of us might as well not even try because we'll never make it."

This was a timely reminder for us that people are watching us all the time! What do they see? Are we leaving a clear testimony for our Lord?

[Submitted by Dave Kauffman, Lott, TX. Slightly condensed.] 

marriages

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

Gerber-Lebold

Bro. Jonathan, son of Raymond and Deborah Gerber, Brunner, ON, and Sis. Joanne, daughter of Floyd and Kathy Lebold, Lucknow, ON, at Presbyterian Church for Whitechurch A.M. Church on June 12, 2010, by Arthur Gerber.

Hamilton-Edwards

Bro. Nathan, son of Charles and Kerry Hamilton, Harrison, AR, and Sis. Carissa, daughter of Jacky and Mishelle Edwards, Harrison, AR, at Red Oak Baptist Church for Little Flock Christian Fellowship, on July 17, 2010, by Charles Hamilton.

Martin-Schmucker

Bro. Sheldon, son of Grant and Judy Martin, Whitewright, TX, and Sis. Louisa, daughter of Joe and Carol Schmucker, Hutchinson, KS, at Journey @ Yoder for Cedar Crest A.M. Church, on July 24, 2010, by Lee Nisly.

Miller-Graber

Bro. Freeman, Jr, son of Freeman and Ida Miller, Oskaloosa, KS, and Sis. Lydia, daughter of Willard and Julie Graber, Lyndon, KS, at Lyndon Amish Mennonite Church on June 18, 2010, by Rudy Overholt.

Perdomo-Hulse

Bro. Edgardo, son of Elin and Marta Perdomo, Isabella Bank, Belize, and Sis. Paula, daughter of Steve and Bertha Hulse, Nappanee, IN, at Pine Ridge Camp for Scotland House Mennonite Church, Scotland Half Moon, Belize, on March 27, 2010, by Hughdell Ysaguirre.

Ropp-Yoder

Bro. David, son of Laverne and Elaine Ropp, Monkton, ON, and Sis. Arlene, daughter of Ben and Leah Yoder, Munnsville, NY, at Cedar Grove A.M. Church for Fellowship Haven A.M. Church on May 22, 2010, by Laverne Ropp.

Stoltzfus-Beachy

Bro. Justin, son of Phil and Norma Stoltzfus, Amanda, OH, and Sis. Kendra, daughter of Ken and Diane Beachy, Laurelville, OH, at Circleville First Church for Emmanuel Mennonite Church on June 26, 2010, by Lonnie Beachy.

cradle roll

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

Bender, Derrick and Cynthia Joy (Kinsinger), Accident, MD, second child, first dau., Annika Joy, June 11, 2010.

Bontrager, Matthew and Lacry (Havristiuc), Suceava, Romania, fifth child, second son, Josiah Willis, July 17, 2010.

Byler, John and Barbara (Erb), Brunner, ON, fourth child and son, Jeffrey Duane, May 21, 2010.

Fisher, Gene and Charity (Stoll), Abbeville, SC, second child, first son, Bryson Taylor, July 10, 2010.

Helmuth, Allen and Melody (Yoder), Chappells, SC, eighth child, fifth son, Forrest Grant, July 1, 2010.

Jantzi, Ryan and Lynette (Wagler), Wellesley, ON, first child and dau., Sierra Katelyn, May 16, 2010.

Knepp, Clifford and Mary (Graber), Odon, IN, first child and son, Lance Tyler, July 2, 2010.

Miller, Keith and Miriam (Martin), Hutchinson, KS, fifth child, second dau., Sabrina Ariel, July 28, 2010.

Stoll, Leonard and Lana (Knepp), Odon, IN, fifth child, third son, Luke Andrew, May 28, 2010.

Yoder, Doug and Rita (Weaver), Plain City, OH, first child and dau., Makenna Kate, July 10, 2010.

Zimmerman, Javan and Matina (Overholt), Lyndon, KS, fifth child, fourth son, Reagan Lee, June 29, 2010.

Corrections: *(with my apologies)*

Swartzentruber, Brian and Dorothy (Petersheim), Abbeville, SC, first child and son, Trevor Lane, May 24, 2010.

Yoder, Keith and Hannah (Beachy), Abbeville, SC, first and second children, twins: a son, Myles Andre` and a daughter, Madison Kate, May 14, 2010.

ordinations

May the grace of God be upon our brother as he ministers faithfully. Let us pray for him.

Bro. David Wittmer, 51, was ordained as minister on March 26, 2010, at Mt. Olive Mennonite Church, Montgomery, IN. Preordination messages were given by John U. Lapp, Gordonville, PA. The charge was given by Homer Zook, assisted by John U. Lapp and David Yoder, Jr. Phil Knepp and Gerald Wagler were also in the lot.

obituaries

Mast, Anna, 88, of Millersburg, OH, died after a short illness May 26, 2010. She was born Sept. 24, 1921, daughter of the late Daniel and Sarah (Schlabach) Kline.

She was a member of Bethel Fellowship Church, Berlin.

On Feb. 27, 1947, she was married to Roy A. Mast. He survives. Also surviving are two sons: Allan (Mary) Mast and Jerry (Mary Ellen) Mast; and a daughter, Barbara (Ernest) Buller, all of Berlin; nine grandchildren, three great grandchildren, a brother: Edward Kline, and a sister: Mattie Yoder, both of Millersburg.

She was preceded in death by brothers, Levi and Alvin Kline; a sister, Amanda Schlabach, and a great granddaughter, Mercy Hallman.

The funeral was held on May 29, with Bill Mullet officiating. Burial was in the Bethel Cemetery.

Yoder, Kaylene Rose, 16 weeks, died in her mother's arms on July 4, 2010. She was born March 17, 2010, daughter of Eli and Judy (Mast) Yoder, Topeka, IN.

Besides her parents, other survivors are grandparents John and Mahala Mast, Crossville, TN; and Abie and Jemima Yoder, Topeka, IN; and one step great grandfather, John W. R. Miller, Belleville, AR.

The funeral was held on July 8 at Rosewood Fellowship Church with William Troyer of Mt. Moriah Mennonite, Crossville, TN and Daniel Bontrager of Rosewood Fellowship Church serving. Burial was in the Rosewood Cemetery.

Yoder, Ruth Elaine, 54, of Grantsville, MD, died June 19, 2010, at her home. She was born Dec. 7, 1955, in Meyersdale, PA, daughter of Lena (Yoder) and the late Ernest Yoder.

She was a member of Mountain View Mennonite Church.

On April 15, 1979, she was married

to Jerry L. Yoder, who survives. Also surviving are: one son, Nathan Lynn Yoder, Pickens, SC; four daughters, Lori Donell, Grantsville, MD; Lorraine Yvette (Rodney) Yoder, Salisbury, PA; Lynita Renee and Londa Inez, both of Grantsville, MD; two brothers: Robert D. Yoder, Grantsville; Marlin Yoder, Moorefield, WV; five sisters: Marlene (Willis) Sommers, Salisbury, PA; Miriam (Reuben) Sommers, Salisbury, PA; Martha (George) Guthrie, Grantsville, MD; Joanna (James) Kauffman, Bittinger, MD; Regina (Danny) Kauffman, Bittinger, MD.

Ruth gave her life for her church and her family, serving faithfully as long as she could. After a nine year struggle with cancer, her absence is mourned even as her life and healing are celebrated.

The funeral was held at Mt. View Church on June 22, with Merlin Beachy, David Kauffman, and Menno Yoder serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.



observations

The following item is gleaned from Dr. Mehmet Oz, in Time, 6-21-10.

One of the trade-offs of globalization as we become more and more connected with countries and cultures we inherit each other's baggage. The factors most responsible for our health woes in the West are the terrible triad of poor diet, too little exercise, and tobacco use. These

culprits have been less serious issues in less industrialized countries. As life-saving antibiotics became available to the less privileged, so did cigarettes, video games, and fast food. In the U.S., we are only in the acknowledgement phase of breaking our addiction to these problems. Less industrialized cultures are largely unaware of the dangers.

Computer use (and misuse),

increasingly common worldwide, is not friendly to physical exercise. The tobacco industry is aggressively marketing its poison in developing countries. According to World Health Organization, more than 80% of at least a billion smokers are from developing countries. Dr. Oz says he has spent a lifetime seeing with his own eyes the damage tobacco does to hearts and lungs.

Dr. Oz asks what members of the terrible triad have in common. They all involve personal decision making and are therefore avoidable. He also says that the developed world's main export should be wellness, not chronic diseases.



Conservative Anabaptists agree that Christian nonconformity has practical applications. Surely this should not exclude sensible health habits. We don't need rules addressing the habitual use of soft drinks. But it is needful that we cultivate awareness that these are not neutral issues.



The offshore oil well explosion in April a mile under the water is getting widespread attention and is affecting not only the lives of many people, but is also blighting wildlife and nature. *Time* (6-16-10) has a long article that attempts to analyze the bigger picture.

British Petroleum is seen as having been negligent in providing

precautions and safety measures. A quote: "Deepwater drilling advanced safety measures haven't been kept up either in industry or government." A 2008 report by the government reports their employees using drugs, accepting gifts and having illicit physical relationships with oil company personnel. A recent report found similar practices still occurring. To this observer it looks like a case of the "fox guarding the henhouse."

The article reports that there are 23 oil companies drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. BP has 24% of the production. Gulf and Chevron have 17% and 15%, respectively. All others comprise the remaining 44%.

Columnist Bill Herbert, lamenting the hopeless outlook of the military conflict in Afghanistan, notes that some corporations view the horrors of war as a heaven-sent bonanza. He says they have been told repeatedly that BP is one the largest suppliers of fuel for the U.S military's wartime needs.



Mennonite Mutual Aid has investments in more than 600 different companies. This includes British Petroleum. "They have seen BP as a firm committed to the highest level of corporate social responsibility."

This tragic incident is causing MMA to back off and take another

look at the character of this unwieldy corporation.” (*Mennonite Weekly Review*, 6-14-10)



Mennonite Weekly Review (6-21-10) has a book review entitled, “Diversity and Change in the World’s Largest Amish Community.” It is co-authored by a sociologist, Charles Hurst and David McConell, an anthropologist, about Holmes and surrounding counties in Ohio. The 356-page book is published by Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, and is priced at \$30.

I found some of the statistics interesting and informative. They report 140 Old Order districts, 30 Andy Weaver; 14 Swartzentruber; and 18 New Order. This community has a reported 221 Amish church districts, compared to Lancaster, PA, which has 175 and Elkhart-Lagrange, IN, which has 136.

The area also includes a large number of Anabaptists who are one generation or more removed from their Amish roots. It is easy to see why this is an attractive field for scholarly study and analysis.



The same issue has an article by Daniel Burke, Religious News Service, about the Amish in business. Opening sentence: “Some of America’s most successful entrepreneurs (one who organizes and manages a business) have never been to high school, don’t

use electricity, and would sooner love their competitors than sue them.”

There are nearly 9,000 Amish-run small businesses in North America. Generally 50% of small businesses fail within the first five years. This compares to 10% failure in Amish-run enterprises.

The Amish are forbidden to support alcohol, entertainment, and computer industries. Businesses that grow too large are subject to bishop review and downsizing. Donald Kraybill says, “The phrase ‘Amish millionaire’ is no longer an oxymoron.”



Both of these articles highlight certain observable features of the Amish. Their religiously influenced lifestyle is remarkable. Christian Aid Ministries personnel report that there seems to be worldwide awareness of the Amish in North America. It is only fair to recognize that lifestyle and culture are not necessarily synonymous with Christianity. But surely we all agree that if we follow the Lord and His Word it does affect the way we live and the way we make a living.



MWR also reports that Conservative Mennonite Conference, Rosedale, OH, is celebrating its first 100 years July 29- August 1, 2010, in a conference at Cedarville University. There are 110 CMC congregations with more than 11,500 members.

Rosedale Bible College is a junior college that began as a six-week Bible school at Berlin, Ohio, in 1952.

The conference has numerous involvements in foreign missions. The article also reports that the concept of distinctiveness has faded, giving away to extensive adaptation to popular culture.



The May, 2010, issue of *Christianity Today* reports the childhood experience of Wes Stafford. His parents were missionaries on a foreign field. Wes, with other missionary children, was placed at school in charge of other mission personnel for nine months of the year. It seems incredible that these children were treated with extreme cruelty and abuse. This was not known to the parents because the children were strictly forbidden to divulge inside information lest it jeopardize the mission efforts of the parents. The young children felt duty-bound to suffer silently.

At age 10, Wes finally revealed very briefly to his mother the sad state of affairs. This caused the mother to become seriously ill, but ultimately also led to a thorough investigation, addressing the problem, and taking corrective measures. That such things could happen in a group that is seen as credibly Christian, is a sober reminder that humans are capable of unspeakable wickedness.



Readers may well question the wisdom of using space in this column to report such sordid doings. My reason quite simply is Stafford’s testimony some three or four decades after the fact. His testimony appears on the reader’s page of July CT. He was asked, “How did you move from pain to deliverance?” His answer opens with a single word: “Forgiveness. At age 17, I realized that those who hurt me would never apologize. They were not even sorry. But I could no longer bear carrying the pain of my past, so I chose to forgive them anyway: Get out of my heart. Get out of my mind. Get out of my life... You stole my childhood, but you cannot have the rest of my life—Get out, I forgive you!”

“God requires us to forgive, but that does not relieve the offender’s consequences of his wrongdoing. It does mean giving up the right for revenge.”

“To allow an offender to live in your heart unforgiven is allowing the person who hurt you to live rent-free in your heart. It costs him nothing, but is costing you everything. You can evict such a trespasser through forgiveness.”

Wes Stafford is president and CEO of Compassion International, whose mission is to provide holistic care to over one million children. They are based in Colorado Springs, CO.

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Raymond Burkholder, who is serving with Macedonian Teaching ministries in Thailand with Institute for Global Opportunities (IGo) spoke recently at Center church. Their approach is to assist national leaders in evangelism and pastoral leadership.

He reported two incidents of particular interest to conservative Anabaptists: In Nepal, a Christian leader had difficulty at first believing that the ladies with IGo were Christians from the U.S. All the “Christian” ladies from the U.S. before had appeared in Western garb. He found it hard to reconcile

this with his understanding of New Testament teaching. A leader in India had discovered something about Anabaptists. His impression of their serious commitment to biblical authority made him want to learn more about them. He was praying that he could personally meet some Anabaptists. When he met Raymond Burkholder and Collier Berkshire, he was excited and gratified that God had answered his prayer.

These two incidents are helpful reminders to me that a commitment of obedience to truth is more credible and more convincing than is the loss of identity and blending in.

—DLM 

Minister’s Meeting Messages — 2010

This is a condensation of the second message given at the annual ministers’ meetings held at Fair Haven Church, Goshen, IN, on April 6-8, 2010. The complete set of eight CD’s may be ordered from Victory Music Services, 5520 Harrison St., Apt. 4, North Highlands, CA, 95660 (Phone: 443-480-1489), for \$50, postpaid.

2. The Call of the Father

Tim Yoder, Millington, MD

I imagine Jesus asking God to take a look at this group of people down here as He draws attention to us. Jesus might be saying, “I want to walk the corridors of their hearts to heal their hurts, strengthen their faith, and renew their commitment.”

“Go,” says the Father. “Go meet

their needs as only You can. Those people down there are people whom we called to our work. Go, Son.” May Christ walk among us here today and touch the very core of our lives.

I shall address three areas: 1) Our call comes from God; 2) Recognizing it is God’s work; and 3) What are we called to do?

Our Call Comes From God

I find it necessary to ponder my

own life's journey, and how I respond to the call of God. Where I am now in my journey and how I am answering God's call?

The call of the Father is life-altering. It is weighty and time-consuming, demanding sacrifices of us, depleting our energy and our resources. This call is not the easiest path to tread. It is, however, unique in its spiritual blessings and eternal rewards. Isaiah 43:1b, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

The Father's call is not exclusive to ministerial positions, but extends to other roles and responsibilities. Is it not God who calls the missionary, the teacher, the doctor, the counselor, the translator, the minister, and other roles in life? Let us explore the role of the minister.

It would be fascinating to hear each of your calling stories. When did God call you to the ministry? How did He call you? How did you respond to God's call? What was your primary spiritual battle then—and now? How has your call molded the person you have become? What and who are you today? These are tough questions we would rather avoid, because they can be disturbing. I believe, however, we should try to ask and answer these questions.

I assume that most of us have been called via the lot, which is structured after the method the apostles used

when calling Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot. Is this the only calling and choosing method that God honors? I realize that we do not all agree on this. Let me say this: Let's not create restrictive parameters and put God inside a box that does not fit and potentially limits what He can do among us.

Let us note that the Apostle Paul had a dramatic "knock-down" experience when God called him. It is certainly not the way the call to minister occurs today. The church was not involved in his calling. God personally chose Paul and then He involved the church, who understandably, had some serious reservations. Ananias showed an incredible trust in God, even though his instincts objected to this. "God, You want me to do *what*? Do You know who this man is? Do You know what he's been doing lately?"

"Yes!" God knew all about it, just as He knew all about our particular situations, when He called us to be ministers. Paramount in any ministerial calling and choosing is this basic core element: It is the Father who calls and chooses whom He will. Human manipulations and influences must always be eliminated in any ordination for leadership.

Jesus said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." This is a key to our acceptance and embrace of the Father's call upon our own lives. Paul

said this about himself: “An apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father” (Galatians 1:1). You and I need the affirmation that God has called us. Anything else leaves room for doubt and second-guessing.

We weren’t perfect when He called us, nor are we perfect now. I believe that God is not so much looking for perfection as He is looking for someone who embraces his call. It may be that my own will is what is most difficult to subject to God’s will.

I have been a preacher’s son. Believe me, that is not some elitist status. If anything, it is the opposite. It can be very tough. I know the pressures, the spotlight, the high expectations for preacher’s offspring (far too often by their own parents); it is not a pleasant thing. Growing up, I somehow concluded that a preacher’s life is “a dog’s life,” so I decided that I wanted nothing to do with ever being a preacher.

One statistic, however, that bothered me early on was the percentage of ministers’ sons who were being ordained. I can honestly say, that in my case, I never felt that God was calling me to be a minister until my ordination. My greatest struggle was the acceptance of His call. How does one grapple with something that is so undesired? Here are some anchors I found: 1. God is in

control of my life, not me. Can I say “No!” to God and be in God’s will? 2. God doesn’t make mistakes in my life. We stumble. We mess up, but not God. I had to believe that this was not some mistake in spite of how it felt. 3. God let me know through the lot that He wanted me to be a minister. This method provided affirmation and confirmation that God was choosing this role for my life. I would not have chosen it, but it is up to me what I now do with that call.

Samuel said, “Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.” An eighth-century prophet was called by God to preach repentance in Nineveh, who responded with, “I don’t think so. No me! I want to do this my way.” And he headed for a location of his own choosing. So often, I want to do “the Jonah thing.” God then has to manually re-chart my course and set me back on the straight and narrow way. God has unique ways of changing perceptions and perspectives as we mature. I am grateful for that. I’m glad He doesn’t use whales every time. In only the last two years of the 12 years since my ordination have I been satisfied with God’s call.

Recognizing it is God’s Work

All Christians are called to be involved in God’s work, whatever their role. “It is good to do the Lord’s work, but better still to do His will.” The basic difference between God’s

will and God's work is when we are doing God's will, God is working through us to do His work.

At 12 years old, Jesus said, "I must be about my Father's business." Then 18 years later, He pursued that mission. His obedience to His parents was the will of His Father for that time.

What is the security of God's will? God has infinite knowledge. Jesus has self-sacrificing devotion to our highest good. That forces this conclusion: Disregarding God's slightest desire is the height of stupidity.

When God asks us to do something, He is granting us the unique privilege of tapping into the greatest mind in the universe. So we should be asking, "Lord, what will you have me do?" It is the Father's work that we are called to do, and not our own. If I do God's work in my own strength, it results in spiritual failure and burnout.

What is God's work for us? It involves every facet of our lives: our marriage, our family, our work, and our church. The question often comes, "How do I achieve a proper balance in all these areas with such limited time and such high demands? Is it ever justifiable to sacrifice something important for something more important?"

Here's a word picture: In my one hand I hold a glass full of water. Suddenly God brings to me a big, heavy tray for which I need

two hands. Both of my hands are occupied. How shall I hold both of these responsibilities adequately when this tray is calling for both hands? Am I to drop the glass of water and let it break? Far too often that is what we do. Now what am I to do about the broken glass? We must remember that the glass that we are holding is the Lord's work and what we do with it is very important. Do we honor God to do more labor in His vineyard and neglect the vines that He has already given us?

My 14-year-old son saw an obvious solution, "That's simple, Dad. Set the glass on the tray first then take the tray in both hands." Perhaps it's not so much the sacrificing of the one for the other, as it is its inclusion as a part of God's work for me. It's not so much the legacy we leave as it is the promotion of the person of Jesus Christ. We are called to do the Lord's work and not our own. Our identity should never supersede our Lord.

3. What are we called to do?

We are called by God to do his work. Allow me to read the ministerial charge at my ordination. [The charge from the minister's manual was read, ending with "for in so doing thou shalt save both thyself and those that hear thee. Amen."] How often have you read your ministerial charge since your ordination? I think there could be real value in pondering that

charge periodically. It could be an excellent means of refocus for us.


Here are several things from this ministerial charge: “Be a faithful laborer.” Jesus said, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” Notice *bring forth fruit*. It means effective fruit production, which can only happen if we abide in Him. We can only produce fruit if we are attached securely to Him. What is fruit? It may be the souls that are saved, relationships that are healed and restored, leadership given to the church, including effective teamwork, or taking on a mission assignment. Whatever it is, may it have eternal value. Fruit that remains refers to eternal preservation, not popularity. Increasing in the knowledge of God prevents decay, shrinkage, and delusion.

“Make full use of thy ministry” means that our spiritual strategies are to warn, admonish, reprove, rebuke, exhort, instruct, teach, comfort, and encourage. God would have us be alert to elements that are destructive among God’s people. I believe that proper identification of these elements is crucial. Too often we get hung up on the external evidences so that we neglect the deeper core issues and we fix the evidence, while we neglect the deeper problem. It is like using a Band-Aid on a wound

that needs stitches. A cheap fix never works. To make full use of thy ministry may mean not to choose the easy route when the hard is called for, nor do you go harshly, when gentleness suffices. This may mean detecting your people’s struggles before they break into the open. It means never being content to operate on a plateau of mediocrity.

“Give heed to thyself.” There is no sadder story than the story of the one who can tell everyone else how to live, but fails to live it out consistently. The devil has great pleasure to have one of God’s chosen servants stumble and fall. As God’s chosen ones we soon discover the intensity of Satan’s attacks. Let us not be weary in well-doing. Jesus took time away from the pressures of life, communicating with His Father.

A track star does not run a 10-kilometer race at full speed, lest he deplete his energy prematurely. A good man knows his limitations. As ministers, we are not immune to the stresses that other people experience. Don’t neglect your own spiritual disciplines.

In the ancient Greek games, there was race in which the contestants carried a burning torch. The winner was not necessarily the contestant who crossed the finish line first. The winner was the first one who crossed the finish line with his torch still burning. May God bless you! 

100 Ways that Heaven is Better than Earth

Raymond Fisher, Limestone, TN

There will be:

1. no sorrow
2. no sickness
3. no hunger
4. no hatred
5. no disappointment
6. no darkness
7. no fears
8. no failures
9. no crying
10. no changes
11. no partings
12. no pain
13. no murder
14. no misery
15. no theft
16. no stress
17. no worry
18. no weariness
19. no evil
20. no devil
21. no temptations
22. no trials
23. no personal problems
24. no marriage problems
25. no church problems
26. no rumors
27. no suspicion
28. no aging
29. no forgetfulness
30. no mistakes

31. no regrets

32. no shame

ALL will be:

33. light
34. purity
35. love
36. peace
37. joy
38. clear
39. just
40. comfort
41. new
42. complete
43. true
44. contented
45. righteous
46. resting
47. united
48. equal
49. sinless
50. guiltless
51. untainted
52. holy
53. good
54. glorious
55. wonderful
56. well

Some things will not be there:

57. weariness

- 58. tears
- 59. immorality
- 60. hospitals
- 61. abortion
- 62. jails
- 63. insanity
- 64. diseases
- 65. corruption
- 66. deformities
- 67. death
- 68. abuse
- 69. bitterness
- 70. war
- 71. loneliness
- 72. poverty
- 73. natural disasters
- 74. burials
- 75. foul language
- 76. cults
- 77. deception money
- 78. cares
- 79. lust
- 80. violence
- 81. apostasy
- 82. broken relationships

We will never grow:

- 83. tired
- 84. discouraged
- 85. uneasy
- 86. impatient

There will be:

- 87. ceaseless praise
- 88. true worship

- 89. total wonder
- 90. eternal life
- 91. singing
- 92. happiness
- 93. beauty
- 94. security

Who will be there?

- 95. God
- 96. angels
- 97. departed saints

Missing:

- 98. sin
- 99. Satan

100. We will always be with JESUS,
safe forever!



Amish Mennonite Information Center

Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA

The purpose of this report is not to draw attention to a particular community or church group, but to bring praise and glory to God for He alone is worthy. May it also serve as an encouragement to reach out to visitors/tourists in our communities, who may be searching for more than the material things associated with our way of life, such as quilts, mini-barns, shoo-fly pies, and Swiss cheese. God commanded the children of Israel, “And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex (mistreat, irritate, or grieve) him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself...” (Leviticus 19:33,34)

In the late 1960’s, a group of brethren from Amish Mennonite churches in southeastern Pennsylvania had a vision to establish a Gospel witness for the thousands of tourists visiting Lancaster County each year. What is a good way to reach out to them? It seemed clear that the Lord was leading them to open an Information Center.

People from another Information Center shared our vision and encouraged us to open a witness of this kind in our part of the county. Just two miles from a PA Turnpike entrance, adjacent to a busy highway there was a well-preserved stone school building where hundreds of community children got a grade-school education from 1857 until 1965, when it was sold to an antique dealer. Apparently antiques did not bring much profit to him, for in several years he sold it again.

A local farmer sensed the Lord leading him to buy the building. He told us later he really did not have much purpose in buying it except to preserve it for the community. We rented it and later purchased it for \$10,000. The Little Red Schoolhouse opened its doors in May, 1969, as a witness for Jesus Christ.

The outside appearance and the inside scents of this one-roomed building with its high ceiling and old hardwood floor, offers a nostalgic attraction to traveling visitors. There is joy in helping people locate points of interest on a free map—restaurants,

motels, campsites—and by lending aid with a smile in 101 other ways.

The most often-asked question is, “What is the difference between the Amish and the Mennonites?” This question has often served as a bridge to explain simply the plan of salvation, the peace and joy of the Christian life, to introduce the subjects of nonconformity, loving our enemies and many more.

In earlier years, the large sign “SHALOM” hanging from the porch caught the attention of many Jewish people from New York City and elsewhere. Some had questions about our faith. One day when fewer people were stopping, a 22-year-old Jewish hippie stopped by. He had resigned from his job as an actor because it did not satisfy him and he decided to read the Bible through, including the New Testament. He was heading west to Colorado to spend time in meditation. It was evident that the Lord led this lone traveler (in his VW bus without any map) to our Information Center. “Joseph’s” eyes filled with tears as our brother gave a brief history of the Mennonites by Joseph’s request. He stayed in the community for one day with a family from church, reading his Bible and asking questions.

One day a visitor from Kenya, Africa, hitchhiked from New York

City. It was nearly dark when he arrived at the Center. He decided to sleep on the porch and wait until morning to get more information. We spied this foreigner wearing a turban at about 10 p.m., while driving home from revival meetings. He was overwhelmed when we invited him to come with us and sleep at our house.

This Kenyan was delighted to attend our revival meetings the next evening, because his main purpose in visiting this country was to learn more about Mennonites and their beliefs, hoping to discover our answers for this age. His presence was warm and cheerful. It pained our hearts to watch this biker slowly disappear as he left several days later. Would we ever see him again? Will the Gospel seed that was sown bring forth fruit?

Here are a few excerpts from a church newsletter written during the early years of witness at the Information Center: “The Holy Spirit does not move us to witness to nearly everyone personally of the 23,000 people (on some days, 100 or more cars stop) that visited the Center this season. Each family or group of people is given a pack of tracts. A return reply card is included with a list of different subjects that can be checked if a person desires more

literature. Some of the tracts most often requested are, 'How to Find Peace and Happiness,' 'What's After Death?', 'How to be Born Again.'

God has promised, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Eccl. 11:1).

Glory to God, some people have indicated that they found Jesus as their Lord and Savior through the ministry of the Information Center, but much of the work is simply sowing seed and being an encouragement to Christians. The following article describes our mission well.

Our Front Door Mission

Ben Lapp, Christiana, PA

Our Lancaster County Beachy Churches have a mission endeavor at our front door. We've been involved in God's work here for more than four decades. It is not a highly publicized mission venture, but through the years thousands of people have entered the door of The Little Red Schoolhouse (now named The Amish Mennonite Information Center) that were greeted and ministered to by daily volunteers. Our registration book reveals numerous religions or denominations, including atheists, from likely every major country in the world.

The opportunities of leaving a Christian witness have been many and varied. Helping people find their destinations in a loving and kind way has brought many a hearty handshake. Numerous tracts, Christian books, Bibles, and good, a capella singing CDs have gotten into the hands of our visitors. I shall not forget a lady who worked at the official Route 30 West Information Center. She stopped at our center and as she entered the door, she stood speechless. Finally she said, "You people have something to offer the public here. At our Information Center we have nothing on display of a godly or spiritual nature." She was looking at our tract display and an array of Christian books and literature and heard Christian music providing background. She expressed appreciation for it. It is understandable that not everyone appreciates our Center like she did. Some do not say anything in appreciation, but the courtesy and kindness shown to them leaves a Christian witness they may remember.

We feel God has opened the doors of the Information Center, which gives us many opportunities to present Christ. Visitors ask us the difference between Amish and Mennonites beliefs. It is an opportunity and privilege we treasure.

The numbers have dwindled in recent years, due to web sites and GPS navigation which help tourists find their own way. In addition, gas prices have kept some people from traveling so freely. If one soul is worth more than the whole world, shouldn't we be there, in spite of fewer numbers?


I personally believe there is no mission work that our Lancaster County churches are involved in that is more cost-effective in sowing the seed of the Gospel than the witness of The Amish Mennonite Information Center.

Here are testimonies and experiences of a fellow volunteer:

- With a Mormon family that stopped in some time ago, we talked about the true saving power of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit as taught in the Bible. Their teenage son was very much intrigued with the term 'nonresistance,' which he had never heard before. It was explained to him that we don't go to war because the

Bible teaches us to love our neighbors and enemies alike.

- A very Orthodox Jewish father stopped in with his son, about 10 years old. The boy was offered a New Testament, which the father promptly said he may not take. As they walked out through the parking lot, I saw the boy looking up to his father. Soon he returned and said that he could take the book along after all, and with a big smile, he received the New Testament. Do you think the father might have also read it?

- A lady was here one day and after hearing the CD that was playing, bought five of CAM's 'Amazing Grace' recordings, one for herself and one for each of her four married children. What a blessing to get this kind of Gospel singing into five more homes. Quite a few of these CD's are sold every year, which talk about Christ's salvation, forgiveness, and the peace found only in Christ, our Rock of Ages. 

Life is what you make it, or what it makes you.

Turn Over a New Leaf

Mary June Glick

September is a good time for mothers to *turn over a new leaf*.

With summer vacations, reunions, and traveling now past, these are now part of your memory book. Even the busy days of canning and freezing fruits and vegetables are coming to an end. The garden will soon be put to bed for another season. You are ready to get back to a daily routine again. If you live in an area with four seasons, you will soon enjoy the beauty and bounty that autumn provides. I remember especially when we lived in rural, upstate New York, the magnificent artwork of God displayed in the brilliant oranges, reds, and yellows of the changing leaves. Here in South Carolina, the displays are not so brilliant, but I have learned to look for beauty in individual trees and leaves.

Take time to enjoy the beauty of autumn with your family. Drive through the countryside. Stop at a roadside market for a bag of rosy red apples or fresh cider, orange pumpkins, yellow squash, or purple grapes. Let the children help you bake apple dumplings or pumpkin

pies. Rake leaves and jump in the piles, enjoy a hay ride, roast marshmallows over a bonfire. Go for a walk in the woods. Arrange an autumn centerpiece with gourds, dried flowers, leaves and weeds that you have gathered on your walk. Press leaves between two sheets of wax paper to preserve them. Teach your children to enjoy the world God created and build family memories at the same time.

September is a great time to get your life back in order. The children have gone back to school. The house is quiet, unless you have preschoolers at home. Now is the time to become organized. You may already be experiencing the hectic morning rush of fixing breakfast, packing lunch boxes, and the last-minute rush of getting everyone out the door. Take a moment to think about the things that you could do to make the morning routine easier and a bit more pleasant for your family. How about doing more of the work on the evening before, such as packing lunches, checking everyone's


homework, and setting the table for breakfast? Assign family members jobs such as making sandwiches for a week.

Things will be easier for you if you wake up in the morning to a clean kitchen, the supper dishes having been washed, and a feeling of peace and order in the house. Change your bad habits and acquire good ones. Take time to pray with the children before they go out the door; pray for specific needs in their lives today.

After everyone is out the door, that is a good time for you to enjoy a quiet time. Grab a cup of coffee or tea, your Bible, and whatever devotional helps you use. This is a great time to buy reduced school supplies for your use—such as a notebook, a good pen, and a few high lighters. I keep my devotional supplies in a basket so I can take them with me wherever I choose to go for my quiet time. In the summer, I like to sit on the porch and enjoy the flowers and birds. At other times, I sit at my kitchen table.

Devotional books can be very helpful; do not be afraid to mark or write notes in them. I have used devotional books, books of the Bible, various word studies, and so on. And I find that it is good to change off with different methods of Bible study.

Use your notebook for your prayer requests. It helps me to remember requests if I divide them into different days of the week. Your prayer time is for both praise and intercession. Pray for your family, your husband, children, (their spouses and grandchildren) daily by name. Pray for your ministers and church families, for missionaries by name and specifically for their needs. Pray for friends, neighbors, for the sick and grieving, the unsaved, mission and relief organizations and people around the world. Ask God for grace for your day. Do not hesitate to share the burden of your own heart and life. It is much easier for me to take time alone with God now than when I was a busy mother. I remember one day when our young son came into the bedroom as I was praying and God showed me he was my responsibility at that moment. Preschoolers can learn to respect Mom's quiet time, but it is more difficult with babies and toddlers. God understands the prayer on your lips and the longings in your heart. Value the stage you are in at this moment and use the opportunity God gives you now.

September is a time to *turn a new leaf*, whether in your home or in your relationship with God. 

Amber's Story

Sheila Yoder, age 15, Middlebury, IN

[While this not an actual happening, it resembles an untimely death I recall. Surely we can all learn from it. –AY]

I remember the day Amber came home from school, swatting at tears streaming down her cheeks. She told me between sobs about another rejection by the girls at her school. The thing that struck me the most was the fact that Amber didn't attend a large public school known for bullying. No, instead she attended a small, close-knit Christian school. It was only her second year attending there and from the first day, insults and rejections seemed to trail her.

I was one of Amber's new friends. My family babysat her after school, because both of her parents worked. Since we were both 14, we developed a friendship and became sounding boards for each other, sharing our passions and our problems. *Why, you might ask, were those four girls so awful to Amber?* To this day it is still a mystery to me.

Amber was a pretty, well-dressed girl. She seemed shy, but really, she was a vibrant person, overflowing with love for everyone. I don't

honestly believe that Amber held hatred for those four. Outwardly, she seemed to take the girls' awful comments in stride, but to us who knew her well, we knew their words cut deeper than it appeared.

By the time that school dismissed each day, Amber was ready to share the events of the day with me. On a regular basis, these four professing Christian girls would shun her at recess, groan when she was their study partner, and generally make insulting remarks both behind her back and to her face. Sleepovers occurred often, but Amber was deliberately left out.

After all this, her coming home and crying seemed like a normal occurrence. But why do I remember this one day so distinctly? To put it simply, it was the last time we ever spoke to each other. To this day, I still ask questions. I wonder if I did enough for her. You see, by the next morning, Amber had left this world forever.


She was found in her bedroom,

doors locked—an empty pill bottle on the floor. The police labeled the incident just what it appeared—suicide. She had obviously downed the pills after everyone was asleep for the night and hoped not to be found before she breathed her last.

I was devastated. She had left no note—no special last words. Her entire life seemed to be a trail of rejections and hopelessness. I cried until I felt there were no more tears left in me. I prayed that I hadn't done something to make her do this. I asked God the same questions a hundred times over. Yet, I got no clear-cut answers.

Not until five years later did I realize that Amber's death was not in vain. An old friend told me the whole story of how two of the

very girls who had been so cruel to Amber had been saved. They told my friend how Amber's death had haunted them and how they felt responsible for what had happened. They explained that through it and the conviction that followed they made a decision to turn their lives over to God.

After finishing that conversation with tears in my eyes, I suddenly and finally realized that God does work in all things for good. I know that Amber's death was not His plan, but through it, He brought two more lives to Himself. Again, I was struck with what an impact we may have on a person's life. We may never know when or how someone might die tomorrow. What we do today can change a life forever. 

youth messages

Am I Truly Anabaptist?

Kelsie Hoover, Stratford, WI

Early Anabaptist history is rich with stories of true faith and endurance for God till death. I am spellbound when I read stories of martyrs that faced death and torture for Christ with courage, and even delight. I wonder how in the world they held up so well in such unimaginable cruelty. I also wonder if I would do as

well, if I was put in their shoes. I conclude that God will always give the grace for the task, if I stay within His will. The night before Michael Sattler was executed, he was put in solitary confinement, and while pondering by himself the reality of the death he was to face the next day, he heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Lo, I am

with you alway.” He was immediately filled with the peace and assurance he so desperately needed. I believe God will help us face physical persecution as well, if we ever need to.

In thinking of those early Anabaptists and the Anabaptists of today (me), I wonder if we are retaining the beliefs, values, goals, and lifestyle that they upheld. Are we gradually slipping away from the truth and losing the boldness for the truth that they had? Do we have their missionary zeal and love? Are we becoming lukewarm? Do we guard the purity of the Bride of Christ with as much diligence?

I would say we have held onto the main convictions for which the early Anabaptists left the Roman Catholic Church. We would never baptize our babies, and we certainly don’t believe that our communion emblems magically become Christ’s blood and body when we eat them. We don’t hold government offices, and the church is separate from the state in other areas as well. We don’t swear oaths. We believe in salvation by faith in Christ that produces good works and a holy life, not simply salvation by works. So, we’re doing pretty well, right?

So, are we doing okay? Are we still Anabaptists? I fear that Mennonites and other “plain” groups of America in 2010 have lost certain aspects of the passion and dedication to Christ

and His work that was so evident in the lives of the early Anabaptists—our “fathers.” Would they be happy to associate with their “children” if there was a way for them to briefly visit our churches and homes? Would they praise us for faithfully carrying the torch of faith that they lighted? Would they simply encourage us to press on—keeping on doing what we’re doing? What would they want to tell us?

I hope they wouldn’t be drastically ashamed with our core beliefs and convictions. However, are there attitudes and practices among us that we have simply gotten used to over time, that they would shudder and quake over?

Satan didn’t do so well with his plan of physically persecuting the church. As is commonly heard, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” Many early Anabaptists responded to persecution by taking a firmer hold on the truth and giving up their entire lives for the furthering of Christ’s kingdom. They sacrificed everything they had—except their inheritance in heaven. They were not moved.

Are we moved? The persecution we face today is not physical. Satan has gotten smarter, it seems. I believe he is lulling us into lukewarmness by turning God’s blessings of peace and freedom into a curse upon us. It is slower-acting and more subtle. It

is therefore more dangerous to us as individuals and churches.

We tend to get sidetracked. We lose our focus so often because of trivial reasons. We worry about what our peers and other acquaintances think of us. We fret about our future. We stew over family feuds, or disagreements in the brotherhood. We press for financial gain. We get all wrapped up in fun and games that are so prevalent in society today. We pursue satisfaction of the flesh.

I also fear we are losing conviction and knowledge of the truth among individuals in our churches. Sure, the preachers at my church know their Bibles, but do I? I'm often amazed when Dad can flip directly to a remote verse in Scripture, but I've become far more astounded upon digging into the history of Anabaptist trials and writings. They knew what is in the Bible! They proved time after time, trial after trial, that they were firmly anchored in the truth of God's Word. Even young martyrs answered knowledgeably, with Scripture, when questions were fired at them by judges. Are there Anabaptist youth (and even parents) today that are simply floating along in their lives without conviction and little knowledge of the Bible? What a scary position to be in! I look at that predicament as possibly one of the most dangerous differences between early Anabaptists and those

of today. It is of utmost importance that we know the truth and live it out by faith in our daily lives. It simply takes personal responsibility and discipline to become fully familiar with the Bible. We will leave a much clearer witness if people know exactly why we practice the things we do, and can point them to Scripture, clearly laying everything out.

That brings me to my next point—witnessing. The early Anabaptists had a passion to bring others to Christ. They were constantly looking for new areas to take the Gospel to. They also weren't scared about telling people the truth, even if it got them into major trouble—like losing their life. Modern evangelism tends to be too soft. We tell everyone that God loves them abundantly, and we don't stress enough the consequences if they are not saved.

People from the world aren't the only ones we need to speak truthfully to. I don't think our ancestors hesitated to reprove in love those that started to slip. One of my fears for modern Mennonite churches is that we are losing our courage to be honest with each other. Are there those that we play volleyball with once a week, sit with on the same pew at church twice a week, and work with at Kid's Club that are slowly but surely blazing a lukewarm trail to Hell? If we don't approach them to save face and stay friends, it is because of a limited

perspective. We forget it is far more important to have a friend in Heaven (that initially despised us for talking to them) than a friend in Hell we never got up the courage to talk to.

Anabaptists wore simple clothing. We women wear dresses and coverings, or veils, which set us apart, but I fear that forms of immodesty are slowly becoming accepted. Tacking a cape onto a dress doesn't automatically make it modest. And the jackets we wear, with designer names smeared all over the front—are we becoming so much a part of the world that we could barely be caught for looking different? Try to imagine a girl being led to execution grounds with a tight Hollister hoodie and Hilfiger flip flops on, make-up all over her face, and only a lacy doily “covering” her colored hair. Something seems odd about that picture, and yet there are many girls today that are considered Mennonites (Anabaptists), and dress that way! Isn't that inconsistent?

Are we dealing with technology the way our forefathers would have? Would they be horrified to see the violent and immoral movies “Anabaptist” youth of today watch? Would they close their ears to the music that we play? Would they be startled to see youth with nothing better to do all day than sit around playing video games? Would they severely warn us of the temptation we place at our fingertips by allowing

[unrestricted and unaccountable] internet access into our own living rooms? Could they believe the openness between genders that has been caused by texting?

Is our worship as genuine as the worship that went on in forests and behind curtained windows? Our choral music has become extremely complex and beautiful, but is our praise beautiful? Is there a true spirit of worship behind the difficult pieces of music we produce? I doubt that anyone was caught falling asleep or mentally rehearsing the following day's schedule at the hushed Anabaptist worship services. Have Sunday mornings become such a part of our lives that we can leave church completely untouched and forgetful of anything we heard?

We are extremely blessed. Our forefathers were constantly under pressure from the government. Many of them spent most of their Christian lives running from authorities. They were bound physically, but were free spiritually. Let's not let the reverse be true of us today. We can use our physical freedom to bring more souls to a freedom from the bondage of sin and an eternity in Hell. May God help us remember the faith of our fathers!

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Wisdom consists partly in choosing ignorance about things not worth knowing.

• • • • •

Fishing is said to stimulate the brain and the imagination.

• • • • •

Inflation seems to activate a new law of gravity: It gets *us* down.

• • • • •

Laughter costs too much when it comes at the price of decency.

• • • • •

We must not only itch for success; we must scratch for it.

• • • • •

Married love might be called a game that two can play and both win—or lose.

• • • • •

Too often, yesterday's luxuries are seen in today's debts.

• • • • •

Beware of falling in love at first sight; take time for another look.

• • • • •

One of the many things that won't cure a cold is advice.

• • • • •

So live that memories will be part of your happiness.

• • • • •

If you keep your mind too open, people will throw rubbish into it.