

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

Galatians 6:14

DECEMBER 2010

Meditation	
<i>Sing With Your Voices Now</i>	1
Editorial	
<i>Guarding Our Turf</i>	2
Reader Response.....	4
Someone Understands.....	6
Contentment.....	7
Marriages.....	11
Cradle Roll.....	12
Ordinations.....	13
Obituaries.....	14
Observations.....	16
Mission Awareness	
<i>What Missions Are Not</i>	20
Helpers at Home	
<i>Is Your Heart Ready for Christmas?</i>	23
Junior Messages	
<i>It's God's Will</i>	25
2010 Index	
<i>Authors and Their Contributions</i>	26
<i>Subject</i>	31
Statement of Ownership.....	37
Thought Gems	back cover

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

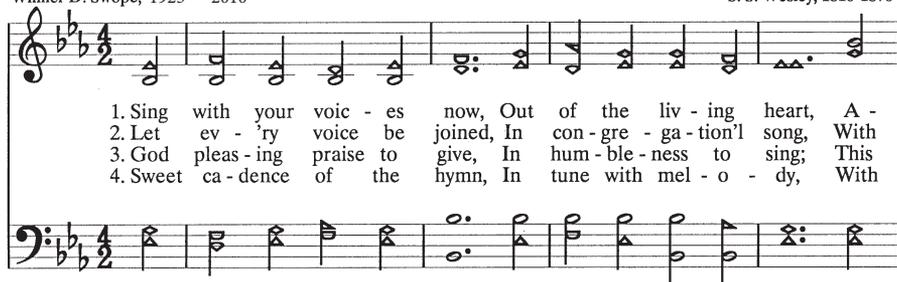
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meditation

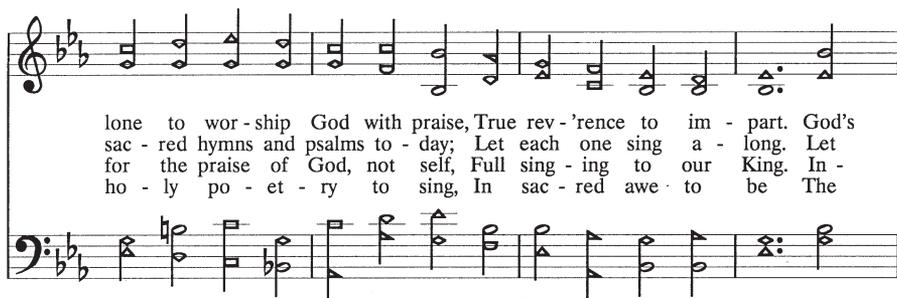
Sing With Your Voices Now

Wilmer D. Swope, 1925 — 2010

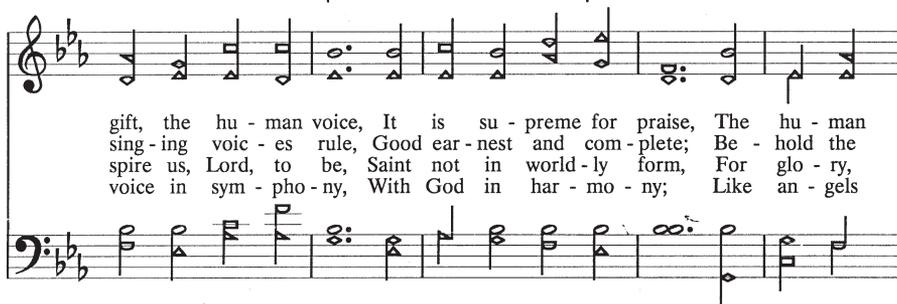
Sacred Acapella
S. S. Wesley, 1810-1876



1. Sing with your voices now, Out of the living heart, A -
2. Let every voice be joined, In congregational song, With
3. God pleasing praise to give, In humbleness to sing; This
4. Sweet cadence of the hymn, In tune with melody, With



lone to worship God with praise, True reverence to impart. God's
sacred hymns and psalms today; Let each one sing a long. Let
for the praise of God, not self, Full singing to our King. In -
holypoetry to sing, In sacred awe to be The



gift, the human voice, It is supreme for praise, The human
singing voices rule, Good earnest and complete; Be hold the
spire us, Lord, to be, Saint not in worldly form, For glory,
voice in symphony, With God in harmony; Like angels



voice is sweet alone, With voices worship raise.
living soul is blest, Four voices sing so sweet.
self, or pleasure, too, Keep order as the norm.
singing in the sky, So let our worship be. A - men.



Guarding Our Turf

The term “my rights” means a lot in today’s world. Because of my personal rights, I might have something but refuse to part with it, even though I would hardly miss it. It might benefit you greatly and you offer a fair price, but I don’t have to sell it to you and I don’t. Admittedly, respect for personal property is good. Without such respect, we might carry off a neighbor’s belongings and think he should be happy about it. “My rights,” however, can hide a lot of selfishness.

Jesus was different. He didn’t cling to His rights. His arrival brought joy, both in heaven and earth. The safe arrival of a new born child is ample cause for rejoicing. So on the night of Jesus’ birth angelic excitement was high as the shepherds were assured with, “Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy...” (Luke 2:10). That angel carried some of the best news ever to come here from heaven.

Jesus was born for our salvation. He took human form upon Himself at great personal sacrifice. He was the beloved and only Son of God who dwelt with the Father in heaven. He was with the Father at creation. He had seen the human race push

aside Noah’s offer to enter the ark of safety Noah had spent 120 years in building. Nothing in our experience compares with God’s judgment of the earth with that Flood, but when Jesus comes back to earth for His own, there will be another judgment. God will judge the earth with fire. That fiery judgment will be stark and final. (2 Peter 3:1-9) Only those who have already repented and believe on Christ will be safe.

The Father and Son might have pondered the pitiful human tendency of rejecting divine love and decided having Jesus assume human form wouldn’t be worth the effort. They saw how the prophets were persecuted and killed. Fortunately, they didn’t let the rejecting multitudes decide the fate of the faithful. They wanted the people they had made in their image to join them in heaven. In their unlimited knowledge of the past and future, the Father and the Savior saw all our responses and yet they maintained that a way must be provided for those willing to repent of sin and cling to Jesus for salvation.

Jesus of Nazareth was fully human, but also fully divine. I don’t comprehend certain aspects of Jesus’ sacrifice. I think, however, that

His coming to earth is absolutely the most selfless thing ever done. Willingness to come to earth was not automatic for Jesus. In Hebrews 10:7, we sense that it was a great struggle: “Then said, I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.” This struggle of soul also showed as His appointment with the cross drew near. The turmoil increased in the week before He was arrested, tortured and crucified. He told His followers in John 12:27, 28a, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” It was at that point that God seemed to take a “heavenly megaphone,” to speak loud enough for many people in that vicinity to hear: “I have both glorified and will glorify it again.” Because Jesus had taken on human form He needed that extra encouragement. He struggled mightily with the cup of suffering He faced in the Garden of Gethsemane. He started the high priestly prayer with an awareness of what glory would come out of His gory death: “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee” (John 17:1).

If Jesus had guarded His turf as the only Son of God, He would have kept that special position for Himself and we would *not* have been given an opportunity to become sons of God.

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering” (Hebrews 2:10). *“Oh, the great love the dear Savior has shown to shamefully die on the tree; leaving His scepter and beautiful throne to rescue a sinner like me!”* (I. N. McHose)

We may feel unworthy (and we are) of being called the sons of God, but the Apostle John actually calls repentant believers *sons of God*. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:...” (1 John 3:1). Jesus isn’t guarding His turf when He calls us up alongside Himself to become sons of God.

Note Paul’s words about guarding one’s turf: **“Let Christ Jesus be your example as to what your attitude should be. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogative as God’s equal, but stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man. And having become man, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying, and the death he died was the death of a common criminal. That is why God has now lifted him so high, and has given him the name beyond all names,...”** (Philippians

2:5-10; Phillips translation, italics in Phillips). In Jesus' sacrifice He wasn't guarding His turf. He came at the Father's request and by His own desire that we might find abundant life!

Let us identify with Jesus. Let us assume the special relationship Jesus bestows upon us from God. Just think—that makes Jesus our brother! *"I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God!"* (B. Gaither)

What does His example teach us? Certainly this: When we guard our privileged turf, we are not Christlike. When we keep to ourselves the Good News of Jesus Christ, we are not following His example. When we live selfishly, we guard our turf to our own hurt and the hurt of those souls God desires to bless through us!

Let us not fail Him.

-PLM



reader response

**Re: Hats, Reader Response,
Sept., 2010.**

Bro. Paul,

I was somewhat surprised to see the letter about hats in September, as I felt it contradicted clear biblical teaching. However, I realize it was in Reader Response and that it does not really reflect your views. It caused me to do some studying and digging so that is good.

...I understand that culture says we should wear a hat outdoors, however, are we willing to allow culture to dictate our lifestyle and dress or will we turn to God's Word and follow it wholly and completely?

As a man with a bald head, I have discovered that my head can acclimate to the sun and become tanned even as my arms and face do. I do confess that when it gets cold, I

occasionally wear a stocking cap to cover my head and ears for warmth. When I wear it, it is for protection....

May God give us grace to rightly divide His Word

James L. Gingerich, Greenfield, OH



Dear writer, I have several questions for you. Though I don't know you, I want to challenge you in love.

According to your letter, it sounds like the main reason we should continue wearing hats is because our people have always done it.

My question is, *Is that enough reason to keep a practice that is not spelled out in the Scripture?*

That is the main reason the Catholics in Nicaragua do what they do. Their parents, their parents' parents, and the priest always did things this way. I am concerned if any practice is based only on what our forefathers did.

This is my challenge to you. What does the Bible say? It says, “*For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and the glory of God*” (1 Cor. 11:7).

I understand the man is not to wear headgear as religious garb. Since you say he should only take his hat off to pray or prophesy, then we should give the sisters that privilege, too. If they should keep it on all the time because they are not to pray, prophesy, submit with their heads uncovered, so men should not cover their heads either, because they should also pray, prophesy or show forth the image of God at any time.

I appreciate that we ask the sisters to cover their heads, but the same text tells us men not to cover our heads. If we do, we offend Christ. That’s why I will speak out clearly: Our ancestors in this were wrong.

I have no problem with men wearing a hat or cap to be out in the weather. But wearing a hat to church is not scriptural. I expect the practice started when men needed a hat to protect themselves from the weather since they either walked, rode, or drove horse-drawn vehicles to church. A hat would then have been acceptable, of

course. Many of us don’t need a hat to go to church anymore.

Please, if God wants us to be non-conformed to this world, He wants us to show it some other way--not with some extra-biblical custom. I wear a hat only when I go out in the weather, and even then, when I pray, or meditate, or witness, I quickly remove it.

Are we ashamed that we were created in the image of our Maker?

Pablo Yoder, Waslala, Nicaragua

• • • • •

Editor’s response:

My situation may be unusual, but I think doctors encourage protecting the skin to avoid skin cancer. I commonly wear headgear when working outdoors. If I don’t, Kansas summer sunlight very quickly gives me serious sunburn, because I’m a thin-skinned redhead. Furthermore, in winter I often wear a fur cap, because my bald head quickly gets cold. I don’t think 1 Corinthians 11: 7 stands in opposition to these solutions.

I do have another question about men’s headgear: Is it not true that many more men’s heads get covered when certain headgear is in vogue?

—PLM 

***Keeping Christmas is good,
but sharing it with others is better.***

Someone Understands

Andrea Wagler, Cross Hill, SC

To my friends who may recognize this situation, I wish to thank you for your support and for understanding to the best of your ability. But there are some things that no other human being can understand; perhaps that experience was designed by God so that we don't become so dependent on people but learn to depend on Him.

I sit here, surrounded by more than 100 people, but I feel alone.
I watch my friends participate in spirited games of volleyball,
but I have no strength to join.
I try to disguise my frustration with cheery smiles.
My friends plop down beside me for a few minutes to try to include me.
I appreciate it, but they don't understand.
They don't notice the signs of exhaustion.
They don't understand the effort it takes to be in a crowd.
They don't perceive the physical pain.
They don't see my limbs begin to shake, signs of an imminent seizure.
They don't know why I choose to go home rather than party late with
the rest of the group.
You stand there surrounded by 100 young people.
But you feel alone.
You join in the games, but your heart is heavy.
Your friends don't see the shadows in your eyes.
You try to disguise the hurt you feel with your bubbly ways.
Perhaps you've been heartbroken, misunderstood or abused.
Maybe you've lost a family member or close friend in death.
Your friends don't comprehend the effort it takes to be in a crowd.
They have no idea of the emotional pain.
They do not feel the dark clouds of depression closing in on you.
They don't understand the decisions you make.
But Someone does!
He notices the shadows in your eyes and the frailty of your spirit.
He's endured loneliness.
He's been heartbroken, misunderstood and abused.
He understands emotional and physical pain.
His friends knew nothing of the effort it took to leave His home.

They didn't understand the decisions He made.
One of His closest friends betrayed Him.

His name is Jesus.

He gives balm to your pain.

He offers His glorious presence to be your companion.

He provides strength to venture into the populace.

He promises to guide you in your decisions.

But—you must ask.

You must be willing to accept His offer.

You must allow Him full control of every area of your life.

Then—He will turn your sorrow into joy, your weakness into strength, your frustration to peace.

And ultimately—He will use your experience to bring honor and glory to Himself.

He does not say it will be easy.

But He does promise never to leave you; to walk every step of the way right beside you.

“To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified” (Isaiah 61:3).



Contentment

Lowell Miller, Nickerson, KS

Certain Bible passages like Psalm 23, John 10, and John 14 give us much encouragement and comfort. Other Scriptures, like 1 Timothy 6, speak conviction into our lives. As we hold ourselves to the perfect standard of Scripture, we see where we fall short of its high standard. A sheep in a green field may look white. That same sheep in a field of fresh snow does not look clean. It is easy for us to see the faults in people around us, but it is

harder for us to see those same faults in ourselves.

Man is born selfish. Small babies tend to get vocal when they have a need that doesn't seem to be satisfactorily addressed. Satan was lifted up with pride. His self-centeredness cost him his place in heaven. Since man fell, we've gone astray. Like lost sheep we've turned to our own way.

1 Timothy 6:6-8 says, *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For*

we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." There is something beautiful, but elusive about contentment.

Sometimes it is helpful to understand a concept by naming synonyms: *trust, satisfaction, peacefulness, restfulness, relaxation, gratefulness*. Sometimes opposites help: *strife, conflict, greed, entitlement, unrest, grabbiness, discontentment*.

I contemplate a scene of contentment: I think of a baby totally relaxed in the arms of his mother, who feeds him, changes his diapers, rocks him to sleep and holds him close.

Have we found the grace like Paul to be content in whatever state we find ourselves? Being contented is what God wants for His children. Satan wants us to be consumed with greed and conflict. The "father of lies" takes God's truth and twists it. When we start believing those twisted lies, we're in real trouble.

The contentment issue involves things—like possessions and money. In the verse ahead of the Scripture given above, Paul warns about false teachers. Here is his warning in verses 3-5: *"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud,*

knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." Paul uses some colorful language in verse 5: "Perverse disputings." "Men of corrupt minds." "Destitute of the truth." "Withdraw yourselves from such." What is the heresy these perverse, corrupt, destitute men promote?

I think we see it in the clause: *"Supposing that gain is godliness."* Is not this the teaching powerful televangelists often promote? Basically, it is the concept that wealth is a sign of God's blessing on your life. If you give to the right causes, God will bless you financially. Paul is telling us emphatically today not to fall for the idea that "gain is godliness." But Paul doesn't leave Timothy "hanging." He follows up with some very positive words: *"But godliness with contentment is great gain."* What a combination! What a blessing! Godliness with contentment is great gain. I like this definition: "Contentment is not so much having what you want, but wanting what you have."

The grave is often referred to as the great leveler. We brought nothing into this world and we can take nothing out. I attended a funeral

some time ago. This man's family had accumulated a lot of real estate, which seemed to be a fairly well-defined goal of theirs. Now the man had died. His body lay in the coffin at the front of the church. The coffin was normal in size. There wasn't room for much besides his body. Certainly not for the 4,000 or 5,000 acres of land he may have owned. The real estate that was used in the ceremony of his funeral was only the equivalent of a pickup load of dirt, that didn't even come from his many acres of real estate, but from the cemetery site.

We bring nothing in. We take nothing out. It's good to keep that in mind. We need to see things in "the light of eternity." That perspective illuminates our earth-dimmed eyes.

Having food and clothing, let us be content. Food and clothes? Just basic needs. We often add one more: *Shelter*. Food, clothing and shelter. What more do we need? When I think practically, my mind goes to the billionaire and his billions. If he has money for groceries, clothes, and a place to stay, what do all those extra billions do for him? What is the real advantage in being able to buy many different layers of food, clothing, and shelter?

We tend to find a lot of security in layering our financial safety net. God wants us content. Satan wants us discontent. The advertising industry tries to create discontentment in

us. They want us dissatisfied with what we have. "It's time to trade in the old clunker for a new model." "How about a new mixer? Blender? Microwave? Or a saw? A lithium-powered drill? A laser transit?" Imagine what it would be like if you'd get regular mailings from Penneys or Walmart or Sears telling you how important it is to save money, and the best ways to save money are to, "make do with what you have; pay your bills; buy only what you can afford; fix what's broken." Let me assure you, that won't happen soon.

Someone described the peer-pressure spending treadmill this way, "We spend money we don't have to buy things we don't need to impress people we don't like."

In a recent Sears sales flyer, I noticed this slogan: "Life, well spent." I find an irony in that last word: *spent*. It is sobering to realize what happens when we buy and use cheap, non-essential merchandise. Basically, such foolish ownership often becomes one small, intermediate step between China and the landfill.

We celebrate Christ's condescension in coming to earth to redeem mankind. Ironically, this season has become the epitome of extravagant consumerism. People lay out incredible sums of money to buy the "have-to" items that go with the Christmas season. If it is *things* that make us happy, Americans should

be some of the happiest people on earth. Our children should be the most content while underprivileged, and third-world children should be the least content. That situation is often reversed.

The American “me generation” is being raised on Twinkies and soda pop, entertained by television and computer games, and indulged with the latest fads that advertising dictates.

Verse nine says, *“Those that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition”*

We’ve seen people make some very unwise decisions related to money. They spend tremendous sums of money in gambling, and the lottery, even though the odds are horribly stacked against them.

If I’m a poor person, I may think this verse in 1 Timothy 6:9 doesn’t affect me at all. Right? Wrong! It speaks to those, *“that will be rich.”* A poor person may be penniless but have the same flawed foundation as a rich, greedy person. So what are the downfalls of the person who lusts after riches? Temptation. Snares. Foolish and hurtful lusts. These are things that drown men in destruction and perdition.

In concluding his analysis and warning, Paul writes: *“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and*

pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Paul’s train of thought continues: The love of money is a root of all evil. People taken by this false security can depart from the faith and bring great sorrow into their lives. And not being wealthy doesn’t get us off the hook. A covetous mindset carries as much guilt as does the hoarding of the wealthy.

Paul doesn’t leave us on that negative note. He gives us a positive course of action. *“But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou are also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”* He encourages us to flee the false trails the devil would tempt us with and to take the narrow path of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and kindness. We need to hang in there. We may lay hold on eternal life, where God Himself will provide for us more adequately than we ever could.

Earlier, we noted scenes of contentment: a totally relaxed baby in the arms of his mother. Not all babies are like that. Did you ever notice how some people’s babies squirm and wiggle, scream and complain? God is our Father. As His children, let us find the contentment and beauty that comes from relaxing in His arms. 

marriages

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

Anderson-Frentz

Bro. Cory, son of Grady and Darlene Anderson, Bluemont, VA, and Sis. Jennifer, daughter of Dean and Elaine Frentz, Jamestown, NY, at Faith Mission Fellowship, Free Union, VA, on August 22, 2010, by Ivan Beachy.

Bogado-Miller

Bro. Milmer, son of Euracio and Sara Bogado, Col. Luz Y Esperanza, Caaguazu, Paraguay, and Sis. Marsha, daughter of Marvin and Rosemary Miller, LaGrange, IN, at Fair Haven A.M. Church, on Oct. 2, 2010, by Wilbur Yoder.

Coblentz-Troyer

Bro. John Daniel, son of Wallace and Ruthann Coblentz, Cinnцинати, IA, and Sis. Wilma, daughter of William and Edna Troyer, Crossville, TN, at Mt. Moriah Church on Oct. 8, 2010, by John Mast.

Frost-Yoder

Bro. Myron, son of Virginia Pinkard, Double Head Cabbage, Belize, and Sis. Hannah, daughter of LaVerne and Mary Yoder, McConnelsville, OH, at Max Samuel's Ranch for Zion Mennonite Church, on Oct. 9, 2010, by Hughdelle Ysaguirre.

Goff-Schrock

Bro. Justin, son of Evan and Glennis

Goff, Double Head Cabbage, Belize, and Sis. Sarah, daughter of Stephen and Marilyn Schrock, Isabella Bank, Belize, at Isabella Harmony Fellowship, on Sept. 19, 2010, by Hughdelle Ysaguirre.

Hochstetler-Yoder

Bro. Dennis, son of Amos and Anna Fern Hochstetler, Howe, IN, and Sis. Andrea, daughter of Jerry Merle and Anita Yoder, Ligonier, IN, at Fair Haven A.M. Church on Oct. 22, 2010, by Wilbur Yoder.

Miller-Dolly

Bro. Steven, son of John and Emma Miller, Crossville, TN, and Sis. Melissa, daughter of Dane and Martha Dolly, Burlington, WV, at North Fork Mennonite Church on Oct. 2, 2010, by Larry Showalter.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. George S., son of Sanford and the late Sylvia Miller, Kalona, IA, and Sis. Evelyn Rose, daughter of Marvin and Bertha Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on Oct. 2, 2010, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Nisly-Miller

Bro. Brandon, son of Ken and Gloria Nisly, Harrison, AR, and Sis. Krista, daughter of Omar and Elsie Miller,

Harrison, AR, at First Methodist for Cornerstone Mennonite Church on Oct. 9, 2010, by Melvin Bontrager.

Yoder-Stutzman

Bro. Wendal, son of Mark and Karen Yoder, Leon, IA, and Sis. LaRhea, daughter of Floyd and Rose Stutzman, Leon, IA, at Trinity Christian Church for Salem Mennonite Church on Oct. 23, 2010, by Monroe Gingerich.

Yoder-Yoder

Bro. Wesley Lee, son of Mark and Esther Yoder, Montezuma, GA, and Abigail Marie, daughter of Floyd and Prudence Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on May 1, 2010, by Donny Swartzentruber.

cradle roll

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

Beiler, Mark and Alta (Raber), Goshen, IN, first child and dau., Katelyn Ali, Oct. 8, 2010.

Kimberlin, Bradley and Regina (Miller), Cleburne, TX, first child and son, Donovan Jon, Oct. 21, 2010.

Bontrager, Craig and Leanna (Schlabach), Goshen, IN, second child, first son, Landon Rhys, Sept. 29, 2010.

Bontrager, Lamar and Joanna (Kinsinger), Cromwell, IN, sixth child, third son, Laylynn Troy, Sept. 22, 2010.

Frey, Sheldon and Amy (Schlabach), Middlebury, IN, first child and son, Durrel John, Oct. 12, 2010.

Helmuth, Ellis and Hannah (Yoder), Riverside, IA, fourth child, second dau., Karlyn Jebet, June 4, 2010.

Hochstetler, Jonathan and Wilma (Slabaugh), Bloomfield, IN, third child and daughter, Kendra Janise, Oct. 2, 2010.

Knepp, Phillip and Angela (Kemp), Odon, IN, eleventh child, fifth son, Sheldon Ray, Aug. 12, 2010.

Lantz, Jacob, Jr., and Susanne (King), Honey Brook, PA, first child and dau., Sara Madison, Oct. 11, 2010.

Miller, Bill and Jolene (Farmwald), Clarkson, KY, second child and son, Derek Daniel, Sept. 28, 2010.

Miller, Marion and Loretta (Miller), Shipshewana, IN, third child, second son, Jensen Brock, Oct. 12, 2010.

Overholt, Travis and Lisa (Yoder), Kalona, IA, first child and dau., Jasmine Dawn, June 27, 2010.

Peachey, Joseph and Susan (Yoder), Ephrata, PA, second child, first son, Jeremiah Dwayne, August 20, 2010.

Petersheim, Philip and Marla Kay (Yoder), Meyersdale, PA, sixth child, fourth dau., Autumn Rose, Oct. 4, 2010.

Plank, James and Megan (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, first child and son, Tristan James, July 2, 2010.

Raber, Jake and Crystal (Heatwole), Goshen, IN, first child and son, Carson Trivette, Oct. 5, 2010.

Stoltzfus, Abner and Marlene (Stoltzfus), Honey Brook, PA, currently serving in Kiev, Ukraine, third child and dau., Marina Shalom, Sept. 16, 2010.

Stoltzfus, Johnny and Gloria (Yutzy), Lancaster, PA, first child and dau., Natasha Renae, Sept. 29, 2010.

Strubhar, Carl and Lillian (Miller), Wasilla, AK, third child and dau., Lilliana Mercy, Oct. 12, 2010.

Stutzman, Brian and Loretta (Beachy), Leon, IA, first child and son, Ridge Tyrell, Sept. 11, 2010.

Swartzentruber, Wendell and Mary (Beachy), Montezuma, GA, second child and dau., Ashlyn Grace, April 19, 2010.

Troyer, Rodney and Faith (Helmuth), Antrim, OH, fourth child, first dau., Danika Rae, Oct. 12, 2010.

Wagler, Leland and Sherri (Knepp), Odon, IN, fifth child, third dau., Sandra Kay, Oct. 1, 2010.

Yoder, Aaron and Debra (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, second child, first son, Logan Cordell, April 27, 2010.

Yoder, James and Elsie (Yoder), Paris, TN, second child, first son, Wilson James, Sept. 16, 2010.

Yoder, Troy and Matilda (Nisly), Montezuma, GA, seventh child, third son, Ryan Cole, Oct. 10, 2010.

ordinations

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

Bro. Arlen Bontrager, 37, Millersburg, IN, was chosen by voice of the church and ordained as deacon on Sept. 19, 2010, at Woodlawn A.M. Church, Goshen, IN. Preordination messages were given by George Stoltzfus, Millmont, PA. The charge was given by Steve Miller, assisted by Elmer Miller and Wilbur Yoder.

Bro. Manfred McGrath, 47, was ordained as bishop at Dayspring Chris-

tian Fellowship, Hiddenite, NC, on Oct. 17, 2010. Preordination messages were given by Perry Troyer, Plain City, OH. The charge was given by Virgil Kanagy, assisted by Perry Troyer and John Beiler. Anthony Miller was also in the lot.

Bro. Karl Myvett, 46, Hattievill Village, Belize, was ordained as minister on Oct. 3, 2010, at Pilgrim Fellowship Mennonite Church. Messages were given

by Orlando Matute, Cayo; and Hughdelle Ysaguirre, Hattieville. The charge was given by Bro. Hughdelle, assisted by Bro. Orlando. Bro Karl had been ordained as deacon in 1988.

Bro. John J. Petersheim, 39, Narvon, PA, was ordained as deacon at Bethel Christian Fellowship, Morgantown, PA, on June 6, 2010. Preordination messages were brought by Ernest Hochstetler. The charge was given by John U. Lapp, assisted by Ernest and Ben A. Stoltzfus. Omar Stoltzfus and Mark King were also in the lot.

o b i t u a r i e s

Marnier, Katie, 82, of Chesterville, IL, died Sept. 19, 2010. She was born August 12, 1928 in Saultville, OH, daughter of the late Valentine B. and Elizabeth (Erb) Beachy.

She was a member of Pleasant View Church, Arcola, IL.

On Sept. 29, 1949, she was married to John G. Marnier, now deceased. Surviving are five children: Andrew J. (Lynn) Marnier, Arthur; Valentine J. (Lydia) Marnier, Arcola; Daniel J. (Irene) Marnier, Constantine, MI; Sarah Ann Marnier-Tomm, Bement, IL; and Dorothy (Reuben) Hostetler, Chesterville; 19 grandchildren, and 16 great grandchildren. Other survivors include two brothers: Ben V. (Dorothy) Beachy, Fresno, OH; Atlee V. (Patsy) Beachy, Monroe, GA; and one sister; Mary Ann (Leslie) Wolfer, McMinnville, OR. She was preceded

in death by son-in-law, Mark Edward Tomm; brother, Andrew V. Beachy and sister, Fannie Miller.

The funeral was at Pleasant View Church on Sept. 22, with Howard Kuhns officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Mast, Florence Katherine, 57, of Weatherford, OK, died at Corn Heritage Village Oct. 24, 2010. She was born Aug. 7, 1953, daughter of Fannie (Yoder) (who was 100 years old on 11-5-10) and the late John B. Mast in Thomas, OK.

Florence was handicapped. She lived with her parents until 33 years of age. Then she was cared for in several different homes for the mentally handicapped, touching many lives wherever she was.

She is survived by a brother, Perry J. (Mary) Mast, Weatherford; a sister, Barbara Ellen (Leroy) Lambright, Topeka, IN; brother-in-law, Floyd (Joyce) Miller, Dublin, OH; 12 nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by infant twin brothers: Alvin and Melvin; sister, Mary Ann Miller, sister-in-law, Margie Mast, and a nephew, Timothy Mast.

The funeral was held at Zion A.M. Church on Oct. 27, with David Yoder, Gary Miller, LaVerne Miller, and Leroy Peachey serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Sam P., 65, of Gordonville, PA, died (the result of an injury in 2003) on Aug. 21, 2010. He was born Dec. 22, 1944, son of the late Benjamin and Emma (Stoltzfoos) Stoltzfus.

He was a member of Weavertown A.M. Church. He was ordained as minister in April, 1968; as bishop in August, 1975. He served in that office at Summitview, New Holland; at Pine Grove, PA; at White Church, Ontario; and Pataste, Costa Rica.

On Nov. 1965, he was married to Hannah K. Stoltzfoos, who survives. Their six children are: Samuel, Bloomfield, NM; Elvin, Farmington, NM; Susanna, White, GA; Jada, Narvon, PA; Katrina, Jonestown, PA; Rosa, at home; and 16 grandchildren. Other survivors include brothers: Mose Stoltzfus, Sylvan Stoltzfus, Leon Stoltzfus, Alvin Stoltzfus; sisters: Rachel (John) Lapp, Sadie (Jess) Stoltzfus; Ruth (Marvin) Stoltzfus; Verna (Melvin) Beiler.

The funeral was held at Weavertown on Aug. 24, with Dave Stoltzfoos, John U. Lapp, and Steve Ebersole serving. Mervin Lapp served in the committal at the burial in the Weavertown Cemetery.

Wagler, Nathaniel Merlin, 17, of Greensburg, KY, died suddenly from an aortic aneurysm Sept. 21, 2010. He was born Nov. 25, 1992, at Washington, IN, son of Dale William "Bill" and Janet (Stoll) Wagler.

He was a faithful member of Summersville Mennonite Church.

He was employed as a window builder and installer. Besides his parents, he is survived by five brothers: Bryan, Randall, Timothy, Jonathan and Christian, all of Greensburg; three sisters and one

brother-in-law: Rachel and Terry Yoder, of IN; Mary Jane and Leah Wagler, both of Greensburg and one nephew, Kadin Yoder. Other survivors include his grandparents, Alvin Wagler and Alma Stoll, both of Montgomery, IN.

The funeral was held at Summersville Mennonite Church on Sept. 25, with Forrest Mast, Eugene Eicher, James Hershberger, and Lonnie Yoder serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Wagler, Nelson, 54, of Montgomery, IN, died Sept. 21, 2010, following a traffic accident. He was born Feb. 5, 1956, in Daviess County, IN, to Willis and Rosanna (Stoll) Wagler.

He was a member of Mt. Olive Mennonite Church, Montgomery.

He is survived by his mother, Rosanna Wagler, Montgomery; four brothers and sisters-in-law: Dean and Wanda Wagler, Wayne and Esther Wagler, Amon and Marti Wagler, all of Washington, IN; Nathan and Rose Wagler, Montgomery, IN; and four sisters and brothers-in-law: Fannita Wagler, Montgomery; Marsha and Loren Wingard; Rhoda and Marlin Wagler, all of Washington, IN; and Velma and Dan Mast, Holmesville, OH, and 31 nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father and a nephew, Wendel Mast.

The funeral was held at the Simon J. Graber Complex with Clyde Stoll, Floyd Lengacher, and Paul Kurtz serving. Burial was in the Mt. Olive Cemetery, with Kevin Graber serving.

Yoder, John E. N., 81, Of Dundee, OH, died after a lengthy illness in his home on Aug. 20, 2010. He was born Jan. 30, 1929, son of the late Eli J. S. and Amanda (Shetler) Yoder.

He was member of Agape Christian Fellowship.

On Nov. 25, 1948, he was married to Elizabeth Weaver, who survives. Also surviving are seven children: Miriam (David) Beachy, Strasburg, OH; Ervin (Sara Sue) Yoder, Dundee, OH; Lucy (Doug) Wood, Strasburg, OH; Ruth (Brian) Wills, Atwater, OH; Kayte (Mose) Yoder, Millersburg, OH; Aaron (Naomi) Yoder, Leesburg, OH; and Esther (Kim) Eichorn, Dundee, OH. Other survivors include 24 grandchildren; 38 great grandchildren; sisters: Mattie (Levi) Troyer, Charm, OH; and Malinda (Isaac) Schlabach, Kimbolton, OH.

Preceding him in death were three sisters: Mary Ann, Amanda, Katie Ann; three infant brothers; and two infant granddaughters.

The funeral was held at Maranatha Fellowship Church, Sugar creek, on August 23, with Bill Mullet serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Yoder, John Ray, 48, of Leon, IA, died Oct. 22, 2010, due to injuries from a fall. He was born Aug. 20, 1962, son of the late Simon and Vina (Helmuth) Yoder.

He was member of Salem Mennonite Church. John Ray had significant health problems and longed for heaven.

He is survived by six sisters and two brothers: Rosanna (Marvin) Kauffman, Weldon, IA; Marilyn (Steve) Burkholder, Nappanee, IN; Erma (Norman) Troyer, Leon, IA; Esther (Andrew) Miller, Canon City, CO; Morris Yoder, Weldon, IA; Wilma (Aden) Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, PA; Loretta, Leon, IA; and Myron (Vera) Yoder, Leon, IA.

The funeral services were held Oct. 25, with Monroe Gingerich, Norman Troyer, and Marvin Kauffman serving. Burial was in the Salem Mennonite cemetery. 

observations

The American economy continues to struggle with the unemployment rate hovering between 9 and 10 percent. It is interesting to remember that when there is a recession the amount of money has not decreased. It has simply changed hands.

A column by Bob Herbert (*The Hutchinson News*, 9-16) gives some interesting information. In the 1970's

8 to 9 percent of national income went to 1 percent of the earners. Since that time this had gradually increased until 2005, when it increased to 21 percent. Middle class workers are now getting less income (adjusted for inflation) than they did 20 years ago. The richest one tenth of one percent (.001%) representing 13,000 households took in more than 11 percent of the total increase in 2007.

To this observer it seems apparent that the movement of large amounts of money from the middle class and poor people to those already extremely wealthy is an important reason for the present recession.

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Pharo Cattle Company is located at Cheyenne Wells, CO. Owner Kit Pharo sends out occasional newsletters promoting his philosophy of efficient beef production. He also sends a weekly devotional meditation that reflects his personal Christian faith. He assumes that those who take the Lord seriously will be uneasy with many things that have become common in modern times.

The following paragraphs are excerpted from the 9-11-10 meditation:

“How did we get to where we are today? Little by little, Satan knows that if he takes big steps we will easily recognize him. However, if he takes very small steps, we won’t pay attention. Little by little, Satan has succeeded in permeating our culture, our homes and our churches. I have said it before and I will say it again—when I look at what the church has become, I have to wonder if this is the Lord’s design or Satan’s design.”

Pharo acknowledges that one can be so passionate and forceful about his faith in God that he does more harm than good. But he says, “We do not have to be belligerent to take an effective stand for Christ.” We need to

seriously consider all of the areas that we have inadvertently allowed Satan to take control of. We need to reclaim control of those areas for Christ’s sake. He says further, “If we suffer for doing so, so be it. We will rejoice as the early disciples did.” As usual, he closes his newsletter with, “Don’t just go to church; *be the church.*”

While I have met this man, I don’t know him well. He has developed a large following in the beef cattle industry; but there are those who refuse to buy his livestock because of his outspoken witness for Christ. My reason for including his comments in this column is that I believe it can encourage readers to firmly and graciously resist the pressures to choose a path of less resistance when it leads in a wrong direction.

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In 2009 MCC had their annual meeting in Manitoba. Speakers included a Honduran Mennonite pastor, Francisco Muchado. He is a married man. An observer noticed that he was not wearing a wedding band and asked him about it. He answered, “Why do we need gold rings when they cause so much suffering?”

Later that evening, the offering plate included two rings along with the typical offering of checks and cash.

Francisco is concerned that foreign mining operations are being harmful to pure water and soil health, and are often disruptive and unfriendly to

human settlements.

This man is to be commended for his courage to stand out in the crowd for conscience' sake. There are even better reasons for abstaining from wearing gold and other superfluous ornamentation. Adornment of character conveys a message that manmade hardware cannot convey. (1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Peter 3:1-6) This item was gleaned from MCC Peace Office Newsletter, October-December, 2010.

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I am aware that mid-term elections will be history when you read this. But an article in *Charisma*, 10-10, entitled, "The Church as an Alternative Society" by Pastor Brian Zahnd, St. Joseph, MO, has important things to say to us for all seasons. Following are choice excerpts from a longer article:

- "I'm afraid we've made a grave mistake concerning our mission. We're not so much tasked with 'changing the world' as with being faithful expressions of the kingdom of God through following Jesus and living the Sermon on the Mount. But this mistake is nothing new. It is the mistake the church has been making for 17 centuries. [Since Constantine -DLM] We should never forget that Jesus submitted to the injustice of a state-sponsored execution by telling Pilate: 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight.'" (John 18:36)

- "Admittedly, we live in a world

where much is wrong. But what is most wrong with the world is not our politics or who lives in the White House. It is the nature of the human heart. Greed, lust, and pride in the heart are the epicenters of all that is wrong with society."

- "We're not called to follow an elephant or a donkey. We're called to follow a Lamb. That doesn't mean that we should form a Lamb political party. This means that we should model the way of the Lamb and then make disciples of both elephants and donkeys in the way of the Lamb, the way of extending radical forgiveness and considering others in self-sacrificing love."

- "We Christians have a complicated relationship with the state because of our dual citizenship. But our first allegiance is to the kingdom of Christ. This means treating everyone, even enemies, with kindness, love and respect."

- "As Christians, our first obligation is not to seek to transform the state by using Caesar's means of dominion but to simply be a faithful church through a living example of God's alternative society."

Many of our readers are aware that our view of the Christian's relationship to the state was a major issue and conflict between Anabaptists and other reformers in the early 1500's. The issue is still very much with us. National loyalty and Christian loyalty are often considered equal in the larger

church community. In the event of a national emergency, patriotism will likely usurp Christian priorities for many people.

I find it truly refreshing to find this view so ably expressed by one who has come to these conclusions, not by his upbringing, but by his study of the life and teachings of Christ and the Apostles' doctrine.

None of us has a monopoly on God's truth, but truth is kind to all who seek it with honest hearts.



Jerry Moran has served in the U. S. House of Representatives for seven terms. He is running for the U. S. Senate seat that is being vacated by Sam Brownback, KS. *Mennonite Weekly Review* (10-18-10) reports that Moran stands a good chance at becoming the first Mennonite to be elected to the Senate. He is a member of a Mennonite Brethren church at Hays, Kansas. He is a Republican and considers himself a fiscal conservative. To be politically conservative does not necessarily mean restraint in funding military operations. James Juhnke, retired history professor, commented that Moran wears his Mennonite identity lightly.

The same issue of MWR reports that Vicky Hartzler from Harrisonville, MO, wants to become a Representative for her area. She is a member of Harrisonville Community Church. This was formerly a Mennonite Church but is no longer

so. Her opponent has noted her past association with Mennonites could mean that she is a pacifist. Hartzler's campaign staff emphatically insists that she is neither a Mennonite nor a pacifist.

The church of which she is a member has been very intentional in disassociating itself from Mennonites. She is politically identified with the conservative Christian movement. Harrisonville Community Church is now affiliated with the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches. In recent times, they deleted Mennonite from their official title. At their beginning in the 19th century, they were known as the Egli Amish. Later, they renamed themselves Defenseless Mennonites. During World War II, a relatively small percentage of their draftees were conscientious objectors. In recognition of this reality, they became part of Evangelical Mennonite Conference. A recent change has dropped "Mennonite" from their name. This seems to remove any trace of their Anabaptist heritage.



Conservative Anabaptist Service Program (CASP) was formed to enhance awareness of the way of Christ especially as it relates to participation in military service. A logical alternative to military service is Christian service. The Beachy constituency is one of 14 groups who are affiliated with CASP. Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) provides

administrative oversight.

We get the impression that our constituency approves of this endeavor. Tangible support in terms of personnel and funding has been a bit challenging. There are many competing opportunities.

Last year we worked with Interfaith Housing Services (IHS) in Hutchinson, KS, who reaches out to people whose circumstances create special needs. The people at IHS are eagerly anticipating whatever additional service we of CASP can provide.

We are presently in the process of recruiting volunteers for a work project beginning January 24, 2011. Funding requirements include mileage for the volunteers and two staff couples, as needed, plus food and other associated costs. It adds

up to a significant figure, but if congregations who approve and also support, it would not be burdensome to anyone.

The 2010 yearbook shows 155 congregations. It appears that \$175 per congregation would satisfactorily fund the project this year. Larger congregations should bear in mind that some small, mission congregations might find such a figure burdensome.

Is it realistic to assume that when our people become aware of this need, that they will eagerly supply funding? A little surplus would provide a start for another year. Send your contributions to:

Elmer J. Miller
63511 CR 33
Goshen, IN 46528

—DLM



mission awareness

What Missions Are Not

Floyd Stoltzfus

In reading a recent Amish Mennonite Aid newsletter, I was deeply impressed that the message of the Gospel is the only answer for the human dilemma of sin. In the next months, we shall focus on some of these needs.

Would you be willing to write a story of how the Gospel changed a person's life in your ministry?

In achieving a proper balance in worthwhile endeavors it is sometimes good to view an opposite. This month we will discuss "What Missions Are Not," coupled with what missions really are.

Mission leader David Howard explains the scriptural foundation of missions this way: "**The missionary enterprise of the church is *not* a**

pyramid built upside down with its point on one isolated text in the New Testament out of which we is built a huge structure known as ‘missions.’ Rather the missionary enterprise of the church is a great pyramid built right side up with its base running from Genesis through Revelation. All of Scripture forms the foundation for the outreach of the Gospel for the whole world.”

God is a missionary God with a global message in the Bible full of global promises to a world of global need. Following are two Scriptures that express God’s heart so His name will be known in all the earth: “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). “That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Genesis 22:17,18).

God uses catastrophes and destruction and even raises up evil dictators so He can show His mighty power and declare His great name in all the earth: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. For now I will stretch out my hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth” (Exodus 9:13-16). God used David to triumph over Goliath (the victory was the Lord’s): “...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel” (1 Samuel 17:46).

It is God’s purpose and plan that all “ethnos” (people groups) hear the message of salvation. Hear the heart cry and deep burden of the psalmist: “God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon the earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge thy people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him” (Psalm 67).

Missions are not an addendum that God the Father had Jesus give to His followers just before He ascended

to heaven. It is *not* an afterthought as though God were saying: “Oh brethren, I nearly forgot! I do need men to go into all the world to preach the Gospel—if your schedule allows it; if your business does not interfere; when your car payments are completed; when your friend’s wedding is past; after your children are grown and married; when the hunting season is over; if you feel like going; but if you cannot make it, don’t bother.” Perish the thought!

Jesus said, “...All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

I see a powerful three-letter word in Psalm 67 and in the Great Commission (Matt. 28). The word “all” appears four times in each of these texts. The message of the Gospel is urgent for all to hear. The Great Commission is *not* just fill-in words as a nice complimentary closing to the first book of the New Testament. “Go and make disciples”

carries the force of a command. Baptism publicly identifies the new believer with Christ and His people. By baptism, the believer declares: “I now belong to Christ. I no longer follow the world, Satan, and my own sinful desires. I renounce them and purpose to serve my Lord and Master.” Baptism seals this holy covenant “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

The purpose of missions is *not* just to educate (teaching them to know) what new disciples should do to grow. That is to train them to observe all things that Jesus commanded us. I suggest we begin our teaching program in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, 7). After all, is not this where the rock-bottom foundation of the heavenly kingdom lies?

Jesus began this sermon with godly attitudes; then He taught us how to respond to persecution. Godly response to people in times of persecution produces within us the qualities of “salt and light.” As we take the new believer through the various subject material of this great sermon are we then ready for the expanded and amplified teaching of the epistles, the ordinances and more. 

***“Good will to men” is good seasoning
for the Christmas season.***

Is Your Heart Ready for Christmas?

Mary June Glick

Christmas is the essence of love sent to humanity by God Himself. God sent this gift wrapped in a human body to a humble couple in a lowly stable. God had messengers to proclaim the message to the shepherds who tended their sheep on the hillsides of Judea. Anthems of praise by heavenly messengers rang out through the starlit night. I imagine these heavenly beings watching in awe and adoration of Jesus Christ, when the beloved Son of God entered the world as a tiny infant.

I believe the angels rejoiced as Mary held that precious bundle close to her heart—Jesus, her first-born son. Her heart must have felt overwhelmed with the tremendous responsibility of caring for the Messiah. It is the birth of Jesus Christ we celebrate at Christmas. We choose to remember that God loved and gave. It is up to us how we respond. Will we remember Him only as a tiny baby? Will we also worship Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

Christmas holds a great potential for the Christian family. We are living in a world that has taken the meaning

of Christmas and transformed it into one of the most profitable sales seasons of the year. It is a time of greed and commercialization. However, it can also be a season of joy and peace for the Christian family. We have an opportunity to show the world that we are celebrating the birth of the only One who gives true peace. It is also a time to determine in our hearts what memories and values we want to leave with our children and grandchildren. Our own hearts need to be at peace.

We identify with the story of Mary and Martha who welcomed Jesus into their home for a special supper. However, Martha was so busy and caught up in the frustration of wanting to have everything perfect that, initially, at least, she missed the joy of worshipping at the feet of the One she loved. She had looked forward to this special occasion yet she missed it. Mary, on the other hand, chose the better part as she sat at Jesus' feet.

I tend to be like Martha. I often get frustrated with the preparation. I enjoy having things nice and trying to make everything special. However,

sometimes I have become weary and miss the significance of the occasion. Christmas is a season I look forward to with much anticipation. I love to give. I enjoy the camaraderie of friends and family. The Christmas programs, special family reunions, watching the glow in a child's eyes as he opens a gift are all a part of Christmas that mean a lot to me. Christmas carols add much to the joy of Christmas.

The Jewish culture has many significant holy days that remind them of their history. However, as Christians, we have the ultimate of holy days—Christmas. Let us look at some ideas to celebrate Christ's birth.

Prepare your heart.

How am I to prepare my heart? I believe we women have a unique edge in celebrating Christmas because we identify with Mary in the birth and nurturing of a child. Even if you have never given birth to a baby, God has given you the heart of a mother. Contemplate in your mind the emotions that Mary may have been feeling. I enjoy reading through the Christmas story as given in Luke during the weeks before Christmas. Mary's simple, trusting heart when she received the angel's message always challenges me. The angel's message to the shepherds of peace and goodwill to men should cause us to search our hearts and see whether we are at peace with God and others.

Ask God to give you a quiet heart this Christmas.

Lower your expectations

If you are like me, you tend to get carried away with your expectations of trying to make this a perfect Christmas for your family and for others. Try setting goals by writing down what is important. Make a list of what you need to do in preparation for family dinners, sending cards, gift giving, church activities, and so on. Give responsibility to family members. Even children can wrap gifts, make cards, and do many other small jobs. Does everything have to be done ahead of time? Set priorities.

Bless others

We all love being surrounded by family at Christmas or some time over the holidays. I struggle a bit this year because our family will not all be able to be at home. However, I remember that many families will be missing a family member this year by death, so I have much for which to be grateful. How can I bring a little comfort to the grieving at Christmas? Some people around us do not have family close by. Our local colleges have foreign students who would love to be invited into a family setting. Elderly people living alone in our communities may enjoy a little Christmas cheer. We can make a difference in some person's life.

Celebrate Jesus Christ

Christmas is about Jesus. Find

a way of emphasizing this in your home. You can establish a tradition of advent, such as reading certain Scriptures in your family leading up to Christmas or lighting candles to teach the light coming into the world. A nativity scene helps children grasp the meaning of the stable and the lowly birth. Children enjoy acting out the story. A birthday cake for Jesus is special. There are many ways you

can share with those less fortunate at Christmas. Make it a special project for your family, plan ahead so the children can save for it. Missionary families would love to receive a gift box from you. The ideas are endless. Use what is best suited for your family and to your financial abilities.

Just remember: God GAVE His BEST!



junior messages

It's God's Will

Brianna Hochstetler, 12 years old, New Haven, IN

I was all packed. The day had finally arrived. I was going to Mexico to visit missionaries there. I went over my list again and again and I couldn't think of anything I'd forgotten. "Beep! Beep!" blared a horn in the driveway. I kissed my family good-bye and I was on my way! Once I got to the airport I sat in the waiting area with shaking knees. I had never flown in a real airplane before.

Then I heard the "Ring, ring!" of my cell phone. "Hello?" I answered.

"Linda?" Mom said.

"It's your grandma...she just slipped into a coma," said Mom. Grandma has had a brain tumor for

a while now and she was the one who pushed me to go! I had told Mom to call me if anything happened. But I didn't really think anything would.

"Linda?" asked Mom.

"I'm still here," I replied. "I'll come home right away."

"Okay, see you in a little bit, bye!" said Mom.

"Bye!" I answered. As I left the airport I heard my flight being called, but I just ignored it. I was disappointed, yet I knew I had to be there for Grandma.

Now I sat beside her hospital bed holding Grandma's hand and praying. I began talking to her. "Grandma, I don't know if you can hear me, but

I'm going to talk to you anyway. You mean so much to me and I want you to know that. You're my best friend! I'm here for you right now! Please don't leave us...." Just then there was a long "beeeeeep" from a machine and nurses and doctors came rushing in. I moved aside wide-eyed.

"I'm getting no pulse!" stated one nurse. "We're losing her!" cried another. "No!" I exclaimed.

The sounds of the hospital faded away and Grandma was rolled out of the room. I fell into a chair and cried. I sobbed and sobbed. The tears in my eyes kept coming and coming. Finally, after what seemed like hours, my mom put her arms

around me and guided me out of the room and to the car. I sat in the passenger side and leaned my head against the window. I had no tears left.

Mom spoke, "Linda, sometimes we may not understand why God takes away our loved ones, but we need to trust Him and remember that He isn't *taking* them; it's more like He's *receiving* them.

"I know, Mom," I sniffed. "Grandma was an amazing Christian and she is now in the arms of Jesus, we shouldn't grieve over our loved ones, because we know they're in a much happier place. They're in Heaven... with Jesus."

INDEX 2010

Authors and their contributions

Abbreviations identify sectional features: (M) Meditation; (P) Poem; (BR) Book Review; (Ed) Editorial; (MA) Mission Awareness; (MM) Ministers' Meeting Message; (Obs) Observations; (HH) Helpers at Home; (Y) Youth; (JM) Junior Messages; (RR) Reader Response; (G) Guest Writer.

Baker, Melva

(Y), 4-37

Beachy, Ivan

Developing Faithful Leaders (MM),
4-23

Beachy, Kraig

(RR), 5-4

Beachy, Mary Ellen

Perils of the Roads (MA), 11-29

Betz, Kenneth

(RR), 11-6

Bontrager, Dolores

A Happy Ending (JM), 10-33

Bontrager, Kaylene

What Does Your Church Allow?
(Y), 2-36

Brenneman, Marilyn

Selah (Y), 6-36

Byers, Jake

Hats (RR), 9-4

Byler, Katrina

God's Symphony (M), 6-1

Eby, Edwin

Michael Sattler, 2-5

Eby, Ernest

Comments in Youth section
(RR), 7-4
Serving God Singly (Y), 5-35
Waking Up to Reality (Y), 11-34

Fisher, Cynthia

(Y), 4-33

Fisher, Raymond

100 Ways Heaven is Better than
Earth, 9-25

Flint, Annie Johnson

I Will Not Doubt (P), 2-30

Gairdner, William

Cultural Relativism, 2-9

Gembicki, Larry

Diamonds and Coal, 2-11

Gingerich, Amy

Hope for Healing (JM), 8-34

Gingerich, James

(RR), 12-4

Gingerich, Lavina

Going the Second Mile, 11-28

Glick, Mary June

A Clean Home and Heart (HH),
3-31
Encouragement (HH), 10-31
Five Gifts for Grandchildren (HH),
7-30
Happy Years (HH), 8-31
Is Your Heart Ready for Christmas?
(HH), 12-23
Loving Your Child (HH), 2-33
Mother's Day Meditation (HH),
5-31
Now is the Time to Communicate
(HH), 6-30
Preparing Your Child for Marriage
(HH), 4-33

There is no Better Time (HH), 1-30
Turn Over a New Leaf (HH), 9-31

Glick, John E.

Heeding the Cry of the Orphans
(MA), 6-27

Groff, Rosalind

Spring, 110, A.D. (JM), 11-31

Heatwole, Steven Wayne

Alone? (M), 2-1
Evening Skies (M), 4-1

Hershberger, James

CO Heirlooms, (RR), 3-5

Hite, James

Seeing What You Want to See,
2-10
Truth Sets You Free (M), 7-1

Hochstetler, Brianna

It's God's Will (JM), 12-25

Hochstetler, Eldon

Inner Controls for Electronic
Living, 5-10

Hoover, Kelsie

Truly Anabaptist? (Y), 9-34

Kauffman, Jason

Faithful to the End (MM), 5-25

Kauffman, Kelley

(Y), 4-37

Kenaston, Denny

Dangers of Anti-Groupism, 7-8

Klewin, Grace

Lydia and the Healer (JM), 6-32;
7-32

Kuepfer, Joseph S.

REAL Real Estate, 8-27

Lapp, Aaron

Current Events in Nonresistance,
8-5
Discerning God's Judgment and

Chastisement, 7-5
Driving Patterns, 6-4
Real Men Don't Read Directions,
9-5
Soft Pretzels, 1-4
That Information Curve, 4-6
When Stolen Goods Are Recovered,
11-7

Lapp, Ben

Our Front Door Mission (MA), 9-29

Martin, Andy

Thy Will Be Done (M), 5-1

Martin, Daniel

Road to Anarchy, 6-10

Martin, Harold S.

My Cup Runneth Over, (Guest Ed),
11-2

Martin, Lehman

(RR), 11-6

Mast, Edwin

(Y), 1-35

Miel, Jerry

Turning to God! (Haiti), 5-6

Miggiani, Lori

Our "Tender Shoot" (P), 11-10

Miller, Andrea

(Y), 1-35

Miller, Anthony

Things I have Learned, 9-10

Miller, Darlene

FAITH (P), 11-1

Truth's Final Word (P), 6-12

Miller, David L.

Observations (each issue)

Nonconformity and

Nonresistance, (MM) 1-22

Miller, Diane

(RR), 4-5

Miller, John

(Y), 1-36

Ultimate Power Personified (Y),
6-37

Miller, John M.

(RR), 3-4

Miller, Ken

Essence of Salvation (MM), 10-4

Will Theologians Sit Down (BR),
5-8

Miller, Lowell

Contentment, 12-7

Miller, Paul A.

(RR), 6-4

Pastoring Includes Counseling,
(MM), 3-9

Miller, Paul L.

Finding Heroes at Home (Ed), 3-2

Guarding Our Turf, 12-2

I Must Tell Jesus, (Ed) 1-2

It's Not About Us! (Ed), 6-2

Keys to Victory (Ed), 8-2

Messages from Calvary (Ed), 5-2

Reddy Rooster (Ed), 7-2

That Bottom Step (Ed), 4-2

Thriving Families (Ed), 10-2

Virtue Can Become Vice (Ed), 2-2

Washing Feet (Ed), 9-2

Mullet, Kevin

(RR), 8-4

Olander, Anna

If I Gained the World (M), 10-1

Overholt, Felicia

(Y), 1-36

Peachey, Earl

Heart of a Father (MM), 8-7

Raber, John Paul

Earthly, Sensual, and Devilish, 2-26

- (RR), 11-6
- Raber, Martha**
(Y), 1-36
- Richardson, Linda Mae**
Comforters, (M), 1-1
- Roth, Esther**
(RR), 3-4
- Schrock, Elmer**
Commitment and Resolution, 5-11
- Schrock, Lyndon**
(Y), 1-37
- Schrock, Simon**
Faithful in Little, 7-22
Fellowship in the Tire Shop, 9-7
Finding the Right Church, 6-24
Responding to Critics (MA), 4-30
Those Manmade Rules, 10-25
TOV Bible, 8-24
- Shetler, Jared**
Maintaining our Beachy Values,
11-13
- Shetler, Ryan**
Get Your Hands Dirty (Y), 10-35
- Smith, Shelton**
Thinking Inside the Box, 10-21
- Stauffer, Bruce**
Learning From the Flu, 3-26
- Stauffer, Robert**
You Used to Be Beautiful, 6-8
- Stedman, Ray**
Our Need for Discipline, 4-4
- Stoltzfus, Erica**
(Y), 3-36
- Stoltzfus, Floyd**
Amazon River Basin (MA), 8-29
Amish Mennonite Information
Center (MA), 9-27
God's Marvelous Gifts (MA), 5-29
- Jewish Evangelism, (MA), 1-27
Mobilizers and Senders (MA), 7-27
Reward: Motive for Faithfulness
(MA), 6-27
Visit to Belize (MA), 10-28
What Missions Are Not, 12-20
- Stoltzfus, Joetta**
What a Privilege! 2-31
- Stoltzfus, Kaylita**
(Y), 3-36
- Stoltzfus, Leanna**
(Y), 3-35
- Swope, Wilmer**
(RR), 2-4
Blessing on Food, after Tears (P),
4-13
Sacred Healing (M), 3-1
Writer's Prayer (P), 5-13
- Tozer, A. W.**
Carrying the Cross, 8-26
- Troyer, Adin**
Supremacy of the Word, (MM),
2-20
- Troyer, Corrie**
A Journey (M), 9-1
Gift of God's Love (P), 10-31
- Troyer, Eric**
(Y), 3-36
- Wagler, Andrea**
Someone Understands, 12-6
- Wagler, Steven**
(Y), 3-36
- Weaver, Chester**
Just Musing, 1-7
Two-Legged Truth, 6-6
- Wickey, Vernon**
Give Attention to Details, 3-25
- Wilberforce, William**

Emotions, 2-29

Wolf, Greg

“Lord, Is It I?” (P), 5-20

Yoder, Andrew

(Y), 3-35

Continue Your Education (Y), 8-37

Yoder, Anita

Challenge, The (JM), 5-33

Da Bible Tells Me So (JM), 3-33

Who Is Your Captain? (JM), 1-32,
2-34

Yoder, Anne

Creation Continues (P), 2-13

Yoder, Bill

The Pastor’s Home (MM), 11-23

Yoder, Corey

Believer or Disciple? 9-12

Yoder, David M.

Proper Conduct in Administration
(MM), 4-18

Yoder, Denver

(RR) 11-5

Yoder, Elmer M.

Sport Hunting, 3-24

Yoder, Gerald

Small Talk Turns Serious (MA),
3-30

Yoder, Janet

Courage or Cowardice? 7-26; 9-13

Yoder, Jason

What Can I Do? (JM), 4-35

Yoder, Jean

God of the Wilderness (Y), 7-37

Yoder, Nathan L.

Courage to Stand (M), 8-1

Yoder, Pablo

(RR), 12-4

Yoder, Philip

Ministry of Visitation (MM), 3-7

Yoder, Sanford

Well Done, Thou Servant (MM),
5-21

Yoder, Sheila

Amber’s Story (JM), 9-33

Yoder, Tim

Call of the Father (MM), 9-20

Yutzy, Sherri

(Y), 3-37



SUBJECT INDEX – 2010

Abortion

(Obs), 1-18

Abuse/Healing

(Obs), 1-19; 9-19; 10-17

Amish

Industry and population (Obs), 9-18

Anabaptism

Am I Truly Anabaptist? (Y), 9-34

(Obs), 3-21; 5-18; 8-21

Anarchy

The Road to Anarchy, 6-11

Appearance

You Used to be Beautiful, 6-8

Arrogance

Fellowship in the Tire Shop, 9-7

Attitudes

Moses (Obs), 2-17

Small Talk Turns Serious (MA),
3-30

Things I Have Learned, 9-11

Authority

Strong persons (Obs), 5-19

Balance

Two-Legged Truth, 6-6

Baptism

Mode (Obs), 6-21

Bible

Bible Reading (Obs), 3-23

Supremacy of the Word (MM), 2-20

Blindness

Da Bible Tells Me So (JM), 3-33

Brotherhood

Dorcas Smucker finds comfort in
others (Obs), 8-22

Finding Heroes at Home (Ed), 3-2

Carefulness

Clean Home and Heart (HH), 3-31

Give Attention to Details, 3-25

CASP

CASP meeting (Obs), 10-18

Children's Stories

What Can I Do/ (JM), 4-35

Child Discipline

No spanking in Sweden (Obs), 3-22

That Bottom Step (Ed), 4-2

Christian Vision

Messages from Calvary (Ed), 5-2

Christmas

Is Your Heart Ready for Christmas?
(HH), 12-23

Church Administration

Developing faithful leaders (MM),
4-23

Proper conduct in administration
(MM), 4-18

Church and State

(Obs), 3-22; 7-19

Clothing Styles

Jeans, Modesty (Obs), 2-18

Commitment

Commitment and Resolution, 5-11

Compromise

Cultural Relativism, 2-9

Learning from the Flu, 3-26

Congregations

Autonomy (Obs), 6-19

Retention (Obs), 6-19

Conscientious Objectors

Heirlooms of CO's (RR), 3-5

Contentment

Contentment, 12-7

Courage

Courage or Cowardice? 7-26

Courage to Stand (M), 8-1

Creationism

Creation Museum's impact (Obs),
10-18

Creed

Michael Sattler, 2-5

Criticism

Responding to Critics (MA), 4-30

Cross Bearing

Believer or Disciple? 9-12

Carrying the Cross, 8-26

Darkness

Darkness, 2-12

Dictator

Hitler's Beliefs, 6-23

Diligence

Get Your Hands Dirty (Y), 10-35

Disappointment

It's God's Will (JM), 12-25

Discipline

God's Judgment and Chastisement,
7-5

Economy

Recession, who is hurt most? (Obs),
12-16

Education

How much is needed? (Obs), 7-21

TV's negative influence (Obs),
10-16

Egyptian Plagues

A Happy Ending (JM), 10-33

Emotions

Emotions, 2-29

Encouragement

Awards assembly (Obs), 7-21

Encouragement (HH), 10-31

Eternal Values

If I Gained the World (M), 10-1

Evangelism

Jewish Evangelism (MA), 1-27

Example

Driving Habits, 6-4

Extremes

Virtue Can Become Vice (Ed), 2-2

Faith

A Journey (M), 9-1

FAITH (M), 11-1

Faithfulness

Faithful in Little, 7-22

Faithful to the end (MM), 5-25

Three Keys to Victory (Ed), 8-2

Well Done, Thou Servant (MM),
5-21

(Obs), 1-18

Family

2,000 direct descendants (Obs),
7-20

Character Development in Children,
11-12

Our "Tender Shoot" (P), 11-10

The Happy Years (HH), 8-31

Thriving Families (Ed), 10-2

Fathers

Heart of a Father (MM), 8-7

Now...Communicate (HH), 6-30

Fellowship

Alone? (M), 2-1

Washing Feet (Ed), 9-2

Forgiveness

Soft Pretzels..., 1-4

Generations

Age of patriarchs (Obs), 6-21

Gifts, God's

God's Marvelous Gifts (MA), 5-29

Global Warming

(Obs), 2-19

Goals

Preparing for Christian homes (Y),
3-35

God's Discipline

Our Need For Discipline, 4-4

Grandchildren

Five Gifts for Grandchildren (HH),
7-30

Gratitude

(Obs), 2-17

My Cup Runneth Over (Guest Ed),
11-2

Halloween

(Obs), 1-19

Healing

Hope for Healing (JM), 8-34

Lydia and the Healer (JM), 6-32;
7-32

Sacred Healing (M), 3-1

Health Care

(Obs), 1-18; 9-16

Health and heredity (Obs), 5-17

Home Schools

In Tennessee (Obs), 4-10

Hope

100 Ways Heaven is Better than
Earth, 9-25

REAL Real Estate, 8-27

Imagination

Seeing What You Want to See, 2-10

Immigration

Why neither party does much
(Obs), 7-22

Information

Amish Mennonite Information
Center, 9-27

That Information Curve, 4-6

Integrity

Integrity (Y), 4-36

Will the theologians please sit
down! (BR), 5-8

Intolerance

God excluded from schools (Obs),
10-18

Israel

Jewish Evangelism (MA), 1-27

Martin Rosen dies (Obs), 8-20

Joy

What Does Your Church Allow?
(Y) 2-36

Leadership

Unusual methods (Obs), 7-18

Love

Loving Your Child (HH), 2-33

Loyalty

Finding the Right Church, 6-24

Marriage

A successful marriage (Obs), 4-10

Preparing your Child for Marriage
(HH), 4-33

Martyrs

Michael Sattler, 2-5

Spring, 110, A.D. (JM), 11-31

Medicine

Antibiotic resistance (Obs), 3-20

Doctors and sleep (Obs), 3-21

Doctors prescribe too much (Obs),
8-23

Health care (Obs), 2-15

Ministry

It's not about us! (Ed), 6-2

The Call of the Father (MM), 9-20

Going the Second Mile, 11-28

The Pastor's Home (MM), 11-23

What youth can do for their
ministers (RR), 4-5

Missions

Amazon River Basin (MA), 8-29

A Visit to Belize (MA), 10-28

City missions (Obs), 2-16

Mobilizers and Senders, 7-27

Perils of the Roads (MA), 11-29

Robert Morrison (JM), 5-33

SE Asia appreciates modesty
(Obs), 9-20

What Missions Are Not (MM),
12-20

Mothers

Mother's Day Meditation (HH),
5-31

Nature's Beauty

Evening Skies (M), 4-1

God's Symphony (M), 6-1

Sport Hunting (RR), 5-4

Nature's Lessons

God of the Wilderness (Y), 7-37

What a Mighty God we Serve! 7-25

New Leaf

Turn Over a New Leaf (HH), 9-31

Nonconformity

Hats, 9-4

Just Musing, 1-7

Nonconformity and Nonresistance
(MM), 1-22

Nonresistance

Current Events in Nonresistance,
8-5

Nonconformity and Nonresistance
(MM), 1-22

President Lincoln, drafting
Mennonites (Obs), 2-19

OBITUARIES

Beachy, Eli, 10-15

Beachy, Grace, 11-17

Beachy, Ivan, 1-16

Bontrager, Willis, 6-17

Burkholder, Richard W., 11-17

Byler, Ida, 8-18

Byler, Sharon, 4-15

Coblentz, Mary, 1-16

Eicher, Daniel, 11-18

Eichorn, Ellen, 6-18

Gingerich, Edward E., 4-15

Gingerich, Jacob, 6-18

Gingerich, Mark A., 4-16

Gingerich, Moses, 3-17

Helmuth, Sarah, 8-18

Herschberger, Carrie, 10-15

Hershberger, Sarah, 8-19

Kramer, Ashlie M., 7-17

Kuepfer, Kathryn E., 3-17

Kuepfer, Marion, 5-15

Lambright, Levi, 11-18

Lapp, Annie Mary, 5-16

Marner, Katie, 12-14

Mast, Anna, 9-15

Mast, Florence, 12-14

Miggiani, Seth, 11-18

Miller, Albert, 1-16

Miller, Esther, 3-18

Miller, Treva, 3-18

Mullet, Ella, 7-17

Nisly, Edna, 7-17

Nissley, Esther Arlene, 5-16

Peachey, Ada, 1-17

Schrock, Simon E., 3-18

Stoltzfus, Anna Mary, 2-15

Stoltzfus, Emma, 4-16

Stoltzfus, Sam P., 12-14

Wagler, Nathan, 4-17

Wagler, Nathaniel, 12-15
Wagler, Nelson, 12-15
Wittmer, Mary, 1-17
Yoder, Amanda, 4-17
Yoder, Emmon, 10-16
Yoder, John E.N., 12-16
Yoder, John Ray, 12-16
Yoder, Jonas, 3-18
Yoder, Kathrine, 6-18
Yoder, Kaylene, 9-16
Yoder, Ruth E., 9-16
Yutzy, Ivan, 8-19
Yutzy, Minerva, 5-16
Zook, Anna M., 10-18

OBSERVATIONS

In each issue

Oil

Gulf spill (Obs), 9-17

Ordination

(Obs), 11-19

ORDINATIONS

Beachy, Robert 1-5
Beiler, John O., 5-15
Bontrager, Arlen, 12-13
Fisher, Daniel, 8-17
Gingerich, Carl, 6-17
Gingerich, Wilbur, 6-17
Hershberger, Virgil 1-5
Hochstetler, Lamar 3-17
Kline, James, 7-16
Lapp, Nathan, 8-17
McGrath, Manfred, 12-13
Miller, Dwight, 10-14
Myvett, Karl, 12-13
Nisly, Arlyn, 10-14
Overholt, Jonathan, 7-16
Peachey, Aaron, 6-17
Peachey, Bob, 6-17

Petersheim, John J., 12-14
Stoltzfus, Ivan, 8-17
Stoltzfus, Lavon, 7-16
Wittmer, David, 9-15
Yoder, Bill, 5-15
Yoder, Jesse, 1-5
Yoder, Tim, 3-17

Orphans

Heeding the Cry of Orphans, 6-27

Orthodoxy

Thinking Inside the Box, 10-21

Overweight

Hazards of overweight (Obs), 8-21

Pastors

Counseling (MM), 3-9

Visitation (MM), 3-7

Patriotism

National anthem at Goshen

College (Obs), 4-11

Peace

Dean Taylor embraces peace (Obs),
4-11

Gift of God's Love (P), 10-31

Pets

Reddy Rooster (Ed), 7-2

Sheep's response (Obs), 5-17

Who Is Your Captain? (JM), 1-32;
2-34

Politics

Mid-term elections (Obs), 12-18

Power

Power Personified (Y), 6-37

Practical piety

Real Men Don't Read Directions,
9-5

The TOV Bible, 8-24

Too uncommon (Obs), 8-20

Prayer

Blessing on Food, after Tears, 4-13

How to Pray the Lord's Prayer,
10-12

Writer's Prayer, 5-13 (Obs) 1-20

Pride

Reddy Rooster (Ed), 7-2

Privilege

Guarding our Turf (Ed), 12-2

Purity

Christian youth appearance (Obs),
5-18

Reading

Continue Your Education (Y), 8-37
(Obs), 2-16

Reality

Waking Up to Reality (Y), 11-34

Rebellion

Those Manmade Rules, 10-25

Redemption

When Stolen Goods Are
Recovered, 11-7

Refugees

Peter Dyck dies (Obs), 3-22

Repentance

Turning to God, 5-6

Respect

Amber's Story 9JM), 9-33

Retirement

Swindoll on retirement (Obs), 5-18

Reverence

(Obs), 1-19

Salvation

Essence of Salvation (MM), 10-4

Sanctification

Creation Continues (P), 2-13

Satan

Little by little he undermines (Obs),
12-19

Self Examination

"Lord, is it I?" (M), 5-20

Service

What a Privilege! (MA), 2-31

Silence

Selah (Y), 6-36

Singleness

Serving God Singly (Y)< 5-35

Sleeping

College students' sleep (Obs), 3-22

Smoking

(Obs), 3-21

Sports

Sport Hunting, 3-24

Steel Wheels

Steel wheels on hard top roads
forbidden (Obs), 8-21

Stereotyping

Dangers of Anti-Groupism, 7-9

Stewardship

Expensive church buildings (Obs),
11-22

Needless spending (Obs), 3-20

Stanley Tam (Obs), 4-11

Suffering

Someone Understands, 12-6

Sunday

Chick-fil-A (Obs), 4-12

German Shopping (Obs), 2-18

Sunday School

(Obs), 11-21

Surrender

Thy Will be Done (M), 5-1

Sympathy

Comforters (M), 1-1

Visiting those who grieve (Obs),
4-9

Technology

Inner Controls, 5-10
Texting while driving (Obs), 7-18

Time

No Better Time (HH), 1-30
Time banks (Obs), 8-22

Trials

Diamonds and Coal, 2-11
I Must Tell Jesus (Ed), 1-2

Trust

I Will Not Doubt (P), 2-30

Truth

Truth's Final Word, 6-12
Truth Sets You Free (M), 7-1

Unemployment

(Obs), 3-21

War and Peace

(Obs), 3-20; 8-23

Wealth, American

Stewardship thoughts (Obs), 12-18

Weddings

Cost of weddings (Obs), 6-21

Wisdom

Earthly, Sensual, and Devilish, 2-26

Women

Women in medicine (Obs), 7-21

Working Women

An open letter to working women,
4-28

Youth

Maintaining our Beachy Values,
11-13



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PS Form 3526, September 2007 (Page 2 of 3)

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

How can you expect a white Christmas when you don't stay out of the red?

• • • • •

Christmas should be a time of anticipation for family and adulation for Christ—not exasperation from extravagance or misery from overeating.

• • • • •

A reverent observance of Christmas shows us a demonstration of true religion that is better than a definition of it.

• • • • •

How we spend Christmas is of greater significance than how much we spend for it.

• • • • •

God sent the world a baby, not a bomb.

• • • • •

Some schools teach history as man's achievements, others teach His story.

• • • • •

If I listen to the Gospel only as a story to hear and not a story to tell, it will stop with me.

• • • • •

God put the church in the world; the devil would put the world in the church.

• • • • •

Don't complain about old age—some don't get that privilege.