



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

Galatians 6:14

JANUARY 2011

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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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Alone?


Steven Wayne Heatwole, Rosthern, SK

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

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

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

I'm not alone! I have a friend!
He's always been right by my side!
With Him by me my troubles end.
Alone? No, not alone! He's here!
Together now we face the dawn
And watch the sun rise high and clear—

[From , Nov-Dec, 2010. Used by permission.] 

Lord, Give Us Christian Homes

Christian homes don't just happen. Even when parents are careful, sly enemies lurk that resist their best efforts. And if parents are not careful, children can stray into lawlessness. Some years ago, (before the internet), Jacob M. Brande, who served on the circuit court of Cook County, Illinois, listed what he saw as 15 causes of juvenile delinquency. Here is his list:

- Destructive toys and games
- Working mothers
- Moonlighting
[having more than one job]
- Improper literature
- Gambling
- [Improper use of] automobiles
- Drugs and Narcotics
- Alcohol
- Movies, Radio, and Television
- Unsupervised Group Activities
- Idleness and Unemployment
- Lack of Religious Training
- Lack of Discipline in the Home
- Lack of Discipline in the School
- Lack of Love in the Home

(From Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, Assurance Publishers, Rockville, MD, 1979, #2903.)

According to this list, juvenile delinquency mostly starts with adult

delinquency. Parents certainly need wisdom that's higher than their own. Good parenting is not easy. If parents choose the course of least resistance, they let down the children given by God to be brought up.

Watch out for hazards to the children. Dr. Manuel Suarez Perdeguero, who was at one time president of the Spanish Pediatrics Association, said that a child's brain can be permanently impaired if it is exposed to television at an early age. He said, "The damage is both structural and chemical," explaining further that the cells undergo a change in their structure and chemical makeup which, though slight, definitely affect the child's normal intellectual development. A child is left with a picture imprinted upon the mind that works only one way. The picture—usually one of violence or tragedy—lingers in the child's mind without being processed, because the child is incapable of clear thought or constructive imagination. The light waves, moreover, damage the child's sight cells, and can leave a permanent distortion if the child does not comprehend the picture. (Tan, *op. cit.*, #6994.)

This seems to say that a child will be

able to read and learn better in school if he has been spared unrealistic, dazzling images like those common in today's entertainment fare. Such distortion of reality hinders good development of the young child's mind.

In 2008 an evangelist who has often preached in Spanish and English told me that he now seldom preaches for 40 minutes, because people here and in Latin America seem to have shorter attention spans than in former years. Formerly he could hold his audience's interest while preaching 40 minute sermons, but now is advised to preach for only 20 minutes. He places the blame for this reduced attention span on modern entertainment.

I think today's entertainment produces more than one problem. I suspect several: a weakened work ethic, compromised morals, overweight, but also physical harm from watching lots of fast-moving images that present sinful lifestyles as "the new normal."

Parents need to take back the task of godly nurture. Here's my list of 10 goals for parents, if their children are to have Christ in first place:

1. Jesus loves the little children and we parents can do so, too. Undivided, sympathetic parental regard conveys unconditional love.

2. The children's health is precious. Their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and should be cared for

by worship, work, study, exercise, nutritious food, sleep and proper rest. Their minds thrive by exploring God's wonderful creation and by worshipping Him.

3. Children need to obey both parents. A child specialist said, "When it comes to serious illness, the child who has been taught to obey stands four times the chance of recovery than the spoiled and undisciplined child does." (Tan, *op. cit.* # 634.)

4. Parental direction is best when given in a calm voice. When giving directions once is enough, if it's done clearly. Direct disobedience is not acceptable. Unpleasant consequences follow direct disobedience. If correction is too light, it stirs anger; if it's too severe, it conveys rejection.

5. Malachi prophesied that John the Baptist would avert a curse when turning the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers (Mal. 4:6). Such nurture excludes cruel, heartless methods but it includes parental direction and correction that is both diligent and compassionate.

6. God is good--all the time! If parents praise God, the children see how it's done.

7. Charitable giving is part of worship and service to God. No one is so poor that he can afford to stop giving to others.

8. Satan has many flashy substitutes,

but God's treasures are found in God's world and God's Word. God's treasures help build a transformed life.

9. Parents are to nurture young children in a way that prepares them to give their hearts to Jesus Christ. Only He can give the new birth and the new life. We must talk to them about God and talk to God about them. Prayer is absolutely vital.

10. Parents must cooperate with God to keep the glow in their marriage. Marriage is designed to improve character. By God's design, the longer marriage goes the better it gets.

The Christian home is God's idea. He will bless and guide parents who sincerely want their home to be genuinely Christian.

• • • • •

Please note: I have had only two responses and need a lot more written contributions for my plea (October, 2010) for reader input about thriving families. Please pick up that issue and follow the Spirit's prompting. It will bless those who wait to hear what others have done in situations that resemble theirs.

—PLM 

reader response

Re: Thinking Inside the Box, Oct. 2010.

Dear Editor,

I want to let you know how much I appreciated this article from October, but forgot to write until the November issue showed up.

As one who is creative and tends to think of myself as a pioneer—

who distrusts boxes and sometimes reacts to structure—I was unsure about reading an article entitled that way, but I was well rewarded for risking it. I appreciated its balanced perspective; that made it easier to hear. Thank you for reprinting this thought-provoking and relevant article.

R. M. Nisly, Oswego, KS 

*Reputation is never completely secure;
it is continually earned.*

Being On the Winning side

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Life is a succession of wins and losses and of gain and pain. In reality, it seems that sometimes we go one step forward then two steps backward. Life on earth is certainly not perfect.

Earthly life is a mix of opportunity, heredity, environment, experimentation, foresight, and outlook. The counsel of others can be helpful. In fact, getting a wise person's advice can be the crucial means of benefiting from someone else's hindsight.

We are often encouraged by superior numbers. For even the Bible says, "In the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14). Sometimes being on the side of a simple majority can provide necessary security or justification. And yet, the Bible warns us about "going with a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2). Jesus also gave clear teaching about the majority of people being on the broad road to perdition. (Matt. 7:13)

Congregational administration might involve voting at times. A faithful church should never vote on doctrinal issues, such as whether church members can participate in the state lottery. That is clearly contrary to Bible principles and thus becomes

a clear prohibition for us. But using congregational voting for selecting Sunday School teachers, song leaders, or church trustees is a good way to ascertain God's will in church life.

One church recently was voting to choose various persons for the ongoing function of the congregation. While the church leaders went aside to count the ballots for each office, anyone could lead out with a chorus or song. In one instance, there was a tie vote between two qualifying church brothers, so the congregation was asked to break the tie by voting again. While the leaders were out tabulating the second ballot, the wife of one of these two men (not sensitive to the implications) led out in a chorus loud and clear, "There's more with us than be with them; we're on the winning side."

After the dismissal, there was no small stir among this lady's friends about her timing and selection of that chorus!

The Bottom Line is that God is not manipulated by man's methods of amassing a majority. Nor is He swayed by psychological persuasion and the "sweet talk" of those who compromise God's principles. But being on the winning side is assured to those who are born again and abide in Christ.

A CALL TO INTERCESSORY PRAYER

We feel deeply indebted to Christ and His church for the vast network of prayer warriors in behalf of Calvary Bible School opening January 3, 2011, for two three-week terms then one six-week term.

- Pray for the staff, cooks, and faculty that we may be endowed with wisdom, endurance and humility to serve faithfully.
- Thank God for students who have answered the Spirit's call for intense Bible study and related subjects. Pray that the Scripture may become deeply rooted in their hearts.
- Pray for a Holy Spirit revival that it may burn all the sin trash among us and that it may be replaced with joyful praise and consecrated Christian service.

Yours in the Calvary tie,
Floyd Stoltzfus



Eva

Name withheld by writer

(Based on a true experience)

When Sheila first called and talked to Mom, all of us were excited. She introduced herself as one of our neighbors and had just welcomed a fourth child in her home.

“She seemed very nice,” Mom told us as we worked together to prepare the evening meal. “Her baby is a girl and only a couple of weeks old.”

“But we’re already thinking about baby-sitting triplets,” Vivian pointed out. “Do you think we could handle four babies?”

“I think we could,” I said. “After

all, we have three girls to help—plus Mom.”

“This’d better be the last baby we decide to take, though,” Kara said. “The triplets’ mother said one or two babies besides her three would be fine, but she didn’t know that she’d want us to have many more.”

“More than that would be too much,” Mom agreed. “But Sheila wants us to baby-sit for her pretty badly. In fact she asked when we might have a meeting. I told her I’d talk with Dad about it first and get back with her later.” Before she

could discuss it with Dad, however, something happened that basically took care of that decision.

One day while Vivian was out getting the mail, Sheila drove by and stopped to chat with her, letting my sister see the baby, as well as a couple of her little boys. Vivian was all excited when she came in. “The baby had a sun suit and little hat on,” she reported. “She was really cute!”

“Did you find out what her name is?” Kara asked. Vivian couldn’t remember, but it made no difference.

Though we still weren’t sure just what we would be doing, we felt we couldn’t turn down Sheila’s desire to have that meeting. She came the next week, bringing her three-year-old son and baby girl along. I took one curious glance at Sheila as she stepped into our living room. She was of medium height with blond hair and dark eyes and had doubtless applied a lot of makeup to her face. She was dressed warmly against the spring day, and looked to be in her lower thirties. She was a very friendly, talkative person, starting to talk as soon as she stepped inside the door.

Sheila spoke at length about the guilt she felt with leaving her baby in the care of sitters when she went back to work. Meanwhile, I studied the tiny girl in the car seat. She slept peacefully, her brown sleeper with pink polka dots enhancing features

that appeared naturally tanned. When Sheila lifted little Eva from the car seat and handed her to me, I asked, “Who does she look like?”

Sheila glanced at her daughter and shook her head, “Can you believe it? I finally have a girl after three boys and she looks like her dad!”

Sheila, we discovered as she talked, had divorced the baby’s father after she was already expecting his child. “He was unstable,” she explained. She was now living in a house not too far from us—and had a boyfriend.

Whether he lived with her or not, she didn’t say, but as she talked, my heart welled with sadness for this innocent baby I held in my arms. Her home had been shattered before she was even born and who knew what her future held? How I longed to rescue that tiny girl—to adopt her and give her a chance for the life I have known!


Any excitement we felt over the opportunity of baby-sitting for Sheila had faded by the time she left. She was so worldly that it would be uncomfortable to work with her.

It was obvious that she decided to place her baby somewhere else, because after a few weeks we stopped hearing from her. While I sorrowed for her children, I knew that my prayers would follow them even though I might never hear from them again.

My Plea

If you've been adopted in the home you find yourself in, don't wish yourself in a different position! If you have loving parents who longed and prayed for a child, you are the child God chose for them. It was love that brought you where you are now, and you have been tremendously blessed with a heritage you can claim as your own. Yes, you may long to find your birth

family some day, and that's okay in its place; but, oh, I can't stress enough the privilege you have of being where you are! If you had stayed with your birth parents, you would never have known the life you now know—a life that is better in every way compared to what it likely would have been, had they not adopted you.

I think I should know that as well as anyone. You see, *I am adopted.* 

Protecting Purity in a Technological Corinth

Randy Alcorn, Sandy, OR

I used the phrase “technological Corinth” in 1985 when I published my first book, *Christians in the Wake of the Sexual Revolution*. Corinth was the immoral city in the first century, and 1 and 2 Corinthians refer to the immorality in the church's midst. On its streets were prostitutes, a thousand priestesses of Aphrodite. It was a degenerate culture.

In the 1980s, there was the advent of VCRs and places where you could rent a video. You could rent a Disney movie (or any movie, actually) and you could watch it in the privacy of your own home, instead of going to a porn theater where you might be seen. That was an incredible revolution in making lust and sexual

sin more secretive and easier to get away with. Of course, God sees and judges all. Our sexual sins hurt our families and others, too.

Fast forward 25 plus years: We are now living in a more far-reaching technological Corinth. A police officer friend told me that hardly a week goes by when he doesn't get a call from a distraught parent who has discovered that nude pictures of their daughter are being sent all over the school and across the country because she posed for her boyfriend or took the picture herself. Those images cannot be recalled and the shame of it stays in the memory.

A few years ago a man in our church was standing next to his son, who received a text message with a

photo attached. He was looking over his son's shoulder and recognized a girl from church who attended the same high school. She was naked. The boy said he didn't know it was coming. Maybe he was telling the truth. But all it takes is a cell phone. Christian parents would have been stunned if you had told them 25 years ago that many kids would be carrying around a miniature television screen that would allow them to receive such images while the young person is doing homework or sitting in church.

We're in a battle—big time. Tragically, many Christian homes are losing this battle. Scripture says that Satan goes around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and sadly, we are losing our sons—and our daughters. It's not just boys who are looking at pornography; young girls are too. And some of them are going to online chat rooms to be flirted with by strangers.

As a parent you might wonder, *Well, do I have the right to interfere? Isn't that being too nosey?* Your job is to interfere and be nosey. Your job is to know what is going on in the life of your children and to protect them, just as if you were standing next to a freeway and would feel an obligation to put your arms around your child and say, "Stay off that freeway." This is a battle for our children with their lives and future at stake.

Proverbs 5 gives a picture of

the awful results of immorality. In Deuteronomy 28 through 30, God says He sets before us life and death, blessings and curses. There are blessings that come with right choices. There are curses that come with wrong choices.

I know there are many Christians who are not trying to be corrupt. Their life goal is not to seduce other people. Yet, when I see how many young (and even older) women dress, and how they look at teen magazines and follow current fashions, I think: *They don't know. They don't understand.* I would encourage Christian parents, and even grandparents, to intervene kindly and graciously. It is appropriate to firmly say, "No. You can't leave the house dressed this way" and graciously tell them why they can't.

In my book, *The Purity Principle*, I write that God has given guardrails through His commandments. Have you ever been driving late at night on a mountain pass knowing that if you went off this road, you would plunge to your death? Suppose you are driving along in the fog on a treacherous mountain road with a cliff below you, and you know people have gone off that cliff to their destruction. All of a sudden you hit something. You get out of the car with a flashlight and see a guardrail and your dented fender and bumper. Would you look at it and say, "I hate

that guardrail. Look at what it did to my car!” No. You would thank God for the guardrail because it saved your life.

Spiritual safety is not just about physical places, even though there are physical places you should not go. There’s also wisdom in saying, “Don’t go anywhere near that book or magazine or website or have them in your home.”

If you have a history of struggling with impurity on the internet, where in the Bible does it say, “You must have a computer. You must have internet access. You must have a cell phone. You must have a cell phone with internet access.”? Look up these words in a concordance and, of course, they aren’t there. If you have a history of having a problem with something, remove it; restrict it. Do not keep putting yourself back at the source of temptation. Run from it—do not go to it.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 says we must be sexually pure. We do not have to wonder what the will of God is in this area—He tells us. Proverbs 5: 11 and 12 say, “And at the end of a wasted life you will groan, when your flesh and body are consumed. And you will say, ‘How I hated discipline and my heart despised reproof!’” Proverbs 4:23 says, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” If someone is going to poison the stream, they poison it at its source.

And if you are going to clean it up, you clean it up at its source.

Proverbs 5: 13-15 includes these truths, “Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.” Do not be promiscuous. “Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth.”

Who created sex? Was it Satan? No. It was God Think about the two of the most powerful things God has created: fire and water. What would we do without fire and water? But have you ever seen water out of control? A flood, a tidal wave, a tsunami? They are devastating. Have you ever seen fire out of control? A forest fire or a house burning to the ground? Have you ever seen a person’s body covered with burns? It is absolutely horrific. The things that are best become the worst when they are taken out of their God-intended boundaries. *Sex is one of the best things God has made, but it becomes the very worst—the most devastating—when it is taken out of its God-given context--marriage.*

Deuteronomy 6 commands parents to not only inscribe or engrave on the hearts of our children the Word of God, but also to talk about and model the principles and truths of God’s Word as you rise in the morning, as you go to bed at night, and all throughout the day.

Our children will sometimes not listen to us, but they seldom fail

to imitate us. You might think you are trying to cultivate some sense of purity in the home, but Dad or Mom, are you watching things that feed impurity? Ephesians 5:3-4 says, "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity...because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place." Use this passage as a standard by which you measure a drama, novel, website—you name it. Does it have:

Even a hint of sexual immorality?

Any kind of impurity?

Obscenity?

Foolish talk?


Coarse joking?

If it does, then the inspired Word of God decisively tells us it should

not be present among God's children, who are to be holy and Christ-centered.

I suggest that many parents should go to their children, confess, repent, and say: "I'm sorry. We're not going to be watching the same things any more. They're not pleasing to God and they're not good for you or us. We want to protect you, and we need to guard our hearts as well as yours."

I beg you. Protect your own life. Protect your children. Protect your grandchildren. Then watch and enjoy the blessings and rewards of purity in your life and theirs.

[Condensed from *Eternal Perspectives, Fall, 2010. Eternal Perspectives Ministries, 39085 Pioneer Blvd, Suite 206, Sandy, Oregon, 97055; www.epm.org/blog. Used by permission. Submitted for publication by Rod Nisly, Nickerson, KS.*] 

That There May Be Equality

Wayne Rudolph

This quotation immediately arrests our attention because it seems so right and fair. This was the goal of the church-wide collection that Paul outlined to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8 and 9). But what does it mean to have equality? And how do we apply this principle today? These chapters contain a clear outline of church-directed giving.

We find answers to questions, such as these: *Who gave? How much did they give? How did they give? And, Why did they give?*

Who gave?

Those of Macedonia, Achaia, and Corinth gave. They all gave. It seems that the poorer brethren in Macedonia impressed Paul the most because they "with much intreaty"

insisted that he receive their gift. They wanted so much to be involved in “the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.” To those who had less, he exhorted, “For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye be burdened.” (2 Cor. 8:13). The call to all was to give.

How much did they give?

Their example is a guide to help us determine how much we should give. The monetary amount is not stated. But their gift is called their bounty, which means “blessing.” We are further informed that they abounded in giving. Some joyfully gave “beyond their power” (2 Cor. 8:3). Their economic means was “their power,” and this governed their giving. Jesus taught, “He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise” (Luke 3:11). “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luke 6:31).

How did they give?

They gave systematically. Paul instructed them to lay aside so that when he arrived their gift would be ready. They gave of their own free will. They were “willing of themselves” (2 Corinthians 8:3). They gave privately. They held no benefit auctions and no individuals received special recognition for their gift.

Why did they give?

They wanted to be involved in “the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.” They knew that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” They truly cared about the poor saints’ dilemma at Jerusalem. They responded to a call for help. Since the need was communicated, it could be met. There was a real need. They gave “that there may be equality.”

What does it mean to have equality? They gave with fairness, proportionate to the need. The suffering saints at Jerusalem were in want of the necessities of life. From across the sea there were those who had the means to help, and they did. They did not merely say, “be ye warmed and filled” but gave according to their ability “those things which [were] needful in the body” (James 2:16).

Both were blessed. The needy at Jerusalem were relieved and the Corinthians had the joy of sharing. We are equally blessed today. Many have had critical needs met. And we thank God for the selflessness that causes our bounty to flow freely as well.


We are enjoying today the results of a return to the New Testament outline of brotherly aid. Following these biblical principles keeps alive our trust in God. It provides

motivation for sacrificial giving. True thanksgiving is promoted as others share generously with our need. The pressure to depart from faith in God and accept the insurance of the world is minimized. We are relieved of the retirement worries of the world and are free to give rather than laying aside [accumulating] a large nest egg.

To preserve a scriptural pattern, we should analyze whether we are consistently meeting needs in the brotherhood. Is it resulting in equality? As we receive, do we view it as a gift from the generous hearts

of others and our loving Father or as a payment that we are owed? On the other hand, a humble trust in God will help to combat the [naïve] attitude of, “I’ll be indebted to no man.” By God’s grace, we will generously give and also be willing to humbly receive. This will supersede any social program that the world offers.

May the Lord continue to bless us as we generously give and are graciously willing to receive.

[From *The Eastern Mennonite Testimony*, August, 2010. Used by permission.] 

Snares for the Soul

W. Tozer (1890-1963)

Jesus said that when wealth becomes our heart’s treasure, our very beings may well be imprisoned within our wealth.


The heart of man was made to commune with God and hold fellowship with the Divine Trinity and to soar away to worlds unknown and behold God upon His throne. That same heart may be locked up in a bank vault or in a jewelry box or somewhere else here on earth.

The fashionable woman longing to make the list of the “Ten Best Dressed”—she lives for her jewelry

and glamour. And when she puts those jewels into a box at night, she surely imprisons her heart in the same box as she snaps shut the lid.

So, too, the businessman who doesn’t know how to use the money God allows him to get, and who makes an idol out of it. When he snaps the door of his box in the bank vault, he puts his heart there and locks it up.

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Luke 12:34).

[From *The Tozer Pulpit*, Christian Publications, Harrisburg, PA, 1967, p. 42.] 

marriages

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

Coblentz-Byler

Bro. Matthew, son of Wallace and Ruthann Coblentz, Unionville, MO, and Sis. Ruth, daughter of Louis and Darlene Byler, Milverton, ON, at Faith Mennonite Church for Fairhaven A.M. Church on Sept. 11, 2010, by Melvin Roes.

Fisher-Stoltzfus

Bro. Ammon, son of Reuben and Lydia Fisher, Lebanon, PA, and Sis. Susanna, daughter of Amos and Hannah Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, PA, at Conestoga Mennonite Church for West Haven A.M. Church on Oct. 9, 2010, by Lee Stoltzfus.

Hershberger-Swarey

Bro. Titus, son of Jesse and Mary Ellen Hershberger, Stuarts Draft, VA, and Sis. Evelyn, daughter of Ivan and Lena Swarey, Stuarts Draft, VA, at Pilgrim Fellowship on Nov. 5, 2010, by Bennie Byler.

Hostetler-Beachy

Bro. Leon, son of Eli and Wilma Hostetler, Auburn, KY, and Sis. Melody, daughter of Joe and Joanna Beachy, Auburn, KY, at Plainview Mennonite Church for Providence Fellowship, on Oct. 23, 2010, by David Yoder, Jr.

Jantzi-Gerber

Bro. James, son of Peter and Linda Jantzi, Gowanstown, ON, and Sis. Amanda, daughter of Clare and Gwen Gerber, Wingham, ON, at Lucknow United Church for Fairhaven A.M. Church on Sept. 25, 2010, by Melvin Roes.

Miller-Chupp

Bro. Anthony, son of Maynard and Shirley Miller, Stuarts Draft, VA, and Sis. Sherri, daughter of Monroe and Miriam (Nisly) Chupp, Stuarts Draft, VA, at Pilgrim Fellowship on Oct. 29, 2010, by Jesse Yoder.

cradle roll

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

Good, Benjamin and Ann (Fisher), Perry, NY, second child, first son, Leon Nathan, Nov. 8, 2010.

Gutierrez, Rogelio and Linda (Eicher), Cayo, Belize, second child, first dau., Kaliegh Hadassah, Oct. 27, 2010.

Helmuth, Ellis and Hannah, Riverside, IA, fourth child, second dau., Katlyn Jebet, June 4, 2010.

Hershberger, Dan and Melinda (Wickey), Bronson, MI, second child and dau., Johannah Faith, Sept. 25, 2010.

Hostetler, David and Miriam (Yoder), Howe, IN, fourth child, second son, Tyler James, Oct. 29, 2010.

Lapp, Wilmer (Bill) and Sara Lynn (Stoltzfus), Gap, PA, seventh child, second dau., Shaohannah Grace, born July 15, 2009, adopted Sept. 30, 2010. (Twin sons deceased)

Miller, Arlen and Naomi (Summy), Stuarts Draft, VA, second child and son, Tristan Grant, Nov. 22, 2010.

Miller, Eli and Diana (Miller), Crossville, TN, fifth child, third son, Kylan James, Nov. 5, 2010.

Miller, Javan and Suetta (Hershberger), Dundee, OH, first child and son, Cole Andrew, Aug. 24, 2010.

Miller, Jeremy and Marla (Bender), Rural Retreat, VA, fourth child, second dau., Shari Diane, Nov. 10, 2010.

Miller, Joseph and Lisa Jolene (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, first child and son, Nathaniel David, Oct. 10, 2010.

Miller, William J. and Gwendolyn Joy (Stauffer), Sturgis, MI, second child, first son, Andre` Jay, July 6, 2010.

Overholt, Len and Naomi (Stoltzfus), Warsaw, IN, (presently serving in Cayo, Belize), second child and son, Jordan Taylor, Oct. 19, 2010.

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

Peachey, David and Martha (Schlabach), Belleville, PA, fourth child, second dau., Hannah Rochelle, Oct. 11, 2010.

Stoltzfus, John, Jr., and Angela (Miller), Morgantown, PA, seventh child, third son, Nicholas Joseph, Oct. 6, 2010.

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

Tejeda, John and Delia, Cayo, Belize, first child and dau., Jaeyah Victoria, Nov. 5, 2010.

Troyer, Joseph and Darlene (Yoder), Bealeton, VA, third child and dau., Sierra Blyss, Oct. 12, 2010.

Troyer, Matthew and Sara (Yoder), Baltic, OH, second child and son, Braden Marshall, Sept. 30, 2010.

Troyer, Melvin and Laura (Yoder), Wawaka, IN, first child and dau., Carrie Faith, Aug. 31, 2010.

Wenger, Nick and Wanita (Martin), Summersville, KY, fourth child, third son, Austin Trey, August 25, 2010.

Wickey, Mark and Fannie (Stutzman), Bronson, MI, fourth child, third dau., Damaris Grace, May 4, 2010.

Yoder, Eugene and Rose Anna (Miller), Oskaloosa, KS, sixth child, fifth son (one deceased), Logan Sean, Oct. 27, 2010.

Yoder, Mervin and Jenell (Beachy), Salisbury, PA, fifth child, third dau., Olivia Kate, Nov. 4, 2010.

Yoder, Millard and Carolyn (Yoder), Rural Retreat, VA, third child, second dau., Stephanie Lashae, Nov. 15, 2010.

Zook, Daniel and Karen (Zook), Belleville, PA, second child, first dau., Leah Rachele, Nov. 9, 2010.

ordinations

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

Bro. Nathan Beachy, 39, was chosen by voice of the church and ordained as minister at Faith Christian Fellowship, Catlett, VA, on Nov. 14, 2010. Preordination messages were given by Ivan Beachy, Free Union, VA. The charge was given by Wayne Schrock, assisted by Simon Schrock and Dan Beachy.

Bro. Devon Miller, 33, of Brookfield, MO, was ordained by lot to the office of bishop, Sept. 26, 2010, at Locust Creek Mennonite Church, Linneus, MO. Preordination messages were given by Leroy Lapp, New Holland, PA. The charge was given by Rudy Overholt. Titus Hostetler was also in the lot.

Bro. Ivan Dale Schrock, 32, was chosen by voice of the church and ordained as minister at Faith Christian Fellowship, Catlett, VA, on Nov. 14, 2010. Preordination messages were given by Ivan Beachy, Free Union, VA. The charge was given by Simon Schrock, assisted by David Nisly and Clarence Miller.

Bro. Wesley Yoder, 51, was ordained by lot as minister for Pleasant View Church, Arcola, IL, on Nov. 14, 2010. Preordination messages were given by Steve Stoltzfus, Kennedyville, MD. Howard Kuhns gave the charge with Steve Stoltzfus and Bill Yoder assisting. Allen Miller and Paul Plank were also in the lot.

*Prayer is not the last extremity
—it's the first necessity.*

Beachy, Melvin, 83, of Sugarcreek Ohio, died at Hennis Care Center, Dover, OH, Oct. 3, 2010. He was born in Holmes County, OH, on Aug. 22, 1927, son of the late Enos B. and Lydian (Mullet) Beachy.

He loved the Lord and was a faithful member of Maranatha Fellowship Church for many years. He was retired from Belden Brick, was an organic farmer, was owner of 93 Stop-N-Store storage units and drove for the Amish community.

On Dec. 8, 1949, he was married to Katie Yoder, who survives. Surviving are children: Miriam (Wayne) Hershberger, Sugarcreek; Willis (Marie) Beachy, Beach City; Frances (Dave) Byers, Aroda, VA; Paul (Stacy) Beachy and Nathanael (Shelly) Beachy, both of Sugarcreek; 10 grandchildren; four great grandchildren; sister Lela Fern Beachy, Farmerstown; step-brother, Joseph Bontrager, MI; and step-sister, Polly Anna Graber, IL.

He was preceded in death by a son, Roy Beachy and a daughter, Erma Beachy, a brother, Emanuel Beachy, an infant brother, Enos Beachy, Jr.; sisters, Amanda Ruth, Fannie Erb, Iva Yutzky, and infant sister, Anna Mae Beachy.

The funeral was held at Maranatha Fellowship on Oct. 6, with Paul Leroy Miller officiating, Burial was in the church cemetery.

Coblentz, Benjamin J., 88, of Millersburg, OH, died at his home after a brief illness

on April 19, 2010. He was born Jan. 20, 1922, in Millersburg, OH, son of Joseph N. and Susan (Troyer) Coblentz.

He was a member of Messiah Fellowship Church. He was in the founding of the fellowship churches of Holmes County in the late 1950's. He was fervent in spirit and wrote Christian songs and two books: *The Greatest Love Story* and *Born to Love*.

On Dec. 20, 1945, he was married to Anna Weaver. She survives. Also surviving are children: Elvin (Laura) Coblentz, Fredericksburg; Ray (Roselyn) Coblentz, Millersburg; Elsie (Omar) Miller, Harrison, AR; David (Cora) Coblentz, Millersburg; Mark (Stacy) Coblentz, Walnut Creek; Sue Ann (Philip) Beachy, Millersburg; Jason (Mary) Coblentz, Walnut Creek; Ina (Mervin) Lapp, Gordonville, PA; 37 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren; brothers: Joseph, Jr. (Amanda), Baltic; Mose (Niva), Millersburg; Roman (Niva, deceased), Walnut Creek; Fannie (Jonas) Troyer, Mt. Hope; Elsie (Andrew Schlabach, deceased), Walnut Creek; sisters: Fannie (Jonas) Troyer, Mt. Hope; Elsie (Andrew, deceased) Schlabach, Ada (Glen Miller, deceased), Berlin; Betty (Melvin) Miller, Millersburg; Sue (Robert) Troyer, Sugar-

creek; Ruth (Melvin Mast, deceased), Crossville, TN; and sister-in-law, Sara (Willis, deceased), Walnut Creek; and Martha (Jacob, deceased), Millersburg. Benjamin was preceded in death by a son, Charran, a grandson, Joshua Miller, brothers: Willis, Albert, Jacob, Ervin, Noah, and sister Mary.

The funeral was held on April 22, with Philip Miller, Adin Troyer, Philip Beachy, and Philip Beiler serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

King, Mary L., 95, of Ronks, PA, died on Nov. 12, 2010, at Tel Hai Retirement Community, Honey Brook, PA. She was born July 15, 1915, to the late Amos L. and Susan (Lapp) Kauffman, founders of Kauffman Fruit Farm.

She was a member of Weavertown A.M. Church and was active in many of its programs through the years.

On Nov. 26, 1936, she was married to Aaron Z. King, who at age 100 survives. Their children are: Verna Mae (Jay) Miller, Hutchinson, KS; Mervin (Miriam) King, Berkley Springs, WV; and Alvin (Mary) King, Ronks, PA; 12 grandchildren, 34 great grandchildren; and sisters-in-law, Elsie Kauffman and Suvilla Kauffman.

She was preceded in death by two sisters: Susie and Sadie, and five brothers: Christian, Elam, John, Melvin, and Sylvan.

The funeral was held at Weavertown on November 16, with Dave Stoltzfoos, Norman Kauffman, John U. Lapp, and Lloyd Beiler serving. Burial was in the Weavertown Cemetery.

Otto, Kurtis Eugene, was stillborn Oct. 28, 2010. His parents are Mervin and Lou Ida (Otto) Otto, of Humboldt, IL.

Besides his parents, he is survived by sisters: Cynthia, Valerie, LaWanda, and Rochelle; brothers, Delbert, LaWayne, and Virgil; grandparents, Leroy and Sarah Jane Otto and Jerry Otto, Jr.

He was preceded in death by maternal grandmother, Annie Marie Otto.

The funeral was held at Trinity Christian Fellowship on Oct. 31, with Wilbur Gingerich and Mervin Yoder serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Schrock, Fannie J., 91, of Arthur, IL (formerly of Arcola and Cerre Gordo, IL) died Nov. 1, 2010, at the Arthur Nursing Home. She was born Oct. 29, 1919, daughter of the late Jacob and Katie (Helmuth) Otto.

She was a member of Pleasant View A.M. Church.

On Jan. 22, 1948, she was married to Harley J. Schrock. He died in 1999.

Survivors include one son, Lawrence (Cheryl) Schrock, Arcola; and one daughter, Rachel (Ken) Gere, Cerro Gordo, IL, seven grandchildren, 14 great grandchildren; one sister, Amanda Kemp, Arcola, one brother, Elmer Otto and wife Nancy, Sullivan; and one sister-in-law, Nancy Otto, Arthur.

She was preceded in death by a brother, Noah Otto, a sister, Elizabeth Schrock, one granddaughter, and three great grandchildren.

The funeral was held on Nov. 4, with Howard Kuhns serving. Burial was in Pleasant View Cemetery.

Yoder, Elmer C., 82, of Ligonier, IN, died Oct. 28, 2010. He was born at Thomas, OK, July 24, 1928, son of the late Clarence J. and Fannie (Wingard) Yoder.

He was a member of Fair Haven A.M. Church, Goshen, IN.

On March 4, 1952, he was married to Irene Yoder, who survives. Daughters surviving are: Eileen (Dorvan) Yoder, Mylo, ND; Carolyn (Delmar) Bontrager, Kalona, IA; Edith (Ron) Miller, New Paris, IN; Kay (Marcus) Beachy, Sugar-creek, OH; sons: Freeman Betty) Yoder, Harrison, AR; Laverne (Kay) Yoder, New Paris, IN; and Dewayne (Lori) Yoder, Millersburg, IN; 29 grandchildren and

five great grandchildren.

Other survivors include brothers: Perry, Mayfield, KY; Herbert, Goshen, IN; Amos, Thomas, OK; Leon, Middlebury, IN; John, Millersburg, IN; Harley, Garnett, KS; an aunt, Viola Wingard, Montezuma, GA; two uncles: Amos Yoder, Grove City, MN; and John A. Yoder, Jr., Hutchinson, KS.

Preceding him in death were a brother, Samuel; and three grandchildren: Riane Yoder, Alicia Miller and Austin Miller.

The funeral was held Oct. 31, with Delmar Bontrager and Dorvan Yoder serving. Burial was in the Thomas Cemetery.



observations

A kind brother sent me the book, *Kingdom Focused Finances for the Family* by Gary Miller. The following quotes are by brethren who reviewed the manuscript before publication.

Ernest Hochstetler: "I don't know that I have read anything even close to this from the pen of our Anabaptist writers."

Dean Taylor: "As a father and pastor I feel this book provides a one-of-a-kind, much needed tool that I hope to utilize to encourage fellow Christians as well as my own children."

Dennis Kline: "In his gentle way the author gets his readers to search themselves to see who is controlling

their lives."

Simon Schrock: "The author points to principles that really matter now and for eternity."

David Bercot: "This is one of the best 'nuts and bolts' books on Christian finances that I have read in quite a while."

John D. Martin: "The serious Christian will find himself well informed and amply equipped to obey Jesus and experience the powerful freedom of kingdom economics."

This book has 29 chapters (230 pages). The author has the gift of expressing profound truths in an easy to read style. I hope this message will become a significant influence

throughout the conservative Anabaptist population. If Choice Books would choose to distribute this much needed message it would get a much wider reading audience.

The book is published by TGS International, a wholly owned subsidiary of Christian Aid Ministries (CAM), Berlin, Ohio 44610 Phone: 330-893-4828.

Gary Miller lives in the Pacific Northwest and is employed by CAM.

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This same friend included a second book by the same author, who was sent to Haiti shortly after the earthquake in January, 2010. His assignment was to gather photos and write a report of the momentous tragedy. An unusual feature of this 198-page book is the photography. The pictures are close up and remarkably clear. They show survivors but also many heaps of wreckage under which victims perished. I believe as least half of the page surface is photos.

Their story is vivid and graphic. The suffering and property damage seem indescribable. It is fresh reminder of how insecure these temporal things are that we tend to take for granted.

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A bold headline in the local paper says “Four in 10 Say Marriage is Becoming Obsolete.” (*The Hutchinson News*, 11-18-10) The article says nearly one in three

American children are living with a parent who is divorced, separated, or never married.

According to the survey referred to in the article, about 39% of Americans said that marriage is becoming obsolete and 44% said they had lived with a partner without being married. Twenty-nine percent who were polled found the trend troubling, but 33% were favorably inclined or indifferent.

The article suggests a significant interest in re-defining marriage to include unmarried partners or same-sex couples who live together. Statistics show a growing openness to this consideration.

It is not surprising that persons whose lives are essentially self-centered and individualistic would support such lifestyles. But when people who want to be considered Christian promote such thinking something is very wrong. To assume that we are authorized to re-define sin is to be seriously misguided. Common practice or permissive thinking does not invalidate the authority of Scripture.

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Bob Herbert is an African American who is a columnist for *The New York Times*. His columns frequently appear in *The Hutchinson News*. Mr. Herbert seems to have done well materially, as have many other blacks; he apparently could be

considered upper middle class.

But in a recent column (11-18-10) Herbert laments the larger picture of black Americans:

- More than 70% of black children are born to unwed mothers.

- Their children are three times more likely to live in single-parent homes than white children.

- In 2008 black males were imprisoned at a rate 6 ½ times higher than were white males.

- More than half of black males who are without a high-school diploma will have spent time in prison when they reach the mid-thirties.

Mr. Herbert is aware that racial prejudice and injustice is part of the bigger picture. But he says that does not excuse the irresponsible behavior of many black males. The dear children deserve better. With willing minds and hearts, by God's grace, this grim cycle can be broken.

Historical awareness reminds us that our people have not always been free from misguided prejudice. Let us remember that pigmentation or its lack is only skin deep.



Last year the Iowa Supreme Court voted to legalize same-sex marriage. Their judges are appointed but can be retained by a majority vote every ten years. Since 1962 when the system was put in place, no judge had been booted from office. But conservative voters were very upset and were able

to influence voters to oust the chief justice and two additional judges. Conservative activists are warning that their work is not yet finished. (*Mennonite Weekly Review*, 11-22-10)



Presently our son Lowell and his wife Judy are on a trip to India where several brethren meet with Indian pastors for their nurture and encouragement. Their assignment includes visiting mission workers from this area in several locations. For this reason, I have the privilege of looking after Lowell's herd of beef cattle while he's gone. This includes moving them from barnyard to field and back again daily. It gives me a fresh reminder that to be able to move cattle by calling them is much easier than driving them. It seems the cows like it better, too. Of course, it works only if the cattle are convinced that the one who calls them wants to lead them to a better place. This reminds me of a recent quote: "Church leaders are called to be shepherds, not sheep herders."



"While God's grace covers our sin as a gift, we cannot even deserve it. It's a mistake to think of God as an indulgent grandparent who turns a blind eye to humanity. The cost of our salvation was the cross of Calvary. This is costly grace indeed."
-Ken Gipple

• • • • •

“In some ways the church has been guilty of reducing Christianity to a shallow faith of being nice,” says Cedric Roth. “Following Jesus is not about being nice. It is about self-sacrifice. We are calling people to the kingdom of God where we live not only by kindness, but also by mercy, forgiveness, justice, and loving our enemies. These actions are more difficult than being nice.”

(The above two items are excerpted from *Mennonite Weekly Review*, 11-29-10)

The same issue of MWR has an article by John Longhurst, Mennonite Publishing Network, entitled: “What Does the Future Hold for Sunday School?” Leaders see value in Sunday School but are struggling to know how to respond to lagging interest and attendance. In a recent meeting organized by MPN, the following factors were identified as being pertinent to the struggle:

- A loss of the concept of Sunday morning as sacred time due to competition from sports, work, and other activities.
 - Declining and irregular attendance patterns.
 - Waning biblical literacy.
 - Urbanization.
 - Growing racial and ethnic diversity.
 - Declining denominational loyalty.
- Leaders are to be commended for

recognizing these needs and wanting to make a helpful response. To me it is a challenge to take a fresh look at wanting to make the Sunday School an attractive and valuable part of our Sunday morning worship.

Congregational singing and an appropriate devotional meditation can set the tone for meaningful Bible study. Ideally, the class members will have invested time in serious study. The skillful teacher’s preparation should include not only his readiness to share but also to draw from the class the fruits of their preparation. It is admitting together that we have not “arrived.” We still have things to learn. O, how we need to have discerning and teachable spirits! May the good Lord spare us from allowing unworthy distractions to diminish the value of this important part of our worship experience.

• • • • •

Matthew Nisly returned from a term of service at Strong Tower Children’s Home in El Salvador about two months ago. He was recently asked to share some highlights of his experiences with the home congregation (Center) on Thanksgiving morning.

He acknowledged that working with the boys was not always easy or encouraging, but ultimately, he felt that God had honored his desire to serve faithfully. A written note of apology and gratitude from a boy

who had seriously misbehaved was rewarding.

An unwelcome highlight was when he and his cousin, Karlin Nisly, were suddenly face to face with armed robbers, who ordered them to hand over all they had or be shot. After a very brief consultation, they decided they didn't want to be shot. Matthew handed over his wallet and cell phone (Karlin had no valuables with him). They were told to head back to

where they came from and not look back. Remembering Lot's wife, they complied.

Matthew confessed that the confrontation and loss made him angry. Why should God allow this to happen? But the Lord helped him see that the loss was only things—things that ultimately belong to God and not himself. He found comfort and blessing in resignation.

—DLM 

Minister's Meeting Messages — 2010

This is a condensation of the fourth 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.

5. The Vibrant, Active Brotherhood

Ben A. Stoltzfus, Morgantown, PA

Singing can be active and vibrant in the brotherhood. I am blessed hearing my brothers and sisters sing. To be vibrant and active is a sure sign of life. It indicates an animated group of believers who cooperate together for a cause.

About 3,000 years ago, four men were banished from their city because they were lepers. Although the inhabitants of the city had removed these four diseased men from inside

their city, the city was not safe because of it. Their city was besieged and surrounded by an enemy army. In fact, this siege had been going on for so long that the people inside the walls were on the verge of starvation. Due to their intense hunger, some of them had even succumbed to cannibalism--eating their own for sustenance.

With the people inside the walls starving we can imagine how little these four social outcasts had to eat. One day, considering their options, they said, "Why should we sit here till we die? Even if we found a way to get

back into the city, it would benefit us very little because they're not better off than we are. If we continue sitting here outside the city gates, that's not all that promising either. Why don't we go down to the enemy camp and see if they'll take pity on us? If they kill us, we haven't lost more than if we starve. Maybe they'll be sympathetic toward us and feed us and let us live."

So as the sun set, four gaunt hungry lepers limped their way to the outskirts of the enemy camp. Upon arrival, to their astonishment, they found the camp deserted. The whole encampment had been abandoned, obviously in haste. As they came into the camp, there was no sign of human presence—anywhere! These lepers had thought death was inevitable for them. Instead, as they walked into the enemy's camp, they found unattended campfires cooking supper. There was plenty of food! Not only food, they also found silver, gold and clothing.

After filling their stomachs, they began to carry out the valuables. Then they found a place to hide them. They came back, went into another tent, found some more and carried them out and hid them also. After several trips of carrying out, they said to each other, (2 Kings 7:9), "We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace..."

Should these men feast on the abundance of food and celebrate

their good fortune all by themselves? Or should they share the good tidings with the very ones who despised them and cast them out to die?

The plight of the skinny, gaunt lepers is not much different from our own plight outside of Christ. Having feasted on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we have found the food that gives us abundant life here and eternal life for the future. We are well-fed lepers. We used to be outcasts, but are now pronounced "joint heirs." We are healed, have our sins forgiven, and we face a future beyond description and comprehension that's guaranteed by God Himself! And God has called us to flesh out all of this in the context of brotherhood.

Why are we not vibrant and active? Have we so soon forgotten what we once were? Have we forgotten how desperate our situation was? As we evaluate our experience in the brotherhood, do you see yourself as one of the four lepers or as the valued people inside the city walls (the brotherhood) eating their own? "But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15). That's brotherhood cannibalism. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). Here God's Word promises that if we walk in the Spirit, we will not be fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

Last evening the question was

asked, “What is the biggest threat to hinder us from fulfilling the call that God has placed on our lives?” My response to that question is it’s me—Ben Stoltzfus himself. If I would just get out of the way and let God have his way, God could begin to show Himself strong.

When the Spirit of God visited the churches of God in Revelation 2 and 3, He observed a condition in one of these congregations that is relevant to this topic. In Revelation 3:14-22 we have the Holy Spirit’s message to Laodicea. One of our problems today is that too many of us are neither “hot” nor “cold.” God prefers us either hot or cold. This condition of being in between “in” or “out” is nauseating to our Savior. If we don’t see this, it is plainly to our detriment. In the eyes of God, if we are “lukewarm,” we are “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” Such a mediocre, half-alive follower of Jesus Christ is the most damaging person in brotherhood experience and relationships. We’re not on fire for God and not completely dead either--just alive enough to be nauseating.

Why does God say He prefers “hot or cold.” Lukewarmness indicates that we really don’t appreciate what we have been saved from. We were outside the grace of God, but now that we have come “inside the city gates,” is self-indulgence all we can

think about? Is God saying that those who are cold (unbelievers) are preferable? Are middle-of-the-road, mediocre, run-of-the-mill Christians more wretched than those who have always been lost? God says, “I see the fruit that lukewarmness produces and it nauseates Me.” God would not have us choose cold; He would have us become hot, active, and vibrant for the cause.

If we are to become “hot,” we must realize it’s our move. He gives us the resources to go in the direction of hot. If we find ourselves lukewarm, let us note the three passions that we need to make our own: “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous (vibrant and active)...and repent.”

Passion #1: “Buy gold tried in the fire!” Salvation is not bought with money. Grace is unmerited favor that comes to us from God as a gift. Buying gold implies something costly. I believe the church in Laodicea needed stirring up. Maybe they needed persecution. What about us? I prefer to think we don’t need persecution. If persecution does come, *we will choose* how we respond to it. He says, “As many as I love, I

rebuke and chasten.” We don’t ask for persecution, but if our condition is such that God vomits, God may send it. Such chastisement is evidence of His love.

We find ourselves in a culture where *feelings* often trump *right thinking*. I don’t want us to ignore feelings, but unless we think right, we won’t go right. How will we respond if God sends us rebuke? How do you respond if that happens in your brotherhood? Too often, we get angry. We defend ourselves with, “I don’t deserve this.” Our feelings may say, “If I have to live in this kind of brotherhood and do brotherhood with people like this, I’m out of here!” We miss what God wanted to teach us.

“Be zealous therefore and repent.” Brotherhood offers blessing and protection for the believer. Recently a man with the surname of Stoltzfus died in prison. He was charged with murder, although he stoutly maintained his innocence. His father was a bishop in an Anabaptist church, but in his youth this man joined a motorcycle gang called The Pagans. Someone noted that whether or not he was guilty, he was not imprisoned because he sang too loud in church. In other words, he was not a suspect in the crime because of a godly life. The brotherhood of believers offers blessing and protection. The way of the transgressor is hard. “Blessed is

the man that walketh in not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord,...” (Psalm 1:1,2).

Passion #2: “Buy white raiment that ye mayest be clothed.” It might include our clothing. White raiment speaks of holiness of life and separation unto God. I believe God desired the brotherhood at Laodicea to really look like something--like they were serious about the cause of Christ. As the world observed them, there was to be no doubt in anybody’s mind who these folks really were: Little Christs.

Passion #3: “Anoint thine eyes.” You’re blind in your lukewarm state. Anoint your eyes so that you can see where you’re heading. Often we are short-sighted. Have we enough vision to see where our decisions will take future generations? Are the decisions that we’re making as a brotherhood going to result in wretchedness and misery in the lives of our posterity? Or will they bring blessing? What are we willing to pay to experience the sort of brotherhood that keeps us from heading down that road? I’m convinced it will cost us something that our flesh does not like. 1 John 3:14 says, “We...have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

This message is not popular in nominal Christianity. Most of what one hears is, “God loves you and all you need to do is accept that love and then—oh, happy day! Go get the food and enjoy it—all by yourself! Get as many valuables as you can possibly carry. Stash them all away for your own enjoyment.” The lepers in Israel realized what many of us miss: “We do not well. This day is a day of glad tidings and we hold our peace....”

God really does love us just the way we are. But, because He loves us, He doesn’t want us to stay that way. His goal is for us to be conformed to Jesus Christ. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus....” Don’t allow your feelings to trump your thinking.

Three ways that God uses to bring us to awareness of needed change: 1. The mirror of His Word. 2. The presence of His Holy Spirit. 3. The brotherhood. These three need to have their proper significance in our lives. While I have not said much about the first two, let us not emphasize any one of these at the expense of the other two. This touches a serious problem in Christendom today. It is possible to emphasize brotherhood at the expense of serious Bible study. If we do that, we will ultimately compromise the truth of the Scriptures in order to accommodate relational issues. We will never really solve relational

issues by overlooking or bypassing the truth of the Scriptures.

God’s Word gives us the answers we need in brotherhood. Sometimes we pride ourselves that we are people of The Book. In reality, I wonder sometimes if we should admit that we have become a people of many books—rather than The Book. We may not know what we think about a Scripture until we check to see what commentators say about it.

We can also overemphasize the Holy Spirit. Some tell us that the Spirit told me thus and so, even though serious Bible-believing brothers believe it stands in opposition to the Bible. We must ask, “What spirit is being heard?” Any spirit that is not in agreement with the Scriptures is not the Spirit that inspired the writing of the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit cannot lie. He has promised to lead us into all truth. He will not guide us differently from what He has already written.

The grace of God operates in a similar way. God’s grace has appeared to bring us forgiveness, but it has appeared for much more than that. The grace of God teaches “us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:11,12). The grace that brought us salvation is the grace that would do a sanctifying work in our lives.


In our home congregation we

have preparatory services before communion every six months. We take inventory of our relationship with each other and with God. If we consider the seriousness of loving the brethren, it may put a different light on this tradition. Believers need to affirm the certainty between faith to Christ and commitment to brotherhood. We can't have one without the other. The Bible says we either love the brethren or we abide in death. "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (*abideth* is an ongoing condition.) That's a seriousness we dare not ignore!

We may say, "God gave me a difficult set of brethren to love." Most of us have a few individuals in our brotherhood that make things hard. I don't think we should spend very much time in figuring out why they are in our brotherhoods. Instead we should think about what God says about their being there: "But now hath

God set [the members] every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. 12:18). No one does himself a favor by arguing with God.

How much are we willing to sacrifice to be able to say? "I love the brethren." Whatever moves us in that direction, regardless of what it costs us—we need to start up that path. Any sacrifice won't be too much. The alternative is terrible—death. Regardless of how we view the condition of our brotherhood back home, most of us think she is less vibrant and active than she could or should be. Even if that's true, she is the organism of whom God says, "I will build my church..." If we want to be part of that organism, we must love the brethren.

The future of the church is glorious beyond imagination. That reality should do something for us who were once gaunt, bony, diseased, hungry, and desperate lepers. 

Behold the Fowls of the Air

Mary Anna Petersheim, Humboldt, IL

Being bird lovers, we have a bird feeder outside our kitchen window. We have a finch feeder and hummingbird feeder at the same window so that our mealtimes sometimes become quite lengthy—watching the birds!

It's been very interesting watching

different birds. We even discovered they have different ways of eating. The cardinals will gently search for the kind of grain they like and we've actually seen the male feed the female.

The sparrows don't have much color, although some are nicer than

others. But when they swing their beaks around, they can waste a lot of feed. When from four to six sparrows sit at the feeder they can rather quickly empty the feeder.


Sometime ago, Hubby found a wire cage for catching sparrows. Half of it is an open space where we put ground corn on the floor. The next compartment is enclosed with chicken netting and they need to crawl through a cone (made of netting). We also put seed in the second space. After sparrows get into the second space, they can't figure out how to escape.

One day as I walked by the cage, I counted 18 sparrows wildly flying about, seeking a way to get out. As I stood and watched them, my heart went out to them to the point that I was tempted to open the door for them. Then I thought, *No, God has provided all kinds of grain and bugs for them and they could be happily flying in the air or feeding at the feeder.*

But they chose to eat something that dooms them to die.

As I stood and watched them I had to think of the human race. God has a plan provided for us. We can drink freely of the living water (John 4:10; Hebrews 10:22). We pass other fountains that tempt us: lust of the eye, pride of life, lying, worldly pleasures—and other tempting things that can draw us away from God, if we don't keep our eyes on Jesus and feast daily on His Word.

We may be suddenly snatched from this world and find ourselves in heaven or in a room of doom forever. May we be satisfied with what has been provided for us instead of taking something that has been placed as bait to catch us.

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Revelation 3:5). 

***Since neither condition is permanent,
let us not be over-awed by success or
over-intimidated by failure.***

A New Work in Mexico — Part 1 of 3

Little Flock Christian Fellowship, near Harrison, Arkansas, gives support to and provides leadership to a mission endeavor begun by Brother Johnathan Pinkham in 2001. Their mission vision is as follows:

- To plant believers in functioning, culturally-relevant, reproducing fellowships that make Scriptural applications that are practical, understandable, and transferable within the culture.

- To provide stable and consistent exposure to sound Bible instruction. (Lordship-oriented Christianity)

- To provide the Scriptures in a dialect which can be readily understood, taught, memorized, and shared. (in both printed and audio form)

- To encourage and cultivate native leadership within the church.

- To instill an evangelistic vision among native believers, so that this work is carried forward among Tarahumaras and other people groups.

Little Flock Church makes periodic visits to this rugged mountainous terrain in Mexico to carry out this vision. Their printed brochure explains: “Mexico’s rugged Sierra Madre Occidental mountain range encompasses the mighty Copper Canyon in the Mexican state of Chi-

huahua. This canyon system, four times larger than the United States’ Grand Canyon, is so ‘wide, deep, and remote that parts of the canyon remain unexplored.’

In and around this canyon live an estimated 100,000 indigenous, migratory people known as the Tarahumara (Tara) Indians. Those Taras who are isolated in the canyon live a very basic, rugged lifestyle. Many of them are groping in spiritual darkness and superstition. ‘How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?’

The Taras of the canyon fear the white man and the devil, and worship the moon and the sun (a god they know as the devil’s little brother).

“Until now, most of them have known nothing of the true Creator God, and His Son, Jesus Christ...”and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?”

The next statement in Romans 10 is: “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things” (Romans 10:14,15). This became literally true for Bro. Johnathan as

he began hiking those rugged, steep trails with sore feet into the Batopilas Canyon (one arm of the canyon system) every week, from a mission base on the canyon rim.

“Jonathan often helps those with serious medical conditions to get out of the Canyon, to the Mission Tarahumara Hospital. He shares

the Gospel in their native tongue as he works, teaching them about the one true God, and about His perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ.”

In February and March, Bro. Charles Hamilton, pastor of Little Flock Christian Fellowship, will provide further information on this Gospel outreach.

—FS 

helpers at home

Goals for the New Year

Mary June Glick

As we begin 2011, we reflect on the past year. Some of you will be able to say it was a good year. Others will say, “I hope I never need to go through another year like that one.”

Last year may have had pain or suffering, death, regrets or discouragements. Perhaps it was a year of new life, new opportunities, joys, and happiness. However it was, I hope each of you can say, “God is good!” in spite of anything you experienced this past year. I trust you found God’s grace sufficient as you took one day at a time.

We begin this new year with the assurance that God will be with us and will direct our paths as we place our trust in Him. A new year is a time to look ahead, to anticipate what God will do for us and through us. Isaiah 43:18, 19 tells us “to remember not

the former things or consider not the things of old;” however, God wants to do a new thing in our lives. I believe we can apply these verses personally in our hearts for this coming year.

Bible Reading

I desire more love and longing for God’s Word. Many people find a blessing in reading the Bible through in a year and I challenge you to try it. I find I do not like the pressure of doing that as well as going at my own pace. However, I believe it is important to cover the whole Bible as we read. It is easy to pick out our favorite books and chapters without reading the more difficult books. The excitement of new believers reading the Bible for the first time challenges me and I desire a fresh hunger for the Word.

A Thirst for Learning

Learning new things may help to

prevent Alzheimer's as we grow older. I know this is not 100% reliable, however, I believe it is good to continue to learn all we can and use what we learn to benefit the Kingdom. This takes different forms because we each have our own interests. For some it may mean learning to sew, crochet, or knit. We can bless needy people by sewing, knitting, or crocheting clothes or blankets. Others may have an interest in writing. We all have memories and advice we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren. Let's write things down. It helps a lot to know how to use a computer—so learn that. It is not as hard as you may

think. Read good books. Fill your mind with things that are true and have good moral value.

Develop a Christ-like Spirit

A godly woman is a treasure in God's sight. Such a woman loves God, her family and other people. She has a forgiving spirit. She is a woman of joy and contentment, accepting her role in life as part of God's plan. She considers well the needs of her family and reaches out to people beyond her own home. God wants us to grow more like Him with a gentle and quiet spirit. **You can reach for no higher goals than these as you begin this New Year.**



junior messages

Late Again

Marlee Friesen, Shishewana, IN

Karla, Karla," her mother's insistent call floated up the stairs where Karla was relaxing, reading a book. "Karla, I want you to come down and hang up the dresses that are in the dryer. Hurry, or else they will get wrinkly."

Karla sighed and brushed the loose hair out of her face. "I only have two more pages left to finish this chapter," she thought. "I'll just finish it first, and besides, it doesn't matter if the dresses are a little wrinkly," and with that she pulled her legs up onto the

couch and continued to read. Soon she was lost in the land of her book.

"Karla!" The stern voice jerked Karla out of her book. Quickly she jumped up, leaped down the steps two at a time and raced into the laundry room.

Oh, no! I forgot all about the dresses, she thought as she hurriedly jerked crumpled dresses out of the dryer and haphazardly hung them on hangers.

"I'm disappointed in you," spoke a voice from behind her. "Hadn't I told you to hang those up a while ago?"

“Aw, Mom, they’re not all that bad. Who will notice a few wrinkles?” Karla muttered. “And anyway, it isn’t like these are our Sunday dresses.”

“Well, okay,” Mother answered, “but try not to be so forgetful next time.”

The next morning Mother picked up her shopping list and purse and said, “I’m going to town, Karla, and since you’re the oldest you can wash the dishes.”

“But Mom, it’s Katrina’s turn—not mine,” complained Karla.

Well, now, I think a 12-year-old girl like you can do a little extra work. And since Katrina was so nice and cleared the table yesterday for you when you were working on your science project, I think you should return the favor.”

“Yeah, but—”

Karla was cut off as Mother continued, “And make sure you have them all shining and washed by the time I get home.” With that, she walked out the door.

Karla glanced at the clock and figured aloud. “Okay, it’s nine o’clock now, It will probably take at least 20 minutes to get to town, another 20 to get back, and about 15 minutes, at least, to shop. So that gives me 55 minutes before Mom gets home. Great! I can easily finish my science project and still have plenty of time to do the dishes.”

She bounced downstairs and sat

down at her work table. “Oh dear, what happened to my paper with the directions?” she worried, while she flipped through a stack of loose papers that were strewn across the bench, but that specific paper was not in the stack. “Probably one of the boys took it,” she muttered under her breath. Karla glanced around once more and spied something white peeking out between two cushions of the sofa. It was her paper. “I wonder how it got there,” she asked herself as she retrieved it. Then she remembered, “Oh, it must have fallen through the crack when I was reading the directions on the sofa yesterday. Well, problem solved.” And she sat down and soon had finished her project.

Walking up the stairs she happened to glance at the clock that hung at the head of the stairs. She froze in her tracks and looked again. “It’s 9:30 already!” she exclaimed. “Looking for that paper slowed me down and now Mom will soon be home and I haven’t got one dish washed yet!” Karla groaned, rushed up the stairs, and dug into the dishes as if her life depended on it. She hadn’t washed very many though, when the door knob turned and in walked Mother.

Mom took everything in at a glance: the stack of dirty dishes still needing to be washed. Karla was washing furiously, her jaw set, and lips pressed in a line; and the

dish rack held a puny pile of just washed clean dishes. Calmly she said, "I think you know what I'm going to say. You've heard it many times already, but I'll say it once more. Work comes before play, and whatever you would like to do. The Bible teaches obedience to your parents and that means right away. Your punishment will be washing dishes for the rest of the week. Understand?"

"I understand," whispered Karla, but she thought to herself, *I don't see why I have to. It wasn't like I was never going to do the dishes. I'm doing them now and nothing is lost.* Rebellion welled up inside her.

Friday evening, after she had finished washing supper dishes, Karla headed upstairs to read her book. She had settled down on her bed when the dreaded call came.

"Karla," Mother's single call came from under her upstairs window.

"Now she will probably want me to dry the dishes," thought Karla. She waited a little, but no second call came. "Probably she got someone else to do it," she thought, and kept reading.

Soon she realized the house seemed really quiet. "Everybody must be outside. I guess I'll go see what they're doing." She walked out into the evening air. She looked around and spied her family congregated around the ice cream freezer. "Yes,

homemade ice cream, yummy!" Karla raced over anticipating the slushy, delicious ice cream awaiting her.

When she reached the group she saw the empty ice cream container and asked, "Hey, where is the ice cream?"

"It's gone," Mother answered.

"Gone? But Mom, why don't I get any? Why didn't you leave me some? You never even told me to come!" Karla looked like she was almost ready to cry.

"But I did tell you. Don't you remember? I called you but you never even answered me," Mother explained.

"But I thought you just wanted me to do some work or something so I didn't come and you never called again so..." Karla's voice trailed off.

To that Mother replied, "Shouldn't you come even if it's for work? Do I have to call twice to get a response?"

"But Mother, couldn't you make some more ice cream?"

"I could, Karla, but I won't. I think this can be a good lesson for you. Next time you feel like finishing what you're doing before answering me, and doing what I want you to do, just remember this incident and let it be a reminder for you to obey right away," finished Mother. "Do you think you could try to do better?"

"I'll try; and I'm sorry for not being prompt," answered Karla meekly. 

Dear Youth,

This Month's
QUESTION

How have adults been a good example to you in uprooting attitudes or habits that hindered them from becoming spiritual giants?

r e s p o n s e f r o m o u r r e a d e r s ...

When I think of how an adult or adults have been an example to me in overcoming an issue in their life, the thing that comes to my mind is the attitude of pride. I know of several adults who, to the human eye at least, appear to have everything going for them and would have every reason to be proud, yet they are some of the most humble people you could wish to meet. This is a great challenge for me, who though far less accomplished than these people, can quickly become proud of my meager achievements.

Pray for me that I could take their examples to heart and overcome my weakness in this area.

Also, just a challenge for you older folks—young people desperately need godly role models to look up to, and even though it may be contrary to all appearances, what you do can make a big difference in their lives. So serve God wholeheartedly and be

mindful that your words and actions may be affecting someone whether it be for good or bad.

Thank you to those of you who have been and continue to be good examples to me and others. May God bless you for it.

Brad McGrath, Taylorsville, NC

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My dad has been an excellent example to me in this. Even though he has been a conscientious person all along, he made a more deep and specific decision to always seek the truth and embrace it. He has become more committed to searching his own life openly and honestly and dealing with whatever God spoke to him about. Abandoning oneself to embrace truth is never easy, but it has made a spiritual giant out of him.

He has challenged me to look for the truth in criticism I receive from

others, rather than just reacting to the way it was delivered.

Rhoda Martin, Rochelle, VA



We as youth lean heavily on what we see in the lives of older people in the church. We subconsciously analyze spiritual growth in more mature Christians and often pattern our lives after them. To the elderly people in our churches, please note, we as youth do indeed notice and observe your lives. I have been blessed time and again by mature adults in my congregation who have the courage to admit that they need growth and are willing to root out anything that would hinder it. It gives me hope that even when I get old, I can still continue growing spiritually by weeding out anything that hinders God's plan.

When someone reaches a plateau in their Christian lives and thinks they have finally attained they usually become lukewarm, unprofitable Christians. True strength is being able to acknowledge your shortcomings. Life in Christ cannot come without rooting out self first.

Brandon Miller, Sugarcreek, OH



One area that adults have been a good example to me is to remain calm even when the circumstances call for anything besides remaining calm. There are several adults in my church who seem like they can take

any situation and not let it worry them but just calmly work their way through the situation. I tend to let these things bother me till I have figured out a way to solve them instead of trusting God to take care of me in His time and way.

Ronnie Kuhns, Leesburg, OH



Many adults have been an excellent example to me in uprooting attitudes or habits by taking three actions.

First of all, they develop an eternal perspective. When you have a healthy eternal perspective, any amount of humiliation, pain, or hard work right now that shapes you more into Jesus' image will be worth the cost. Without an eternal perspective, there is no need to make hard changes, for your self-image and your life on earth is your primary focus.

Secondly, they humble themselves and become vulnerable. When adults expose their faults and their need for help, my respect for them grows and they inspire me to change. Their humility is often exchanged for deep respect from others.

Thirdly, they step out in courage. It takes great courage to confess failures and make the needed changes, but courage is what makes strong giants. I have been privileged to know and watch many adults who made needed changes in their lives and become spiritual giants.

But the need for more spiritual gi-

ants is huge. Take action and uproot sin your life. It will be totally worth it.

Frieda Kuepfer, Hutchinson, KS

• • • • •

Adults have been a good example to me in uprooting attitudes that have hindered me in several ways. One time when I was struggling with wrong attitudes toward a certain person, a trusted adult helped me to see I need to first look at myself instead of the faults of the other person. Often it's not even their problem; it's just the attitude with which I view them.

In the area of habits, one of my older friends has been an excellent example to me. At one point in his life, he struggled with the habit of wrong music. Several times he tried to get over it and it would last for a while, but

he would fail again. Finally, he prayed and totally gave the problem to God realizing he couldn't do it by himself. Through this he gained victory.

This taught me three important points that help get rid of bad habits. First, be self-disciplined. Do what you know is right even when it's hard. Even though he prayed and totally gave it to God it still took effort and discipline on his part that wasn't easy.

The second point is to persevere. We're human; we will fail at times. But that doesn't mean we should give up. Every time we get back up and try again we make progress.

Thirdly and most important, be sure to look to God for help. Only through Him will we have the power to overcome.

Austin Miller, Newcomerstown, OH

Next Month's
QUESTION

Children often model the values of young men and women around them. Youth sometimes get absorbed with their peer group and neglect golden opportunities to influence children from the church. What are practical examples of how youth influence children to become either lovers of the world or disciples of Christ?

—EE 

Wrong is wrong, even if everyone is doing it. Right is right even though no one else is doing it.

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Don't lay down your life in your efforts to lay up money.

• • • • •

Parents can tell but never teach until they practice what they preach.

• • • • •

Few pain medicines are as effective as a mother's kiss.

• • • • •

The first step to senility is to think we have all the answers.

• • • • •

What we call adversity God calls opportunity.

• • • • •

Responsibility: my response to His ability.

• • • • •

Great preaching is made complete by great listening.

• • • • •

You cannot antagonize and persuade at the same time.

• • • • •

No God--no peace; know God--know peace.

• • • • •

Only a new love can destroy an old prejudice.

• • • • •

It takes no musical talent to toot one's own horn.