



# Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JUNE 2023

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## Calvary Messenger

June 2023

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

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## For Father's Day

*Ruth Overholt Hershberger, Jesup, GA*

In this world where we live today,  
So much is going wrong;  
So many take the easy road  
When they should be so strong!

How much we need a Christian dad  
And have a Christian home.  
No matter where the setting is  
Or far away we roam.

Remember, Dad, when I would sit  
Upon your lap to hear,  
The Bible stories that you'd read?  
These memories seem so near.

Dear Dad, when you are in control,  
And strive to do your best,  
It helps me honor and obey,  
And so we both are blest!

I thank you then with all my heart;  
You paved the way for me,  
With serious times and family fun.  
I'll always grateful be.

*Written in 1993 for a Father's Day program  
at Lake Grace Mennonite Church.*

*Ruth's dad has been gone for 57 years.*



## The Great I AM

Ervin Hershberger (1914-2003)

When God met Moses at the burning bush, Moses asked by what name he should identify Him to the children of Israel. God gave him an answer that spoke volumes in a few words. *"I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you"* (Exodus 3:14).

Such words from the lips of God defy being fathomed by the minds of men. We can ponder, probe, and analyze; yea, we can even verify whatever depth we can reach. But always there remain deeper truths, unknown and unknowable to man. Nevertheless, we would do well to exercise ourselves more diligently in what we *can* know of God.

First, *"I AM THAT I AM"* emphasized God as the ETERNAL One; He *had* no beginning for He *is* the beginning. *"I AM Alpha...the beginning..."* He neither grew, nor developed, nor became—He WAS, even as now He IS. God eternal is pre-existent and self-existent, the uncaused Cause. He was there before there was any other cause, but He was cause enough to breathe creation into being.

God spake, and the energy of His

word became matter. *"Let there be light: and there was light."* On the fourth day He said, *"Let there be lights..."* and there they were—ten billion stars and more, dazzling with heavenly glory and chasing one another through space in perfect rhythm precisely timed!

To say God made the world from nothing is the inadequate language of man. God couldn't start with nothing, for He Himself was everything—ALWAYS! He is the source of all reality, the sufficient Cause for all that is.

*"I AM THAT I AM"* declares God equal to every occasion, sufficient for every need. Tragedy strikes suddenly with cruel and crushing blows, but it springs no surprises on God. His counterbalance for that very occasion had been in the making before the foundation of the world, accurately timed to be there at the proper moment. To us it may be an emergency, but that emergency may be God's way of preparing us for greater trials yet to come.

The jaws of Satan's trap snapped shut on Adam and Eve, and immediately God told them of the Redeemer,

prepared for them even before the creation of Satan. Come what may—and what we call tragedies are sure to come—but God is adequately prepared to handle every situation. This is what God wanted Moses to teach the children of Israel, and this is what He wants us to understand in 1971.\*

In the new Testament the great I AM came down to man in the Person of Christ. He it was Who said, “*Before Abraham was, I am*” (John 8:58). Notice His I AMs in the Gospel of John alone (italics added).

- *I am* the bread of life (6:35, 48).
- *I am* the bread which came down from heaven (6:41).
- *I am* the living bread (6:51).
- *I am* the light of the world (8:12).
- *I am* not alone (8:16).
- *I am* from above (8:23).
- *I am* he (8:28).
- *I am* the door (10:7, 9).
- *I am* the good shepherd (10:11, 14).
- *I am* the Son of God (10:36).
- *I am* the resurrection and the life (11:25).
- *I am* the way, the truth, and the life (14:6).
- *I am* the true vine (15:1, 5).

The world *outlook* snarls back with howling hopelessness; the religious “*inlook*” erupts with foreboding omen; but the Christian “*uplook*”

raptures forth the glorious hope of a soon-returning Saviour! Christ, the great I AM of the New Testament reminds us at least seven more times in Revelation of His ever-present, self-existent, all-sufficient role at the end of time. Four times He says, “*I AM Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...*” (1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13), assuring us that He Who caused the beginning controls the ending.

“*I AM he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I AM alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death*” (1:18). By this He assures us that He has conquered death and hell.

“*I AM the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star*” (22:16). He shines away all the gloom and sorrow for all who abide in Him.

“*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be*” (22:12). “*Surely I come quickly*” (22:20). God’s time clock never fails. Christ’s return is timed and set. When that moment comes, the I AM will come again. He Himself will close the doors of time and usher in the timelessness of eternal day.

“*Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*”

[Written for and published in the January 1971 issue of *Calvary Messenger*.]



## Announcement



### **Faithful Women Seminar**

October 7, 2023

#### **“Going For The Gold”**

As fire purifies gold, so God uses adversity to purify women. In this seminar, we will consider how the Lord uses some of the common things in women’s lives—relationships, busyness, depression, and life transitions to reveal and refine our hearts and prepare us for service in His kingdom.

**Gold and Relationships** – *Christine Martin, Plain City, OH*  
**Calendars, Clutter, and Chaos** – *Sylvia Yoder, Somerset, OH*  
**Living With Hope**- *Estalee Anderson, Rochelle, VA*  
**Trust in the Transitions**- *Mary Ruth Kipps, Aroda, VA*

*Location: Plainview Christian School, 8270 Amish Pike, Plain City, OH 43064*

*For more information or to register, please contact Deeper Life Ministries:  
(614) 873-1199 or [info@dmlmohio.org](mailto:info@dmlmohio.org)*

## Announcement

### **2023 Youth Fellowship Meetings**

**Eastern** - Dayspring Christian Fellowship, Taylorsville, NC - July 28-30

**Northern** - Mt. Olive Church, Montgomery, IN - July 21-23

**Southwest** - Cedar Crest Church, Hutchinson, KS - August 4-6

*For more information, please contact:  
Clifford Bontrager | 540.717.4220 | [bontragers85@gmail.com](mailto:bontragers85@gmail.com)*

## The Glory of Weaknesses

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

We all have friends who have suffered in weakness. Many of these have died: a close neighbor, a business associate, or relative, and perhaps even a spouse. Some of us know a great deal about a personal physical weakness, either in the past, or some of you at this very moment. There were/are the doctor visits, being admitted to the hospital, the round of medical tests, X-rays, MRIs, and other diagnostics. Some are encouraging, short term, and better than we had feared. Some are discouraging and not as good as we had hoped.

The human cycle of physical analysis is why do good people suffer bad things? Why, Lord? Some of these good people are those we consider to be in their prime of life. Some were teenagers, a few were children, or were babies born with abnormalities at birth. Esther and I both provide taxi service in our large Amish community, and by it have many trips to doctors and clinics for some of these circumstances. Our own extended family and friends are not exempt from these concerns for their children or even for themselves.

What additional perspective is given to us from Bible times? Men and women, who in over-powering weaknesses of some kind, kneeled or prostrated themselves before God in their confessed weakness: Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others. Even Solomon, early in his career, prayed and said, *“And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.”* (I Kings 3:7). All of the above prayed to declare before God their weaknesses, their felt need for answers, help, and strength. Typically, the recorded champions of noble and crucial times in the Bible and since were men who prayed, freely confessing their weaknesses.

Lest we think this is just a man-thing, there are also astounding Bible records of women who equally cast themselves upon God in time of personal crises. They were just as needy and called out to God in their own desperation.

Whenever one tries to make a list of people, there is always the danger of missing some equally worthy ones.

But let us try to name a few of these women. There was Mary, the mother of Jesus. The turn of events must have seemed to turn 180 degrees, maybe more than once. In her weakness, she was made strong for her Savior, her own Son. Many years prior to Mary's long-ago life were other notable women: Deborah, Jochebed, Sarah, Rebecca, Abigail, Hannah, Rahab, Naomi, and Ruth. During the agony of spirit in the soul's depth in grief, the earnest prayer is carried up to God by His Spirit. It reaches up to the heights of glory, which already helps us to glory in our weaknesses, even as they did.

The Bible informs us that women are the weaker vessel; their emotional arrangement by God is subject to greater weakness and hard-to-manage grief of soul. They need an earthly counterpart as a helper/leader, a man to bear the heavier burdens of decision-making. That is another reason why God has designed men to be leaders, and women to be trusting of them and God at the same time. Where there is not a husband, her refuge can be a brother, uncle, close friend, pastor, or another male figure, who can fill the role of helper-manager-leader.

However, on the other hand, there have been many godly women whose expressed trust in God was greater

than their trust in a husband or some other male figure. Some men have been much weaker than a woman in their man-sized discouragements. Men tend toward pessimism and quitting when in larger-than-life heartaches. In those times, men can end up weaker than women. The wreckage of a man's long-term goals can be most devastating to him, as he sees it. Women's goals are more short-term, and for that reason, she can foresee that at the next turn in the road, life may be easier again. She can see little pockets of positive indicators, while he might still be having heartburn over what he supposes will be long-term grief.

Here the weaknesses were identified. Now, where is the glory? The last two lengthy paragraphs have had nothing to say about God. Is God still the blessed Controller of all things? Yes, of course, He is, "*There is no searching of His understanding.*" Sometimes we need to be revived in the basics of salvation and Christian living just to be renewed in our faith toward God. A man who quits in Christian living has a dead faith. Sometimes we men especially, need a spiritual 911 to be rescued from the throes of emotional and spiritual injuries. Divine help is on the way. "*Stand still and see the salvation of God*" (II Chronicles 20:17). The



first part of this verse says, as a prerequisite, “*You shall not need to fight in this battle, take your position, stand still...*” (Amplified O.T.). Seeing the salvation of God is easy IF it is right now! The standing still part is often the most difficult part when answers do not come.

That is why I maintain that we best please God as we prepare our hearts to both have faith in God, and in tandem with that, also obey Him. So, which is easier, faith or obedience? We say, in many respects, obedience is easier for us Germanic-sourced people. At least with obedience, you can do something. With only faith, you must wait. Waiting is not natural. It is not easy.


Grace sufficient has for us an easy verse, “*My grace is sufficient for thee.*” We often quote that verse, sometimes rather glibly. We should look at the entire verse, and observe how the central idea is about Paul’s weakness, and ours also. “*And he [the Lord Jesus Himself] said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*” Then Paul says, “*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*” (II Corinthians 12:9). This illustrative verse gave rise to the title for this article. Weakness is the subject of this verse for Paul’s part, whereas, grace is

the subject for the Lord’s statement in verse nine.

Weaknesses and infirmities seldom have a quick fix. Here Brother Paul says he glories in his infirmities, which gives the thought that they will be around for some time, so he will just accept them and glory in them.

The next verse is the clincher to this glorying which he did, when he further says, “*Therefore I take PLEASURE in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*” You will see the fuller thrust of these four other synonyms if you take a few minutes to see what the dictionary says about each of them.

**The Bottom Line** is that our weaknesses, once recognized and acknowledged, make room in our hearts to wait on God for His work of renewal. That renewal is best accomplished when its first phase takes place in our hearts. Renewal needs more than rearranging the furniture; the old man has been hiding in some dark corners where the light of God was not allowed to shine. The second phase is when the house is swept and garnished, and the Lord of the house is invited to be at home there again.

Confessing our weaknesses allows God to be glorified by the grace and help which He willingly gives. 

# Wholehearted Action

*Adelle Andras, Lodi, OH*

“**T**o recapture the vision again.” Ronda sang heartily with her congregation the beautiful song, “Faithful Men.”

Christ calls us to be faithful and to do, Ronda contemplated while the congregation started another song. Even when all else seems to fall under me and I can’t go on. Faithfulness. The word continued to ring in the tender 16-year-old’s ears.

Her mother had passed away not yet two years before. Ronda was the youngest child in her family, and all the others had married and moved out. She often felt lonely at home, just she and her dad.

She had one wonderful friend, Wilma Yoder, who had stuck close by her during many of life’s bumps. Wilma was just diagnosed with a disease and struggled to see God in it. Ronda didn’t feel very open to share with her at this time.

I still had a mom when that tragedy hit. She wasn’t sick with Covid, or unable to talk while her lungs struggled. I am so thankful she was there to comfort me, but why not still? Ronda paused to wipe a tear off her cheek.

The next church hymn reverberated

through her thoughts. “Submissive still would I reply, Thy will be done!”

Before Ronda could realize, the singing finished, and silence reigned for a minute. After church, she stood in the greeting line while she waited for her dad’s signal to leave. She glanced around. Without Wilma, she felt a little lost.

I want to act normal. My life is part of God’s plan, and I need to learn that. I will grieve sometimes, and sometimes I will just want to talk like any other girl. She smiled weakly at her reasoning and another tear slipped down her cheek.

“Greetings, Sister Ronda! How are you today?” The bishop’s eyes spoke of kindness and care as he waited for an answer.

“I was very encouraged by your sermon and the songs. Especially “Faithful Men” and “Thy Will be Done.” They speak to my recent struggle,” Ronda added.

“Yes, I know you are going through a valley right now, not knowing in what direction Wilma’s life will take. That is so hard.” He paused. “Remember the valleys are what form us.” With that, the elderly man walked on to greet others.

She got home and scribbled in her

journal, “Dear journal, life is hard, but Thou, oh God, art just what every man needs on his hard path. Help me

to love Thee in whole-hearted action. I thank Thee—for Thee.”



## The Freedom of Forgiveness Received (Part 3 of 3)

Joel Kime, Lancaster, PA

*In part 1 (published in the April issue) Joel relates how he hit a horse and buggy while driving recklessly fast on Kissel Hill Rd. Joel was 17, and the Amish couple in the buggy had been married five days earlier and were on their honeymoon. The newlywed bride was killed. Part 2 (May issue) begins with the events of the evening on the day after the accident and concludes with his trial and sentence.*

### From Forgiveness to Friendship

**O**ur relationship with the Stoltzfus family has continued ever since (both Aaron’s and his in-laws’ surname is Stoltzfus). Over the years, they have come to our house, and we have gone to theirs about once each year near the anniversary of the accident. Once when they came to our house, I remember playing ping-pong with Aaron. We must have played 10 games, and I beat him every time, which to me was an awkward situation. Here I am, I thought, an irresponsible kid who killed his wife,

and now I’m playing ping-pong with him. He really seemed to enjoy it and wanted to keep playing. I wondered if I should have let him win, but what would that do? I came to realize that our relationship with Aaron and the rest of the Stoltzfus family, though it began under the most horrible circumstances, had grown into a legitimate, normal relationship. They had forgiven me, and never, ever, went back on that decision. And they backed it up with a real relationship. Consider this: five years after the accident, Michelle and I invited them to our wedding, and they came for the ceremony and the reception, bearing gifts! Some may read this and think, “How insensitive! You invited them to your wedding? Isn’t that a slap in the face?!” On the surface it certainly looks like it. It does seem odd to me that we would invite the Stoltzfuses to share in our celebration when only five years earlier, I had totally shattered theirs. But that viewpoint fails to realize the depth of the relationship.

The past had been forgiven, and we were friends. People invite friends to their wedding. I particularly like the idea of trumpeting to the world their brand of forgiveness. To me, having the Stoltzfuses at my wedding was not to show off the fact that I had friends in the Amish community, it was to display for everyone who knew us the glory of God that results when people obey His commands! To accent this further, when we moved to Jamaica to be missionaries three years later, the Stoltzfus family supported us financially. Forgiveness, they taught me, is not always a one-time event. Perhaps this is one angle of what Jesus intended when He replied to Peter that we ought to forgive someone not just seven times, but 70 times seven. In other words, Jesus said, that to follow its purpose of freedom, it requires follow-up, the rebuilding of a relationship, or, as in my case, the creation of a new one.

God blessed the situation even further as Aaron eventually married Sarah's younger sister, Levina. To me, it was as though God allowed the family to be whole again. They now have a beautiful family of children.

This past year when we visited Melvin and Barbara (Aaron and Levina live in a house on Aaron's family's property in Leola, so we don't see them as much) on their farm/

bakery in Lititz, it was the first we had seen them in a couple of years. We missed one year when we lived in Jamaica, and the next year because we had just returned home, so it was good to see them after a two or three-year gap. For the first time in 11 years, we talked about the accident frankly but very kindly. Again, they were never condemning, just admitting how hard it was and how they missed Sarah. I had the chance to express my gratitude and share with them how the freedom of forgiveness they gave me impacts so many people whenever I share the story. I cried then as I do now as I type this.

In this land of liberty, that kind of freedom I received often eludes us. We have so few pictures of what it looks like. God glorified Himself in my life, however, by blessing me with a wonderful picture of how people can handle terrible crimes against themselves. My uncle, Jim Ohlson, when commenting on an early manuscript of my story, added, "What I have seen in you is that the forgiveness of the Amish gave you the confidence to live life to the full." Jesus said, "*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*" That full life is only possible through the freedom of forgiveness received.

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



## Kneel Down and Wipe

*Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS*

I saw it in church; a man on his knees. Of course, isn't that normal? To kneel in prayer? But this man knelt to wipe up his son's breakfast, and his eyes stayed open. His wife, still recovering from a long and difficult year, was seated on the pew holding the offender. There was no question between them as to who would tackle this lowly business. No hesitation. He moved quickly to serve the one he loved. Hmm, I said to myself. Isn't that the way it should be? We kneel to pray—acknowledging to God His goodness and our mess. We also kneel—wiping up the messes of those we love. Sometimes we sit—allowing others to serve us. Sometimes, the wiping up takes a lot of praying.



*But that, my friends, is also beautiful.* 🌅

# God's Man-Plan

*Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX*

There is an abundance of talk within Christianity today concerning what it means to be a real and good man.

The problem with this defining rhetoric is in the way it attempts humanistically to represent God's Man-Plan.

On the one hand, you have those who claim that males were endowed with the aspiration to take full control. These say that a man who does not assert his place, fails when he concentrates primarily on the needs of the soul.

On the other hand, there are those who teach that men are to be extremely careful to not offend anybody. These say that a man oversteps his responsibility when he assumes his divine calling to act within his authority.

Now, instead of zeroing in on one unbalanced propensity, let us consider some important man-character virtues. Yes, these must become an integral part of you and me if we expect to lead our little men into a fruitful future.

The first Christ-like element to nurture is true humility; this is a sincerity of heart and soul that is vulnerable. Because this attitude does not judge oneself too highly, personal image and repute become readily expendable.

Another quality closely related to humility is meekness; this attribute is depicted as internally harnessed power. It keeps humility from the extreme of passive weakness, enabling a man to fulfill his duty in the most trying hour.

The second very important character trait is discipline; this is an actively and intentionally sober self-awareness. In this spirit a man trains himself to guard against sin, thus he develops habits to maintain himself in holiness.

Here again, temperance is another closely-related factor; this biblical mindset carries the thought of moderation. It keeps discipline from an excessively austere posture, enabling one to refrain from insensitive administration.

If we as male disciples of Christ nurture these traits, we will be equipped to effectively fulfill our calling. They will produce a sensible response when straits of life generate situations that are most challenging.

I want to be clear, honing these will not guarantee that everything will fall into an idyllic alignment. But I can assure you, if we cultivate them faithfully, they will be the sure means of character refinement.



## marriages

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

### Graber-Herschberger

Bro. Joas, son of Loretta and the late Lavern Graber, Williamson, IA, and Sis. Anita, daughter of Roger and Elsie Herschberger, Kokomo, IN, March 25, 2023, at Bethany Fellowship by Darlton Bontrager.

### Lehman-Hostetler

Bro. Adrian, son of James and Ida Lehman, and Sis. Sarah Beth, daughter of Edwin and Esther Hostetler, Auburn, KY, March 11, 2023, at Providence Mennonite Fellowship by Jason Miller.

### Mast-Hertzler

Bro. Marcus, son of Monroe and Ida Mast, Fredericksburg, OH, and Sis. Amanda, daughter of Andy and Sally Hertzler, Winchester, OH, April 22, 2023, at Georgetown Church of Christ, Georgetown, OH, for Still Waters Mennonite Church by Marcus Yoder.

### Stutzman-Mast

Bro. Nathan, son of Jonathan and Esther Stutzman, Monticello, KY, and Sis. Christina, daughter of Jason and Eunice Mast, Crossville, TN, March 11, 2023, at Cornerstone Baptist Church for Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church by John Ray Miller.

### Swartzentruber-Bucher

Bro. Derrick, son of Lowell and Anna Mae Swartzentruber, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Ruth, daughter of Mark and Debora Bucher, Lisbon, ME, February 25, 2023, at Cornerstone Baptist Church by Mark Bucher.



## cradle roll

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

**Beiler**, Jalin and Rosetta (Stoltzfus), Bridgeton, NJ, third child and daughter, Jemma Chantel, February 17, 2023.

**Beiler**, Micah and Kendra (Huber), Pittsgrove, NJ, third child, first daughter, Avah Noelle, March 29, 2023.

**Beiler**, Timothy and Vasilica (Bitica), Gordonville, PA, fifth child, first son, Noah Kade, April 2, 2023.

**Fisher**, Arlin and Sharon (Stoltzfus), Mifflin, PA, first child and son, Nickolas Myles, April 20, 2023.

**Hostetler**, Eugene and Norma (Beiler), Auburn, KY, fifth child, fourth son, Braden Clark, April 22, 2023.

**Martin**, Barry and Thelma (Stauffer), Greenfield, OH, second child and son, Carter Rhys, March 1, 2023.



**Mast**, Ken and Mary Jo (Yoder), Blackville, SC, fourth child, first son, Lane Kendrick, January 31, 2023.

**Overholt**, Rylan and Charity (Swartzentruber), Auburn, KY, second child, first daughter, Erin Brienne, March 15, 2023.


**Petersheim**, Tim and Deanne (Stauffer), Narvon, PA, fourth child, third daughter, Serenity Grace, April 11, 2023.

**Stoltzfus**, Abner and Marlene (Stoltzfus), Berezyanka, Ukraine, ninth child, third son, Elisha Stefan, January 27, 2023.

**Stoltzfus**, Sheldon and Veronica (Petersheim), Coatesville, PA, fourth child, first daughter, Mariana Lois, April 13, 2023.

**Yoder**, Darrel and Linda Dawn (Herschberger), Sullivan, IL, third child, second son, Sawyer Grant, January 30, 2023.

**Yoder**, Jesse and Teresa (Yoder), Owenton, KY, eighth child, fourth daughter, Daisy Joy, March 16, 2023.

**Zook**, Ethan and Melissa (Hostetler), Abbeville, SC, third child and daughter, Lucy Mae, March 23, 2023. 

## obituaries

**Frey**, Sarah, 94, Plain City, OH, went to be with her Lord and Savior on April 6, 2023, at Riverside Methodist Hospital, Columbus, OH. She was born on January 9, 1929, to Eli and Malinda (Farmwald) Troyer.

She was a member of the Canaan Fellowship Church. She did housecleaning as a business for years. She also enjoyed mowing her large yard and picking up sticks and branches in the woods.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Nelson Lee, four sisters and one brother: Freda (Joe) Kurtz, Eldon Lee (Lena) Troyer, Katie Troyer, Ada (Sanford) Beachy, and Edna (Glenn) Christner.

She was survived by children: Marvin Duane (Lena), Linda (Noah) Miller; grandchildren: Kristin Louise (Tony) Jordan, Nathan (Christina) Frey, Kevin Frey; great-grandchildren: Tyler Gage Jordan, Talia Grace Frey, and Nevaeh.

The funeral service was held April 13, 2023, at Canaan Fellowship Church. The burial followed in the church cemetery.

**Jantzi**, Esther, 81, Hamburg, ON, died at home on November 12, 2022. She was the daughter of the late Moses Zehr and Fannie Lichty. She was born in Wilmot Township, ON, on November 13, 1940. On September 14, 1960, she was united in holy matrimony to Ohmer Jantzi. They shared the joys and sorrows of married

life for over 62 years.

She was baptized upon the confession of her faith in Jesus Christ on October 21, 1956, and was a member of the Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite church.

She leaves to mourn her departure three daughters: Norma (David) Schmidt, Barbara (Elam) Martin, Rosanna; and six sons: Merlin (Darlene), Earl (Darcee), Harold (Michelle), Ronald, David (Josie), and Edgar (Ginalyn). Also surviving are 15 grandsons, 15 granddaughters, and 12 great-grandchildren. She will be sadly missed by her brothers: Norman (Amy) Zehr, Elmer (Ethel) Zehr, and sister-in-law, Alma Zehr.

She was predeceased by her daughter, Marlene, in 1979; brothers: John Zehr and his wives Esther and Mary Anne, Jacob Zehr; sisters: Emma (Allan) Wagler, Laura (Elmer) Jantzi, Mary (Amos) Gerber; brothers and sisters-in-law: Joe (Vera) Jantzi, Dan Kuepfer, Ruth (Laverne) Jantzi, Ruth Jantzi, and Irvin (Ellen) Jantzi.

The funeral was held on November 16, 2022, with John Gerber and Paul Jantzi serving. Burial was at the Cedar Grove Cemetery.

**Kuhns**, Edwin, 67, of Sullivan, IL, passed away peacefully at his home on September 22, 2022, following a two-year cancer journey. Ed was born January 10, 1955, in Tuscola, IL, to Menno and Alma (Kauffman) Kuhns. He married Leona Yoder on June 26, 1982.

Ed put his whole heart into everything he did. His faith, hope, and trust in God

guided him through life. He took great delight in his children and grandchildren. He enjoyed his friends, neighbors, church, and community. Harvest was his favorite time of year and he loved to see the bounty of it. It seems significant that he passed away on the first day of fall. He will be greatly missed.

He is lovingly remembered by his wife, Leona, and six children: Mark (Jenni), Sullivan; Ron (Cindy), Montezuma, GA; Julie (Matt) Yoder, Lovington; Sheri (Earl) Miller, Cadwell; Joe (Peggy), Sullivan; Abby Kuhns, Sullivan; 12 grandchildren, three siblings: Irene Kuhns, Arthur; twin sister, Edna Kuhns, Arthur; Dave (Dawn), Sullivan; and sister-in-law, Anna Kuhns, Belleville, PA.

He was preceded in death by his parents, stepmother, Esther (Hershberger) Kuhns, and one brother, Willard Kuhns.

The funeral service was held at the Otto Center on September 26, 2022. Internment followed in the Trinity Christian Fellowship Cemetery.

**Raber**, Edna, 91, of Barnwell, SC, passed away on March 13, 2023. Edna was born on March 17, 1931, in Millersburg, OH, to John and Malinda Miller. Edna was married to the late Eli A Raber.

She was a member of Calvary Fellowship Mennonite Church. Edna was a homemaker and loved having interaction with her children and grandchildren. She kept a cheerful and thankful spirit in spite of her blindness. She also kept her sense of humor. Edna loved the Lord and her church, and she

missed not being able to attend in recent months.

Survivors include her children: Esther E. Williams, Williston; Atlee E. (Erma), Wagener; Ina Sue Schrock, Barnwell; David Wayne (Rachel), Wagener; Melinda Kay Tice, Bridgewater, VA; Martha Ruth (Amon) Wagler, Washington, IN; Mary Naomi (Rick) Knepp, Beaver Crossing, NE; a sister, Bena Yutzy, Hilliard, OH; 19 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and a number of nieces and nephews.

Edna was preceded in death by her sisters: Katie Mast, Fannie Yoder, and Erma Beachy; brothers: Roy J. Miller, Owen Miller, Alfred Miller; a great grandson, Landon Raber; and sons-in-law: Gary Williams, Melvin Schrock, and David Tice.

The funeral was held on March 17, 2023, at Barnwell Mennonite Church and the burial was at Calvary Mennonite Church cemetery.

**Yoder**, Elsie, 71, of Blackville, SC, passed away on March 4, 2023. Elsie was born on July 16, 1951, in Hartville, OH, to Wallace and Mattie Byler.

She was the fifth child in a family of 11. Her family relocated to Belle Center, OH, in 1974. At the age of 21, she moved to the country of Belize where she spent nine years as a missionary. She married Robert Yoder on September 17, 1982, and moved to his home state of South Carolina. She and Robert owned Blackville Farm and Garden for 21 years. Later, Elsie was instrumental in operating The Healing Springs Country

Store for nine years. They had many wonderful years together but in the spring of 2005, cancer entered her life. She fought valiantly for 17 years but in February she found out the cancer had spread to her brain and that God was calling her home. She was so ready to see Jesus and to finally be pain-free.

She is survived by her husband, Robert, her sons: Robbie (Linda), NY; Joshua (Tammy), SC; a daughter, Samantha (Mike) Kandel, OH; grandchildren: Jensen Kandel, Cole Kandel, Blake Kandel, Ava Kandel, Victoria Yoder, Mariah Yoder, Kate Yoder, and Kyler Yoder; sisters: Judy (Leroy) Miller, Ruth (Levi) Schlabach, Nancy Byler, Laura Miller, Rachel (Steven) Miller, Elizabeth (Paul) Miller, Martha (Lloyd) Gingerich, Amy (Mahlon) Coblentz, and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Wallace and Mattie Byler, brother and sister-in-law, Paul and Leona Byler; sister, Sadie, and brother-in-law, Stephen Miller.

The funeral was held on March 6, 2023, at Barnwell Mennonite Church and the burial was at Calvary Mennonite Church Cemetery.

**Yoder**, Miriam Ann, 48, of Jamestown, PA, passed away peacefully at home on April 7, 2023. She was born on August 20, 1974, to Henry and Rhoda Brenneman. She married Peter Yoder on May 15, 1997.

She is lovingly remembered by her husband, Peter, and her children: Sharon,

Caleb (special friend, Ashley Peachey); Luke (special friend, Kellsie Sites); Veronica, Philip, Katrina, Ryan; and her mother, Rhoda Brenneman.

She was preceded in death by her father, Henry Brenneman, and her twin sister, Martha Yoder.

The funeral service was held on April 10, 2023, at Plainview Gospel Church, Guys Mills, with Roy Hershberger officiating. The burial followed in the church cemetery with John Yoder officiating.



## observations

The David Ehrman family in Orange County, California obtained a \$3,000 electric-assist bicycle to solve the transportation needs of their daughter, Johnny, for her school and work. She rides 12 miles on her bike on a typical day. One day this spring she locked the pedals and the wheels and removed the battery like usual after she arrived at her place of employment. But she did not chain the bicycle to a fixed object this time. When she was ready to go home, she was dismayed to find that her bike had been stolen.

A very small disc-shaped device made by Apple called an Airtag makes location tracking in real time possible by communicating a signal that shows the location of the device.

Johnny's father had exercised the foresight to affix an Apple Airtag at an inconspicuous location on her bike earlier. He quickly checked on his iPhone to see where the bike was. It

was still being transported and soon stopped at an apartment complex near their home. The Ehrmans paid a visit to the party who was in possession of their stolen bike. As can be guessed, the thief expressed quite a mixture of surprise and consternation when the Ehrmans arrived to retrieve the stolen bike.



The annual Biking Across Kansas tour brings hundreds of bicycle riders together to ride across Kansas from Colorado to Missouri. The tour makes overnight stops at schools in host towns and cities along the way where some of the riders sleep in tents on school grounds and some sleep in the gymnasium indoors. At one overnight stop during last year's tour at about the half-way point, an opportunistic thief selected two bicycles from the hundreds that were parked outside the school. The nefarious deed was detected the next morning when the riders awoke to resume their ride.

One of the missing bicycles had a tracking device similar to what the Ehrman family used. The owners of the bikes contacted law enforcement, and they went together to pay a visit to a nearby home where the two missing bikes were located. One of the recovered bikes was soon ready to ride after a few small repairs for damages incurred in the hasty theft. The other bike was inoperable and the rider of that bike was obligated to abandon the tour. The thief was young. One of the owners preferred to not press charges, due to the age of the offender. But the other owner thought the education opportunity for the thief would be greater if he would need to answer to a court of law for his misdeeds. I never heard how that all played out.

One of my sons and I were riding along on the tour last summer. I don't know why our unsecured bikes weren't selected by the thief. The bike theft was certainly disappointing. However, the greater surprise might just be that it doesn't happen more frequently. There were more than 500 bikes parked outside each night of this tour. If there were 500 bikes parked outside for eight nights during each tour, that means there would be about 4,000 theft opportunities throughout the course of the week. If a bike theft like this happens once

every several years on the tour, the incidence of theft is extremely low given how easy it would be for someone to steal one. So, maybe the greater take-away is that most people here in middle-America are quite trustworthy.

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The 2023 version of this tour is scheduled to commence soon after this issue arrives in your mailboxes. Each year, the tour uses a different route from the previous year. So it is very unusual that this year's ride is slated to traverse the same route as last year's ride for a portion of the route. Both last year and this year, the route will pass by the last home of my parents in Partridge, Kansas, where my sister, Linda, currently lives.

Last year my sister Lois spearheaded and organized a rest stop at my sister Linda's yard where they served free, ice-cold, mint tea, and other refreshments to those on the tour. The tea was harvested from Lois's garden and is called mint tea, garden tea, or meadow tea depending on where you live. She had prepared enough concentrate to serve 60 gallons of tea, not all of which was needed. The tea was indeed exquisitely refreshing on that hot day with stout winds blowing out of the south at 20-25 miles per hour. Most riders were unfamiliar with this tea,

but it was very well received by those who chose to stop and be refreshed. “That mint tea” was discussed with great fondness and nostalgia later in the week as the triple-digit summer heat exacted its toll on the riders.



Researchers at the University of Texas in Austin reported a recent notable discovery. If you’re like me, the jargon employed in this report make it a bit difficult to grasp exactly what they’ve done and how it all works. However, it goes something like this.

Using artificial intelligence, chemical engineering, and synthetic biology, they’ve modified an enzyme in such a way that it breaks down plastics very quickly. Plastic containers that would take 500 years to break down in a landfill, are consumed by this enzyme in a matter of 24-48 hours. The residual material is then useful for recycling. This report is good news for those who have long been concerned about the production and use of plastics.

The linear description of man’s conversion of natural resources for use is one of “take-make-waste,” in which raw materials are taken and products are made and then discarded when they are no longer useful. The description that describes a circular process is one in which the “waste” phase of the linear model is replaced

by a recycle process. The researchers are enthused about the “circular” implications of this discovery.

This modified enzyme that is touted as a plastic-eating machine is called PETase. The article I read did not give a time frame for how soon this could be scaled to meaningful proportions if other logistical hurdles can be overcome. But those who report this breakthrough are quite enthused about the possibilities this offers.

I suppose we’ll all find out soon enough if this develops into something viable and beneficial. While I would love for this to provide a good solution to the copious plastic waste that mankind generates, I also admit to a touch of internal misgiving. Since this enzyme is the result of artificial intelligence, chemical engineering, and synthetic biology, it makes me wonder “what could go wrong here?” What unintended, unforeseen, and inadequately understood results might be observed as a result of this discovery? Time will tell.



The topic of effective and humane treatment for those who struggle with psychiatric difficulties is a controversial one. Geel is a town in Flanders, Belgium, with a population of about 41,000. It is here that this topic has been addressed with a somewhat novel approach.

In this program, people who might be institutionalized in other settings are hosted in local foster homes. Currently, about 120 people are hosted in homes who otherwise would likely be in a psychiatric residential facility elsewhere. The benefits of a family setting with chores and jobs that align with their capabilities is quite beneficial for the boarders. The government provides a stipend of \$25-\$30 USD equivalent per person per day to the hosts. This isn't enough to attract anyone seeking financial advantage. Those under this care are also provided weekly outpatient mental health care at a local facility where their progress and well-being are monitored.

Applicants for this treatment are rigorously screened because not all are good candidates for this arrangement. But it is highly esteemed as a program for several reasons. It is less expensive than institutionalized care. Furthermore, the benefits of a home setting in which the person seeking treatment is able to contribute according to his or her ability builds a person's sense of well-being that comprises part of mental health.

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Compassionate, home-based elder care and handicapped care offer many blessings for those involved. I

extend my deep respect for those who make life adjustments to provide this care for family and relatives in their own homes.

I'm also impressed by the service that Faith Mission Home, Hillcrest Home, and Mountain View Nursing Home provide for those who are unable to provide the increased level of structure and care that certain situations sometimes require. That Christ-centered approach to care, in which those receiving care are treated with personal dignity and compassion, leaves a distinct and eloquent testimony of Christian love.

An additional blessing of these operations is the volunteer opportunities that they offer for youth and families in conservative Anabaptist circles. Something significant and transformative often occurs when a Christian volunteers a block of time in service to others. I'm not sure if the benefit is more for those receiving care or for those providing the service. Let's call it a "win-win" situation.

Just maybe if people understood how valuable such a service opportunity really is, those facilities would struggle with knowing how to manage the list of applications for those waiting their turn for an opportunity to serve there.

-RJM 

# Your Clothes Tell on You

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

**M**y wife and I stayed at a motel to attend a wedding in another state. The next morning we enjoyed their provided breakfast. Most people in the breakfast room were not models of modesty. The message on one man's shirt got easy attention. "A wildcat till the day I die." We engaged in conversation. He professed to be a believing man of the church, even talking about dealing with the Mennonites in his home community. His shirt "spoke" first, followed by good words. Which statement really represented his heart, the shirt or his words? Does it matter to the God he professed to serve?

If you ask the average church offender, "How would you describe the present condition of the world?" you'll likely get a very pessimistic answer. That's understandable! According to Jesus, many people are living on the broad way that leads to eternal destruction. In the context of an "*adulterous and sinful generation*" (Mark 8:38), He warned of false prophets arising and deceiving many. The apostle Paul warned "*that in the last days perilous times shall come,*" and that "*evil men and seducers shall*

*wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*" (II Timothy 3:1, 13).

This describes the present "broad way" culture. The broad way people exert enormous time and energy into their outward appearance, trying to gain attention and respect through self-ornamentation, latest fads, and body display. The broad way culture constantly introduces new styles and fads, expecting the public to spend and comply. One of the deceptions in the religious culture is conforming to the broad way's attire.

The believer is the temple of the living God (II Corinthians 6:16). One deception of this sinful generation is that God is not concerned about how you outwardly clothe His temple. They profess loving Jesus in their hearts (temple) but follow the patterns of dress and ornamentation introduced on the broad way. When approached about the matter, they often use a handy Scripture to defend their behavior and to set me in place. "*For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*" (I Samuel 16:7). That's true; the outward is all I can really see. God did not say it was wrong to see the outward. Jesus said, "*Wherefore*



by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20). The message on the shirt spoke at first sight to the immodest crowd. His words, which they didn’t hear, had a different tone. Which should I believe? Was this a case of “*honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me*” (Mark 7:6)?

Jesus taught, “*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength*” (Mark 12:30). Heart, soul, mind, strength—that means love Him with ALL your being. Every room of your heart is to be occupied by the Spirit of Jesus. This includes every closet, hope chest, and wardrobe.

Does God care about the message of the clothes that believers put on His temple? Yes, He does. His Spirit inspired Peter and Paul to address the outward that man sees in three aspects.

**1. Modesty with no outward ornamentation is God’s statute.** “*Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel*” (I Peter 3:3). The NIV says, “*wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes.*” Men are to be praying with “*holy hands*” and “*women adorn themselves in modest apparel*” without

“*gold, or pearls, or costly array*” (see I Timothy 2:8-10).

**2. Clothing is to be “not conformed” to this present world.** “*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*” (Romans 12:1-2). Does your clothing communicate a heart surrendered and perfectly acceptable to God’s will? Is it cluttered with the broad way fads that are constantly vying for your participation to blend into its culture?

**3. God wants His disciples’ outward appearance to be gender specific.** The people of Israel were forbidden to cross-dress. “*The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God:*” (Deuteronomy 22:5). Some will say this was for the Old Testament era. The covenant of grace (N.T.) also gives specifics. (See I Corinthians 11:1-16, and the aforementioned Scriptures.) What message of the heart is communicated by church sisters who wear what looks like men’s blue jeans but they can still call it a skirt? The Christian woman is to maintain a “covered” head. What

does it communicate about the heart when the “covering” is a small, barely noticeable doily?


The believer who loves God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength will gladly submit to these statutes from God. They will be like Moses of whom the Bible says repeatedly, did “*as the Lord commanded.*” That is how a heart that seeks “*first the kingdom of God*” responds to God’s dress code.

My outward appearance gives a clue about my heart. I accompanied a Mennonite preacher friend to give a speech in the Pentagon at a noon devotional wearing my “plain” coat. Someone told me, “You don’t look as though you belong here.” He was right. My clothing told on me. I am an ambassador for Christ, not part of the military.

“A wildcat till the day I die.” That communicated. What would be communicated about my heart if I wore a cap, shirt, or jacket, “rootin” for a sports team? My wife does not like raw oysters. If I want to show her

that I love her I would not take her out for a raw oyster dinner. I would select something she likes. If you want to show God that you love Him, dress His way.

I serve the King of kings in a culture that lets the broad way people set the agenda for dress. It is a privilege and freedom not to be bound to their ever-changing styles. I do not want my outward appearance to suggest that my heart is not fully surrendered to God. I do not want to distract from my commitment to King Jesus and His kingdom. The broad way culture provides a great opportunity for the disciple of Jesus, whose heart is fully surrendered to His lordship and to be an example of godliness. One whose heart fully loves Jesus will be careful to practice “*whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*” (I Corinthians 10:31).

Like it or not, your dress communicates what’s on your heart. What does it really say? 

## Community

*Elsie Yoder, Hutchinson, KS*

**W**hat is community?  
Is it the local  
community garden  
where the neighbors gather in the

July heat to weed and water and  
gossip? Happy housewives chit and  
chat as they pluck green beans, and  
barefoot kids throw water at plants

and each other. At the end of the day, sun-kissed mothers and children gather in one of their kitchens to snap and can. Relationships are created and hearts are bonded through the accomplishments and conversations.

Or is it the small-town cafe? At home in rural Kansas, I waitress in one such cafe. Without the restaurant, I am fairly convinced that the whole town would fall apart. Early every morning, dozens of farmers and high school kids scurry in to get their daily fuel of sweet tea. Cops and work crews stop in to grab a box of doughnuts. Everyone knows everyone else, and each other's business is fair game for conversation. Farmers fill tables and discuss pertinent things such as the wheat market, the lack of rain, or which variety of soybeans is superior. There's that table of retired men who come for breakfast and stay till lunch, discussing the Chiefs' latest game, play-by-play, the entire time. Lunch hour may appear to be mass chaos, but really it's just a very happy and interconnected community interacting.

Is it the farming community? This is such a good type of community in my biased opinion. Sure, there may be some friendly competition over the nicest equipment or best yields, but overall, farmers desire the best for each other. On rainy days, my

dad and fellow farmers go out for pizza together to discuss life and celebrate that it finally rained. Wheat harvest brings everyone together on a whole new level. The entire family is involved whether it's operating the combine, trucking wheat to the elevator, making field meals, or driving the tractor and auger wagon. Friends come over for combine rides. People who aren't actually farmers still find it crucial to capture that perfect sunset/wheat/combine picture. Small-town cafes specialize in cold-cuts sandwiches for field meals. The entire community is on board, and I love it so much. We had a major drought this year, and one thing that I saw that really blessed me was a sign outside a church in the tiny town of Abbyville. It said, "Pray For Rain." Yes! A community that goes back to God with its needs.

Or what about the church community? It should go far beyond simply worshiping together on Sunday mornings. When a baby is born to one of the church families, women sign up to bring meals. We have work nights when we physically work together for a common goal. Autumn feasts, that are filled with whole hogs, apple bobbing, and spelling bees, bring church people together in a fresh way. Just show up, see needs in your church, and

meet them. Accountability and brotherhood are crucial parts of church community.

Book clubs, accountability groups, extended family, sports, Bible School—clearly, there are many different types and elements of communities. However, I also think that community can be used in a more personal sense. Recently, I listened to a podcast from Answers May Vary. In it, one of the guys described community as a set of rings. In the innermost ring you have your family and closest confidants.



The second ring has your close peers, and the third one is your coworkers and random people you

occasionally run into. So in this case, I would say that community refers more to love, support, and acceptance that you give and receive from those closest to you.

What does Webster say?

1. all the people living in a particular district, city, etc.

2. a group of people living together as a smaller social unit within a larger one and having interests, work, etc. in common

3. a group of nations loosely or closely associated because of common traditions or for political or economic advantage

4. society in general; the public

5. ownership or participation in common

6. similarity; likeness

7. the condition of living with others; friendly association; fellowship.

What does the Bible say concerning community? Using the Christian Standard Bible, Acts 2:42 says, “*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.*” Romans 12:13 says, “*Share with the saints in need; pursue hospitality.*” Fellowship, sharing, hospitality—these are crucial elements to a healthy community. Of course, without love, all of these things would be worthless.

To me, it’s the small things that make up community. Show up. Bless with an encouraging note or word of affirmation. Make a meal for the young family. Drop off a coffee drink for your friend at her office job. Let someone vent their feelings and simply listen.

This, to me, is community.

[Written for a class at CBS. Submitted by Galen Stutzman.]



## Four Battlements for the Christian Home

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

Sharply and deeply impressed in the hearts and consciences of many parents is the raising of their children for the Lord. Missionary parents may particularly face many questions, such as: “What about our children’s education? Will they get the proper training they need? I am afraid my children will be influenced wrongly. Is the mission field a safe environment?”

What fun building a snowman! The rolling of a small ball to a bigger and then even larger ball for the base. Then the same thing for the stomach and chest and there is plenty of snow left for the head. Don’t forget the art work; the black coal buttons for the front, then the eyes with pieces of coal, and finally the red ribbon around the neck with the old hat on top. It is clean fun at its best! But oh, in a few days the snowman has melted.

A young couple gazes into the face of a firstborn. Suddenly it grips them. Here is a living being with an eternal soul. A new sense of responsibility arrests their attention. There are feelings of apprehension and fear, but

yes, mixed with confidence and trust in the heavenly Father.

In Deuteronomy, tucked among various laws for the Israelites such as respect for property, ungodly clothing for women and men, sowing a vineyard with various kinds of seeds, and more is a building code for a new house. “*When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence*” (22:8).

In Bible times houses were built with flat roofs. It was a place for families to gather and visit with neighbors and enjoy fellowship after a hard day’s work or during their Jewish festivals. The battlement was an indented or notched parapet. It was simply a railing which served as a protection for children or adults from falling off and injuring themselves or being killed. If a neighbor’s child would die from a fall, a witness could chase the owner of the unprotected roof and kill him unless the runner would reach the nearest city of refuge. The owner would need to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the

high priest. When the high priest died the victim could be free again. (This is a beautiful type of our perfect High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus died we are made free from the bondage of sin, if we receive Him as Lord and Savior and walk in holiness.)

Today, we need strong Christian homes that are well-guarded with fences and a wall of protection from this evil world to guard our dear children and youth from falling off the precipice into a dangerous and hazardous environment. We must build a connecting fence on each side. A parapet just on one side will not be safe. Here are four railings that make up a complete fence.

### **1. Parental love and godly examples**

In Paul's triad of Christian virtues (faith, hope, and love), love lasts the longest, reaches around the widest, and is rooted the deepest. The table is the center of social life. The speech of the husband and wife should always be with grace and tenderness—unless the house is on fire. I remember, in my youth, visiting the home of a powerful preacher who had a naturally-amplified voice. He would walk back and forth on the platform and soon get to his eight to 10-point outline and preach with Holy Spirit unction without notes. But I was deeply impressed how the mother,

children, and even this preacher daddy spoke to each other rather quietly in gentle tones of kindness.

Children need an atmosphere of gladness. Rules should be spoken with firmness but not slammed with harshness and cruelty. Let's remember, playing with our children (even hunting and fishing) can develop security and a deep respect toward us as parents. It may even lighten the load of needed correction.

### **2. Family worship**

Many times this has proven to be the strongest and most secure fence in keeping children from falling off. Sadly, sometimes children or youth will jump the fence and suffer the consequences like the prodigal son. But Dad and Mom's prayers have been testified as binding heart strings to draw the prodigal home. Here is a quote from a gospel tract on family worship, "A prayerless family cannot be otherwise than irreligious. Those who pray daily in their homes do well. They who not only pray but read the Bible, do better. But the best of all, are they, who not only pray and read the Bible, but sing the praises of God." Select a quiet, daily set time for this powerful "parapet" of family worship that fits your schedule.

### **3. Instruction**

We are commanded to teach the Words of God diligently (sharply,

carefully, and exactly). When we put our children to bed and when we arise, at mealtime and outside while working in the garden, while driving together, we are to make wise use of our time in telling them the stories of the Bible, memorizing Scripture, teaching them about God's marvelous creation and glorious redemption, Jesus' second coming, the sins of divorce and remarriage, Biblical nonresistance, and more.

#### **4. Disciplining or training the child**

It may be better stated, "Parent training." This is the title of an article by John Coblenz. A few pointers this writer pens: "Child training is parent training. God nowhere says to parents, 'Children, train your parents.' Rather, God says to parents, '*Train up a child in the way he should go*' (Proverbs 22:6)."

Parents need a godly vision for their children that regulates character—a training that is gracious and firm. Help the child assume responsibility for disobedience. Do not ask the child, "Why did you do it?" The child may tend to blame others for the offense. And do not ask, "Did you do this?" That may tempt the child to lie. Rather use God's words to Eve, "*What is this that thou hast done?*" (Genesis 3:13a).

Parents must overcome softheartedness and leniency.

Administer discipline in a private room. Look your child straight in the eye, mixed with kindness, and appeal to their conscience. Remind them that the offense is a sin against God and it grieves God's heart, and Daddy and Momma are responsible to their heavenly Father. The wisest man who ever lived penned a number of verses that give direction as to how to administer discipline in a godly manner (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13,14; 29:15,17). After the correction is administered, hug the child and pray. When correction is given in the right manner it normally gives the child and the parent a holy respect for God and a feeling of release.

One young man, who was on the mission field with his parents as a child, wrote, "Growing up in a family on the mission field is such a privilege. If handled properly there can be more quality time together as a family compared to the family whose dad has a regular job and is away from home all day. Although there may be the temptation for parents to put 'ministry' ahead of family, this surely does not have to be the case." A rich blessing to parents and children is to take the family along for visitation into the highways and byways, witnessing for Jesus to various people by singing, reading the Scriptures, and praying.



## What If?

*Lois Troyer, Georgetown, OH*



**N**o one needs to tell you that we are living in days of unprecedented opportunity. Whether we are single or married, there is not only boundless opportunity, but a great, gasping, clutching need for hearts and hands to willingly care for the women struggling around us. All of us have walked through difficult seasons and know what it's like when we can't even hold up our own arms. The following is a patchwork of my story and issues facing women today, stitched with bindings of grace and hope holding them together. Find here little bits of truth and questions to ponder in our hearts to keep us reaching higher. Whether we are married or single, a mother or an office worker, we are called to nurture and support the community of women around us.

**What if we developed true empathy that crosses the boundaries between the young and old and the married and unmarried?** What if we turned off the voices in the back of our minds that criticize and compare griefs and burdens and

envies opportunities. A woman who went straight from Dad's wing to her husband's protection without needing to provide long-term for herself doesn't grasp the hard work and loneliness entailed in a single's journey. At the same time, a single woman can't fully grasp the demands of motherhood that are so exhausting and sometimes downright terrifying. And neither of them know the pain of a monthly pregnancy test that's negative year after gut-wrenching year. True empathy allows you to care without comparing and to extend grace without judgment.

**What if, when the calamity of grief has overtaken a friend, we sit with her in her lamenting without offering trite words of supposed comfort?** Grief is a wild thing in its early days. It wipes out the capacity to reason and process, and comes in waves you don't think you'll survive physically or emotionally. Give the gift of your physical presence, bring the tissues, stop being shocked at the wailing, and don't cower at the pain squeezing your own heart.



Pray Psalms aloud over her. Bring her water or tea, or lip balm for her dry lips, but don't bring your advice. There will be time for that next year, or the next. Or maybe never. In the emotion of the moment, insensitive comments are sometimes made by well-meaning people who intend to be encouraging or helpful. Unless you've walked a very similar path, extending arms and hands in physical comfort, prayer, letting them do the talking, and helping with physical needs are the best things you can do.

**What if we addressed the brokenness in our own lives and stopped pretending that our spirituality is a standalone feature?**

Our spiritual life encompasses our emotional and mental health, and the key to finding healing in any of these areas is addressing them as a whole. Not only do fractured mothers produce fractured children, but they are apt to generate downtrodden and defeated husbands who find it easier to shift into passive mode than to shoulder the protective leadership role they were created for. Until someone takes responsibility and allows help and healing to shine on those generations of skeletons in the closet, the brokenness will keep producing shockwaves of pain

and unhealthy coping skills in each following generation of souls. Mental health professionals who emphasize Jesus as the source of healing can be a powerful force on a journey towards restoration. What if we utilized therapy and counseling early and not as a last-ditch effort? If it's the very last tool we try, those who do use it feel like they are a special kind of broken—a stigma that should not be found among us.

**What if we mothers taught our children early and well about the lavish love of God and the way He rejoices over us with singing?**


Instead of portraying Him as a God of rules, and justice, and sovereign frowns heaped upon their disobedient little heads, and, *oh, Jesus loves you*. Having first established in their minds that God delights in them, the desire to honor Him will happen more organically. Maybe then we wouldn't have Christians incapable of seeing God as anything but a God who has a running list of the sins I don't know about. If we serve God out of the necessity to escape His judgment, we are missing the whole point of being His child. If we serve God because we have found our place in His kingdom of love, our obedience will be the calm and joyful fruit of being known by Him.

### **What if we stopped hurrying?**

What if we embraced the value of rest and boundaries in our schedule? As Anabaptists, we are shakers and movers and doers. This subject tends to makes us feel a little (or a lot) insecure. Proverbs decries the sluggard and the lazy, and we place a tremendous amount of value on tangible accomplishments. So much so that we tend to find our self-worth and identity there. A sparkling clean house, neatly-sewed dresses, and stacks of quilts for refugees are wonderful; and even better if accomplished all by one person! That would be sure to get you on some committee. But, Corrie ten Boom said, "If the devil can't make you sin, he'll make you busy." What is the greatest commandment? Loving God and loving those around us. Neither of those can be done without intention and time. Have we ever shaken our heads sadly at a wayward young person and said, "His parents just spent too much time with him, they weren't busy enough?" Flipping over rocks to look for grubs in the woods with a four-year-old in mid-forenoon on a workday is perfectly honorable. We have one fleeting life to love the souls that surround us. Maybe this is the real way of kicking laziness to the curb? Maybe this is what diligence looks like?

**What if we believed that taking offense is a choice?** What if we had the maturity to back up, take a deep breath, and let it go? Being easily offended is toxic to any relationship and is rooted in spiritual immaturity. Harboring an offense bears the fruit of bitterness. And the devil sits back on his haunches in delight at his ancient and effective trick. When we are offended, pride and arrogance are in the driver's seat and humility and honor are in the trunk. We choose our responses and can blame no one for making us angry or bitter. (Abuse and sinful behavior are not being excused here.)

**What if we invited friends into our homes and the best we could offer was bad food at a table with Cheerios crunching underfoot, but laid our hearts bare before each other?** What if we would talk about our darkest places? Those desert places where the hyenas of fear and shame nip at our heels.

Can we lay down the pride or whatever is holding us back? And what if, after a torrent of tears, and hands placed on our heads in intercessory prayer, we could do the next right thing? Henri Nouwen said, "Community is where humility and glory touch." 



## My Dad's Brush with Death

*Alisha Miller, Crossville, TN*

**O**n this Father's Day I am so grateful I still have my father.

My grandpa's funeral, on December 9, 2021, was unusually warm and muggy. He had a stroke and passed away on Sunday, December 5. His funeral, on Thursday, was a very sad day for us. The weather was unusually warm and felt unsettled and ominous.

After the funeral, Dad, Mom, and I went to my uncle and aunt, Marlin and Orpha, in Paris, TN. We stayed there two nights. We had planned to go home, but we were still so tired from the past week that we decided to stay an extra night. Plus, we heard that there were nasty storms coming and we didn't want to be on the road when they hit.

Some of the family went to bed early that night, which was very unusual for us. But we were exhausted and needed a good night's sleep.

At 11:00 my aunt Orpha rushed upstairs and woke us. "Marlin's brother just called and said that there's a tornado on the ground in a town several miles away. We must go to the basement right away," she urged. Mom's phone had gone off

with the tornado warning. She was already out of bed and had told Dad about the warning. He did not usually go to the basement during storms and just went back to peaceful slumber, oblivious of the danger coming our way.

Needless to say, the rest of us got out of bed and headed downstairs quickly. We had been in the basement for several minutes when I noticed that Dad wasn't down there!

It was stormy—a wild and dark night. But where was Dad? Mom and I were afraid to go upstairs. My brave uncle Marlin raced back up two flights of stairs. He banged on the bedroom door. "Mose," he yelled, "Mose, a tornado, you must come down now!"

My dad was sound asleep. At first he wasn't going to get up, but Marlin convinced him. As the men raced downstairs, they looked outside at the storm. Dad remarked, "This isn't good."

We all huddled in Jordan's basement bedroom. Only five minutes after Dad and Marlin joined us, the tornado roared over us. My ears started popping. We could hear metal banging and crashing and wood

ripping apart. It seemed like the awful noise went on for a long time, but it was actually only 30 or 45 seconds. The tornado devastated the house, and the top story was blown away. The bed my dad had been asleep in just five minutes earlier was gone. The electricity went off and water started pouring from the ceiling.

We waited till all was quiet then went to see the damage. Most of us weren't wearing shoes, so Jordan graciously lent out his shoes. Most of the main floor walls were down, and there was glass, mud, and insulation everywhere.

Thank God we had just enough phone service to call friends with the news that we were all alive. It took men several hours to clear the road to Marlin's place, but as soon as it was possible, several men from their church showed up. They took us to a church family's place, and we just crashed in their basement. Thankfully, most of us were able to fall asleep even after all the trauma.

The next day, many of the church friends and some of our relatives from Rutherford showed up bright and early to help clean up. They worked all day, going through the debris to see what could be saved. The ladies took home loads and loads of muddy clothes to wash.

The house was almost totally gone

with only a few main walls still standing. Marlin's shop and 18 mini barns had gone with the wind along with their rental house. Three of their vehicles were totaled, along with our van. Their two chicken barns were damaged. Their whole backyard was a complete mess. The top story of their house was smashed in a big pile, and the remains of the shop and mini barns were scattered all over their property. Their animals were fine with the exception of one goat that died.

We stayed in Paris until Tuesday afternoon of the next week. Some of the men from our church came to help with the cleanup. They brought an extra vehicle for us to drive home.

With the help of countless friends, Marlin's place got cleaned up, and they started rebuilding. Many more people came to lend a helping hand. Only seven weeks after the tornado, they moved back into a new house.

Marlin's family was so grateful that what mattered most was not taken, the precious lives of each one of their family.

My family praised the Lord continually that we still had our dad. My mother thanked God over and over for the life of her husband.

This month, thank God for your father. Let him know how much you appreciate him.



## He is No Fool...

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

June 29 is known as the day of the Christian martyr. According to church tradition, it is the day that the Apostle Paul was martyred. Many faithful men and women of God have made the ultimate sacrifice for their faith since Jesus Christ gave Himself as a perfect example and perfect sacrifice. All who choose to follow Christ are called to give their lives either as a living sacrifice, or in some cases like the people that we honor on June 29, a literal sacrifice.

On October 28, 1949, a young man with a deep love for God and a passion for the lost souls in the world, jotted a few words in a journal entry that have become some of the most-often-quoted Christian words not found in the Bible, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” Jim Elliot wrote those words in his private journal. Little did he know that a few years later he would do just that. I don’t believe he ever dreamed that someday his journals would be published and that many

Christians would know his name and sacrifice and the sacrifice of his fellow missionaries on that fateful day, January 8, 1956.

It’s easy for us to read *Martyr’s Mirror* and say, “That was hundreds of years ago!” That raises the following questions. “What about Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, and their colleagues?” Well, that was over 65 years ago, one might counter! This raises yet another question, “Have you heard of John Chau?”

Following is an excerpt from *Voice of the Martyrs* about John Chau: “*The Lord clearly gave John Chau a desire and calling to go to the people of North Sentinel Island [off the coast of India] when John was a teenager. The North Sentinelese do not have any contact with the outside world. Their language is unknown, and tribesmen have responded violently to past contacts. Neither violence nor isolation lessens Jesus’ call to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew. 28:19).*

Neither dampened John's desire to be obedient either. Every decision John made for the next nine years was to help prepare him to land on the beach, live among the North Sentinelese, and share Jesus with them. John knew he wouldn't have a hot water heater on the island, so he always took cold showers. John knew he would land with zero knowledge of the North Sentinelese language, so he went through linguistics training. John knew one way he could serve the islanders was through health care, so he trained as a wilderness EMT. He knew contact lenses wouldn't work without running water, so he had vision-correction surgery. He was vaccinated against all manner of diseases, knowing islanders' immune systems would be vulnerable to imported Western illnesses. John made first contact with the islanders on November 15, 2018, approaching in a kayak, offering gifts. Later that day, a Sentinelese boy fired an arrow at John, which lodged in the Bible he was holding. John retreated and prayed for wisdom. Should he keep going? Should he turn back? "God, I don't want to die," John wrote in his journal that evening. "WHO WILL TAKE MY PLACE IF I DO? ... Forgive [the boy who shot me] and any of the people on this island who try to kill me, and especially forgive them if they

succeed." The next morning, before being dropped off for the final time on North Sentinel Island, John penned a note to his family. "You might think I am crazy in all this," he wrote. "But I think it's worth it to declare Jesus to these people." On the morning of November 17, the fishermen who'd dropped John off saw tribesmen burying John's body on the beach. John often ended his letters, even journal entries, with the Latin phrase "soli deo gloria"—"Glory to God alone."

Nine years of preparation. Nine years of training and focus. Nine years of prayer and conviction for the lost souls on North Sentinel Island. One day of contact, a day of prayer and planning, and then one last attempt to bring them Jesus—an attempt that ended in John's soul slipping off the bonds of this earth to go to his eternal reward.

So what's the point? Why put in so much effort for so little return? That is the wrong question to ask. We should not ask "Why?" but "Why not?" How much is a soul worth? II Peter 3:9b says, "[The Lord] is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Why wouldn't we spend our whole lives actively sharing our faith? I don't doubt that young people today love the Lord, but are you passionate about your

faith? Are you willing to sacrifice or even inconvenience yourself to share your faith with others? Are you willing to risk relationships and reputation to strive to be more godly regardless of how uncomfortable it makes others feel? How far are you willing to go to help bring someone else to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ?

A quick Google search will confirm reports that the U.S. military is struggling to get recruits, and the U.S. education system is facing a shortage of teachers. Is the church reflecting what is going on in the world? There is a shortage of teachers and a shortage of people willing to serve in voluntary service units domestically and internationally. If we are truly “not conformed” to the world then why are we reflecting what is going on in the world? Where are the young people who are sold out for Christ like Jim Elliot and John Chau? Have we become individualistic and independent, or are we just lukewarm?

The blame can't really be pinned on any one generation. Perhaps we've been too focused on our businesses and making money so that we aren't better examples of sacrifice and service. There is a distinct possibility we spend too much of our free time

and income pursuing hobbies and personal interests and not positively impacting other people's lives. And there is always the chance that we've become so entangled with our own affairs that we have no time for God's affairs. *“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier”* (II Timothy 2:4).

I have had various people in the last year come and ask me why young people leave the church. I don't have an answer. Neither do I have the answer to why more youth don't commit to several years of voluntary service for the Lord. I am not trying to put anyone on a guilt trip. I honestly want to know what you (the reader, both young and old) think might be the problem. There are many fervent and faithful young adults in our churches. Maybe you are one of them and are frustrated with the casualness of fellow youth. Maybe my comments earlier in the article are wrong. Please reach out to me either by mail or email and give me your opinions and ideas. I want to generate a discussion that will encourage young people to commit to service for the Lord. Let's find a way to raise up more fervent and faithful youth.



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## THOUGHT GEMS

Happiness is the result of being too busy to be miserable.

• • • • •

The way to be successful is to follow the advice you give to others.

• • • • •

He that would govern others, first should be the master of himself.

• • • • •

What a father says to his children is not heard by the world, but it will be heard  
by posterity. –Jean Paul Richter

• • • • •

Self-control is coolness and absence of heat and waste. –Ralph Waldo Emerson

• • • • •

Happiness is a very small desk and a very big wastebasket. –Robert Orben

• • • • •

Worry doesn't help tomorrow's troubles, but it does ruin today's happiness.

• • • • •

My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me. –Henry Ford

• • • • •

To profit from good advice requires more wisdom than to give it.

• • • • •

He who lives to live forever, never fears dying. –William Penn

• • • • •

The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.

–William James