



Calvary messenger

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

Galatians 6:14

APRIL 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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Bent the Head That Knows the Sorrow

Darlene (Mrs. Ervin) Miller, Linn, MO

Bent the head that knows the sorrow,
Of the cross that looms—tomorrow!
Bent the head where blood-sweat gathers on His brow.
Bent the heads of watchers—sleeping,
While alone their Lord is weeping,
Though they long to comfort Him they know not how.

Bent the head that feels the anguish
Of a world so prone to languish
In a wilderness of sin and unbelief.
Bent the heads in slumber—waiting,
Never quite anticipating
That the one they loved would face such bitter grief.

Bent the head of father, mother,
Son or daughter, sister, brother,
Where the hand of death has touched a home with loss.
Bent the head of Jesus—caring!
For He knows the pain they're bearing.
He already bore death's burden on His cross.

Bent His head to watch—to listen;
Bent to wipe the tears that glisten
On the cheeks of those He loves, while still they weep.
Bent to share the cup they're drinking,
Lifting hearts in sorrow sinking,
Bent in love, but never, never bent in sleep!

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16).

[Author's note: I wrote this only a few days before the terrible accident that claimed the lives of 11 people in Kentucky on March 26, 2010. The John Esh family were neighbors of my husband's aunt and uncle. It was as if I was writing it for someone, but I didn't know who it was. The title of the poem came to me and since it lingered, I asked God to make it say what He wanted it to say. I send this in memory of those who were called home in that accident.]



Just Peanuts

Imagine several good friends browsing garage sales. One finds a wonderful bargain. The purchase is made and carried home. This good fortune is complete except for telling the neighbors: “I got it for *just peanuts!*” That’s how one person’s *trash* becomes another person’s *treasure*.

I also like “just peanuts” and it has nothing to do with trash.

While I enjoy other snacks, lightly-salted peanuts, roasted in the shell, I think are really good. It’s wonderful to open that dry shell, brush off the “red paper,” then pop them one at a time into my mouth and savor the crunchy goodness!

Earlier this year my grandchildren gave me a bag of Virginia roasted peanuts for my birthday that provided delightful snacking for a good while. Some weeks later, I noticed something unusual. About the time the bottom of the bag started showing through, the leftover peanuts caught my eye. The peanuts left over were almost all *one-nut* peanuts! I had been picking them out of the bag one at a time, supposedly at random, but I guess I had been picking out the longer

peanuts. When I realized what I had been doing, I started picking up the short peanuts and I found them just as tasty as the multiple-meated nuts. The short shells were usually a bit tighter than the longer ones. Would an analytical mind conclude that I had subconsciously chosen the 2, 3, and 4-meated ones because they were easier to open? Or would they think I tell myself (even when I’ve had enough), “I will eat just *one* more.”

Comparisons That Hinder

This situation got me to thinking about how we tend to compare people. We may walk past people who are different from us. We may think we are better (or worse) than they. Comparing ourselves with others comes naturally, but it’s bad. (See 2 Cor. 10:12.) When we accept God’s love for us, we don’t need the crutch of comparison for significance. For instance:

- Some people have wealth; others are poor. James tells us not to judge people by their clothes or their money. **“For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;**

And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; Are ye not then partial in yourselves and become judges of [with] evil thoughts?" (James 2:2-4). Having money does not necessarily harm us, but when money possesses us—that's different!

•People don't all have the same amount of pigmentation, but the difference is just skin deep. The human race is all made of the "same stuff." Skin hue just never makes someone less (or more) worthy of honor and brotherhood. Let us remember Acts 17: 26, which says, "[God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth..." Notice the words: *one blood* and *all nations*. Even in the life-saving, blood-donation process (to and from anywhere on the globe), the donor's ethnicity is not important. Only freedom from disease and blood type matter. Nothing good comes from making comparisons and feeling superior (or inferior) for skin color.

•People don't look alike. We think some men are quite handsome and some women are quite beautiful—and some are less so. But wait--what constitutes attractiveness? What is

the right size for ears, the right length for a nose, the right texture for hair, the right shape for a mouth, the right prominence for a chin? What is the right physique? Is it better to be tall or short, muscular or lean, athletic or less coordinated? I'm not sure, but one thing I do know: God's grace in the heart gives us all something to dress up with—a genuine, God-honoring smile.

•People's ability to think varies. Those with less ability are well-advised to find work accordingly. Those with greater ability should do the same. Both may need encouragement to work diligently. The people who find it relatively easy to do what others find harder, may slacken their effort to simply keep pace with others. If they do that, they "bury their talent with laziness." God gifts us for the work He has for us. Our level of ability is not nearly as important as our willingness to work diligently with what God has given us.

When we make invalid distinctions, it affects our relationships with others. Now that is not "just peanuts." God's Word makes it clear that it's very important!

Paul, the Apostle, puts things into clear focus with these *three* probing questions: "**For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?**

Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7).

Human vanity makes life very confusing. It makes some matters significant that are insignificant in God’s sight. Let’s adjust their relative

importance in our eyes, too. We’ll be more Christlike and we’ll relate better to our fellow travelers. That’s one liberating truth of which Jesus said, **“Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”** (John 8:32).

—PLM 

reader response

Re: Casey Gingerich’s death

It may be instructive for us to observe that Casey Gingerich died abroad while visiting a mission field to help his fellow man. In contrast, many young men in the military are killed while attempting to kill their fellow man and it is called service. What a waste!

We can be thankful that Casey

was living his life in a positive way to serve the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. What a contrast!

Casey’s life was not wasted but it was a shining example of youth in service for Christ. What a worthy example!

James D. Hershberger,

Stuarts Draft, VA 

the bottom line

God’s Simple Math

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

From God’s perspective, the whole scope of life for every individual can be seen in choices with two possibilities. With only two choices, choosing is much clearer. Two choices are much simpler to deal with than 16 choices—or even six choices.

In the beginning, God created the earth and all things in it—visible and invisible—in just six days. He made it

with seemingly countless numbers of rocks, plants, insects, birds, animals, fish, stars and so on. Yet, in the most solemn choices regarding the future and the afterlife, God has given but two choices.

A key Bible passage is in John 5:24, where the middle verse of this chapter, says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me,

hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.”

The Bible speaks of *two births*. We are all born once when we come into the world. No choice of our own brought us here. Then there are those “born of God,” “born from above,” “born again by the Word of God” and “born by the Spirit of God.”

There are also *two lives* to live. Romans 8 speaks of living after the flesh, or living after the Spirit. Either spiritual blindness in darkness or spiritual life is lived in light and spiritual insight.

The Bible speaks of *two deaths*. Spiritual death has come about by sin, which is the experience of us all. But those who are born again are made spiritually alive in Christ and by Him. Such will only die physically. Those who fail to be saved from their sins will die in them and are thus eternally cut off from God.

There are *two resurrections*. Adults who have not been saved or who were saved but have gone back into sin and unbelief and are spiritually dead. They are “dead in trespasses and sins” against God. Jesus said they will be resurrected to damnation. We who are saved will be raised to appear before God by the resurrection of life.

Jesus said, “Marvel not at this [the fact of the final judgment]: For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

And shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28,29).

The Bible speaks of *two judgments*. Revelation 20 states the awesome fact of a future judgment at a great white throne. “They” will be judged according to “their” works, it says. The dead shall appear there. Those drowned in the depths of the sea shall appear there in that awful judgment. Those in the graves worldwide, the bodies lost in avalanches, mud slides, or buried in the lava beds of volcanoes, those whose bodies were cremated and had their ashes scattered over the oceans will all be there.

The other judgment is the judgment seat of Christ. While “they” shall appear at the great white throne judgment, the Bible also says “we” must all appear at this judgment. “Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:9,10). We see here the likelihood of Christians receiving their rewards. Whether one is going to heaven or hell is decided based on the soul’s status with God in Christ while yet living on the earth.

Jesus said that he who believes on Him “shall not come into condemnation (Luther’s German: *judgment*), but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24). *Is passed* is passive. We believe in Jesus Christ. He causes the transaction from spiritual death to spiritual life upon the basis of our salvation in Him.

Is passed is also a *power* word. It is descriptive of action being accomplished with irreversible thrust. Believing in Jesus Christ to salvation from sin is the *spiritual cause*, having everlasting life is the *supernatural effect*!

Coming back now to where all of us are today. Jesus also taught that there are *two ways*. There is the broad gate and the broad road that leads to everlasting destruction (hell). Those who enter in at the narrow gate are to walk the narrow road which leads to life (heaven). (See Matthew 7:13,14). Our choices in life determine in which resurrection we will share and what our eternal destiny will be.

There are *two eternal destinations*. Many years ago, a brother said it would seem as there really ought to be three destinations. He said it seems as though a lot of people are

too bad to go to heaven and also too good to be banished to hell.

Such humanistic ideas are a problem only for people with a weak view of the Scriptures. The Bible says “The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim. 2:19). God is also kind and reasonable to give those saved by Jesus’ blood personal assurance by His Holy Spirit. (See Romans 5:11; 6:23; 8:16).

The Bible is clear. God has spoken with verity and clarity. The unrighteous dead will end up in hell. The righteous dead will go to heaven. God is altogether righteous in these declarations of two births, two lives, two deaths, two resurrections, two judgments, two ways, and two destinations.

“...in the place where the tree falleth, the it shall be” (Eccl. 11:3). “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, ...he that is righteous, let him be righteous still” (Rev. 22:11).

The Bottom Line is that God’s simple math comes down to two choices. We either choose the path and accept the destination or we choose the destination and accept the path!



***Zeal without knowledge
resembles fire out of control.***

Right or Relationship?

Chester Weaver, LaGrange, IN

Every so often a new wrinkle challenges Anabaptist churches. These challenges regularly test the mettle of the Anabaptist people to reveal what is in our hearts. The good side of the challenge is that when met and understood for what it is, the church is rooted more deeply and God gets special glory. The down side is that well-meaning people may get swept away into error they do not perceive. Since error blinds the heart and mind, extricating a church from error is most difficult. It is much better to be forewarned and forearmed. It is much better to be so acquainted with truth that error immediately “flies a red flag.”

A recent wrinkle can be stated like this, “Which trumps, doctrine or relationships?”

The question itself is bad because both sound doctrine and good relationships are important according to the Word of God. It sounds as if people must choose between the two. “Trumps” means “which is more important.” God expects His people to choose both; an artificial distinction creates a problem.

We demonstrate our love for God by loving people. Good relationships among people are a good indication that proper love for God is functioning

as it should. If a person does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? This basic concept is sound doctrine, according to 1 John.

Sound doctrine means measuring all things by the eternal Word of God. It does not matter what I think or say; it does matter what God thinks or says. My words only have weight as they correspond to God’s words. My thoughts only have validity as they echo God’s thoughts. His Word and His Truth will stand forever and we will all be judged by these words. We are not judged in a human court according to human “groupthink” and human wisdom.

The New Testament has much to say about how to make human relationships work as they should. Every counsel it gives for human relationships is sound doctrine. Love, humility, forgiveness, peace, *Gelassenheit*, [calm acceptance, surrender to God] confession, longsuffering, respect, integrity, honor, gentleness, and more are sound human relationship principles. When people practice these divine counsels, human relationships usually work well. Ruptures in human relationships often mean some New Testament admonition is not being practiced somewhere. To

get human relationships properly restored, people need to deal with root issues honestly.

But what happens when God's truth cuts across human thinking? What happened when God's truth through Jesus Christ cut across Pharisee understandings? What happened when Jesus Christ cut across Sadducee understandings? What happened when Jesus Christ cut across Roman understandings?

What happened when God's words through Jeremiah cut across Jewish understandings? What happened with the other prophets? Some of the prophets, such as Elijah, were oral prophets. Ahab and Jezebel understood Elijah only too well.

Prophet jobs are most difficult. They cut across groupthink. They cut across relationships. When people stray from His truth, God sends prophets to confront them with what is happening. This is an act of mercy. God cares enough to offer correction so that human beings can get back on track. But people often do not want to get back on track. Humans historically believe their ideas are superior to God's. They want to preserve their relationships. Why?

There is the rub. People have a herd instinct. They desire to be like other people. They like to move together in groupthink. Since most people do not like to think deeply, they tend to pick up great-sounding ideas somewhere and agree with them.

When others do the same, people are convinced that they have the truth. Not much checking with God. Not much critical thinking. Not much historical perspective. "The wheel has just been invented!" Everybody slaps everybody on the back and goes chuckling on their way. The new vogue *must* be God's truth because the whole group thinks that way. And we all have a great relationship with each other!

When asked to comment on the aftermath of others leaving their Conference, one older minister said, "Who was I to resist the Holy Ghost?" To him unity with Conference while it was moving into apostasy was the work of the Holy Ghost. With that premise, relationships must trump everything, even obedience to the clear word of God.

This is a very old problem. This is why God sent prophets among His people occasionally. Correction time!

Today we call groupthink behavior an expression of post-modernism. Post-modernism is consumed with the idea that everyone creates his own reality, individuals, and groups. You and your group create a meaningful reality for yourselves and we in our group will create a meaningful reality for ourselves. In the big picture if homosexuality is collectively deemed acceptable, it must be alright. If divorce and remarriage happens all the time, it must be a sad fact to accept

and to work with redemptively. If integrity suffers, we just live in a fallen world and everybody makes his way the best he can. In fact, spinning the facts a bit to encourage groupthink might even be virtuous. Expressions of post-modernism justify disobedience to God on the basis that since many people disobey and obviously we are making it quite well, God must mean something a little bit different from what He seemed to say so directly. Or, we know some things today that past generations did not know.

But then there is the “prophet problem.” Some out-of-sync person questions groupthink.

Historically, the way humans have handled this problem is to tell the prophets to stop talking. “Shut up,” they said. Or, “Prophecy unto us smooth things. We need encouragement, not discouragement.” To this they add ridicule and Jeremiah got his share. If prophets do not get the point and keep speaking God’s words, get rid of them. The ultimate is to stop the mouth with death. In Jeremiah’s case, God divinely protected his prophetic voice. Humans will do just about anything to smooth out the way before themselves.

Think about Nazi Germany and the gross crimes against humanity justified in the name of Naziism. Many people surrendered themselves to Nazi groupthink in spite of inner misgivings. The group must be right!

Think about Communism. Think about modernism. Think about post-modernism. Think about mass media. Think about public nudity. Think about consumerism. Think about entertainment movies. Think about “Christian” sports. Think about texting. Think about cell phones. Think about electronic gadgetry. “Lovest thou me more than these?”

What if Jesus actually meant what He said? What if the prophets meant what they said? In that case the facts are in.


Jesus Christ quoted the Old Testament law, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” What does this command have to do with groupthink?

Jesus said further, “If any man love father or mother, brother or sister, wife or children more than Me, he is not worthy of Me.” Is that groupthink? He also said, “Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” (NKJV) Do these

words describe good relationships?

On the great Judgment Day, we will hear words from The Great Authority, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of thy Lord.” Or we will hear, “Depart

from Me, for I never knew you.” Those words will be spoken according to whether or not we got these matters right.

Is it Right or Relationship? Certainly not a trivial question! 

Man of Sorrows

Larry Gembicki, Cleveland, OH

I was reading Isaiah 53 today and I was struck by the phrase that called Jesus “a man of sorrows.” We like to picture Jesus as sort of a happy-go-lucky individual who had it all together. What made God inspire Isaiah to picture Jesus as a man of sorrows?

As I meditated on the thought, a couple of things came to my mind. First of all, Jesus was conceived before his earthly parents were married. I believe people were well aware of this fact. I believe that’s what the Pharisees were getting at when they told Him, we were not born of fornication (*like you were*: implied) He carried the stigma of illegitimacy.

Secondly, He was a brilliant man. His IQ was off the charts. We all know what kind of comments those who break the curve receive: “nerd,” “geek,” whatever.

Thirdly, there’s no mention of his earthly father, Joseph, after they found 12-year-old Jesus in the temple with the Jewish leaders. That makes me believe that Joseph died young

and because Jesus was the oldest male in the family, it was His responsibility to be the man of the house. It’s a pretty traumatic event when you lose your father at a young age.

Fourthly, it is said that He came unto his own and his own received Him not. He was not received by the ones He came for—the Jews. “How often have I desired to take you under my wings and you would not,” He said about Jerusalem.

Fifthly, when Jesus looked at people, He saw more than we do. He could see their past, present, and future at the same time. He knew Nathaniel was a man in whom was no guile even while Nathaniel was still sitting under the fig tree. He could see all the sorrow that a person had been through, was going through at the present, and would go through in the future. He knew where a person he was talking to would ultimately spend eternity. He knew that many would not spend eternity with Him in heaven. Broad is the way, He said, that leads to destruction and many

go that way. But only few are on the narrow road, the strait gate, and thus find eternal life. I believe this brought Him much sorrow.

He also spoke much about the cross and his coming crucifixion. He knew He would be scourged. He knew the date of his death. He knew that Judas would betray Him. He knew that Peter would deny Him three times. He knew that his apostles would be martyred. He said He had not come to bring peace but a sword. He said a man's foes are those of his own household. He knew many would be killed because of his name.

It is said that for the joy before

Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame. Jesus was a man of sorrows while on earth. He saw it all. He was beaten, scourged, disfigured like no other man, and crucified as a common criminal. He truly is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We hid our faces from Him and esteemed Him not...but with his stripes we are healed.

Today we celebrate his resurrection. He had to die before He could be resurrected. He spent three days in the grave. He rose from the dead on the third day. He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Hallelujah, what a Savior!



Headship

Kevin Smucker, McConnelsville, OH

The world that we live in has become increasingly hostile to the thought of having other people over us in authority. Many people rebel at the thought of submitting to another person, but our world could not survive if there was no rank of order among humans. We were all created to answer to someone, whether we are male, female, youth, or children; until we come to that realization; we'll probably think of our authorities as people who are looking suspiciously over our shoulders, rather than embracing them as our God-given

protectors. God has very clearly shown us the headship order in 1 Corinthians 11:3, *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."*

When Christ was on earth, He made it clear that He was sent from His Father and was only doing the works of His Father. A proof of that submission to the Father is the amount of time He spent talking with Him and seeking the Father's direction for His journey.

In chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians, Paul

explains how men and women should honor their heads with the matter of the head covering. He tells us that for a man to show proper respect to his head, Jesus Christ, the man should not wear something on his head while praying or prophesying. Paul also asks the question of whether long hair is fitting for a man, and he would suggest that our God-given feelings (nature) would tell us that it is only right for a man to have short hair. Paul also explains that a woman shows honor to her authority by wearing something that does cover her hair while praying or prophesying. It doesn't show that she is less important in the eyes of God or that her position is inferior to the man, but only that in the design of God's headship order she does respect and follow his decisions as long as it doesn't violate the Word of God.

Theses verse seem to cause some confusion among even people who observe the practice of the woman wearing the head covering. An interpretation of the Greek words used here may help us understand what Paul was saying. He uses the word *akatakalyptos* (means to cover wholly) in the verse that explains that a man ought not to do this as a sign of his submission to his head, Jesus Christ. Paul gives the exact opposite instruction when he describes how a woman should pray or prophesy, so it

seems clear that the different genders are to have their pates adorned in opposite manner. In the second verse using the word *covering*, Paul uses the word *peribolaion* (means something thrown around; a mantle) to explain that the woman's hair is given her to be covered by cloth covering. Paul also mentions that the long hair of the woman is a glory for her, but he does not say that the hair itself is the covering that should be used as a symbol of observing God's headship order.

As we look at the overall picture of what Paul was addressing in this chapter, it's clear that he was emphasizing the importance of recognizing the perfect order that God has designed for His followers. God is first; Christ, man, and then woman, but even though the order has the woman in the last place, Paul is reminding us that the man could not survive without the woman and the woman needs the man to survive as well. Both depend on Christ for life and they each depend on the other in their human needs, and as long as love abounds between man and woman, God's order will be the only way to bring peace and fulfillment to the relationships between the genders.

[Written in an assignment at IGo Institute, Chang Mei, Thailand, November, 2009.]



Life's Purpose

Matthew Schlabach, Holmesville, OH

As long as we don't understand that we were created by God for God, life won't make much sense to us or our children.

If parents haven't found purpose in life, their family won't have purpose either. Children won't experience any of the joy found in functional families and are much more likely to seek to fill voids in alcohol, drugs, porn and more!

My friend was once explaining the peace of God. He had lunch with one of the richest men on earth. The rich man was 75 years old, had his own yacht, his own airplane, you name it. If he wanted it, he had it. After lunch, he got tears in his eyes and said he felt empty and was probably the most miserable man

on earth.

My friend met other celebrities. They would tell him they don't have anything to live for, but are depending on alcohol to make it through.

Soon afterward, he met a minister who didn't have much to his name, but he had a totally different outlook on life, with a sparkle in his eyes!

Do you have purpose and peace in your home? That electrifying spark worth living for?

God doesn't need lazy people. God wants us to provide for our families. "But if any provide not for for his own and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:18).



“One of the dangers of having a lots of money is that you may be quite satisfied with the kinds of happiness money can give and fail to realize your need for God. If everything seems to come simply by signing checks, you may forget that you are at every moment totally dependent on God.” (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.)

marriages

May the home established by this marriage be a little substation of heaven, where God reigns and His blessings flow.

Wadel-Lambright

Bro. Delwyn, son of Clyde and Dorothy Wadel, Martinsburg, PA, and Sis. Elizabeth, daughter of Gerald and Arlene Lambright, Huntsville, AR, at First Assembly of God for Lighthouse of Faith on Feb. 11, 2011, by Elmer Gingerich.

cradle roll

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

Albrecht, Larry and Anne (Wagler), Newton, ON, third, fourth and fifth children, second, third, and fourth sons: Thomas Henry, born May 17, 2007; Kevan John born Mar. 23, 2008; and Caleb Jordan, born May 11, 2009. All three sons' adoption was completed Feb. 4, 2011.

Graber, Laban and Regina (Miller), Bloomfield, MO, sixth child, second son, Linford Dale, Jan. 14, 2011.

Hostetler, Bruce and Amber (Troyer), Irwin, OH, first child and dau., Cassidy Brooke, Feb. 20, 2011.

Hostetler, Matthew and Keturah (Yutzy), Belvidere, TN, third child and dau., Melody Hope, Feb. 28, 2011.

Kensinger, Caleb and Jessica (Yoder), Sarasota, FL, third child and son, Benjamin Levi, Feb. 3, 2011.

Correction: **Kuepfer**, Ronald and Janelle (Erb), New Hamburg, ON, first child and dau., Hayley Sophia Jade, Dec. 31, 2010.

Mast, Michael and Eunice (Miller), Mountain View, AR, second child and son, Conrad Anthony, Jan. 29, 2011.

Miller, Evangel and Joanne (Brenneman), Honey Grove, PA, second child and dau., Katrina Faith, Feb. 4, 2011.

Miller, Luke and Elizabeth (Overholt), Abbeville, SC, third child, second dau., Kaitlyn Elyse, Feb. 3, 2011.

Overholt, Nathan and Janet (Peaster), Sarasota, FL, fourth child, second dau., Tabitha Faith, Jan. 25, 2011.

Stoltzfus, Dathan and Wilma (Di-enner), Perry, NY, seventh child, third dau., Emily Joy, Feb. 24, 2011.

Wagler, Matt and Erma Jean (Miller), Odon, IN, third child, second dau., Anna Leigh, Jan. 20, 2011.

Yoder, David and Wanda (Weaver), Sarasota, FL, third child, second dau., Kelsie Rose, Jan. 31, 2011.

Yoder, Jadon and Bethanie (Hoch-

stetler), Hicksville, OH, third child, second son, Joash Edward, Jan. 20, 2011.

Yutzy, Wilmer and Joanna (Miller), Huntsville, MO, seventh child, third son, Landon Marc, Feb. 19, 2011.

obituaries

Gerber, Deborah Elizabeth, 58, died of cancer at her home at Brunner, ON, Nov. 18, 2010. She was born Oct. 14, 1950, daughter of Allan and Norma (Zehr) Erb of Wellesley.

She was a member of Fair Haven A. M. Church, Milverton.

On June 1, 1974, she was married to Raymond Paul Gerber. Their children are: Kathryn Gerber, Brunner; Rachel Gerber, of the home; Joseph and Anita Gerber, Brunner; Jonathan and Joanne Gerber, Lucknow; Peter Gerber, Samuel Gerber, and Anita Gerber, all at home. She was grandmother to Kristalynn, Jalissalynn, and Kimberlynn. She is remembered also by brothers and sisters: David and Eva Erb, Wellesley; Darlene and Louis Byler, Milverton; John and Shelly Erb, Mary Ellen and James Ropp, all of Monkton; Allan and Linda Erb of Wellesley; sisters-in-law, Doris Dotzert of Amultree; Mary Ellen and Arnold Jantzi, Milverton, Lynda and Wesley

Kuefer, Milverton.


She was preceded in death by her mother-in-law, Emma (Gerber) Steckley and brother-in-law, Wayne Dotzert, who both died in 2010.

The funeral was held on Nov. 21, with Bishop Melvin Roes officiating. Interment followed in Mornington A.M. Cemetery.

Gingerich, Casey Monroe, 24, of Leon, Iowa, who was serving at Hillcrest Home in Harrison, AR, died Feb. 11, 2011, in a drowning accident while on a mission trip in Puerto Rico. He was born at Leon, Iowa, January 21, 1987, son of Monroe and LaVeta (Hershberger) Gingerich.

On Oct. 21, 2001, he was baptized upon his confession of faith and was a member at Leon Salem Mennonite Church. His voluntary service brought glory to God. He was friendly towards everyone and was a giver rather than looking for what he could get from others.

In addition to his parents, five sisters survive: Amy Rose, Rachel Renae, Sadies Marie, Sheryl LaRane, and Annie Danelle.

The funeral was held at Leon Salem on Feb. 19, with Marvin Kauffman, Norman Troyer, and Leonard Mast serving. Truman Yoder conducted the committal at Salem Mennonite Cemetery. 

The best way to keep from stepping on other people's toes is to put yourself into their shoes.

Lead pastor, Cedric Miller, from Neptune, NJ, has had a Facebook account to stay in touch with his six children. But he is now seriously concerned about how the use of Facebook is causing marital problems in his 1,100 member congregation. It has come to the place that he is relinquishing his account and requesting all of his leadership team to do likewise or resign. He says that for the last year and a half he has been involved with extensive marital counseling that was related to Facebook.

A non-local brother reports that Facebook has attracted the patronage of many “plain” persons. It obviously would have useful potential. Questions that deserve our honest scrutiny, include:

- Does it add anything to our lives that is essential?
- Does group acceptance of this practice add up to a net gain?

Concerns raised about this powerful socializer include not only the possibility of inappropriate contacts and relationships, but also that our involvement would demand a serious waste of time.

Church leaders and family heads do well to earnestly seek God’s guidance in knowing how to make a helpful response to this pervasive

presence that has crept in through the back door. Passivity and disinterest are not helpful responses.

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As of December, 2008, North American Amish census showed a count of 402 settlements with a total of 1,735 districts. At 100 persons per district (a conservative estimate) we get a total of 173,506, and that was two years ago. Studies show that Amish population doubles about every 20 years. (*Plain Interests*, Jan., 2011, David Bender)

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Astronomer Martin Gaskell was an applicant for the position of Observatory Director at the University of Kentucky. During the interview he was questioned about his religious beliefs. He said he is a Christian. Though his qualifications placed him well above fellow applicants, he was not hired. Kentucky U. did not want to be seen as hiring a creationist.

Gaskell sued the school for religious discrimination. In a rare outcome, the university settled the case for \$125,000. Gaskell hopes that the case will increase academic freedom and make people realize, “It is intellectually OK to be a Christian... There are many scientists who are Christian and I am not unusual. In

fact, I regard myself as being a very ordinary scientist and a very ordinary Christian.” (*World*, 2-11-11)



In 1924, founders of a Baptist seminary in Dallas were facing foreclosure and bankruptcy. They met to bring this urgent need to God. Harry Ironside uttered this short prayer: “God, we know that You own the cattle on a thousand hills. Please sell some and send us the money.”

Later that day, a man came unannounced reporting that he had sold two carloads of cattle. He was trying to put a business deal together, but it just wasn’t working. He didn’t know whether they needed the money, but felt that the Lord was “compelling” him to give it to them. The amount was exactly what they needed to get them past their emergency. (Brethren Revival Fellowship, No. 1, 2011.)



The meditation in *Beside the Still Waters*, 2-3-11, is entitled, “Daddy, I met a man named Jesus.” Alvin L. Miller, Crossville, TN, wrote the meditation. A couple who was openly atheistic and also antagonistic toward their Christian relatives, had a three-year-old daughter who became deathly sick. Doctors wanted to help but their efforts did not seem to help. When she was drawing her last breaths, her father knelt to give her CPR. She opened her eyes and

said, “Daddy, I met a man named Jesus; can I go back now?” Her father said, “Yes, Meagan. Good-bye” Close relatives of the couple told Alvin this story.

The parents were so touched and broken by this that they surrendered their lives to Jesus and have been faithful since then.



Another event reported (*The Hutchinson News*, 2-5-11) is similar in that a critically ill child nearly four years old had an out-of-this-world experience while he was being operated on for a ruptured appendix.

After his surgery while he was still in the hospital, Colton, the little boy wanted to share with his father some things he experienced when he “almost died.” His father steered the conversation away from the subject of death toward the prospect of full recovery and good health.

During his recovery, Colton kept trying to tell his parents that he had been in heaven. It took about four months before his parents concluded that their young son had had a truly supernatural experience.

- He referred to a number of things he could not have known naturally.
- He reported seeing his father in a secret place praying during his surgery while his mother was in another room talking on the cell phone.
- He told his mother that he met his

sister in heaven. His parents had not told him about the baby they had lost through miscarriage before he, the younger son, was born.

•He also reported having seen Pop, the child’s great grandfather who died in a car accident 30 years before the boy was born.

The father’s name is Todd Burpo. He is the pastor of Crossroads Wesleyan at Imperial, Nebraska. He also sells garage doors to supplement the family’s income.

This experience was so remarkable that his friends kept urging him to put the story in writing. He didn’t know how he would find time to write. He finally told the Lord that if a book was to be written, He would have to bring the publishing world to him. This finally happened. *Heaven is for Real* is currently number one on NY Times paperback non-fiction list.

I had the privilege of speaking with Pastor Burpo by telephone. The son, Colton, who had the unusual experience is now 11 and is apparently in good health. The miscarried child was lost after two months of pregnancy. The parents did not know whether it was a boy or a girl. But the older sister resembled other family members and recognized her younger brother. She embraced him and wanted him to stay with her.

Parents who have experienced the

disappointment of miscarriage will find comfort with this information. It is a fresh reminder that there is a vast difference between being pro-life and being pro-choice. The latter is poorly disguised murder of the helpless who have no choice in the matter.

It seems to me that the above incidents are worthy of our notice and interest. But the Scriptures are clear that heaven is a place of eternal comfort prepared for those who are prepared through the abundant grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Incidents such as the above are fresh reminders that God is especially interested in innocent children as vessels of communication to adults.



Mennonite Weekly Review editor, Paul Schrag, writes in 2-14-11, how the merger of General Conference and Mennonite Church seems to be affecting their census.

During the last ten years, there has been a loss of 191 congregations and 15,692 members. These developments are understandably painful for people on both sides of the issues of tension.

A pastor of a church who seceded is quoted as saying: “Our main concern was the next generation. We have a lot of young parents who are concerned about the direction the church is going.”

One person declined to name specific issues that led to their

exit, but said, "It was biblical and theological issues we didn't agree with." He further said, "We're not abandoning our Mennonite heritage. We want to remain active with MCC and MDS and other programs we've been involved with."

Specific issues mentioned in the article included ordination of women, divorce and remarriage, and failure to take a firm stand against homosexual practice.

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Division and fragmentation in the Anabaptist community during the last 50-60 years has become all too common. It is not a mark of Christian maturity but rather evidence of our humanity. Issues of contention may be trivial and unworthy of causing division. It is regrettable when this happens. However, when basic issues of sin and righteousness are being re-defined, disregarding biblical veracity, division may be justified. To not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness is not a gentle hint to be taken lightly. But unforgiveness, ill will, and lack of love are foreign to the spirit of Christ.

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On February 13, nine young people received baptism at Center church. All shared a personal testimony before the baptisms. The fathers of class members gave expression afterwards. Their words of support and appreciation were appropriate

and meaningful.

One brother shared a memory of the time when he received baptism. A peer expressed his disapproval of linking church membership to baptism. Today he is not a member of any church and his lifestyle is not recognizably Christian.

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The FCM Informer (Jan./Feb., 2011) reviews a book entitled, *Glory, Seen and Unseen*. The author is Warren Henderson. This review is written by Anita F. Weaver.

Author Henderson is not an Anabaptist. His exposition on the woman's veiling is not influenced by personal background or tradition.

The reviewer says that the 150-page book is easy reading with short chapters and simple vocabulary. The book is scholarly and effectively refutes the notion that it is relevant only to the Corinthian culture.

Excerpt: "The covering should not be so small that the glory of the woman sneaks out from underneath it or so transparent that it peeps through."

It is very common in the larger church community to dismiss the teaching as being specific to the Corinthians, therefore not applicable to our time. Such people should notice the reference to angels and specific instructions for communion that occur in the same chapter.

The letter is addressed specifically

to the church at Corinth, but also “to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2).

There is observable danger that this practice can gradually move toward non-use. Conscientious sisters, responsible church leaders, and family heads who take this teaching seriously are a stabilizing influence in this unstable environment.

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The recent uprising in Egypt was a reaction against a 30-year reign by a dictator that was perceived by popular opinion to be very unfair to ordinary people. Under extreme

pressure, he finally agreed to step aside and at this writing the military is in charge.

Columnist Bob Herbert feels that democracy in our country is being usurped by the extremely wealthy who call the shots while political leaders cater to their interests. Meanwhile, low and medium income people find it increasingly hard to make ends meet. (*The Hutchinson News*, 2-14-11).

All this is another reminder that earthly government systems are unstable. The Kingdom of Christ will ultimately triumph.

—DLM 

Minister’s Meeting Messages — 2010

This is a condensation of the final message given at the annual ministers’ meetings held at Fair Haven Church, Goshen, IN, on April 4-6, 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.

8. The Diligent Workman

Lonnie Beachy, Plain City, OH

Eternal life brings an eternal perspective. In 2 Timothy 2:15 in present-day English, “Be diligent to present yourselves approved unto God, diligent workers who are not ashamed to rightly divide the word of truth.”

God is not satisfied with my belief. He wants my obedience.

Diligent means to be hard-working, industrious, persistent, conscientious, thoroughly and painstakingly reliable. How hard is it to live up to that? Our culture has a reputation of being a good, down-to-earth, hard-working people. But the diligence we consider this evening is diligence in Kingdom work. Here’s a question for you: Was Jesus diligent when He walked here in human

form? Yes, of course!

Was Jesus rushing around from place to place? Yes and no. He took time out to pray. He took time to be by Himself. He took time to enjoy friends, as in going to a wedding. He also made a point to Martha that taking time to worship was more important than making sure all the physical details of hospitality were in perfect order. Her sister, Mary, stopped, listened, and spent time with Jesus.

I struggle with continued overload. It is of my own doing, I know. Sometimes it seems that the only time I pray is on the run. I speak not of a business run, but a pastoring run. I deduct that I must spend more time with the Father, listening. I sometimes feel squeezed, but I believe that as I spend time at the fountain and source of Holy Spirit power, I feel more energized than squeezed. Then I also feel more empowered than fatigued.

Does our limitation of time reflect our practice of being tent-making pastors? I feel the plural ministry is a great benefit. The plural ministry is meant to divide the work. My team members are all busy. Paul chose to be a tent-making pastor. I understand Paul's tentmaking was a means to an end. While this has been our practice, I would like to believe that, had I been given a choice, I would have chosen that, too. I like to sweat with my people.

Think also about the negative side of it. The negative side of it is the over-involvement in business pursuits. In this structure, we may assume our associates will do the necessary tasks, when, in actual fact, no one does them. Someone said that our preachers are ordinary business men who show up on Sunday morning to preach. I hope we don't deserve that comment, but we need to hear it. But just as a government needs to review the original constitution, so we should sometimes review our constitution and our practice. The love of money reaches every tax bracket and income level.

Should we not consider preventive maintenance, especially as it relates to church issues and human relationships? Would not spiritual therapy that keeps people healthy be better than putting spiritual "band-aids and splints" on people? Would it not be better to be engaged in pastoral care Monday through Saturday—not just on Sunday? This would mean we have fewer hours for the office, the barn, the auction, and the job site.

What were the early church leaders trying to say in their practice of tentmaking? About five years ago, I went to a four-day week. I wanted to be with my people. It had great benefit for me and for some of those I surprised on their job sites. They welcomed me and often wanted to get me a cup of coffee.

Is it, “Seek ye first financial security”? No, I believe we must step out in faith and put God’s work first, and see what God does with it. I don’t think Paul was a business man who showed up on Sunday mornings to preach. He was fully engaged with the call of God on his life. I am resolved to be more diligent in Kingdom work and then to trust God for my needs.

When Jesus came to earth, He found the religious people of that day diligent in their rigorous, religious drills. Everything was measured according to the commandments of men. Jesus was grieved about that because they had made for doctrine the commandments of men. They were so detailed that they lost what it was all about, yet it could be termed “diligence.” They were religious not faithful. There was pride—not humility. Is it possible that we too are in danger of resting our experiences with the happenings of the past without our own current, personal, intimate experience with Christ? Our identities are not wrong, but they are not our safe and secure answer.

You and I are pastoring youth who are possibly more academic than we are. I did not say wiser. I want to give them reliable, current, pertinent answers. I do not think a spiritually-alive church is willing to walk on somebody else’s chalkline. Is such a church happy or willing to live out the directives and edicts that were only pertinent in the last

generation? Every generation needs its own revival. Have our forefathers done something wrong? No! But we need to personalize it for ourselves today.

As a diligent pastor, my purpose is to know the Father as they knew the Father. They surely had their own experiences of revival and walked accordingly. We today still reap benefits of our faithful, diligent forefathers. With due respect to our forefathers, they were human—as are we. Our forefathers critiqued their own forefathers and they made changes they deemed necessary for their day. Every time the word *change* comes up, there’s a war. We can make applications today, which may be slightly different than they were a generation ago.

Are we happy with the results of what has happened? I’m not finding fault, but if we keep on doing the same things the same way, we will get the same results. Are we happy with the results? How about the church’s mandate to reach the world for Christ? Have we met our goals? Reaching the family, the community, and the world for Christ is His mandate for every believer.

In our need for a very private school and our need for exclusive activities, have we worked so diligently at external separation that we now wake up to find that we have formed an exclusive religious club, not so different from the Pharisees in Jesus’

day? No, the previous generation didn't get it all right, but let us diligently, passionately seek God for what works in our generation.

Finishing the race is critically important. Quitters don't inspire us. We dare not rest on our laurels or on the examples that many of you of the previous generation have given us. You would ask us to "take the baton" and make it pertinent today. We have to take up the race. Marathon runners tell us that there are two critical times in a marathon: in the beginning and the half-way point. The first one is fraught with danger because of over-exerting oneself because it is going so well. The second one is that point runners call "hitting the wall." It is the point of coming to the end of one's endurance. It can happen in marriage, in the Christian life, in the pastorate. Have you experienced burnout?

We are to run with perseverance the race set before us, but we must sometimes check on ourselves; are we experiencing burnout? It can happen when things seem to be going well, then to have a seemingly insignificant thing come up and one's whole ministry teeters on the brink of disaster. What was once going well suddenly becomes a heap of scandal, ungratefulness, and misunderstanding.

I love to serve, but I have limitations. Galatians 6:9 says we are not to be weary in well-doing, but

to be diligent. Some of us are weary of over-doing. Has burnout become an expected, accepted result of pastoring? If we are to be spent, let us be spent for Christ, but let us also be good stewards of our bodies. If and when is a sabbatical leave necessary or appropriate? Is there some biblical precedent?

Notice that immediately after baptism, Jesus took a 40-day hiatus in the wilderness. How many of you men have taken 40 days off just to be with God? I have not.

I delegate; and yet my pastors are busy. We're all busy. We're not just spiritual comrades; we are best friends. We are gifted differently. I NEED them. I think it would be good to engage church lay members more than we do. A busy church membership is a healthy church.

Can we consider the power of affirmation more than we have? Affirming our associates and our church members has an amazingly positive effect on them and their faith. As it is positive to acknowledge the children and shake hands with the children, so it is good to do the same with adults in the church. It seems to me that our culture gave us a myth that we cause pride when we affirm people. Let us take the role of pastor-coach like Jesus did. Would our marriages survive if we took the arms-length attitude that says, "See you next Sunday" that we sometimes give our brothers?

In ordination, God did not give us responsibility for everything that happens in church. Other brothers also have important responsibilities—be it the Sunday School teacher, the sound man, the song leader—or whoever. Engage them in their ministries. They're better at it than you are.

Jesus was opposed and persecuted but He went on and paid the price and ran the race. It is so easy to give up, to quit, and to say, "I don't have to do that anymore."

Pastors, we need direction. We're under authority. Don't lose heart. Don't quit. Keep on running the race.

Seven weeks ago Mark A. Gingerich, a close friend and brother in Christ, died. He left four sons behind. The oldest son was at our place last

week. He is handling his grief well. He inherited his father's cell phone. He said to me, "Sometimes I call my own phone because I want to hear my dad's strong voice on the answering machine." I ask myself, *How desperate am I to hear my Father's strong voice?*

Be humble. Don't give up on erring youth too quickly. They need to know that people care.

I can't do God's work on my own. You can't do it on your own. I need His voice and the patience of the whole congregation. Tonight I would like us to covenant our lives to the Lord in a new way to serve again with the passion we once knew. Let's make this our commitment to God that we want the Captain of our Salvation to go before us.



No Time To Wait

Xylona Stanhope

*Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen
thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. (Psalm 27:14)*

Why wait? I don't understand how I can, Lord!
This world that I live in demands that I go.
Demands that I move and get out of their way.
They need me to help them get right quick and just so.

God, I have learned to jump and holler.
I run and scurry around. I'm just busy.
I try to do all the jobs I am given.
When I look at the work I get dizzy.

God, I don't think I have time just to wait.
Everyone around me is doing something big.
They have a good job, are making big money.
They're in the "in group" and have a cool rig.

I'm wasting my time and getting no answer.
Are you so busy I just have to wait?
I read, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen thine heart;" you still say. "Wait."

Oh, what did I just read? It was a promise!
God, you'll strengthen my heart if I wait. That's how!
I knew I could not stand alone and just wait;
Amidst the rush and jeers. Thankfully, I bow.

I close my eyes and take a deep breath. I hear
A whisper in my heart, a whisper of hope.
"While learning to wait your character's growing,
Your heart's more beautiful when you don't mope.

"I want to teach you the joy of a whisper,
Enjoy the beauty. Breathe deeply the fragrance.
The rose, the bluebird, trees, and butterfly
Are my handiwork. Are you ready to dance?"

"The sky's my ballroom. Birds echo my music.
But a joyful heart that soars so high and free
Was trained, my child, to wait patiently through pain.
That heart to me had great value. Don't you see?"

"I have accepted and loved you as you are.
I have chosen and bought you. You are precious!
Don't worry about what others think of you. I care.
It's not what you do, but who you are. Don't fuss."

Dear God, I will stand even if I'm alone.
Till I hear you whisper, I'll wait and be still.
Though busy, fast workers may scoff at my pace.
If I must, I'll wait till Christ comes. Yes, I will!



Separation and Non-conformity

Darryl Miller, McConnelsville, OH

Separation and non-conformity are vital parts of the Christian life. The Bible teaches it. Separation is defined as the act or process of keeping apart or making a distinction between. Non-conformity is defined as refusing to take the same shape, outline, or contour. It can also mean refusing to conform to an established or conventional creed, rule, or practice.

There are two ways to look at this doctrine. One is separation from the world and non-conformity to the world. The other is separation unto God and conformity to the image of Christ.

Separation was not necessary in the beginning until Satan filled himself with pride and desired to be like God. Separation was then needed and Satan, along with one-third of the angels, was cast out of heaven. He now goes like a roaring lion trying to take as many people with him as possible.

I, as well as all people, have a choice whether or not to follow God. It is easy to follow Satan's kingdom, because I have a sinful nature. When I turn to God, He makes me alive. As long as I stay

in his Kingdom, I live in victory over sin.

Three phrases that define the world are "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." These can enter my life easily, sometimes without my knowing it. It could involve about anything I choose to do. Worldliness is an attitude of love for or following after temporal things and sinful practices. It can also be defined as passion, possession, or position. *Kosmos* is the Greek word relating to worldliness. It is an enemy of the church. The friend of the world is the enemy of God. God has provided an armor for my defense against the enemy. If I am not loyal to my commander, or only fight half-heartedly, I am giving myself to the enemy. God's side is always the winning side. [In some cases the devil seems to win, but God will win in the end. —PLM]

When I deal with and get rid of sin in my heart, I become separated unto God. I am separated from the world when I live a lifestyle different from the world. God made laws in the Old Testament to follow. They lived lifestyles different from the

heathen nations around them. God called those who displayed a heart for Him. When the people rebelled against God, He allowed enemy nations to conquer them. The Old Testament laid the foundation for the New Testament.

My speech is an important part of separation. Some people speak to get noticed or sometimes they just think out loud. We will give account for every idle word we have spoken. Speech indicates what I think of others and the way I live and think. My tone of voice shows what is in my heart. God wants me to glorify Him with my speech. In witnessing, people hear my speech. If I use foul language, they will likely reject my speech. A good verse concerning speech is, Philippians 4:8: **“Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”** I can use my speech to encourage others.

The heart of man is often defined as the seat of the will and affections. The heart affects me mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. I need to follow

Christ, no matter what happens, because my soul is worth more than any wealth. In the kingdom of Satan, everything leads to destruction, even if it appears to be something good. Worldly wisdom is foolishness with God. Knowledge is the possession of facts and truths; understanding is comprehension and knowing how to use knowledge; and wisdom is the application of knowledge to real life situations to God’s Word. Proverbs 2:6, **“For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.** It is important to seek after wisdom. It goes the opposite direction from evil. Teaching and learning create more wisdom.

Materialism is sometimes another downfall. It has the following definitions: a preoccupation with or stress on material things rather than on intellectual or spiritual things, the doctrine that the highest values in life are found in material well-being and progress, the theory that physical matter is the only fundamental reality and that luxury or conspicuous consumption (lavish or wasteful spending thought to enhance social prestige) in hopes of having a better reputation, but I get separated farther away from God. I shouldn’t let possessions control me. Giving to

the Lord's work is a very good way of transporting goods to a higher floor.

Clothing is another essential part of separation from the world. It was not needed until sin entered the world. Adam and Eve realized their nakedness and hid. No matter how horribly the world dresses, I am to do my part in following God's commands for modesty. The wearing of jewelry is also just to draw attention and can be idolatry. I am to show the world

that I am different. More important than clothes, God wants my life. He wants whole-hearted Christians that serve and glorify Him, even through hardships. My goal is to stand for the right in these areas, even if it means standing alone. I want to be the leader that God has called me to be. I will serve Him until I die! Paul said it this way, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

[Written at CBS]



mission awareness

Tact With a Tack Hammer

Tact is "the mental ability of doing and saying the right thing at the right time so as not to offend or anger." Much of evangelistic effort involves persistence. To persist is "to refuse to give up especially when faced with opposition or difficulty." Evangelism involves prayer, perseverance, and patience.

David J. King is director for Choice Books of Mid-Atlantic District. Interestingly, the Bible is the best seller in this district which encompasses a large populated area that includes New York City, Long Island, northern Jew Jersey, southeastern New York state, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

David writes the following story,

revealing some behind-the-scenes, persistent, tactful efforts in this valuable evangelistic endeavor. -FS

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We, in the Mid-Atlantic district are delighted to have the opportunity of working with a metro grocery chain called Western Beef. They have 21 stores in the New York City area, and one store in Florida, with plans to open more in Florida.

We are currently in nine of the stores, with plans to have displays in most of them soon, providing that Rocky, the buyer, agrees.

The owner of Western Beef is a Catholic man. He has a reputation of being a community-oriented man. Most of the Western Beef stores are

located in lower-income areas of the city. His company is known for hiring ex-convicts and other people who need another chance at life. One of the men in Receiving told me most of the men in the back belong to gangs. He also wanted me to get him a book about blood. I still don't know what the book was, other than I know that it was not a book about the Blood of Jesus!

If you shop in these stores, your food purchases will be bagged in plastic bags that all have a Bible verse printed on them. This company seems like a natural fit for Choice Books, right? Christian owner, inner city stores, lower income areas, multi-ethnic population—the perfect place! Well, thank God, we are there but the journey there was long and time-consuming.

When I first began noticing these stores, I saw that they had a funny looking wire display with Christian material on it. Unfortunately, the displays did not look like the displays we at Choice Books are proud of: clean displays, right product, you should know the line!

Since they had books, we did not pursue them persistently, but did have a meeting with the buyer in 2005. Some time after this, the other book provider contacted Choice Books and wondered if Choice Books would be willing to take his place in providing Christian material to these

stores. Of course, we were willing!

There was some interaction between Choice Books and Western Beef as to how to deal with the other book vendor. About this time there were some other changes taking place in the company, and the idea of Choice Books simply did not get any traction with Western Beef. Eventually, the other books were donated to local churches, and understandably, few people in Western Beef liked the idea of Christian books in their stores.

In 2008, I spoke with the assistant buyer, Mario, about a meeting with Rocky, the buyer. I had the first meeting with him on July 22. Rocky seemed open to the idea, but let me know that the company has a bad taste about books because of their former experience. He said he wanted me to visit all the stores and talk to the managers. I visited all the stores and got all kinds of responses, some really wanting them again, some neutral, some strongly opposed. I summarized the responses and excitedly prepared for the second meeting. Rocky read the summaries, laughed and said that he knows these men well. He said he can picture the responses and delivered the verdict: NO! What a disappointment! I had not made my case well enough.

I was to revisit all the stores again. It was a tough job and what was I to say? “Rocky sent me, but I can't take

an order, but do you want Choice Books in your store?” Never mind that I had been in these same stores only several months before asking the same thing. Some of the managers remembered my first visit and wondered why I was there again.

I met with Rocky again on Oct. 6, 2008. He seemed impressed with our persistence and said he would meet with the district managers on Thursday, I was to call him on Friday for an answer. I asked if I could make a presentation to the district managers. He laughed and asked if I wanted to be carried out of the meeting (the implication: straight to the hospital)!

The next several months I made numerous calls and stopped quite frequently at the main office. I could usually speak to Mario, who finally told me he does not know why Rocky doesn't just say No!

I began praying that I would have a creative idea to knock this Rocky off his rocker and finally give me some attention. In April of 2009, I stopped at a Pep Boys for some supplies for a Choice Books van. While I was in the store, I saw these nifty little hammers that fit in the palm of a hand and knew instantly that was what I needed. I got one, raced over to the ShopRite store nearby, got a card to fit the occasion, and headed out again for another visit with Mario at the Western Beef office. I wrote in the card, “I can't wait to hammer out

a deal with you,” and gave the card and hammer to Mario, and asked him to give them to Rocky. This idea was apparently God-directed. Mario came back laughing several minutes later to where I was waiting and said, “You made our day.”

Rocky loved the hammer; he still keeps it in a little stacker on his desk and shows it to me almost every time I see him. He also told me he has told lots of people the story of the hammer. Finally, Rocky was willing to give us “a shot.” He said, “Listen, I am willing to give you a try, but people in the company have a bad taste with books. You can have three stores if you give me a free set.” I called our Chief Operating Officer and, lo and behold, he said NO WAY can we do that! We are not giving away *free* sets.” We went in circles trying to figure out other options, but found none. Now I was really caught between two hard places! I went back to Rocky and said, “I simply can't give you a free set. We as a company simply don't do that.”

April turned into May and May turned into June...I kept stopping. There were times when I would literally wait for Mario for several hours just to say “Hi!” and check if there were any possibilities for Choice Books. The lady at the counter who would call him got to the place where she knew who I was and what I wanted. She would look at me

through the bullet-proof glass and give Mario a call.


On August 25, 2009, I was at home working at my desk when my phone rang. It was Mario! Mario said, "I have good news for you. You will have a good day. We are going to give you five stores" What an amazing answer to prayer!

I met with Rocky a week later. He chose five stores he was willing to give Choice Books a test. One was on Staten Island, one in Brooklyn, two in Queens, and one in the Bronx. We set the store next to the corporate office on Sept. 14, 2009. Rocky let me know that "now the hard work starts; you need to prove you are what you kept saying you are." We set the three other stores but when we got to the store in the Bronx, Radamus, the manager, let me know that I was NOT bringing that rack into his store. So, we were happy with the four displays for the time being.

The Mid-Atlantic babied those displays, believe me. I kept dropping off reports. Rocky would review his scan

data and be happy with the results.

In January of 2010, we received permission to place one more display in Staten Island. (He promised several, but, oh, well, at least one order came!) Several months later, we were permitted to place displays in three more stores in the Bronx and one in New Jersey. One of those stores was the store where Radamus is the manager. He agreed to give us a try. He is now happy with the display and the sales.

[**Customer response:** "You have made my soul to flourish in picking such rich books to sell. At the WalMart, I pick up one off and on. Always, they deepen my daily walk with the Lord. In *500 Questions and Answers from the Bible*, I am reading through the Bible and along the way I use this book for a deeper look. Just last week I purchased *The Names of God*. Reading at this time in Ezekiel, I used *The Names of God* to get a larger view of the Good Shepherd. Wow, I must thank you for being so led by God to choose the books you put on your stands for sale." -Grace] 

helpers at home

Bloom Where You Are Planted

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Springtime has arrived. I am writing this in February and our daffodils are just beginning

to bloom. For many of you who are reading this in April, spring may just be arriving in your area.

Spring brings new life when the early perennials peek through the ground.

I enjoy walking around my flower beds to see what has sprouted today. The gardens are prepared for planting. The birds are singing their spring time melodies, choosing their mates and searching for a place to build their nests. I feel new energy surging through my body as I enjoy the sun's warm rays. I marvel at the beautiful artwork of our Creator God. The Bible says, "He made everything beautiful."

The earth is a beautiful palette of color and design. I can just imagine the Master Artist taking his giant paint brush and filling in all the different colors and designs. I believe He gives us who are His creation, a love for color and joy in observing the vibrancy of His creativity that surrounds us. Let us be aware of that beauty this springtime. Remember we are to worship the Creator, not the creation. God's desire is that creation would turn our hearts in praise and adoration to Him, the Creator.

Even as God has a plan for his handiwork of nature to fulfill its place and purpose on this earth, so God has a plan for us, his people, to fulfill. God desires us to bloom in the very area, situation, position, or circumstance where He has placed us. We were born in many varied situations with

different family names and under diverse circumstances. We live in various geographical locations. Some of us have grown up in Christian homes; others learned to know the Lord much later in life.

Our skin colors are varied; we may be short or tall, fat or thin. We may have reached the golden years with gray hair as our crown of glory while others are still young and full of energy. The amazing truth in all this is that God knows where we are right now and He has a plan for each of us to fulfill as long as He allows us to live on this earth. So, take heart, whether you are 25 or 105. God still has a plan for your life. He is telling you to "*bloom where you are planted*" right now, **today!**

Life has many different stages. I am thinking especially of the stages in the life of a woman. We may begin with marriage and motherhood in the early twenties. If so, we will find it both challenging and rewarding. The thirties are the productive years; we still have lots of energy and can work hard and accomplish a lot. The forties bring changes to our bodies. We struggle with changes in the family structure. Our children are trying their wings, leaving the family nest for service, college or even marriage. It can be a difficult time for a mother. I think of the fifties as a happier time.

We have emerged from some of the changes and are beginning to enjoy life more. Even the empty nest does not seem so bad. Grandchildren arrive, bringing us new joys and blessings. As we go into the sixties, our bodies definitely begin to slow down, although this varies. I have not yet reached the seventies, so I cannot describe the passage from here on to when God has planned for our years to end. However, we are becoming more aware at this age that we cannot go on indefinitely. I think now we feel an urgency to see that our remaining years are not wasted. We do not want to be put on the shelf, however, we know that we need to make changes, and we ask God for wisdom and grace to make these changes.

Let us look for ways we can learn to “bloom where we are planted.”

1. Accept our situation.

We know God sees the whole picture. He has chosen us “for such a time as this.” Life may seem difficult but God is working for our ultimate good. We will never understand everything in this life. Only in acceptance do we find peace.

2. Develop a godly character.

The fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are not personality traits, but are developed in a lifetime of

seeking after God with all our hearts. They are to be a part of every godly woman.

3. Choose to have a positive outlook on life.

A thankful heart will chase away complaining. No, it is not wrong to express our pain and disappointment to others, however, a constant complaining and grumbling spirit is displeasing to God. It is so important for mothers (and grandmothers) to express a cheerful and thankful attitude as we set the atmosphere for our families.

4. Embrace change.

Women especially do not like change and it becomes more difficult as we grow older. We can hinder God’s plan by resisting change and we can make life difficult for those around us. Learn to accept change as a challenge and opportunity to make new friends and enjoy God’s surprise adventure for you.

5. Enjoy life.

Joy is a byproduct of forgetting about ourselves and our own difficulties. Joy is learning to see the beauty of other people and the handiwork of God in the world around us. Joy is contagious. So let us spread joy to our families and to other people around us.

BLOOM WHERE YOUR ARE PLANTED!



Which Way is Best?

Lorene Helmuth, Age 14, Laclede, MO

Smack!”
 “What was that?” wondered
 13-year-old Andrew.

“Hah, are you okay, wimp? That wasn’t even hard. I can pack the next snowball harder if you wish,” sneered Philip.

“Why, you mean thing!” shouted Andrew. “You just wait and see. I’ll get even with you when I think of the meanest thing in the world to do!”

Just then the bell rang and the boys ran quickly for the schoolhouse.

“Students, instead of doing vocabulary, I want you to get a piece of paper and write a paragraph about a person you like. Write five things you like about him,” said their teacher, Mary. “Do you have any questions?”

“Do we have to read them aloud?” inquired Andrew.

“Yes, tomorrow morning.”

The next morning the students read their papers. When Philip read his, he simply stated, “I like Andrew because he...he’s fun to tease, gets mad easily, is very babyish, can’t play well and doesn’t know how to get even.”

At dismissal time, Teacher Mary stated solemnly, “Philip, please stay after school. I want to talk with you. The rest of you are dismissed.”

As Andrew walked home, he vowed to get even with Philip. “Mom,” he questioned when he got home, “What’s the best way to get even?”

“Why, Andrew! Whatever do you want to get even for?” Then the whole story came out. “Well, the best thing you can do is to return good for the evil he has done to you,” advised Mom.

“But Mom, I want to do something mean! May I put that dead kitten into his lunch box, or better yet, put it in a box and wrap it in some pretty paper?” wailed Andrew.

“Andrew that is not the Christian way,” chided Mom. “Why don’t put a juicy, red apple in his lunch box instead?”

“Which do you think would work better?” asked Andrew.

“I’ll let you decide; just remember the Christian way is always best.”

That evening, Andrew was very quiet. He had a decision to make.

The next day at lunch time after

Philip opened his lunch box, he exclaimed, "Whatever! Where does this delicious-looking apple come from?" He looked around to see if he could figure out who had done it.

"Uh, it—it was me," stammered Andrew.

"Th-thank you," replied Philip. "But why?"

"Oh, I just thought I'd give my friend a little gift. After all, isn't that the way to treat a friend?" asked Andrew.

By this time, the others had gone out to play and Philip and Andrew were by themselves. "Andrew, I'm sorry for being so mean. Will you forgive me?" questioned Philip.

"Gladly," answered Andrew, "will you be my friend again?"

"I sure will!"

Just then the bell rang, so the boys gave each other a quick smile and sat down in their seats.

Well, thought Andrew, like Mom said, the Christian way IS always best. 

youth messages

Effective Witnessing

Ernest Eby, Youth Editor

This Month's
QUESTION

What has helped you or what do you think could help you be a better witness for Christ?

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

As I think of witnessing to others I have to think of some of the opportunities I have missed because I didn't know what to say or was afraid of their reaction. But when I put myself in the shoes of others and realize where their lives will take them without Christ, it gives me a compassion for their souls.

As I grow in my relationship with God He gives me confidence in sharing with others and the Holy Spirit gives direction in knowing what or how to much to say. It is also important that as I witness I remember I am no better than anyone else and that without Christ, I could be where they are.

Jonessa Miller, Malta, OH

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We need to have a close relationship with God to do and say whatever He asks us to. I think it would help us if we see people the way God sees them and truly love and care for their souls the way He does. Simple things like visiting and singing for older people and helping a neighbor that's in need can be a witness for Christ.

Linda Stoltzfus, Port Royal, PA

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A person needs to have a desire to tell others about Jesus, which can be acquired by a close relationship with God. Another way I believe that would help us as Christian witnesses, would be to spend a lot of time in prayer asking God for strength and courage to share the Good News and also to open the hearts of those we minister to. Reading the Word of God daily will greatly strengthen our courage to share with others. Our actions sometimes speak more than our words, therefore, what we do, the way we dress, the places we go, and the people we associate with will leave an impact on the lives of those who are observing us. Let us therefore gladly spread the Seed of Truth for the coming of Jesus Christ is near.

Caleb Miller, Asuncion, Paraguay

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Simply living a Christ-like life will probably leave a bigger impression on someone than many words could do. When I think of being a witness for Christ, I think not only of the talk we talk, but most of all the life we live.

One of the biggest struggles I have had already is laying down myself completely for Christ and allowing Him to use me in whatever way He sees fit. It all comes down to pride when I think more highly of myself than I ought to think.

In Mark 8:38, it says, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." So I believe it is a dangerous thing to be ashamed of Christ. To not be ashamed is only possible if we have a deep relationship with Christ by spending time with Him in prayer.

When I see how unworthy I am of Christ's love it is not hard to be humble, which is the essence of being a good witness for Christ. Simply seeing my need for a Savior gives me a fresh burden for the lost who also need a Savior. That Savior is for whoever will give up themselves and receive Him. When I truly see the love of God, I will want to do everything I can to let others know

about the freedom we can have in Christ.

Our actions speak louder than our words. So pray for me that I can be a more humble person, so I can be a better witness for Christ.

Anthony Zook, Georgetown, OH



So often we are ashamed to witness, but one thing that has helped me is not to focus so much on myself. If we focus more on other people’s needs, we will discover ways of helping them. Sometimes doing a little something for somebody is more powerful than words that we could say. God put us here on earth so that we can show others the love of God and what He can do with a changed person. Let’s keep our focus on God and be a witness for Him wherever we are!

Dorcas Miller, Suceava, Romania



“And he said unto them, ‘Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’” (Mark 16:15). These words from Jesus to us were spoken just before He

ascended to heaven. It is our duty to be a witness for Christ. Jesus Himself commanded it.

One thing that has helped me in witnessing to others is remembering that each person I meet is going to either heaven or hell when they die, and that I, as a Christian have the chance to reach out to them and impact their life for eternity. I also try to remember that if it weren’t for the grace of God, I would be a lost soul, too.

I believe the most important way to be a testimony of Christ is through our everyday life. People watch us. They notice things about us, things like praying before meals, or how we handle confrontation. In order to be a good representation of Christ we need to become more like Him. The best way to do that is to spend lots of time with Him—in prayer and personal devotion. So, let’s walk with God as we go through each day, lean on Him for wisdom and understanding, and pray for chances to reach out to others!

Eleanor Miller, Sarasota, FL 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Some people think Sunday should be “Funday.”

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Worry brings tomorrow’s clouds over today’s sunshine.

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Have your tools ready—God will find work for you.

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Some things not worth saying are put to music, which doesn’t improve them.

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There isn’t enough darkness in the whole world to put out a candle, so let your candle shine.

• • • • •

Read God’s Word; you don’t have to be listed in Who’s Who to know what’s what.

• • • • •

When some people crash into a telephone pole, they blame the pole.

• • • • •

The worst lies are those that most resemble truth.

• • • • •

If you find a path without obstacles, it may go nowhere.

• • • • •

Don’t be afraid of opposition; a kite rises only against the wind.

• • • • •

Silent gratitude is ingratitude.