



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

Galatians 6:14

JUNE 2011

Meditation	
<i>Once Again</i> .....	1
Editorial	
<i>Hedonistic Pleasure or Joy?</i> .....	3
The Bottom Line	
<i>A Sermon for Pentecost</i> .....	5
Mary Believed .....	9
Dear Karen .....	10
The Egg .....	12
Annual Christian Youth Fellowship Announcement .....	14
Marriages .....	15
Cradle Roll .....	15
Ordinations .....	16
Obituaries .....	17
Observations .....	19
Minister's Meeting Messages — 2011	
<i>Early Views of the Church</i> .....	23
Mission Awareness	
<i>Gathering Sticks</i> .....	28
The Beautiful Christian Woman .....	31
Helpers at Home	
<i>To Love Your Husband</i> .....	32
Junior Messages	
<i>School Problems</i> .....	34
Youth Messages	
<i>Giving to the Lord — Time or Money?</i> .....	35
Thought Gems .....	back cover

June 2011

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.

Calvary Publications, Inc., is a non-profit organization, incorporated in the State of Ohio, for the purpose of sponsoring, publishing, and distributing Christian literature. The board is elected, one member annually, by the ministers of the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches, at their annual spring meeting.

### **Board of Directors**

(*Calvary Publications, Inc.*)

Elmer Glick, Chairman  
 Nathan Yoder, Vice-Chairman  
 Enos D. Stutzman, Secretary  
 Ralph Miller  
 Manfred McGrath  
 David L. Miller

Material for *Calvary Messenger*, marriages, births, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles—send to the *Editor*. Other Material—mail to their respective *Editors*.

**Subscriptions**, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to **Circulation Manager**. **When you move**, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

**Editor:** Paul L. Miller

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

**Assistant Editor:** Elmer D. Glick  
 P.O. Box 400, Slanesville, WV 25444  
 elmerg@frontiernet.net

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

### **Contributing Editors:**

Simon Schrock  
 Enos D. Stutzman  
 Aaron Lapp

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

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

### **Junior Messages Editor:**

Mrs. Anita Yoder  
 10393 N 1100 W, Ligonier, IN 46767

### **Helpers at Home Editor:**

Mrs. Mary June Glick  
 1080 Return Church Rd., Seneca, SC 29678

### **Circulation Manager/Treasurer:**

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

Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications, 2673 TR 421, Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$8.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$24.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$7.00 per year to individual addresses. Renewal \$4.25 when you also give a 1-year gift subscription at \$4.25. Second class postage at Sugarcreek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW, Dundee, OH 44624.

## *Once Again*

*Joseph Jones*

How many times had Mary watched  
Young Jesus carry wood?  
She'd often seen a hammer fall  
Quite close to where she stood,  
Observed as nails were driven deep,  
So now why does she weep?

I'm sure she tended cuts and scrapes,  
Pulled splinters from His hands.  
She knew He always gave his all;  
Fulfilled His father's plans.  
She's seen the sweat upon His brow.  
So why's it different now?

When'er He put His hands to wood,  
He kept His standards high.  
And He'd stay with it to the end;  
He aimed to satisfy.  
She'd watched Him gently rub in stain,  
Yet this time brings her pain.

He sometimes crafted things for her  
To use around the place.  
And then He'd stand with arms outstretched  
Awaiting her embrace.  
And say, "I did this just for you."  
...but this is something new.

Yes, once again He carries wood  
Again the hammers fall,  
Again the nails are driven deep,  
Again He gives His all,  
Again He fulfills His Father's will  
Beneath Golgotha's hill.

His hands are on the wood again,  
He rubbed in crimson stain,  
Again there's sweat upon His brow;  
His work is not in vain.  
Again He sets His standards high  
Prepared to do and die.

Again His flesh is cut and scraped,  
And splinters pierce His skin,  
His heart is just as full of love,  
His arms outstretched again,  
And once again His words ring true:  
**I did it just for you!**

[Submitted by Thomas Miller,  
McConnelsville, OH]



## Hedonistic Pleasure or Joy?

**“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:18).**

Hedonism is “the doctrine that pleasure is the sole or chief good in life.” We rightly ask: *Is it hedonistic pleasure that makes life good?* I think this says it better: ***Real pleasure is a gift of God.***

In Ecclesiastes 2, Solomon lists some things he did in his youth in pursuit of meaning and found them dead-end streets. He tried mirth (laughter); great works (architectural feats); wine and great vineyards; gardens and orchards, trees and pools; servants; cattle, silver and gold; men and women singers and various musical instruments— just about anything he thought might bring him enjoyment. After trying them all, he decided they were but “vanity and vexation of spirit.”

Notice Paul’s comments in 1 Timothy 6 where he discusses the perils of pursuing another snare for Solomon—riches. Paul explains that having as one’s chief goal that of getting rich is a slippery slope to spiritual disaster (verses 3-6). His summary statement in verse 17 stands out: **“Charge them that are**

**rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.”**

Notice that last statement. Who is it that gives us all things to enjoy? *God does.* We wrongly assume that if we don’t make up our minds to be sure we get “the good life,” we will miss it.

What then shall we pursue? Nothing brings us joy like when Christ gives us new hearts and He dwells in us by our faith in Him. (Ephesians 3:17) Jesus invites us to pursue His kingdom and His righteousness. In Matthew 6:19-34, Jesus explains in some detail about how we are to live life with confidence in God’s goodness and provision. It is only as we pursue God and His will for us that we experience true pleasure—without a bitter aftertaste.

The Epicureans in Acts 17:16-34, pursued carnal pleasure like the hedonists they were. The Stoics, their opponents in debate, disagreed with them. They maintained that all emotion must be suppressed and denied. Both parties apparently hoped that Paul, the famed ex-Pharisee from Tarsus, would take their side in debate, but Paul declined. He didn’t tell them point blank how

wrong both philosophies were, however, but made it clear that the first step in finding enjoyment is not in trying to make oneself happy. The first step is repentance. If we would be happy, we must first repent of our *sin* (inherited) and our *sins* (committed). Life has meaning only if we live it in a “God-first, God-centered” way. If we live it in a “me-first, me-centered” mode, regardless of how hard we may try to put a good face on it, we will be disappointed.

Paul indicated that enjoyment comes to us and our pursuit reaches its goal if we first repent, then trust and obey Jesus. This is how he explained it to the philosophers on Mars Hill: “For in him we live, and move, and have our being...” (Acts 17:28).

It is not surprising that Christians are typically the most fulfilled—most jubilant—people on earth. Nor is it surprising that whether or not we “are abased or abound” (Philippians 4:12), we find reason to live joyfully. Even in persecution, true Christians are “more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:37).

We’ve heard it put it this way: *We either choose the destiny and accept the path, or choose the path and accept the destiny.* Let us arm ourselves with the mind of Christ (1 Peter 4:1), who for the joy that awaited Him, bravely faced death on the cross, and experienced *joy*. Yes, He wept and acknowledged sorrow, but He was

always confident of God’s goodness and we can live in that confidence, too.

When we realize we can’t make ourselves happy, we can come penitently to the foot of the cross of Calvary. As we lay our sins at Jesus’ feet, He sets us on our feet with assurance of forgiveness. (John 8:11)

Here’s an example of Christian joy: Both Christians and non-Christians get married. Their experiences have similarities, but the true child of God experiences deeper joy in marriage than does the unbeliever. Without repentance, it is unnatural to forgive and to love unselfishly. If one has not faced his own sins, others’ flaws and sins look huge. The unregenerate tend to see life as an opportunity to make their mark in life and to *get* from others. The regenerate see life as opportunity to walk with God and to *give* to others.

After we have thus placed ourselves on the receiving end with God and received from Him a fatherly blessing as He claims us a beloved son or daughter, we are to come regularly “to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). God answers prayers of faith offered in Jesus’ name (John 14:13,14). When we cultivate a humble, teachable attitude, we are eligible for “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

That’s how it is that joy is available



every day. We don't get joy by pursuing pleasure directly. We don't find joy by denying all emotion. It is when we give our sins and burdens contritely to God, that He gives us a joy so pervasive it outshines self-pursued pleasure by a country mile. Then, whatever comes, like the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:39), we are set to go on our way rejoicing! *Praise the Lord!*

• • • • •

Readers may recall that in *Calvary Messenger*, October, 2004, I mentioned with gratitude being

one of a family of 12 children born to Levi D. and Clara (Nisly) Miller in rural Hutchinson, KS. We were born in the years 1921 to 1937, thus we are all "seniors," now from 89 to 74 years old.

I had mentioned that all 12 children survived, but that situation changed on April 19, 2011, when my brother Daniel (1932-2011) died at 79 years of age. He was a member of Shalom Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, VA. "Dan" was the ninth child. He had Alzheimer's Disease.

—PLM 

## the bottom line

# A Sermon for Pentecost

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

**T**he day of Pentecost was in the mind of God before Creation, so it had been in the making by God for a very long time before that day had fully come. Then, fifty days after Jesus rose from the dead, "the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2:1).

Pentecost is commonly referred to as the birthday of the church. The Holy Spirit came upon each of them with the sign gift of speaking in tongues (languages). It was supernatural, causing believers to do something beyond their natural ability. Detractors and unbelievers concocted the criticism that Peter and the other apostles had been

drinking new wine.

What follows is Peter's stunning sermon. He speaks first what many preachers leave for last, if they bother with it at all. Peter leads off with doctrine. Fearless. Daring. Bold. Powerful.

What else? Peter, freshly anointed and divinely guided by the Holy Spirit, led out in a declaration of doctrine. Was it dry? Stiff? Boring? Irrelevant? Out of date? No! The doctrine he gave centered on Christ. As we follow Christ, instead of living life by outward controls, it is to be experienced by the Holy Spirit's inward presence and power. Doctrine placed in the heart brings full-orbed

Christian living.

Acts 2:14, “But Peter...lifted up his voice....” [Lord, give us preachers who lift up their voices with assurance and confidence.] “...this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, I will pour out my of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...” (verse 17). Peter knew immediately where to reference and how to build his rebuttal.

“Prophecy” is to speak forth God’s truth in exhortation. The rebuttal goes on for seven verses, with a quote from the prophet Joel taking up four verses. Here is how Peter’s sermon proceeds, as I see it, in a simple, foundational outline:

1. (verses 16-20) *The doctrine of the Holy Spirit.* The day’s central event is the fulfillment of prophecy. The Holy Spirit has gifts to give each of us who believe. God did it!

2. (verse 21) *The doctrine of salvation.* “...whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Shall be saved. This concept will be routinely spoken in witness of those who believe and to those still lost in sin. It was readily used by the apostles and should be in use today.

3. (verse 22) *The doctrine of Jesus Christ.* “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you....” These miracles proved

without a doubt that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus’ humanity was evident, but His divinity had been in question. The 50 miracles recorded in the Gospels give ample proof of His sonship. Jesus did the miracles; God approved them.

4. (verse 23) *The doctrine of the Atonement.* “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” The crucifixion was in the plan of God. By His foreknowledge, it was predetermined before the foundation of the world. It is the one offering for the sins of all men for all time. This great fact leads to the capstone of apostolic preaching: **The resurrection!**

5. (verses 24-32) *The doctrine of the Resurrection.* Nine verses! It isn’t hard to see that this is the climax in Peter’s sermon. The resurrection of Christ is the clincher to everything about Him. It is the star witness of His whole life. It validates all His claims. It authorizes His Sonship. It inaugurates Him as the final Judge. It assures us of His future Kingship. It solidifies Him as being all in all. It establishes that in Him all fulness dwells! We really don’t have words to describe it adequately. God surely did it!

6. (verses 33-35) *The doctrine of the Ascension.* Prefigured by Enoch and Elijah, Jesus was taken up visibly and literally to heaven by God. We



would likely be more shocked if we would be hearing it for the first time, or would've been there to see it. The ascension of Jesus Christ is the clear indication of His finished work on earth until He returns, as it was spoken by the two men in white apparel. (Acts 1:9-11).

7. (verse 36) *The doctrine of Jesus' lordship*. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Somehow, we seem to have made a convenient shift from preaching these doctrines from the pulpit to saying it is enough if we just live by them. We assume that people want us to share on topics of Christian living rather than preaching on Bible doctrine. A contemporary Mennonite theologian actually publicly ridiculed Daniel Kauffman's *Doctrines of the Bible*. We cannot agree. We say it is a valuable reference book. Every young person ought to have one and use it!

Sunday School teachers can get by without being conversant on Bible doctrine if how we live and relate is the main thing year after year. The question remains: Can we maintain living these doctrines if we avoid speaking of them?

The apostles emphasized doctrine, notably the doctrine of Christ. By it people were saved. It was the message for evangelism and for church members' nurture. What you

use to win them is what it will take more of to keep them. That was true in the early church and also today.

This expository sermon Peter preached (not just shared) on Pentecost had convicting implications, enlightening explanations, and exciting exclamations. Expository sermons are too heavy for Lite Diet Christians of today; some say we will lose them, bore them, divide them, or scatter them. But wait, there are notable features here for the church today, if we still wish to be the church of Christ. The exhortations we cherish in the Epistles all rise out of the doctrine of the centrality of Christ in the church.

I was surprised and thrilled to find as I went back over each of the seven points of doctrine and saw God identified in the origin of each one! God spoke it, approved it, determined it, raised up Christ, exalted Him, God certified that same Jesus as Lord and Christ. All these aspects of doctrine are in the direct plan of God and His workings. Check it out for yourself and see how God is the source.

Peter's doctrinal message turned out to be powerfully evangelistic. Some say evangelism can't go forward on doctrine. The teaching on the Seven Ordinances recently brought out 200 people in Kenya and some people accepted Christ as Savior. In Peter's day, 3,000 were saved.

Peter's sermon was an inviting

message. Peter started out with an emphatic voice, and in the Jewish practice of raising both arms, he cried, “And...whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21).

I notice that Peter’s main point was spoken first in his sermon. I wonder why—I tend to tack them on at the end. In the midst of his preaching, he said, “Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Any applications for their day? Most surely! “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward (unruly, difficult to work with) generation” (Acts 2: 40).

The doctrinal sermon on Pentecost was also a powerfully uniting experience. “And they continued daily with one accord in the temple...” and in their houses in mutual sharing and rejoicing (verses 46, 47). Sharing was what they did with food, not sermons. The response to their leader’s doctrinal sermon was to continue “steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (verse 42).

This doctrinal sermon also resulted in a lighter attachment to earthly goods, for they “sold their possessions, and parted them to all men, as every man had need” (verses

44, 45).

This doctrinal sermon points the way to solid and progressive church expansion. “And the same day there were added to them about 3,000 souls” (verse 41). This sermon highlights the resurrection of Christ.

The Day of Pentecost is not to be repeated, but the doctrines Peter gave can be repeated. They must be repeated and proclaimed wherever the Gospel is proclaimed—worldwide.

Peter’s sermon is a keynote address for the church age to all preachers and teachers of the Kingdom of God. It is a comprehensive declaration of the centrality of Christ. It is as simple and concise as necessary for brevity, and as profound as necessary for completeness.

In this sermon, we have:

1. the *event* of the Holy Spirit being poured out;
  2. the *effect* of the Holy Spirit upon each individual believer;
  3. the *elusive accusations* of those out of touch with God;
  4. the *elevation* of Christ to center stage for the world to see;
  5. the *evidence* that a church can be built by doctrine;
  6. the *eloquence* of simple and direct preaching that convicts;
  7. the *effusion* of God’s blessing upon the preaching of Christ.
- PREACH IT, BROTHER!



# Mary Believed

The sun was rising above the southern ranges of Galilee to the east. In the cool of the summer morning, Mary sat on the bare floor as her father Eli spoke to his gathered family. “Jehovah hath ordained to send His anointed One. He shall bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives; and to open the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of our God; to comfort all that mourn.”

He paused. “We must wait and see when that blessed promise shall come to pass. A King shall be born. And it shall happen in Bethlehem!” Eli let out a breath of joy welling from the depths of his soul. Well-versed with words of the Scriptures, Eli raised his voice in awe and reverence. “...Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

A smile escaped from Mary’s lips. She’d heard her father proclaim these words of Jehovah many times. She breathed the prophetic words into her heart. The holy Son of God, Messiah, shall live among men. Praise Jehovah! He shall perform that which He was ordained to do. May Jehovah’s blessings be on the maiden who will find such favor in His sight.

Mary kept these sayings in her heart.

A gentle gust of summer breeze

seemed to bring a whisper like a still, small voice through the open window. Mary thought she heard her name. As she looked up she was astonished to see an angel standing at the door. He introduced himself as Gabriel, and said. “*Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women.*”

At these words, Mary’s brow creased, as she probed within her heart what the angel of the Lord said by such a greeting. She did not understand what it meant. She was afraid and troubled. “*Do not fear, Mary, Jehovah God has sent me to bring you blessings of good news.*” Redeeming the time, He continued, “*For thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.*” The angel exulted, saying, “*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*”

Mary pondered. Reverently, she bowed and asked, “*But how can this be, I have not known any man as husband and am only recently betrothed?*”

Gabriel assured her, “*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing*

*which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. For with God nothing shall be impossible.”*

Mary said, “*Lord, I am your handmaid; be it unto me according to thy word.*” And the angel left.

In December, the spirit of the season, associated with the King’s birth resonates in every tongue. The exchange of “what-to-do” plans and schedules, cantatas and choirs in churches, gift giving, visiting and feasting echo everywhere at every turn. Christians are busy for the King of the season every year!

It’s easy to let the story of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, pass by, webbed into traditions and activities of the season. And after all the seasonal celebrating, many people settle back into complacency and materialism.

But the Messiah did come. And He shall come again! This time He will come as the risen Lord and the

Righteous Judge. As parents, we want to teach and show our children to be watchful, waiting and faithfully living for the returning Messiah. May the message of the promised Messiah convict every soul to total surrender to Him—not only for a season but for all the days of our lives.

Zechariah gives us a song about Christ’s coming, “*That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life*” (Luke 1:74-75).

*[This inspirational article was written by a sister from Australia who prefers to remain anonymous. The messianic promises Mary heard from her father, which Gabriel repeated, were not new for Mary. As she lived in the hope of His first coming, so may we live in the hope of His second coming. Submitted for publication by Eli Kauffman, Montezuma, GA.]*



## **Dear Karen**

*Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA*

**I**t was a joy to eat supper with you and Jim at The Chuckwagon. Staying in touch with neighbors is a blessing. Near the end of dinner, you asked me a question that took me by surprise. It was a good question: “Why do you never say ‘Good-bye’ when we finish a phone call?”

I was surprised; I didn’t realize

that I don’t say good-bye. I gave your challenging question more thought. Maybe it has something to do with my theology. As we discussed in earlier visits, I embrace Anabaptist theology. How could that have anything to do with saying good-bye? An oft-used expression among us is “Aufwiedersehen,” which means

“I’ll see you again.” It appears that this expression may come out of the severe persecution and martyrdom of our church forefathers.

Ulrich Zwingli was an early Protestant reformer in Switzerland around 1516. He came to view the Bible as the source of doctrine rather than having the state decide that. Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz pled with Zwingli to take his reformation further and follow the New Testament pattern of administering baptism only after a person is truly committed to Christ. Felix’s plea was that “it is necessary for a person to make their own commitment to Jesus Christ and accept baptism for themselves.” Their plea was rejected and the Great Council posted notice: “Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz must be silenced.” (*I’ll See You Again*, page 105, 100) These men believed and agreed they should obey the Scripture above the law of the state church.

In January 21, 1525, Conrad Grebel re-baptized George Blaurock. In turn, George baptized Conrad. The third to receive baptism was Felix Manz. The life and death of Felix is an example of the price paid by these reformers for following their understanding of Scripture. “On January 5, 1527, Felix was drowned in the Limmat River by Swiss religious authorities for his belief and practice of rebaptizing.”

Myron Augsburgger gives a few details in his book, *I’ll See You Again*:

“When they crossed the bridge at the Fish Market to the other side of the Limmat River, the officers finished binding Felix’s hands and ankles. One of Zwingli’s preachers came to his side and spoke sympathetically to him. He urged him to be connected to the acceptable church and give up his Anabaptism. But another voice overtook that of the preacher. It was Felix’s mother crying out to him at a distance. He searched for her and found her with his brother Heinrich, standing on the bank of the Limmat. She was calling to him to be faithful, to be steadfast for Jesus. Joyfully, Felix sang praise to God and they placed him in the boat. They stripped his arms over his knees, placed a stump through so that he could not struggle, and dropped him over the side of the boat into the ice-cold, swirling waters of the Limmat River.”

Michael Sattler, like many other Anabaptists, was burned at the stake in a public execution for his faith. “During the first 75 years of the Anabaptist movement, some 5,000 believers died for their faith.” (*Pilgrim Aflame*, Herald Press, 1967) The spirit and words of these martyrs was not like a final “good-bye,” but more like “Aufwiedersehen.” (“I’ll see you again.”) They believed they would see each other in eternity.


Karen, I have thought more about your question. I became aware that “Aufwiedersehen” has probably become deeply ingrained

in my thinking. It is part of my Christian heritage. It is a part of our understanding that true Christians do not see each other for the last time here. It is sometimes given as a word of comfort at funerals. Maybe that is one of the reasons I got away from saying “good-bye.”

A second incident may have influenced me. In 2005, we needed to vacate the old house in Fairfax where we had lived for 40 years. We could not find a place that seemed right to us. Time was running out. We had a CD of singing by the Titus Martin family that was an encouragement to us at that uncertain time. That CD is what I would go to sleep on at night. One of those songs that still rings in my memory is, “We’ll Never Say Good-Bye” in heaven. While we

received encouragement from the singing, the uncertain path we were on eventually led us to becoming neighbors with the Martin family.

Then as I reflect on my growing up years, we were frequently reminded of a Scripture in Hebrews 11:10, referring to Abraham, “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Another one was, “For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Hebrews 13:14).

Putting all of this together might be helpful in answering your question. Meanwhile, I’m not opposed to saying “Good-bye” when we finish a phone call. The next time we go to dinner, you are welcome to ask me another question that will stretch my thinking for an answer. 

## The Egg

*A Spiritual Analogy*

*Paul E. Miller, Sugarcreek, OH*

**A** bird’s egg consists of three parts: the shell, the white (or albumen), and the yolk. Man is also composed of three parts: body, soul, and spirit.

The shell, the outer layer (that which is visible) illustrates a person’s body, the outer man. Man’s body is tangible, referred to as flesh and blood.

The albumen or white of the egg illustrates man’s soul. The soul

consists of the mind, the will, and the emotions or feelings. The soul is what will enjoy eternity or suffer endlessly in hell.

The innermost part, the yellow or yoke of the egg contains the seed of life and can be fertilized by the male seed. It illustrates man’s spirit. Man’s spirit consists of his conscience, intuition, and communion or connection with God. Man’s spirit has the potential of being indwelt by



God's Holy Spirit.

A young healthy child is full of life and enjoys blessings of God even before he/she responds to the Holy Spirit, before being born from above. (John 3:3) He is part of God's spiritual kingdom even though he has not made a conscious choice to follow Christ and has not been baptized and become a church member. He even illustrates the traits needed to enter the kingdom of Heaven. This young child is under grace and will inherit eternal life should he die at this time.

As the child becomes older and his mind matures, the Holy Spirit begins to speak. The Spirit begins prompting the mind to surrender itself to Him. If the child does not listen to the promptings of the Spirit and does not respond to His pleadings, he begins to lose his impartation of grace. He begins losing his blessing, innocence, and profitability. No more does he illustrate the spiritual qualities needed to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Rather he becomes selfish, following the dictates of self. He begins receiving his motivation from the world and its promptings.

A fresh, infertile egg illustrates the young healthy child. This sterile egg is profitable for a certain length of time. Soon, however, it begins to deteriorate. Soon it loses its weight, its worth, and its profitability. It even begins to stink!

In contrast, a fertile egg, if exposed

to right environment and properly turned, experiences inner growth. Something wonderful occurs internally. A new life develops. Ultimately the shell breaks and a baby chick appears.

It illustrates the individual who responds to the voice of the Lord and receives warmth by staying in fellowship with the Spirit. As time goes on, the spirit becomes stronger and the body becomes weaker. Finally, the person dies, his body is broken, but a new life—a much better life—begins. This new life will never end. The Bible calls it everlasting life—a life not measured by days.


Many fertile eggs have started to develop but then lost their life because they lost contact with the proper temperature. They rolled out from underneath the hen and expired. Unfortunately, in the same manner, individuals have responded but then left the necessary warmth. They did not abide and did not continue their relationship with the Father. They chose to leave church fellowship. Because of their personal choices, they lost their spiritual life.

We can make other comparisons. If you take an egg that is *not fertile* and expose it to the correct temperature, the correct humidity, and turn it properly, it will not develop because it does not contain the seed of life. Likewise, you can put a child in the correct environment and surround

him/her with love. You can make sure he reads the Bible daily, prays, memorizes Scripture, goes to an upbuilding school, but unless that child responds in a positive way to the moving of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit moves in the child's (or adult's) spirit, he remains lifeless, deteriorates, and experiences the second death.

This analogy has its weaknesses. For example, the egg can receive the male seed only when it is in the

very early development stage before the shell is formed. Humans can receive the incorruptible seed from the Father at any time, provided they meet the requirements. Furthermore, the egg has no will of its own, but humans do. We humans can choose blessing or cursing, life or death. May we choose life; may we choose to serve only the Lord.

[Slightly edited and used with permission from *The Brotherhood Messenger*, Vol. IX, Issue 1, 2011.] 

## ANNOUNCEMENT

**The annual Christian Youth Fellowship meetings for 2011 are scheduled to be held July 22-24.**

**The reports of the five area meetings held in July, 2010, indicate God's blessings were abundant. We praise God for His continued faithfulness in this work and ministry for our youth. Certainly recognition is due to the hosting communities for their hard work in planning enriching programs and extending unselfish hospitality. May we continue to work together to make these meetings the success they have been.**

**Let us prayerfully look to God in anticipation of more good things at the meetings this summer. The districts and their meeting places of 2011, the Lord willing, are as follows:**

<b>North East</b>	<b>Shekinah Christian Fellowship, Middleburg, PA</b>
<b>North Central</b>	<b>Plainview School (Canaan Fellowship), Plain City, OH</b>
<b>North West</b>	<b>Pleasant View Church, Arthur, IL</b>
<b>South West</b>	<b>Calvary Christian Fellowship, Paris, TN</b>
<b>South East</b>	<b>Clearview Fellowship, Montezuma, GA</b>

***Luke Stutzman, Millersburg, OH***  
***Chairman, Annual Christian Youth Fellowship Meetings***



## marriages

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

### **Beachy-Troyer**

Bro. Philip, son of Marvin and Orpha Beachy, Fredonia, KY, and Sis. Rosanna, daughter of Edward and Katie Troyer, Bloomfield, MO, at First General Baptist Church, Bloomfield, MO, for Crowley Ridge Mennonite Church on March 17, 2011, by Jim Yoder.

### **Miller-Raber**

Bro. Jeffrey, son of David and Ruth Miller, Sugarcreek, OH, and Sis. Rachel, daughter of Harvey and Mary Raber, Millersburg, IN, at Woodlawn A.M. Church on March 12, 2011, by Steve Miller.

### **Schrock-Mast**

Bro. Lyndon, son of Gary and Mary Schrock, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Regina, daughter of Alton and Mary Ellen Mast, Flintville, TN, at Cumberland Presbyterian Church for Belvidere Mennonite Church on March 25, 2011, by Donnie Swartzentruber.

### **Yoder-Beiler**

Bro. Jon, son of Leroy and Mary Yoder, Mifflintown, PA, and Sis. Melanie, daughter of Melvin and Fannie Beiler, Honey Grove, PA, presently serving in Kenya, Africa, at Bunkertown Church of the Brethren, McAlisterville, PA, for Shade Mountain Fellowship Church on April 15, 2011, by Leroy Yoder.

## cradle roll

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

**Beiler**, Donald and Sarah (Hostetler), Ronks, PA, second child, first dau., Angela Sarah, Nov. 21, 2011.

**Bontrager**, Vernon and Ada (Miller), Shippshewana, IN, second and third children, first and second daughters, Heidi Lucia, Feb. 25, 2011. Twin sister Heather was stillborn.

**Gerber**, Joseph and Anita (Wagler), Brunner, ON, fourth child, first son, Kenton Nathaniel, April 14, 2011.

**Hostetler**, Carlon and Lill (Esh), Warsaw, IN, second child, first dau., Cassia Layne, Nov. 18, 2010.

**Hostetler**, James and Maria (Beechy), Goshen, IN, second child and son, Cedric James, Jan. 2, 2011.

**King**, Calvin and Lin (Esh), Kinzers, PA, fifth child, third son, Isaiah Joel, Nov. 15, 2010.

**Kooistra**, Jesse and Anne (Bauman), LaGrange, IN, first child and dau., Willow Anne, April 26, 2011.

**Lapp**, Bill and Sara Lynn (Stoltzfus), Gap, PA, eighth child, sixth son, Damien Elijah, April 27, 2011.

**Lapp**, Jimmy and Anne (Esh), New Holland, PA, sixth child, fifth daughter, Makayla Diane, March 3, 2011.

**Lapp**, Jonas and Leah (Zook), New Holland, PA, twins: fourth son, first daughter, Alijah Rolin and Angelena Rose, April 3, 2011.

**Miller**, Marlin and Anna (Miller), Franklin, KY, third child and son, Randall David, March 2, 2011.

**Overholt**, Alan and Shirley (Beachy), Franklin, KY, second child and son, Adrian Carlos, March 8, 2011.

**Stoltzfus**, Marvin and Julie (Stoll), Abbeville, SC, second child and son, Blake Kindin, April 15, 2011.

**Stoltzfus**, Nelson and Martha (Zook), Gap, PA, first child and dau., Hailey Tiyon, Jan. 22, 2011.

**Weaver**, Jason and Juanita (Mullet), Antrim, OH, sixth child, third daughter, Angeliqua Renee, March 24, 2011.

**Yoder**, Melvin and Amber (Bontrager), Harrison, AR, second child and dau., Kara Nicole, March 29, 2011.

**Yoder**, Michael and Sarah (Shank), Harrison, AR, first child and son, Joshua Ellis, April 29, 2011.

## ordinations

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

**Bro Darrell Beachy**, 37, was chosen by voice of the church and ordained as minister at Gospel Light Mennonite Church, Gordonsville, VA, on April 24, 2011. Preordination messages were given by Wayne Schrock, Catlett, VA. The charge was given by Melvin Yoder, assisted by Ivan Beachy, Eldon Hochstetler, and Wayne Schrock.

**Bro. Simon Schrock**, 55, was chosen by voice of the church and ordained to the office of bishop at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA, on April 3, 2011. Preordination messages were given by John U. Lapp, Gordonville, PA. The charge was given by Bennie Byler, assisted by Ivan Beachy and Tim Miller.

***In trying times, let us beware that we don't stop trying.***

**Lanza**, Maurice Ignatius, 92, of Isabella Bank, Belize, died April 10, 2011, at Karl Heusner Hospital in Belize City. He was born Sept. 22, 1918, son of the late Faustino and Gertrude Lanza.

In 1970, at age 52, he accepted Christ as Savior and Lord and was baptized. He was a member of Isabella Harmony Fellowship, and was ordained as pastor in 1978.

On Dec. 24, 1952, he was married to Isabel Salas. She survives. Also surviving are their children: Patrick, Orlando, Mario, Martha, Alberto, Emil, Gertrude, Judith, Elvira, Fidel, Solia, and Lourdes; one sister, Hilaria Marin, better known as Aunty Laura, 40 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren.

The funeral was held on April 14, with Mario Lanza and Stephen Schrock serving. Burial was at the Isabella Cemetery.

**Miller**, Jonas J., 76, of Malta, OH, died Feb. 17, 2011, at his home after an extended illness. He was born Nov. 15, 1934, in Holmes County, son of the late John and Lizzie (Hershberger) Miller.

He was ordained as deacon at in 1965 at Bethel Fellowship in Berlin, OH. In 1975, he moved with his family to Morgan County, where he resided until his death. He loved to preach the Gospel. In 1995-96, they with their youngest daughter served in Ireland, where he served as pastor/missionary. For several years, they also served with Christian

Aid Ministries as project managers on their disaster response team. Locally, he was known as a builder and enjoyed interaction with his customers.

On Oct. 4, 191956, he was married to Bena Miller, who survives. Daughters are: Wanda (Jonas) Beiler, Kenya, Africa; Rosetta (Martin) Barkman, McConnellsville, OH; Doretta (Steve) Goins, McConnellsville. Sons are: John Andrew (Irene) Miller, and Titus (Frieda) Miller, both of Malta; 23 grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, three step-great grandchildren; a sister, Edna Erb, Sugarcreek; brothers: Monroe and Henry Miller, both of Sugarcreek, and Noah Miller, Baltic.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Mattie Beachy, two brothers: Eli and Emery Miller, and and a granddaughter, Judith Beiler.

The funeral was held on Feb. 21, with Laverne Yoder, Raymond Barkman, Adin Troyer, and Thomas Miller serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Miller**, Randall David, 26 days, died at home in Franklin, KY, on March 28, 2011. He was born March 2, 2011, son of Marlin and Anna (Miller) Miller.

Survivors include his parents, and brothers: Brian Dale, 6; and Austin Daniel, 4.

The funeral was held at Franklin Menonite Church on March 30, with burial in the church cemetery.

**Yoder**, Lena (Miller), 86, died at her home in Sullivan, IL, on March 5, 2011. She was born Oct. 6, 1924, in Arthur, IL, daughter of the late Adlai B. and Sovilla (Mast) Miller.

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

On Nov. 30, 1944, she was married to Adlai E. Yoder. Their children are: Katie Fern, married to Floyd Helmuth, Shipshewana, IN; Larry (Pat), Glen (Carol), Clifford (Kathy), Wayne (Corrina) Yoder, Leona (Ed) Kuhns, all of Sullivan, IL, and Sovilla Miller, Arthur, IL, and three sisters-in-law: Mattie Miller, Arthur; Alta Miller, Arcola; and Ardith Miller, Springfield, IL.

She was preceded in death by three brothers: Henry, Fred, and Daniel Miller, brother-in-law, Ben W. Schrock and three great grandsons.

The funeral was held on March 18, with Howard Kuhns and Wesley Yoder serving. Interment followed in the Pleasant View Cemetery.


**Zook**, Annie Jane, 73, of Belleville, PA, died March 16, 2011, at her home. She was born April 13, 1937, daughter of the late Noah H. and Emma (Bawel) Peachey. She was a homemaker and the former

owner of Annie's Quilts and Crafts.

She was a member of Pleasant View Amish Mennonite Church.

On Oct. 22, 1957, she was married to David N. Zook. He preceded her in death in 1966. Surviving are children: John L. Zook and wife Anna, Belleville; David P. Zook and wife Arlene M., of Belleville; Timothy S. Zook and wife Barbara E., Mifflinburg; Lavina R. Yoder and husband Edwin, Mifflinburg; Chester M. Zook and wife Julia, of Milroy; Martha J. Sharp and husband Joseph, Belleville, NY; Sarah H. Peachey and husband Jonathan, of Belleville; 35 grandchildren; 13 great grandchildren; brothers and sisters: Elsie Swarey; Katie Zook and husband, Ben; Rachel Walters; Sylvia Yoder; Rhoda Kauffman and husband Steven; and Kore Peachey and wife Madonna; Jonas Peachey and wife Karen; and Paul Peachey and wife Joann; and sisters-in-law: Linda Peachey and Mary Peachey.

She was preceded in death by three brothers: Henry, Louie and Shem Peachey and two brothers-in-law: John Swarey and Jacob Yoder.

The funeral was held at Pleasant View on March 19, with Sylvan Yoder, Ray Miller and David J. Peachey serving. Burial was in Locust Grove Cemetery. 

*Good fortune is what happens when  
preparation meets opportunity.*



Brigham Young University, owned by the Mormon Church, has 34,000 students. The school has an honor code that students are required to sign every year. This code includes the following: “Be honest, live a chaste and virtuous life, use clean language, participate regularly in church services, observe dress and grooming standards, no facial hair or earrings for men; no form-fitting clothes for women, abstain from alcoholic beverages, tobacco, coffee, and substance abuse.”

Their basketball team recently had a 27-2 record and seemed to have a chance for national honors. Brandon Davies, a 6’ 8” sophomore, a double-digit scorer and a leading rebounder, was dismissed from the team for unspecified violation of the school’s honor code. The sports world was shocked and impressed. (Daniel Price, local columnist, *The Hutchinson News*, 4-19-11)

Price comments: “What makes this such a powerful testament is the fact that so many schools have abandoned their standards at such a time as this, embracing athletic expediency over instructional principle.”

My knowledge of the sports world is very meager, but it seems to

me that several things are true: Leading players draw income far more than is needed for their living. This money comes from spectators whose addiction justifies spending their money for perishable non-essentials. It is not surprising that the world is caught up in this extremely competitive activity where winning is so important that doing what’s right is often compromised.

Popular interest is evident from the large crowds who watch the events on site, on screens or follow carefully in the sports section of the newspaper. Is it not strange that many “Christians” are strongly attracted to such worldly activities? James 4:4 uses strong language to underscore the seriousness of spiritual adultery. (See also Luke 16:50) Such misplaced friendship is not a laughing matter. (verse 19) It is rather occasion for drawing close to God in repentance. I believe the need for such repentance is widespread.

• • • • •

The Mark Nissley family moved to our area from Nappanee, Indiana, several years ago and are members at Center Church. Marks’ brother Nathaniel, who still lives in Indiana, has reached out to witness to men

who profess atheism. He learned that these atheists consider freedom to do what their desires dictate as the ultimate fulfillment. Nate responded by telling them he finds security, fulfillment, and freedom in following the perfect Master, Jesus Christ.

It finally came to the place that Nate confronted them with this question: What do I stand to lose if there is no God and no eternal hereafter? What about you—if it turns out that there is a God, after all, and eternity ahead? A former pastor turned atheist expressed frustration and walked off.

I was touched by this incident because these are men who by their own confession are totally self-centered. We who profess Christ also struggle with self-centeredness. One doesn't have to be an atheist to be on the wrong road.

• • • • •

*From Nonresistance to Justice, the Transformation of Mennonite Church Rhetoric, 1908-2008*, by Ervin R. Stutzman, Herald Press, 421 pages, is a book that chronicles a century of gradual change. It is an unusual book.

One thing that is different about this history book is that it is primarily about the recent past. I remember some key persons mentioned. The author was an active participant in

some of the more recent happenings in that period.

Stutzman has done very well in gathering pertinent information relevant to this subject. His reporting seems to be objective and gracious. He is able to discuss sensitive issues without being needlessly offensive. He is intentional in wanting to be candid and fair.

An important section could be called "The Daniel Kauffman Era." Kauffman had some formal training and some interest in becoming involved in politics. But his conversion to Christ re-directed that interest to using his training and his gifting to further the cause of Christ in the Mennonite church. He was editor of *Gospel Herald*, a prolific writer of Bible doctrine, and gave significant treatment to practical issues of his day. Conservative Anabaptists of today still consider his teaching helpful in promoting sound doctrine and a responsible Christian lifestyle. Kauffman's successor as editor of *Gospel Herald* was Paul Erb.

Harold Bender of Goshen is remembered as a scholar, teacher, and writer whose influence was a noticeable shift away from some of the conservative values that Daniel Kauffman so ably promoted. Bender is seen as an intellectual, a historian whose presence seemed to dominate

the field during much of his lifetime.

A milder-mannered church leader of that era was John C. Wenger, whose ideals were somewhat to the right of his contemporaries, and who wrote the book, *Separated Unto God*.

But then, as now, time brings changes. Some younger men who were serious scholars, saw Bender's manner as being a bit overbearing, and essentially nudged him from his position of unquestioned finality in certain matters of historical interpretation.

John Howard Yoder was vocal and became active in that era. Yoder is now deceased and his contemporaries have been replaced by yet younger persons while a certain dynamic of transition continues.

Early in the era this book covers, a very clear concept of two kingdoms prevailed. The church was very careful not to try to influence government unless the Christian conscience was at stake. This emphasis changed to where there is presently an active interest in becoming influential by voting, oral and written appeals and in some cases public demonstration to address issues of perceived injustice, even toward people not necessarily part of the faith community.

It seems to this observer that this transition from nonresistance to justice was hatched in the halls of

higher learning rather than at the grass-roots level.

The author faithfully quotes persons who voice opposition to these obvious trends, notably J. Ward Shank, editor of *The Sword and Trumpet*. I like Stutzman's reference to nonresistance and nonconformity as Siamese twins. He mentions grace and peace as being worthy of that title. He prefers to add yet a third term: "judgment" to the equation of values we strive for. I take this to mean that God's righteous judgment is an essential ingredient of His character. So the twins become Stutzman's triplets: Grace, Peace and Justice.

I keenly feel my review does not do justice to this unusual book of recent history and current developments. To persons who believe that historical awareness can be helpful in maintaining faithfulness for the journey, this book should be a welcome read. I assume this book will find a place in many church libraries. As is the case in all writing by human authors, "Prove all things, hold fast to which is good."

One thing that is clear from the review is that the rising generation will examine carefully whatever older persons have provided for them. It is extremely important that communication between

the generations remains free and open. When older people assume that the ideas of their offspring are predictably unworthy of their respectful attention, this is not friendly to building confidence and good relationships. When young people are sure that their discoveries of “new truth” are eligible for uncritical acceptance, this also is not evidence of stability and wisdom. Mutual respect and priority considerations to foundational issues can provide a climate of stability that is open to making needed changes.

• • • • •

I recently learned that some hymns from the *Ausbund* have been translated into English. The German and English columns are side by side on the same page. Volume 1 is available from: Ohio Amish Library, 4292 S.R. 39, Millersburg, OH, 44650. This volume contains history about the *Ausbund* hymnal as well as notes for some hymns. The *Ausbund* is commonly considered to having been in use longer in America than any other Christian hymnal. Volume 2 is presently being translated in preparation for future publication.

• • • • •

The following incident took place decades ago in an Amish community in an eastern state. I share it here as an

example of Christian nonresistance in a non-military setting.

A young man away from home was looking for work. He was given work by an Amish farmer. Some time later, this farmer had some hams stolen that were hanging in a grain bin on the property. He realized that the hired hand could be considered a suspect, but did not pursue an investigation.

Later, the young man served time in prison for theft. The former employer visited him in jail. Eventually he was released and drove a truck that hauled livestock for area farmers. Once when he was taking some livestock to market, his former employer rode with him. In the course of leisurely conversation, his former employer asked him said “I have wondered if I owe you a confession.” He thought perhaps he hadn’t paid him enough when he worked for him earlier so that he had resorted to stealing.

“Oh, no,” was the his response. “I owe you a confession. I was the one who stole your hams, but I want to pay you.”

This story is told by Oliver Troyer, Partridge, KS, about his late father, Eli N. Troyer, the farmer who had given the unemployed young man a job.

—DLM 

# Minister's Meeting Messages — 2011

*This is a condensation of a message given at the annual ministers' meetings held at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, New Holland, PA, on April 5-7, 2011. The complete set of CD's may be ordered from Victory Music Services, P.O. Box 1498, North Highlands, CA, 95660 (Phone: 443-480-1489), for \$50, postpaid.*

## 1. How Early Church and Early Anabaptist Views Differ from Current Popular Views of the Church

*Dave Nisly, Manassas, VA*

Sound doctrine is critical: *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy...thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine...Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself, and them that hear thee"* (1 Timothy 4: 1,2,6,13,16). Other Scriptures speaking to this issue include: 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Eph. 4:14; Titus 1:9; and 2:1.

The Evangelical movement came out of the mainline Protestant denominations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It took its identity and shape in the

latter half of that century by conservative leaders such as Billy Graham, Bill Bright, John Piper, Tim LaHaye, Chuck Colson, Pat Robertson, James Dobson, and others. The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was formed, giving the movement even more definition and clarity.

The NAE statement of faith includes seven statements that most of us would also hold. Four primary characteristics of evangelicalism are:

- *Conversionism* – The belief that lives need to be transformed through a "born-again" experience and a life-long process of following Jesus.

- *Activism*: The expression and demonstration of the Gospel in missionary and social reform efforts.

- *Biblicism*: A high regard for and obedience to the Bible as the ultimate authority.

- *Crucicentrism*: A stress on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as making possible the redemption of humanity.

There is a fairly wide range of denominations that find themselves in the evangelical fold: Assem-

blies of God, Brethren in Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical Free Church, Evangelical Friends church, International Pentecostal Holiness church, Presbyterian Church of America, Salvation Army, Christian and Missionary Alliance, The Vineyard, USA, The Wesleyan Church, and US Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Evangelical influence is found in many colleges and universities, such as Wheaton College and BIOLA University. Many para-church organizations speak for them: Campus Crusade for Christ, Compassion International, Focus on the Family, Moody Bible Institute, Prison Fellowship, and World Vision, Youth with a Mission. Publishing efforts include Harvest House, Thomas Nelson, Tyndale, and Zondervan.

Their theology is similar to ours, yet significantly different in some ways, for example:

- We believe the Bible teaches a two-kingdom concept of church and state.

- In love and nonresistance, they generally embrace Augustine's "just war" theory.

- As to discipleship and obedience, we believe Calvinism detracts from motivation to grow.

- In brotherhood and community, they have a more individualistic focus than we do.

- In the sanctity of marriage, they have a broad acceptance of remar-

riage after divorce.

We believe there is a threat of deception. Satan is still deceiving, even from within the church. We must be alert for the next deceptive tactic. This requires constant scrutiny and discernment.

In this overview, I shall note some aspects of the emerging church movement, noting two authors and what they believe. The emerging church movement is a post-modern approach to Christianity and church. John MacArthur commented: "Modernity, in simple terms, was characterized by the belief that truth exists and that the scientific method is the only reliable way to determine truth." He further commented: "Postmodernism in general is marked by a tendency to dismiss the possibility of any sure and settled knowledge of the truth." Emerging churches claim that "truth (to whatever degree such a concept is even recognized) is assumed to be inherently hazy, indistinct, and uncertain—perhaps even ultimately unknowable."

MacArthur also gives his comments on what defines the emerging church:

- Emphasis on experience and feelings over absolutes.

- Re-evaluation of the place of Christianity in the world.

- De-emphasis of absolutes and doctrinal creeds.

- An inclusive approach to various, even contradictory, belief systems.



•Re-examination of the Bible and its teachings.

•Re-evaluation of traditionally held doctrines. (Leaders claim that “Scripture is simply not clear enough to allow us to preach its truth with any degree of clarity, certainty, or conviction.”)

The threat to conservative Anabaptists is shown when emergent authors weave “Anabaptist” language and terminology into their engaging writings. Many 18-30-year-olds in our churches are quite familiar with emerging church authors: Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, Donald Miller, Leonard Sweet, Phyllis Tickle, Erwin McManus and others. It seems that these authors are sometimes listed by our youth as favorite authors, while many parents and church leaders are somewhat unaware of them. The danger in these books is that there is some genuinely good stuff, but it is mixed with a lot of very deceptive stuff.

I shall refer to two of these authors, Brian McLaren and Rob Bell. McLaren writes *A Generous Orthodoxy*. He introduces himself humorously as a missional, evangelical, post-protestant, liberal-conservative, mystical-poetic, biblical, charismatic-contemplative, fundamentalist-calvinist, anabaptist-anglican, methodist, catholic, green, incarnational, depressed-yet-hopeful, emergent, unfinished Christian.

McLaren refers to Anabaptism as

emphasizing personal commitment, seeing the Christian faith primarily as a way of life, taking a radical posture in relation to modernity [probably reference to groups that are visibly non-conformed], having lived and worked in the margins, having made Jesus Christ central, seeking peace, and having practiced “community in creation.”

Rob Bell has written the following books: *Velvet Elvis*; *Sex God*; *Jesus Wants to Save Christians*; and *Love Wins*. He has written: “...the Bible is open-ended. It has to be interpreted... We must first make decisions about what it means at this time, in this place, for these people.”

McLaren wrote: “I try to explain that the problem isn’t the Bible, but our modern assumptions about the Bible and our modern interpretive approaches to it. I try to explain that there is a better way to understand and apply the Bible, a largely new and unexplored way that can be summarized like this: *We need to reclaim the Bible as narrative.*”

He states further, “The Bible is a story, and just because it recounts (by standards of accuracy acceptable to its original audience) what happened, that doesn’t mean it tells us what should always happen or even what should have happened.”

Bell wrote in *Velvet Elvis*: Now the rabbis had technical terms for this endless process of forbidding and permitting and making interpreta-

tions. They called it ‘binding and loosing.’ To ‘bind’ something was to forbid it. To ‘loose’ something was to allow it. Notice what Jesus says in the Book of Matthew: ‘I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be bound in heaven.’ What he is doing here is significant. He is giving his followers the authority to make new interpretations of the Bible, He is giving them permission to say, ‘Hey, we’ve missed it before on that verse, and we’ve recently come to the conclusion that this is what it actually means.’”

“And not only is he giving them authority, but he is saying that when they do debate and discuss and pray and wrestle and then make decisions about the Bible, somehow God in heaven will be involved. Everybody’s interpretation [of the Bible] is essentially his or her own opinion. Nobody is objective.”

MacArthur notes that McLaren emphasizes that “one of the highest values (if not the supreme virtue by which all others are measured) is a particular notion of ‘humility’... which starts with the assumption that certainty, assurance, and bold convictions are arrogant and therefore wrong.”

*[Editor’s note: Bro Dave gave other examples of the low view of Scripture found in these writings, but I will give only a sampling of them.]*

- “...as a Christian, I am free to claim the good, the true, the holy, wherever and whenever I find it. I live with the understanding that truth is bigger than any religion and the world is God’s and everything in it.”

- “...although I believe in Jesus as my personal Savior, I am not a Christian for that reason. I am a Christian because I believe Jesus is the savior of the whole world.”

- “I don’t believe making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many (not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus *and* remain within their Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish contexts.”

- “If the gospel isn’t good news for everybody, then it isn’t good news for anybody...the church must stop thinking about everybody primarily in categories of in or out, saved or not, believer or nonbeliever...We are all created in the image of God, and we are sacred, valuable creations of God. Everybody matters. To treat people differently based on who believes is to fail to respect the image of God in everyone.”

- “I don’t follow Jesus because I think Christianity is the best religion. I follow Jesus because he leads me into ultimate reality. He teaches me to live in tune with how reality is.”

- “True spirituality then is not about escaping this world to some other place where we will be forever. A Christian is not someone who

expects to spend forever in heaven there. A Christian is someone who anticipates spending forever here, in a new heaven that comes to earth. For Jesus, heaven and hell were present realities—ways of living we can enter into here and now.”

### **Our Response**

We have a responsibility to identify and warn of the deceptive doctrines being promoted. This includes, but is not limited to, the emerging church movement. We always have a responsibility to distance ourselves from deceptive, apostate teaching. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

The emerging church is appealing because they are addressing issues that exist in young minds. Their approach resonates with many people. Their authors ask questions and wrestle with the issues many of our young adults wonder about, but often don’t get solid answers. Some of these may be questions we have not fully resolved. That’s OK. Let’s be honest and admit it. It’s an opportunity to dialog in a meaningful way.

Doctrines about church membership and discipline have been under attack. These are important doctrines. Satan is undermining and destroying the effectiveness of the church and our perception of God. Individualism and disregard of ac-

countability are on the increase.

*The Church and the Surprising Offense of God’s Love*, by Jonathan Leeman reintroduces the doctrines of church membership and discipline. Its premise is that if Christians accurately understood and defined God’s love, the value and purpose of church membership and discipline would be understood and practiced. But tragically, Leeman writes, “more than we realize, we view ourselves as independent agents charged with determining how best to grow, serve, and love in the faith. Yes, we may listen to others, defer to others, and accept guidance from others, but in the final analysis we view ourselves as our own coaches, portfolio managers, guides, judges, and the captains of our own ships in a manner that is more cultural than biblical.”

Here are more of Leeman’s insights: “God’s love is often conceived these days as something universal, undiscriminating, and unconditional. And behind this conception, often, is man-centeredness. Yet in Scripture we actually find that God’s love is utterly God-centered, which means it is more complicated than common conception would have it. It combines salvation *and* judgment. It’s gracious and discriminating. It moves inward and outward. Church membership is a picture of all these things—of salvation and judgment, grace and discrimination, inward and outward care—and therefore defines

God's love for the world."

"God calls the church to draw boundaries, boundaries which mark off *these people* from *those people*, boundaries which prevent some individuals from joining while excluding other individuals after they have joined. Not only that, God intends that the church uses these boundary markers in order to help define for the world what exactly love is."

"When the boundary between church and world gets blurred, God's picture of the loving, forgiving, caring, holy, righteous community becomes less clear."

Why do we join a church? Leeman comments: "...joining a church is not about *giving of yourself* as you might do with another organization; it's about *giving yourself*, which is an act of submission. It's about identifying your name with all those who belong to the church. It's about being united in heart, mind, and mission. It is, in sum, to submit your discipleship to Christ to a geographically bound, numerically concrete group. It is to

submit; it is to be ruled; it is to rule."

"Christ has authorized no individual, but rather the apostolic church, to mark off a people for himself and to hold them together. The church has authority not because it's omniscient but because Christ has commissioned it to stand and speak—or better, to go and speak—in his place. Submitting to the local church is how we submit to Christ's lordship."

### **Our Challenge**

The challenge remains that the only way to identify counterfeit doctrines is to become intimately familiar with the TRUTH—Jesus Christ! Truth is the standard from which Satan deviates to attempt yet another deceptive tactic. Sound doctrine is critical. Staying true to sound doctrine isn't automatic. Satan is determined to destroy sound doctrine.

Conservative Anabaptists are in Satan's cross-hairs. There is deception all around—including from within. We must stay alert. Let us watch for, scrutinize, discern, expose, and avoid Satan's traps!



## **mission awareness**

### *Gathering Sticks*

*Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA*

**Y**ou say it is a trivial matter: "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks..." (Acts 28:3). Why did the Holy Spirit include this little act of service? Luke was

observant about details. Who is this man gathering sticks? We know that Paul's missionary career was not about himself, but about the Lord of the Harvest. I suppose he would have

felt very small during this treacherous voyage to Rome. We give the following events to show how Paul was a master of circumstances by gathering sticks. There are lessons we can learn from this account of a man who served God passionately.

### **1. Paul, a hopeful disciple of Jesus Christ**

We see in acts 27 that Paul was man of forethought, orderliness, and giving careful directives to bring peace and unity in adverse circumstances. Notice how Paul warned the sailors before they set sail, “Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me and not have loosed from Crete” (27:21). Paul uses this opportunity in the midst of a tempestuous storm, Euroclydon, even in those days they gave names to storms, as a platform to bring a short message to all 276 passengers and the crew members to be of cheer because their lives would be spared, even though the ship would be destroyed. He spoke convincingly about the One “whose I am and whom I serve.” He told how the angel standing by him said, “Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee” (27:24).

The second time he told them to be of good cheer (27:22a, 25a), he said he believes in the living God of heaven, Who is always true to His promises. The apostle Paul gives warning to the centurion to keep the anchors up or they would not be spared. Paul gave specific instructions to take bread and

eat for their survival. Then he took some bread and “gave thanks to God in the presence of them all” (27:35).

This directive in breaking the two-week fast brought good cheer to all of them.

### **2. Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ**

For over two weeks the ship was tossed like a cork on the wild waves of the Mediterranean Sea. Finally, it was wrecked “where two seas met” off the island, Melita (Malta).

The centurion commanded that those who could swim should cast themselves into the sea and the rest on boards and broken pieces of the disintegrating ship.

They all got to land—safely. Can you imagine how miserable they still were at that beach reunion? The prisoners and the crew were chilled to the bone in the water. The cold wind and rain added to the misery. What did Paul do? He combed the beach for fuel to add to the fire already kindled. Perhaps Paul said, “My circumstances are not going to defeat me! Captivity, termination of evangelistic tours, storm, shipwreck, cold rains are not going to stop me. I determine in Christ’s strength to be victor.”

One writer commented: “If you are feeling sorry for yourself, take a look at this scene. Look at the breakers dashing on the sandy beach, watch the clouds scudding across the sky, feel the ceaseless rain falling on the unprotected people as they huddle around the fire, and follow Paul as he goes around gathering sticks. In this

simple act of picking up sticks from the beach, Paul was contributing to what others started.”

“The barbarous people showed unusual and remarkable kindness” (Acts 28:2a, AMP). I appreciate what another writer wrote: “As we go about our work, let us remember that we are contributing what others have started. In doing our part faithfully as to the Lord, we are keeping the flame of their vision burning brightly. Our part may be small, but each stick, each twig, every branch helps to keep the fire burning. Some throw water on the fire. Don’t be among them.”

Contribute your share, whether it is reaching into your pocketbook and giving to the cause, surrendering your children to serve on the front lines, offering regular prayers, writing a letter, or serving faithfully in some remote part of the earth.

### **3. Paul, a volunteer for Jesus Christ**

Paul could have murmured, “Let George do this menial job. Gathering sticks is not a task for ‘a Hebrew of the Hebrews.’ I was a Pharisee under the most elite Jewish professor of the time: Gamaliel. I lived righteously and blameless according to the law. And besides, I memorized most of the Old Testament. Now I am a scholar of Jesus Christ. None of the other apostles met Jesus, in full glory like I did. Neither have they had as many revelations as I, nor accomplished as much. My assignment is to preach Christ. Gathering sticks is not on my

job description.”


In Christian service, whether in the work place or voluntary service, it is important to know our job description. But, at times, in order to exercise Christian unity, we should go beyond the job description and do insignificant things. Pick up sticks in the yard or clean flower beds. Tell the couple (where the husband is unit leader) that you offer to watch their children so they can go out to eat or do some sightseeing.

Once when General Washington was riding near a city with a group of friends, their horses jumped over a rock fence. The last horse knocked off several stones. “We’d better replace those,” said the General.

“Oh, someone else will do that,” was the careless reply. When the party disbanded, Washington turned his horse, and rode back the way they had come. Dismounting, he carefully replaced the stones.

“Oh, General,” chattered a friend who had gone along, “you are too big to be doing that.”

“Oh, no,” replied Washington, as he stood inspecting his work, “I am just the right size.”

I think if we had met Paul on the beach that day gathering sticks and suggested, “Oh Paul, you are too big to be doing that” he would likely have said, “Oh, no, I am just the right size.” Oswald Chambers once prayed, “O Lord, drench us with humility.” On that day long ago, Paul was drenched with rain and true humility. 



# *The Beautiful Christian Woman*

*Author unknown*

*A woman's heart should be so hidden in Christ that a man should have to seek Him first to find her.*

When I say "I am a Christian," I am not shouting, "I am clean living."  
I'm whispering, "I was lost, but now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't speak this with pride.  
I'm confessing that I stumble and need Christ to be my guide.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not trying to be strong.  
I'm professing that I'm weak and need His strength to carry on.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging of success.  
I'm admitting I have failed and need God to clean my mess.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect.  
My flaws are far too visible, but God believes I'm worth it.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain.  
I have my share of heartaches, so I call upon His name.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not holier than thou,  
I'm just rescued sinner who received God's good grace, somehow!

**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13).**





## To Love Your Husband

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

We set aside the second Sunday in June to honor husbands and fathers. This month I chose to talk about loving your husband. I also encourage you to honor your father on Father's day and express your love to him. Good husbands usually make good fathers.

June is often referred to as the month for weddings, probably because of the profusion of flowers—especially roses—blooming in our gardens.

We are looking forward with anticipation to our oldest granddaughter's wedding in this special month.

There are so many things I would like to tell her. I hope she does not need to make the same mistakes that I made as a young wife. There is joy in planning a wedding, however, the couple comes into marriage with very little understanding of what all is included in the marriage vows they make to each other.

The wedding lasts for only one day, but marriage lasts till death. As I grow older, I appreciate the concept of marriage as a symbol of Christ and the Church and the way it relates to my role as a wife. In Paul's letter to Titus, he gives instruction for the older women "to teach the younger women to love

their husbands." I believe this is the only reference in the Bible to the wife that tells her to love her husband. There are many commands to the husband to love his wife and the wife is repeatedly told to submit to and reverence her husband.

To love is not difficult for a woman. Our greatest need is to be loved. We expect our husbands to show love to us in the same way we do for them. We want to hear our husbands say, "I love you." We desire romantic love such as flowers and gifts, candles, an evening out and other expressions of love. We see love as a noun.

We also feel deeply and want to talk about our feelings. Many a young wife learns that her husband does not think or feel as she does. He does not always understand her feelings. In fact, he may be hurt when she expresses her feelings, especially about their relationship. Women enjoy relating on an emotional level with their friends and expect to relate on the same level with their husbands.

Most men will converse about facts with other men. Tears may also be hard for a man to understand. Little boys are sometimes encouraged not to cry, because "crying is not manly." Many men grow up without the capacity to

cry and may look at tears as a weakness. A young husband can tend to walk away from tears. However, it is okay to cry; tears are an emotional release, but do not use your tears as a weapon for pity, or to get your own way.

The husband's greatest need is to be appreciated, admired, honored, and respected by his wife. He wants her assurance that he is doing a good job. Many young wives begin marriage with the idea that they can change their husbands. It looks so simple: just tell him to hang up his clothes and wipe off his shoes before he walks across the clean kitchen floor. The little habits that seemed "kinda' cute" before marriage suddenly become major defects. What are we to do? We may simply tell him to change, however, he looks at it as nagging. He begins to feel that he isn't appreciated and conflict follows.

I wish I could give you a simple solution. However, after 47 years of marriage, I am still learning! It does help to remember that I also have many faults and I really do not like being criticized, either. I have also learned to pray, and not to talk about it when either of us is very tired. I also find it helps to talk in a calm way and explain why it matters to me, then exercise patience if things don't change. Marriage is a two-way street; both husband and wife need to give and take. Love overlooks a multitude of faults.

It is important to remember that men tend to express love as a verb—by action. We must learn to be grateful

and show our appreciation for their many acts of love. Men provide for the family by going to work every day. They come home and mow the yard, work in the garden or fix whatever needs to be repaired. They show love by keeping the car filled with gas and in good shape for us to drive.

The man shows his love by being the spiritual leader in the home, by taking the family to church and church activities. They show love with their hands. We need to respond with gratefulness and a thankful spirit. I hurt my husband when I complain about the lack of money or not being able to afford the luxuries of our peers. My attitudes and words can deflate his sense of worth and confidence in his ability to perform as a husband.

Marriage is for life. Couples must begin marriage with this commitment and understanding. I am afraid many marriages break up today because one partner begins to focus on the 5% that she or he does not like rather than appreciating the 95% of good in the other. Little things become major when we focus just on them. Let me encourage you to look for the good qualities in your husband. Thank him for all he does for you; respect and support (stand behind him and lift him up) him in his job, his work in the church and community. Tell him, but also show him that you love him. Love is both a noun and a verb. Taken together, they make a marriage grow.

Honor your husband this Father's Day.



## School Problems

Logan Sommers, Age 12, Bangor, CA

Don sauntered along with Tim, his best friend, on their way to school. “Hey,” Tim began, “I’ve got an idea. Why don’t we...?” His voice trailed off at the sound of footsteps behind him. “Oh, no,” he groaned, “Here comes Paul. Let’s get out of here!”

“Don! Tim! Wait for me!” Paul shouted as the two boys broke into a run.

“Run! Run!” Don whispered hoarsely. As soon as they rounded a bend in the path, they dived into the bushes. There they crouched as Paul ran on, suspecting something. As soon as he was out of sight, they burst into laughter. “Whew!” Tim laughed. “that was close!” Once again, they walked up the path. The surprised look on Paul’s face nearly made them start laughing all over again.

“Where were you? I wanted to tell you....”

“Ding! Dong! Ding! Dong!” the school bell stopped Paul, giving Don and Tim time to scurry into their seats.

All that day, Don wondered what Tim had in mind. *Probably another scheme to upset the teacher*, he thought. Don and Tim were the main pranksters in school. If either boy got into a scrape, the other seemed to be there for him.

That afternoon, Tim said, “Here’s my idea. We’re having a substitute teacher next week. She may not know all the rules, so I’m bringing a pack of gum to pass out so we can chew it during school hours. We’ll pass notes and I’ve got another idea that you won’t believe.”

“What is it?”

“Oh, you’ll find out. Just wait and see!”

The first day of the substitute teacher’s job went pretty well. But the second day wasn’t so good. When Tim was caught with gum, Sister Clara asked, “Tim, does your teacher allow you to chew gum in class?”

“Naw,” he answered.

“Well, go throw it into the trash, then write, ‘I will not chew gum.’ 50 times on the board.” The rest of the students proceeded to either swallow or hide their gum, so they wouldn’t be discovered.

The next day Tim brought a box to school. When the teacher left the room, he started putting small things into the girls’ and the teacher’s desks. Don asked about it but Tim wouldn’t say a thing.

When the first girl opened her desk, something jumped up. “Eeeeeee!” she screamed.

“What’s wrong?” asked the substitute teacher anxiously, as she made her way to Lucinda’s desk.

“There’s...there’s something moving and...it’s ...it’s squeaking!” cried Lucinda in a frightened voice.

“Oh!” cried the teacher. “It’s a mouse! Lucinda, it’s alright.”

Each time one of the girls opened up their desks, out jumped a mouse. Sister Clara opened the classroom door and Don, smirking, chased them outside.

Then the teacher turned to the class. “Students, do any of you know who did this?” Heads shook, as everyone denied it.


“Well,” she said, “I’d like Don Troyer and Tim King to stay after school.” after school, Sister Clara talked to Don and Tim. They grew serious as she asked questions. When she learned Tim had

done the mouse trick, she let Don go.

The next week Brother Simon talked to the class. “Boys and girls,” he said sadly, “I’m disappointed in you. Sister Clara told me about your behavior. This is intolerable. Each of you will write an essay on obedience and respect. Tim will stay in at recess so we can discuss his punishment.” That day each pupil went home with a note for the parents.

Don’s parents were not happy with him. “Don,” his father said, “I don’t want to hear of any more disrespect.” After his punishment, Don said, “Dad, I’m sorry. I’ll try to do better after this.”

“Good, we’ll be praying for you.”

Don tried his best. He soon was a likable boy who stood firm for the truth. He was happy for he had turned to his Father in heaven for help. 

## youth messages

### Giving to the Lord—Time or Money?

Janice looked over her weekly earnings and set aside a portion for the “mission offering” on Sunday. Sitting in church the following morning, some thoughts crossed her mind: *Does God really need my money? Doesn’t He own the cattle on a thousand hills? Would He rather I donate my time?*

I am blessed when I read about youth and singles around the world who are giving what time they can to the work of God. I am blessed when youth take

up voluntary service that is unpopular or choose service opportunities that require greater sacrifice. I am blessed to hear of youth who “go into service” at home. Some care for prison babies and disadvantaged children on their own expense. Others assist neglected widows and elderly persons. Still others befriend children whose parents are physically or emotionally absent. Rather than consuming their extra time and money on themselves, these folks are using their extra resources for

the advancement of God's kingdom.

Giving to the Lord is a very old practice. In the beginning of time we read about two brothers who brought an offering to the Lord. Abel brought an offering and God was delighted. Cain brought an offering and God was displeased. Rather than change his heart, Cain became very angry. This story teaches us that physical gifts by themselves do not bring God pleasure. God is only pleased when giving comes from a heart that is perfect toward Him. He cherishes offerings that are motivated by love and gratefulness.

Throughout the Old Testament there are many incidents of people giving time and possessions to the Lord. In many of these stories the sacrifices and offerings were given out of love and gratefulness to God. But the situation changes in the book of Exodus. We read about God's people murmuring and complaining. At Mount Sinai the Israelites disowned God's prophet and gave their gold for making a golden calf. In their deluded state, they intended to use this idol in a "feast to the Lord." Once again, He was very displeased with an offering. How disappointed God must have been! God was ready to annihilate these stiff-necked people.

But at Moses' request, God had compassion on the Israelites, and He continued to establish an outward law that would govern a people whose hearts were not always turned toward

Him. God gave them a long list of regulations that would enable them to "live long on the earth" and "remember the Lord their God." Among these regulations were various instructions for giving. Freewill giving like that of Abel, Noah, and Abraham would have been ideal. But most of the Israelites did not have hearts like these men and so God established giving regulations. It would be many years before God would again establish a holy nation of people whose hearts were perfect toward Him.

There was a group of Israelites, however, whose hearts were turned toward God. When Moses asked for those who were on the Lord's side to gather around him, the Levites presented themselves. God noticed the sincerity of this tribe and consecrated them for his own special work.

The remaining tribes were instructed to tithe the increase of their lands and livestock in behalf of the Levites, the poor, in their regular trips to the tabernacle. Some tithes were given annually; other tithes were given every three years. On the average agriculturalists gave about 23% of their increase to the Lord every year. Those whose income came from other sources, were not commanded to tithe; yet even these people were given opportunities to freely give time or money to the Lord as they were able.

Part of God's covenant with the Israelites was that if they served Him, He would bless their flocks and herds.

However, with the coming of the New Kingdom, a radical shift took place in the way God's people viewed material goods. No longer was there a promise of material blessing for those who followed Jesus. In fact, Jesus even predicted that for some Christians, following Him would entail great physical hardship. In the New Kingdom, Jesus and the apostles proclaim the *urgent* need for men and women to offer *themselves* and to trust their material needs to God. Young men are instructed to preach the Gospel in neighboring towns, and are told to travel without money or food. A group of preachers discover that God miraculously provides their tax dues. Affluent Christians sell their lands and possessions and give to the poor. A Samaritan woman is shocked to realize that true worship takes place in perfect hearts, and that collective worship can take place in upper rooms or whatever shelter is available. The materially blessed Corinthians are counseled to collect weekly offerings in behalf of those who experienced drought in Jerusalem. A godly lady uses her time and money to sew

clothes for the poor.

These and many other stories give us a glimpse into the kind of giving that God must have anticipated when He decided to salvage a massive congregation and postpone the creation of a new nation. It is hard for us to imagine how much God must have anticipated a kingdom of priests, who like the Levites, would give *themselves* to His service.

Like a farmer, God waits expectantly to receive fruit from the investment He has made in our lives. I urge you to willingly give to the Lord. Has God blessed you materially? Offer back to Him as much as you can. Will your employer allow you to work fewer hours? Then begin giving as much of your week as you can in serving others and proclaiming the Gospel.

God can put money in fish's mouths. He can send rain on farmer's crops. He can even multiply the offspring of cows upon a thousand hills. But He chooses to limit his use of people to those who are available.

God does not force anyone to give to Him. He waits for us to give *ourselves*!

*Next Month's*  
**QUESTION**

**Christian missions frequently have a shortage of responsible, humble, and effective personnel. What are some factors that contribute to this problem and what are some things that could be done to help resolve this dilemma? Feel free to discuss this question with church leaders and mission leaders.**



(USPS 767-160)  
Calvary Messenger  
2673 Township Rd. 421  
Sugarcreek, OH 44681

Periodicals

## THOUGHT GEMS

What a scarcity of news there would be if everybody obeyed the Ten Commandments!

• • • • •

Raising one's voice often lowers communication.

• • • • •

*Formula:* The good old days + a bad memory = Nostalgia.

• • • • •

Overweight doesn't happen overnight—it snacks up on you.

• • • • •

We tend to have too many opinions and not enough convictions.

• • • • •

We are better off passing by many "once-in-a-lifetime opportunities."

• • • • •

Notice the tea kettle; even when up to its neck in hot water, it still sings.

• • • • •

Speech is silver; silence is golden, while oratory may be mainly brass.

• • • • •

Why should children born out of wedlock be labeled illegitimate instead of their parents?

• • • • •

Nothing worthwhile is achieved without patience, labor and disappointment.