



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2023

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Calvary Messenger

July 2023

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Editor: Aaron D. Yoder

5188 W. 825 N., Leesburg, IN 46538

Ph: 574-646-2123; Fax: 800-956-7850

calvary.messenger.19@gmail.com

Contributing Editors:

Simon Schrock, Enos D. Stutzman,

Aaron Lapp, Ronald J. Miller

Missions Editor: Floyd Stoltzfus

3750 E. Newport Rd.

Gordonville, PA 17529

Youth Messages Editor: Josh Kooistra

2445 Rough & Ready Rd.

New Concord, OH 43762

cm youtheditor@gmail.com

Junior Messages Editor:

Mrs. Mary Ellen Beachy

11095 Pleasant Hill Rd.

Dundee, OH 44624

maryellenbeachy@icloud.com

Women's Editor:

Mrs. Susan Schlabach

7184 W. Henry Rd., Ripley, OH 45167

skschlabach@gmail.com

Circulation Manager/Treasurer:

Barry Hochstetler

6681 Lake Rd.,

Hicksville, OH 43526

Ph: 419-487-0887

hochdrywall@gmail.com

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How You Live Your Dash

Author Unknown

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on her tombstone from the beginning to the end.

He noticed that first came the date of birth
and spoke the following date with tears,
But he said what matters most of all is the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time that she spent alive on earth.
And now only those who loved her know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own—the cars, the house, the cash.
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard. Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left, that still can be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real,
And always try to understand the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger and show appreciation more,
And love the people in our lives like we never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile,
Remembering that special dash might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy's being read with your life's actions to rehash,
Would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your dash?

Submitted for publication by Eli J. Yoder, Hutchinson, KS 

Syncretized Worship

There is a phenomenon among God's people to give up the true riches of God and blend the worship of the false gods of the people around them with the worship of God.

After Israel's deliverance from Egypt, the children of Israel requested Aaron to "make us gods, which shall go before us" while Moses was on the mount of God receiving the Law of God and instructions to build the tabernacle. To this molten calf they gave credit for their deliverance from Egypt. Had they not seen the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night that led them? Their unbelief continued through the next 40 years in the wilderness.

The temptations continued even as they made their way to enter the land of Canaan. The king of Moab was afraid of them and asked Balaam to curse them.

Although Balaam was not successful in cursing the children of Israel when they passed through Moab, according to the Jewish historian, Josephus, Balaam told the princes of the Midianites how their young women could ensnare the

Israelite men and get them to worship their gods.¹ Indeed, according to Numbers 25, his strategy had a great effect upon the children of Israel. It was while the repentant children of Israel were weeping before the Lord that Zimri brought home a Midianite woman in plain sight of Moses and the congregation. According to Josephus, Zimri gave the following rebellious rebuke to Moses some time before he was killed by Eleazar.

Antiquities of the Jews 4.6.13

But Zimri arose up after him, and said, "Yes, indeed, Moses, thou art at liberty to make use of such laws as thou art so fond of, and hast, by accustoming thyself to them, made them firm; otherwise, if things had not been thus, thou hadst often been punished before now, and hadst known that the Hebrews are not easily put upon; but thou shalt not have one of thy followers in thy tyrannical commands, for thou doest nothing else hitherto but, under pretence of laws, and of God, wickedly impose on us slavery, and gain dominion to thyself, while thou deprives us of the sweetness of life,

1. *Antiquities of the Jews* 4.6.6

which consists in acting according to our own wills, and is the right of free men, and of those that have no lord over them. Nay, indeed, this man [Moses] is harder upon the Hebrews than were the Egyptians themselves, as pretending to punish, according to his laws, everyone's acting what is most agreeable to himself; but thou thyself better deserves to suffer punishment, who presumes to abolish what everyone acknowledges to be what is good for him, and aimest to make thy single opinion to have more force than that of all the rest: and what I now do, and think to be right, I shall not hereafter deny to be according to my own sentiments. I have married, as thou sayest rightly, a strange woman, and thou hearest what I do from myself as from one that is free; for truly I did not intend to conceal myself. I also own that I sacrifice to those gods to whom you do not think it fit to sacrifice; and I think it right to come at truth by inquiring of many people, and not like one that lives under tyranny, to suffer the whole hope of my life to depend upon one man; nor shall anyone find cause to rejoice who declares himself to have more authority over my actions than myself."²

Indeed, even if this statement is only what Josephus imagined Zimri

2. *Antiquities of the Jews* 4.6.13

to say, is there anything new under the sun? The rebellious heart of man often throws away the riches of true love and the fellowship of a body of God's believers to be master of his own will and destiny. Of course, the judgment of God is seldom as immediate today as it was for Zimri.

Following the miraculous conquest of the land of Canaan, Israel repeatedly worshipped the gods of the people they defeated. "*And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger*" (Judges 2:12). What is the logic of adopting gods and strategies of people who fell to the power of the God of Israel?

Who were the gods and which cities and countries did they come from? We find a list in the book of Judges. "*And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him*" (10:6). Was it not some of these very countries that plundered and controlled Israel? During the time of the judges, the children of Israel went

through cycles of apostasy, bondage, repentance, and deliverance. It was during a relatively short period of Jewish history during the reigns of David and Solomon that they enjoyed freedom from the pagan nations around them. However, Solomon led the way into idolatry as he was influenced by the pagan women he married, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites. The rituals and worship practices of the gods they worshipped were truly detestable and corrupt. We can hardly imagine the sensuous, perverted, and inhumane practices that included prostitution and child sacrifice! How far had Solomon fallen to encourage and practice worshipping these gods? He followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians and built a site on the Mount of Olives to worship Chemosh, the goddess of Moab and for Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites.

It was soon after the death of Solomon that the loss of the treasures of the house of the Lord began, but the glory of the Lord had likely left Israel before Solomon's death. It was only for the sake of David, his father, that God did not allow the kingdom to be divided during his lifetime (I Kings 11:12).

I Kings 14: 25 *“And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam*

[son of Solomon], that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:

26 *And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.*

27 *And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house.”*

After that began the trade-off of the riches of the kingdom to buy alliances with the kingdoms around them that served strange gods.

I Kings 15:18 *“Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,*

19 *There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.*

20 *So Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and*

Abelbethmaachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.”

II Kings 12:17 *“Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.*

18 *And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the **treasures of the house of the LORD**, and in the king’s house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.”*

Are there gods of the culture around us that we are lusting after? What are the treasures of the house of God that we are trading for alliances and peace with the “nations” around us? Do we replace the gold shields with brass shields so it appears that the glory of God is still with us?

Concerning Israel’s spiritual infidelity, Bruce Scott suggests that the main cause may have been a craving to be like everyone else.

He continues:

Surrounded by a sea of pagan uniformity, it was difficult for Israel to remain distinct. They attempted, not so much to replace Jehovah, but to syncretize and blend Him in with all the other so-called gods. The effect obscured Israel’s true distinguishing

mark—the genuine presence of God in their midst (Exodus 33:16).

If we are not careful, the same could become true of us. As Christians, we too are *a peculiar people*. Although less overtly idolatrous, our modern culture is very similar to that of the ancient Canaanites. Our society is saturated with violence, debauchery, and the expenditure of children through abortion. Similar to Old Testament Israel, we are tempted to concede biblical truths for the sake of blending in and appearing tolerant. Israel’s example should be a warning to us of the danger of attempting to drink the cup of the Lord along with the cup of demons (I Corinthians 10:21). When we agree to conform to the world and acquiesce to Satan’s counterfeits, we too end up obscuring the one characteristic that distinguishes us from the rest of humankind—the genuine presence of God in our lives.

Elijah’s forthright challenge speaks to us today, as it does to every generation: *“How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.”* What will be our choice?³

-AY 

3. <https://israelmyglory.org/article/the-battle-of-the-gods-paganism%E2%82%AC%82-seduction-of-israel/>

Announcement



Single Ladies' Seminar

August 4-6, 2023



“Building Your House”

“The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands.” Proverbs 14:1

The Design- Catherine Kipps, Aroda, VA

Building Relationships- Allison Payette, New Paris, IN

Money Matters- Valerie Steiner, Plain City, OH

Women in Leadership- Chelsea Good, Logan, OH

Embracing Loveliness- Delores Mast, Whiteville, TN

Walking With the Master Builder- Dorcas Peachey, Belleville, PA

Location: Deeper Life Ministries, 5123 Converse Huff Rd, Plain City, OH 43064

For more information or to register, please contact Deeper Life Ministries:

(614) 873-1199 or info@dmlmohio.org

the bottom line

The Glory of Remembering the Lord's Day

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

We remember the old ways of Sabbath observance. My parents were baptized at our Weavertown Church in the mid-1920s. We did not have family devotions, always silent prayer at the table, and no

evening services at church. But we did consistently refrain from any unnecessary work on Sunday. Even just to start the tractor to show my cousins how our new Ford diesel sounds seemed to violate keeping the Lord's Day as a holy day.

How does that which is holy constitute a glory which seems to be sent by God? The priests in the Old Testament were consecrated to their office by reason of their very special garments and with the holy anointing oil, as stipulated in great detail in Exodus 28. The holy anointing oil by which Aaron, the high priest, was anointed, is described with detail in Exodus 30. It was very sacred, being a holy recipe which no one dared duplicate for personal uses lest he die.

The whole plan was based on God-ordained principles for the distinct purpose of being set aside for religious purposes, separate from any mundane or common use by non-consecrated persons. Aaron and his helper priests were assigned the washings and the use of holy oil administered upon them, so *“that they die not”* (25:21). Likewise, this oil or its attempted likeness was straitly warned by God to not be used by non-consecrated persons lest they *“be cut off from his people”* (25:33, 38).

Believers all over the world regard the Lord’s Day (Sunday) as the one day in seven to honor God as a holy day set aside for rest from our week-day labors. We should look again at the seventh day of creation week and see how it was a rest-day. *“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the*

seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all this work which God created and made” (Genesis 2:2,3). Twice it says God rested from His work. He blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, making it a holy day, set apart to celebrate the completed work of a most abundant and magnificent creation.

When God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, the fourth commandment was by plain and simple language, just seven words, *“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”* (Exodus 20:8). The economy of a few words warranted a bit of explanation, by which He then uses 76 words. We will quote the following two verses with its easy-to-understand language without any need for a modern translation. It says, *“Six days shalt thou labor, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates”* (verse 10). The Ten Commandments were given at Mt. Sinai in the midst of a great display of fire and smoke and a gigantic demonstration of divine power and glory.

I am impressed to think that the first

duty by this creation is not worship, but to cease from work, to rest from working, to rest from business, to rest from business production, to rest from business bookwork and phone calls, to rest from work-related computer browsing and inquiries, smart phone contacts or responses. Just to REST from WORK. Looking back over my own life, I feel I have not done very well in this rest thing.

One of the modern-era ideas is that when you have done your worship, you know, being at the very least a quiet spectator in your spot at church, you have the rest of the day to do your own jollies. Six days per week just is not enough time to do those non-resting ideas, whatever they may be.

The main feature of keeping the Lord's Day holy, by present-day moderns, is to be in church on Sunday forenoon. For some people, there are new demands from some sports programs to be on the ball field all day on Sunday. To not short-change God, some people "do" their church on Saturday evening. That way some key players can be fit and ready for the big all-day Sunday games. There have been certain sports tournaments that commence on Saturday morning and go all day and also on Sunday all day. Whereupon, some churches have

advertised a Friday evening service to happily allow people to "do" their church then, which conveniently provides for a free weekend. That way God is not short-changed, and "Christian" people are not deprived from their earthly priorities.

So where really is God, Who is the Giver of all good things, in this whole regimen of time, especially on weekends? Regarding the Ten Commandments, each of those is a ready declaration that the Holy Lord God is to be regarded as No. One in every person's life, whether saved or unsaved. If would-be Christians pay no mind to it in specifics, why would the worldlings give any thought to it in general? Of course, they would not. Consequently, the glory is departed.

To their shame and error, modern Christians too often have a weak view of anything stated in the O.T. The Ten Commandments are timeless principles that apply to every nation and peoples. Back when President Jimmy Carter was the leader and spokesman for the most powerful and prosperous nation on the earth, he met for strategic peace talks in the Middle East. The Arab nations had their strongest man there, and Israel had their top man present for a very important summit conference. Come Friday, the Arab man said he will not

be present, it is their holy day. The Israeli man said he cannot come on Saturday, for that is his holy day. They all three agreed to meet on Sunday to resume their business.

Well, sorry to say, “Christian” Jimmy Carter blew an excellent opportunity to display his allegiance to God and Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, by not declining a meeting on Sunday in deference to the God whom he worships. It could have been a testimony that Sunday must be revered as the day when the Son of God was resurrected. At a time when the world at large was watching this stage of national power and glory, an opportunity to extol the God of heaven over all religions was lost. But alas, the glory faded.

There is no religion on the earth that can even have any semblance to matching that peak witness by God of His Son when God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

But how well do we do in remembering the Lord’s Day, to keep it holy? God created the earth and all things in it, then rested in recognition of having finished a major work. Jesus finished His work on the earth as both the Son of Man and the Son of God, concluding it all on the Cross with the words, “*It is finished.*” People buried His body; God raised Him in a mighty resurrection. Ever

since, believers in Jesus rest and worship on the first day of the week to give worthy recognition to the great plan and work of redemption being finished. Jesus sanctioned that occasion to His disciples by meeting with them on the first day of the week, having entered in through shut (locked-German) doors. Jesus did it two times, as recorded in John 20:19 and 26. Both times it was on the first day of the week. Glory filled their souls! Hence it became known as the Lord’s Day. The glory returned!

The principle is about being told to keep it holy. How shall we fulfill the biblical word “keep,” as in keeping it holy? Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #8104 gives it as “to put a hedge about it, to guard or protect it, to beware, circumspect, to heed to keep it.” As a Bible principle, it is up to Christian believers how best to rest from our weekday labors and business, exercising our soul and spirit in meditation while the body is renewed by a day of rest. Worship is also a most worthy way to keep the day holy, as set apart for giving glory to God for His creation and for His redemption.

The Bottom Line is herewith a call to all our readers to continue to be consistent in revering the first day of the week as a holy day. The glory part is by resting from our weekday work

and business, and parallel to that, making it a priority to be present at a church somewhere every Sunday. Then super-size it by always being

there four minutes before starting time! The Lord will give grace and glory. Amen!



Intergenerational Continuity

Elmer Smucker, Sugarcreek, OH

Text- II Timothy 2:1-10, Jude 3

Continuity- uninterrupted connection, succession, or union.

Intergenerational- existing or occurring between generations.

History, both secular and biblical, tells a tragic story about the difficulty of faithfully transmitting values that have shaped an earlier generation. We need look no further than the history of the revival that swept through this area in the late 50s. While there is much to be appreciated about the current situation in our churches, it is also true there are things that should cause us to pay attention. One of the most urgent issues is the trajectory that is evident in our daily living (family worship). The second is our passion for the local brotherhood, especially as it is seen in our church attendance. There is no lack of things we could complain about. We are surrounded with the pull to become complacent with the added attraction

to something new and “relevant.” That has limited value in challenging us to greater faithfulness. The greater value is in maintaining for some, and regaining for others, the realities that pulsed in the hearts of our parents and grandparents.

The words of our text follow the urgent appeal to Timothy to “*hold fast the form of sound words...which are in Christ Jesus*” (1:13 NKJV). Paul follows that appeal with the sad documentation of a great falling away that had taken place in Asia. Consequently, he urges Timothy to “*be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*” It is of interest that “be strong” is sometimes translated with the words “be strengthened.” Is there anything significant about the change in words? In one sense, no, since the strength is found in the grace of God. That ensures that we understand that this kind of strength is not conjured up with some well-meaning “pull

yourself up by your boot straps” philosophy. On the other hand, I value the idea of being strengthened since it gives the sense that this is an ongoing exercise. The word is in the passive sense which means the action is coming from outside of ourselves. We are the recipients of the action, not the source. In verse three there is an added comment on the urgency of this matter. We are told that faithfulness in passing on the faith means that we will need to face hardship head-on. We will need to endure many difficulties. This is not a work for wimps or those whose lives are shaped by the loudest voices around us. It means we will be a people who are willing to go against current norms even if it means we will be marginalized or worse still, be persecuted for our faithfulness.

Consider with me the metaphor of a relay race to capture the challenge we face. A marathon race is one of the more difficult challenges to the human body. It calls for sacrifice and commitment. A relay race calls for both of those with the added challenge of coordination. While swift runners are keys to winning these races, they are of lesser value if the runners have not mastered the art of passing the baton under very difficult circumstances. It would be one thing if such a race were designed

to run at top human speed and then stop during the transition. Instead, this act is to be accomplished in a confined area while both runners are still moving as fast as possible while the baton is being passed. There is also a limited space in which this can lawfully happen. The ideal situation is where the runner that is passing the baton passes the receiver who has started running, and without looking back hands the baton to the second runner. Every generation encounters the challenge and difficulty in faithfully defending the faith once delivered unto the saints and to faithfully pass that on to succeeding generations.

I want us to consider three essentials, foundational elements, in response to this call on our lives.

1. Focus

The noun form of this word means, “directed attention, a point of concentration.”

The verb form is, “to cause to be concentrated, to bring into focus.”

Paul begins this appeal to Timothy by calling him his son. What a tender appeal this is. He urges him to be strengthened. Then he moves on to three analogies.

A soldier

An athlete

A farmer

In all of these there are certain

aspects of life that mark that person from other people. Yet in each one there is the need to pay close attention to his sphere of duties. It is not difficult to see the similarity to the call to be faithful in our calling as children of God. We are in the world, but not of the world. (John 17: 15-16, II Corinthians. 4:16)

2. Content

If I would be forced to make a choice which of the three elements I consider of greatest importance, it would be without question this one. I am conscious that others would disagree with me on this matter. I want to be gracious, but I hope before I am finished that most of you will at least recognize that this one is very important.

I get my point from the words in verse two, *“And the things that thou hast heard of me.”* What might that be? It is certain that there were many things. At the same time there was a word that shaped the apostle Paul. It is the word Gospel. Think of the importance he places on this word in the opening words of his letter to the church at Galatia. Galatians 1:8 *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”*

Here are other Scriptures that add to the urgency.

Romans 1:16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ...”*

Romans 2:16 *“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.”*

Galatians 6:14 *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...”*

This is just a sprinkling of verses where we see that the message of the Gospel was of great importance to Paul. So we ask the question, What is the Gospel? This is where a person can get himself in difficulty. I will attempt to answer the question concerning its essence rather than its fruit. There is a difference.

Philippians 1:27 and Titus 2:11-12 refer to the fruit of the Gospel. This is a result of the Gospel having wrought its work in our lives.

I have come to a rest in my soul that the essence of the Gospel can be gathered together in three realities:

The character of God,

The condition of man,

The cross of Christ.

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. There is no salvation from our desperate and lost condition if we add something or take away from these three realities. Think with me of the words of the song “Rock of Ages.” In one of the verses we sing these words, “Nothing in my hands I bring.” Every other

religion, including atheism, would approach their deity with these words, “Something in my hands I bring.” This always separates the true and the false. Anytime someone adds human works to the finished work of Christ, the Gospel is excluded. This in no way means that our faith will not have evidence. James makes that clear. What it does mean is that there are no human works that were included in the third element of the Gospel. It is all of grace. (Romans 11:6, Ephesians 2:8)

Brothers and Sisters, let me say it as clearly as I possibly can. If our goal is to preserve a particular culture marked by a lifestyle that we value highly, we will end up losing the faith. It pains me to say this knowing that I will probably be misunderstood and even marked as one who is losing out, but say it I will. The souls of our children and future generations will not be saved by a lifestyle; they will be saved only by the work of God in sending His only begotten Son as the sacrificial Lamb that takes away our sins.

3. Faithfulness

The call to transmit the faith once delivered unto us means there will need to be faithful men who have heard and then who commit to others who teach others also (II

Timothy 2:2). When one link in this chain is broken, the prospect of intergenerational continuity is very unlikely (we should never say never). God is very gracious. The proof of that is that we are still believers in Christ today. In our generational background there were those times when the faith was very dim. God in His mercy and grace raised up others who preached and lived the Gospel message. The OT is a witness that God will be faithful to the end. There will be a people who are His when He returns for the Church.

The burning question for me is, will I be among those who are faithful? Secondly, will our children be among them? How about our grandchildren? It is these things that should move us to be willing to give up anything that would hinder this process. At the same time we should be like Paul who said of himself,

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I have been apprehended in Christ Jesus...this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”



marriages

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

Jantzi-Good

Bro. Harold, son of Wayne and Judy Jantzi, Blackstone, VA, and Sis. Arianna, daughter of Bruce and Fonda Good, Frazier Park, CA, on April 8, 2023, at Jewel City Church for Shinnston Fellowship, WV, by Sheldon Martin.

King-Beachy

Bro. Benjamin, son of Raymond and Mary King, Burgettstown, PA, and Sis. Shari, daughter of Jacob and Luane Beachy, Hutchinson, KS, on May 27, 2023, at a rural private park for Center Amish Mennonite Church by Raymond King.

Near-Shrock

Bro. Johnny, son of George and Edith Near, Osage, IA, and Sis. Konni, daughter of Kendall and Brenda Shrock, Riceville, IA, on April 28, 2023, at Evangelical Free Church for Believers Fellowship Mennonite Church, Grove City, MN, by Glen Chupp.

Peachey-Byler

Bro. Brandon, son of David “D.J.” and Martha Peachy, Ukraine, and Sis. Krista, daughter of Larry and Violet Byler, Hutchinson, KS, on May 19, 2023, in an outdoor wedding at the bride’s sister Alicia and Aaron Mast residence for Center Amish Mennonite Church by Dwight Miller.

Peachey-Jantzi

Bro. Jesse, son of Louie Jr. and Olive Peachey, Woodville, NY, and Sis. Kaitlyn, daughter of Wayne and Judy Jantzi, Blackstone, VA, on April 29, 2023, at Smyrna Baptist Church for McKenney Mennonite Church by Tim Miller.

Raber-Troyer

Bro. Eli Raber, Sugarcreek, OH, and Sis. Clara Troyer, Sugarcreek, OH, on March 25, 2023, at Maranatha Fellowship by Paul L. Miller.

Stoltzfus-King

Bro. Javen, son of Daniel and Naomi Stoltzfus, Romney, WV, and Sis. Breanne, daughter of Floyd and Wilma King, Gap, PA, on May 5, 2023.

Yoder-Overholt

Bro. Victor, son of Louis and Kathy Yoder, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Joanna, daughter of Steven and Kaylene Overholt, Montezuma, GA, on February 17, 2023, at Montezuma Mennonite Church by Donny Swartzentruber.



cradle roll

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

Beachy, Darren and Heidi (Salazar), Hutchinson, KS, fifth child, second son, Sebastian James, April 4, 2023.

Fisher, Donny and Leanna (Wengerd), Greeneville, TN, third child, second daughter, Amrah Rowen, April 20, 2023.

Frey, Elvie Jr. and Sonya (Riehl), Elkhart, IN, fifth child, second son, Coleson Reed, April 26, 2023.

Gingerich, Joshua and Jonessa (Miller), McConnelsville, OH, third child, second son, Carson André, May 10, 2023.

Kauffman, Tyler and Leslie (Beachy), Latrobe, PA, first child and daughter, Makenzie Brooke, April 28, 2023.

King, Branden and Juliana (Beachy), Cottage Grove, TN, first child and son, Archer Slade, April 12, 2023.

Knepp, Jason and Janelle (Yoder), Fincastle, VA, third child, second daughter, Kianne Grayce, February 8, 2023.

Lapp, Curtis and Ella (Wagler), Mount Pleasant, PA, sixth child, third daughter, Cheree Annette, April 9, 2023.

Miller, Daryl Ray, Jr. and Glendora (Chupp), Kandiyohi, MN, second child, first daughter, Brianna Dawn, March 25, 2023.

Miller, Freeman III and Lydia (Graber), Oskaloosa, KS, sixth child, fifth son, Nolan Yuri, April 3, 2023.

Miller, Matthias and Kathleen (Yoder), Huntsville, AR, second child, first daughter, Ellie Hope, April 12, 2023.

Miller, Reuben and Heidi (Kuhns), Millersburg, OH, sixth child, third son, Nikoli James, May 29, 2023.

Raber, Philip and Karen (Miller), Big Prairie, OH, second child and son, Kylan Philip, May 31, 2023.

Schlabach, Marty and Kristina (Yoder), Cochranton, PA, fourth child, third son, Kai Dawson, May 31, 2023.


Schlabach, Wes and Janae (Kauffman), Latrobe, PA, first child and son, Bentley West, March 2, 2023.

Sommers, Jeffrey and Cynthia (Mast), Cochranton, PA, fourth child, second son, Kadin Jeffrey, April 14, 2023.

Stoltzfus, Matt and Ariana (Lapp), Coatesville, PA, third child, second daughter, Mariah Kate, April 30, 2023.

Yoder, Alex and Marissa (Amstutz), Montezuma, GA, second child, first daughter, Kinza Joyce, April 23, 2023.

Yoder, Brian and Faith (Yoder), Dundee, OH, fourth child, first son, Jordan Lee, May 28, 2023.

Yoder, Larry and Brittany (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, first child and daughter, Sabrina Grace, January 17, 2023. 


ordinations

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

Bro. Tim Miller (wife, Amanda) was ordained to the office of deacon on May 28, 2023, at Sunnyside Mennonite Church in Sarasota, FL.

Bro. Michael Jantzi (wife, Twila Yoder) was chosen by the voice of the church to be a minister at the Kiev Evangelical Mennonite Church. The ordination was held on April 23, 2023, with Jim Gingerich (Burkesville, KY) officiating. Perry Miller (Good Springs, TN), and Titus Miller (Suceava, Romania) preached the two sermons. Michael first moved to Kiev, Ukraine, as an 11-year-old boy in July 1993 with his parents, Bruce and Ruthann Jantzi.



Michael and Twila have six children. Despite the current war in Ukraine, the Church of Jesus Christ goes on. 

obituaries

Beachy, Alma, 94, of LaGrange, IN, died May 28 at her daughter Rosemary's residence. She was born on October 11, 1928, in Scott County, MO, to Manas F. and Anna (Schrock) Bontrager. On October 6, 1949, in LaGrange County, she married Cornelius "Neal" D. Beachy. He died August 2, 2014.

Surviving are five daughters: Sue Ann (Dennis) Hershberger, Nappanee; Rosemary (Marvin) Miller, LaGrange; Eileen (Harold) Yoder, Ginny (Jim) Kauffman, both of Millersburg; Maggie (Nate) Schwartz, Sturgis, MI; six sons: Marvin (Carolyn), Amboy; Dave (DiAnn), Goshen; Wayne (Rosanna), Ligonier; Tim (Leona), Columbia City; Paul (Janice), Syracuse; Sam (Heidi),

Milford; 27 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren, one step-granddaughter, four step-great-grandchildren, one step-great-great-grandson; sister, Fannie Schlabach, Goshen; two brothers: Melvin (Malinda) Bontrager, Middlebury; and Ralph Bontrager, Bemidji, MN.

Besides her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents, and three brothers: Levi, Manas Jr., and Enos Bontrager.

Alma was a homemaker and a member of Fairhaven Mennonite Church. She, along with her husband and family, lived as missionaries in Paraguay, South America, for 5 ½ years. She dearly loved Jesus, her husband, Neal, her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

The funeral service was held May 31, 2023, at Fairhaven Mennonite Church. Services were conducted by the Fairhaven Ministry Team. Burial followed in Thomas Cemetery, Goshen.

Eby, Menno Simon Jr., 83, died April 15, 2023, at his home near Paynesville, MN. He was born February 18, 1940, in Hagerstown, MD, to Menno and Orpha (Burkhart) Eby.

He accepted Christ as his Savior and was baptized in his youth. He grew up in Sheldon, WI, and graduated from Conrath High School in 1958.

On September 18, 1959, he was united in marriage to Alma Martin in Hayward, WI. They were able to share in 62 years of marriage until Alma's death on March 1, 2023.

He was a faithful member of the Believers' Mennonite Church. He worked as a carpenter, farmer, truck driver, and handyman. He will be remembered as an optimistic, easy going, and fun-loving father. He enjoyed cutting firewood and helping others.

He is survived by his children: Iva (Randall) Kauffman, Monroe, WI; Rhea Hershberger, Greenville, TN; Steven (Donna), Albany, KY; Kay (Daryl) Miller, Paynesville; Jay, Big Fork; Dena (Tom) Miller, Sheldon, MO; Orvan Lee (Christy), Abbeville, SC; 36 grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and two brothers: John and Mark Eby.

Menno was preceded in death by his wife, Alma; daughter, Lyn; two grandchildren; son-in-law, Roman

Hershberger; siblings: Melvin, Earl, Fannie, June, and Esther.

The funeral service was held April 19, 2023, at the Paynesville Evangelical Free Church, with burial in Burr Oak Cemetery in rural Grove City.

Knepp, Lovina Fern, 76, of Myakka City, FL, went to be with her Lord and Savior on April 24, 2023. She passed away peacefully in her home after a lengthy illness of Parkinson's disease. She was born on September 15, 1946, in Washington, IN, to the late Homer and Mary (Wagler) Knepp.

She was a member of Sunnyside Mennonite Church. She was part owner of Bulk N Natural Foods in Sarasota. She loved her children and grandchildren. Watching nature, yard work, and raking leaves were her favorite things to do.

Left to cherish her memory are her sons: Richard (Naomi), Perry (Miriam), Kristin (Rebecca); siblings: Dave (Wanda) Knepp, Miriam (Dave) Graber, Steve (Darlene) Knepp, Phillip (Marilyn) Knepp; grandchildren: Javin, Austin (Tierra), Trevor, Taylor (Kara), Nakia (Joe) Miller, Erica, McKendra, Rowen, Abriana, Mason, Bentley, and Brielle; great grandson, Weston, and a baby on the way.

Lovina was predeceased by her husband, William Knepp, in 1991, and son, Jason, daughter-in-law, Eileen, and their children, Heidi, Andrew, and Ivanna in 2002.

The funeral service was held on April 28, 2023, at Sunnyside Mennonite

Church, followed by the burial in Sunnyside Cemetery.

Miller, Rhoda Mae, 53, Auburn, KY, passed away on April 27, 2023, at her residence. Rhoda was born in Daviess County, IN, on June 16, 1969, to Laura Mae (Weldy) and the late Martin Kemp.

Rhoda was a member of Plainview Mennonite Church and a homemaker.

She is survived by her husband of 22 years, Wayne Miller, three children: Samuel, Rachel, Melody; mother: Laura Kemp, Odon, IN; brother, Jonathan (Rebecca) Kemp, Freedom, IN; four sisters: Angela (Phillip) Knepp, Odon, IN; Regina (Garry) Mullet, Summersville; Christina Kemp, Odon, IN; and Carol (Daniel) Knepp, Loogootee, IN.

She was preceded in death by her father and a daughter: Katie Eileen Miller.

The funeral service was held on April 30, 2023, at the Plainview Mennonite Church with Leon Coblentz and Kevin Miller officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery with Steve Miller officiating.

Palmer, Westley Ray, 74, of Sarasota, FL, passed away on March 2, 2023. He was born on April 5, 1948, in Lakeland, FL, to Roy and Ellamae Palmer. He was married to Shirley Ann Robbins.

Westley was enlisted in the United States Navy, and later pursued a career as a refrigeration technician, which included maintenance and repairs on HVAC units and commercial coolers.

He became a member of Sunnyside Mennonite Church on April 4, 2004, where he was a faithful member. He had a burden for lost souls and is remembered for his tract ministry in the community. He also greatly enjoyed fishing and had many stories to tell about his adventures.

He is survived by daughters: Cynthia Jane and Connie Elaine (Chuck) Nations, Hickory, NC; and nephew, Jimmy Lee.

The funeral service was held on March 5, 2023, at Sunnyside Mennonite Church with burial following.

Peight, Hannah B., 79, of Greenville, TN, passed away on February 6, 2023, after an unexpected, short illness. She passed away surrounded by her family at her daughter Lavina's home in TN. She was born on November 24, 1943, in Belleville, PA, to Ezra and Lavina Kanagy and married Henry B. Peight on November 21, 1967. He passed away on October 4, 2015.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her brother, Aquilla, two infant grandsons, and one infant granddaughter.

She will be greatly missed by her surviving children: James (Mary), Bedford, PA; Jonathan, Bedford, PA, Lavina (Marlin) Stoltzfus, Chuckey, TN; and Jesse (Jani), Heavener, OK. She will also be greatly missed by her 24 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and her brothers and sisters: Jacob (Katie) Kanagy, Ezra (Eva) Kanagy, Lavina Swarey, Ezra (Leah) Peight, Jacob (Nannie) Peight, and Urie (Martha) Kanagy.

She was an example of true Christ-

like loving kindness, patience, and unselfishness until her last breath.

A memorial service was held at Greene County Mennonite Church in Greeneville, TN, on February 9, 2023. The funeral service was held February 11, 2023, at Somerset Mennonite Fellowship, Somerset, PA.

Yoder, Alma I., 94, of Montezuma, GA, passed away on March 5, 2023. She was born on February 21, 1929, to the late John and Ida Mae (Borntrager) Plank, in Garnett, KS. On July 8, 1947, she married Menno L. Yoder, and they enjoyed 57 years together.

Alma enjoyed sewing and spent many hours at her sewing machine. She loved her family and always had a candy drawer and delicious vitamin Cs ready for her grandchildren. She cared faithfully for Menno for years as he dealt with Parkinson's disease. She also dearly loved her puppies, Corky and Gracie.

She was a faithful member of Clearview Mennonite Church.

She is survived by five children: Ernest (Edna), Cuthbert; Elmer (Esther), Montezuma; Eli (Linda), Cuthbert; Ellen (Ernest) Yoder, Montezuma; Emily (Larry) Yoder, Montezuma; 20 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren, brother, David Plank, and two sisters: Elva Miller and Mary Esther Plank.

Alma was preceded in death by her husband, Menno, son, Ivan, daughter, Elva Mae, sister, Millie Hostetler, and brothers: Isaac, Daniel, Ralph, and Tim.

The funeral service was held at

Clearview Mennonite Church on March 7, 2023, with Clyde Yoder, Randy Miller, and Donny Swartzentruber officiating. The burial followed in the church cemetery with Dwight Yoder serving.

Yoder, Anna, 83, of Montezuma, GA, went to be with the Lord on March 17, 2023. She was born on December 10, 1939, to Rudy and Lydia (Schrock) Yoder in Norfolk, VA.

She dedicated her life to Christ and was a faithful member of the Montezuma Mennonite Church. She touched many lives through her work as a nurse at the hospital, various nursing homes, and also in a doctor's office for many years. She loved children and will be remembered by many of them for the Smarties she handed out to them.

She was loved and will be missed by her sisters: Malinda (Raymond) Kauffman, Naomi Kauffman, Esther Yoder; brothers: Eli (Miriam) Yoder, William (Naomi) Yoder, 45 nieces and nephews, a host of great-nieces and nephews, and close friends.

Preceding her in death were her parents, Rudy and Lydia Yoder, sisters: Martha (Carl) Brenneman, Mary (Irvin) Weaver, Ruth Yoder, Barbara Yoder; brothers: Ervin Yoder, Paul Yoder, and brother-in-law, Eli Kauffman.

The funeral service was held on March 20, 2023, at the Montezuma Mennonite Church with Morris Yoder, David Lee Yoder, Donny Swartzentruber, and Irvin Yoder officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.



A brother who taught at Calvary Bible School 30 or 40 years ago recently reflected on that experience as we visited amiably. He regarded himself as a relatively young and inexperienced person in the teachers' study where a mixture of seasoned older brothers and younger teachers spent time in class preparation and mutually edifying interaction.

This brother reflected on how surprised he was when one of the older, seasoned brothers in his cohort asked him how he would respond to a rather nuanced and thorny question that had come up in class. There are several things that are currently noteworthy about this interaction from decades ago.

First, the young man felt perplexed on how to respond to the question that was posed. But he noted with interest that just because someone is older and more experienced, doesn't mean that he or she has all the answers.

Secondly, he was moved that this older brother sought out the perspective of the self-perceived novice. He felt humbled and affirmed at the same time. I assume that the older brother genuinely didn't know

how to address the question that had come up. But I note that seeking the advice of the younger brother was helpful whether a helpful response was clear or not.

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I'm reminded that good things happen when we seek each other's perspective on ideas, issues, and life in general. This is helpful in a variety of situations but is particularly noteworthy when the one seeking additional perspective is in a position of advantage by virtue of his experience, role, or age, relative to the person whom he seeks out for input.

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This incident also reminded me of the importance of cultivating an inquisitive attitude toward the questions people struggle with. If there's a downside to the accumulation of a life's worth of experience and wisdom, it is that the older person might struggle with the temptation to quit asking questions and quit trying to learn. It has been said that we are severely disadvantaged if we reach a point where we "know it all." The person who already knows it all has nothing more to learn.

It's not difficult for us to instinctively agree because none of us knows

everything. However, is it possible that there may be areas that we are more like the “know-it-all” than we idealize? One warning sign that this might be the case is when my answers-to-questions ratio is out of kilter. A healthy, humble follower of Christ is one who has questions about many things in life that come out of his security with Christ. It is that security of having the most important questions settled that gives the freedom to ask questions and invite scrutiny about things that are ambiguous.

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Jim Dove owns a firm in New Jersey called Dove Design Studio that specializes in kitchen remodeling. He reports that the ice maker is the kitchen appliance that his clients care the most about after the range.

In the northern parts of the USA, ice houses were common in days before electric refrigeration. It is unclear what role this history plays in this country’s relative obsession with ice. In the USA it would be considered rude for an establishment to serve a drink without ice unless specifically requested to do so. But this is not so in many other parts of the developed world.

America is very fond of coffee. In the mid-1990s, Starbucks introduced iced coffee drinks to their offerings.

Coffee and related drinks are now consumed with a lot of ice.

A consumer poll conducted on behalf of Bosch several years ago found that 51% of the respondents identified themselves as “ice obsessed” and indicated that they consume about 36 lbs. of ice each month which translates to over 1 lb. a day.

When I was a child, we had a fleet of ice cube trays that we used to make ice. It has been many years now since we had a refrigerator without an ice maker. Now folks debate what ice is the best ice for what occasions. Opinions vary on which drinks go best with pellet ice and other situations call for crushed ice. Appliance companies dedicate a lot of resources to the research and development of various-shaped chunks of ice. Some prefer ice that is more spherical, and one outfit has developed pyramid-shaped chunks of ice. Beverage vendors, particularly at bars, give special attention to what ice they feel is able to chill a drink and keep it cold without diluting the drink more than necessary.

I really enjoy cold drinks and ice water. Just yesterday I drank an iced coffee drink. Regardless how we feel about the merits or demerits of ice, I suppose we could all agree that the discussion about ice cube shapes and texture and the proper application

for certain uses is a debate unique to cultures that are more economically prosperous. I'm confident that this discussion would seem quite superfluous to a resident of arid and hot regions where prolonged drought has made it very difficult to find water, particularly clean water. Maybe this awareness can help me to adjust my opinion of the importance I place on ice.

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Air New Zealand asked 10,000 of their passengers to step onto a scales before boarding an international flight in a fact-finding effort that was slated to be finished by July 2, 2023. This was part of a process by which the airline obtains the average weight of passengers that they will use in their calculations going forward. In 2004, the Civil Aviation Authority in New Zealand adjusted the average weight of passengers aged 13 and older from 170 lbs. up to 190 lbs. The airlines are free to use these numbers or obtain their own averages by compiling their own data like Air New Zealand did this year.

Of course, submitting to the judgment of an impartial scales can be a bit of a sensitive topic for some folks. But the airline made sure to communicate that there is no weight display that can be seen by nearby people.

Understanding the weight of an aircraft and all it carries is an important component both of air travel safety and operational efficiency. The airlines seek a very precise understanding of the total weight that goes airborne. Many of the components of the total weight do not vary, like fuel and the aircraft itself. But one remaining variable for total weight is the assumed average weight of passengers and the items they carry.

In an environment in which the amount of free checked luggage is disappearing incrementally and luggage must meet stringent weight limits, I've been almost surprised that the airlines haven't embarked on a plan to charge passengers according to weight, both personal weight and personal effects. It seems obvious that the industry uses calculations that provide enough margin for good passenger safety.

In this era of tightening margins and streamlining efficiency, weighing passengers and all they are carrying and charging according to weight would seem like such a logical way to allocate some of the operating expenses. But I suppose that one possible reason carriers have not moved in this direction is that this would create more revenue variability. If they must choose

between a major variable in weight carried or revenue generated, I'm guessing they prefer the unknown of how much weight they will be carrying to how many seats are filled and at the price attached to those seats.

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In recent years, the use of goat herds in California for fire abatement purposes has grown in popularity. A goat's willingness to consume a variety of vegetation that serves as wildfire fuel has made goats an attractive strategy for fire prevention. Various municipalities and parks are among those who contract for this service.

It is estimated that there are approximately 100 seasonal goat herders in the state of California. Most are immigrants from South America in the USA on temporary work permits. The going wage rate for this round-the-clock goat

shepherding is around \$3,500-\$4,000 per month.

However, recently the goat herders were reclassified by California labor regulators which means they are required to be paid a minimum wage of \$15.50 per hour, plus overtime. The clock never stops while the goat herders are on duty. This would make the monthly compensation closer to \$15,000 for this seasonal work. Those who are providing this service say they will simply be required to go out of business since there is no way the operating margins can support that kind of pay rate.

I think it seems like a really good idea to have goats reduce fuel for wild fires. And it sounds like there was broad support for this method. But this whole concept is in danger of disappearing due to this labor reclassification for goat herders.

RJM 

Bridging the Gap (for Seniors)

Steve Kooistra, Milford, IN

“**T**he elders who are among you I exhort... Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those

entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock...Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, **all of you be submissive to one another**, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore

humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (I Peter 5:1-7 NKJV).

Today I am at the age where my grandparents were when I was a youth. They died when I was a father with young children. My own parents were this age when my children were youth. I have never been this age before. However, I have been a youth, and I can understand their concerns and thought processes. Yes, I have forgotten how urgent some of the issues feel. Yes, my thoughts about youth and the world have been changed by times and experiences. But when youth speak, something inside of me understands because I have been there.

When a father of small children expresses concern about the kind of church he wants his children to grow up in, the educational opportunities available, or even the community he lives in, I can understand and empathize. When a father of youth expresses concern about job opportunities and youth group leaders and functions, I have the capacity to know what he is talking about.

Three things I do not like about being my age. First, I have never been this old before, so geriatric concerns are new to me. The second is that I

find myself echoing my parents and grandparents when I speak of how the world has changed, the young generation, the things parents are doing wrong, or where the church is headed. Third, just as a youth cannot know how a 50-60-year-old sees the world, even so I do not yet know what a 90-year-old man knows. There is always a gap.

Of course, there is a “gap” between the youth and adults. Youth have experienced 15 to 25 years of history. They are just beginning to understand how that history has shaped their lives. I am trying to understand how 68 years has affected my life. The difference is that youth don’t always understand that the 15 to 20 years they know about and have been part of has been shaped and determined by many years of previous history.

This gives them the idea that issues they are facing are unique to them and that this is the first time these challenges have been wrestled with, debated, or discussed. The Scripture is still true that there is nothing new under the sun. This generation may have grown up with a smartphone, but old men have been dealing with the digital revolution since the 1980s. Before that was the science-technology revolution in the 1950-1960s. We have grappled with changes, new phenomena, church

drift, and political changes. We react to youth concerns based on those experiences.

If the place where we have arrived as an individual, a church, or community was hard fought and took a lot to carve out in “our day and age,” we are going to defend it and withstand every change. If we don’t like the end results of those wrestlings, we might be willing to entertain change. We tend to embrace what benefits us most. All too often, whether young or old, what we accept is based on our carnality.

God knew all about the different changes in history. The inventions of humankind were mentioned in Genesis before Noah’s flood took place. The tower of Babel did not catch God off guard. The prophets foretold many of the political changes God was going to create among people groups long before they happened. When Jesus was sent in the fullness of time, the Roman empire ruled the world, enforcing peace between nations, constructing a road network that still exists today, and creating a maritime system that went as far as England. All these realities allowed the Gospel to travel all over Europe, Asia, and Africa. God made use of technology to further His kingdom.

The church is designed to exist in


any culture, history, society, political reality, and for old people, youth, and all ages. Paul started churches in rural areas, in Roman colonies, and in Rome itself. He worked with barbarian and Jew, slave and free, men and women. The church will survive the changes and differences of the 2020s and more, no matter what issues are brought to the table.

The real question is how can the issues be brought to the table in such a way that Jesus is glorified? Scripture is clear that older men are to teach the younger men, instructing them in the ways of the Lord, nurturing them, protecting them from false doctrine and being an example to them. (See Deuteronomy 6, Ephesians, and Timothy). We cannot do this without respecting youth as human and as valuable to God as anyone. Older adults need to acknowledge that youth concerns are valid and worth discussing.

By the same token, Scripture infers that youth must be able to listen to adults, respect them and trust that most elders have the good of the youth and the church in mind. Youth have to at least attempt an understanding of adult perspectives. All adults and youth are people—we can be emotionally reactive, carnally motivated, self-absorbed, and tunnel-visioned about any issue.

This is why we must come to the table willing to know what God's take is on the issue. Paul talks about the Fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5. I realized in my older age that we sometimes look at those verses wrong. When I pick a tomato from a plant, it is a tomato plant. I cannot get a tomato from a corn stalk. In the same way, the Fruit of the Spirit does not come from me. I am not love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness,

or self-control. This fruit comes from the Holy Spirit. It is one fruit. It is the only way any issue, coming to the table, can be resolved that will bridge any gap between believers. It may not be the conclusion old men want, youth want, or parents want. But if it is the conclusion God wants then we are responsible for our reaction to it.

Gaps will never go away, but submissiveness with humility at any age and by all parties will help build a bridge. 

I Saw a Beautiful Thing

Across the Years

Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS

It was the third week of September. A much-anticipated annual event, church camping at Big Hill Lake, was the source of many a huddled conversation for the girls; who sleeps where or what snacks will you bring? The boys' plans were concerning fishing gear, bikes, and kayaks. Some middle-aged persons concluded that they would stick with sleeping quarters with a ceiling fan.

But weather doesn't always cooperate with carefully-laid plans. This time, it was rainy and cool, making the big, borrowed canvas tent with its heading-south tables and tilted chairs a good place to be. I opened my bag of games and selected Qwirkle. "Who wants to join me for a game?" I called out. Soon

we had the necessary number and a few extras. We took our turns, from six-year-old Sadie and newcomer Rose, to 80-something Blanche. For most of the game, Amberly occupied my lap, coaching me. I can't remember who won. We were busy growing friendship across the decades.



Isn't that a beautiful thing? 

Daily Prayer for Our Children

Reprinted from October 1996 *Calvary Messenger*

The following list is designed to pray one request per day, thus enabling you to go through the list each month.



1. That they will trust in Christ as Savior and Lord early in life, and in their youth be examples in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, and in purity.
2. That they will love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and strength.
3. That they will become wise and view life, people, and circumstances as God does.
4. That they will be humble, contrite in spirit, and live to glorify the Lord.
5. That God would give them a deep hunger and thirst for Himself.
6. That they would have an obedient, respectful, and loyal spirit for their parents and other authorities.
7. That their spirits would be quickened and the soil of their hearts would be fertile and ready to accept truth.
8. That they would fully believe and experience God the Father's perfect love, forgiveness, and acceptance of them.
9. That they would learn to live in the fear of the Lord, realizing that God is just and lovingly judges everyone of their motives, words, thoughts, actions, and attitudes.
10. That they would learn to simply trust in the Lord with all their hearts and not to fear.
11. That they will be protected from Satan in each area of their lives: spiritual, emotional, and physical.
12. That they will be caught when guilty.
13. That they will grow in meekness, not given to anger, exercising self-control, yielding all rights and expectations to God.
14. That when convicted of offending another, they will clear their consciences.
15. That they would begin the daily discipline of reading the Bible and praying.

16. That they would joyfully accept all the unchangeable things about themselves.

17. That they would know and understand their position in the Lord Jesus Christ, cast down false imaginations, and build towers of truth in their minds.

18. That they will desire the right kind of friends and be protected from the wrong ones.

19. That they will learn not to tolerate a little sin to enjoy a passing pleasure.

20. That they will not allow bitterness and selfishness to remain in their hearts.

21. That they will have a hatred for sin, submitting themselves to God and actively resist Satan, fleeing youthful lusts.

22. That their thoughts and bodies would be kept pure and that sexual curiosities and drives would motivate them to deepen their intimacy with God.

23. That they will be hedged in, protecting them from the wrong mate, and be saved for the right one. That they, as well as those they marry, will be kept pure for marriage.

24. That Satan would not be allowed to claim any territory in their souls and construct strongholds from which to torment them.

25. That they will be free from the love of money and be financially responsible.

26. That they would learn to boldly share their faith with the unsaved.

27. That they will have a purpose bigger in life than an occupation or marriage.

28. That they will have a vision for a life of service, ministry, or missions.

29. That they would view suffering as God's vehicle to bring blessing and build character, and learn that "*all things work together for good.*"

30. That as they grow older, they will always remember the training and values of their godly heritage and never depart from it.

Submitted by Irene Yoder, Hutchinson, KS 

GREAT IDEAS NEED *landing gear* as well as wings.

Ukraine Needs

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

In the Mission Awareness column we aim to give a view of a variety of biblical missions worldwide. This new church function is operating alongside Grace Press. Here is a brief report from the Grace Press newsletter, April 2023. “Plans have been finalized to turn over the operation of the food-packing project in Skvira, Ukraine, to the Southwest Region of the Nationwide Fellowship Churches.”

If anyone has more questions about this worthy cause, contact Harvey Mast, Secretary, h@singinglife.net, or call (505) 320-2354. Following are two articles from their recent newsletter. (FS)

Ukraine Crisis Aid

Lamar Torkelson, Pueblo, CO

Jesus’ words grip us, “*Then shall the King say...Come, ye blessed of my Father...For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat...Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also...Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire...for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat*” (Matthew 25:34-42).

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble” (Psalm 41:1).

Soon after the war began in Ukraine, Grace Press (where people were already printing gospel literature) workers saw requests for the literature skyrocket. They also saw an acute need for humanitarian aid caused by interrupted income and lack of food supply. The most obvious needs were at the front lines, where families still lived, because they had nowhere to go. There were also critical needs among those displaced by the war who now lived in other parts of Ukraine. For some, the threat of starvation was real!

While Grace Press’s focus has always been to provide sound gospel literature, they could not ignore the urgent physical needs of the people they had served for so many years. When presented with the opportunity to help prepare food boxes for distribution, they rose to the colossal challenge of organizing teams from America to travel to Ukraine to do this.

Grace Press felt that the need

would be more suitably met by a group of churches rather than a publishing house, so they recently approached the Southwest region of the Nationwide Fellowship Churches. We agreed to take on this opportunity. The first team began operations in Ukraine in May. We aim to continue as Grace Press did, with a projected production of 15-20,000 boxes per month. Each box contains basic food items, plus a New Testament, multiple pieces of gospel literature, and often a book for children. The boxes are sealed with a sticker that reads, "God loves you."

The food items are purchased in Ukraine as much as possible to help support the economy. The gospel literature is donated by Grace Press. I just spoke to a sister who helps to distribute our packages in Ukraine. She wondered when our first team would arrive because their waiting list for the desperately needy people is now more than two months out. While we continue to sit down to well-laden tables in America, some families in Ukraine wonder how long they can survive without food. And many are realizing that their greatest need is for the Bread of Life.

Who then will pray for the work? Where the kingdoms of the world see catastrophe, the Kingdom of Heaven sees opportunity!

Remember Ukraine

Tim Horst, Rawlins, WY

From distant lands the war in Ukraine seems almost peaceful. As the battle wears on, people become tired and the story grows old. Pictures of the war that once made us stop in our tracks have lost their grip on us.

Who is my neighbor? Isn't the world helping Ukraine? What responsibility does the church have? What role can I fill? Last winter, after flying over water and land and driving through a darkened country, we finally arrived at our base in Skvira, Ukraine. Is this really a safe place?

This experience helped us see how uncertain daily life has become for the Ukrainian people in contrast to the peace and prosperity of America.

We spent most of our time along the assembly line packing food parcels and gospel literature. What a rare God-given opportunity to share the good news! Is there more to do? Of the millions of refugees and those left behind, anything we do seems small, like five loaves and two fish.

The good times in America are a call to help in other lands where we have opportunity. The tide may soon change and our bountiful tables could be turned upside down. How will we respond to a war at our door?

For our neighbors in Ukraine, the pounding engines of war are

unending. Tender children are scarred for life and sturdy adults continue to reel from the horror and shock of utter devastation. This is a

call to continue in prayer for people (especially Christians) in war-torn lands. **REMEMBER UKRAINE!**

(Used by permission)



A Woman After God's Heart

If I Could Talk to My Younger Self



Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH

I would remind her that she gets to choose how and what to think and that she is not a victim of whatever comes to her mind. Philippians 4:8 gives her a list of thoughts to think.

I would assure her that her parents want to hear her thoughts and questions about life and that the dividends of investing in mom and dad relationships will pay back all of her life.

I would tell her that acting out is hollow performance. And that vulnerability and genuineness is beautifully whole and attractive. That it's not hard for people to love a person who dares to be honest about her own insufficiencies and shortcomings. And that when you say, "I'm sorry," you pave the road to love and forgiveness.

I would also tell her that it's not prideful to be candidly honest about gifts God blessed her with, especially if she can keep on giving when her generosity goes unnoticed.

I would tell her that humility is grown when others are praised for work she was responsible for initiating. Her heart is enlarged when she exults in the growth of God's kingdom aside from any of her personal efforts.

I would tell her that the opinions of people around her are *not* the measure of her value. If those opinions are based on what she looks like, on what she wears, on how she orders her home, or how perfect her *act* is, she must turn a deaf ear.

I would tell her that usually others are not as consumed with thoughts about her (or her family's)

performance as her own mind tells her they are.

I would remind her about her true identity—of being created in the image of God, and through the blood of Jesus she is an heir *with* Christ. And that's what matters.

I would inform her that the wrongs around her aren't hers to overhaul. That a healthy balance in others' lives isn't her responsibility to measure or correct. That her personal assignment is to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with her God. She can let the rest go.

I would remind her that she has a Friend in Jesus. That if she has trials and temptations, or trouble anywhere, or if she is cumbered with a load of care, she is privileged when she takes it to her Lord in prayer.

I would tell the young wife that her husband's deep-down motivations are without guile. That what looks like careless unconcern or a lack of love is actually proof of how much responsibility he carries and that most likely he protects her from knowing about it all—as a kindness to her.

I would tell her how profoundly her husband is affected by her affirmation and opinions. That no one else's praise builds him as much as hers. And no one else's criticism cuts as deeply.

I would tell her that the beauty cultivated in picnics with little ones lasts a lifetime while the beauty of spring cleaning her house lasts a day or so. "If only I'd cleaned more," said no one ever.

I would tell the young mother that a four-year-old heart, ears, and mind is wet cement. That her responses, influences, and words to her child are etched for always. That *asking* can be a gentler form of commanding.

I would explain to her that body language, sighing, and tone of voice carry as much or more weight than the words spoken.

I would remind her that hurry, scurry, and flurry don't produce a restful spirit. That the unfinished tasks will likely be there tomorrow.

I would caution her against listening to the loud voices, and that she does well to hear what is not being said.

I would quote Theodore Roosevelt to her: *Comparison is the thief of joy.*

I would tell her that however unusual or complicated or painful her personal story is, God is never at His wit's end on how to transform ashes into beauty. He gives joy for mourning, and her story is no exception. He doesn't waste pain, and He is the Master of redemption.

I would say to her that patient empathy and gentleness show a

better picture of Jesus than forceful declarations, especially at those times when things appear black and white for her.

When the night seems long and

hard times keep thrashing at her small boat, I would invite her to repeat after me: “The best is yet to come. Jesus says, ‘Peace, be still.’ And it came to pass.”



junior messages

Escape from Ukraine (Part 1)

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

I have so many questions—God, why? Why did war have to come to Ukraine?

I feel lost in the whole world.

Life is unpredictable. What plans can I make?

These thoughts and more, tumbled through Venya’s mind. Yes, he and his father had miraculously escaped Ukraine one month after the war began. God led them out safely. But still, life was confusing. He longed for the familiarity of home. But where was home?

In Ukraine at first there had been rumors, but then war had come. Like a storm, it raged around us. We could hear bombing and gunfire. At the gas station there were 50 or more cars in line. People were crying. The atmosphere was sad and heavy.

My family and my Christian mother were very concerned about

Dad and me. Men were no longer allowed to leave the country of Ukraine. My dear mother worried, “Would her husband and son be drafted into the Ukrainian army?”

Venya also struggled with fears. Would the soldiers just grab him one day as he was walking in town? His thoughts ran wildly. He could not join the army. He would not fight and kill. But what would happen?

Was there no way of escape? The family heard that people were fleeing Ukraine over the snow-covered Carpathian Mountains. It was said they could hire and pay an undercover guide to take them over the mountains. But now the mountains were blanketed in two feet or more of snow. The rocks were treacherous. Venya thought he could do that hike, but what about his dad who was nearing 60? It would be harder for him. Venya worried about his dad.

One day they heard from some contacts that if they could reach a specified border town that evening, someone would meet them and take them to a cabin to wait till the right time to flee over the mountains.

Venya and his dad went to the market that very day and purchased sturdy boots. They bundled up in their warmest clothes, threw a few things into their backpacks and boarded a bus. They felt conspicuous on that bus but did their best to appear calm. There were many check points, but they were not questioned.

After the ride on the bus, they were instructed to find a small car. Three ladies were in the car. Venya sat in the middle of the back seat. Officers went from car to car with big bright flashlights. Venya's head was itching and his heart was racing. The men prayed desperately and kept quiet.

The officers walked around their car, shining their bright light into it. Another car came up behind them with the lights on. The officers questioned the women and asked to see their documents. It seemed the officers were blinded and could not

even see the frightened men in the back seat.

God's power and presence was so real. It was a miracle that the officers did not see them.

Eventually, the car stopped and the men were told to get out and follow a guide for a 15-minute walk through the snow and black night. How grateful they were when they came to a dark cabin.

Venya and his dad were told to get under the table till the time to leave. Although Venya was exhausted and worn out, he couldn't sleep. He heard men yelling outside and saw lights. He got up to ask the guard at the window what was going on?

Tersely the guard hissed, "You, you just stay under the table."

Later Venya asked again, "What were those lights and that noise I heard?"

This time the guard told him that two other men were going to join them but got caught. They were apprehended so near to the cabin where Venya and his dad were hiding.

[To be continued] 

The *Bible* speaks of a time when all tears shall be wiped away, but it makes no mention of a time when we shall cease to *smile*.

-J. D. EPPINGA

Bridging the Gap

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

Recently I had the opportunity to be surrounded by young people from ages 15-25 and from different types of Plain churches at a Youth Seminar at Penn Valley. It was a tremendous blessing to see young people who were on fire for God and burdened for the future of the church. One of the topics that was discussed concerned the seeming gap between the younger generation of today and their preceding generations.

Youth today face things that previous generations have not. Some of the main issues haven't changed, but the way in which those issues present themselves has. How can we build a mutual understanding between these groups?

On February 12, 1963, construction of the St. Louis Arch began. Large triangular steel pieces were fastened together one piece at a time starting on both sides. Construction continued for over two years and the two sides continued to grow in height and continued to get closer and closer to each other. On October 28, 1965, the last piece or "Keystone" was scheduled to be inserted. When

they attempted to place the last piece, things weren't fitting, so they had to spray the south leg of the arch with water to cool it down and make it contract so that there was enough room to make the final connection. The Arch could not have been built if they started at one side and built all the way across and down the other side. They had to start on both sides and meet in the middle.

First, let's recognize that it isn't just two groups. We often perceive the gap as a delineation of youth and all those older than them. However, all those older people usually includes: young-married and mature singles, middle-aged heads-of-households, families with mostly youth and married children, and the gray-haired grandparents that often includes widows and widowers. All these groups have different dynamics and will interact differently with each other. Also, we need to establish what is meant by "bridging the gap." Bridging the gap doesn't mean that I make another generation think like me. For this discussion it means that both sides of a generational gap exert the effort to build a connection of

understanding and find a common ground to approach issues.

One of the most contentious areas of disconnect in our circles is in the area of technology: where to draw the line, how much to allow, how to regulate it and protect ourselves and our families, how much we can use it for business, and how much for personal use. I heard a youth brother express it this way one time (to the best of my recollection), “We are the first generation that has grown up with smartphones pretty much our whole lives. No one has had to deal with the kind of access that we have now, from information to entertainment.”¹ He was right when he said it, and his statement brings up two things that contribute to the disconnect. Firstly, this generation has experienced something that other generations have not. Secondly, they have experienced it to an extreme that other generations have a hard time relating to. As a result it’s difficult for them to wrap their minds around it.

Another area where there often are differences are church standards, or application of biblical principles. Whether it’s in regards to clothing we wear, the vehicles we drive, the music we listen to, or a myriad of other things, it always seems as though different generations have different

views on how we apply the biblical principles that we hold so dearly.

An area that we may not think about this gap is in our work. Most of us at some point work for or with someone from a different generation. We have different ideas on how to do things. Times change and sometimes we need to as well.

I recently heard a friend of mine speak on this topic, and he said, “Proving you’re trustworthy is the single greatest tool in bridging generational gaps.” It might sound easy, but it takes effort and consistency. Building that trustworthiness takes time. It takes more than a day, a week, or even a month. It takes years. If you are known as a trustworthy person, you can ruin that reputation with poor choices overnight. Just as a bridge needs maintenance, our relationships with the other generations need continual “maintenance” in order to remain healthy. One of the best ways to build trust is faithfulness over time. When we do what is expected of us, and do it faithfully over an extended period of time, we build that trust.

Once that trust is built, how do we leverage it in helping bridge the gaps between youth and the other generations? Spend time with each other outside of work and church. Talk to more than just other youth

after church. Meet them for coffee or for breakfast or ask if they'd like some company for a couple hours some afternoon. I recently heard about a man who wanted to learn about a specific field of study, so he contacted a well-known expert on that subject in his area and asked how much he makes in a month. He told him, and he offered to double that amount and pay him that amount for one day of his time if he would on that day share with him all of the things that he had learned and felt were the most important on that subject. He said that the person spent a couple months preparing and then on that day the knowledge he received was liquid gold. He said he then went on to do that several other times with other people in other fields of study. We should utilize a form of that strategy. We should ask those from different generations than ours to share their experiences and wisdom with us. We can learn a lot from others people's mistakes.

Although it is an aspect of building trust, it needs to be named specifically. Communicate! How do you know what someone is thinking or what they mean or why they do something without asking? Many disagreements could be resolved if differing opinions across generations (in regards to things like application

of biblical principles in the church) would be handled by sitting down and explaining why we feel the way we do. One of the most frustrating answers to why we do something is, "Because that's how we've always done it." I'm not encouraging young people to question everything, but if the older generation can't tell you why, then maybe it's time to evaluate if we should still do it. A lot of misunderstandings can be avoided by open communication.

We've covered a few things in regards to bridging the gap between generations. Respect, building trust, and communication are paramount if we want to bridge that gap and develop healthier relationships with people not in our peer group. We need to understand that just like with the Arch, it will be difficult for one generation to put all the work into making the connection. Both sides need to be willing to have an open discussion. If the youth are the only ones putting the work into "bridging the gap" then there are more serious issues that need to be addressed. Instead of focusing on the gap, let's focus on striving to understand each other better, communicate effectively, and respect each other and our views while trying to find a way to blend our views instead of completely changing someone else's.



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Unbelief is the door to hell.

• • • • •

When in doubt, always tell the truth.

• • • • •

A pessimist is one who feels bad when he feels good
for fear he'll feel worse when he feels better.

• • • • •

Freedom without purpose leads headlong into chaos.

• • • • •

A person becomes wise by observing carefully what happens when he isn't.

• • • • •

Keep your mind open to the voice of God and uncluttered by unworthy thoughts.

• • • • •

Lord, fill my mouth with worthwhile stuff and nudge me when I've said enough.

• • • • •

A person with a thick head often makes thin conversation.

• • • • •

Discipline yourself so others won't have to.

• • • • •

Your mind is the gateway to your heart.

• • • • •

A loose tongue can get into tight places.