



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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2011

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July 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.

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Come to the Savior

Mrs. Martha King, Belleville, PA

Come to the Savior with your burden of sin;
He longs to give you His sweet peace within.
Confess all your sins and trust in His grace;
Christ's blood is sufficient for the whole human race.

Look to the Savior when you're tempted and tried;
He will keep you from falling, if you stay by His side.
He was tempted in all points, yet without sin;
Now Jesus will help us the victory to win.

Trust in the Savior; cast on Him all your care;
He will not fail you but give grace to bear
The trials and troubles which oft come our way,
Prove His love and His grace enough for each day.

Abide in the Savior and bear precious fruit;
He has chosen and called us for such a pursuit.
The secret of living a good, fruitful life,
Is in having God's Spirit in our heart and our life. 



What Shall This Man Do?

Peter apparently lost his courage in the intense pressure of the fast-moving events of the night Jesus allowed Himself to be taken captive in Gethsemane. Three times, on that confusing night, Peter was invited to acknowledge his relationship to the prisoner in custody. All three times, he flatly denied it. Then a rooster crowed, Peter came to his senses, was deeply ashamed, quickly stepped outside the judgment hall, and wept bitterly.

Peter's disillusionment ran deep. Even after the Resurrection, he was confused and thought that God's plan had failed at Calvary. In his disappointment, Peter decided to go fishing (John 21). He and several other dispirited followers of Jesus' caught no fish in a long night with an empty net. Then Jesus appeared in the early mists of morning and told them to drop their net over the right side of the boat. The net quickly filled up with fish and Peter realized that His teacher was indeed the Messiah.

Then Peter's thinking began to clear. After a meaningful breakfast on the beach, Jesus tested him and gave him opportunity to make his earlier wrongs right. Three times,

Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. He seemed to squirm, but all three times he answered in the affirmative and passed his test. Jesus proceeded to tell him that later in life he would meet persecution and disabilities of old age. Peter, apparently still smarting from humiliation, asked Jesus a question that he hoped would move the dazzling spotlight from him onto someone else. Referring to John, he asked, "*Lord, what shall this man do?*" But Jesus kept pressing Peter. His comment to Peter was, "*If I will that he [John] tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me*" (John 21:21,22). Peter's sincere repentance was shown in how he went on from that point!

Let us return to Peter's question, "**Lord, what shall this man do?**"

Watchman Nee wrote a book entitled, *What Shall This Man Do?* Nee suggests that the later ministries of John, Peter, and Paul were characterized by the work they were doing when Jesus called them.

Peter was a fisherman who was casting a net into the sea. The work of fishing typifies God's path for Peter. One day after Peter had made an insightful response, Jesus told him that He would give the keys of the

kingdom to him (Matthew 16:19a). On several later occasions Peter used those keys: First, he led out in the birth of the early church, and proclaimed the Gospel powerfully to the Jews in Jerusalem. That day three thousand came to faith in Christ as Peter cast the Gospel net (Acts 2:41). Secondly, Peter was present when the Gospel took root among the half-Jews in Samaria (Acts 8:14). Thirdly, when Gentile Cornelius asked for someone to lead him into saving faith, God asked Peter to go to Caesarea to Cornelius (Acts 10) and lead him and his family in. So Peter used the keys Jesus gave him and cast the Gospel net to open the door of salvation for all.

The Apostle Paul also brought people into the Kingdom. He was trying to destroy Christians when God called him, but then he became a builder. He was a tentmaker by vocation. “Builder” describes the ministry committed to Paul. He even called himself a “wise master builder” (1 Cor. 3:10).

John, also a kingdom worker, was different from Peter and Paul. John was a mender. When Jesus called him, John was mending his nets. His ministry seemed to reach out to greater needs some decades after Pentecost when apostasy had begun to creep into the church. John’s help was needed to call people back to The Faith of Jesus and the Apostles.

John’s Gospel and his three epistles reflect that concern for genuine, uncompromising, deeply-held, personal faith.

Even though Peter, Paul, and John all worked in the same cause, their assignments and strengths are identifiable in distinct ways.

Courage, Loyalty, and Teamwork are Essential

Today’s church still needs various gifts. Pity the church that has only one shepherd feeding the flock. When a work is starting, one shepherd may be all that is available. But when the work of God reaches greater numbers, it will benefit immensely from the increased balance made possible by several men sharing those responsibilities.

Woe to the ministerial team in which a man thinks his fellow servants are not needed. When two or more such men are on the same team, trouble waits around the corner.

Those serving the body of Christ need not expect that God will use each one in exactly the same way. Humility sees what others do as having value; pride does not. Humility steps aside and encourages another in what he does well. When that happens, he will likely do it even better. Blessed is the church whose ministers encourage each other.

Let us allow teamwork to make us observant to needs in our flocks.

Proverbs 27:23 says, “*Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.*” While this Old Testament Scripture may refer mostly to animal welfare, it applies equally well to church ministry.

Loyalty among ministers is good, but sometimes loyalty is not enough. When a servant of God is in the wrong, special wisdom is required, because if loyalty is the only thing we value, we can hinder the work of God by supporting a man even when he goes off course. To be human is to be subject to error. Even though whenever we help in such situations, it gets our “paw prints,” we must not be so generous that we gloss over doctrinal error.

When sheep or shepherd get into trouble, we must carefully consider what are proper steps of correction, probation, and restoration. A “lock-step system” of discipline fails to take real repentance into proper account. We are most Christ-like when we look for indications of genuine

repentance that merit restoration.

It has been said that what is everybody’s business is nobody’s business. Somebody must stand in the gap and take responsibility. Negligent group dynamics loses the urgency of necessary action. It is tempting to push things off and decide that addressing difficult cases should wait until later. Effective responses to the need for disciplinary action in the local fellowship are seldom, “Put that on the back burner” or “Let somebody else get his hands dirty.”

Let us use the potential benefits of team work. Let us learn the graces of humility, encouragement, and genuine concern for the Lord’s work. Jesus is still building His church and He asks for our best efforts. The potential losses through neglect of the local body of believers is devastating. Fortunately, the value of faithfully feeding and shepherding our brotherhoods is worth everything we can give it. Let us not fail Him!

—PLM



reader response

Re: Reader Response

I’m glad you have added Reader Response. I enjoy reading Calvary Messenger, especially Observations. [From a personal conversation May 23, 2011.]

Elmer Lapp, Lancaster, PA



ANNOUNCEMENT

Midwest Bible Conference

July 1-3, 2011

Guest Speakers:

The Home.....Charles Hamilton, Harrison, AR

The ChurchMarlin Kreider, Grandview, TX

Sponsored by Lyndon Amish Mennonite Church, Lyndon, KS

Directions – Flying – Lodging – Call 1-785-828-4175

EVERYONE WELCOME



ANNOUNCEMENT

Calvary Bible School

Calvary Bible School is again planning for a Young Men's Discipleship Training Course. This year it will be held October 14-24, 2011.

This course provides an environment for young men to evaluate their walk with God, experience spiritual growth, and develop leadership skills by serving each other and the local community. Elementary training in wilderness survival and first aid will also be included. Men 18 years and older are invited to apply.

All applications received prior to July 23 will be reviewed the last week of July. Applications will continue to be processed through September 15, but space may be limited.

To receive a brochure and application, contact Ernest Eby:
870-269-3338 or ernestebey@gmail.com.



Perverted Attempts at World Domination

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

The tower of Babel was the first attempt at world-wide control. God's view of that was that a politically united world would not work well. God, who is all-knowing and all-seeing, foresaw trouble ahead. The confusion of languages which God brought them, caused people to separate into many different people groups which finally formed into many nations.

The Old Testament has different nations making attempts at forming confederacies with other nations to produce an unstoppable super power. Babylon, the Greeks, and the Romans all took their turn at the God-defying idea of world domination.

Adolf Hitler embarked on such a plan. His armaments were superior, his men seemed loyal, but his plan failed. Communist Russia was grooming itself for world domination after World War II. Their rush into outer space was seen as a way of gaining the upper hand among the nations. Nuclear weapons were included in their struggle to amass superior armaments. Nazi Germany tried world domination with military

might. Communistic Russia tried it more on a political level, with enhanced ideology, but also with superiority in large-scale armaments.

The Muslims now seek world domination using religious ideology, forcing subjects to their world view, even using cruel persecution and death in countries where they seem to be securely in control.

The western world's view of domination is by capitalism. Controlling world economies through business and money is also perverted. As military conquest seeks to capture and overthrow its enemies, so businesses try to overtake and obliterate their competitors. Competition makes businesses efficient. Nations that offset each other in this way keep things in a more civil mode.

There are about 300 mega-corporations in the world, which control most of the world's capital. Nike's holdings exceed many small nation's economies. The United States apparel workers on the average earn \$9.56 an hour; in El Salvador such workers earn \$1.65; in China they

earn only \$.67! On average, U.S. companies make a 42% return on their business investments in China, with cheap labor being one of the main reasons for it.

WalMart, McDonald's, Nike, and General Electric are among the largest companies in the world, with GE being #1. A Kenyan newspaper says WalMart recently bought out MassMart in Africa.

Capitalistic domination brings a uniform offering of product, services, and entertainment which is assumed to be good, even needed, by all. Recent research shows that teenagers largely go for Reebok sports shoes, Cover Girl make-up, Sega and Nintendo video games, Pepsi, etc., etc.. How? Through television which spreads like wild fire over the world's 24 time zones! World-wide advertising leads the way for capitalistic domination.

Attempts at world domination have been, are and will be:

1. Total control of the world by military force, down to local police.
2. A universal money system with a standardized currency.
3. A political consensus with centralized control.
4. A court system tied to the implementation of total world domination.
5. A system of laws to make world control appear to be legal
6. A religious confederation under one head.

None of these can allow for conflicting views. Competing proposals cannot be tolerated where world domination is desired.

Instant worldwide communication could pave the way for a super power to make it happen. But instant communication can also be crucial to stopping attempts by a super power or a super strong man with dictatorial ambitions and powers.

The balance of power in God's world is simply amazing. Without direct intervention from God Himself, our world continues on in a "sometimes restless/sometimes restful" mode which somehow perpetuates itself. The "distress of nations" is shown in continued upheavals.

Political cross currents seem to be keeping the high and mighty politicians in check. Politicians of more different "colors" than a box of crayons will in no way allow a world coalition of military might. Without centrally controlled military and police forces, laws and courts will be equally diverse, offsetting each other in their own countries. National currencies and religious preferences are likewise present.

It is not hard to see this work out in biblical history, on through the tumultuous events of the last two centuries, as well as the last ten years. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost control of their world. Mankind has been trying to bring

that control back ever since. Having “dominion” was put in man’s heart as an integrated component of man’s being. For God said, “And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over all cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth ...” (Genesis 1:26).

The idea of domination found a perverted expression in Cain when he killed his brother Abel. A further expression of dominion and control was present in Cain when he built a city (Gen. 4:17). Further perversions of people domination is noted in Genesis 6 where the earth, it says, was filled with corruption and violence.

The Flood in Noah’s day “wiped the slate clean,” but not the heart of man. After the universal flood, man’s perversion continued. They again built a city, countering God’s purposes for repopulating the world.

A perverted mind can come up with ideas on a grand scale when it has to do with creating a name for oneself. The plan was to build a city and a tower. A tower? Yes, to reach to heaven itself, they said. God changed that by tweaking the vocal chords and they heard jabber and chatter, burble and prattle of irreconcilable languages. They solved that problem by scattering.

The perverted nature of man continues, trying again and again to bring about world domination

under one head. Where and when will this lead? God, who ordered the earth into existence, has a plan for the future. There are no surprises to God. Nothing is impossible for God, for He is all-powerful.

If the Book of Revelation is understood to be historical, then current events should keep repeating themselves, howbeit, getting progressively worse until Jesus Christ comes again in an unprecedented blaze of glory and with awesome judgment.

But if, as some believe, the righteous dead will rise out of their graves at the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, with the righteous living joining them “caught up together,” to be forever with the Lord, and judgment will follow upon a godless world.


It is within the realm of prophetic Scripture interpretation that we might see a time in the future of a grossly perverted world domination by the combined forces of politics, religion, economics, and military might. If so, it will result in widespread chaos and devastation, causing death in one-fourth of the world’s population, with one-third killed later, as spoken of in Revelation 6:8; 8:11, and 9:18.

The Holy Spirit is a powerfully restraining force in action in the world for the entire church age. As God was preparing to save righteous Noah and his family, He said, “My spirit shall not always strive with

man...” (Genesis 6:3). Those who refuse Him now will cry out to the mountains to fall on them to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16). At that time, men “shall desire to die and death shall flee from them” (Rev. 9:6).

The Bottom Line is that however we view the future, God is far greater than our feeble efforts to live acceptably for Him, and He

will carry us through to his eternal kingdom and glory. Furthermore, our preferences in biblical interpretation should never stand in the way of our faith toward God, nor hinder a full trust in His Word.

Eventually, when God takes over, there will be no contest. On that day, the KING of KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS will take charge. It will be sudden, swift, and severe. 

Evaluating Alternative Medical Practices

Jonathan E. Stoll, Aylmer, ON

We have mixed feelings about entering this discussion. We wish to avoid disputing but are reluctant to send a message that this question is “only a matter of personal opinion,” as if it didn’t really matter, one way or the other. It does matter. Can we respectfully consider other views and still be clear on where we stand?

I do not imagine my opinions to be more valuable than anyone else’s, but neither do I wish to shrink from joining the discussion.

Let us consider five possible categories that such practices could fall into—mental shelves to help us sort out where we are.

#1) FIXED LAWS OF NATURE

These can be observed, tested, measured, and proven (or disproven).

They are constant, and not affected by the mood, thought patterns, or beliefs of the people involved.

This does not mean that we can understand all that we observe. There are many mysteries in the natural world around us, but they bear the mark of nature. Take magnetic force, for example: I do not begin to grasp the invisible power that a little white plastic dog on a magnetic base exerts on the little black dog, causing it to twirl and jump as if it were alive. But I have never suspected a magnet of having supernatural powers. It is clearly part of the fixed laws of the universe. There is no spiritual connection.

Science should be viewed in proper perspective. It is simply the study and observation of the world around us.

We accept it as far as it goes, but no further. The important questions of life cannot be answered by scientists. They are no more qualified for this than a butcher, a baker, or a candlestick maker—perhaps even less.

The medical sciences, for example, are able to tell us a lot about the body, some things about the mind, and nothing about the soul. Medical science has its place. I would go to my ministers for help with a struggling marriage, but never for a blood test or to adjust my medication. We have lost a valuable anchor in today's sea of health claims once we no longer trust our family doctor to advise us on the very matters he should be relied upon.

#2) MIRACLES

The Bible has many accounts of supernatural events. Prophets predicted things they could not have known by natural means: The sick were healed and the dead were raised to life. The stamp of God was upon these happenings and the church has been blessed through the ages by these reminders of the almighty power of the Creator.

#3) PRACTICES THAT ARE RUBBISH

We may need a big shelf for this one. I will not stretch my neck too far in giving examples because my favorite home remedy might be someone else's nonsense. There is value in a healthy dose of skepticism

when we meet up with a surprising claim. It might be just that—a claim and nothing more.

Some see a demon behind every alternative health theory. This is an extreme and becomes a kind of superstition in its own right, the same kind of needless fear we felt as a child lying in bed, stiff with terror because of the shadowy corners. What monsters we saw there! A little light was all it took to show us how ungrounded our fears were. Some practices are like that—scary only because of our imagination.

It is such superstition that leads to ceremonies to purge a newly-purchased house of evil spirits that may have been left behind by former occupants.

#4) SORCERY

Let us make no apologies for fearing involvement in this category. The Old Testament has strong warning against such practices linked to spiritual powers other than God's power. Among the practices forbidden in Deuteronomy 18 is the use of *divination* and the *observing of times*. The dictionary meaning of divination as used in Deuteronomy is "...the practice of foretelling future events or the unknown by occult means." (Webster's Unabridged)

Was there a tendency for these practices to be adopted by the Israelites from the heathen around them? "For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto

observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee to do so” (Deuteronomy 18:14).

Human nature may have led the Hebrews to adapt heathen rites to make them more acceptable. These “cleaned up” versions would have slipped in easier, once their ungodly origins were forgotten or ignored.

Even Joseph, mighty man of God that he was, used his silver cup for divination. From this we may learn a lesson for today. It is one we urgently need. We would be absolutely wrong to pass judgment on Joseph, or condemn him as a sorcerer. But, we would be just as wrong to justify divination because a good man like Joseph used it. This last tendency is one the biggest stumbling blocks to thinking clearly about these questions. We dare not measure issues solely by who is using them. We are examining a practice, not judging people.

We are left with a partial knowledge of how “divination” was practiced in ancient times. We find clues in Hosea 4:12 where God laments that His people were using a staff or rods to give them answers, and the king of Babylon stood at the fork of the road and consulted his arrows to “divine” which way to take. (See Ezekiel 21:21.)

How can we escape the conclusion that consulting swinging pendulums or other objects to discover *future*

events or *unknown facts* is a form of divination and condemned by the Bible?

#5) PRACTICES WE DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND

If our knowledge were complete, we would not need this last category. If we consider a practice and cannot get to the bottom of its roots or its nature, what should we do? In many other areas, we try to stay on the safe side rather than pushing our boundaries into gray areas. Should this be any different?

Taking these five categories, imperfect though they be, where are we? We can safely trust the first two categories. The third is harmless in that it has no direct spiritual bearing. The fourth category we must reject. Whatever practices we place into the fifth, we should avoid until we can move them into a safer category.

There may be too much eagerness to attribute things to the dark world of Satan. After all, there is warning in the New Testament against recklessly assigning the works of the Holy Spirit to the devil. The Bible has stern warnings against sorcery, but also against speaking blasphemously about the works of God.

I am uncomfortable with an overly judgmental, black-and-white view. We should lay off a little and realize this may be similar to the way it was with Job and his “friends.” Once God spoke, He rebuked them all. None of them really had the right answers or

the full view.

On the two issues at hand, reflexology and “drawing pain,” I must say, I do not understand them well enough to remove them from the fifth category. Where does the theory of reflexology come from? Are its beginnings interwoven with spiritual beliefs? Does that connection still endure today among many of its practitioners?

I was curious to see what reflexologists themselves have to say about their field, and found nineteen listed in the Yellow Pages of our nearby city of London. First, I called “Sacred Waters Reflexology” and found the number no longer in service. I got an answer at the second place, “Head, Hands, and Feet.” The lady that answered the phone was able to shed only a little light on how she understood her profession. After receiving no answer on the third and fourth numbers listed, I pursued no further.

If I believe that reflexology has questionable beginnings and questionable supporters today, does that prove it is occultic? No, but the possible link should still be taken seriously. Here we have a practice not accepted by medical science and doubted by many sincere Christians. May we accept it without further examination? If you massage people’s feet for health reasons, you are not necessarily connected to the

theory of reflexology. But if you are trained by that profession and use their charts and display their certificates, then you are a part of it and should make sure you are not unequally yoked with something that is questionable.

The question of “drawing pain” seems more complex because it is more of a traditional “healing” practice and does not have the same links to present-day theories. Some who dismiss the Plain People as being in “darkness” are quick to label this as a black-and-white issue. Such judgments bear the marks of an emotional reaction and not of a calm and grounded position.

Having said that, we must not return “like for like,” instinctively defending our territory. Our position ought not to be based on reaction. Wherever things have crept in, even generations ago, we must be willing to change where we are wrong. We may not all agree with one another, but sharing our views and learning from one another will help us chart our course and walk it together. It is important to consider issues without being judgmental. When it comes to things that remain unclear, how can we do this better than to leave them unjudged—and then to leave them alone?

[From *Family Life*, May, 2011. Used by permission.]



The Power of the Resurrection

Virgil Schrock, Boyd, WI

We associate power with noise, eruptive movement, and complicated systems. Whether the power is electrical, mechanical, or political, we have learned to respect the potential of power, partly because we have learned that unstructured power can destroy much faster than anyone can build.

Jesus came with enough power to make the blind see, without anesthesia or pain, scalpels or spectacles, or assistants and offices. He did it with so little demonstration that His disciples became hardened to it. They could still be impressed with His power over wind and waves possibly because they knew about the unpredictable storms of the Sea of Galilee, since some of them had made their living on it. But the obedience of devils, the recovery of the lame, and the multiplying of bread became commonplace. Eventually they could watch unimpressed. Such was the quietness of the power of Christ.

For us, the purpose of the resurrection of Christ was to save the world from sin. He suffered and died on the cross as the sacrifice for sin. For our holiness He was raised from the dead.

The quiet power to change from sin to holiness proves the resurrection. There is no other power so miraculous, so against nature, and yet so sensible and agreeable as holiness. Holiness

limits saints to righteous acts, righteous thoughts, and righteous words; yet it leaves the disciples of Christ the most free agents in the world. In their thoughts, words, and actions, they can rejoice in any circumstance.

Jesus told His disciples, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Being made free by truth is the life of holiness. The quiet power that raised our Lord from the dead keeps the disciple of Christ thinking righteous thoughts. Anything the Christian faces any day of his life can be done righteously because he walks with Christ. Without noise, eruption, or complications, he seeks the will of God and the power of God in prayer. In it all, he proves that Christ rose from the dead.

Because Christ rose from the dead, we can become sons and daughters of God. Because Christ rose, we have access to the throne of God always. Because Christ rose on earth, where the prince of the power of the air reigned in his kingdom of death, the disciple of Christ can be holy in the same place, with the same decisive power in evidence that the soldiers saw who watched the tomb. For those who believed, it was not commonplace—it gave them life. So may it give us life!

[From *The Harvest Call*, April, 2011.
Used by permission.]



marriages

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

Beiler-Burkholder

Bro. Dustin, son of Mel and Becky Beiler, Gordonville, PA, and Sis. KrisAnne, daughter of Steve and Marilyn Burkholder, Nappanee, IN, at Sandy Ridge Mennonite Church on April 23, 2011, by Wade Burkholder.

Stoll-Miller

Bro. Matthew, son of John and Ruth Stoll, Summertown, TN, and Sis. Marlene, daughter of Arden and Ruth Miller, Pulaski, TN, at Wales Baptist Church for Goodspring Mennonite Church on April 22, 2011, by John Mast.

Stoll-Smoker

Bro. Eric Nathan, son of John and Ruth Stoll, Summertown, TN, and Sis. Frieda Kathryn, daughter of Eli and Carol Smoker, Pulaski, TN, at Wales Baptist Church for Goodspring Mennonite Church on May 14, 2011, by John Mast.

Whitt-Yoder

Bro. Leroy, son of Lee and Miriam Whitt, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Teresa, daughter of Irvin and Beulah Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church on May 21, 2011 by Donny Swartzentruber.

cradle roll

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

Correction:

Beiler, Donald and Sarah (Hostetler), Ronks, PA, second child, first dau., Angela Sarah, born Nov. 21, 2001. Received for adoption April 7, 2011.

Coblentz, Mark and Naomi (Miller), Flemingsburg, KY, fifth child, second dau., Isabella Ruth, April 13, 2011.

Dyck, Abe and Beulah (Swartzentruber), Montezuma, GA, first child and dau., Chania Faye, Jan. 26, 2011.

Gerber, Collin and Becky (Ropp), Gadshill, ON, first child and dau., Krystal Rebecca, March 6, 2011.

Hostetler, Michael and Melody (Yoder), Aroda, VA, first child and dau., Jennika Renae, March 10, 2011.

Kauffman, Ben and Christina (Plank), Lovington, IL, fifth child, third dau., Nicole Christine, April 18, 2011.

Kauffman, Melvern and Patricia (Whitt), Montezuma, GA, fifth and sixth children, third and fourth daughters, Joanna Grace and Joetta Faith, March 27, 2011.

Lapp, Nathan and Fern (Stoltzfus), Cedar Creek, TX, seventh child, fourth son, Laryl Nathan, May 3, 2011.

Miller, Ben A. and Michelle (Yoder), Lamoni, IA, first child and son, Blaine Ryan, Jan. 7, 2011.

Miller, David, III and Charity (Miller), Millersburg, OH, third child, first son, Blake Emerson, April 3, 2011.

Miller, Kenneth and Renae (Miller), Winesburg, OH (serving in Labaleine, Haiti), first child and dau., Alice Latoria, April 24, 2011.

Mullet, Terry and Janette (Coblentz), Sugarcreek, OH, first child and dau., Kate Elizabeth, May 11, 2011.

Schmidt, Jeremiah and Naomi (Wagler), Crossville, TN, first child and son, Jeremiah Cristofer, May 7, 2011.

Wagler, Mervin and Wilma (Wengerd), Cottage Grove, TN, third child, first dau., Wanda Kaylene, April 13, 2011.

Wengerd, Titus and Kathy (Schrock), Paris, TN, second child, first son, Kendrick Weston, May 6, 2011.

Wingard, Faron and Roselyn (Weaver), Montezuma, GA, seventh child, fourth son, Colin Daniel, Feb. 4, 2011.

Yoder, Brady and Luann (Weaver), Montezuma, GA, fifth child, fourth son (one deceased), Colson Paul, May 13, 2011.

Yoder, David Lee and Heidi (Cross), Montezuma, GA, second child and dau., Megan Janae, April 27, 2011.

Yoder, Jamin and Raquel (Guadron), Mishawaka, IN, third child and dau., Makaia Joy, May 3, 2011.

Yutz, Ryan and Heather (Beachy), Plain City, OH, first child and dau., Addison Raine, May 19, 2011.

obituaries

Friesen, Anna “Anne,” 70, of Lott, TX, died May 16, 2011, at her home after a brief battle with cancer. Her family was with her in the final days. She was born Nov. 10, 1940, in Steinbach, Manitoba, daughter of the late David and Anna Thiessen. When she was eight years old, her family moved to Mexico. At the age of 19, her family relocated to Belize, Central America.

Anna accepted Jesus as her Savior at age 16. She was an active member at Faith Mennonite Fellowship, Lott, TX. God’s presence was evident in her life in how she loved and cared for her children and grandchildren, whom she often met at the door with a hug. She enjoyed crocheting baby booties, scarves, purses, blankets, and doilies for family members.

On Sept. 10, 1961, she was married to

Peter Friesen. They were pioneers in the jungles of Belize. To visit her mother, Anna would walk three miles through jungle mud, often amid screaming monkeys. Peter and Anna raised their family in Belize, then moved to Texas in 1983. She often accompanied her husband on mission trips and on rebuilding trips following natural disasters. They anticipated celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 10, 2011.

Survivors include her husband, Peter; sons: Harold (Susanna) Friesen, Grandview, TX; Timothy (Norma) Friesen, Lott, TX; Philip Friesen, Lott, TX; Jason (Jolynn) Friesen, Lott, TX; Duane (Lucy) Friesen, Philadelphia, PA; daughters: Irene (Omar) Miller, Chilton, TX; Ruth (Darrel) Miller, Lott, TX; Rachel Friesen, Harrisonburg, VA; Lois (Josiah) Miller, Lott, TX; 21 grandchildren, and one great grandson; one sister, Margaret Thiessen, Belize, five brothers: Jake (Linda) Thiessen, Belize; David (Helen) Thiessen, Belize; Peter (Norma) Thiessen, Canada; Ruben (Tina) Thiessen, Belize, and Cornelius (Lena) Thiessen, Belize.

The funeral was held on May 19, at Faith Mennonite, with Elmer Smucker and Andy Mullet serving, and with Friesen sons contributing. Burial was in the Clover Hill Cemetery.

Correction:

Gerber, Deborah Elizabeth, 58, died of cancer at her home at Brunner, ON, Nov. 18, 2010. She was born Feb. 6, 1952, daughter of Allan and Norma (Zehr) Erb

of Wellesley.

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

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

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

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

Sweeney, Mark John, 50, died peacefully at home May 7, 2011. He was born with Down Syndrome on June 25, 1960, in Cook County, Illinois. When he was 10 years old he came to live with Laban and Agnes (Bontrager) Hochstetler, Middlebury, IN.

Mark's baptism was a real milestone for him. He was open in his love for

the Lord. He was a member of Fair Haven A. M. Church and dearly loved his friends there. He graduated from Horizon Learning Center in 1978, and was employed by ADEC Industries until his illness. He was a charter member of Project Promise. He enjoyed doing word searches, playing marbles, and listening to music. He was happiest when surrounded by his family and friends.

Surviving are his parents, Laban and Agnes; brothers: Edwin Hochstetler, Middlebury; Nate (Jan) Hochstetler, Sioux Lookout, Ontario; John (Denise) Hochstetler, Middlebury; sisters: Joanna (Oren) Yoder, Partridge, KS; Judy (Willard) Martin, Goshen, IN; Elsie Mast, Mountain View, AR; Mary Lou Gingerich, Plain City, OH.

He was preceded in death by a brother, Wilbur Hochstetler, two brothers-in-law, Lowell Mast and Mark Gingerich; two nephews, Andrew Yoder and Jaron Martin.

The funeral was held at Fair Haven Church on May 11, with Wilbur Yoder and the home ministers serving. Burial was in Miller Cemetery, Middlebury.

Weaver, Mary, 80, of Montezuma, GA, died peacefully at her home Dec. 22, 2010. She was born Sept. 9, 1930, daughter of the late Rudie and Lydie (Schrock) Yoder.

She was a member of Montezuma Mennonite Church.

On Sept. 25, 1951, she was married to Irvin M. Weaver, who died in 1996. Surviving are children: Daniel (Linda)

Weaver, Rachel (Daniel) Yoder, Raymond (Ruth) Weaver, Ruth (Simon) Yoder, Verda (Leslie) Yoder, all of Montezuma; Linda (Eli) Yoder, Cuthbert, GA; Victor (Cathy) Weaver, Andersonville, GA; Joe (Fern) Weaver, Blackville, SC; Irvin, Jr. (LaVerda) Weaver, Blackville, SC; Marlene (Merle) Diem, Americus, GA; 50 grandchildren and 44 great grandchildren; three brothers: Paul (Esther) Yoder, Orrville, AL; Eli (Miriam) Yoder, Sebree, KY; William (Naomi) Yoder, Fredericksburg, OH; six sisters: Martha (Carl) Brenneman, Clayton, IL; Malinda (Raymond) Kauffman, Virginia Beach, VA; Naomi (Eli) Kauffman, Montezuma; Anna, Barbara, and Esther Yoder, all of Montezuma.

She was preceded in death by two grandsons, Randall Weaver and Langdon Diem; one granddaughter, Kayla Weaver and one great grandson, Durrel Yoder.

The funeral was held Dec. 24, at Montezuma Mennonite with Donny Swartzentruber, Irvin Yoder, and Levi Mast serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.


Yoder, John C., 90, of Grove City, MN, died May 5, 2011. He was born June 19, 1920, at Hutchinson, KS, son of the late Crist M. and Fannie (Miller) Yoder.

He was ordained to the ministry at Hutchinson, KS, in October, 1944, and was a founding member and minister at Believer's Fellowship Church, Grove City, MN.

On Feb. 26, 1942, he was married to Mary Miller, who preceded him in death

in 2000. Their seven surviving children are: Elizabeth (Melvin) Beiler, Grove City; Orpha Yoder, Grove City; Ruth (Richard) Thayer, Tryon, OK; Reuben (Mary Ann) Yoder, Free Union, VA; Simon (Ruth Carol) Yoder, Sparta, WI; Nathan (Doris) Yoder, Free Union, VA; and John Mark (Ruth Ann) Yoder, Bluffton, IN. Other survivors are 41 grandchildren and 42 great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were a daughter, Mary Esther Thayer; five granddaughters; a sister, Mary (Mrs. Henry A. Miller); and a brother, Moses C. Yoder.

The funeral was held at the Evangelical Free Church in Paynesville on May 8, with the local ministerial team and sons serving. The grandchildren and great grandchildren sang during the burial in the Burr Oak Cemetery. 

observations

Carriage Crossing is a restaurant located in the tiny town of Yoder, Kansas, about 30 miles northwest of Wichita along a well-traveled state highway. This Mennonite-owned restaurant draws a large patronage from the Wichita area.

Their clients continue to show active interest in a non-food item there which is available free of charge. Calvary Publications offers two tracts by Brenda Weaver, written for persons who want to know more about conservative Anabaptist beliefs. The titles: “Answers to Questions about Amish and Mennonites” and “Yes, I’ll Tell You Why I Wear It” (about the woman’s prayer/headship covering).

When I see the number of tracts that are received in sparsely-populated Kansas, it makes me wonder how much potential is being overlooked in Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and

Florida—you name it. The public is entitled to understanding the reasons for our lifestyle and appearance. Ultimately, this has value as it calls attention to the One who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.



Harvard University is the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States. It began in 1636 just 16 years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. (World Book Encyclopedia) Although Harvard began as a Christian college, by the early 1880’s, it was on a path of secularization that was in conflict with the ideals of its founders. *World* magazine (5-4-11) says that Harvard’s experience blazed the trail for the secularization of countless other Christian institutions of higher learning.

A current example is Erskine College and Seminary in South

Carolina. This institution is affiliated with the Association of Reformed Presbyterian (ARP) Church. They have long professed that the Bible, as it was originally written, is free from error. In 2008, two faculty members refused to affirm this position and raised questions of academic freedom. Most recently, six professors posted an open letter stating that Erskine should no longer tolerate faculty who cannot affirm ARP's statement of belief. The article notes that too often academic freedom "has actually meant a corrosive and exaggerated skepticism toward religious authorities and traditions."

Formal training is not only friendly but sometimes essential for some forms of Christian service, nurses and doctors being prime examples. But many Christian service opportunities do not require special training. We live in a social climate in which the value of formal training is seriously over-rated. In those cases where formal training is necessary, Christians should have a built-in guardedness that gives protection against compromise of truth. That which begins and ends in the human mind does not make contact with God.

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In 1883, three Amish families came to Reno County, Kansas, from Shelbyville, Illinois. These settled in the Partridge area. Later, in the same

year, several families moved from the same location to the Haven/Yoder area which is also in Reno County. Both settlements find Hutchinson quite accessible.

At present there are several Amish church districts in both locations. At this point, Anabaptist presence in the county includes an increasing variation of identities. One can rightly question whether more spreading out would not have been better than this. In 2003, six families went from Center Church to Labette County in southeast KS as an outreach. Presently there are about ten households, plus some occasional attendance from local families. In the meantime, Center has experienced growth by a larger number moving here from several locations than the number who participated in the outreach. The overflow area in our church house is used regularly. This, in spite of the fact that four families are away in foreign service.

We appreciate all the families who worship here. So far the Lord's leading for a new outreach has not become clear.

We welcome a recent development that provides service and witness opportunities for many people. "Hands of Christ Ministries" was organized to reach out to special-needs people in Hutchinson. Paul Yoder, returned from Belgium, gives leadership and coordination to this

work. He works closely with a three-man board from Center church.

The outreach consists of personal interaction and witness, minor repair and maintenance jobs, and yard work. While this ministry is still rather new, we are encouraged that there seem to be witness and service opportunities for an indefinite number of people. Hutchinson is our county seat, with a population of about 40,000. All this is a reminder that outreach can happen close to home.

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What's the hurry? Fuel is expensive. "Tell Me" news line reports that drivers who drive aggressively stand to lose their fuel efficiency by 33%. The nervous high-speed driver will also experience a corresponding increase in the cost of brake maintenance.

I remember my late uncle by marriage, Menno Yoder, whose lifestyle was steady and predictable, saying it does not make sense to put needless strain on a vehicle in acceleration and braking.

Part of what incubated these thoughts was that the state of Kansas is raising the speed limit on selected highways to 75 m.p.h. Our 11-year-old family car has a visual readout, showing miles per gallon being used. It is very sensitive to acceleration, road speed, and wind direction.

Is this change in speed limits wise? To think that our driving habits should reflect stewardship awareness

does not seem like a neutral issue to me.

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"Water for Life" is the name of a well-drilling ministry in Haiti. It was started several decades ago by Willis Miller and others from Kalona, Iowa, members of Conservative Mennonite Conference.

We know that water is the most basic essential for human survival. We also know that Haiti is a very poor country. Well drilling requires high-dollar equipment. The work is presently being carried on by descendants of its founders.

I find it most most interesting that a General Conference Mennonite congregation in central Kansas is a generous supporter of this worthy work. It is apparent that they are willing to entrust resources to persons more conservative than themselves. The apparent rationale: Differences in culture and lifestyle become secondary to more basic considerations of human need and this translates to an openness to share where a worthy work is in progress by people whose lifestyle is different from ours. Such sharing need not compromise our stability or our integrity. Galatians 6:10 teaches us to share generously, especially with fellow believers.

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The decade of the 1950's was significant in terms of recent

Anabaptist history. It was during this time that the “non-conference movement” began. As it turned out, it became mostly a restructuring of conferences as groups of people seceded from parent bodies in the interest of stability and preservation.

At the same time there was a movement in some Amish circles to make certain changes more friendly to outreach in Christian service and missions. It is obvious that such groups with different backgrounds, starting for different reasons, can pass each other by moving in opposite directions. History has repeated reminders that Amish Mennonites are not immune to the gradual loss of certain earmarks of obedience that sets them apart from the larger church community and society in general.

May the Lord give us freedom from reactionary baggage or other hindrances and distractions in our brief journey from time to eternity.

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At John C. Yoder’s funeral, Grove City, MN, (See Obituaries), his son Nathan conducted the graveside committal. He shared a few thoughts about “celestial geography” that I found especially interesting. It was a fresh reminder that our finite minds are very much conditioned by our perception of time and space. Our infinite God does not have such limitations. I very much appreciate

that Brother Nathan has agreed to share his thoughts with CM readers:

“A good number of people gathered around the freshly-dug grave. The casket containing the earthly remains of my father was placed on simple cross members above the grave.

“Where is heaven?” “How long does it take to get there?” “What is Dad experiencing now?” “Has he met Mother?” These questions were among the many thoughts I had that Sunday afternoon of the funeral. Consider with me the first two questions: The sheer vastness of space is intriguing to anyone who has tried to comprehend the distances involved. Astronomers measure distances in space in Light Years—the distance light travels in a year. The Milky Way Galaxy is approximately 100,000 light-years across. Our Solar System is only a very small part of this galaxy.

“With powerful telescopes, man has been able to see hundreds of galaxies besides our own. Would it be safe to assume that heaven is somewhere outside the Milky Way Galaxy?

“When a Christian dies, we believe his spirit goes to be with the Lord. How fast is Spirit travel? How great a distance is a ‘Spirit-year’?

“Light travels fast. Very fast, in fact. It zips along at over 186,000 miles per second! Perhaps Spirit travel is as fast as light. But here

we run into a dilemma. We believe Adam died less than 10,000 years ago. If he has been flying toward heaven at the speed of light, he still has not crossed the 10,000 light-year marker. If heaven is beyond the Milky Way Galaxy, he has merely begun the journey. The same is true of all others headed in that direction.


“Paul was not troubled with this potential problem. He states confidently by faith that ‘whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord;’ and ‘to be absent from the body, [is] to be present with the Lord.’ This implies instantaneous relocation. And regardless of which side of any galaxy the Celestial City awaits us!”

Let me (DLM) add that the vastness of space in no way diminishes God’s awareness of small things, such as, the number of hairs on our heads

or our personal struggles and needs. May we daily experience His divine grace for the journey.

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Those who do not accept the Genesis account of creation seek other explanations. Evolution and the Big Bang Theory are common explanations. It does not take superior intelligence to see that such theories are not intellectually credible. Morris Yoder, Montezuma, GA, who has made a serious study of God’s creation, shares the following quote:

“The belief that there was nothing, and nothing happened to nothing, and then nothing magically exploded for no reason, creating everything, and then a bunch of everything magically rearranged itself for no reason whatsoever into self-replicating bits which then turned into dinosaurs.” —DLM 

Ministers’ Meetings 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. The Birth and Basic Doctrines of the Early Church – Acts and the Epistles

Perry Beachy, Burgettstown, PA

Let us begin with two Old Testament Scriptures that strongly influenced Judaism at the time of Christ and even up to this day. They are Deuteronomy 6:4-6, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God

is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.” and Leviticus 19:18, (also part of the Shema), “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of my people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord.”

The ancients and the early church emphasized practical living out their faith. It seems that they said in essence, “I love God through my obedience, my devotion, my love for my neighbor; in other words, by my actions, I speak. I tell God that I love Him by the way that I walk.” A second-century pagan who ridiculed Christians for their lack of education, was told, “We don’t speak great things—we live them.” So I conclude that the early church, which was Jewish, was strongly influenced by this idea of walking and living out love for God by faithfulness. The implication to the pagans was, “You speak great things but you don’t do them. We don’t speak—we live.”

David Bercot says, “Early Christians understood truth in general concepts, not in meticulous theological definition. Although theology was important to the early church, it took a back seat to living the Christian life.” Clement, of Alexandria, said, “Those who are

particular about words and devote their time to them, miss the point of the whole picture.”

Paul tells in Romans 8 that all creation was groaning in pain, eagerly awaiting redemption. That depicts birth. God entered time and space as an unborn baby in the womb of a young Jewish girl. He lived a sinless, perfect life, thus fulfilling the requirements of a passover lamb.

Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day of the first month, the day for selecting the passover lamb. He was seen daily teaching in the temple. He was examined by the brightest minds of Israel and no fault could be found in Him. He was crucified at the moment of the morning sacrifice and died [when He committed His spirit into God’s hands] at the time of the afternoon sacrifice.

After three days, He rose from the grave. Incidentally, that was the day of firstfruits. He appeared to many people in the next 40 days, then ascended to heaven. Ten days later, He sent the Holy Spirit at the feast of Pentecost where the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were presented to the Lord in the temple. On that day, the Lord brought in 3,000 souls, the firstfruits of the church. Soon thereafter, others came in. We are of the Gentiles who came in later.

In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit was given. Let us note several parallels between Sinai when God gave the

Ten Commandments and Pentecost, when God gave the Holy Spirit.

- At Sinai the Torah was delivered to them on tablets of stone; at Pentecost it was written in their hearts.

- Both were accompanied by God revealing himself to man.

- Both were accompanied by many languages. (When they left Egypt, people from many other places followed them out of Egypt.)

- Both were accompanied by loud sound and fire. (At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came in visible form—flames of fire.)

- At Sinai, 3,000 died. At Pentecost, 3,000 were saved.

- At Sinai, a nation was born. At Pentecost, the church was born.

There were two different schools of thought among the Pharisees of Jesus' day. Both Hillel and Shammai believed that Torah should be obeyed, but they disagreed on how it should be applied. They spent considerable energy debating what really is the greatest commandment. Jesus addressed that by saying that the second is like the first one in importance. Do both. Love God and your neighbor. If you love your neighbor you will love God. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

In fact, as we love our neighbor, so we love God. How did the early church carry this out? They met daily in the temple. Granted, this

was a honeymoon period. God tells us not to lose our first love. It tells us that they spent every day in Bible study—listening and hearing the apostles' doctrine. The act of studying God's Word and seeing what He has for us is as much an act of worship as singing or praying. As we read, study, and learn we gather God's Word into our hearts. We understand what He wants from our lives. We can hear what He has in mind for us.

These early Christians loved God intensely. How well do we pastors do in setting aside special, regular time for study? Probably most of us struggle with this sometimes. We're busy. Setting aside regular times for study of God's Word is a key to effective pastoring. According to Acts 2:42, there was *koinonia*, fellowship. As the early believers met daily they were developing that deep connection with God. That's what church is meant to be. Fellowship is more than just a casual relationship. It is learning about both parties in fellowship. It is developing common goals and vision for the future. Out of that fellowship comes a deep and abiding love for each other.

Out of that fellowship came a willingness to share their personal belongings. Can you imagine loving a brother so much that we would be willing to sell a car because he has a need? They were practical about it. I'm not suggesting that we need

to form a commune and have all things in common, but I think there are things we can learn from this example.

How can we love our neighbor? How can we share from the same brotherly love? I think our brotherhood sharing plans are part of that. But we could probably do better. Our communities are all different. Each congregation must wrestle with the questions that come up.

We have a concept for helping our brother in tragedy and hardship. That's good. The question that persists is: Do we also speak love and live it? God would call us to a higher calling—a calling of love. Love your enemy as you do your brother. I believe the early Anabaptists did a good job of living out that principle. How are we doing? We may actually have less trouble loving the enemy "out there" than the brother we rub shoulders with.

Aristide, a converted early Greek philosopher from Athens, wrote, "When they see a stranger, they take him into their homes and they rejoice over him as a very brother, for they do not call themselves brothers after the flesh, but brothers after the spirit and in God. Whenever one of the poor among them passes from this world, all of them give to his need. When one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted because of the name of their Christ, all of them

carefully attend to his needs. If there are any poor or needy among them, but if they have no spare food to give, they fast two or three days in order to supply the necessary food to the needy."

The early church speaks to us today to live a life totally sold out to God, to live and to love like Jesus did. When we see this kind of love demonstrated, it is easy for us to excuse ourselves and say, "Well, maybe they were a little different from us. They thought differently, so it wasn't so difficult for them," or some other excuse not to do the hard work of looking at our own lives in the light of Christ. The love that was lived out in that church was no less miraculous than when Jesus fed the 5,000 or when the Spirit came down at Pentecost.

The Perushim (Pharisees) called themselves the Holy Community of Jerusalem. Members of their society called each other Comrade, much like we use Brother. They started in the second century B.C. There was a severe clash between the priestly Saducees and the more learned Pharisees. Historians believe there were more than 20 sects among the Pharisees at the time of Christ. Josephus mentions only three of those:

1. The Saducees: The priests. Aristocratic. Worldly. Skeptical of the after life and the existence of

spirits. You might think “Mafia” when you think of them. They were extortionists, using bribery whenever they could, even assassinating people to achieve their ends. They stole tithes that belonged to the common priests, thereby even causing some older priests to starve. They became extremely wealthy and powerful and built enormous mansions, living in luxury.

2. The Essenes: Ascetic. They lived for the purpose of maintaining a pure community. They wanted to make a straight path for the Messiah to come.

3. The Pharisees: Josephus describes them as the most accurate interpreters of The Law. Functional holiness was of greatest importance to them. We tend to give them a hard knock because of some things Christ said about and to them. They had many failings, but let us also acknowledge that they saw God as of utmost importance in their lives. They held Torah as being very important. Among other things, they believed in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the existence of angels, divine providence, the free will of man, and the use of oral laws.

It seems that Jesus especially clashed with the Saducees and Pharisees. Within the Pharisees, there were two main streams: the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai. Shammai tended toward

a more conservative and rigid view of the application of Torah. These two groups were in bitter disagreement with each other. We have disagreements but theirs were much more severe. They went so far as to call each other Synagogues of Satan, writing the other group off as hopelessly lost, and yet they would sometimes get together and fellowship. Shammai had a favorite way of expressing his view: “Make the study of Torah thy chief occupation. Say little and do much and receive all men with cheerful countenance.” Shammai was known for his severity. He held the line. A pagan proselyte who came to the Jews, had this to say about the difference: “The irritability of Shammai would drive one from the world, while the tolerance of Hillel brought them under the wings of Shekinah.”

I understand that Jesus identified more with the school of Hillel than with the school of Shammai.

Hillel was more concerned with the heart than with the external. In Matthew 15:4, 5, in the discussion of Corban, the tax to be given to the temple, Shammai taught that if you made a vow that you would give what you had to the temple, that vow was never to be broken. Hillel said that that vow is very important, but there is a commandment that is even greater than the one to keep one’s vow, that is the commandment to

take care of your parents. Jesus stood against hiding behind Corban to say, "I can't take care of my parents."

In Acts 2, we see at least 10 different cultural groups present at Pentecost. How does this work? Church growth experts tell us it's impossible. They say you cannot have a vibrant church fellowship with that many different cultures. But God did it.

In Acts 15: 4 and 5, some Christian believers said, "We can't have this. The Gentiles are coming into the church and they are not following the laws of Moses. Something must be done." So the Apostles and elders got together in a big gathering, probably somewhat like this meeting.

In Jewish culture, when an issue is to be considered, it is not a quiet thing. People are given opportunity to speak. Peter, based on his vision at Joppa and experience with Cornelius at Caesarea, offered his viewpoint that God makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. He was there when they received the gift of God's Holy Spirit, even though they weren't circumcised and did not follow the law of Moses. He said that God obviously accepts the Gentiles the way they are, noting that, "Through the grace of Jesus Christ we are saved."

Several things stand out from this account: Everyone was given a time to speak. When there are difficult things to work through, we must give people time to share

their views and work through their questions. They were heard, then the leaders stepped in and moved on to resolution. James made a statement that recognized what was said, then he made a proposal, based on the Spirit's working among them.

If God could work like He did in the church at Jerusalem, has His power diminished, in any way, from that day till now? Our responsibility is to allow the Spirit to lead us. We must examine our conclusions and be sure that they line up with Scripture. As we look at the early church, perhaps looking for specific answers to problems we face, thinking that it would be nice if God would lay out a formula, instead He wants us to wrestle with those questions, search the Scriptures, to come before Him and ask Him for wisdom to work through a situation we face and to trust in Him to lead us.

The early church was not perfect, neither are our churches, but there is hope for us. God can do His work, even in a fallen world and an imperfect church. Let us allow Him to do that. The mark of a godly church is not the absence of all controversy, but the Christian maturity to work through the issues we face.

Jesus Christ was their Risen Lord and Savior and they did not say that glibly, they went to death for the belief that He who died and rose again, alone is worthy of our allegiance and devotion.



How Can I Receive a Burden for Souls?

Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA

You prayed to God. He gave you a burden for souls, but it did not last. You read books on witnessing to the lost and devoured articles on community evangelism. You even took a class on Personal Evangelism and later a course on World Evangelization, but after you got back into the routine of life the burden vanished.

Some years ago I took a class at a Mennonite (winter) Bible School on Personal Evangelism taught by a seasoned missionary from India. He said something I have never forgotten, “If you want a burden for souls, don’t just pray about it, go after people and you will receive a burden.”

It works! Some people are best led to Jesus Christ by building a relationship with them. As we show love to them, they become attracted to the God we serve who is changing us into his likeness. This is sometimes called Friendship Evangelism. Jesus used this method of evangelism when He spoke to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s Well, when He invited Himself to Zaccheus’ house, when He called his disciples, and many

other times.

This type of evangelism has its roadblocks and hindrances in witnessing. Martin Rosen states, “The first roadblock is usually fear of creating an unpleasant situation. If the individual is a friend, we hesitate to initiate a witness for fear that we destroy the friendship.”

David Brickner identifies what he calls “myths” and “facts” in witnessing: We might say, “I need to wait for the Holy Spirit’s leading. I don’t want to lose my friend.” To wait on the leading of the Holy Spirit in witnessing is important, but we must remember that God already has told us we are His witnesses (Acts 1:8). “If you are friendly and forthright, you will gain your friends’ respect for genuinely caring, even if they don’t agree to discuss the matter at length.” Another myth: “I will let my life be a testimony and wait until the person asks me about Jesus.” The fact is that could be a long wait.

Jesus commands us to go and tell. Some of us believe in Friendship Evangelism, but rarely—if ever—get around to opening our mouth for the

truth of the Gospel. In some cases, we become like them rather than having them become like us. We must be willing to initiate conversations with these in our society. The Gospel needs to be declared through our mouth as well as through our lives. Remember that there is another side to Friendship Evangelism. The Gospel must be preached even if people hate us. Jesus Christ died for our sins because He bore witness to the truth. Thousands of people in the past and today have given their lives as a testimony for Jesus Christ.

Friendship evangelism is a good way to evangelize, but it is impossible to be friends with everyone and share the Gospel. We as Christians need to be involved in "Pre-friendship Evangelism." According to one study, unbelievers receive a witness an average of seven times before they are willing to surrender their lives to Jesus Christ. Do not be discouraged if all you do is plant seed.

How can I receive a burden for the lost? Get involved in Pre-friendship Evangelism. Here are some examples:

1. Knock on doors in a community. Take children along. This often softens people's hearts.

2. Use a community questionnaire, saying, for instance, "We are from the Hope Mennonite Church. We are getting acquainted with this neighborhood so we can be of

service in any way possible. This is a community survey. Would be willing to answer a few questions for us? If so,

- a. How long have you lived in this community?

- b. Are you a member of a religious group or church? (Yes/No)

- c. In the last year or so, have you given much thought to spiritual things? (Yes/No)

- d. What would you say is a person's greatest spiritual need?

- e. Do you think there is life after death, a heaven or hell? (Yes/No)

- f. In your opinion, how would a person prepare to go to heaven?

- g. If you died right now, where would you go?

- h. Could we look at several Bible verses that explain how we can prepare to go to heaven?

- i. Do you have any specific concerns about which I could pray for you now and in the coming days?

You may not get very far in this list of questions. Offer them some free literature and hand out CD's. Ask widows and the elderly if you could help in any physical work around the house like cleaning the yard or flower bed. Invite people to church. Take a group along and sing for them.

3. Stand on street corners or metro stations and talk to people who walk by. Pass out Gospel tracts and CD's, if it is permissible. Do open-air preaching and singing in cities.

4. Contact Wal-Mart in your area and see if their policies allow you to distribute free Gospel CD's in front of their store.

5. Make a commitment to talk to one person about the Lord every time you go shopping.

6. Put letters or tracts in helium balloons and send them out with a prayer.

7. Put an ad in your newspaper offering personal Bible studies in homes.

8. Mail *Reaching Out* magazines to your community or some needy city. Get them personalized with your church name and ministers.

9. Speak for Jesus to the person at a toll booth and give them your name card.

How can I receive a burden for souls? Go after "fish" and your passion will grow. It must be cultivated. A Christian family from Louisiana has embraced biblical Anabaptist faith. They have committed themselves to sharing their faith with three people per day. That will be over 1,000 people per year. Their purpose in setting this goal is to help them make witnessing a part of their lifestyle.

[NOTE: Some of these points were compiled by Ernest Eby and used for evangelization orientation at Calvary Bible School.]



helpers at home

A Beautiful Woman

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

In 1 Peter 3:4, KJV says, "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, with is in the sight of God of great price." The Living Bible paraphrases it, "Be beautiful inside, in your hearts, with the lasting charm of a gentle and quiet spirit which is so precious to God." In this context, Peter is telling Christian women to be submissive to their husbands even if they are not believers. Then

he explains that our focus must not be on the outward appearance, such as how we fix our hair or by buying expensive clothes or wearing jewelry, but we should focus on that inward beauty which is of great price to God.

The phrase "of great price" catches my attention. I realize that "a meek and quiet spirit" in a woman is what is important to God. That doesn't mean that we should be a doormat and let a man "walk over us." If the man is in God's order, he will not

desire to do so. It also does not refer to being quiet or bashful, not talking or having any ideas of our own. However, a quiet spirit is referring to being quiet inside, not getting upset or angry on the inside but allowing God's Spirit to fill us with peace and contentment.

A quiet spirit learns to flow with the tide thereby bringing tranquility and harmony into the home. God created woman. He knows what makes us tick. He created us in His image, so He has given us some of His characteristics. He created woman with the capacity of wife and mother. A woman has the physical ability to bear children. God also gave us a tender heart to nurture and love the children God places in our care. He knew that the man needs a woman by his side to encourage, support, admire, care for and love him.

He made the man to be the protector, provider, leader of the family, the high priest of the home. Man must learn to love his wife and the woman must learn to [follow man's leadership and] submit to man's authority. In most situations, when the man learns to love his wife as Christ loves the church, the woman has little problem in submitting to her husband, even as the church is submissive to Christ.

This brings me to the subject of the prayer veiling. Many times people have asked me why I wear the veiling.

I have tried to give a good answer, but I know that I have failed, at times. I remember with deep regret one experience while traveling in Ireland. I was feeling frustrated and tired at the time a saleswoman asked me why I wear my veiling and I simply replied, "Our church practices it." I deeply regret that answer. The veiling has a deeper significance than that of being merely a church requirement.

In 1 Corinthians 11:1-15, we find God's teaching through Paul on this subject. Remember that God inspired the whole Bible, so God is teaching all Christians through Paul on this subject. This, however, is not our salvation. Our salvation comes alone by the blood of Jesus Christ. The headship veiling, as I prefer to call it, is also known as the prayer veiling, is worn in obedient response to one of God's creation principles. It is also in response to my desire to be a woman with a meek and quiet spirit, to be a woman who pleases God. The veiling is a symbol to others of my submission, not only to my husband, but also my submission to God's order of headship. This is first God, then Jesus, then Man, then Woman. It is an order of function for the benefit of orderliness.

In this Scripture, we are told that a woman who prays with her head uncovered dishonors her head, which is her husband or man. If a man prays with his covered, he dishonors his


head, which is Christ. God's glory is found in man because God created him before woman many years ago in the Eden. Since God created woman from man, took her from man's body, her glory is in man. Do I understand it all? No! I do, however, believe it is a beautiful symbol which brings joy and peace to a woman. To wear a veiling and not practice or understand the principle does not bring any special benefit.

I believe woman can feel blessed to know that our Creator has a deep love for woman. He understands woman and lifted her to a new level when He (Jesus) journeyed this earth. He loved Mary, His earthly mother; He cared for the woman at the well (John 4); He respected the woman taken in adultery and invited her to repentance (John 8:1-11); He deeply cared for Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha and many other women in the Bible. Jesus also understands and loves us today because He created us with our unique physical hormones, our deep longings for love and acceptance, our tender spirits and emotions.

I do not believe the type or color of the veiling is as important as the fact that we wear it. I remember years ago someone lamenting the size of veilings (coverings) being worn and a dear old saint of God said, "Let's just be thankful when a woman wears it." I believe the principle is probably

most important. The church can define the type of veiling to be worn. [How much can it shrink before it is a mere symbol of a covering? Is it to be a symbol of a covering or an actual covering? -Editor]

This Scripture also includes, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." I have struggled to understand this verse. To the best of my understanding, it refers to a protection from angels when they see the veiling on a woman's head. I do not believe angels or the devil can read our minds so this is a visible sign of a woman's submission to God's order. I realize that in some other religions, the women cover their faces, too.

I have felt a protection and a respect in many different places and cultures because of my veiling. This gives me a great responsibility to be sure that I do not disappoint someone by my actions. I know that simply the religious significance of the veiling is generally understood by society and has often given protection to a woman. Even in our own hearts, we are protected from going to a worldly environment where the veiling is inappropriate. Again, it is a reminder to me of the importance to God that I have a gentle and quiet spirit. May you be blessed as you accept your role as a woman. God created you for His high calling and purpose in life. 

The Lost Keys

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

Jerry is a tall young man who lives in Belize with his parents and brothers and sisters. Jerry really is thin! He is six and one-half feet tall. Standing beside him, you might feel quite small.

The best thing about Jerry is his big heart full of love to God. He loves children, too. It is a pretty sight to see that tall fellow stop to talk with a little lad. When he plays volleyball with children, the different in size is quite comical.

One afternoon, Jerry was busy with catching up on small jobs around the farm. He fixed the fence so the cows couldn't get out onto their neighbor's lawn. He chopped down a patch of weeds by the barn. He enjoyed hearing the colorful parrots squawking in the nearby palm trees.

R...I...N...G! R...I...N...G! Sang Jerry's cell phone. "I wonder who's calling?" Jerry said as he reached into his pocket for his phone. It was Edward, a man from a nearby town. Edward wanted to know if he could come over with a tractor and ripper and put in a water pipe line from his water source to his barn. He agreed

to help him on Saturday. But when he spoke to his boss about it he wasn't sure it was a good idea, because Edward had a bad reputation. He had a hard time paying bills.

Jerry tells us in his own words what followed that Saturday morning: I chugged out the lane with the tractor. I was ready for work at Edward's farm. I felt nervous about the project. My boss told me I would have to be responsible to collect the money if I took the job.

I knew Edward had a young family. I also knew he was a heavy drinker, which caused financial difficulties. I prayed I would have a chance to witness for Jesus to this man.

I pulled into Edward's lane and prepared to pull in the pipeline. Edward drove up with his battered old truck and started to get the pipes in place. I saw lots of empty beer bottles on the truck. I wondered what Edward's three little children were learning with a father who lived like that!

Edward and I bolted the pipes to the ripper, then I pulled them into place with the tractor. The work went

smoothly. It was a pleasant morning and the job was soon done.

Edward asked me for one week to get the bill paid. I said that would be fine. I told him, “I will give you a call if the money doesn’t come.”

A week passed by and no money came to my mailbox. I called Edward and asked him if he forgot about sending money. “It will be in the mail in a couple of days,” Edward promised.

Days went by and still no payment appeared in my mailbox. I wondered what to do. Finally, I decided to call him again. Edward sounded upset and frustrated when he answered the phone. “Jerry, do you want to help me or just give me more trouble!” he hollered.

I calmly replied, “I want to be of help to you if I can.” I asked him why he was so upset.

“I lost the keys for my truck,” Edward snapped. “I have searched all through my truck and the keys are gone. If I find the keys, I will give you the money I owe you.”

“Edward, why don’t you pray about the lost keys?” I asked.

“That wouldn’t help a bit,” Edward laughed, “but I will give you one hundred dollars if you find my keys!”


I was not far away, so I offered to come and help hunt for the lost

keys. As I got on my motorcycle to go help Edward search for the keys, a wave of fear went over me. “What if I can’t find the keys and he mocks me for saying I believe that prayer helps?” But then, I remembered the many times God has answered my prayers. I realized that even if I would not be able to find the keys God would still make a way for me. With that assurance, I entered the yard where Edward was taking the steering wheel off his truck, hoping to start it another way.

As I drove up to Edward’s truck, he jumped out and proclaimed, “Here is a hundred dollars. It’s all yours if you find the keys! But you will not find them because I searched everywhere.”

Then—right then—I saw the keys! They were in plain sight, lying on the driver’s seat. I reached in, got the keys and handed them to Edward. His mouth dropped open. “I know I searched the seat!” he said.

“I prayed about finding your keys,” I said as kindly as I could. “God still answers prayer. I want you to remember one thing: God loves you and so do I!”

Edward offered me the extra hundred dollars, but I refused the money because I knew it was God who had found the lost keys. 

Dear Youth,

If you read the May youth section titled, “What He Really Wants” you may remember the author describing her journey to find the true meaning and purpose in life.

This month’s writers share some of their thoughts on why so many people enter adulthood without “doing the one thing most needful” - that of finding purpose for which

they were created.

I hope you are taking advantage of opportunities to understand the purpose for which God created you. If you are, you will be much better prepared for marriage or serving God singly as life unfolds before you.

Blessings to you as you prepare for life!

—EE

This Month's QUESTION

Why do you think many youth enter adulthood without ever discovering the real meaning of life?

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

When I think of why some youth enter adulthood without discovering the real meaning to life, I think of a short illustration: Compare a hunk of scrap metal to a car. Both are made of steel. But the car is more valuable than the scrap. Why? Because the steel has been molded under intense heat into the form of a car. As scrap metal, it's almost worthless. But in the form of a sleek BMW or a Porsche, it's expensive.

When we think about giving our life a real meaning, some might

think it's doing or buying everything our friends do. Or always taking a summer vacation and never missing social events. It takes work to be happy. But *things* won't make us happy because we always want more.

The true meaning in life starts with believing God through accepting Christ as our Savior. And I think after that, to find true joy, we need to be willing to look at our life as being that piece of scrap even though it seems like a good life. Allow Christ to change me by taking me through

disappointments, trials, even times when it seems things couldn't get much worse, or sending us to the mission field (my situation). Then after being through those purifying times, I trust we can see what all God has done for us and see what a nice "car" He has made us into! Then we can claim the words of Job, "When He has tested me, I will come forth as gold."

For myself, I look back and say that I'm thankful God took me through some of those tough times, but I don't think He's finished yet. Even though tough times aren't easy, I do know I have blessings in life that now bring me happiness and also help remind me how that life can and does have real meaning. "Happiness is not what you have to live on, but what you have to live for."

Ken Gingerich, Siem Reap,

Cambodia



I think many parents don't fully realize the huge responsibility they have on their shoulders to correctly raise their children. It starts at home, and if youth have insecure homes where they are not properly taught the real meaning of life, most likely they won't have a proper view of life,

either.

I also think many youth are so busy doing all kinds of things that they don't have time to read and meditate on God's Word, and because they don't spend enough time with God, they forget the real meaning of life.

Charissa Stoltzfus, Plain City, OH



We, as youth, are sheltered in the culture we grew up in. We tend to have things handed to us and may be deceived into believing that these things are what really matter. Many of us are not exposed to the suffering and hardship around us. Although we are truly blessed and we certainly need to be very grateful, I believe that suffering does help us to view our lives as God would want us to. As Job 23:10 says, "...when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Having said all this, I do not believe that suffering is the only answer! We need to see everything we have as God's and mentally give it up. And, only then, can we fulfill our purpose by honoring and glorifying God with our lives.

Emily Schrock, Millersburg, OH



Youth are oftentimes vulnerable to peer pressure that leads them away

from principles they know to be true and, if followed, throws them into a sea of confusion. Suddenly the life they lived is no longer good enough for them and they find themselves searching for security because they no longer understand their parents, their church, or even themselves. This can lead to a very difficult situation that, unless checked, reaches into adulthood and ultimately becomes a part of their life. Others fail to ask God for counsel in their decisions (Prov. 16:1-3) and soon find themselves unfulfilled as that can only come from a true encounter with the Good Shepherd "...I shall not want." Unless we are willing to give our whole life to Christ, we will lose it (Matt. 16:25).

Merle Fisher, Nakuru, Kenya

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In John 6:38, Jesus said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine

own will, but the will of him that sent me." The real meaning of life is to die to self and do the will of God. In today's society there are many things that distract us from the real meaning and purpose of life. Sometimes we are so busy and caught up with our own things that we fail to focus on God. The more selfish we are, the less time we have for others. The lack of self-discipline causes us to not focus on God. The more selfish we are, the less time we have for others. The lack of self-discipline can also keep us from having a personal relationship with God (Bible reading and prayer). I believe that the closer we are to God in our youth, the easier it will be in adulthood. I am also very thankful to God for godly parents that are teaching me the real meaning in life.

Kimberly Peachey, Middleburg, PA

Next Month's
QUESTION

Sometimes Christians get very self-centered as they absorb themselves with their own projects and interests. Others become so focused on their future that they overlook present needs in their community.

What are some practical ways youth can live in the present and use the month of September to bring glory to God in their community?



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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

We mustn't depend on our perception of others when our imagination is out of focus.

• • • • •

Let us not judge ourselves by our best intentions while we judge others by their worst faults.

• • • • •

A great help to dieters would be a refrigerator that gives the weight of the person opening its door.

• • • • •

Worried about your job? If you don't like it, someone else will probably have it soon.

• • • • •

The most important things in life aren't things.

• • • • •

A lasting gift to a child is a parent's listening ear—and heart.

• • • • •

One aspect of success is learning to attend to one's own business.

• • • • •

Loving others makes us happy; loving ourselves makes us lonely.

• • • • •

Romance fades when a wife stops knitting and starts needling or when a man starts growling and barking orders.