



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

Galatians 6:14

OCTOBER 2011

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

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

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

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

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

Somewhere Forever

Rosanna King, Honey Brook, PA

Dear friend, remember that today
The Lord could take your life away.
Have you thought upon it ever,
That you'll be **Somewhere Forever?**

Dear friend, you have a choice to make,
Let Christ your soul and heart now take.
Make this choice right, regret it never.
If heaven is your **Somewhere Forever.**

Dear friend, it is your choice to choose
The Devil's hoping you will lose.
God and you he tries to sever
Just where is your **Somewhere Forever?**

Dear Friend, God will not your sin condone;
You must give all for Christ alone.
God's love will help you to endeavor,
To choose it well, **Somewhere Forever.**

Dear Friend, do not take a chance;
For Christ could come in a wink's glance
That grave thought dismiss, oh, never,
For you'll be **Somewhere Forever.**



Taking Jesus Seriously

Harold S. Martin, writing for Brethren Revival Fellowship, calls on Christians to take Jesus seriously. He notes that when Jesus gave his life, He asked that his disciples/apostles would carry on the work He had begun. Bro. Martin's written comments provided starter yeast for this editorial.

Paul explained that Christians are **“built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone”** (Ephesians 2:20). Perhaps Jesus' prayer (John 17:4) that He had finished the work God had given Him to do may have caused us subconsciously to devalue the apostles' doctrine. We could reason that if Christ finished the work of God, we might assume that we need not look seriously at what the Apostles wrote. That's simply not true!

Jesus offered that high-priestly prayer on the night before His crucifixion. He was in great agony but emerged from that struggle willing to lay down His life so that He could take it again. Thus He said in His prayer that His work was finished because He had won the great battle of willingness. The greatest struggle was done, but the scourging and mocking, the crucifixion, and the awful desertion by God would come

in the hours that lay just ahead.

Is it because of Jesus' prayer that some would draw a line through the New Testament that places the Gospels in a class above the writings of the Apostles? But what about the book of Acts? Acts is the record that links the birth of the church with Jesus' ministry that preceded it. Note Luke's comments in Acts 1:1. He said that he was writing about **“all that Jesus began both to do and to teach...”**

Just before Jesus ascended, He told them that the Holy Spirit would give them power and thus they would be able to record and carry Jesus' message to the regions beyond. Simply stated, **Acts links the life and the teaching of Jesus with the life and teaching of the Apostles.**

Notice how the writer of Hebrews brings the whole New Testament writings into one unified body of truth. In a challenge to faithfulness, the writer asks, **“How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken**

by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" (Hebrews 2:3). How could anyone think of discounting the writings of the Apostles with such words hanging over his head? Apostolic teaching comprised "the building fitly framed together;" the life and words of Jesus formed the foundation upon which it rested.

Jesus authenticated the New Testament in John 16:12 before it was written. We understand that even the Gospels were written after Jesus' departure from earth. Jesus said He was leaving some things unfinished, but promised that the Holy Spirit would provide further unfolding of God's truth after his departure. Uncommon for a founder of a religion, Jesus did not write down his teachings. He gave that work to his followers. Thus the Gospel came to full flower after Jesus ascended to heaven. People might forget some of what He taught them, but Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would bring to their minds all He had taught (John 14:26), so they could write it down for future generations.

Jesus was fully human, but He was different from us in certain ways. He was separate from sinners (Heb. 7:26), even though He mingled with all kinds of people. The Apostles were men like we are. The apostles faced issues we still face. For instance, Paul taught creationism in Acts 17:17-

34 on Mars Hill. Paul also taught discipleship at his departing from Ephesus in Acts 20. Peter, James, John, and Paul all taught aspects of practical holiness not spelled out in the Gospels. Apostolic writers agree that Jesus will come to earth again. At His second coming, He is not coming as a baby. He will not be an offering for sin. Every eye shall see Him when He comes in great power and majesty as judge.

Jesus said that the Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35). Among other proofs of the absolute accuracy of the Bible, this crowning proof comes from Jesus Himself!

Even if we make a good beginning in our walk with Jesus, we miss part of our birthright if we doubt the apostles' writings. Their writings speak to our benefit "**for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works**" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

Let us pay careful attention to all New Testament teaching. For instance, let us not lean on the power of the sword (be it guns, grenades, bombs, or whatever), let Christians greet each other as saints; let us refrain from adorning our bodies (be it with body tattoos, precious metal, fancy cloth or whatever); let us dress and behave modestly, let the brothers have their hair cut and the sisters

wear their hair long and covered in obedience to God's headship order; let us follow apostolic teaching in recognizing God-prescribed roles for men and women in the body of Christ; let us avoid occultic practices as we pursue health by prayer and anointing with oil and by consulting practices based on tested truth. In these ways and others, we represent the Savior to a confused and skeptical world.

We do these things in obedience to the Captain of our Salvation. The Apostles were to write God's revelation to man for posterity, so their assignment included more than does ours. Yet we too are to

make known the Gospel. We are to interpret and apply what has already been given. According to Revelation 22:18,19, we are not authorized to write a Romans 17 or an Acts 29!

Jesus' Apostles carried His precious truths at the risk of their lives. If they had had doubts about the truth of Jesus' words, they would surely have tried desperately to escape rather than submitting to painful suffering and disgraceful death. They knew Jesus and trusted Him fully!

Let us take Jesus *and* the Apostles seriously. How can anyone who doubts the Apostles' writings say they are taking Jesus seriously?

—PLM 

reader response

Re: Living Life as a Blended Family, August, 2011.

I'm reading the August issue of Calvary Messenger. In the article, "Living Life as a Blended Family" the author speaks of those in second marriages. I hope she is not referring to the second marriage of someone who is divorced. I did not see any mention of why this is a second marriage. I hope someone does not use this article to justify a second marriage when they still have a partner living.

God bless you.

Richard Mummau

Editor's response: Somehow, I had not even thought about that, because I knew that both parties had lost their partners through death. Surely, no one should take this as license to remarry after divorce.

Paul L. Miller

Bro. Paul,

God bless you, my brother. I hope I can come to Hutchinson some time and we can sit and visit together.

In Him,

Richard Mummau



Why Are We So Fascinated with Answers in Genesis?

Cory Anderson, Newcomerstown, OH

When I first heard a tape by Ken Ham, I was riding around in a Lancaster County field on a New Holland tractor. My friend, piloting the machine, shared the tape as I listened from the passenger's stool. The man's speech could cut meat through the bone, his foreign accent drilling an absent debate partner. After that isolated incident, I heard his name with greater frequency. From Fellowship to Beachy to Amish to B.M.A., conservative Anabaptists have latched onto Answers in Genesis (A.I.G.) programs like the Creation Museum. We have formed some reservations, such as A.I.G.'s failure to follow through on the "all things" of the Bible (the head covering, nonresistance, and so on) but the costs have not outweighed the benefits, and the charm of A.I.G. continues to woo us.

Why are we so fascinated with Answers in Genesis? "Because they promote the truth!" one may reply. "Maybe not everything, but most things," and that may be part of the reason. Here, I present other possible reasons. This article is not seeking to cast a shadow over the efforts of

A.I.G., but is rather inquiring about *our fascination* with A.I.G.

We like fresh ideas. Something clicks just right in our brain. "Ah, why didn't I think of that before?" It's a fresh interpretation of the same ideas that have been cycled again and again in our familiar settings. Several fresh ideas lead us to pursue more from the same source. If a tape has a fresh idea, then a set of tapes must have more. If the set has more, then the magazine must have more. If the magazine has more, then the website must have more. If the website has more, then the multi-volume DVD set complete with outlines must have even more. We personalize the new ideas as part of who we are, part of what people know us by. More than before, we are "Creationists."

We like a simple reading of viewpoints. It puts the world into two camps. We have an enemy, the atheistic evolutionists. Their home is in public schools and universities. We like an easy basis on which to determine whose side we are on, whom we should trust: creationists are allies, evolutionists or "wobblers" are not. If you vary from the organization's Genesis teaching

or disagree with the level of emphasis placed on it, you are out. It is all or nothing. We face uncertainty if we conclude that many people could be at a place neither here nor there, or that there are additional criteria to determine who is in or who is out, or that most people have not even thought about the debate (since we can't pursue every debate). *But*, such a conclusion forces us to a deeper level of discernment than quick, easy criteria to put someone in or out. Indeed, Scripture teaches the two-camps idea (for example Revelation 3:16 and Matthew 6:24, 7:13-14), but the criteria are *many* and subtle.

We like to know we're right without working for it. A.I.G. provides readers with abundant information. However, the abundance of ideas presented to general audiences are simplified in order to make it accessible to mass readership. Very basic concepts are taught rather than the complex studies that are the actual basis for questioning evolution. We read literature, watch DVD's, and visit the museum for easy information that makes us feel correct. However, this is the candy bar of science. Few are willing to chew on the tough steak of the subject matter. Rarely will any get to the place of reading the high-level scientific studies published in thick black-and-white academic journals. We want the easy route to knowing we're right. We don't want to weigh

rigorous data. Must we then become experts in every field of debate to take a side? No, but rather, we humbly accept in Christian yieldedness many things we do not dig into because of a greater force than rationalization (1 Corinthians 1:17-18). Where research is advantageous on a given challenge, an individual may pursue deep studies as a representative of the church. For example, through academic work Luke learned medicine and Paul learned Jewish law.

We don't have to face "the enemy." Of those in our conservative Anabaptist constituencies who visit the Creation Museum, how many have then actually met and talked with an ardent, atheistic evolutionist? Or, do we limit our sharing of facts and quips with each other? Few have shared with a branded evolutionist, for at least two reasons: One, we do not want to meet these people and risk defeat in debate, and two, these people (as portrayed by A.I.G.) are a rare species. The enemy that A.I.G. creates often goes without a name or identity. It is a caricature. A.I.G., like most social movement organizations from P.E.T.A. to N.R.A., makes up the enemy that looks the nastiest but is easiest to defy in front of a crowd of supporters. On one occasion, A.I.G. referred to a debate with "a well-known atheist in the the USA." No name, no identity, nothing to go

by except how she is portrayed in the article. The evolutionist A.I.G. paints, whose life goal is to convince people of the absurdity of religion, is an enemy we will rarely if ever face. The enemy that is most distant and that our church friends approve is the easiest to denounce. On the other hand, taking as decisive a stand on controversial, close-to-home issues in our setting is a quick way to accumulate scorn. We take cues from outsiders as to what we need to condemn on the outside, but crack our fragile unity when addressing inside issues imported from the outside.

We like to have a single issue as the root of success or failure. “If a minister cannot soundly answer the questions of a seeker or church member about Genesis, then it is a critical failure.” Or, “You cannot lead someone to salvation without a sound understanding of Genesis.” These statements, and others like them, give a simple solution: Bone up on Genesis knowledge. I suspect we opt for the silver bullet answer to our problems as a cover for dealing with more detailed, case-by-case circumstances that require advanced Christian learning and living. Promoting the essential need for “creation ministry” serves to perpetuate A.I.G. indefinitely, making it indispensable to our religion.

We like pizzazz. “Color” adds flavor and stimulates the mind to prudent reflection; “pizzazz” entertains, amuses, and hypnotizes. Magazines, DVD’s, websites, and larger-than-life public centers tend towards the latter. A.I.G. has relied on the latter as the primary media to create publicity and hype.

We like one source for our information. It’s easy. Sorting through different sources of information takes time, work, and thought. In viewing only A.I.G. and similar materials, we rely on A.I.G. for the whole truth and portrayals of the opposition. But we know A.I.G., like most organizations, selects facts to their advantage. Humans, after adopting anything new, surround themselves with information that affirms their choice. After personalizing the title “Creationist,” the proselyte depends on A.I.G. for information that affirms this decision. To read the works of evolutionist Richard Dawkins, for example, just to see what he really says (instead of someone’s interpretation of what he says) or Christian writings questioning the work of A.I.G. is to go against the principle of viewing only choice-affirming materials.

We like their lingo. So much of what A.I.G. says is similar to our Christian talk. Even Christian traits we have felt alone on are advocated in language familiar to ours, such as women’s

roles, modesty, attention to family, and the dominion of Scripture. When someone uses our language, we are quick to trust him. When lost on the streets of Washington, D.C., if you ask for directions and the pedestrian responds in Pennsylvania Dutch, there is an instant bond. You may latch onto this stranger with particular trust. However, there are some basic differences to which you are exposed in opening up to him that are concealed by the language spoken. When A.I.G. or any organization uses Christian lingo, this opens a trust to which we may be making ourselves vulnerable to ideas hidden by the good speech.

We like what our friends like. If our friends are talking about creationism and our youth group is visiting the Creation Museum, we feel left out unless we learn about it. Organizations know that for a product, idea, or fad to really take off, it *must* be advocated by people's friends. Ads and publicity only do so much; they can only *inform* people. Most people make a decision based on what their friends are doing.

We like to be in control. In a number of short stories and e-mail forwards, a meek Christian student stands up to the anti-God challenges of a cookie-cutter college professor. Through a witty quote or exceptional event, the professor is embarrassed in front of a class of hundreds. It's really more

like this: Let's spend a little time on evolution, and then only in certain classes. Professors make their point; some of it makes sense, some of it doesn't, which is the way it is with most things. Plenty of students, even professors, personally don't accept the teaching in full, but there are many other topics to move on to and cover, too. For Anabaptist people who teach respect for authorities, such stories of "gotcha" fundamentally alter this virtue of respect. A.I.G. often presents their debates with anonymous evolutionists in the "gotcha" fashion. When followers pick up their quick quotes and jargon to throw evolutionists off, A.I.G. admonishes their supporters to remember to also lead people to Christ, but despite this, the precedent has been set.

Many of the things that fascinate us about A.I.G. are the same concepts that will fascinate us about many other organizations, books, and ideas. A.I.G. has blazed a helpful path for the individual who wishes to research the debate in more detail, using A.I.G. *as but one of many sources for information.* However, the way the program has been commercialized and marketed in recent years has moved it beyond its original scope. While still plainly committed to refuting evolution and serving a role in providing an alternative to Darwinism, the organization has

become about much more without saying what more is. Am I suggesting that those who have contributed and supported this organization discontinue such? Not necessarily, but I am calling readers to reflect further on how identifying with A.I.G., or any organization, fundamentally alters our Christian patterns, practices,

local church loyalty, and ingrained beliefs, so we may understand what challenges it presents in anchoring and fortifying our faith.

[Editor's note: The writer embraces creationism, but would warn us against a flabby, "me, too" commitment and search for truth. We invite reader response]



News and Views from Israel

Donnavon Graber, Jerusalem

August 13 - The figs are in season. After another busy week, it's a real pleasure to share a deliciously cool fig with my son in the quietness of a Shabbat afternoon. It is a cool day with temperatures in the low 80's.

The protests about high prices of food, childcare, and housing continue. The country's tycoons are beginning to come under fire as a chief reason for this situation. Only 16 individual tycoons and business groups control 50% of the money of the entire country! Many people argue that this system doesn't encourage true competition and is designed to line the pockets of those in control at the expense of the masses.

Since 2005, food prices have increased 30% in Israel, while in Europe they increased 20%. A tube of toothpaste in the USA costs about \$1.30 while here it is \$5.43. A gallon of milk costs \$6.50 here and around \$2.77 in the USA. A gallon of gasoline here

is \$7.98, thanks to a \$.54 tax, while in America it is around \$3.80. New and used vehicles cost an average of nearly twice as much here as in the States, thanks to a 90% tax on new vehicles.

Other voices being raised against the priorities of the government are demanding more social programs and help. These people point to Israel's defense budget of \$16 billion out of a total of \$74 billion, or 20% of the total budget, as one segment that needs cutting in order to finance tax cuts and new social programs.

By way of comparison, last year the USA spent about \$700 billion, or about 20% of its total budget, on defense. America spent 43% of the \$1.6 trillion total spent worldwide in 2010 on defense, after having increased military spending 81% since 2001. We rarely think of how much blood America has on its hands. Surely, those who live by the sword die by the sword.

Thankfully, our spiritual weapons are much more powerful than the

sword as they have the ability to change hearts and bring people into living relationship with the Father!

• • • • •

Life in our home is finding a new normal as we adjust to our new son, Yosef. Hanoch, his brother, loves him very much and loves to kiss him. My wife is getting her strength back, although she fell in the stairwell as we were leaving for an appointment with the doctor.

It is a real blessing to have Amos and Sarah Kauffman with the CAM team here for several months, bringing some gray-haired spiritual leadership and unselfish assistance.

Last week we visited a beautiful pastoral village near Jenin to research some potential self-support projects. In the mountains of ancient Samaria, just above the Jezreel Valley, is a wonderful agricultural area, well suited for raising sheep, goats, and chickens. Another interesting possibility is beehives for producing honey. The vision is for

larger cooperative projects that would help support the participating families, with a portion of the profit going to elderly families who lack other means of support.

Business here is rarely as straightforward as it appears. Following legal advice and protocol, we moved forward in purchasing protected tenancy for a small property for CAM offices and miniature food parcel assembly facility. The location seemed ideal for our purposes and the price was good, considering that it was in Jerusalem. In this sort of purchase, a second entity has the right to purchase the tenancy as well, but the second entity did not exercise its right in the time frame given by law. Now we are threatened by a lawsuit, and are trying to find a way to negotiate peace by going the second mile.

Pray for peace and light of the New Jerusalem to infiltrate the cracks and crannies of the Old.



Halfway-Anabaptists

David Steinhauer, Jr., Peach Bottom, PA

They were called the *Halbtaefer* or Halfway-Anabaptists. These people sympathized with the Swiss Anabaptists but never left the state churches to join the Anabaptist brotherhoods. Some sympathized because they recoiled at the horrific treatment these defenseless brethren endured as they were chased, tortured, and slaughtered at the hands of

the Swiss authorities. Others were convinced that the Anabaptists practiced a pure Gospel that they themselves did not have the courage to practice openly.

Halfway-Anabaptists greatly aided the Anabaptist brethren. They did everything they could to help them escape the fury of persecution. They gave them food and clothing. They

allowed them to have meetings on their properties and build shelters in their woodlands. They went out of their way to warn them of approaching danger.

Obviously, the Halfway-Anabaptists were a problem for the persecuting authorities. These sympathizers could not be relied upon to help track down and arrest the Anabaptist people. They refused to cooperate in giving information as to where the brethren were hiding. Sometimes when they were commanded by officers of the law to assist in arresting groups of Anabaptists, they would allow a fleeing Anabaptist to run unhindered into the surrounding forests and mountains. While the authorities passed mandates, orders, and prohibitions against aiding Anabaptists, in some Swiss districts there appeared to be more of the sympathetic Halfway-Anabaptists than loyal members of the state church.

It is no wonder that the Anabaptist brethren referred to the Halfway-Anabaptists as *die treuherzigen Menschen* or “the truehearted people.” The following recorded prayer of Anabaptist origin refers to these “truehearted people.”

“O Holy Father in heaven, we pray Thee for all truehearted people who love us and do good unto us, and render us services of mercy by providing us food and nourishment, housing and shelter. O Lord, do Thou recompense them richly with all that is good. And since they hear Thy Word gladly but have

little strength to surrender themselves to obedience, we pray Thee to grant them that they may through Thy Holy Spirit have ingrafted in them Thy Word which is able to save their souls.”

This prayer definitely reflects an appreciation for these Halfway-Anabaptists or “truehearted people” and what they did to aid the brethren. It also clearly expresses a concern that the “truehearted people” had not gone far enough in following the Scriptures and that they wished them to be saved.

A number of years later, however, it appears that the Anabaptists’ view of the Halfway-Anabaptists had begun to shift, for eventually a question arose as to whether the Halfway-Anabaptists should be considered as saved. This question was one of the points of controversy in the Amish division of 1693-1696.

Apparently some of the more tolerant Swiss Anabaptists had not only accepted the Halfway-Anabaptists as Christians, but had also intermarried with them and attended the state churches with them on occasion.

Jakob Amman, a leader in the Amish division, believed that to accept the Halfway-Anabaptists as Christians was to compromise one of the foundational aspects of Anabaptism. He believed that Anabaptists should cut off all fellowship with the state church and no longer recognize those who continued to be members there as fellow Christians.

From our vantage point today, it

is easy to cast judgment on both the Halfway-Anabaptists and those who eventually accepted them. God seemed to use the Halfway-Anabaptists to preserve and protect His people when they faced extermination in many Swiss provinces. We are probably better served, however, to evaluate whether we today are Halfway-Christians or Halfway-Mennonites.

We live in a society that is quite different from that of our Anabaptist forefathers. We no longer face the arresting officers, the dungeon prisons, the torture chambers, and the executioner's sword and fire. However, we still deal with the pressures to believe a partial Gospel and to live as Halfway-Christians. Many nominal Christian churches around us do not preach a full Gospel. They do not promote discipleship to Christ in everyday living. They do not practice the "all things" of Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.

But the principles of God's Word are still as effective and as relevant for us today as they were for our Anabaptist forefathers. As conservative Mennonite churches we need to continue to maintain the pure doctrines of the New Testament. We must promote and practice nonresistance as an expression of God's love in our hearts. We must continue to forbid divorce and remarriage as Jesus taught us. We must abstain from the swearing of oaths. We may not love the world and many things that are highly esteemed

among men but are an abomination to God. We must uphold a high moral standard in both our thoughts and practices. We must keep our churches strong in faith, doctrine, unity and brotherly love. Much more could be enumerated.

Jesus told the church at Laodicea, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:14,16). Jesus clearly states that this church was halfway warm and halfway cold. This halfway state was not acceptable to Christ. May our Mennonite churches and her people be fully dedicated to serving the Lord with their whole heart and not just halfway. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment (Mark 12:30).

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[From *The Pilgrim Witness*, June, 2011. Used by permission.]



They See God...

Darlene Miller, Linn, MO

You are a Father!

You have been chosen, called out, brought
To this great task by Father God;
To teach the truth that must be taught,
To bear a shepherd's staff and rod.

To guide those searching little feet
In paths that lead to righteousness,
To faithfully rise up and meet
Their every need with tenderness.

To love them always, though they fall,
As God the Father loves them, too;
For, just remember, through it all
They see their God as they see you.

If in unfaithfulness you live,
How will they know that God stays true?
Are you reluctant to forgive?
They see their God as they see you.

Are you a faithful witness of
His mercies that are ever new?
A living emblem of His love?
They see their God as they see you!

Is holiness your heart's delight,
In all you say, in all you do?
Despise the wrong and love the right!
They see their God as they see you!



marriages

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

Chupp-Gingerich

Bro. Jeffrey Lynn, son of Mark and Freida Chupp, Eden Valley, MN, and Sis. Mary Emma, daughter of John and Christina Gingerich, Spooner, WI, at Full Gospel Church, Shell Lake, WI, on July 30, 2011, by Mel Beiler.

Hamilton-Heft

Bro. Nicholas, son of Charles and Kerry Hamilton, Harrison, AR, and Sis. Shae, daughter of Daniel and Lena Heft, Western Grove, AR, at Faith Assembly of God for little Flock Christian Fellowship on July 16, 2011. by Charles Hamilton.

King-Stoltzfus

Bro. Chester Lee, son of Emanuel and Katie King, Port Royal, PA, and Sis. Rhoda Carol, daughter of Lloyd and Sara Ellen Stoltzfus, Port Royal, PA, at Bunkertown Church of the Brethren for Shade Mountain Christian Fellowship by the groom's uncle, Jonas King.

Kleiner-Yoder

Bro. George Kleiner, Aroda, VA, and Malinda, daughter of Harry and Susan Yoder, Aroda, VA, at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, on May 28, 2011, by Tim Miller.

Overholt-Yoder

Bro. Henry, son of the late Will and Millie Overholt, from Montezuma, GA, and Matilda Yoder, daughter of the late Crist and Anna Yoder, Montezuma, GA, at Montezuma Mennonite Church, on May 27, 2011, by Donny Swartzentruber.

Weaver-Graber

Bro. Daryn, son of Dennis and Regina Weaver, Meadville, PA, and Sis. Jeanie, daughter of Raymond and Laura Graber, Amboy, IN, at Bethany Fellowship June 4, 2011, by Melvin Lehman.

Wengerd-Mast

Bro. James, son of Daniel and Dorothy Wengerd, Summersville, KY, and Sis. Gail, daughter of Jonathan and (the late Margaret) Frieda Mast, Bloomfield, MO, at Hodgenville Baptist Church for Summersville Mennonite Church on June 10, 2011, by James Hershberger.



cradle roll

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

Bontrager, Clifford and Krista (Martin), Aroda, VA, second child and son, Jaron Michael, June 30, 2011.

Bontrager, Lyle and Shirley (Ropp), Middlebury, IN, first child and dau., Arianna Marie, August 7, 2011.

Byler, Nathanael and Kathryn (King), West Farmington, OH, first child and son, Dominic William, June 19, 2011.

Caceres, Adonay and Leona (Miller), Crossville, TN, eighth child, fifth dau., Ellen Joy, Aug. 16, 2011.

Coblentz, John Daniel and Wilma (Troyer), Crossville, TN, second child and dau., Amy Yvonne, July 27, 2011.

Graber, Donnavon and Elana (Miller), presently serving with C.A.M. in Israel, second child and son, Yosef Lior, July 16, 2011.

Hochstedler, Keith and Elmina (Graber), Amboy, IN, seventh child, fourth son, (two daughters deceased), July 26, 2011.

Hochstedler, Morris and Anna (Mast), Summersville, KY, eighth child, fourth son, Jaron Grant, July 10, 2011.

Hochstetler, Lonnie and Ruth (Lapp), Wesley, AR, first child and son, Alex Perry, August 16, 2011.

Hostetler, Ben Jay and Carolyn (Yoder), Paris, TN, first child and son, Adrian Benson, July 6, 2011.

Jantzi, Charles and Melanie (Ropp), Lucknow, ON, first child and dau., Jayde Dawn, May 28, 2011.

Jantzi, Ronald and Jennifer (Mullet), Milverton, ON, fifth child, second dau., Kerri Lynae, July 19, 2011.

King, Eldon and Monica (Beachy), Harrison, AR, second child, first son, Michael Eli, July 8, 2011.

Knepp, Abe and Janelle (Wagler), Montgomery, IN, fourth child, first dau., Brooklyn Sierra, April 7, 2011.

Lengacher, Caleb and LaRhonda (Wingard), Montezuma, GA, second child, first son, Chandler Cole, August 24, 2011.

Miller, LaVerne and Ruth (Yoder), Stuarts Draft, VA, third child and son, Josiah Willis, June 22, 2011.

Miller, Steve and Melissa (Dolly), Crossville, TN, first child and dau., Brooklyn Dane', Aug. 7, 2011.

Nisly, Brad and Rosa (King), Hutchinson, KS, second child, first dau., Madelyn Grace, August 25, 2011.

Overholt, Benny and Beth (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, first child and son, Caden Lane, July 31, 2011.

Pollard, Timothy and Phebe (Landis), second child and dau., Livingston, TN, Hannah Grace, Aug. 1, 2011.

Stoltzfus, Lavon and Melissa (Troyer), Dundee, OH, second child, first son, Joshua Lynn, July 18, 2011.

Troyer, Steven and Rhoda (Yoder), Millersburg, OH, seventh child, fifth dau., Rachel Maria, April 22, 2011,

Wagler, Dale and Heidi (Wingard), Washington, IN, fourth child, third dau., Arianna Mae, August 7, 2011.

Wagler, Jeremiah and Marie (Graber), Odon, IN, third child, second dau., Talisa Chay, March 24, 2011.

Weaver, Duane and Ruth (Miller), Stuarts Draft, VA, seventh child, third dau., Susannah Grace, Aug. 2, 2011.

obituaries

Coblentz, Melvin J., 78, of Uniontown, Ohio, died July 15, 2011. He was born Jan. 18, 1933, son of the late John A. M. and Nancy (Weaver) Coblentz.

Melvin was a faithful member of Pleasant View A.M. Church. He was a life-long farmer.

On Oct. 8, 1953, he was married to Barbara Miller, who preceded him in death in August, 2004. Surviving are nine children: Alta (Stephen) Hege, Long Lake, SD; Susan (Perry) Miller, Sarasota, FL; Mary (Reuben) Miller, Abbeville, SC; Betty (Greg) Mishler, Hrtville, OH; Nancy (Duane) Eash, Gambier, OH;

Judy (Ernest) Miller, and Jean (Joseph) Miller, of Hillsville, VA; Leon (Marlene) Coblentz, and David (Tracy) Coblentz, of Uniontown, OH; 29 grandchildren and six great grandchildren; two brothers, Atlee (Elsie) and Henry (Savilla); two sisters, Anna (John Henry) and Mary (Joseph) Coblentz; and brother-in-law, Earl Coblentz.

He was preceded in death by two sisters, Sarah and Clara.

The funeral was held on July 18 at Bethany Mennonite Church, with Homer Zook officiating. Burial was in in the Pleasant View A.M. Church Cemetery.

Plank, Isaac J., 81, of Montezuma, GA, died at his home on June 8, 2011. He was born Jan. 20, 1928, son of the late John and Ida (Borntrager) Plank.

Isaac loved the Lord and was a member of Montezuma Mennonite Church.

On Sept. 28, 1949, he was married to Amanda Yoder, who preceded him in death in 2009, so they were just three months short of 60 years together.

Surviving are 10 children: Verda (Henry, Jr.) Overholt; Ruth (Raymond) Weaver; Eddie (Becky) Plank; Lewis (Mary) Plank, all of Montezuma, GA; Maynard Plank, Myakka City, FL; Irene (Levi) Yoder; Bertha (Marvin) Yoder; Kathy (Louis) Yoder; Marie (Eugene) King; Willis (Lorene) Plank, also of Montezuma, GA; 48 grandchildren, 84 great grandchildren; four sisters: Alma (Menno) Yoder, Montezuma; Millie (Noah) Hostetler, Sarasota, FL; Elva (Martin) Miller, Meigs, GA; Mary Esther Plank, Virginia Beach, VA.

He was preceded in death by one son, George, one daughter and son-in-law, Pauline and John Wagler; four granddaughters, and two brothers, Ralph and Daniel Plank.

The funeral was on June 11, with Donny Swartzentruber, Eli Kauffman, Irvin Yoder, and Daniel Yoder serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Alva E., 81, of Montezuma, GA, died at his home on April 23, 2011. He was born Nov. 6, 1929, son of the late Elmer and Malinda (Miller) Yoder.

His life reflected his love for the Lord and his family. He was a member of

Montezuma Mennonite Church.

On Sept. 9, 1952, he was married to Sara N. Yoder and they were blessed with more than 58 years together.

Survivors include his wife, Sara; children: Laura (Peter) Whitt; Alva, Jr.; Elmer (Roseanna) Yoder; Johnny (Linda) Yoder; Nathan (MariAlice) Yoder; Milton (Barbara Ann) Yoder; Miriam (Lee) Whitt; Michael (Kathy) Yoder, all of Montezuma, GA; Eva (Pete) Miller, Delta, CO; Laban (Rose) Yoder; Benjamin (Mary) Yoder, also of Montezuma, GA; 62 grandchildren; 27 great grandchildren, two brothers: S. Melvin (Ruth) Yoder; Robert Paul (Amanda) Yoder; and one sister, Laura, all of Montezuma, GA.

He was preceded in death by three grandchildren and one brother.

The funeral was held on April 25 at Montezuma Mennonite Church with Donny Swartzentruber, Eli Kauffman, and Daniel Yoder serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Heidi Elaine, 11 months and 16 days, of Fredonia, KY, died July 26, 2011. She was the daughter of Roman and Brenda (Miller) Yoder. In addition to her parents, she will be missed by two sisters and one brother: Cynthia, Nolan, and Marcia, as well as her paternal grandparents, Paul and Mary Yoder, Belvidere, TN, and maternal grandparents, Ruben and Kathryn Miller, Fredonia, KY.

The funeral was held at Fredonia Mennonite Church, with Titus Troyer, Leon Wagler, and Paul Mark Overholt serving. Burial was in the Belvidere Mennonite Cemetery.



There was a time when it seemed to me that the Scriptures would favor immersion for baptism rather than affusion (applying water by pouring on the recipient's head). However, George R. Brunk I gave his insights in *Ready Scriptural Reasons* that changed my perspective.

More recently, I received a 61-page book entitled, *Water Baptism, the Doctrine of the Mode* by W. A. Mackay, that discusses the subject at great length. His study reaches a firm conclusion that immersion developed after the New Testament period. The author sees it as a faulty understanding of the purpose of baptism and a mistaken understanding of some key words. His conclusions are supported by his own study and others whom he considers unbiased scholars.

It would be a serious mistake to emphasize mode at the expense of repentance and faith in the Author of salvation. Persons who have been immersed need not be unsettled by this reading. But pastors and baptismal candidates would do well to be open to this teaching rather than to be influenced by simplistic conclusions that do not survive objective study of the subject.

This booklet can be ordered from Eastern Mennonite Publishers, phone: 717-733-7998.

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The founders of Creation Museum located near Cincinnati in northern Kentucky are in the process of building a modern, full-sized Noah's ark. The structure is to be 500 feet long and 80 feet high. The purpose is to tell the world that the great flood is indeed a part of human history and that God's Word is true. An article in *The Hutchinson News* (8-20-11) says that a team of Amish builders from Indiana will erect this huge structure. The building will have old world details like wooden pegs instead of nails.

Folks from Indiana tell me that this building crew is headed by "Big Dave" Bontrager, a nephew of the late bishop Dave Bontrager (1915-1989). The expertise of these craftsmen is widely recognized and has been called for in various projects some distance from their homes. Daniel D. Bontrager tells me that Big Dave's father Joe and Daniel's father, Dave, earlier did this kind of work together. These skills are not included in formal architectural training. Now sons in the third generation carry on these rare skills.

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The following excerpts are from an article entitled, “Hindsight and Insight” in *Harvesting*, (8-11) by Aaron Lapp:

- About 20% of the world’s population lives in China; 20% in India, and about 5% in the United States of America.

- The U.S. has about 6% of the world’s vehicles and generates 70% of the world’s solid waste.

- Developing nations are growing rapidly in population; industrialized nations like the U.S. are nearly static.

- There are 200 nations in the world but more than 5,000 ethnic and people groups.

- 40% of the world’s population is under age 15, but in the U.S., only 20% are under 15.

- One half of more than 4 billion children live in poverty without enough food, shelter, and clothing.

- One of four children must work instead of going to school.

- U.S. apparel workers’ wages average \$9.56 per hour; in El Salvador it is \$1.65 and in China only \$.67 an hour.

- On the average, American companies make a 42% profit on their China operations.

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It seems apparent that American companies that move their production to foreign companies are an important reason for widespread

unemployment in the U.S.

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According to the local newspaper Warren Buffet has written an opinion piece for *The New York Times*. The essence of his article is to support a tax increase for the wealthy. He is considered to be one of the wealthiest men in the whole world. He pointed out that he paid a much lower rate of taxation than do most of the middle class. He also said that his cleaning lady pays a higher tax rate than he does.

To hear from a wealthy person is unusual. Often we are told that rich people should be favored in the tax game so that they can afford to make investments to create jobs. Buffet notes that between 1980 and 2000, when the marginal tax rate was higher on the wealthy, many more jobs were created than in the last decade when the tax rate was lower. I would find it refreshing to hear more rich people express such sentiments.

The fact remains, however, that material wealth is rightly called “uncertain riches.” The present state of the U.S. Economy is very unstable. To lay up treasures in heaven is wise and safe.

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Cal Thomas gives Virginia governor, Bob McDonnell high marks for his financial leadership. When he took office in January, 2010, he was faced with a \$2.2 billion

shortfall inherited from the outgoing governor. In less than two years, he has delivered two budget surpluses without raising taxes or causing harm to the “most vulnerable” citizens. Instead, he has judiciously cut spending. His administration also reports having added 48,200 new jobs.



“And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:12b). This short comment sums up the motive of the world’s first murderer.

On July 26, 2005, Robert Hege, age 19, from Buck Creek Mennonite Church at Richland Center, Wisconsin, was shot and killed at work in a pallet shop for what may have been similar reasons. Robert and others worked at the same place Reuben did. Robert frequently requested prayer at church for Reuben’s salvation. It seems that Robert’s life and testimony brought a hateful response from Reuben. He acted out his feelings, then promptly turned himself in to the police.

The shock of the family and church community of losing a fine young man is not easily described. Twila Hege, Robert’s aunt by marriage, is quoted as follows: “Following the shock, horror, and grief of it all, the fact remained to forgive this young man.”

There was a time when Robert resisted the call of God on his life. The congregation earnestly prayed for his salvation. At age 16, he yielded his life to Christ. His outgoing personality and his love for the Lord were outstanding. He took an interest in all the age groups which is shown by the fact that he enjoyed holding little babies and he also enjoyed conversing with seniors.

He was both gentle and vocal in the work place. His presence and manner of life were a source of irritation for fellow worker, Reuben. He is said to have expressed his frustration at one point: “You don’t even fight back!”

An important ingredient of the tragedy is that Reuben had intentionally committed his life to Satan. The conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Genesis 3: 15) is seen in the murder of a promising young Christian.

Forgiveness did not come easily. A friend advised Twila that she should choose to forgive so that healing could begin, which helped her. Twila lists the following points as helpful in forgiveness:

- When she chose to forgive, God moved in. His yoke is easy and His burden is light.
- She realizes that the offender’s family is grieving, too. They have a son who will be behind bars for 40 years.


- They remember that early Christians had many persecutors to forgive.

- They continue to pray for Reuben's salvation.

- They recognize God's sovereignty. Robert's death did not change who God is.

- “We refuse by God's grace to let

Satan have any victory in our lives by our unforgiveness. Satan did not give up easily, but when he is steadfastly resisted, he does flee.”

The article closes with a fervent appeal that we experience the freedom of forgiveness. (Conversation with Twila Hege and from *Life Lines*, July/August, 2011) —DLM 

Ministers' Meeting Messages — 2011

This is a condensation of a message given at the annual ministers' meeting held at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, 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.

5. Building a Vibrant Church

Laban Kaufman, Middlefield, OH

For years I have had a passion about how the unchurched see us Anabaptists. We are gathered here tonight and I sense a beautiful spirit here. What would an unchurched person experience here? Would they leave this place thinking, *There is life here.*

Jim and Casper were two men who developed an unlikely relationship. Jim was a Christian and Casper was an atheist. Jim invited Casper to go on a trip with him. He wanted to visit churches across America to find out what Casper would find in these

various churches. So they took off.

Each of them carried a laptop. They would show up at a church and sit in the back and take notes. They were simply absorbing what they saw and felt. Then they wrote the book, *Jim and Casper Go to Church*. They visited Saddleback, Willow Creek, Lakewood—large churches. They also visited small churches—one had about 15 people in attendance.

I was fascinated by their ongoing conversations in this book. A very typical question that Casper would ask, was: “Is this what Jesus told you guys to do?” As they concluded the story, Casper, the atheist, was still trying to figure out what the church

was all about. He concluded that what churches do best is *put on an event*.

I, and probably most of us, wish they would have come to our church. But what Jim and Casper would think is not most important for us tonight. It is possible for us to experience our own churches and to have good, warm feelings. But sometimes those feelings are not based on the work of God in our hearts so much as simply being something familiar. We may feel good about our church, even when it is not a vibrant church according to God's description.

Tonight's message is directed primarily to us as pastors, men who proclaim the Gospel to our home congregations, men who have a lot to do with whether or not ours is a vibrant church.

A vibrant church is people whose thinking is based on truth.

Proverbs 23:7 speaking of man, says, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." The way we think, is the way we are. Few things will affect the life of a church more than our understanding of God. As a pastor, you are one of the great influences in your people's lives as to what their understanding of God really is. We try to convey who God is by the things we say, but ultimately, I have found that we best convey who God is by who we are. Yet, there is only One who can say, "I am the life. I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly."

The lie that Satan brought to Eve, *The reason God didn't want you to*

eat of it, is because God knows it's the best one and He's keeping it from you, is still one of his lies, which says, in effect, that Satan gives the best life. It is only as we build on the foundation that God alone is the source of life that we build a vibrant church. When we as pastors do not recognize Satan's lie for what it is, we will spend too much energy on trying to build fences around that forbidden "tree," instead of leading our people deeper into the garden so full of nourishment and life. Satan is fairly OK with having us focus on that forbidden fruit, even if it's a focus that tries to avoid it.

When Bro. Dave Nisly spoke to us about the emergent church, my chest tightened and I wondered how much exposure we have to these false teachings. Dave told us that the best defense against deception is becoming familiar with the One who is true.

I believe God would have us go into that darkness with authority and power, equipped with the truth of God's Word. When we spend most of our energies as a church protecting ourselves from evil, we miss so much of what God would equip us with to move into the kingdom of darkness with His light.

We really need to become equipped with the power of God to move forward, as God's people, and as our Anabaptist forefathers did. I am by no means saying that we should ignore or become oblivious to the deception around us. We must be aware of it to be equipped to stand against it. But we

must not be afraid, because we have been empowered by God. When the wind and waves are at their worst, we must stay focused on Jesus.

We had high hopes for our dog, Meshach. One time, instead of being in front of the house, Meshach was barking furiously behind the house. He was up on our upper deck, backed up as far as he could, against the railing. He apparently thought he was doing his duty as a good guard dog—barking and barking. He was going through the motions of guarding our house. Why was he barking? The neighbor's dog was in the front yard but Meshach was completely ineffective, because he was being ruled by the enemy.

A vibrant church learns to connect the things of God with the person of God.

I have found that when we connect the person of God with the goodness of God it transforms how we live. We have many resources. It is now possible to have more Bible study references in one's pocket than many people of old had in their entire libraries. We emphasize doctrinal purity and accuracy. We now know something about the Greek and Hebrew texts. We use this to shed additional light on a given subject. The more important question is: Do all of these rich and accurate understandings of the things of God or the Word of God equal a vibrant church?

We may search the Word of God for data, for answers, for facts, instead of

searching for the Author and allowing that search to transform us into his image. This is right and good. At some point, however, we must realize that these are still the things of God and not God Himself. To promote the things of God apart from the person of God can become idolatry. When we keep the doctrine of God with who God is, it becomes a good representation of who He is and our doctrine becomes contagious.

Some say that materialism is our greatest threat. I wonder if individualism is not a greater threat. Individualism is in direct contrast with the very nature and character of God. God could have revealed Himself to us in any way He chose. He chose to reveal Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (the holy trinity) in the context of a spiritual community. I believe He revealed Himself that way so we have something to model. We have the Father saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." We have the Son saying, "I came not to do my own will, but to do the will of my Father." We have the quiet one, the Spirit, always seeking to divert the honor to the Father and Son. Out of this, we have the model of the spiritual community and brotherhood. I am grateful for our Anabaptist heritage of brotherhood which, for the most part, speaks powerfully to people today because it demonstrates the character of God.

The vibrant church is a

representation of Jesus Christ, its head.

My wife and I have six children. Usually, when one of our children was born, visitors would make comments about the baby's appearance. Is that a Kaufman nose? An Alspaugh forehead, or whatever?

Our children are obvious representations of their parents. The church is no different. If a church is made up of born-again disciples of Christ, the DNA will match the Head. Are we reflecting the DNA of our Head?

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He gave us his mission statement, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18,19)

That sounds like a difficult and messy mission to me. He said He would spend the bulk of his ministry energies for and surrounded by the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives (the demon possessed, for example), the blind, and the bruised. As we follow Jesus around for his three years on earth and as He establishes the New Testament church, we find that that is exactly what He did.

The question for us is: if someone were to follow us around as a church and ask, "What is your church all

about?" would it be carrying these trademarks? Would they find us surrounded by the poor? The brokenhearted? The blind? The bruised? I've had to wonder if our churches don't smell just a little too good. In one sense, I think it would be good if we had a few tattoos and few "shaggy hairs" here tonight. I'm certainly not suggesting that you quit washing your hair or get a tattoo, but I believe this represents part of the mission Jesus gave to us. Would we welcome such people? Jesus surrounded Himself with people that made Him look bad.

One day Jesus was visiting at the house of Simon the Pharisee when a woman came in. I imagine her nose was running. At some point, she went up to Jesus and began to wash his feet with her tears. She took her hair, her womanly glory, which had perhaps become disheveled, to wipe Jesus' feet. This whole scene was so awkward, so embarrassing, so inappropriate to Simon, that He concluded that there's no way that Jesus could be who He said He was. If He were a prophet, He would realize that this woman was a sinner and would stay away from her.

Menno Simons said, "True evangelical faith is of such a nature it cannot lie dormant, but spreads out in all kinds of righteousness and fruits of love. It dies to the flesh and blood; it destroys all lusts and forbidden desires; it seeks, serves and fears God in its inmost soul; it clothes the naked; it feeds the hungry; it comforts the sorrowful; it shelters the destitute;

it aids and consoles the sad; it does good to those who would do it harm, it serves those that harm it, it prays for those who persecute it, it teaches, admonishes and judges us with the word of the Lord; it seeks those who are lost; it binds up what is wounded; it heals the sick; it saves what is sound; it becomes all things to all people. The persecution, suffering, and anguish that come to it for the sake of the Lord's truth have become a glorious joy and comfort to Him."

We live in a world of chaos and confusion—a scary world. Jesus entered this messed up world, He ministered to it, and above all, because He was life, He brought life to it. He is who He said He was! We can go to great lengths to keep our lives neat and clean. God is a God of order. But if we are to be a vibrant church, we must live out the mission of Jesus. He is our head.

This chaotic world where there are blind, brokenhearted, and bruised people is not only out there. Sometimes it's much closer than that, and more dressed up than the man with the tattoo and the long hair. There is a measure of chaos, confusion, blindness, and brokenheartedness in every one of our own hearts. Have we found a way to bring the life of Jesus to those areas of our lives? We as pastors play a very important role in creating an environment where this trademark of Jesus' ministry can take place. A good motto for our churches might be, "A safe place to hit bottom." What

if that was posted at the entrance of your church? One of the important features of a place where help comes to the troubled is where one can be known and still loved. What if you could be known for who you really are, and still be loved?

The cleaning up process in people's lives should not have to only take place before they can come to church, but as a result of coming to church. One demoniac came to Jesus, and after he had been touched by Jesus, he was sitting there, clothed and in his right mind. Wouldn't it be beautiful if that could be said of all of us, as a result of the life they received in one of our congregations?

Part of the process of creating an environment where godly growth and change can take place involves being honest about the chaos within our own hearts as leaders. That is hard to do. It is tiring to be considered a perpetual fountain of giving. We get tired. We're supposed to make a decent living, working with our hands. At the end of the day, we're supposed to be ready to minister to that couple in the church struggling in their marriage. Never mind, that we haven't worked through an issue we face in our own marriage.

A good pastor should be involved in the school. His children need to be good role models for the youth group. A good pastor allows ample time for Bible study and prayer so that his message can be fresh, alive and "in touch." His wife, we know, ought to be

a fountain of cheer and support for him in his ministry. When he is called away from home, she gladly keeps the home fires burning. Of course, she's delighted to have those unexpected guests to her home on Sunday when it suits no one else to have them for lunch.

I don't know what you do when you feel snowed under, but when that happens to me, I'm not very vibrant. Far too often, I've taken the grin and bear it approach. Can't you see I'm happy, because I'm smiling? Or, I go through the motions, trying to give out of my vacuum. After a while, that becomes frustrating.

In Matthew 26:37 and 38, it says that Jesus Christ, the head of the church, "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy, then said he unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, tarry ye here and watch with me." Jesus set an example for us.

Paul spoke of his many sufferings and added yet another thing that he faced: "The care of all the churches." It is a blessing to have a brother to share with and to pray over me. Then I can come back again to serve God and the church. There are a number of people in my home congregation praying for me. That is so empowering. If you want to experience life, don't just go to your fellow minister and ask for prayer, go to that weak brother. When I did that, I got this response, "You mean you would ask me to pray for you. My life is a mess." Tonight I got a text from that person that he's praying for me.

I believe that in a vibrant church, the pastor is sometimes the doctor, but sometimes he's the patient. Jesus asked his disciples to pray for Him. I have found that when we as leaders set the example with honesty of who and where we are, it opens the door for enriched life to come to the lives of those we minister to.

David Wilkerson once said that there was a point in his life when he was so busy serving God that he forgot to know God. I remember in my own life when God showed me that most of the time I spent in the Word was spent in preparation for some assignment--not in getting to know Him.


I have been to these meetings year after year. I have been here with an attitude that says "I am different from you." The Lord took me to Luke 18, where Jesus spoke of two men who went to the temple to pray. The first words out of the first man's mouth was, "God, I think thee that I am not as other men are." I was smitten as never before, because God seemed to say to me, "That is you." God said, "That spirit will never bring life in any church." That spirit is death. The second man humbled himself and experienced life and vibrancy. When God revealed the arrogance of my heart, it was so ugly, so full of death. I want to continue in a lifestyle of repentance over that. When we compare ourselves with others, it ministers death.

I wonder what it would do for our churches if we would think not on

how we are different, but on how we are alike. When the primary focus of any church or individual is to bear the image of Christ, the natural result of that focus is brokenness and humility. "The Lord is nigh to them that be of a broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Otherwise, we may be only a people group who has come out of a people group, who only want to avoid becoming like another people group.

Jesus said to each of the seven churches in revelation, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." A vibrant church must be tuned in

to what the Holy Spirit is saying. It is more than simply having a good program. Beware of a program so good that it just runs on its own. It becomes like Samson, "he wist not that the Lord had departed from him."

Where the Spirit of God is, there is life! When that which we profess and believe is a reflection of Jesus Christ, and that is lived in tune with the Holy Spirit's work in the church, there you will have a vibrant church that connects with the deepest needs of the human heart. People are still drawn to life. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." 

mission awareness

Heroes

Clair Schnupp, Dryden, ON

We all have someone whom we admire and model for their courage, their qualities, and achievements. Who are they? Eventually, our heroes reflect our character. May this article by the 75-year-old founder and chairman of Northern Youth Programs stir our hearts to be mission-minded and cause us to adore and worship our Great Hero, Jesus Christ. Homes and church libraries with books of missionary stories build stalwart character in children and instill in them the great need of reaching out to the lost. -FS

Heroes! Yes, we all have and we need them. My mother told me many stories of great men in the Bible and many stories about missionaries. These stories of faith, courage and sacrifice

inspired me and gave me direction to my life.

Arthur Moyer was my mother's cousin. He was a school teacher at the Welsh Mountain mission school. My mother would often tell me the

story of how much Arthur Moyer loved Jesus and how he was willing to leave the comforts of home to be a missionary teacher.

He became the first Mennonite missionary martyr on United States' soil. One night he went out to give some corn to a man who was stealing from him. When the man saw Arthur coming, the man shot him. Later that night, after singing all the verses of the hymn "Rock of Ages," Arthur died in the Lancaster hospital.

His family asked that no charges be laid against the man who committed the crime. They believed that forgiveness was the way of Christ. That story was riveted into the fiber of my being. I wanted to be a missionary like Arthur. He became one of my heroes.

David Livingstone was another one of my heroes. Mother told me how he went into the interior of Africa. He fought lions. He fought mosquitoes and malaria. He died on his knees by his cot in a praying position. After his death, the Africans cut out his heart and buried it under a tree. Then they mummified his body for the long trip back to Westminster Abbey for burial.

I recently read of a negative aspect of Livingstone's legacy. At the funeral, many dignitaries gave tribute to

Livingstone for all he did for Africa, while his sons who never really knew their father stood at a distance. That gave me sadness. That is one aspect of his life, I do not admire nor do I want my children to feel that way about me.

Another hero of mine is Mr. Garrett. He was a missionary in northern Ontario for many years. He came from England in the 1930's with a calling to minister to the people in the Big Trout Lake area. He had to travel overland from the Canadian National Railroad to reach Big Trout Lake, a trip on foot of several hundred miles.

A few years after his arrival at Big Trout Lake, he traveled south to marry his bride. The first part of the trip was on foot to Winnipeg. Once in Winnipeg, he traveled by train to Toronto. Mr. Garrett liked to tell the story of traveling from Big Trout to Winnipeg with the mail carrier and his dog team. He would laugh and say that was the fastest trip he ever made on foot. He knew his bride was the end of the trip and behind him the dog team was nipping at his heels. He would end the story by saying it was the fastest and hardest trip he ever made but the bride made it worth it all.

He would tell of many good times

and hard times. In his lifetime, he traveled thousands of miles on snowshoes. He told how his legs became tired and painful. He also told of times of hunger and times of plenty. He would end his stories with how the Lord sustained Him.

He left his home country as a young man to follow the call of God to northern Ontario. He ministered to first Nations people for over 60 years. Even when he was elderly, as he lived out his later years in Winnipeg with his married daughter, he would visit First Nations people who were in the hospital. He served Christ faithfully to the end of his long, godly life. He is a model I want to follow—a hero of the faith, serving Jesus to the end.

In each generation there are those who follow the call of God and in some way become heroes for others to look up to and follow. There are those who are called but do not go. They miss the blessed life of leaving a godly example for others to follow.

I think of a man whom I visited in the last days of a long life. He told me how, at 15 years of age, he was called to be a missionary, but he was too busy with high school, youth groups, jobs, cars, dating, marriage, and purchasing a house. He told me how he never lost the call and at

different times he actually planned to sell out and go to the country of his calling. But he never did. Some of his last statements were, “I am old and dying. I never obeyed my Lord to be a missionary.” With tears in his eyes, he said, “I failed my Jesus.”

I do not want to fail my Jesus. Do you?

Another hero whom I have learned to know in my travels is a man who felt called of God to go to the Canadian Arctic. He was a 12-year-old boy living in Europe when God called him. At the age of 21, he left his home and sailed to the arctic. As a young missionary, he learned the language. He lived among the people and taught about Jesus decade after decade. Several years after he moved to Canada, he met a beautiful young missionary lady who loved the Lord. A romance followed. Even the cold Arctic has not cooled the warmth of their 50-plus years of romance. Together they have served their Jesus and have led many people to Him. Even now, in his older years he visits those who end up in “the pen,” the hospital, or at the altar and will continue to do that as long as he can put one foot in front of the other.

I want to do the same. What about you?

My greatest hero is Apostle Paul. He was a determined man in whatever he

did. As a Jew persecuting Christians, he traveled far and wide to stamp out the followers of Christ. But in all that effort, he saw their love for and commitment to Christ.

When Stephen was stoned, Saul had to see the peace on Stephen's face. As Stephen was dying, Saul must have heard him ask God not to hold this stoning against them. In other words, he was asking God to forgive them.

When Saul was struck down by a bright light on the way to Damascus, he was ready to say "Yes" to Jesus. Saul the persecutor of Christians did a 180° turn and became Apostle Paul building up the Christian church. What a conversion!

Then Paul became the persecuted one. He came to know what it meant to follow Jesus. He was beaten, imprisoned, hungry, and finally beheaded. But before he died, he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness..." (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

What a wonderful way to die! He died in peace knowing he had done his best for Jesus and death itself could not separate him from his faith and commitment to his Savior.

I want to follow him as he followed Christ. Don't you want to, too?

[From "The Focus." Used by permission.]



helpers at home

What's a Grandma To Do?

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Our grandchildren are gifts to us in our older years when our own childhood is just memory. When our children were small, we were busy mothers providing for our growing families. We often failed to appreciate and delight in those special moments of childhood. It seems to me that God is giving us another opportunity to

enjoy those childhood years through our own grandchildren. Grandmas all have different ways of expressing love. We all have various talents and special gifts which are comfortable and are part of who we are by God's design for our lives. We must not compare ourselves with some other Grandma and try to imitate her.

We do have the responsibility of

passing on a legacy and values that are important to us and to the next generation. For those of you who do not have grandchildren, consider becoming a Grandma to a child who does not have grandparents in the area or bless your nieces and nephews or other children in your community.

I believe grandparenting has different phases in life similar to parenting. Our grandchildren will have different needs as they grow older. Mel and I have taken many mission trips ever since our grandchildren were small. We made it a practice to send postcards to each child and bring a small souvenir along home for them. The grandchildren loved to listen to our stories and soon was born within them an interest in missions. In fact, we like to remember an incident when our four oldest grandchildren were preschoolers. I was working in the kitchen and the two youngest, Ericka and Stephanie, came into the house crying as if their hearts were broken. They related that their older siblings, Michel and Twila, told them that they cannot love Jesus. However, they themselves insisted that **they do love Jesus**. I went out to investigate and was informed that Michel and Twila and the younger girls could not love Jesus for a whole year until the missionaries had explained to them more about Jesus. It sounds

like mixed up theology, however, they had gathered the thought that missionaries teach people to love Jesus.

Some time along the way, we told our grandchildren that as they grow older, we want to take them along on a mission trip. Five years ago we had the privilege of taking our two oldest with us on a Choice Books trip to the Caribbean. Our next two wanted to go to Ireland with us on an MIC delegation trip. This summer, we took a few extra days of sightseeing. Guess what Mel and I discovered! **We are getting older** and it was not easy keeping up with two ambitious, seventeen-year-old girls. We did have a lot of fun with them. Walking, riding buses and The Tube (subway) took a lot of energy. Now, even our sons are asking whether we are able to continue with these trips. So what about your younger grandchildren that are already planning and looking forward to their mission trip? What is a grandparent to do? I have been thinking about growing older quite a bit recently and how it relates to our children and grandchildren. Aging comes at different ages to different people, depending on our health and circumstances in life. We cannot change the fact that we are not all the same. However, we must each find our place in life and in our family at the stage where we are today. I believe God wants us to enjoy life as

we grow older.

He wants us to enjoy our grandchildren. Each child should have an older person besides their parent who has time to listen to them, even if just to recount what happened at school or to listen to their childhood hurts and disappointments. Grandparents must take time to listen. It does not take a lot of energy to read a story or play a game. I know it is not much of a challenge to play **Memory** or **Chutes and Ladders** with a pre-schooler, but let me assure you it does get better. **Sorry** is fun for a first grader and my brain gets challenged the last while playing **Scrabble** with an 11-year-old. I enjoy doing crafts with the grandchildren, however, there comes a time when they outgrow that and I need to know it's okay. I can enjoy nature with my grandchildren, either in my garden identifying flowers and butterflies or birds at a feeder. For the grandchildren, from a distance, taking them to the Buffalo Zoo, which is within a few blocks from our son in New York, and also our two small granddaughters living next door and the rest are living up to 800 miles away. Long distance grandparenting takes more planned effort but can be just as bonding. E-mails can keep us in contact, along with birthday boxes and cards. Our oldest grandson is in college so I like to send occasional CARE

packages. Guess what he likes the best: Homemade cookies, even if they get rather crumbly by the time he receives them. I now have a married granddaughter in PA, so it's fun to send her something when I have an opportunity. I don't think it is the size of the gift as much as reminding the child that we remember them.

We need to let our grandchildren know that we pray for them. I trust they will be able at a difficult time in life to remember that Grandma is praying. Pray specifically for each child's needs.

Baking cookies and fixing treats for snacks may be a challenge as we grow older, so it is okay to buy a special snack instead of making it.

I am concerned that our younger grandchildren many not experience the same kind of love and care or the special attention that the older ones remember. However, I believe there is a way to make them all feel loved even if I can't go on a mission trip. We are thinking there are opportunities of "mission" here in the U.S. Maybe that will be a possibility. I continue to look for other ways of relating to them.

You may be a "rocking chair" grandmother," not able to do much else, but you can pray, you can listen and you can love. Grandmothering can be a blessing and a joy regardless of which stage of grandparenting we find ourselves.

Enjoy that grandchild, today! 

A Peek into a Silent World

Margretta Beachy

Have you ever thanked God for ears that can hear the music of the world around you? It is so easy to take life's precious gifts from God for granted. Today I thank God that I can hear.

Hi, my name is Silvia. I am ten years old, but only six months ago I learned how to spell my name. You see, I am different from other children. I live in a silent world. I have no idea what the whistle of a train, the motor of a car, or the tone of my mother's voice sound like. Like approximately two million Americans, I am deaf. Because I cannot hear, I have not learned to talk.

My uncle lives in the United States. Last winter, he was working with Loncho Ramos. My uncle sadly told Loncho, "I have a deaf niece living in El Salvador. I am very worried about her because she is not receiving any schooling." Loncho immediately mentioned The Deaf Institute of El Salvador (operated by the Amish Mennonite churches in El Salvador) to my uncle.

My mother was so excited, but the big news turned my world upside

down. My mom, my aunt, and I traveled out to the school in a car, and I had no idea what was going on. We arrived at a nice big house about 45 minutes from where I live. It was scary. The people were strangers. My mother took my hand and told me to sign my name to the new people. We walked around the school and the big, grassy yard, and I even got to play with the other children.

A few days later, my mom took me to the school again. This time she left me there. I met 12 other deaf children. I also met the staff and my new dorm mom. Everyone was signing and seemed to be able to communicate. I wondered what all the signs meant. Because I felt rather lost and afraid without my mom, I decided to show everyone that they couldn't control me. At lunchtime, I did not want to eat all the food that was on my plate, so my dorm mom had to call a man over.

He told me that I must eat what is given. At devotional time, as I was being introduced to everyone, I stuck out my tongue at my new teacher. After school, my dorm mom gave me a broom and motioned for me to sweep the kitchen. I did not want to work, but after a few punishments, I decided to work a little.

I love animals and saw a cute dog outside. After I finished my chores, I went outside and picked up the dog and started carrying it around. At first, my dorm mom just laughed, but then she told me that I may not carry the dog around because it was making my dress all dirty.

I had to help with chores like mopping the floor, cleaning the sink, and washing my own clothes. At bedtime, I cried for my mom. I thought, “Maybe, just maybe, if I am really bad, the teachers will send me home to my mom like they did at the other school.” No one wanted me to stay at the government school, and I was so rebellious they sent me home. Maybe that plan would work here, too.

The next morning my dorm mom woke me up at 6:00 and helped me get dressed. It was different to wear a dress. Then she combed my hair. She showed me a flower, then taught me the sign for it. Everywhere I went, the children and staff showed

me new signs. I learned the sign for *door, bathroom, banana, water, and school*. And everyone had a name in sign language, including me!

I still did not want to obey, but every time I did not obey, I got punished. I liked playing with the children, especially kickball, hide-n-seek, and drop the hanky. Sometimes I was not nice to them, and they always tattled on me when I pulled their hair and shoved them around. Then I got more punishments. The children and staff were nice to me anyway; they played with me, gave me hugs, and did their best to help me learn. Oh, I tried their patience sorely, but after a while, I realized that they really did love me and wanted to help me. I started listening and obeying better, too.

We got to do some exciting things! One day my dorm mom, her sister, and I started walking out the lane. I could not understand what we were doing, although my dorm mom kept signing “ice cream” and “bus.” I was rather upset because I did not know what was going on. Pretty soon we got on the bus and I gave the bus driver a quarter for my fare.

Town was wonderful! I spied some tempting candy displays, smelled fried papusas, and felt the hot sun beating down on my head. And at the ice cream shop, I tasted my mango

cone. Delicious! My dorm mom went off by herself to buy some pineapples. After a while, my dorm mom's sister and I started looking for her. I saw her first!

Because I cannot hear, I have to rely on my other senses more. When we got back to the Deaf School, I shared my candy with my friends.

The first few weeks, I asked for my mom every day and always wanted to know how many days till Friday when I could go home. I cried in the middle of the night for my mom until my dorm mom would hear me and come and pat me until I was quiet. After a few months, I started liking being at school. I smiled a lot more; I stopped crying at night; I learned to communicate much better; and I learned to listen and obey.

Every afternoon, all the staff and children sing songs together. We sign the words instead of singing them. Then one of the staff tells a Bible story. We like when visitors come. When it is time to pray, we all copy the signs of the persons who is

praying. Every night, my dorm mom and Beatrix (the other deaf girl who stays at the school during the week) and I pray to God. I love to pray although I still do not know all the right signs to use. I no longer ask for my mom every day, and now I'm sad to leave the other children when it is time for me to go home.

Please pray for Silvia. She arrived at the Deaf School in Aguilares, El Salvador, in March, 2011. She still has a lot to learn about respecting her authorities, learning to read and write, and serving God. She really has made a lot of improvements over the past few months and seems like a different girl from when she first came. Before, she always got her own way as her mom didn't know how to handle a deaf child. Now she is getting a chance at life. Please pray that her heart could open and that she she would grow up to love God.

To find out more about the Deaf Institute of El Salvador, you can sign up for the e-newsletter at cics.rom.10.14@gmail.com



***An idea provides no protection
for the people who believe in it.***

The following are compositions submitted by high school students from PA. Thank you for your contributions. —EE

If I Could But Touch His Garment

Michelle Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, PA

Almost too weak to walk, she stumbled along the road leading to Capernaum. She leaned heavily against a brick wall, gasping for breath. Swarms of people buzzed past her, only intensifying the struggle to move forward—but she must move forward; she HAD to reach the wonderful Rabbi of whom she had heard so much. He was her only hope. This young woman had been dealing with an issue of blood for 12 years. Repeatedly she had sought the help of doctors, but always they could give her no hope.

She longed only to touch the hem of His garment; then she would be healed. Weakly, she tottered a few more steps before being rudely shoved aside by a rough-looking man. Falling weakly to the dusty ground, she made a desperate attempt, thrust her arm past a mass of legs, and gently touched the threads of the Rabbi's garment.

Immediately, power surged

through her entire being. The Man turned and she fell at His feet, tears of joy streaming down her cheeks. The Master smiled kindly and said, "Daughter, thy faith had made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

If I may but touch his clothes was the young woman's utmost desire. She was desperate and she knew the power this great Healer had. So often, we forget that we need "to touch the hem" of our Master's garment as well. In order to become a Christian, we had to be willing to humble ourselves, stoop low, and reach out to touch his garment, and the difference it brought to our lives is overpowering. Love, joy, and peace surged though our entire being the moment we touched His garment. The moment we surrendered, power and strength was ours.

However, we cannot be satisfied with touching His garment but once. Instead, it is a continuing process. Currently, we need Him as much as ever and we must not forget to daily encounter our Lord and Master. When discouraged, tired, weary—we can touch the hem of Christ's garment and He will instantaneously grant us our utmost desire and bring healing to our soul.



Protect Us, Dear Parents!

Keturah King, Honey Brook, PA

“The devil walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Dear parents, we were born of you, you raised us, now we are maturing sheep who need guidance and protection against our enemy. We are feeble; we are only beginning to grow in strength, so protect us!

Dear parents, I can only imagine the joy that comes to you when we children give our lives to Christ. Your earnest prayer for our souls has been answered and you know we have made the right choice. However, the Christian walk is making day-by-day choices, so the next challenge is for you to walk with us. While some of us may seem to be able to live a victorious Christian life more easily than others who struggle, I encourage you to speak to us about our conflicts and hold each child accountable. If this is done in the proper way, our relationship with the Lord as well as with you will undoubtedly be strengthened.

Dear parents, build relationships

with us children. Allow us to trust you and you likewise trust us. Try to treat our personalities equally. The relationships will last and will make a difference in how your godly influence impacts our lives. Oh, the beauty of father/son and mother/daughter relationships!

Dear parents, realize where we children are heading and what we are facing. Protect us from worldly desires by eliminating from your homes such things as worldly books and things not permitted by your church that will be a hindrance to us. Be aware of whom we associate with and where we hold activities.

Dear parents, we children each have decisions to make. Although you are responsible for influencing many of our choices, you are not totally responsible for all of our decisions. You can only do so much for us, so commit what you cannot do into the hands of the Shepherd, for He can do everything for your lambs. He is the ultimate source of our protection and has also set you to protect us in this life. So protect us!



A man who knows his imperfections is about as close to perfection as he can be.

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

If folks had more *patience* the hospitals would have fewer *patients*.

• • • • •

Every survival kit should include a sense of humor.

• • • • •

The outcome of the income depends on the outgo for the upkeep.

• • • • •

If George Washington never told a lie, what's his picture doing on a dollar bill worth about forty-three cents?

• • • • •

A good wife laughs at her husband's jokes not necessarily because they are clever, but because she is.

• • • • •

A juvenile delinquent is a minor with a major problem.

• • • • •

Shiftless people seldom get it into high gear.

• • • • •

Keep your ethics on the level and you won't go downhill.

• • • • •

A lie is a coward's way of trying to get out of trouble.

• • • • •

Medical science may add years to life but it's up to us to add life to our years.