



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

Galatians 6:14

FEBRUARY 2012

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

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Christian Growth

Mary Hake, Falls City, OR

Growing in the Lord takes work;
Growing in the Lord takes time.
We cannot just sit and wait,
Hoping life will turn out fine.

We do not want to be infants,
Fed spiritual milk solely.
We must grow in the spirit,
Learning to become holy.

We desire to be like Jesus,
And obey all His commands.
We long to mature in faith,
And avoid Satan's demands.

What will help us grow in grace?
Reading God's Word every day;
Often taking time to pray;
Heeding what He has to say.

If we follow in His way
And sincerely seek His will,
We will grow in godliness,
And His purposes fulfill.



The Way of Transgressors

Satan scorns the path of Jesus as needlessly narrow. One sign that he's getting his point across to us is when we think we miss something worthwhile if we deny ourselves of something that seems well-nigh irresistible, yet it would jeopardize our peace with God. Satan is good at offering questionable choices, saying in effect, "Pshaw! It doesn't matter! What's wrong with it anyway?"

A recent experience of the Ernest and Cathy Eby family speaks to this bad reasoning. The Eby family went to Utah to follow up responses to roadside Gospel signs put up by Christian Aid Ministries. One evening they took their family to an evangelical service. During the service, "Fidel," a 21-year-old man, drew Ernest aside and asked, "Are you spiritual?"

Ernest reports that after that strangely worded question he spent the next hour listening to a story of a man who had lived life "in the fast lane" and was now feeling wretched and angry. He told Ernest that he had shot several people, has not prayed for a long time, and has recently been seriously contemplating suicide. In fact, he came very close to "ending it all," believing the devil's lie that says: "After death, it's all over—there is

nothing more."

Fidel called Ernest aside because he found it nearly intolerable to be inside the church building in the presence of the beautiful innocence of the two little Eby girls and of the obvious joy of so many Christians worshipping Jesus. When Fidel stepped outside and looked at the mountains, their awesome majesty troubled him, and when he looked up at the sky, he felt condemned. So he asked Ernest to come outside to talk.

Actually, Fidel was planning to leave home and escape to California but changed his mind in the course of his conversation with Ernest, who tried to talk sense to him. Finally, Fidel decided to get right with God. But he wondered: *Can God forgive my wickedness?* After Ernest prayed for him and assured him that God could and would forgive him, Fidel was finally ready to pray. He started his prayer something like this: "God, I don't know if you can hear me, but if you are hearing me...", and he prayed a prayer of repentance.

Fidel kept his plans to leave for California the next day, but not as an escape. He would attend a prayer summit there. Let us hope he continues in God-honoring repentance and brave willingness to do everything he can to

make all possible restitution.

Fidel is finding out the hard way where life in the fast lane goes. The path of the Christian may look hard and steep, but it is much easier than the way of self and Satan. The path of self and Satan looks like fun, but it turns into a very rugged and slippery slope of compromise, sending men and women slipping, sliding, and careening downhill. And at night when they try to sleep, their guilty conscience becomes a very hard pillow.

But Fidel has now turned around and started on the path of life. His first steps are right. His resolve will be tested, but God is faithful to give him courage to keep on walking with Jesus. That first step of surrender and faith must have seemed very hard. Should someone have told him that further steps of obedience on the pathway of faith will not necessarily be easy, either? Probably not, but the next steps of faithfulness can be almost as hard as the first step was.

God does not arbitrarily make a list of things we should *not do* to show us He's boss or to make things inconvenient for us. He does it because He wants us to have a good life. He only forbids what takes away from our satisfaction, fulfillment, and deepest delight. For example, regardless of how wicked my enemy is, if I took justice into my own hands and murdered someone without having the law catch me, my way would

still be very rough. If I refuse to forgive some injustice, I am chained to a heavy load that gives me no rest. If I decide to try worshiping something or someone else and bow down to some idol, I get no life-giving help.

We must remember, Satan can only mimic God. By sugar-coating his bait, he gets people to try it.

New Testament holy living makes us stand out from the permissive culture around us. Let us not count God's commandments grievous. Let us not saw off our cross in hopes of making it easier to carry. *Easier* is not the way to make things *better*. It often makes them much worse. The temptation to compromise is a trick to get us to take what seems to be the easy way instead of walking in the transformation of Christ with a yielded heart. The secret of real joy is still: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" (Col. 3:1a).

Solomon said, "The way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13:15b). How true! Jesus is the way and there is no other way that leads to heaven! Jesus is the truth and we must turn a deaf ear to all humanistic clamor that disguises itself as harmless! Jesus is the life and outside of Him is a vast wilderness of spiritual death!

Jesus is Lord! No one else deserves first place in our hearts. Nothing else can give us what we need. "Thank you, Jesus!"

—PLM 

Re; Modesty: Do We Need a Wake-up Call?

I found this article to be refreshingly pertinent. However, I believe the women's issue is just as much or more of a men's issue because women dress to please men. Women instinctively know what the men in their social circle want, and work to please them. If men desire virtue, the women, in large part will accommodate that desire with the symbol of their clothing and feel good about it. If men desire immodesty, the women will submit themselves to some immodesty in order to please their men but not feel very good about it. Unless a woman is perverted, she in her feminine nature, does not desire to be immodest. In immodesty, she cannot feel good about herself; she feels caught between some men criticizing her for immodesty and other men quietly desiring it. No woman deserves to be in this predicament. She deserves men to value her as a person and men who will assist her to

demonstrate that value in the symbol of her clothing.


Chester Weaver, LaGrange, IN

Re: A False Christ at Weavertown

I was troubled by this article. I would have to agree with the visitor that he could have been shown more respect. True, smoking is objectionable and he was there with a false message but he also left with a strong impression of that church which he possibly passed on to others. What are we known for?

The question that keeps coming back to me is, What would Jesus have done? Would He have invited the visitor to His house for lunch? Having lunch is not necessarily bidding him godspeed or sanctioning his false doctrine.

False prophets need the Lord too, and if we avoid them, how are we to reach them? What would Jesus have done?

David Sommers, Oswego, KS 

The Bread of Life never becomes stale.

Ministers' Meeting Messages – 2011

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

8. Paul and Barnabas—Team Ministry in Evangelism and Nurture

Marvin Kauffman, Weldon, IA

Imagine with me the conditions in the very early church. You've been hearing a lot about Saul, the persecutor. He is known to be vicious and heartless, and also very zealous and determined. One day, you breathe a sigh of relief, for he has gone to Damascus. Then, a rumor comes back that Saul has been converted. He is now joining those of The Way. In fact, he is now back in Jerusalem. He would like to join our meeting. You might think: *Now wait a minute. What better way would there be for a persecutor to wreak havoc in the church? It would be like taking a bull into a china shop.*

So we find the early brothers holding him at arm's length. In Acts 9:26, we read, "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him. And they believed

not that he was a disciple." How can Saul get past this reserve?

Someone came to the rescue. Verse 27 says, "But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming and going out at Jerusalem." They believed Barnabas. Here Barnabas not only laid his reputation on the line, but also his life. This was the beginning of team ministry for Paul and Barnabas, even though it did not continue right away.

I will focus especially on team ministry. In team ministry it is very important that we accept and trust each man on the team, especially new ones. We should bring new men in and encourage them in their ministry. In order for evangelism and nurture to work well, we need teamwork. When there is conflict on the team, the body will likely suffer malnourishment and even sickness.

While Paul and Barnabas did well at working together, we also know they had one challenging time. I am choosing to include mostly material about Barnabas, the man less well-known. In Acts 4:36, "...Barnabas, ...son of consolation,...having land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles feet." Other translations call him the Son of Encouragement. What a nickname! Then a nickname might refer to occupation or some prominent character trait.

We need encouragers in the body of Christ, and especially so in the ministerial team. In our church I'm grappling with this question: How does one encourage a team member and his wife who are walking through intense grief? While we in the congregation felt the loss of a young brother (Casey Gingerich) in the congregation, I can only imagine what it would be like to lose an only son. Let us continue to pray for Monroe and LaVeta.

When Barnabas sold land and brought the money, it was a generous gift. We don't know—he may have had other land. There's encouragement in giving. This encouragement did not only affect the recipients, but also others to give. Our giving may be unknown, but the manner of giving our time and energy is observable. We should do it cheerfully. I don't think ministers should reason thus: *I*

give a lot of time; let others give money.

Barnabas was an encourager *in fellowship* when he brought Saul in.

Barnabas also gave the encouragement of *involvement*. In Acts 11:22-24, we read that "Barnabas, who when he came and when he had seen the grace of God, was glad and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added to the Lord." A good thing is happening here and Barnabas is leading out in it. He remembers a man he once knew—a zealous young man with tremendous potential. He leaves the work and goes to Tarsus, finds Saul and tells him, "I need your help." He got him involved. Barnabas would be mentoring Saul. That invitation must have been a great encouragement to Saul.

As ministerial teams, we must involve our lay brethren. Some who find it hard to get going, may need someone who says, "I need you for this." If we give the sense that the inexperienced can't do it well enough, that's unfortunate. We have heard it said that the mark of a good leader is not the one who does the most work, but the one who delegates work. Soon after I was ordained to the ministry, the late Bishop John Yutzy wanted me to preach several messages on a topic I

thought was rather difficult. But there was something encouraging about that: John expressed confidence in me that gave me courage.

There is encouragement in *following*—willingness to take second place. On the first missionary journey, the team was referred to as “Barnabas and Saul,” with Barnabas apparently team leader. He may have been older and definitely in Christian experience, he was the senior. He introduced Saul to the church; he solicited Saul’s help; he’s obviously the leader. But it isn’t long until their roles seem to be reversed.

While Barnabas was a well-spoken religious leader, yet Saul may have been a more natural leader. How did that shift make Barnabas feel? We may think that’s why they had contention later. Maybe so, maybe not. This can be a difficult area of team ministry. The time will come when new members of the team will need to exercise more leadership.

Some of you men 50 to 60 are in business with a son. You see how it works there: you must back up and let the younger man take a more prominent part in decision making. In my case, it was such a short time ago that I was teaching them how to build storage sheds. Now they’re telling me how to do things, especially, saying things I forgot. A good friend of mine recently offered that he could step down and turn

things over to his sons. They agreed and he wasn’t expecting that.

My sons are fast and have good ideas. I could be bullheaded and say, “We never did it that way. If it isn’t broke, don’t fix it,” but that would squelch their motivation to be involved and to improve the business in ways that we can. There is probably no faster way for your business to become stagnant and to lose the interest of your sons, than to be closed to all change. That applies to other organizations.

We must be willing to step down, but there is a sense in which we should do it cautiously. We must do it without compromising scriptural principles. We do have a tendency to drift. It seems that where there’s been less experience and less opportunity to observe, that tendency is stronger. Is that saying it okay? I’m not saying the younger generation is less committed, but they are less experienced. So here’s a dilemma: to be able to back off in leadership when it could seem to increase drift. I wish I had better answers for that. I think we may sometimes feel we’re being asked to compromise *principle* when in fact it is *preference*. Someone said, “If we keep on doing what we’ve always done, we’ll keep on getting what we’ve always got.” I appreciate Moses Yoder, now 95 years old. Several years ago, he retired from the ministerial team. He didn’t always

agree with our perspective, but he was very encouraging. He has said over and over how much he appreciates working with younger men who have conviction and vision for a faithful church. [Moses “graduated” on August 21, 2011. -Editor]

Sometimes, the reason it may be hard to decrease, is that our sense of significance is wrapped up in what we’re doing, rather than in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Don’t we all like to be useful? That may be a man thing, and that is why we sometimes need a wife’s help to say, No.

The time will come when we can’t do the things that go with our office, what will we have left then? The following comments are excerpted from Joseph Stowell, then president of Moody Bible Institute:

“I’m only 57, and I already find myself weary of the hollow thoughts of what few accomplishments I may have mustered in my life. My failures continue to embarrass me. The inadequacies I have carried with me since my youth still frustrate me. My insecurities still trouble my soul. And the praise of others has an increasingly hollow ring. I am tired of worrying about whether or not the sermon I preached was good enough, or whether or not someone will pat me on the back for a job well done. I’m tired of worrying about what people think about me. I’m weary

of the carnal feeling that sometimes haunts me when someone talks about his favorite preacher and it’s not me.

“Bottom line, I just flat out get tired of me. But I never get tired of Jesus. After all these years, I still find him more compelling, more engaging, more awesome, more surprising, more fulfilling, and more attractive than ever before....”

What about the contention between Paul and Barnabas? Let me make several observations:

- Men involved in important Kingdom work have enough humanity in them to get involved in contention.

- Where there are people there will be disagreements. Let us not let them get so sharp that we part ways.

- If it was a good thing to have two teams, it was not because contention is a good thing. We serve a God who can take what Satan intends for evil and turn it around for good. Take the crucifixion, for example.

- I believe there may have been an early effort made for resolution of this problem because:

- unresolved contention results in some level of bitterness and I see none.

- Paul’s second missionary journey was quite fruitful; bitter men aren’t good missionaries or writers of helpful material about interpersonal relationships. Paul did both.


- Paul later said that “Mark is

profitable to me for the ministry.”

If there is a need to part ways, do not sweep the contention under the carpet, but seek to resolve it. To be effective in ministry, we need to have broken spirits and contrite hearts.

John Collison wrote: “Sometimes it is asked what we mean by *brokenness*. Brokenness is not easy to define, but can be clearly seen in the responses of Jesus, especially as He approached the cross. I think it can be applied personally in this way: When to do the will of God means that even my Christian brethren will not

understand, and I remember that neither did His brethren believe in Him and I bow my head to obey and to accept misunderstanding, this is brokenness. When I am misrepresented or deliberately misinterpreted, and I remember that Jesus was falsely accused but He held his peace and I bow my head to accept the accusation without trying to justify myself, this is brokenness.”

May God help us to encourage others like Barnabas did, to work together well, and to serve Christ with a fruitful brokenness. 

Taking the Heat

Johnny Miller, Minerva, OH

In today’s world, if you verbalize your belief that God created this universe in six, twenty-four hour days, you will experience ridicule. If you express your conviction that the Bible condemns homosexuality, you will be labeled as an intolerant bigot. And if you answer to their questions includes, “Yes, I believe the Bible teaches a literal heaven and hell,” you will be accused of fear-mongering.

Our faith in God is misread as superstition by those who demand concrete evidence. My question is whether Christians today will be able to take the heat, or whether they will

allow the sting of ridicule to stifle the voice of Almighty God in their lives and experiences. The following exchange is taken from an actual phone conversation which crystallizes these issues.

“Hello? Yes, I saw your billboard; so tell me just what is the meaning of this?”

“Okay, we have 106 billboards across the nation with 10 different messages, and which message did you see?”

“It said, ‘After you die, you will meet God’—so what god are you talking about?”

“What we are doing with these billboards is pointing people to the God who made heaven, earth and sea. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sins so that you and I can be forgiven and stand before Him uncondemned after this life is over.”

“Wait a minute, wait a minute! What makes you think there is a God? Have you ever talked to him? Has he ever talked to you? Have you ever seen him? What evidence do you have?”

“Let me explain something; through faith, Jesus Christ lives within me and the Bible says...”

“Hold it! Are you telling me that this guy, Jesus, is inside of you? You’ve gotta’ be kidding, man; that’s far out!”

“I know it sounds far out, but let me tell you, when a person repents of his sins, confesses them to the Lord Jesus, He forgives him. He will cleanse you from your sinfulness and implant His Spirit with your heart, and that’s what makes you to become a child of God.”

“Don’t give none of that spirit mess; I want evidence, man, solid evidence!”

The Bible says in John 4, that God is a Spirit; so what you are really demanding is material evidence of a spiritual God.”

“That’s right; give it to me!”

“You already have it. The physical evidence of Jesus Christ and the

many miracles He performed while He was here upon earth have been recorded by eyewitnesses in the first four books of the New Testament, and there you have it—solid evidence! But if you lock your heart and mind away from the Bible you will never gain faith to believe because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Hello?” (no response)

Yes, the caller had hung up on me. That isn’t nearly as disturbing as when I see Christians today hanging up their faith in God, and no longer following the precepts and commands which He so graciously has written in His Word for our salvation and admonition. These cannot take the heat and have become ashamed to put a living faith in Almighty God against the philosophies of dying men. If ever there was a time when it was imperative for God’s children to live a life separated unto Him, it is now. With God’s eternal Word, we must inoculate ourselves against the philosophies of men lest they destroy our faith in Him!

[Johnny is one of several tele-counselors for Christian Aid Ministries, Billboard Evangelism. An average of 60 phone calls a day are coming through this avenue of evangelism and many are being challenged to seek God and His redemption.]



Ten Steps of Biblical Discipline

Clair E. Schnupp, Founder, Northern Youth Programs

Dryden, ON

Being a father of five married daughters and a grandfather of 26 grandchildren, I have concerns. There are many forces and voices out there to draw our teenagers away from God to destructive ways of living.

Law and order need to exist for a home to function well. Another word for law and order in the home is biblical discipline, a type of discipline that teaches a child the way of love, obedience, and good decision making. Loving, biblical discipline helps the child develop a good self-image and positive attitudes, and prepares a child to respect law and order as an adult.

I was taught ten steps of biblical discipline that worked for us as we raised our family. Someone taught me, so I can pass it on to others.

Every child has a special design made by God. "Your hands have made me and fashioned me..." (Job 10:8 NKJV). Yet raising a child is a full-time job, full of strong feelings and full of hard work. It also requires family activities and communication.

Father and Mother (the authority

figures) must agree to work together as a team in training and disciplining children.

Control/discipline the will (wrong behaviors) and build up the spirit, the inner self. Let the child know that you are disciplining him or her out of love for them, as the Bible instructs you to do (Ephesians 6:4). This helps build good mental health and spiritual health.

Effective discipline has three parts:

a. Clear instruction as what is right and wrong. "Hear, my children, the instruction of a father..."

(Proverbs 4:1).

b. Warning of what will be the consequences (discipline) if they disobey.

c. Correction is the follow-through with the penalty promised in the warning. This needs to be done in love and not in anger or with shaming. This helps the child to feel good about him/herself and lays the foundation for law and order. The child learns responsibility and wise decision making.

Be sure the penalty is appropriate for the disobedience. Never

discipline a child for mistakes, but rather for disobedience of clearly defined rules with a stated penalty for disobedience.

Comfort the child after the disciplinary action. Talk about the situation. Talking things over makes the child feel loved, cared for, and important because you want the best for him/her.

After the child is comforted, it is good to pray with him or her. This shows concern for the child's future and not just the present wrong doing. Talking things over and praying helps the child to develop good spiritual health which also results in better mental health.

Restitution (making things right) is very important. If the child broke something, help him or her to restore it. If the child did or said something hurtful to someone, teach the child

to say, "I am sorry. Will you forgive me?" Confess your faults to each other (See James 5:16a).

After the discipline, take time to evaluate how well you did. Think about it: *Was I fair? Was I loving? Did I display anger? Did the child learn something from the experience? Did I learn something from the experience?*

Be consistent. Consistency helps make biblical discipline work. Discipline needs to be done on a daily basis. If a child can do something wrong one day and get away with it, but do it again and be disciplined for it the next day, he or she gets confused about right and wrong—law and order.

[To get a free booklet on discipline, e-mail to secretary@nymministries.org or fax your request to 807-937-5524 or call 807-937-4421. Used by permission.]



The Gathering Clouds

Donnavon Graber, Jerusalem, Israel

Today is the last day of the old year, 2011. The year has come and gone, as if in the blink of an eye as we think retrospectively of time. The records of history most likely note some of the happenings of this eventful year. What is still unknown is how these events will

shape the future, and therefore be remembered. In April as some CAM personnel stood in Tahrir Square in Cairo, the people of the Egyptian Revolution were still heady with their accomplishment of overthrowing one of the past century's notorious dictators.

Now, the events unfolding are causing the Egyptian to lose his optimism. Here with the gathering storms both within and without, the average Israeli looks around with growing alarm.

People caught up in the moment are often unable to see what history later reveals to be grave mistakes. When George W. Bush sent soldiers to topple another of the past century's most notorious dictators in 2003, many, even among those of us claim not to believe in the effectiveness of politics for true change, were drawn into the excitement of watching American military might in action with feelings of pride in the righteousness of the war. It was viewed as self evident that American democracy and ethics would bless Iraq. Now, after a cost to the American economy of something between one and three trillion dollars, the last American troops have withdrawn. Depending on how time unfolds, it is possible that historians will rule this war as the turning point in the fall of the "American Empire." Meanwhile, back in Iraq, sectarian violence grips the country, electricity is on for only a few hours a day, displaced people and refugees remain a big problem, and the situation for Christians continues to deteriorate as Islamic radicalization increases.

Now, the war that Israeli and American patriots are pushing for is the Iranian one. Since America took out Iran's chief rival, Saddam Hussein, Iran has been on the ascendancy and the world feels threatened by its nuclear posturing.

One thing is certain: If Iran is attacked, life here in Israel will change dramatically, as well as for the people of the whole region. If we look around at the waves threatening in 2012, our hearts may well fail from fear.

But, in many ways when Jesus came as a vulnerable baby, things were much the same. There was military intrigue and violence as the kingdoms of this world vied for a place at the top of the pile. Herod the Great heard the rumor of a baby King born nearby in the shadow of one of his huge fortress palaces in Bethlehem. With no hesitation he killed scores of innocent babies. What is the difference between the kingdom of this humble King and the kingdoms of this world? One by one the earthly kingdoms rise and then fall into the dust bin of history while the Kingdom that cannot be shaken grows on, led by its humble King born in a stable cave.

A blessed New Year to you from the city of the Prince of peace! We who have come into "a kingdom that cannot be shaken" have abundant reason for good cheer.



marriages

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

Beachy-Bender

Bro. Kendall, son of Perry and Judy Beachy, Winfield, PA, and Sis. Jeanette, daughter of Simon and Virginia Bender, Mifflinburg, PA, at Shady Grove Christian Fellowship on Nov. 19, 2011, by Perry Troyer.

Eicher-Sirait

Thomas Jay, son of Daniel and Marie Eicher, Grabill, IN, and Sis. Hanna, daughter of Raja Bona and Hotmauli Sirait, Jakarta, Indonesia, at Leo Apostolic Church for Fellowship Haven Church on Sept. 17, 2011, by Eugene Eicher.

Troyer-Gingerich

Bro. Merlin, son of Norman and Erma Troyer, Garden Grove, IA, and Sis. Amy, daughter of Monroe and LaVeta Gingerich, Leon, IA, at Trinity Christian Church for Salem Mennonite Church on Nov. 26, 2011, by Monroe Gingerich.



cradle roll

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

Beiler, Carlin and Hadassa (King), Harrison, AR, third child, first dau., Abbie Grace, Oct. 29, 2011.

Bontrager, Brian and Lois (Miller), Chilton, TX, fourth child, second son, Eric Steven, Oct. 10, 2011.

Chupp, Glen and Katherine (Yoder), Watkins, MN, sixth child, third son, Caleb Lee, Dec. 23, 2011.

Eash, Donnie and Marlene (Wengerd), Cumberland Furnace, TN, second child and son, Tyler Austin, Nov. 8, 2011.

Eichorn, Ryan and Janice (Eichorn), Montgomery, IN, first child and son, Emerson Luke, Dec. 14, 2011.

Erb, Dan and Ruthanne (Erb), Millbank, ON, fourth child, third dau., Victoria Renee, Oct. 18, 2011.

Fisher, Daniel and Lydia (Stoltzfus), Mifflin, PA, sixth child, second son, Elijah Paul, Dec. 13, 2011.

Hostetler, Dan and Kris (Gingerich), Belleville, PA, fourth child and dau., Megan Rae, Dec. 13, 2011.

Jantzi, Gabriel and Jennifer (Willey), Wellesley, ON, (serving in Ireland), second child, first son, Gregory Shane, Oct. 21, 2011.

Kauffman, Norman and Fannie Rose (Raber), Grabill, IN, second child and dau., Abigail Dawn, March 28, 2011.

Miller, Marcos and Karla (Flores), Lott, TX, second child, first dau., Karelia Patricia, Nov. 4, 2011.

Miller, Timothy and Esther (Oatney), Hutchinson, KS, third child, first son, Malaki Tate, Dec. 13, 2011.

Miller, Vincent and Juanita (Beachy), Belvidere, TN, first child and son, Mason Kordell, Dec. 8, 2011.

Nisly, Mark and Esther (Weaver), Oswego, KS, first child and son, Ian Samuel, Oct. 23, 2011.

Correction: **Nissley**, Gary and Tina (Lengacher), Shipshewana, IN, fourth child, first son, Korey Andrik, Oct. 24, 2011.

Sandoval, Juan and Julie (Yoder), Shipshewana, IN, eighth child, fifth dau., Amber Lily, Dec. 16, 2011.

Schmucker, William and Rosina (Miller), Partridge, KS, third child, first dau., Desiree Joy, Dec. 12, 2011.

Troyer, Lee and Sharon (Miller), Belvidere, TN, first child and dau., Jenna Lou, Dec. 16, 2011.

Wagler, Dallas and Jodi (Wittmer), Odon, IN, first child and son, Bracey Cole, Dec. 11, 2011.

Wagler, Milan and Grace (Beachy), Cottage Grove, TN, fifth child, third son, Brian Lee, Dec. 12, 2011.

Weaver, Rodney and Glenda (King), Denmark, SC, first child and son, Colton Wade, Dec. 2, 2011.

Yoder, Mervin and Lorene (Schrock), Arcola, IL, fourth child, third son, Tyler James, Nov. 19, 2011.

Yoder, Michael and Miriam (Dueck), La Estrella, Costa Rica, sixth child, fourth son, Wesley James, Dec. 20, 2011.

Yoder, Samuel and Regina (Miller), Cottage Grove, TN, third child, second dau., Jannalynn Faith, Nov. 23, 2011.

Zook, Jonathan and Geraldine (Lapp), Chesapeake, VA, fifth child and son, James Nathaniel, Oct. 7, 2011.



ordinations

May the grace of God be upon our brother as he ministers faithfully. Let us pray for him.

Bro. Andrew Miller, 34, Midway, TN, was ordained as minister at Greene County Mennonite Church, Chuckey, TN, on Dec. 11, 2011. Preordination messages were brought by Leroy Kauffman. The charge was given by Raymond Fisher, assisted by John Smucker and Leroy Kauffman. Nathan Yoder was also in the lot.

obituaries

Beachy, Ernest N., 91, of Salisbury, PA, died Oct. 11, 2011, at his home after a series of mini-strokes over the last two years. He was born July 22, 1920, son of the late Noah M. and Elizabeth (Tice) Beachy.

He was a member of Mountain View Mennonite Church.

On Oct. 21, 1945, he was married to Elizabeth Yoder. She preceded him in death in April, 1998. On July 25, 1999, he was married to Edna Tice, who survives. Also surviving are two sons, Daniel (Emma) Beachy, Conestoga, PA; Philip (Ruth) Beachy, Salisbury, MD; four daughters: Naomi (Paul) Petersheim, Oakland, MD; Dorcas (Joseph) Yoder, Grantsville, MD; Anna (Daniel) Tice, Spain; Mary Jane (William) Yoder, Meyersdale, PA; and Miriam Bruno,

West Jefferson, OH, who lived with Ernest and Elizabeth for a number of years and remains close to the family. Also surviving are four sisters: Alma Beachy, Salisbury, PA; Alice Tice, Miriam Schrock and Ruth Miller, all of Grantsville, MD; 29 grandchildren and 35 great grandchildren; three step daughters, one step daughter-in-law, 19 step grandchildren, 19 step great grandchildren and two step great, great grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were two sisters: Rachel Beachy, Grace Beachy, and one brother, Elmer Beachy.

The funeral was held on Oct. 15 at Mountain View Mennonite Church, with Jerry Yoder and David Kauffman serving. Merlin Beachy conducted the committal at the church cemetery.

Hostetler, Allen Daniel, 53, of Cottage Grove, TN, died Dec. 24, 2011, at Jackson Madison General Hospital, following an illness of liver cancer. He was born July 12, 1958, son of the late Jacob E. and Bertha Eldora (Yoder) Hostetler.

He was a member of Bethel Fellowship Mennonite Church.

On June 2, 2000, he was married to Sarah (Wengerd) Hostetler. Surviving are daughters: Brittany and Chelsea White, Lewisburg, PA; stepdaughters: Marilyn Hostetler, Berlin, OH; Joyce, Deborah, Violet, and Rosa Hostetler, all of Cottage Grove; sons Charles White, Lewisburg, PA; John Hostetler, Cottage Grove; stepsons: Norman (Jeanette) Hostetler, Cottage Grove; Owen (Leah) Hostetler,

Linn, MO; Daniel and Thomas Hostetler, Cottage Grove; and two grandchildren, Amy and Mason Hostetler. Other survivors include sisters: Naomi (Allen) Miller, Mifflinburg, PA; Nancy (Harvey) Yoder, Paris, MO; Mary (Joseph) Peachey, Belleville, PA; Edna (Elmer) Schrock, Sebree, KY; Julia (Elwood) Yoder, Russellville, KY; brothers: Lee (Ruth Ann) Hostetler, Cottage Grove; Titus (Arlene) Hostetler, Selingsgrove, PA; and John (Lavina) Hostetler, Port Treverton, PA.

He was preceded in death by three brothers: Ezra, Ivan and Paul Hostetler.

The funeral was held on Dec. 28, with Perry Miller, Nathan Byler, Menno Wagler, and John Mast serving. Burial was in the New Boston Cemetery.

Miller, Alma N., 65, of Kokomo, IN, died on Dec. 11, 2011, at St. Joseph Hospital. She was born Sept. 14, 1946, daughter of Noah S. and Emma Maida (Thomas) Anderson.

She was a member of Bethany Fellowship Church. She was a homemaker and worker at Dutch Cafe.

On Sept. 11, 1969, she was married to Lester T. Miller. He survives. Also surviving are five children: Lamar (Carol) Miller, Amboy; Allen (Heidi) Miller, Granger; Larry (Danyel) Miller, Amboy; Gerald Miller, Greentown; Norma (Wilbur) Jess, Kokomo; three brothers: Ivan Anderson, Goshen; David Anderson, Nappanee; Noah Anderson, Jr., Nappanee; six sisters: Inez Mast, Nappanee; Treva Otto, Kokomo;

Mary Otto, Kokomo; Betty Yoder, Topeka; Rosetta Anderson, Nappanee; Anna Miller, Nappanee; and eight grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her father.

The funeral was on Dec. 15, with Marvin Beachy, Darlton Bontrager, and Delbert Hostetler serving. Burial was in the Christner Cemetery in southern Miami County.

Schrock, Daniel A., 74, of Warsaw, OH (formerly of Arthur, IL), died on Dec. 24, 2011, at Sycamore Run Nursing Home, Millersburg, OH. He was born on March 10, 1937, son of the late Menno and Sovilla (Mast) Schrock.

He was a member of Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Arcola, IL.

On Jan. 29, 1957, he was married to Marie Herschberger. She survives. Also surviving are three sons: Gary (Mary) Schrock, Montezuma, GA; Dale Schrock, Hammond, IL; Ernest Schrock, Warsaw, OH; three daughters: Carolyn (John David) Stoltzfus, Warsaw, OH; Ruth (Jon) Miller, Goshen, IN; Dorothy (Elvin) Stoltzfus, Lancaster, PA (currently serving in Liberia, West Africa); 24 grandchildren and two great grandchildren; three brothers: Levi Schrock and Abe Schrock, of Arthur, IL; Andy Schrock, Bowling Green, FL; and one sister, Anna (Oba) Helmuth, Arthur, IL.

He was preceded in death by a brother, John.

The funeral was held on Dec. 29, with

Wilbur Gingerich, Wesley Yoder, and Howard Kuhns serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Lydia (Stoltzfus), 84. of Kennedyville, MD, suffered a stroke and died several days later on Nov. 4, 2011, surrounded by her family. She was born Nov. 8, 1926, daughter of the late Stephen R. and Lydia (Petersheim) Stoltzfus.

She was a member of Harmony Christian Fellowship, Millington, MD.

On Nov. 20, 1946, she was married to Amos Z. Stoltzfus, who survives. She is also survived by three sons and three daughters: Mary (David) Kauffman, Bird-in-Hand, PA; Anne (Ray) Yoder, Free Union, VA; Steve (Mary Etta)

Stoltzfus, Kennedyville, MD; John (Ruth) Stoltzfus, Kennedyville, MD; Barbara (Nelson) Schrock, Kennedyville, MD; and Ivan (Darla) Stoltzfus, Leon, IA; 29 grandchildren; 55 great grandchildren; a sister, Naomi Stoltzfus, Dundee, OH; and a brother, Steve Stoltzfus, Peru, South America.

She was preceded in death by a son, David; a grandson; and sisters: Rebecca Fisher and Barbara Glick and brothers: John, Christian, Ammon, and Jonas Stoltzfus.

The funeral was held at Harmony Church on Nov. 9, with Tim Yoder, Aaron Lapp and Mahlon Stoltzfus serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.



observations

The police chief in Bay Minette, Alabama, is giving non-violent offenders who would normally serve jail time a choice. They can choose to attend church of their choice every week for a year. They must check in with the pastor and the police department. The police chief said those who do this save his department \$75 per inmate per day. (*Christianity Today*, 12-2011)



Dr. David Williams reports on research done by Kent State University in Ohio. This study compared body mass and brain volume. Two hundred and one healthy people between the

ages of 17 and 79, regardless of age or characteristics, showed that the more overweight the person was the smaller their brain tended to be.



Since 1998, *World* magazine has selected a “Daniel of the Year.” They select a person who is seen as having exercised faith in God and gained the strength to stand up against ungodly trends.

This year, 2011, they have chosen Alan Chambers, 39. He is president of “Exodus, International,” a Christian ministry that helps people who struggle with homosexuality.

During his teen years he was a

practicing homosexual. To him it seemed natural but also sinful. Eventually, he embraced the teaching that Jesus could change his heart. Self-denial was a basic requirement. The journey to victory was difficult, painful, with “blood, sweat and tears.” He pursued inward change and holiness in every part of his life, not just in sexuality. He says that Jesus never left him along the way.

Critics have called him a bigot, a homophobe, and a spiritual terrorist. Not only are they angry that he believes that the practice is wrong, but they despise his message that homosexuals can change. There have been a handful of security threats from opponents in recent years.

He is now actively involved in helping others to freedom from this sinful practice. He says, “If you know Jesus, anything is possible.”

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On November 14, a man walked in to a main street bank in Wheeling, West Virginia, and handed the teller a note, apparently demanding money. The would-be robber had poor handwriting and the teller could not decipher it. She handed it back and asked if this was a joke. The man took his note and left empty handed.

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“Regular consumption of a significant amount of water reduces the risk of dehydration.” This statement was placed on labels of bottled water

in Europe.

A European Union bureaucracy did an intensive three-year study and rejected this statement, saying that the claim lacked scientific basis. Such labels are now banned, making violators subject to a fine and three years in prison.

It is good to have a government that wants to safeguard our well being, but sometimes such efforts seem simplistic and misguided.

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A non-profit organization from California called Sirona, has reached out to the poor people of Haiti in a number of different ways. In partnership with Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE), they have delivered six portable solar power stations (solar panels on trailers). With each station, there are 40 battery kits that 40 families can take home to light their homes and charge their cell phones, etc.

The customers don't buy their kits, but pay a monthly rental fee, about \$6.70 a month, roughly what they would pay otherwise for kerosene and candles. So far none of the units have been vandalized. More than 2000 are on the waiting list for such services. There is a general manager providing oversight for the six units. But every unit also has a local manager, usually a pastor, to oversee the local operation. Sirona has a goal to provide electric lighting to one million Haitians within

five years.



North and South Korea were divided into separate political entities in 1945 at the end of World War II. At that time, the Soviet Union took control of the North and the South was under U. S. control. Presently the South has a per capita CDP (annual income) of \$30,000. By comparison, the figure in the North is reported to be \$9,800 per capita. In the North, there are food shortages and serious malnutrition. Admittedly, I'm in no position to make an in-depth evaluation. But this much seems clear: Over-regulation by the government is not friendly to personal initiative and prosperity.

The previous four items were all taken from *World*, 12-11.



The Hutchinson News (12-10-11) reports that membership in Southern Baptist churches has declined in 2010 for the fourth consecutive year. They are wondering if a name change is needed. Their survey of 2,000 persons show that at least 40% of those contacted respond negatively to the Southern Baptist label. They began in 1845 when they disagreed with Northerners on whether slave holders could be missionaries. In 2008, about 18% of their members were non-white. The group is known for being conservative and vocal on political issues. Being saved or being born again has major emphasis. But

the way of Christ on the journey is not always apparent.

Consideration for a name change has to do with the label rather than the more basic contents of belief and practice. The idea of name change has strong support but also significant opposition. To finalize a name change is not done without detailed procedures that could well take up to two years.



The Sermon of the Month by David Fisk in *Sword and Trumpet* (1-2012) contains the following paragraph: "I know a seminary couple who were victims of something close to identity theft. They were left with tens of thousands in indebtedness."

Another couple, let's call them Brad and Julie, heard about their trouble and invited them to lunch. As they talked, Julie brought up the topic of their debt and said to the couple: "Brad and I had been talking and praying about this. We do not want money to keep you from advancing God's Kingdom whether it's from the pulpit or having babies or whatever."

Julie then slid a check across the table written in the amount of the couple's debt. The couple began thanking Brad and Julie profusely, but they would not have it. They said, "Thank God; we're just trying to be good stewards."



The volume of mail that shows up

regularly in our church mailboxes is remarkable. Generally speaking, it speaks of Christian ministry, service opportunities, the need for personnel and funding. Of course, several periodicals do not fit this description.

Let us appreciate the corporate climate that is friendly to the development of a Christian service mentality. This has allowed para-church projects to proliferate. It would be interesting for someone to do a study about how many programs look to the conservative Anabaptist membership for their support of personnel and funding.

Whether we are parents, church leaders, potential volunteers, or service unit leaders this unprecedented opportunity calls for a God-directed response. The following thoughts are offered in the hope of nudging us in the right direction.

- It is assumed that unit leaders are aware that not only do workers have certain tasks assigned to them, but there should be a provision of learning and nurture that is favorable to stability and Christian growth. The service experience should better equip participants for useful roles in the next step of the journey.

- Looking at the numbers from which to draw there should not be a shortage of volunteers. But recruiters find significant challenge in finding enough workers. There are certainly

many legitimate conflicts. It may be a special need in a family or another service opportunity and whatever else? But when lifestyle, car payments, or other such things, rule out consideration for Christian service, this is cause for concern. Christians with their priorities straight rightly keep Kingdom interests first.

- Christians should want “20/20” spiritual vision. This means that there are often needs close to home worthy of our attention and support. Blessed are those Christians who have an openness to serving where there is opportunity—whether far away or close to home. To be near-sighted or far-sighted cripples our usefulness.

- Governing boards of service units should provide stability and credibility to the program. But the strength ultimately comes from “grass roots.” Boards will want to operate in a manner that is worthy of the trust of their supporters. Open communication is needed. Two parties with similar interests, ideals, and priorities have the basic ingredients for harmony.

- Ray Stutzman, who is appointed to recruit workers for Amish Mennonite Aid says that persons from more structured, more conservative settings are less reluctant to make long-term commitments. (I have his permission to report this.)

-DLM 

Just as the Lord Commanded

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

On a cool, February evening I was sitting by the cozy wood heat leafing through World Year Book, 2011. I came across an unusual picture that was religious in nature. It was a picture taken in January in Ukraine. Deep snow, people standing near in what appeared to be a cross about 12 feet tall. They are dressed for winter. In front of the cross a man is submerged in the ice-cold water. The explanation of the scene is that it is an Eastern Orthodox believer in Uyshgorod, Ukraine, celebrating Epiphany on January 19 by submerging himself in an ice hole in the shape of a cross. In Eastern Orthodox churches, the Christian festival of Epiphany commemorates the baptism of Jesus by the prophet John the Baptist.

How interesting! Why would a person cut a cross-shaped hole through thick ice and dip himself in? Celebrating Epiphany? Where does the Bible teach about celebrating Epiphany? I couldn't find the word in my King James Bible. I did find it in Webster's dictionary: "Epiphany: In many Christian churches, a yearly festival, held January 6, commemorating the revealing of

Jesus as the Christ to the Gentiles, in the person of the Magi, and the baptism of Jesus; also called the Twelfth Day."

Early the next morning, I read Exodus 39-40 as the Old Testament reading for that day. In preceding chapters God's instructions are given to Moses about building the tabernacle. Some of these instructions are very detailed and hard for me to grasp. Just how was it to be done? However, God called certain persons and filled them with His Spirit "in wisdom and understanding, and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship, so as to perform in every inventive work." (See Exodus 35:30-35)

Then, as I read chapters 39-40, I noticed a particular phrase occurring over and over. It was "just as the Lord commanded Moses." I counted that expression at least 16 times. Other verses refer to Moses' obedience to God's commands. I was impressed with the careful obedience of Moses in constructing the tabernacle "just as the Lord commanded." "Thus Moses finished the work" (Ex. 40:33).

After Moses did "just as the Lord commanded" and finished the work, something significant and exciting

took place. “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (vs. 34). Not only did the glory of the Lord fill the tabernacle, a cloud settled on it and became a guiding light for the children of Israel (verses 34-38). What a blessed reward for careful obedience: The glory of the Lord and His divine guidance!

Suppose Moses would have reasoned within himself: *We don't have to follow every command. After all, some of them will not be understood by my fellow Israelites. I can make a few adjustments to fit our culture and way of life.* I believe you would have quite a different story than that of God's glory and divine guidance coming to the tabernacle.

I thought of the picture of the ice cold dip in remembering Epiphany. My observation is that man wants to invent his own way of worshiping and serving God. Did you ever notice how Christians have celebrations and do things that God never commanded, but neglect what the Lord has commanded? I find nothing in the New Testament that Christians are to have a festival to remember the revealing of Christ to the Gentiles or the baptism of Jesus by John.

When Moses built the tabernacle “just as the Lord commanded,” the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

How does this apply to the New Testament believer today? The “born again” Christian becomes the temple where God dwells. Paul told the Christians at Corinth that they are the temple of the Holy Ghost. “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in you body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (2 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Glorify God in your body and in your spirit! How are we to do that? The Bible also reminds us that Christians are the temple of the living God. “For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them,...and I will be their God and they shall be my people” (2 Corinthians 6:16).

So you are a believer, which makes you the temple of God. What greater blessing could you experience than having the glory of the Lord fill your temple? Can you pay the price by conducting your life “Just as the Lord commanded.” You are God's temple; what does God ask of you? (See 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18; and 7:1).

What is accomplished by submerging oneself in an ice hole in the shape of a cross? Why do man-invented things look so appealing to the church? Numerous churches

celebrate Lent. That is a period of 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to the Saturday just before Easter. "It's to be a time of abstinence, prayer, and works of charity." (Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology) Ash Wednesday is the seventh Wednesday before Easter. It is so called from the practice of putting ashes on the forehead as a sign of penitence. *The Washington Post* featured a picture of a man receiving a small mark of ashes on his forehead at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. This year the Methodist Church urged its 7.8 million U. S. members to refrain from drinking alcohol during Lent. One man chose fasting from Facebook. A teen student gave up talking. For another, it was giving up meat and fasting on certain days. Lying prostrate before one another is a sign of repentance.

While I do not want to be overly critical of such practices, some of these are to be part of every believer's daily walk of life. Many who diligently practice these man-invented ideas, neglect some commands of the New Testament that followers of Christ are to practice: Baptism upon a sincere confession of faith, breaking of bread and taking the cup of communion, prayer and anointing with oil for the sick who request it, uncut hair and a veiled head for the sisters, brother

refraining from shameful long hair and giving a greeting of a holy kiss of charity, to name several.

I know a lady who had been faithful to the conservative Anabaptist understanding of 1 Corinthians 11: 1-16 and 1 Timothy 2:9-10, being modestly attired and refraining from wearing jewelry and make-up. She chose to drop these practices (which the Lord commanded) and go with the practice of the world's culture. She conformed to man made practices of this present world. Her reasoning? *I can witness much easier to others since I have changed.* My impression of such an approach and attitude is that the real message to God is: *I can serve better my way than Yours* and is not "doing just what the Lord commanded."


Much of the church in America spends a lot of time and money celebrating Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and other things like wearing a wedding band. Imagine the impact the Church would have on the unsaved world if the church practiced the Scriptures "just as the Lord commanded" with dedication and energy!

Why not give careful attention to faithfully practicing "just what the Lord commanded"? After Moses did that, the glory of the Lord appeared. Where would you expect that God

would let us see a glimpse of His glory today? Could it be that He wants to reveal Himself in the temple of the believers? Could it be that His glory shines through the believers who practice living “just as the Lord commanded”? After God’s glory appeared, He gave them His divine guidance through “the cloud of the Lord.”

I am of the persuasion that redeemed believers who choose

to follow the Lord’s commands become a reflection of God’s glory and experience His guidance. If you are a regular Bible reader and adjust your life to do “just as the Lord commands,” the glory of God is revealed in your life. Those are the people I see reflecting God’s glory in the world today.

Are there areas in your life that are shutting out God’s glory and blocking His guidance? 

Proper Responses to Pressure for Change

Willis Nisly, Hutchinson, KS

In April, 2002, our annual ministers’ meeting carried the theme, “The Faith Worth Dying For.” Bro. Willis Nisly was asked to address change. A brief synopsis is here reprinted by request of 93-year-old Eli M. Yoder, Millersburg, OH, as it first appeared in July, 2002, of Calvary Messenger.

Is change always wrong? 2 Corinthians 3:18 describes a blessed kind of change. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.” When we diligently read and obey God’s Word, we are changed from glory to glory. That is the kind of change God wants for us.

What kind of change are we

making? That is determined by our focus. When our focus is on convenience, ease, or popular opinion, it can produce some very serious consequences. In contrast, if we do as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:26, “Let all things be done unto edifying,” wholesome results will follow.

How do we go about this? First, seek to understand biblical principles. Second, observe cause and effect in

other individuals and congregations. If we aren't sure where a road leads, it will help us understand, if we note where it has taken others.

In Joshua 1:8, we are told that "this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth: and that we are not to "turn from it to the right hand or to the left."

I think we can learn much as we consider four types of leaders:

•**Those who let things drift by default.** This is perhaps the most subtle of all pressures for change. This may allow significant change before it is recognized. Here the plural ministry has tremendous advantages to address and identify these needs. There is no circumstance that God doesn't have solutions for. If there are marriage entanglements, we don't have to tell such people that it's all over and that God has nothing to offer them. The biggest problem is that we find it hard to submit to God's solutions.

•**Those who succumb to pressure.** For every church situation and for every leader, there is a limit to how much pressure they can take without compromising. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." We all have the potential to slip and fall. There is no room for any of us to look at others and thank God that

we are better than they. It is only as we humbly seek the face of God and His Word that we can avoid errors we may have seen in others. There are those who say that leaders should just teach the principles and let everybody make their own applications. I have never seen that work effectively. 1 Timothy 1:18, 19 gives three things for us go by: First, we are to wage a good warfare. Secondly, we are to hold "the faith." Thirdly, we are to avoid "shipwreck."

If we cease to verbalize our convictions, we will lose them. In reality, we cannot separate our willingness to verbalize from our embrace of personal faith. If we fail to make practical application of principles, we will lose them. If, in our congregations, we are not able to exercise discipline when congregational applications are violated, we will find ourselves helpless when clear commands of Scripture are violated.

When a leader succumbs to pressure from his own children, it becomes a situation that desperately needs help. Such a situation is prone to serious misunderstandings for both parties. For this reason, it is important that we be slow to make judgment on people's motives. Few things deteriorate confidence in leadership more than the impression

that we primarily hear what our children think and say. We, as leaders, do need to hear our children and see that we don't isolate them.

• **Those who are unflinching, forceful, and authoritative.** While some good can be said for this, there are definite cautions. Such leaders will usually effectively maintain a given position. They may also experience a church split, though their position is maintained. This approach tends to generate more response on the surface than in the heart. It often succeeds poorly in developing true conviction in young people. To help identify this problem, we need to distinguish between honest convictions and dogmatism. Honest convictions can be respected. Dogmatism tends to breed resentment.

• **Those who are unapologetic with all long suffering and doctrine.** We need patient, clear teaching on doctrine in an open atmosphere. Our goal is not to develop skills in applying the brakes on a downhill path but to steer a straight course on an uphill climb. There is no merit or safety in just going at a slower pace on the wrong path.

One of our goals should be to develop young men who are more capable than we are. Moses cultivated and developed Joshua. He took him

along to the top of Mt. Sinai. I don't think Joshua did so well in providing prepared leadership to follow him. Then there arose a generation that didn't know God. Samuel was a man who was deeply pious, but he also did not provide for leadership prepared to lead appropriately. When the people wanted a king, he was disappointed, but he hadn't prepared anyone to carry on the work.


Unless our youth can ask honest questions and even engage in honest debate without causing us to feel threatened, there is little likelihood that they will develop honest convictions. If we fail in this, they will leave us or end up with a "works" religion. Young people have their strengths and weaknesses, the same as we. They seem to have remarkable ability to identify blind spots and inconsistencies in parents and leaders. It's important that we honestly try to hear them. This is not to suggest that young people ought to control the decision-making process.

Idealistic Christian young people are usually right in what they *oppose*, but not so often right in what they *propose*. Because they lack experience, they need input from older folks. Truth is never threatened when it is asked honest questions. The focus must be submission to Christ. Instead of asking, "What's

wrong with it?” the better question is, “What will please Him most?” or “How can we best express scriptural principle and our identity with Him?”

Sometimes I fear that we have not adequately analyzed where we’ve come from, where we are, and where we’re going. We have sometimes depended on the momentum of our Amish upbringing. Unless we know why we believe what we believe and why we do what we do, we are not in a

good position to help others develop a faith worth dying for.

If we find that we’ve drifted from the right course, let us take the path of humility rather than blaming our people. When a dissatisfied member refers to the church as “they,” we understand why. We as leaders can do the same thing in principle when we pass the blame to others. If we’re off course, it’s not “they,” it’s “we.” May we humbly seek the Lord for our much needed answers. 


Lonely or Alone?

Sadie A. Beachy, Marshallville, GA

We are aware that people can experience loneliness in the midst of family (or the church family). This can come from being very reserved, not outgoing, or it can also develop from allowing sinful practices to creep into one’s life.

Things can change. First and foremost, the important step to take is to turn to Christ, confessing our needs, desiring to live as His dependent children. He is the wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace, whose government will not end.

God calls us into His keeping and care. His promises are available to us. Someone has well said, “We have the Word of God, but in order for us to hunger and thirst after his righteousness, the Word is applied to our hearts and we live thereby, we learn to invest our time and desires in Him. Otherwise, the Word of God does very little for us.”

Let us turn to Him with all of life—desires and possessions. His truths, principles, promises, and warnings are written for our learning. When God’s blessings rest in one’s heart and life, loneliness flees. 

Traveling On

Arletha Yoder, Lowville, NY

Traveling the highway of life
We seek the right path to take.
Which way do I forsake?
Which way do I take?

The mountain is rugged and steep;
Let us go another way.
The valley is deep and overgrown;
Here we cannot stay.

Down in the valley we linger,
Yet seeing whatever is best.
Realizing in God we put our trust,
Awaiting that wonderful rest.

Traveling upward out of the valley
And climbing higher, we see
The beauty of the landscape
He has made for you and me.

Alas, the road is bumpy, narrow and rough.
With only one way to go through.
Yet slower we go with a faith of what waits,
At the glorious opening of the Golden Gate.



Sermon Preparation and Delivery

– Part Two

Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA

The degree of loneliness the missionary experiences may depend on how long he has been on the field, how well-acquainted he is with the native people and if he is really enjoying the work. The slump in his feelings may be especially acute on Sunday morning. Since he is the missionary pastor, he must face the audience and preach the Word with gladness and fervor. “Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). The following counsel, while not exhaustive, is given to help in sermon preparation and delivery.

We must “believe in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God; that it is authentic in its matter, authoritative in its counsels, inerrant in the original writings, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice” (Mennonite Confession of Faith, 1921). A minister of another denomination, who visited one of our Amish Mennonite churches, observed a lack of this affirmation: “Thus saith the Lord.” This affirmation

occurs approximately 2,000 times in Scripture. When a minister faithfully communicates the Word of God, he speaks with its authority. There is no substitute for this; it nourishes the flock of God.

There must be adequate and accurate interpretation of God’s Word. To interpret is “to explain the meaning of; to make understandable” (Webster). A preacher must unfold, unravel, and expound the Word as clearly as possible. Always keep the text in its context. A Bible expositor said, “A text, after all, is a thread woven into the warp and woof of Scripture.” We must not select such a thread, isolate it from its context, and then make it mean whatever we choose.” We have heard it said many times, “A *text* taken out of *context* becomes a *pretext*.” If there is a passage that appears unclear in its setting, expose it to a clearer passage for a better understanding. We must compare Scripture with Scripture. There is one correct interpretation of a given passage in the Bible and we seek it. There may be a prophetic revelation

in a certain section, but also other practical applications. The phrase “rightly dividing the word of truth has been translated “handling aright the word of truth.” In other words, cut the word of truth straight.

Be prayerful. Depend totally on the Lord, for without Him we can do nothing of value. Pray often during message preparation. Pray while driving to church. Pray while sitting in the pew. Pray while you walk to the pulpit. The congregation’s prayers for the minister are also very needful.

Be enthused by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Feast of Tabernacles was a joyous celebration for the Jewish people. On that last day of the feast, while the priests were walking around the altar and, no doubt, were pouring out water symbolic of the water Moses drew from the rock, Jesus stood and shouted with great enthusiasm this invitation to thirsty sinners, ...”if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37b,38).

Be serious about the Gospel. Paul carried this spiritual attitude in his missionary endeavors. “Therefore watch and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts. 20:31). Someone commented, “It is easier to get an audience to laugh than it is to move

them to tears.” While some seasoned, wholesome humor may be fitting in certain messages to make a point stick and to keep the attention of the listeners, it is irreverent to be lighthearted and silly. Clowns belong in the circus, not in the church.

Look at the audience. Normally people are not sitting on the floor, in the aisle, nor are they outside the windows or on the ceiling. Eye contact is important. “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts. 23:1). Use gestures and dress neatly.

Get to the point. Aviation instructors urgently inform their student pilots to get that aircraft in the air. Peter, energized by the Holy Spirit, got to the point of his message on the day of Pentecost. He made it clear that the Holy Spirit was given because of the resurrected Christ and that through repentance and faith believers can experience forgiveness of sins.


Stick with the main theme. Do not overload your audience by too much detail. I remember Jacob Hershberger as a dynamic preacher because he often hammered on one point all throughout the message. One evening, he spoke on “holiness.” He repeated the following verse many times during the message: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

that is why I remember, even now, the thrust of the message so clearly. Every preacher has his own style of delivery. It is useless to imitate another minister's pulpit manners.

Finish well. Get landed. A crucial time in flying is landing the plane. Let's avoid the pattern of the pilot who circles the landing strip around and around before landing. It may seem that Jesus ended the Sermon on the Mount abruptly, but the people were spellbound. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28, 29).

In summary, a preacher from the old school wrote: "Three out of 27 books in the New Testament are labeled pastorals. They are so called because Paul addressed them to

two of his younger friends, Timothy and Titus, both pastors." Among the valuable admonitions given is a terse directive that we "preach the Word." That means to cry out, to herald, or to exhort. It is as if the message so burned in one's heart that it must be expressed with compassionate feeling and godly fervor. The pastor's sermons are to be based on Scripture, not just about Scripture, but the very Word of God itself. If one desires the blessing of God upon his congregation, his method of preaching must be to take the Word of God itself to his people.

"Preacher of God's glorious Gospel, ask God to give you a fresh glimpse of the potency of preaching. Then preach the Gospel in its fulness and freshness. Preach it in its glory and greatness. Preach it in its majesty and mystery. Preach it in its richness and rewards! Amen." 

helpers at home

Relationships

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Relationships define who we are. We are not isolated beings; frequently we hear the quote, "No man is an island." I like this Anabaptist saying better: "He who would enter the Kingdom

must do so with his brother." This simply means that if we care about each other, we will do all in our power to take our brother to heaven.

Adam and Eve's decision to eat the forbidden fruit in the garden

altered their relationship with God. However, God cared so much that He sent His only Son to restore man to a relationship with Himself. Jesus taught much about relationships. He told us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to practice the Golden Rule of doing to others as we would have them do to us. The Apostles built on Jesus' teachings, encouraging His followers to love as Christ loved, to be kind, gentle, forgiving, and patient.

Relationships form our lives. Women especially seem to know that relationships hold the key to a joyful worthwhile life. Children learn much about relationships at home, then they step out into a larger world in school and in church. Hopefully, these childhood relationships will prepare them for marriage, leadership roles in the church and the daily workaday world.

Our future destiny depends on relationships, both vertical and horizontal. The most important relationship we will ever experience is our relationship with Jesus Christ. Unless this inner hunger is filled, we will struggle with loneliness, lack of self-worth and need for acceptance. Furthermore, our friendships with others tend to imbalance. When that happens, we constantly search for someone else to meet our needs. No one, not our husbands, our best

friends, our children, or a sibling can meet our inner needs. That is the reason some women become obsessed with a relationship, barely allowing the other person space to relate to others. Such relationships are unhealthy and draining on a friendship. Mentoring someone like this may lead to a dependent relationship unless we can learn the secret of pointing them to Christ rather than ourselves.

Men rarely experience the same type of friendship or intimacy as women. Of course, there are exceptions. Today's world may make it even more difficult for men as we frown on seeing men showing emotion with hugs. Man was created as the leader of the home. He has a tremendous responsibility of providing for the family in financial and spiritual matters. The woman is the heart of the home. She provides emotional stability. God planned for her to be a life giver, a nurturer. Men tend to relate with facts or answers - women with feelings. For instance, how often have you wanted to talk to your husband about your feelings and he responds with a quick answer trying to fix the problem? However, that wasn't what you wanted; you just wanted him to listen. You can tell another woman the same story, and she will probably respond with hugs,

and maybe even shed a few tears with you. You really did not want answers, you just wanted someone to empathize with you. It is not because your husband doesn't care, but because God created him with a spirit of productivity.

Men do need male friends, even when they think of a wife as a best friend. It is with her that he shares his heart. Your husband should also be your best friend, the one who understands and loves you unconditionally. You can help guard his heart by never betraying what he has intended for your ears only or to repeat his words as a joke. However, a woman longs for someone of her gender with whom

she can share her womanly joys and sorrows. She seeks another woman whom she trusts, someone who loves in spite of imperfections, a woman of integrity, able to keep confidences and someone whose life challenges her to be a better person.

Relationships affect various areas of our lives. In the next few months, I would like to write about some relationships women have encouraged me to address. I would be glad to hear from you with suggestions or areas of relationships you would want to hear about.

May God enable each of us to develop strong, healthy, happy relationships.



junior messages

The Hot Pocket

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

Starla smiled with satisfaction as she viewed her work, stacks and stacks of precisely typed Bible stories. All of the stories finally had been translated and typed into French Creole. A Haitian couple had been at LIFE Ministries to work on the translating. Now, after many

months of work, the project was ready to send to the print shop. All except one thing, one major thing. Ten thousand dollars were needed to get the printing done!

Dan, Starla's friend from the print shop, stopped in at eight o'clock that morning. He knew the Bible story

translating project was nearing completion.

“Is the project for Haiti ready to send to the press?” he asked Starla.

“Yes, it is all completed,” Starla said, “but we don’t have the funds to get it printed now.”

Lester walked in at that moment. “We won’t send this project with you until we have the ten thousand dollars we need to get it printed,” he stated.

“That is no problem,” Dan responded. “We are happy to start on the printing, and you can pay us, Les, whenever the money comes in.”

“No,” Lester replied, “I will not send it with you until we have the funds. It’s not wise to borrow the money. Some day God will make a way. I will give you a call when I want you to pick it up.”

Lester called his family and the staff at LIFE ministries together. He presented the need for ten thousand dollars for the Bible story books for Haiti. He proposed they spend the day in prayer and fasting. Right then they had a prayer meeting. At noon, Lester, his wife, Betty, and the others fasted and prayed, imploring almighty God to meet their needs.

At one thirty that afternoon the phone rang in Lester’s office. A man asked, “Do you need ten thousand dollars?”


“Do we need ten thousand dollars?!” Lester exclaimed. “Yes, indeed we do. We were praying for that VERY amount this VERY day!”

“It’s like this,” the man said, “I have ten thousand dollars I need to give to you. I will bring it in. At lunch time today it seemed like my wallet just burned in my pocket. I didn’t know what was going on. I got my wallet out and opened it. I found a check that I made out to you three weeks ago that I forgot to send. The amount is ten thousand dollars.”

Lester went running to find Betty. “God answered our prayer already,” he rejoiced. “God answered our prayer this very day while we were fasting and praying. God is so good! God did it!”

Another prayer meeting was held at LIFE Ministries that day, a meeting of praise and thanksgiving to God for hearing and answering their prayer.

Lester promptly called Dan to come and pick up the Bible stories. Dan walked in the door and said incredulously, “What! Do you mean you have the money now?”

[From *The Horse That Worked for God*, by Mary Ellen Beachy, 2010. This 249-page devotional book for families may be ordered from Mark and Mary Ellen Beachy, 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW, Dundee, OH, 44624, for \$12.50, postpaid.] 

What Can We Give?

Kelly Kauffman, Thomaston, GA

We've just come through the holiday season in America and it was very obvious to see. Lots of decorations and lights. Stores competing with each other to most effectively grab their potential clients' attention with their great sales. Gifts. Lots of gifts. Everybody was hoping their gifts would be exactly what the recipient wanted and that they in return would receive what they had been hoping for. Recently I've been thinking about gifts. Not in the sense of a Christmas gift or any kind of tangible gift but in a spiritual sense. What can I give to those around me? Do I have anything to give? As I was thinking about this, a little children's poem came to my mind that we've probably heard before:

"What can I give Him, poor as I am,
If I were a shepherd, I would bring
a lamb;

If I were a wise man, I would do
my part.

What can I give Him? I'll give Him

my heart!"

This poem speaks of a person who seemingly has nothing to give. He can think of a lot of things that he would give if he had them at his disposal. But he faces reality and acknowledges that he has nothing fancy to give. This is a little different than what I could say. I can think of quite a few tangible things that I could sacrifice for Jesus' sake. But the author of this poem had nothing so all he could offer was his heart. And isn't this all that Jesus needs?

It's so easy for me to get caught up in thinking that if I tithe my ten percent or occasionally go on a mission trip that I am giving all I have to God. But if I don't give him my heart, how valuable are these to Him? When I give Him my heart, it is a package deal that includes everything I am capable of giving Him. I no longer view life as a journey with an occasional sacrifice. All of life becomes a sacrifice. That means my time, talents, and money—everything I have in my

power is available to be used for my Lord's Kingdom, not just when it's convenient for me, but every day of my life.

There are times that I am tempted to believe that it would be much easier to give everything I have if I were involved in mission work, or something more important than I'm doing right now. Satan rejoices when we subscribe to this way of thinking because then we become less effective in God's Kingdom. God has a plan for each of us and He has reason for putting us where we are right now. Maybe it's not on the mission field where opportunities for ministry abound. Maybe it's not in the spot that we have always dreamed of filling. But if we are using our gifts for the express purpose of enriching God's Kingdom, we are accomplishing what God's plan is for us. This not only brings fulfillment, it also brings contentment in knowing we are exactly where God wants us to be.

Recently I came across the biblical account of Mary breaking the bottle of

perfume and pouring it on Jesus. I was struck by her sacrifice. Even though the perfume didn't do any good to anyone, it symbolized her willingness to sacrifice what she had for Jesus' sake. She not only gave what she had, but she gave the best. And she gave it willingly. If I am giving of my time and talents, but doing it in a grudging, I'd-rather-not-be-doing-this-but-I-know-I-need-to manner, it would be better if I would just not do it at all.

This mindset becomes very practical when we apply it to our daily lives. There are times when I need to examine my life and see if I am wholeheartedly using my gifts for God's purposes. Often God calls me to sacrifice something for His sake. This is where "the rubber meets the road." It's easy to recognize that this is the way God wants us to live our lives, but how willing am I to change, not just my way of thinking, but also my way of doing? May God give us grace to wholeheartedly use our gifts in ways that He is glorified and His Kingdom is increased!

Next Month's
QUESTION

There are a number of "Christian" resources available today that appear useful but actually undermine "the faith which was once delivered to the saints." How can youth increase in spiritual knowledge without also embracing ideas that destroy true Christian faith?

-EE 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Don't worry about knowing important people, just make yourself worth knowing.

• • • • •

In kindness, God puts a curtain over tomorrow.

• • • • •

Gambling: stealing by mutual consent.

• • • • •

Science helps man know in part what God already knows in full.

• • • • •

The *stops* of a good man are ordered by the Lord — not just his *steps*.

• • • • •

Goodness is truth and beauty in human behavior.

• • • • •

We first make our habits—then our habits make us.

• • • • •

The cross is the only structure that reaches to heaven.

• • • • •

Don't treat your home like a pit stop on the raceway of life.

• • • • •

Man's greater enemy is not *disease*, but *despair*.