



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

SEPTEMBER 2023

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Calvary Messenger
September 2023

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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Father Eternal

Father eternal, Ruler of creation,
Spirit of life, which moved ere form was made;
Through the thick darkness covering every nation,
Light to man's blindness, O be Thou our aid:
Thy Kingdom come, O Lord, Thy will be done.

Races and peoples, lo, we stand divided,
And sharing not our griefs, no joy can share;
By wars and tumults love is mocked, derided,
His conquering cross no kingdom wills to bear:
Thy Kingdom come, O Lord, Thy will be done.

Envious of heart, blind-eyed, with tongues confounded,
Nation by nation still goes unforgiven;
In wrath and fear, by jealousies surrounded,
Building proud towers which shall not reach to heaven:
Thy Kingdom come, O Lord, Thy will be done.

Lust of possession worketh desolations;
There is no meekness in the sons of earth;
Led by no star, the rulers of the nations
Still fail to bring us to the blissful birth.
Thy kingdom come, O Lord, Thy will be done.

How shall we love Thee, holy, hidden Being,
If we love not the world which Thou hast made?
O give us brother love for better seeing
Thy Word made flesh, and in a manger laid:
Thy Kingdom come, O Lord, Thy will be done. Amen.

Laurence Houseman (1919)

[Public domain] 

The Sun Was Setting

Steve Bayer, Englewood, OH

The day had been like so many in the life of our Lord. Jesus had been in Capernaum, teaching in the synagogue and healing, as was His wont. One poor man had “*a spirit of an unclean devil*” who challenged the Master, at the same time acknowledging Him as “*the Holy One of God.*” When Jesus commanded the devil to come out of the man, there was an instant release. And for once, the people marveled at the power of God instead of chiding Him for healing on the sabbath. And His fame grew.

From the synagogue, the Lord went to Simon Peter’s house. Perhaps He had been refreshed there many times prior. Without a home to call His own, Jesus greatly appreciated the hospitality shown Him when the time came to rest. But that respite was to be delayed this day. More healing needed to be done. Peter’s mother-in-law was lying prone on a couch, running a high fever. Just as He had rebuked the devil shortly before, in like manner the Master rebuked her fever. At once, she rose up “*and*

ministered unto them.” Perhaps the little company thought they could have a relaxing time of fellowship.

But the next verse begins, “*Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him.*” The Bible does not say why those folks waited until evening to beseech the Savior for healing. They may have had other commitments that precluded them from coming sooner. Perhaps they had traveled many weary miles and were only able to reach Him at the close of day. Their late arrival is not explained, nor does it really matter. What we do learn is that “*he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.*”

Have you ever been in this position? Are there some things that you want to get done before sundown? Has your day been so full that it seems like every task will not be completed? While there are some things that you want to get done before sundown, has your day been so full that it seems like every task will not be completed? While there

are some things that can wait until tomorrow, that is not always the case. There are matters that must be dealt with today because procrastination may be extremely critical or fatal. It is imperative that we reach Jesus before darkness engulfs us. We want His abiding presence and power “*for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.*”

When Moses was giving the children of Israel sundry laws and rules of conduct, he had instruction about their hired servants. They were not being paid wages with a weekly paycheck. “*At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it.*” One application of this would be to honor our financial commitments but might it not mean more? When you ask your son to do a task and he gives prompt obedience, let him feel your approval immediately. When you notice something special your daughter has done, do not wait until tomorrow to give her encouragement. Proverbs says it this way: “*Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*”

Paul warned the Ephesians to “*let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*” This should apply in all of our relationships. Whether it be an argument with a coworker or an intense disagreement with a spouse,

“*Agree with thine adversary quickly,*” lest the sun go down before peace is restored. Great will be our regret if our opportunity for reconciliation is lost permanently. Occasions for doing good must be seized when they are available, “*while it is day,*” because Christ told us that “*the night cometh, when no man can work.*”

Heretofore we have been considering our daily living. While no one has the promise of another day, as we grow older we contemplate more often that we are *Nearer the bound of life*. The poet was probably thinking of approaching the last day of his life. And that is a boundary that we are daily nearing. While it is true that today is the first day of the rest of our life, the reality is that each today is our last day, until the Father gives us another day. Our “bound of life” continually extends, but the day will come when it is our last day. How we have prepared when the sun is setting each day will determine our destiny when we reach the sundown of our life. Will our burden fall down, or will it bear us down? Will we leave our cross and gain our crown, or will we let our cross crush us, causing us to forfeit any opportunity to obtain a crown? Micah was speaking of false prophets but his words can also be applicable to our lives. We would not want it to be said of us, “*Therefore*

night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; ...and the sun shall go down over [you], and the day shall be dark over [you].”

As we look on world conditions today, the darkness of her day is steadily increasing. The sun is setting on the western horizon. An unknown poet captured this reality as they considered the catastrophic situation which occurred more than 20 years ago.

“Small Men Cast Long Shadows”

This world has heard the boasting of tyrants big and small,

And now all over God’s good earth, some wicked men stand tall,

Doing evil, trampling right, defying God with all their might,

It must be nearing night.

When small men cast long shadows, the sun is sinking fast,

When wrong is enthroned and truth is in shackles, the day is almost past.

On nine one one two thousand and one, the whole world watched in fright,

As buildings tall were blown in two and vanished from our sight,

Lives were lost because of hate, hearts were broken on that date,

For them it is too late.

When small men cast long shadows,

the sun is sinking fast,

When wrong is enthroned and truth is in shackles, the day is almost past.

Now’s the time for men of goodwill to talk to God of love,

And ask Him to forgive our wrong and send peace from above,

I know He can show the way, turn the darkness into day,

If we’ll only pray.

When small men cast long shadows, the sun is sinking fast,

When wrong is enthroned and truth is in shackles, the day is almost past;

When truth is enthroned and God says, “It’s over,” Oh hallelujah, He reigns!

It is not a time for despair but a time for expectation—confident expectation of our Lord’s soon return. Many who read these lines have made preparation for the sinking of life’s sun. For those who have not, there can be no confident expectation, *“But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”* However, while the sun of this time-world is setting, its rays have not totally dissipated. There is still time to be brought to the Savior through the baptismal waters. Whatever your

sickness, whatever your disease, He will lay His hands on you and heal your soul. Then it will not be sunset, *“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”*

The sun is setting in the west,
And time will soon be o’er;
Beyond the last departing rays
Is found another shore.

Defiant sinners have no hope
Of life beyond the grave;
For they have spurned the overtures

Of Christ, who died to save.

But for the righteous, blood-
bought saint,
Eternal life awaits
Within the city of our God,
Inside the pearly gates.

O sinner, come to Christ and live,
Lest, once your course is run,
There’ll be no hope for you at all
Beyond the setting sun!

*[Reprinted from the June 2023 issue of
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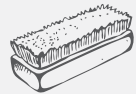
Announcement

Annual Calvary Bible School Cleanup

Come join us in our CBS cleaning November 14-16, 2023, in preparation for next school year. This is open for the young and older. Our new staff building is up and running and will be included this year so we could really use 45-50 people. If you, your youth group, or other friends could help us, we would really appreciate it. Good food, lodging in the dorms, cleaning supplies and evening volleyball will be provided.

*If you are interested, contact Lowell Swartzentruber,
(864) 378-3394 so we know how to plan. Please come help us!*

Thank You! Lowell Swartzentruber



The trouble with **opportunity** is that it’s
always more recognizable **going** than **coming**.

Announcement

Faithful Women Seminar

Saturday, October 7, 2023

Going For The Gold

As fire purifies gold, so God uses adversity to purify women. In this seminar, we will consider how the Lord uses some of the common things in women's lives—relationships, busyness, depression, and life transitions to reveal and refine our hearts and prepare us for service in His kingdom.

Gold and Relationships - *Christine Martin, Plain City, OH*

Calendars, Clutter, and Chaos - *Sylvia Yoder, Sommerset, OH*

Living With Hope - *Estalee Anderson, Rochelle, VA*

Trust in the Transitions - *Mary Ruth Kipps, Aroda, VA*

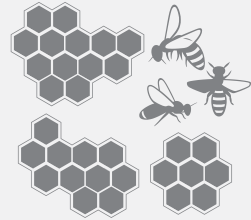
Location: Plainview Christian School

8270 Amish Pike, Plain City, OH 43064

For more information or to register, please contact

Deeper Life Ministries:

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



the bottom line

The Divine Trinity Expounded

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

All knowledge has to do with a mere two-dimensional line of inquiry which, simply put, is general knowledge over against the specifics of knowledge. On the subject of the Trinity of the Godhead, the general knowledge is that the Christian church has

always accepted the biblical fact of the oneness of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Upon that general premise alone, this article would be a Sunday afternoon pastime article to put the reader to sleep about halfway through. However, getting into the specifics

opens one's ears, eyes, and eventually might also increase the tempo of his breathing!

At a recent Bible conference, a brother was assigned to address "The Doctrine of the Trinity." Most of his time seemed to give instances where people spoke to him against the plurality of God. He spoke about the "Jesus only" people, and how vocal they were to him against the Holy Trinity being a Bible truth, or anything valued by a thinking person, and certainly having no basis for faith toward God in that regard. In the past, I had accepted the doctrine (teaching) as a general settled fact. The last sub-point given to this speaker by the program committee was, "Does it matter what we believe?" He assured the audience that it does matter what one believes.

If it doesn't really matter what we believe, a general knowledge will suffice, along with a cultured nod to whatever people seem to say. However, if it does matter what we believe, then some specifics are crucially important and vitally needed in order to "*earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints*" (Jude 3). Every congregation has some Bible doctrine they hold to in general, and some doctrine they maintain by specifics. Preachers and teachers are the main cause for the

weakness of our generalities, and the strength of our specifics.

The Creation Witness of Plurality

Genesis 1:26. "*And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing...*"

Who was the "us?" Who is the "*in our image,*" and "*in our likeness?*" Who was referred to as "us?" In Genesis 1:2 it says, "*And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" There were known appearances of the Son of God in the Old Testament, notably witnessed and spoken of by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:25, "*Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt: and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*" There were additional times when the Son of God was likely present in some form.

God chose to reveal the "us" of Genesis 1:26 after the resurrection of Christ. John begins with a Spirit-inspired witness, writing, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men*" (John 1:1-4). "The" is

an article of grammar, meaning one-and-only as an exclusive component or constituent.

We have here a multiple witness of the Incarnate Christ, plus also:

- “*In the beginning*” was indisputably a direct reference to Genesis 1:1, the first words used to reveal the beginning of time on the earth, and the creation of the earth itself and all its visible and invisible components.”

- “*The Word*” clearly identifies Jesus Christ as one with God, three times.

- “*The Life*” was the origin of life, brought about by the spoken word of God.

- “*The Light*” was the sustaining force of that life, in both material matter and in man himself, everything with the “seed within itself.”

A very significant text is in Matthew 3:9-12, which was a short-term prophecy centered on Jesus. Within that brief portion, mention is made of God and the Holy Ghost, as it centers on Jesus in His personal appearance. This prophecy is in regard to the Holy Trinity.

Immediately following that prophecy, Jesus comes walking to them. He requests to be baptized as a fulfillment of righteousness, by His personal completion of the prophetic word.

Jesus was then baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist.

Upon that literal fulfillment, the Spirit of God descended upon Christ like a dove. Forthwith, the voice of God the Father announces from heaven, “*This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased*” (Matthew 3:13-17).

It is interesting that in this double witness, both the prophecy and its fulfillment give verifiable double proof of the Holy Trinity.

Another Spirit-inspired text is Colossians 1:15-19 which is an important witness from Paul, the apostle of Christ. He speaks of Jesus, “*Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*”

Several things in this text command our notice:

- Jesus Christ Incarnate is made like unto us, even as the first Adam was made as spoken by God to Christ as the Co-Creator, making the first man “*in our image, after our likeness*” (Genesis 1:26) Jesus was made in the visible image and likeness of God, and in “the image of the invisible God.

- Jesus Christ being the firstborn of creation, and in that same vein, is also said to be the “*firstborn from the*

dead” in His resurrection, by whom He brought “*many sons unto glory*” (Hebrews 2:10).

- All of creation has its origin in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is one with God the Father.
- Jesus Christ was with God, one with God in eternity past, even as was the Spirit of God. The proposition is without controversy, a profoundly and rock-solid truth, an indisputable fact that the tri-unity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, by heaven’s declaration and earth’s certification, can rightly and conclusively be called the Divine and Holy Trinity.


The Apostle John gives another Spirit-inspired witness of the tri-unity of the Godhead in I John 5:5-7. *“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”* That is an amazing verse to describe the veracity (habitual truthfulness; accuracy of statement in accordance to truth - Webster) of the Holy Trinity in its divine oneness.

Then there is the additional witness

of Jesus Himself concerning His oneness with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. John 14:6-11 says that Jesus states His oneness with God the Father. And again, in John 14:16-20, Jesus assures that in His absence He will send the Holy Spirit as a Comforter and a heavenly Companion to complement His own unity with the Father in heaven and also with His own on the earth. Additionally, as another sure witness, Jesus reiterates His oneness with God as His Son, and His followers as one with Christ and with God, notably in verse 11 and in verses 21-23 and conclusively in verse 26.

In John 10:30, Jesus said, *“I and my Father are one.”* A simple statement revealing a profound fact. His enemies saw through this oneness concept that some of the professing Christians in our day will steadfastly deny and speak against quite strongly. Upon this six-word statement, some of Jesus’ enemies picked up stones to stone Him, saying He blasphemed God because He said He is God. It is incredible that the enemies of Christ could see and say that Jesus is not only one with God, but in their words, they said, *“that thou, being a man, makest thyself God”* (John 10:33). And they were correct, a fact denied by some erstwhile, supposed Christians.

The Bottom Line is that the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit share a oneness attested to by numerous Scriptures. It is a vital Bible doctrine that has divine testimony in God's

Word, more than we have chosen to cite in this article. God's call for us is to believe His Word, then to appreciate the collaborated testimony by men of God, and only then let the understanding follow as it can. 

It Is Easy to Boast of Having Faith

Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX

It is easy to boast of having faith:

- when we have a savings account from which to draw funds for any emergency.

- when we have a well-stocked pantry and freezer with enough foodstuff until the next growing season.

- when we have a wardrobe in our closet from which we can pull clothes for multiple changes in a day.

- when our businesses and properties are not vulnerable to confiscation due to our nominal discipleship to Christ.

- when medication or surgery restores our health.

- when my spouse does his or her best to submit to the scriptural principles of marriage.

- when our children are dedicated to our *Mennonite cultural environment* with very little or no resistance.

- when our parents have done their best to teach and train us in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

- when our congregational doctrines and practices do not deal with the heart issues of affluence and materialism.

- when our local community can extol our traditionally *plain* lifestyle without it feeling even remotely threatened.

In assessing the *faith rhetoric* of our Western Christianity, it is principally referring to an acceptance of an ecclesiastical set of dogmas and a systematic statement of intellectual theology. This type of faith is possible to hold without the slightest threat to our affluent status quo. It does not even arouse the least inkling of fear of religious, economic, or social disenfranchisement. In fact, it expects and demands material blessings (The American Dream) as a reward for faithful adherence to its generally accepted *Articles of Faith*.

Genuine biblical faith, on the contrary, is not contingent upon any material or earthly blessing God

gives or promises to give. It can be completely stripped of every worldly relationship and physical possession and still foolishly believe that God is good and worthy of praise. This type of faith does not seek any tangible reward as an impetus for loving God since it is satisfied with the awesome privilege of being in union with The Creator of the universe. However,

the frightening reality is that such a faith must be severely tested in order for it to become really alive within our hearts.

So then, in pondering all this, I must ask myself, “Do I actually possess a vibrant Christocentric faith or do I merely profess an insipid *Christian Culture* faith?” Indeed, there is an eternity of a difference!



Family Name

You got it from your father,
It was all he had to give.
So it's yours to use and cherish,
For as long as you may live.

If you lose the watch he gave you,
It can always be replaced.
But a black mark on your name, son,
Can never be erased.

It was clean the day you took it,
And a worthy name to hear.
When he got it from his father,
There was no dishonor there.

So make sure you guard it wisely,
After all is said and done.
You'll be glad the name is spotless,
When you give it to your son.

Post-Amen Talk

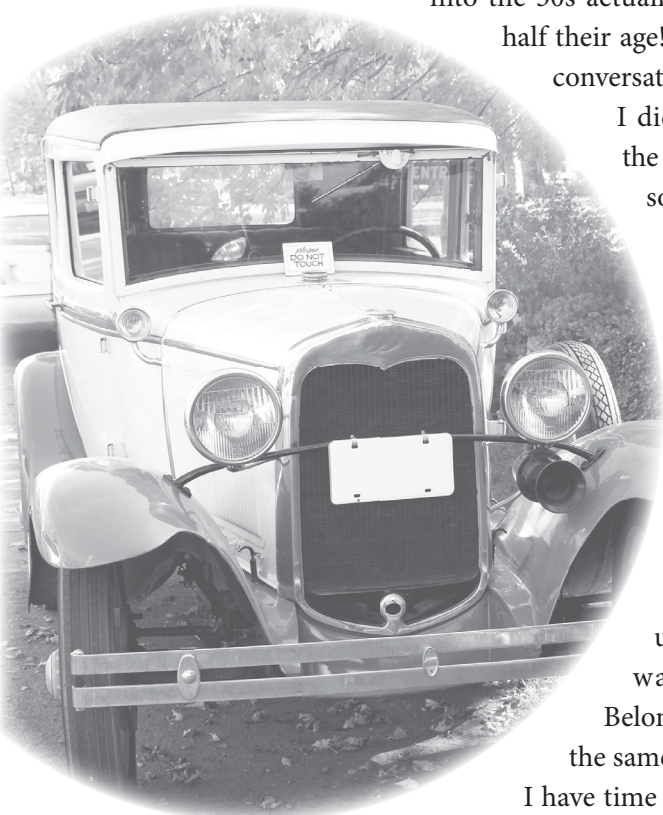
Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS

They stand in clusters after the final amen. Lanky teenagers adapting to the newly-sprouting arms and legs. Inquisitive pre-teens quite impressed by being with the Big Boys. Men in their late 20s and into the 30s actually listening; present to boys half their age! All are gathered in a single conversation.

I did not join them, preferring the company of feminine friends, so I have to imagine the topics being discussed. Among them, I suspect, was who hunted where and what they got. A good recipe for deer jerky? The price of fuel. Last week's social. A book recently read. And don't forget the cars.

I do not have to know what was talked about to understand some of what was being communicated. Belonging goes deeper than being the same age or color or stage of life.

I have time to hear about what interests you. You are a person of value.



Isn't that wonderful?



Of Puppies and Children

Frank L. Reed, Manheim, PA

Puppies love to jump on your lap and lick your face and wag their tails and express their happiness in the security of your presence. But if you try to hold them when they are ready to run again, they will struggle to get away from you. They are ready to run. They have had their security reinforced in your presence and they are ready to go and explore more of life.

Children are like that also. They need the security of your strength. That security needs to be reinforced. But if you try to hold them when they are ready to run, they will struggle and eventually will break loose and run away. If you give them their freedom, they will try their wings and then return to their roots and more security.

This presupposes, of course, the needed early discipline so that when they need self-discipline, the discipleship is already there. If discipleship is there, you can safely allow them to explore the environment around them. If the

discipleship is not there, no amount of rule-making will hold them close.

If discipleship is there, you will have the heart of the child. If you have the heart of the child, the child will love you. If they love you, they will obey you, and you will have a friend for life. If you do not have the heart of the child, he/she may comply but will not obey from the heart and the relationship will be strained.

Do not hold them when they are ready to run. At that point, you must trust your discipleship and you must trust the power of God to keep them when and where you cannot.

Cultivate a relationship with your children when they are little and impressionable. Be available when they are growing and grown. Stay close. Not too close, but close. Be available for as long as you live. They are worth it. Trust them and trust God to guide them as He has guided you.

<https://biblicalbrethrenfellowship.wordpress.com/2013/11/04/of-puppies-and-children/>

We are the Body of *Christ*,
not the body parts of *Christ*.



marriages

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

Gerber-Wagler

Bro. Karl, son of Wayne and Susan Gerber, Millbank, ON, and Sis. Janice, daughter of Daniel and Marlene Wagler, Wellesley, ON, on June 24, 2023, at Cedar Grove A. M. Church by John Gerber.

Hershberger-Weaver

Bro. Samuel, son of James and the late Velma Hershberger, Summersville, KY, and Sis. Julie, daughter of Thomas and Elaine Weaver, Summersville, KY, on March 24, 2023, at Summersville Mennonite Church by James Hershberger.

Peachey-Wagler

Bro. Jamin, son of Ivan and Kay Peachey, Free Union, VA, and Sis. Jessica, daughter of Galen and Mary Ellen Wagler, Oskaloosa, KS, on June 24, 2023, at Western Hills Baptist Church for Ebenezer Amish Mennonite by David Yoder.

Swartzentruber-Miller

Bro. Anthony, son of Steve and Karen Swartzentruber, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Connie, daughter of Reuben and Mary Miller, Abbeville, SC, on June 3, 2023, at Cold Spring Mennonite Church by Steve Swartzentruber.

Yoder-Steiner

Bro. Samuel, son of Nathan and Doris Yoder, Free Union, VA, and Sis. Jessica, daughter of Maynard and Cheryl Steiner, Dalton, OH, on June 10, 2023, at Fairlawn Mennonite Church for Sonlight Chapel by Delbert Kline.

Yoder-Wagler

Bro. Cody, son of Harley and Lisa Yoder, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Caroline, daughter of Nathan and Connie Wagler, Cross Hill, SC, on May 6, 2023, at Cross Hill Mennonite Church by Jay Stoll.



cradle roll

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

Albrecht, Adrian and Regina (Byler), Brunner, ON, fourth child, third son, Kevin Lloyd, July 21, 2023.

Coulter, Jason and Katrina (Peight), Honey Grove, PA, third child, first son, Seth Valor, July 18, 2023.

Fisher, Josiah and Janell (Stoltzfus), Lott, TX, third child, second son (one in heaven), Cohen Lee, June 24, 2023.

Gerber, Trevor and Kathryn (Schmidt), New Hamburg, ON, sixth child, fourth daughter, Junia Esther, July 6, 2023.

Gingerich, Derek and Deborah (Wagler), Loogootee, IN, fifth child, first daughter, Sara Elizabeth, April 1, 2023.

Gingerich, Jolynn and Kathryn (Byler), Mechanicsburg, OH, third child, first daughter, Opal Renita, May 25, 2023.

Kauffman, Daryl and Marlene (Yoder), Belleville, PA, fourth child, second son, Alec Zane, November 22, 2022.

Mast, Alvin and Amy (Glick), Hutchinson, KS, first child and son, Dante Clay, July 31, 2023.

Miller, Merlin and Kimmy (Miller), Washington, IA, fourth child, third daughter, Raquel Raine, May 5, 2023.

Miller, Vernon and Melody (Mast), Pulaski, TN, fourth child, second daughter, Josie Lea, June 11, 2023.

Monterosa, Ariel and Angie (Yoder), Fairview, MO, third child, second son, Kendrick Jason, July 6, 2023.

Troyer, Luke and Mary (Swarey), Auburn, KY, fifth child, fourth son, Ethan Jay, July 21, 2023.

Wagler, Andre and Victoria (Miller), Cross Hill, SC, first child and daughter, Eden Brielle, May 14, 2023.

Weaver, Aaron and Jennifer (Derksen), Summersville, KY, third child, first son, Blake Jensen, July 11, 2023.

Weaver, Philip and Marsha (Graber), Summersville, KY, third child, first daughter, Kenadi Sky, March 5, 2023.

Wingard, Wendon and Amber (Bontrager), Washington, IN, first child and daughter, Isla Murray, May 5, 2023.

Yoder, James and Bethany (Stoltzfus), Honeybrook, PA, third and fourth children, second and third sons, Cameron Bryce and Conner Bentley, April 14, 2023.

Yoder, Loren and Kendra (Wagler), Abbeville, SC, third child, first daughter, Hazel Gabrielle, June 25, 2023.

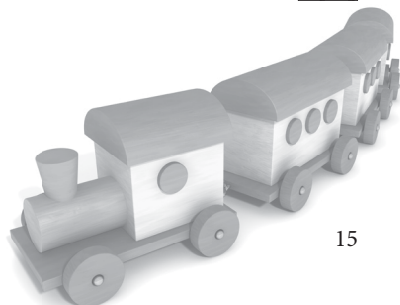
Zook, David and Ellen (Schrock), Milroy, PA, first child and daughter, Chloe Jewel, June 17, 2023.

Zook, Jason and Marla (Knicely), Mifflintown, PA, third child, first daughter, Katelyn Nicole, July 15, 2023.



Don't brag

it's not the **whistle** that pulls the train.



Miller, Oren Dale, 84, of Kalona, IA, passed away on April 21, 2023. He was born on October 27, 1938, in rural Kalona to Chriss M. and Esther A. (Gingerich) Miller. On September 15, 1960, Oren and Emma Ropp were united in marriage and lived in harmony with one another for 62 and one half years.

Oren attended school at Pleasant Hill School in rural Kalona for eight years. In his youth he accepted Jesus as his Savior and was baptized in the Amish church and was a faithful member there until he and Emma joined Sharon Bethel Church. He was a faithful member until the time of his death. They farmed the home place until Oren retired in 2018.

Oren is survived by his loving wife, Emma, and four children: Marlin Eugene (Fern), Virginia Faye, Juanita Grace, all of rural Kalona; and Jasmine Nicole Swantz, Riverside; 12 grandchildren: Melissa (Marcus) Gingerich, Free Union, VA; Angie (Marcus) Beachy, Kalona; Debra (Ray) Garza, Kalona; Kimberly (Merlin) Miller, Washington; Cheryl (Wes) Barkman, Washington; Isaiah Swantz, Iowa City; Tyler Swantz, Katelyn Swantz, both of Kalona; Cassandra Swantz, Emerson Swantz, and Danika Swantz, all of Keota; Ezekiel Feickert, Riverside; 10 great-grandchildren, Haley, Mariah, and Savannah Gingerich; Alyssa, Makenna, and Tyson Beachy; Nakia, Lance, and Hadassah Miller; and Riley

Garza. He is also survived by sisters: Edna (Wallace) Borntreger, Lillian (John) Miller, both of Kalona; brother, Norman (Elma) Miller, Middlebury, IN; brother-in-law, Calvin Yoder, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Oren Dale was preceded in death by his parents, Chriss and Esther Miller; sisters: Erma (Miller) Yoder, Ellen Miller; infant grandson, Luke, son of Marlin and Fern; great-granddaughter, Jocelyn, daughter of Marcus and Missy, and brother-in-law, Wallace Borntreger.

A funeral service was held April 25, 2023, at the Sharon Bethel Church with the local ministry officiating. Interment followed in the church cemetery.

Miller, Thomas D., 72, Grove City, MN, passed away peacefully at North Memorial Hospital in Robbinsdale, MN, on June 24, 2023, after receiving serious internal injuries from a fall. He was born on December 10, 1950, to David and Susana (Herschberger) Miller in Kokomo, IN.

Thomas was a faithful member and supporter of Believers Fellowship Church. He had a heart for missions and enjoyed a trip to Ukraine for a work project and to see the CAM mission firsthand.

In his early years he helped with the family farm and with many neighbors in the area. He served at a nursing home in

Three Rivers, MI, where he made lifelong friends. He worked at the Grove City Elevator, Anderson Crane in Litchfield, and installed equipment for Gillis Ag. Systems.

Thomas enjoyed farming, auctions, and visiting with family and friends. He will be remembered for his kindness, generosity, and for being the favorite uncle who passed out Gummi bears and the man who gave Smarties to children after church.

Thomas was preceded in death by his parents, nephews: Leonard Yoder and Samuel Miller; two great-nieces: Krista Miller and Abigail Burkholder; and one great-nephew, Jordan Miller.

Thomas is survived by his siblings: Neoma (Jerry) Miller, Eden Valley; Mose (Mary), Crossville, TN; Levi (SarahMae), Bloomfield, IN; Homer (MaryAnn), Millersburg, OH; Sara Miller, Litchfield; Anna (Marcus) Yoder and Jesse, both of Grove City; Nancy (Steve) Stoll, Oden, IN; David Jr. (Esther), Lexington, IN; Earl (Trish), Crosshill, SC; Glen (Laura), London, OH; Mary (Tim) Edmonson, Annandale; many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and two great-great-nephews.

The funeral service was held June 29, 2023, at the Paynesville Evangelical Free Church for Believers Fellowship Church. Burial followed in the Burr Oak Cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Mary, 91, of Leesburg, OH, went to be with her Lord and Savior on June 26, 2023, at her home. She was born

May 17, 1932, to the late John and Sarah King. She was united in holy matrimony to Dan Z. Stoltzfus, with whom she enjoyed over 50 years of marriage.

Mary was a member of the Faith and Light Mennonite Church in Leesburg.

Mary is lovingly remembered by her nine children: Melvin (Mollie Yoder), Annie (David) Stoltzfus, Naomi (Omar) Beiler, John (Amanda Swarey), Nancy (Amos) Stoltzfus, Daniel (Wilma Zook), Ivan (Katrina Byers), Mary Ann (the late Jonathan) Zook, and Barbie (Bob) Peachey. She was blessed with 66 grandchildren, 129 great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren.

Mary was preceded in death by her husband, Dan, five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

The funeral was held June 29, 2023, at Faith and Light Mennonite Church. The burial followed in the church cemetery.

Yutzy, Sarah Helen, 92, peacefully passed away in her home on June 11, 2023. She was born to Jacob and Katie (Troyer) Yutzy on July 5, 1930.

She is survived by her sister, Katie, Plain City; and lots of nieces and nephews.

Sarah was preceded in death by her parents, four sisters: Edna (Dan) Helmuth, Amanda (Ralph) Kramer, Mary (Andy) Miller, Emma Yutzy; and three brothers: Gideon, Jonas, and Eli.

The funeral service was held June 14, 2023, at Canaan Fellowship Church. The burial followed in the church cemetery.



In 1976 a peanut farmer from Georgia was elected as the 39th President of the United States. Jimmy Carter's term began in January of 1977 and ended four years later. His leadership was not looked on very favorably by many. He failed to win reelection.

After he left the Oval Office he sought to use his influence to bolster democracy around the globe. He served as a monitor of elections in various far-flung parts of the world in an effort to build confidence in the legitimacy of the process of transparent and free elections. He was also quite active in doing volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity after he left office. While this is difficult to quantify, I suspect he enjoyed more widespread appreciation as an elder statesman after he left office than what he experienced as a sitting president.

On July 7 of this year, Jimmy and Rosalynn observed their 77th wedding anniversary! Jimmy is 98 and Rosalynn is 95. This column is not a political commentary, so I'm not commenting on Carter's policies. But I do find the example of philanthropy and the marital fidelity that the Carters have demonstrated encouraging and inspirational. Many

former presidents have chosen to use the visibility and platform to make a lot of money-making speeches, etc. The example that Jimmy and Rosalynn are leaving is quite a breath of fresh air when compared to the example of other former presidents who have left office since Jimmy did.

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While we're on the subject of wedding anniversaries, Lee and Renee Wilson were married on August 10, 1973. Lee wondered what he should get his wife for their 50th wedding anniversary this year. The couple resides near the town of Pratt in south-central Kansas. The official state flower for Kansas is the sunflower.

Knowing that his wife is very fond of sunflowers, Lee had an inspiration. Back in May he planted an 80-acre field of sunflowers and kept it a secret from his wife. The planting date was timed with the expected maturity of the flowers so that the field would be in full bloom over the time of their anniversary. His wife did learn about the field of sunflowers before the milestone anniversary and was very pleased with her husband's thoughtful gesture. Lee indicated that he didn't expect to repeat this exercise another year. He thought

it might be nice to let someone else take a turn.

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The Los Angeles International Airport recently banned the use of single-use plastic water bottles in the facility. It is anticipated that this will be expanded to include all beverages in the future. The planners hope to reach a point of zero waste by the year 2045. I am not clear how exactly they define “zero waste,” but it is a term that is tossed around a bit.

Los Angeles has become the second airport in the USA to implement this policy by joining San Francisco. The current ban doesn’t apply to beverage cartons, recyclable aluminum cans, or to glass bottles. Neither does it apply to beverages served aboard aircraft that fly into and out of Los Angeles. Still, it is hoped that eliminating their use in the airport and its 32 million passengers each year will make a sizable dent in the amount of plastic waste that is generated through retail efforts at that location.

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David Curry is the president and CEO of Global Christian Relief, an organization that focuses on the plight of Christians persecuted around the world. He writes that Pakistan, where Islam is the primary religion, is one of the countries most hostile to minority religions including Christians.

Hindus and Sikhs are among the minority religions targeted by those carrying out the various forms of religious discrimination and outright persecution. The persecution that occurs includes forced conversion and marriage of teen girls, indentured servitude, abductions, beatings, imprisonment, and execution.

Curry reports that in May of this year a Catholic man by the name of Babar Sandhu Masih heard a commotion outside his house situated in the city of Lahore. Upon investigation, he found his neighbor beating Masih’s 18-year-old son and another Christian boy about 14 years old. The accusation was that they were disrespecting the prophet Muhammad. The two who received the beating emphatically denied that this was the case, but they were arrested anyhow by local police and charged under the blasphemy laws of Pakistan. A guilty verdict for this type of charge has resulted in capital punishment in some cases.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom currently reports that at least 50 Christians and other religious minority adherents are imprisoned in Pakistan specifically as a result of being charged with blasphemy. An unreported number of these have already been sentenced to death.

The religious persecution in Pakistan is getting worse and not easing, according to those who attempt to monitor the situation.

The Hebrew writer reminds us in chapter 13, verse 3, *“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”*

• • • • •

The United Methodist Church has approximately 30,000 congregations in the USA. There has been an increasing amount of discussion and disagreement over how to faithfully respond to LGBTQ practice within the United Methodist Church. The national conference outlined a means by which congregations can leave and disaffiliate with the United Methodist Church. The alternate affiliation that has been formed chose to call themselves the Global Methodist Church. Among other things, they have declared that they will never sanction the marriage nor the ordination of LGBTQ-practicing persons in their congregations, which is pretty close to the center of the disagreement.

The congregations who are pursuing this orderly transfer from the United Methodist Church to the Global Methodist Church have until the end of the current calendar year to set the wheels in motion. I am more familiar

with a congregational approach to church governance that tends to forget how complicated this extrication process can become where questions about church property ownership, employee pensions, and other material assets need to be answered when affiliations are changed.

In early discussion it was feared that as many as 50% of the congregations might choose to leave the United Methodist Church. However, in January of this year only about 1,800 of the 30,000 congregations in the USA had initiated the process. But as of June of this year, the exit had picked up considerable steam and 5,800 congregations had embarked on the extrication process and many more were still having discussions about their future.

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It is sad when those who name Christ choose to disregard clear scriptural directives. Sometimes those clear scriptural directives that are being violated seem easy to spot from a distance, as we might assume in the aforementioned controversy in the Methodist church. Sometimes other ignored directives might claim squatters’ rights in the collective blind spots of churches that are a bit closer to home for this readership. I’m thinking of things that might be a bit more difficult to identify, like the love of the

world, the love of and deceitfulness of riches, the love of the brethren, etc.

The example of unfaithfulness and the resulting discord it leaves are

not winsome to those who might be examining the authenticity and effectiveness of Christians.

- RJM 

music matters

Music That Nurtures the Soul (Part 1 of 2)

Nolan Martin, Quarryville, PA

The German blitz of London during World War 2 brought fear and uncertainty to Londoners that is unknown to most Americans. They fell asleep at night, not knowing if they would awaken or if their homes would still be standing in the morning. If they awoke, it was often to the wail of ambulance sirens and the tinkling sound of broken glass. They would sometimes smell the reeking odor of the blood of their neighbors as they found the bombed apartment next door or across the street.

Many did not have access to items such as butter, milk, meat, string, and paper. Then, the Londoners turned to what they did have: music. Myra Hess organized piano concerts in the National Gallery. Due to nighttime blackouts mandated to make it harder for German bombers to find their targets, the concerts were held five days a week at lunchtime.

People silently crowded into the empty gallery (the paintings had been moved to safer locations) and sat on the floor to listen to the music of Bach, Schubert, Mozart, and other composers. They were frightened, and the music gave them solace and delight amid their fear. It helped them face another horrible night of bombing.

This story suggests that the right kind of music can nurture the soul (mind, will, and emotions) and help sustain us when we are brought face-to-face with the brokenness of this world and the uncertainty of life. What kind of music nurtures the soul? Are there kinds that do not nurture and may instead harm the soul? After sharing the story above, Rene Clausen asked the question, "How would today's generation respond to vulnerability of this proportion? If they turned to music, what meaning and salvation might

they draw from MTV videos or the latest offerings of shocking lyrics from rappers and a host of heavy metal bands?”¹

The reaction to the Covid pandemic coupled with racial strife in the summer of 2020 gives us a clue to the answer to Clausen’s question. During the summer of 2020, vandals and looters caused over \$2 billion in damages in American cities. Could today’s popular music be a contributing factor to the outrage so prevalent in American society?

Though it is difficult to trace how music affects individuals and societies, we should be aware that music can and does affect us for good or ill. It is not neutral, as many have suggested. Music is not just sound waves hitting the ear drum. Music is sound organized within time by fallen humans.

Music affects us in at least three ways. First, music can reduce our inhibitions. An inhibition is a “restraint on the direct expression of an instinct.” Inhibitions are good when they restrain our sinful nature. But when those inhibitions are reduced through drugs, alcohol, or music, humans may give in to acts

1. Clausen, Dr. Rene. “Where Will We Find Sanctuary,” Church Music Institute. https://www.churchmusicinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Where_Will_We_Find_Sanctuary.pdf.

of debauchery that they otherwise would not.

Take, for example, the story of the children of Israel worshipping the golden calf in Exodus 32. As Moses and Joshua trudged down the mountain toward the camp, Joshua observed, “*There is a noise of war in the camp.*” Moses replied, “*It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.*” As they came near the camp, they saw the people dancing around the golden calf. If that was not disturbing enough for Moses, verse 25 states, “*Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies).*”

How did Aaron convince the people to undress? It seems probable that singing and dancing played a significant role in reducing their inhibitions. Then, all Aaron had to do was suggest the idea to a few people until the idea gained momentum.

Daniel 3 records a story of when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, used music to reduce inhibitions to idol worship. He crafted an enormous image of gold and set it up on the plain of Dura. He summoned dignitaries from every province in his empire to come to the dedication of the image. The Babylonian Symphony

Orchestra was at the dedication. A herald commanded the dignitaries to bow before the image when the orchestra started to play.

Why was the orchestra at the dedication, and why were they to give the signal for bowing to the idol? Nebuchadnezzar realized that many of the proud dignitaries from nations he conquered might be reluctant to bow before the image. So, he took precautions to reduce the chance of public defiance. He rightly understood that his hometown orchestra was one of the finest in the world, and their music could be employed to reduce inhibitions to worshiping the image and to fill the dignitaries with a sense of patriotism for the Babylonian empire and its king. And just in case this subtle approach did not work to get everyone in a patriotic mood, Nebuchadnezzar threatened the throng of dignitaries with death in the fiery furnace if they refused to bow to his image.

Even in modern times, politicians play music at their rallies. Like Nebuchadnezzar, they understand that music can subtly reduce reservations some may have about a candidate and help galvanize their support.

The orchestra played on the plain of Dura, and the throng of dignitaries

bowed down before the image, except for three young men who stood straight. The church needs men and women today who will stand straight, although music and peer pressure beguile them to sin. It would be even better to avoid such environments entirely if given the choice.

Critics may say that the Scripture texts do not explicitly say how the music influenced the listeners. The texts only record that music was performed and what the people did next. True. Many know instinctively, however, even with minimal knowledge of rock concert mania and bar room decadence, that music can significantly reduce inhibitions even in people who frequently listen to recorded music. How much greater must the impact of music have been on people who rarely if ever heard such music?

After sharing this topic at a music camp chapel, a woman came up to me and said, "You are exactly right about music reducing inhibitions. Do not let anyone doubt it." She then shared that she frequented bars with friends before becoming a Christian. Music was obviously used to reduce inhibitions to immorality, and it worked.

A second way music can affect us is by creating an atmosphere. Like our physical atmosphere, an

aural atmosphere can be healthy or polluted. Prolonged exposure to a polluted atmosphere can cause health problems, so Christians should consider how their aural atmosphere may be affecting their spiritual health.

Music is not so powerful that it can force us to do anything, but the atmosphere it creates can incline us to speak, think, or behave in ways consistent with that atmosphere. It is hard for some to believe this is true because the effects of the atmosphere happen slowly over time. You may not detect day-to-day changes caused by the atmosphere, but changes over several years will be obvious.

Lyle Stutzman illustrates this idea like this:

Compare a child who grows up in a tense atmosphere to a child who grows up in a relaxed atmosphere, and you will see big differences. But swapping atmospheres for a day will not affect either child much. Swapping atmospheres for five years will. The same is true with music. What we listen to for one day might not be a big deal, but what we listen to year after year is a big deal.²

2. Lyle Stutzman, "Musical Notes with Lyle Stutzman," interview by Troy Stauffer. Radi-Call, June 24, 2019. <https://radi-call.com/2019/06/24/musical-notes-with-lyle-stutzman-an-interview>.

Paul writes in I Corinthians 15:33, "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*" The warning "be not deceived" is given because we are tempted to believe we are so strong that we can withstand being changed by evil influences and companionships. Paul says, "Don't believe it!" The atmosphere we choose to inhabit will change us.

A third way that music can affect us is through the spirit world. A few stories in Scripture indicate that the spirit world responds to music. In a story recorded in II Chronicles 20, Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir allied to attack Judah. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, decided on the astonishing strategy of meeting them with an army led by selected singers singing "*Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth forever.*"

Notwithstanding music's power to lower inhibitions and create atmosphere, the enemy alliance would have swiftly massacred the weaponless singers in a purely physical world. Instead, God acted in response to the praise. "*When they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten*" (II Chronicles 20:22).

Paul and Silas confirm the

effectiveness of singing as a spiritual resource. While in stocks in the Philippian prison, *“Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed”* (Acts 16:25-26).

Both stories demonstrate the power of praying and singing. We recognize the power of prayer, but what if we would follow our spoken petitions with praises sung to God? The combination of praying and singing has significant influence in the throne room of God, but we too often neglect singing as a spiritual resource.

Another Bible story illustrates the power of music to chase away evil spirits. I Samuel 16 records that an evil spirit troubled Saul. The demon-chasing power of skillfully-performed harp music was already established because Saul’s servants suggested that he seek a *“cunning”* harpist. Saul accepted the suggestion, and they found David. Would David’s harp performance help Saul? It did! Verse 23 documents, *“And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so, Saul was refreshed, and was well, and*

the evil spirit departed from him.”

The harp music healed Saul in all three parts of his being. His soul was refreshed. His body was made well. And he was healed spiritually (at least somewhat) as the evil spirit departed. Such is the nurturing power of good music!

This story raises a question. Could a different kind of music have the opposite effect? Are there kinds of music that attract evil spirits rather than repel them? Though the Bible does not clearly answer this question, it is well-known that many non-Christian religions use music in idol worship or to communicate with the spirit world. For example, a central ritual of Haitian Vodou involves drumming, singing, and dancing to encourage a spirit to possess a community member and communicate with them.³

Music is wonderful! It can lift our minds and emotions in the highest praise to God. It can chase evil spirits and nurture our souls. But music can also be unhealthy and troubling to our souls. It can lower inhibitions to sin and pollute our aural atmosphere. It can invite evil spirits.

Music is not neutral. Our society is double minded on this point. On the one hand, they want to say it

³ *“Haitian Vodou.”*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian_Vodou.

does not matter what you listen to. On the other hand, businesses will spend lots of money to create just the right jingle to help sell their product. Their data indicates that this kind of investment pays off. We should agree with their evaluation that music matters.

To be continued...

The objective of part two will be

to evaluate the criteria often used to choose music and propose alternate criteria that will help us choose music that nurtures the soul.

[This two-part article was originally presented in chapel sessions held at Shenandoah Christian Music Camp's OH 2022 PermaCamp. Used by permission.]

<https://www.musiccamp.info/resources/music-that-nurtures-the-soul-part-1-of-2/>



mission awareness

Arising Light Asian Ministries

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

Some years ago Cambodia was devastated by revolutionary genocide. There was a Pentecostal mission involved in operating several orphanages and schools in Cambodia. This group was praying that Mennonites would come to assist them in meeting the great needs of this impoverished country. They thought that Mennonites would have the energy and expertise in more of a “hands on” experience.

Matthew Miller from the Living Waters Fellowship Church in Sugarcreek, OH, was contacted by the leader of this Pentecostal mission. A contact was first made by one of Matthew's relatives serving in Thailand, when he was visiting

in Loas, where he met up with the mission leader's son. This son shared with Matthew's relative about the open door in Cambodia.

Later a meeting was held by the brethren of the Living Waters Fellowship. A delegation of five men were sent to Cambodia to “spy out the land.” They decided to send two families to that country. In 2010 Matthew Millers and Larry Gingeriches (each having seven children) were willing to leave their beautiful homeland in Ohio and embark an aircraft and settle in a land with many temples and strange sights of the Buddhist religion.

The name Arising Light Asian Ministries was chosen from Isaiah

60:1: *“Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”* The light of Jesus Christ has appeared in this dark land of 17,000,000 people and 95% of these are Buddhists.

Friedrich and Renita Miller and daughter were formerly from Sugarcreek, OH. In this article Friedrich gives an important basis for missionary training. Read on...

Our Journey to Cambodia (Part 1)

*Friedrich Miller, Bakong Village,
Siem Reap, Cambodia*

Everybody has different ideas of what mission life consists of. I’ve wondered for many years what it would be like to serve in a foreign context. My wife and I have had the opportunity to experience firsthand the blessings and challenges of life in a cross-cultural setting. Our perspectives and understanding of what mission life ideally should be like is continually being shaped.

My wife and I had the opportunity to serve with AMA in our childhood years. My family served in Paraguay, South America, and Renita’s family served in Kenya, Africa. The memories of our time in these countries are still dear to us. These experiences have had a big impact on our lives and how we view missions.

In 2017, while I was serving as dean at Calvary Bible School, I had the opportunity to audit one class. I took the class “Biblical Basis for Missions” by Joel Martin. He kept coming back to the theme of glorifying God as the basis for missions. As a class we memorized Psalm 67.

*“God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us, Selah. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; **Let all the peoples praise You**”* (Psalm 67:1-3 NKJV).

God blesses us richly, and we celebrate His goodness and salvation to make His ways known and draw more people to worship Him. The quote, “Missions exist because worship doesn’t,” by John Piper, was instrumental in helping me understand this. God is jealous for His glory. He alone is worthy of all of mankind’s worship. The ultimate purpose of our lives and cross-cultural mission work is to bring more worship and glory to God. If our primary motivation in missions is to save people from going to hell, our focus then shifts from God to man. When motivations like these are at play, mission work can become an idol. All our efforts in philanthropy or evangelism must be motivated by the desire to bring

God more glory. While this may not seem that profound to you as a reader, it marked a change in my way of thinking about God and missions.

At the end of the term, I asked Joel where I can learn more about missions, and he recommended the course “Perspectives on the World Christian Movement.” It was a worthwhile course that I took online. It especially helped me see how our mission efforts in this era of mission history have been unbalanced. Most of our mission giving has been to parts of the world where the Gospel is already readily available, instead of to the two-thirds of the world where there is hardly any Christian witness. If you want to get a brief overview of these statistics, please watch and re-watch the video: “State of the World/The Task Remaining” by Global Frontier Missions. It convicted me and I decided I want to center my mission efforts on reaching the unreached people groups. What is an unreached people group? Go to The Joshua Project.com.

As all of us are aware, there are many opportunities to serve in various types of mission posts. However, we don’t have many Anabaptist mission organizations that work in the 10/40 window where the majority of the unreached people groups exist. How would God arrange it for us

to serve the unreached? We also thought it might be a challenge to get support from our local church family (Maranatha Fellowship, OH) to serve with some of the Anabaptist missions who work in the 10/40 window. My wife and I got married in 2019, and a year later ALAM (Arising Light Asian Ministries) asked if we would consider serving in Cambodia, Southeast Asia. ALAM works with the Khmer people group, which is an unreached people group. ALAM is also based out of a local Beachy church which has close ties with our home church.

As we contemplated serving with ALAM, the board offered us a six-week in-country visit to observe the work. After this trip we could more clearly share our perspectives of the work with all our friends, family, and our home church. They were then very supportive of us joining the work in Cambodia. This has been a huge blessing! This marked the beginning of our journey as a couple into cross-cultural work.

Once we committed to serving with ALAM, the board also offered six weeks of training at MTC (Mission Training Center) in New York City. We were so privileged to receive this training! They offered teaching on team relationships, language learning, church planting, evangelism, cross-cultural relationships, religious-

specific break-out classes, how to avoid burn-out, and much more. We got to hear and speak with Anabaptist missionaries who have had years of mission experience. Looking back over the past year and a half of our time in Cambodia, we see that this training is so valuable. We continue to experience the benefits of having received this training. If you are considering involvement in foreign missions, we highly recommend that you consider pursuing some training.

It's been humbling and inspiring to see God's power at work as He orchestrated events in our lives and made it possible for us to serve here in Cambodia. God can open doors

that are outside of our control! At the end of this section I want to give this reminder: As God calls us to follow Him into the world, He is faithful to provide us with all we need to glorify Him and make His name great! “[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for **His** good pleasure and satisfaction and delight” (Philippians 2:13 AMPC).

In the next issue (Lord willing) we hope to share more about our observations of mission life and what God has been teaching us here in Cambodia.



A Woman After God's Heart

Sift Well

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



Some years ago, I served at a maternity clinic in another country. We received layette bundles to distribute, one for every new baby. Some of the bundles were obviously masculine, others decidedly feminine and then there were those we called “eithers.” I specifically remember one *either*

bundle with diapers, small items of clothing and a blanket, sewn from the most obscene shade of brown material, at least in our opinion. I supposed the donors of the bundle had kindly given as they were able, but I also felt it would have been a grace if the receiving mama could have been color blind.

Today I blink in wonderment at that same obnoxious brown popping up on babies, in classy occasions, and in fine wardrobes. I mention this somewhat in humor because it is not a moral issue, but I marvel at how our tastes evolve. Who says? Who gets to determine beauty's color? Is it all relative? Does Grandma get to say? Does Mommy? Do the trendy retailers set the standard? The media, perhaps?

We might expound on the avocado green fridges and harvest gold stoves of the 70s that some of us grin about in our memories. Or the dark charcoal walls of the recent past compared to the whites of today. One of my young friends gladly showed me her newer-style photographs she'd ordered, but blinked in surprise when I said that's exactly how my 1918 mother's photos were: square, with white borders. I hear my dad quoting Solomon and some other sage, "There is nothing new under the sun. What goes around comes around."

The colors on our walls and in our closets seem harmless enough. Surely there couldn't be a scheme behind the retailer's madness? They say they care about us and just want us to be happy. But there's more. The faster they change what's in and what's out, the faster we empty our pockets

into theirs.

Primarily, it seems that a retailer's first motivation would be to relieve us of some of our money in exchange for their goods. I am a retailer, familiar with tactics used to convince a possible customer that he or she needs what we have to offer. In a small way our store also sells our worldview by maintaining a no-Santa, no-tobacco, jewelry-free presentation, and offering Christian greeting cards. However, our small country store probably has no noticeable influence on our customers in those matters because they can readily shop elsewhere.

But let's think about the massive chain stores who have another kind of value system **and** influence **and** platform in which to get their message across. If we are sifting well, we are catching on that their motivation is not *only* about selling their products but about selling a value system and creating a mindless base of loyal clients who buy first and think second.

Jesus said in Luke 16:15: "*For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.*" Paraphrased by M. Lehman, "If the world values something highly, it's suspect." When the world espouses a practice, be aware. Wary, in fact. (I speak of *response*, though, and not

reaction.) I suggest that we scrutinize and study and question and sift and analyze those choices that call to us from shopping aisles, the latest magazines, and splashy ads. Might there sometimes be more than first meets our eye?

The world intends to influence us in many more ways than how we order our wardrobe. They tell us how to feed our families, how to spend our free time, and how to assert ourselves. At best it tries to tell us which house plants are *fashionable*. And at worst, it has the audacity to tell us that *parenting* dogs is superior to bearing sons and daughters. It would have us believe that age is unattractive.

As women after God's heart, do we mentally sift and process before we allow ourselves to be manipulated into thoughtless consumers of the newest trend around the bend? Are we eager to embrace what is new and different and praised by the trendy set who disdains *what we've always done*? Is there a value system we've unconsciously begun to love? Or are we thoughtful, with a degree of measured suspicion and careful speculation?

The news stories about gender confusion in our world are alarming. We cluck our tongues and suggest that the world has never been darker.

We feel like patting our own backs because this is an easy one, since in our Anabaptist culture, it's like we *shout* our gender identity. After all, our men wear facial hair and our ladies wear skirts and veils; thank the good Lord.

I'll share an example of some sifting I've done in the recent past. So, is it just happenstance that a young mother announces, "Pink and blue for babies is so old-fashioned? Gray is the loveliest new baby color!" Small florals on men and boys is now appropriate when a short time ago it would have been labeled effeminate. Leggings on little girls are excellent modesty, but what if the leggings beckon shorter skirts? Lots of baby names work for both genders. Does gender need to have color or distinction? Is it a *thing* or isn't it?

The stores who long held the enemy's values have just recently become more deliberate with their depraved value system. Now it's easier to see the diet they've actually been feeding us for quite some time. Is it a *gray area* to suggest that new grays replacing old blues and pinks could be part of a subtle cultural agenda to blur the distinction between our boys and our girls?

This is the article I was wishing someone else would write. Someone with more tactful wisdom. For sure,

someone with a word from the Lord. But the more I attempted to quiet this voice, the louder it grew. In a concluding question, may I call us to critical thinking and careful discernment? Do we use a figurative sifter as we read, absorb, and listen?

Several suggestions for helpful filters could be: *does this put me or God on display? Am I buying or grasping to satisfy a vague inner hunger?* A wise friend, a husband, or grandma would probably help us

sift—if we ask.

If we sift well, the finished product is wonderfully finer. The witness of our lives is clearer, more distinctly outlining the image and characteristics of the Redeemer God we want to draw attention to. Sifting is not a negative or damaging process. It is beautifully empowering as it contradicts the world's tired search for approval with our joyful and secure identity as women after God's heart.



junior messages

Cambodia

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

On our first trip to Asia we traveled to Cambodia to visit Friedrich and Renita, friends from our church who are missionaries. It was so fascinating to be there and observe their customs, climate, and culture.

As soon as we stepped out of the aircraft, a blanket of hot air settled heavily over us. We think Cambodia wins as the warmest country we have visited.

In Cambodia they don't shake hands or give a hug to greet people. Rather, they place both hands

together and hold them up to their faces with a slight bow of respect.

On the road there were many small motos (motorcycles), driven by men or women. The traffic, tuk-tuks, vehicles, and cycles all just flowed together smoothly. There was no hurry in Siem Reap, it seemed, and no impatient blasting of horns.

I have always appreciated the beauty of tropical trees, plants, and flowers. The plumeria's sweet blossoms perfumed the air. We enjoyed drinking fresh coconut milk and the fresh coconut meat

dug out of the shell. Small bananas, large, sweet mangos, dragon fruits, papayas, pineapples, and more are delightful foods.

We toured a fishing village with houses on tall stilts. We drove on dry dirt roads through the village. During the rainy season that village is flooded, and the children go to school by boat. Women the world over love beauty. There were houseplants on many of the high verandas.

The market in Siem Reap is huge. I appreciate locally crafted goods and purchased hand-woven baskets. At the fabric shop we slipped out of our sandals to enter. We passed through the meat market where raw meat was hanging in the heat without refrigeration. I didn't linger with those smells and sights assaulting my senses. I was amazed at the many stands of bright, glittering jewelry.

The rainy season was just starting. A tropical deluge with crashing thunder blew in one evening. The rain pounded so loudly on the tin roof that conversation was difficult. With the rain came frogs, hopping about. When the rain slowed down we heard the frogs croaking out a grand chorus. I researched and learned that the ones I saw were banded bull frogs. Someone with a flashlight was walking beside the mission property. He was a

frog hunter. The frogs are caught, skinned, and chopped to be fried with vegetables, or grilled whole, impaled, and served on a stick.

We stayed at Isaan Lodge in Siem Reap for a SALT Forum. We met missionaries who serve in Asian countries and were encouraged together.


Cambodians love rice. We had rice three meals a day. It was usually served with eggs, beef, chicken, shrimp, or octopus. They enjoy many unique foods, including insects, spiders, and snakes.

We had a wonderful lunch, coffee drinks, and conversation at a nice restaurant on the way to the airport. Our three suitcases were on the bed of an open truck. Friedrich said the suitcases will be fine. We didn't lock them in the cab. That seemed unwise. I was happily relieved to see our suitcases had not disappeared when we came out of the restaurant. That amazed me. The Cambodia culture is truly polite and gentle.

Frederick stopped at a park and pointed out large fruit bats hanging high in the trees. Fruit bats can weigh up to three pounds and have a wing span of over five feet! They don't attack people. Instead, some people kill and eat the bats. Bats eat many insects and are good for the ecosystem.

We saw numerous Buddhist temples and orange-robed monks. Despite the gentle culture, there is an underlying current of fear and superstition. Most houses have a small shrine out front where they place food for deceased relatives.

People who walk in the darkness of heathen religions need to see the

great Light of Jesus. May they come to know His love and care. Jesus said we should pray for the Lord of harvest to send forth reapers or workers. There is work for God wherever we live. God bless the courageous men and women who serve Him in Cambodia. Pray for them. Pray for the work of God in lands far away. 

youth messages

Fifteen Years

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

You shuffle forward in a line with the others you came with. You do not know their names and you don't really want to. Shackles bind your wrists and ankles. You've just arrived on a transport to what will be your home for the next 15 years. Privacy, personal belongings, travel, and freedom are non-existent. Electrified fences, razor wire, bleak concrete walls, steel bars, and bland uniforms will be your reality for the next 15 years. Visits with family will be rare and supervised. Relationships other than close family will likely fade. You are no longer in control of your life. Your activities are scheduled for you and closely monitored. You are told when to eat, when to sleep, where you can

go, and what you can do. Freedom is no longer a word that you can relate to.

Why? Why are you here? How did you end up in this place? You didn't murder anyone. You didn't steal anything. You committed no financial fraud of any kind. You simply opened an app on your phone, downloaded a video, and forwarded it to someone. Less than two months later, you are sitting on your prison bunk staring at a 15-year prison sentence and wondering where it all went wrong.

I pray that none of you reading this will ever face this situation. Unfortunately, this is the reality of someone whom I know. One downloaded pornographic video has

altered his life forever. He knows he was wrong and admits he shouldn't have done what he did. As I sit and contemplate his reality and the choice he made that resulted in his arrest and sentencing, I realize a few things. First, this wasn't the first wrong choice he made. This was just one wrong choice in a long line of wrong choices, and many of those choices seemed insignificant at the time. Second, it made me question how many people I cross paths with every day who are doing the same thing—making small compromises that lead to bigger ones. Maybe they are only one poor choice away from being in the same shoes. Maybe they are two or three steps away. Being born with a sin nature, our first instinct (like Adam and Eve) is to try to cover up when we cross that line. Our sin nature continually pushes us toward that line.

How far away are you? How close have you come to crossing that line (either intentionally or unwittingly)? Maybe you haven't crossed a line, but you have a few gray areas that you've stumbled into. Perhaps you've answered a call or opened a message from someone you do not recognize. Do you realize how dangerous that can be? Obviously, I've been implying actions and behaviors involving immoral things. We all know that

these things are wrong. We label such things as gross sin. We would never dream of getting involved. Perhaps we end up in the other ditch, feeling pride in the pure life that we portray to others. Are we really as far from the line as we think we are?

Unfortunately, over the years, I have seen these immoral things damage individuals' lives and destroy brotherhood congregations. I have also seen gossip, jealousy, and unforgiveness do just as much or more damage to the brotherhood. I am not trying to downplay the seriousness of moral sin; I'm trying to impress on us the seriousness of sins that run rampant in the Church today. How often do we disguise gossip by saying, "I'm only telling you this so you can pray about it," or "I'm telling you because I know that it won't go any further?" How often do we become jealous over someone else's opportunities, possessions, or relationships? How often do we hold on to bitterness when we have been wronged? We say we've forgiven, but we continue to mull over what happened and don't extend forgiveness and another chance. We "bury the hatchet" so to speak, but we leave the handle sticking up so we can find it again.

Where would we be if those sins held the same penalty in society as

the one that resulted in my friend going to prison. I dare say that if gossip and unforgiveness resulted in jail time, then all of us would be in prison. The sobering fact is that those sins (if not repented of) do have the same penalty—not in society but in eternity. It's often easy to overlook the sins of the mind and attitude as not being as serious as some others. The truth is, sin is sin and the penalty for unrepented sin is eternity without God. Fifteen years suddenly doesn't look very long in light of eternity, does it?

What can we do to ensure that we don't end up like my friend? Recently, while studying Matthew 26, specifically the arrest and trial of Jesus, I ran across a list of three things that led to Peter's denial of Christ. Peter chose himself over identifying with Christ, just as we choose ourselves when we choose to sin against God and others. Peter denied Christ and ended up weeping bitterly after Christ turned and looked at him.

The first mistake Peter made was being self-confident. Take a look at Matthew 26:33-35, "*Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt*

deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples." Peter was so confident that he wouldn't do what Christ said that he argued with Christ. Only a short time before Peter had testified that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and now he was disagreeing with Him. Our human nature is to think we have it all together and that we will have the strength to do the right thing when the opportunity arises. Peter was counting on his loyalty and love for Christ to help him and it wasn't enough.

Secondly, Peter didn't pray. When Jesus and the disciples went to Gethsemane, Jesus took Peter, James, and John apart from the other disciples and asked them to watch and pray with Him. Instead of praying, they slept. Perhaps if Peter had been praying, God may have given him the strength to be faithful.

The third mistake Peter made is mentioned in Matthew 26:58, "*But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.*" Peter was following Jesus afar off. Do we do the same thing? Do we want to identify with Jesus but not **really** identify as one of His followers in the eyes of the world? Do we think it's too dangerous to follow Jesus

closely? Sometimes following Jesus is dangerous. Whenever you follow Jesus at a distance and warm yourself by the fires of the world, you are going to find problems cropping up in your life.

In the next part of the story Peter denies Jesus, the rooster crows, and Peter realizes what he's done. *"And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly"* (Matthew 26:75). Picture this big, burly, sunburned, aggressive, and passionate fisherman weeping bitterly. I think this was something that Peter needed. Without Peter realizing his error, and seeing who he really was in the eyes of God, he may never have become broken. He may never have become the church leader that he later became. Peter had to understand the man that he was if he ever wanted to become the man that Jesus wanted him to be. Once he realized that he was nothing without Christ, then Christ could use him in a mighty way. The same goes for us. Unless we look into God's Word and see ourselves for who we really are, we will never be the people whom God created us to be. Peter would have been nothing without Christ. My goal is not to disparage Peter; God did great things for the church

through him. Just imagine what more he might have done had he not denied Christ.

We do well to guard ourselves against the mistakes that Peter made.

First, we need to realize our need of relying on God for strength and not on our own. Solomon said, ***"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil."*** Proverbs 3:5-7.

Second, we need to pray. The song writer, Sally Deford, penned the words, "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath." Without oxygen our bodies fail to function properly and we die. Without prayer we as Christians will die spiritually.

Third, we need to stay close to Jesus. Like Peter, we don't become Christians and then miraculously we are always close to Him. Staying close to Jesus takes effort. It is a daily journey to stay with Christ as He continues to lead us on the narrow way to eternity and away from the line of compromise. *"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."* John 10:9

"But for the grace of God, there go I."



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Always try to be a little kinder than necessary.

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Kindness pays most when you don't do it for pay.

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Other people see your deeds. God sees your motives.

• • • • •

Where you go and what you do tell people what you are.

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The greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising every time we fall.

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It isn't how high in life you go that counts but how you got there.

• • • • •

A friend is one who puts his finger on a fault without rubbing it in.

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Patience is the ability to count down before blasting off.

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Too many people are humble and proud of it.

• • • • •

God still speaks to those who take time to listen.

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It is better to be faithful than to be famous.