



Calvary messenger

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

Galatians 6:14

MARCH 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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Love and Grace Abound

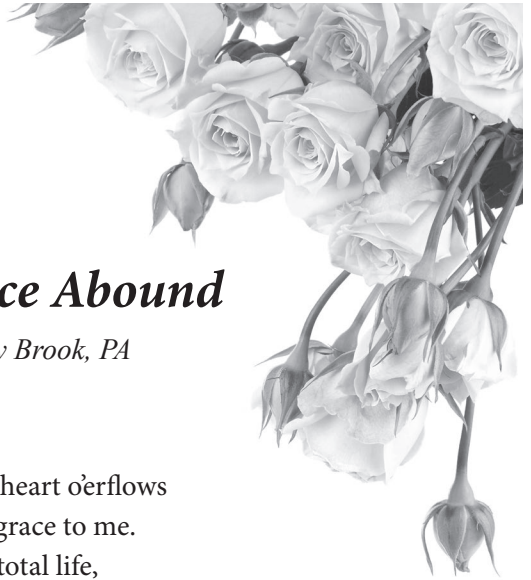
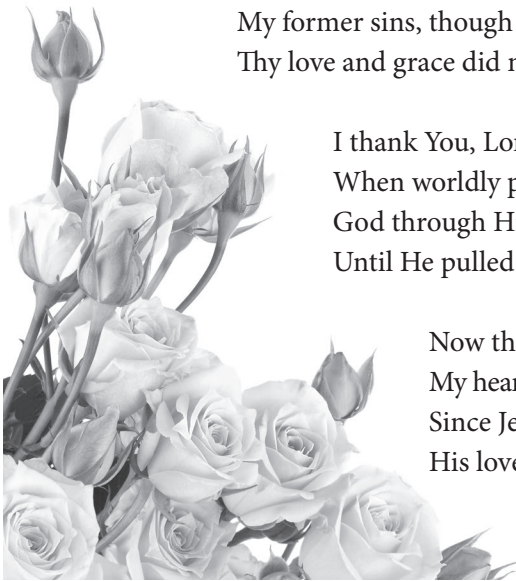
Enos King, Honey Brook, PA

O God, my grateful heart o'erflows
For Your abundant grace to me.
When yielded I my total life,
The ruler of my heart was Thee.

I gave myself to God's control,
And peace from God I found.
My former sins, though great they were,
Thy love and grace did more abound.

I thank You, Lord, for chast'ning me
When worldly pleasures held me back.
God through His Spirit worked on me
Until He pulled me back on track.

Now these desires have lost allure;
My heart and life with peace is crowned.
Since Jesus covered all my sins,
His love and grace will still abound.



Chasing Two Rabbits

An ancient proverb says that if someone tries to catch two rabbits at the same time, both creatures get away. That principle holds true in other aspects of life.

We cannot give our highest loyalty to more than one person or cause. How sad for the person whose marriage partner has not resolved to maintain exclusive matrimonial devotion.

Total commitment to Christ requires an unwavering, unreserved commitment to Christ. Self-centeredness, such as strong personal desires for wealth, popularity, or recognition will replace primary commitment to Christ. It is certainly natural for us to desire earthly success. A commitment to honorable financial principles is good, but if that grows until it becomes a desire for great riches, it strangles faithfulness to Christ. Wanting to be “on top of the pile” with either wealth or recognition moves faithfulness to Christ out of first place.

One day Jesus’ disciples were excited because they had cast out evil

spirits. Jesus told them that the right reason for joy is not in possessing spectacular abilities but in having one’s name written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

Joy eludes the one who professes Christ (and who may actually desire goodness), but is held in the grip of a desire to be wealthy or famous. A person of good works may want a good name, but we labor in vain if this desire does not come from a pure desire to honor the name of Christ, from exposure to God’s Word, and from prayerfully seeking God’s will. Seeking God’s approval brings us vastly different outcomes than seeking people’s approval.

As a rabbit hunter fails to get two at once, so a divided heart cannot pursue two Number One goals. Wanting more than one thing supremely is like a man straddling a fence, because he so fervently wants what is on both sides of the fence. Progress is impossible. The mental images of a person trying to catch two rabbits at a time or walking with one foot on each side of the fence would be comical if it were not so pathetic.

What “rabbits” might we chase? What “fence” might we straddle? What unworthy goals can occupy our minds? Is it upward mobility? A certain possession? Desire for influence and prominence? Even if people don’t catch on, we can’t fool God.

Jesus affirmed the man who quoted God’s law about supreme devotion as, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind” (Luke 10:27). Jesus then added the second great commandment: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Our commitment to having God in first place must be clear. He fits in no other place except in first place. Our needs, our goals, and our dreams—what we want for ourselves—must come after that. Then, when noting our neighbor’s needs, goals, and dreams alongside our own, we are in a position to love our neighbor as ourselves. Such selfless concern comes from a heart that loves God supremely.

God’s approval and blessing is the only goal worth pursuing. Let’s go for it! Let’s give it our best effort! Otherwise, we’ll be empty-handed in the hunt.

We tend to rate our goals as more noble than they are. We must ask

God to help us see ourselves. We must ask Him to help us arrange our priorities. When we don’t bow low at His feet, we may push out the chest and think that we, not God, must rule our little empire.

We pursue the first rabbit. Getting the second rabbit (loving our neighbor) comes as a result of pursuing the first rabbit (loving God). God gives the second one as reward for pursuing the first one. When we love God supremely, He gives us concern for our neighbor and we treat him like we like to be treated. If we discover that a neighbor has experienced loss, we try to help him recover his losses.

So let’s move to the right side of the fence. Let’s pursue just one rabbit. Lost joy in life and empty hands in the hunt both indicate that we have “run in vain,” and “laboured in vain” (Phil. 2:16b). But when Jesus reigns in our lives as Lord of all, we can expect outcomes that come with seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and having Him add his blessings which we long for but cannot produce by ourselves.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (1 Cor. 7:1).

— PLM 


Re: Modesty: Do We need a Wake-up Call? Dec., 2011.

I'd suggest a wake-up call is long past due. Brothers and Sisters, where are we headed? Why not be content with humility instead of trying to break down the fences? Seems like the churches would be much happier and it would make it much more pleasant for the leaders and parents. Why not walk in humble obedience?

True, clothes and dress will never save a person, but the outward appearance speaks loudly about the heart. May God richly bless those who have chosen to walk in obedience to the Word of God. I'd

like to encourage each one to think twice before promoting a new fad: Of what value is it? Is it a good example for the weaker ones? What am I demonstrating about myself?


May we seek first the Kingdom of God and use our desires to bring honor and glory to Him. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16, 17).

A concerned sister
Please withhold my name 

Ministers' Meetings 2012

The Annual Beachy Ministers' Meetings are scheduled for **April 3-5, 2012, Lord willing**, at **United Bethel Mennonite Church, Plain City, OH**, hosted by the Beachy churches of Plain City.

Committee meetings will also be held at United Bethel on Monday and Tuesday, April 2 & 3. For meeting room reservations, those needing a time slot during the business sessions, and anyone needing display tables and booth space, please contact Vernon Miller (614) 205-3406 alicenvernon@gmail.com or Ray Stutzman (614) 395-7401 amapc@iwaynet.net.

Ministers Meeting Registration will be done by e-mail. If you did not receive a registration e-mail, please submit your registration along with any changes to your contact information to: baministers@gmail.com. E-mail registration is preferred, however, if you do not have access to e-mail, you can register by phone. Contact Dwayne Stoltzfus at (614) 406-1118. 

Our Parochial Witness

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

A man sells Shaklee products out of his home. He puts up a sign: “Shaklee products are needed by everyone.” He is well stocked. One room of his house carries a full line of Shaklee products on its many shelves, obviously dedicated to that purpose. A desk is devoted to Shaklee with a number of loose leaf binders, chock full of promotions and sales pitches. One of them is from the company president himself making stirring appeals of how to generate more sales and win trips out of this world. Another binder contains mind-dazzling testimonials of the great physical benefits of Shaklee.

A man and his wife stop in to inquire. The Shaklee representative is surprised that anyone would stop in to ask about his products. He doesn’t know what to say. He stammers and stutters about this unexpected turn of events. Why, hundreds of people pass his house every day and no one ever stops in! True story? No. True to life? No, 100 times no! Shaklee and other sales people know their lines. They are given to speaking of their products, whether or not they have

been asked!

I have a desk largely devoted to Bible study, sermon preparation, and Christian writing. I have numerous file drawers full of Bible-related materials. And then, my books—well, I have shelves and shelves of books. What don’t I have? I have no sign out by the road that tells whom I belong to, or whom I represent. It seems that Shaklee has me beat. So let us consider whether our witness is too “parochial.” (Parochial: “being restricted to a small area or scope; narrow, limited; provincial.” New World Dictionary)

Our Gospel witness is well attended on Sunday at our church. Sunday afternoon jail service and singing at the local rest home have eager audiences. Our six-day work week is too hurried to stop and talk. We have to keep moving to make everything click and to synchronize with our neighbor’s clicking! Here are three ideas about our Gospel witness; it should include being *vocal*, *local* and *focal*.

A Vocal Witness

One Mennonite minister in our area routinely asks people, “Are you

born again?” Then he asks those who say they are, “Where do good works come in, in a Christian’s life?” This man’s witness isn’t on Sunday at church, mind you. This is his six-days-a-week word of witness to salesmen, and other business people who stop in. He does it in a natural, personable tone of voice because he just naturally does it.

In the early church, the witnesses for Christ were told to shut up. They responded with, “We cannot *but* speak ...,” even at the risk of persecution or jail. By contrast, in today’s church, when someone is asked to teach a Bible school class, or give a topic on Sunday evening, some will say, “I cannot speak.” One person who was asked to share a devotional meditation at church said he would need at least a week to prepare. A minimum response in witnessing is being ready always to give an answer to every man of the reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear. (1 Peter 3:15) We know the part of fear well enough, but perhaps *meekness* is replaced with just plain *weakness*. Too many of God’s children are handling their parochial witness “with *weakness* and fear.” The pattern in Paul’s epistles is that he witnessed to the unsaved and prayed for the saints. Today’s church witnesses to the saints and prays for the unsaved!

Robert Keller came to our farm to buy some cabbage one day. He backed up his rickety old Ford car to our shed, seemed to roll out of the driver’s seat because of an oversized girth, and opened conversation with, “Are you saved?” I thought, *You don’t look like a Christian; I should be asking you!* Robert explained that his erstwhile sinner friends tell him he’s letting himself get into this Christian thing too deep. His belly shook as he laughed and said, “I love Jesus. I can’t get into it deep enough!” He was excited. He was saved. No one needed to tell him that as a Christian you needed to be vocal.

A Local Witness

Shaklee sales are not promoted by their reps having to travel to San Francisco, Honolulu, Paris, or London. They live locally, are basically at home, do business from their house, and generate sales from local folks.

We send VS’ers to Hillcrest Home to be a witness there. That is a place where one can really get into witnessing. We send our own church families to El Salvador, Paraguay, or Kenya. The farther we send them, the more likely they are to be really good witnesses of the Gospel, right? No. We are what we are because of who we are—wherever we are!

Being vocal for Christ wherever we are and to whomever we meet is being faithful witnesses. That

rises above being merely parochial witnesses. Witnessing, foreign workers say, is not done more easily 2,000 miles from home than it is at home. The true nature of our witness becomes local wherever we go, even on summer vacation.

Conference and seminar speakers are needed, but the work of local witness is promoted most of all by local people in the local church. Evangelists have done much good but it is the local church that provides the impetus for church growth. Missionaries are to be recognized as coming closer to a localized witness in their assignments to time and place. But it takes just as much effort to be a witness in Kenya as it does at the flea market in Shipshewana.

As is the case in other places, our Weavertown church is planning for another outreach church. People will move to a new non-Mennonite location and establish a local witness for the Gospel. It means sacrifice, hard work, separation from family and friends. Why would anyone leave their comfortable and established communities for this? The call of God is to extend our witness for Christ to a *new local*.

Local is where we live, work, and do our shopping, set up shop or office. We know others, and they learn to know us. Our sphere of influence is mostly local, where we are known. Being gracious and

friendly is a part of our witness. Giving good measure and making reasonable charge for our work or service certainly adds favorably to our local witness. It would make no sense at all if we were cheating and chiseling in money matters, then to speak of our Lord Jesus.


Our Focal Witness

A vocal witness is effective because conversation is our main connection with people. People can see we are different, but it will hardly occur to them that it is because of Christ in our lives. How will they know unless they are told? They won't. We must be *vocal* to witness for Christ. A local witness is effective because we all share in the same troubled economy, the same undesirable geography, the same local political mess, the same whatever else. We live "local." We can rise above economic downturn, petty politics, and bothersome zoning laws. Being local, we understand. But being more than nominally Christian, we can thank God for what we have, who He is to us all, and the privileges we have despite some irritating circumstances. We live *local* and are *vocal*.

But our witness in the Gospel is not complete without this focal point—Jesus Christ! He is the focal point of our witness. Jesus is the one who makes the difference in our lives. Perhaps we need to be refreshed on that point so we talk

more about Him, like the Apostles or the Mennonite pastor or Robert Keller. It is possible to be vocal, and local, and miss being focal. Letting people see us and our good works, they may praise us. The spotlight is on us. But telling them we are who we are because of Jesus and His Word, then the spotlight is where it truly belongs—on Jesus our Savior, and

on God, our Creator.

The Bottom Line is the call of God to be a witness of His mercies and grace and the needed salvation in Christ for every person is more than a parochial calling. It is vocal—more needs to be spoken of Christ. It is local—among our neighbors. It has a focal point—centering on Jesus Christ and all aspects of his Lordship. 

Ministers' Meeting Messages — 2011

This is condensation of the final message given at our annual ministers' meetings held at Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Gordonville, PA, on April 5-7, 2011. The complete set of CD's may be ordered from Victory Music Services, P.O. Box 1498, North Highlands, CA, 95660 (Phone: 443-480-1489), for \$50, postpaid.

9. The Major Decision

Tim Miller, McKenney, VA

The decision we face is one that the church has faced from the very beginning. What will we do with the Gospel that has been entrusted to us? Someone asked it this way: “Do we make the Gospel fit us, or do we fit ourselves to the Gospel?”

In 2 Timothy 1:11-14, Paul speaks of major decisions he has faced. He speaks of not being ashamed of God's call on his life and urges Timothy to do the same. He warns of dangers associated with the Gospel—not that the Gospel itself is dangerous. But

we are to keep an eye on it. Guard it. Be careful with it. Paul speaks of the Gospel as “that good thing” and “the form of sound words.” The form of sound words can rightly be interpreted as the expression we give it in our written church standards.

We realize that we can have a form of godliness without power—without real godliness. We need to guard that good thing. We can stop a practice or we can stop doing a practice with meaning. There is nothing so precious as these words of eternal life. The presence of God within will guard and keep what is true.

We don't have to do this alone in our own strength. Even all of us together don't have the strength to keep the Gospel without the indwelling Holy Spirit. If we attempt to keep the Gospel in our own strength, we become Pharisees and deny the very Gospel we're trying to keep.

Last Sunday we had communion. There I mentioned that we offer communion privileges to those who are members. One man who had been attending for some time, walked out—offended. Is close communion a cultural practice that causes unnecessary offense? Should we re-evaluate it? A woman who was once a sister in the church, has decided that wearing a head covering is unnecessary. She thinks it is too cultural. For now, she is not interested in its practice. Are we so culturally bound that people can't find the Gospel?

Let me mention two things that are influenced by our Swiss-German roots: Cap style coverings for the women and straight-cut coats for men. There are many subcultures in America, but I believe our subculture has been more deeply influenced than most other subcultures by a deep commitment to obey the Word of God. Most subcultures develop for other reasons. Before we make

replacements, let us ask: Will what we replace a cultural practice with make it equally biblical or more so?

Genealogy is a subject of interest to some of us. It can be pursued in a wrong way, according to 1 Timothy 1:4. It can be used it to exclude people. I believe it can also be pursued in a way that is inclusive and that says, "From wherever you come, we want to include you. Tell us about yourself and your family." This is not a popular cultural stance in America today that commonly says, "Take me as I am; don't ask any questions." Shame on us, however, if we want to exclude others.

Even volleyball, the sport of choice for many of our youth groups, gives more opportunity for persons of widely varied skill than many team activities do. It is also simple and requires relatively little equipment. If we think about it, this choice reflects some good principles. Our subculture is committed to obedience. Ideally, it shapes every aspect of our lives. Let us appreciate that.

When we make changes, we need to consider what will replace what we move away from. Typically, if we begin to absorb another culture, the evangelical subculture has been chosen by those who lay aside our conservative Anabaptist culture.

In a recent issue of *Christianity*

Today, a writer was evaluating the spate of recent novels about Amish life. This writer noted that many novelists object to “the cage” that Amish life places around its adherents. He mused this way, “Is it the Amish who are in a cage or is it we evangelicals? Who is free?” He closed his comments with this observation: “Whatever the case, the Amish have been able to protect themselves from the very things which are poisoning us evangelicals to death.” We conservative Anabaptists are in danger of poisoning by many of the same things.

Are we willing to continue to accept the offense of the Gospel? This is not just the offense of someone who says you’re wrong. The Gospel is *not* all-inclusive and all-tolerant. It will drive some people away. The Gospel loves sinners but will not tolerate sin. It calls for “either/or.” Popular culture insists on “both/and.” The claims of Jesus are exclusive in that only by Him is salvation promised and by that some are *in* and some are *out*.

This demands an exclusive obedience to Christ. But the most significant offense in the Gospel is the offense that I feel in my own flesh. We must do battle with the world and the devil, but if there is not in the call to discipleship the call to do battle with the flesh, in relation to God and

to others, we are left with a wimpy Christianity. If we won’t do battle with our self and submit ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we have a form of godliness without power.

The power of God in my life is realized in my life when I by the Holy Ghost, not by my own power, overcome my willfulness and surrender to Him. That reaffirms every day that He is Lord. I fear that we are losing the awareness that our most significant battle is with ourselves. If we lose that battle, our souls will be condemned to eternal hell.

The cross is a daily reality for us. It’s not a memento on the wall. The cross demands my whole life—not just theoretically, but very practically. It is reflected in my relationship with my wife, with you, with my customers, my employees, my children. Am I developing the form of sound words and living this out? Communion for us is not just to remember the death of Christ, but a remembrance of what Christ is doing in me and in you—today. Christ’s death is working in me now. We do not invite strangers along to communion because this is “family time.”

Vanity: following the world in personal appearance. A person who is not willing to appear separated will soon not be willing to be separated at all. It is important for us to continue

to draw lines and make distinctions. Sooner or later, we will draw a line. How much better to draw one in time rather than too late. The Bible says, “Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14). The issue of personal appearance ties into that. Sometimes veilings become not veilings, but decorations. Thus they are worn with the same reason that women of an earlier era wore a hat when they went to church. It becomes a matter of propriety rather than conviction.

You have likely heard this question: Is wearing a veiling a salvation issue? That’s the wrong question. Is *obedience* a salvation issue? Our women don’t wear the covering because the covering saves us but because God said to. He says, “If you love me you will do what I say.” I fear that “easy believism” has influenced our thinking more that we suspect. Well, maybe it’s our humanity that’s influencing us.

Is it true that holiness is less significant than a relationship with God? We must remember that holiness gives us a deepening relationship with God. It is the pursuit of holiness in the way God intends that produces a real relationship with Him. I believe that if we fail to continue pursuing holiness, we remove the possibility of deepening

our relationship with God. To do otherwise, leads to disillusionment and rejection of Christianity.

Several examples of contemporary Christianity that seem “an inch deep and a mile wide” are contemporary Christian music and many Christian novels. What are we absorbing? Does it satisfy?

A European Protestant writer of the of the nineteenth century evaluated aspects of Anabaptist life, when it was not common to speak favorably of them. “In their religious life they laid weight not on sublime mysteries, but on the striving after holiness. The reason the law went after Anabaptists and punished them with death, and torture, and banishment, and confiscation of all their goods—was not because of what they believed or because of their baptism, but because of the Anabaptist ethic that was considered to be danger to the existing social order. They were killed because they were threatening the current culture. They were living at odds to it—cutting across it, not going with it.”

I believe we leaders are remiss if we allow our schools to continue using non-Anabaptist curricula. No curriculum is so good that it’s worth the risk of undermining sound doctrine. We need to evaluate its commitment to Scripture first, other

things second.

There are two different kinds of modern translations: Some make a serious attempt to translate the words and others make a serious attempt to translate ideas and concepts. What do we believe was inspired by God? We cannot read the original documents, but we believe inspiration rested on every word that was translated. Give me a translation that gives me the very words.

The more I have to sacrifice for you, the deeper our bond and the stronger our relationship. If it's not sacrifice, it's not love.

Is prayer in schools important? Our role is not to tame down the other kingdom and help it do better. Our goal is to snatch people out of it. We operate behind enemy lines. In Kingdom reality, that's how we try to rescue the souls of men from destruction. We don't have time to waste on worrying whether or not the world acknowledges God.

If we are not willing to make some hard choices in relation to technology, we will be destroyed. Technology is not innocent. It shapes our values.

We ministers have the responsibility to guard the truth. We must call ourselves to account that the way to heaven is a narrow way. If we're as narrow minded as Jesus on that point, we must acknowledge that

it's not just those out there that will be sent into outer darkness, but if there's anyone in here that is not doing the will of the Father, than they also will be lost. That's what motivates our church discipline and our accountability.

An Amishman wrote a letter to Donald Kraybill about his book on Amish forgiveness. He said, "I was glad to see how you stressed that we, the Amish, are also human and struggle with this issue of forgiveness. We struggle to forgive on a daily basis. The thought came to mind that this generation cannot claim credit for our attitude on forgiveness, because it was the result of our heritage, but we surely can be blamed if it is not passed on to succeeding generations." How insightful!

Menno Simons said: "I began in the name of the Lord after I was born again to preach publicly from the pulpit the word of true repentance to direct people unto the narrow path and with the power of the Scriptures to reprove all sin and ungodliness, all idolatry and false worship, and to testify to the true worship. Also baptism and the Lord's supper according to the teachings of Christ to the extent that I at that time had received grace from God."

May we be faithful in all things!



Can We Help Each Other in Missions to Help Others?

Roman Miller, Paraguay

Recently a brother from Dominican Republic said that projects for the poor are of interest to him. So the thought of using e-mail to share ideas was born. How do we mix putting food on the table with preaching the Gospel?

We have heard this: “My belly is rumbling so loudly that I can’t hear what you’re saying.” My brother-in-law, Dr. Laverne Miller, gave me two books: *A Billion Bootstraps* (ABB) and *Christianity in the Marketplace* (CIM). ABB is a good book on helping in small monetary ways and CIM is most worthwhile reading.

The goals for this project are:

1. To share different self-help ideas

they have tried, even if they did not work well.

2. Share details about what was tried and how it succeeded or failed to meet expectations.

3. Share photos if possible. The information you share should be free—not copyrighted.

If you prefer not to stay with the e-mail group, simply put on the subject line: “Please take me off the list.” If you think of someone who might desire being on the list, please submit that name. Anyone can come in at any time and receive the reports already sent. Send to: misionbelleza@personal.net.py.

Thank you. We hope to hear from you soon!



***Imagination has often made
a man think he could run the business
better than the boss can.***

marriages

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

Boyer-Troyer

Bro. David, son of Craig and Flora Boyer, Belize, and Sis., Delores, daughter of Loren and Sharon Troyer, Ontario, OR, at Church of Christ for Faith Mennonite Fellowship, Lott, TX, on Nov. 19, 2011, by Elmer Smucker.

Schmidt-Erb

Bro. Wilfred, son of David and Norma Schmidt, New Hamburg, ON, and Sis. Dorcas, daughter of Allan and Linda Erb, Wellesley, ON, at Cedar Grove A.M. Church on Nov. 12, 2011, by Arthur Gerber.

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Arlin and Kayla (Wray), from Bethany Fellowship, Kokomo, IN, (presently serving in Chiang Mai, Thailand), second child, first dau., Emma Grace, Dec. 21, 2011.

Beiler, Reuben and Naomi Sue (Stoltzfus), Gap, PA, tenth child, fifth dau., Kristina Joy, Dec. 31, 2011.

Beiler, Vincent and Lydia (Croutch), Lancaster, PA, second living child (one deceased), first dau., Sophia Delight, Dec. 14, 2011.

Derksen, John and Miriam (Hershberger), Summersville, KY, sixth child, second son, Travis Jamin, Oct. 28, 2011.

Farmwald, Michael and Frieda (Miller), Bloomfield, IN, first and second daughters, Connie Marie born May 11, 2007 and Amy Frances born Aug. 8, 2008; adopted Dec. 20, 2011.

Graber, Kevin and Mary Anna (Swarney), Odon, IN, third child, second son, Elijah Shane, Jan. 6, 2012.

Gerber, John and Tanya (Jantzi), Millbank, ON, third child, second dau., Adelyn Faith, Nov. 2, 2011.

Gerber, Timothy and Mary Beth (Wagler), Gadshill, ON, eighth child, third son, David Jonathan, Dec. 27, 2011.

Graber, Weston and Esther (Zook), Peru, IN, first child and son, Ian Grant, Jan. 10, 2012.

Kauffman, Brian and Verna (Stoltzfus), Mechanicsburg, OH, first child and son, Jeffrey Blake, Dec. 26, 2011.

Kimberlin, Ryan and Joyce (Ulrich), Cleburne, TX, second child, first son, Randall Lynn, Nov. 28, 2011.

Kuepfer, Darryl and Susan (Gerber), Millbank, ON, eleventh child, fifth son, Michael Wayne, Jan. 9, 2012.

Kuhns, Ron and Cindy (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, third child, second dau., Mackenzie Jade, Nov. 8, 2011.

Lapp, John and Bethany (Lantz), Honey Brook, PA, seventh child, fifth son, Adrian Mikel, Dec. 9, 2011.

Mast, Caleb and Lisa (King), Ronks, PA, first child and son, Ryan Frederick, Dec. 4, 2011.

Miller, Dale and Miriam (Beiler), Clarkson, KY, eighth child, third dau., Mary Kaylene, Dec. 23, 2011.

Miller, Darryl and Renee (Hochstedler), Utica, OH, fifth child, second dau., Natalie Mae, Dec. 16, 2011.

Miller, Jason and Esther (Byler), Titusville, PA, second child and son, Jesse Lamar, Dec. 19, 2011.

Miller, LaVon and Twila (Yoder), Partridge, KS, fourth child, third son, Derrick Evan, Jan. 24, 2012.

Miller, Mark Andrew and Debra (Coblentz), Newcomerstown, OH, first child and son, Emma Madelyn, Dec. 31, 2011.

Miller, Philip and Joanna (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, third child and son, Anthony Lyn, Oct. 14, 2011.

Miller, Richard and Mary (Glick), Oriskany Falls, NY, ninth child, third son, Japheth Alan, Nov. 22, 2011.

Miller, Tom and Carole Suzanna (Byler), Leesburg, OH, fifth child, fourth dau., Aranya Kate, Dec. 30, 2011.

Nisly, Brandon and Crista (Miller), Harrison, AR, first child and dau., Evelyn Jane, Jan. 5, 2012.

Nissley, Elam and Nina (Yoder), Paris, TN, sixth child, second dau., Natasha Grace, Jan. 1, 2012.

Nissley, Steven and Edith (Yoder), Paris, TN, seventh child, sixth dau., Marilou Joy, Jan. 9, 2012.

Raber, Elias and Debra Marie (Troyer), Cooperstown, PA, second child and son, Austin Drew, Dec. 20, 2011.

Reber, Fred and Charlotte (Ainsworth), Cleburne, TX, third child, second son, Dylan Ray, Sept. 30, 2011.

Schmidt, Walter and Miriam (Jantzi), New Hamburg, ON, first child and son, Jayden Dante, Dec. 9, 2011.

Stoltzfus, Alphie and Teresa (Troyer), White Horse, PA, sixth child, fourth dau., Tiara Dawn, Sept. 25, 2011.

Stutzman, Ethan and Julia (Miller), Bloomfield, MO, third child, second dau., Kara Janelle, Nov. 17, 2011.

Troyer, Philip and Rachel (Miller), Sugarcreek, OH, fifth child, third dau., Natalie Brooke, Dec. 1, 2011.

Wagler, Jeffery and Kristin (Wagler), Odon, IN, second child and dau., Callie Anne, Jan. 7, 2012.

Wagler, Michael and Lisa (Wagler), Montgomery, IN, fourth child, second son, Clayton Lane, Jan. 17, 2012.

Weaver, Ernest and Patricia (Miller), Grandview, TX, third child, second son, Robert Elroy, Oct. 8, 2011.

Weaver, Justin and Joanne (Ulrich), Cleburne, TX, fourth child, second son, Leland Duane, Jan. 31, 2011.

Weaver, Ryan and Rebecca (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, first child and dau., Serena Brooke, Nov. 10, 2011.

Yoder, Cephas and Tracy (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, second child and son, Kyle Blake, Dec. 12, 2011.

Yoder, Josh and Lillian (Nissley), Sugarcreek, OH, first child and dau., Jolene Anne, Oct. 5, 2011.

Yoder, Morris and Beth (Martin), Montezuma, GA, first child and son, Allen Morris, Nov. 10, 2011.

Yoder, Nathanael and Esther (Villalobos), Covington, TX, second child, first son, Japheth Dean, Jan. 11, 2012.

Yoder, Trenton and Amber (Plank), Montezuma, GA, fourth child and son, Trevor Harley, Jan. 17, 2012.

ordinations

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

Bro. John Nissley, 57, of Catlett, VA, was ordained as minister at Pine Grove Mennonite Church on Oct. 9, 2011. Preordination messages were given by Ray Byers, Middleburg, PA. The charge was given by Tim Miller, assisted by Ray Byers and Eli Kauffman.

obituaries

Byler, William C., 78, of Windsor, OH, died at his home Jan. 5, 2012. He was born Sept. 30, 1933, in Mesopotamia, Trumbull County, Ohio, son of the late Crist C. and Elizabeth (Detweiler) Byler.

He was a charter member of Zion Christian Fellowship and loved his church family. He was a retired dairy farmer.

On April 22, 1954, he was married to Kathryn A. Byler, who survives. Also surviving are five children: Freeman and wife Mary (Sommers), North Bloomfield, OH; William and wife Susan (Hershberger), Mesopotamia, OH; Mary Ellen, Windsor, OH; Irene Sue, Windsor, OH; and Timothy Ray and wife Joanna Sue (Hochstetler), Mesopotamia;

OH, dear foster son, Jacob Zelczer; 23 grandchildren, and one great grandchild. Two brothers survive: Jake (Sara) Byler, Burton, OH; Dan and wife Sara Byler, Middlefield, OH; one brother-in-law, Milo Schlabach, Mesopotamia, OH; and two sisters-in-law: Mary Ellen Bontrager, Middlefield, OH; and Edna Byler, Martinsburg, OH.

He was preceded in death by three stillborn children; four sisters: Ida (John) Miller, Katie (Jake) Byler, Mattie (Andy) Byler, and Mary (Milo) Schlabach; and two brothers: Crist and Wallace Byler.

The funeral was held on Jan. 8 at Horizon Assembly of God Church, with Laban Kaufman, Dan W. Byler, Perry Troyer, and Harvey Kaufman serving. Burial was in the Zion Christian Fellowship cemetery.

Kuepfer, Esther J. (Mast), 59, of Free Union, VA, died on Jan. 4, 2012, after a battle with cancer. She was born on Sept. 11, 1952, at Wooster, OH, daughter of the late John and Lizzie (Yoder) Mast.

She was a member of Faith Mission Fellowship. Mark and Esther and their family also spent a number of years in missions in Ontario, Canada, and Kenya, East Africa.

On Aug. 5, 1978, she was married to Mark Dale Kuepfer. He survives. Also surviving are three daughters and three sons: Ruth Annette Kuepfer, of the home; Rachel Dawn (Craig) Miller, Partridge, KS; Dorcas Fern (Shane) Iwashige, Abbyville, KS; Joseph Leon (Marilyn) Kuepfer, Hutchinson, KS; Timothy Mark Kuepfer,

and Titus James Kuepfer, of the home; and four grandchildren: Bomani, Daisy, Hazel, and Tristan, whom she treasured greatly in the short time she could spend with them.

Other survivors include nine siblings: Mary (Jake) Yoder, Ervin Mast, Crist (Ada) Mast, David (Ruth) Mast, Jake (Joan) Mast, John (Mary Alice) Mast, Susan (Merle) Yoder, Atlee (Mary) Mast, Ruth (Glen) Rohrer.

The funeral was held on Jan. 7, where the following tribute was shared. Interment was in the Mission Home cemetery.

Dear God

*Rachel (Kuepfer) Miller
Partridge, KS*

You called my mother home today.

Today.

I live on earth and she is gone.

Away.

My father stands alone.

Alone.

I don't know how to live like this.

She's gone.

I think of laughter, happiness.

Delight.

My mother's humor made our lives so

Bright.

Of home cooked meals, of warmth, of love.

My mom.

Was always here. And now I know she's

Gone.

I see the dusty paths in Kenya.

Trod.

*My mother loved to bring her friends to God.
She loved the land. She loved the life.
So.
She went with Dad wherever he would Go.*

*I see her now; she's walking up in Heaven.
And every time I see her, she is Laughing.
She is young. She's beautiful. She's Strong.
She's close to God. He's so happy with My mom.*

Goodbye, Mother.

Mast, Elmer N., 76, died of a massive heart attack at his home in Whiteville, TN, on January 8, 2012. He was born Sept. 11, 1935, in Hutchinson, KS, son of the late Noah and Elizabeth (Nisly) Mast. The family moved to Nowata, OK, then later to Stuarts Draft, VA. Later moves took Elmer and Mary Jane to Leon, Iowa, then to Whiteville, TN.

He was a founding member and minister of Whiteville Mennonite Church. He had been ordained a minister at Leon, IA, in 1966. He was ordained bishop in 1980 at Whiteville.

On Oct. 25, 1956, he was married to Mary Jane Yoder at Stuarts Draft, VA. She died July 15, 2003. Their five children are Marvin Eugene (Lois) Mast, Nickerson, KS; Susan Darlene (Paul) Overholt, Dickson, TN; Ruby Fern (Loren) Overholt, Williston, SC; Nelson Ray

(Donna) Mast, Bonners Ferry, ID; David Lavon (Luann) Mast, Seneca, SC; and 26 grandchildren. On June 12, 2005, he was married to Norma Kuepfer, She survives. Three step children and fourteen step grandchildren survive. Also surviving are two sisters: Sylvia Parker, Hampton, VA; and Verna Mast, Sarasota, FL; and one brother, Eli Lloyd Mast, Whiteville.

Preceding him in death were two grandsons: Friedrich Mast and Caleb Overholt; and four sisters: Fannie, Mary, Sadie, and Wilma.

The funeral was held on Jan. 12 with Kevin Yoder, L.J. Helmuth, La Vern Eash, and Mervin Kuepfer serving. Burial was in the Whiteville Mennonite cemetery.

Miller, Mervin M., 80, of Millersburg, OH, died Nov. 29, 2011, at Aultman Hospital after suffering multiple strokes and a heart attack. He was born Oct. 14, 1931, at Millersburg, Ohio, son of the late Manelius and Lizzie Ann (Yoder) Miller.

He was a member of Salem A.M. Church, Newcomerstown, OH.

On Nov. 4, 1954, he was married to Malinda Mae Hershberger. She survives. Also surviving are three daughters: Marilyn Sue (Floyd) Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA; Emma Lou (Paul J.) Miller, Newcomerstown, OH; Lisa Holmes, Massillon, OH; two sons: Dean Ray (Nancy) Miller, Sugarcreek, OH; and Merle Ray (Linda) Miller, Millersburg, OH; 13 grandchildren, four brothers and one sister-in-law.

He was preceded in death by five brothers and two sisters.

The funeral was held on Dec. 3, with

Robert Miller serving. Burial was in the Salem Amish Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Petersheim, John Roy, III, 47, of Kinzers, PA, died at his home, after a six-month battle with cancer. He was born Feb. 1, 1964, son of John Roy II and Mary (Stoltzfoos) Petersheim.

He was a member of Pequea A.M. Church, Narvon, PA.

On Oct. 13, 1984, he was married to Barbara Ann Zook, who survives. Children surviving are: Rosene, at home; Verneda (wife of Paul Zook), Kinzers, PA; Anna Mary, Veronica, John Roy IV, and Isaac, all at home.

Preceding him in death was one still born daughter in 1985.

The funeral was held at Pequea Church with Melvin Zook, Ben A. Stoltzfus, and Nelson Beachy serving. Burial was at Summitview Cemetery, where Mark Kuepfer served in the committal.

Stoltzfus, Daniella Grace, first child of Jared Lee and Carmen Faye (Stoltzfus) Stoltzfus, was stillborn on Dec. 21, 2011, at Los Angeles, CA. Jared and Carmen are presently serving with DestiNations, International, in Los Angeles.

Survivors include maternal grandparents J. Omar and Carol Stoltzfus, Oxford, PA; and paternal grandparents Jonathan and Lil Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA.

On Dec. 27, graveside services were held at Forest Lawn, Hollywood Hills, Los Angeles. The child's father and both grandfathers participated. Their mailing

address is:

Jared and Carmen Stoltzfus
955 El Paso Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90042

Yoder, Cora M., 95, died at Mercy Hospital on Jan. 19, 2012. She was born in Kalona, Iowa, on Dec. 22, 1916, daughter of the late Mahlon and Maggie (Miller) Gingerich.

She was a member of Leon Salem Mennonite Church, Leon, IA.

On March 11, 1937, she was married to Moses E. Yoder. He died August 21, 2011, so they shared life and love for 74 years. They had eight children, of whom seven survive: Enos (Esther Helmuth) Yoder, Leon; Jacob (Esther Gingerich) Yoder, Kalona; Pauline (Perry) Bontrager, Kalona; Maynard Yoder, Leon; Moses, Jr. (Ruth Hurst) Yoder, LaMonte, MO; Norman Yoder, Thompsonville, IL; Jonas (Linda Gingerich) Yoder, Leon; 25 grandchildren, 64 great grandchildren and five great great grandchildren. Also surviving are two sisters: Ida Mullet; Pauline Schrock, and one sister-in-law, Dorothea Gingerich.

She was preceded in death by a son, Jerry who died in infancy; three brothers: Linus, Jacob, and Maynard Gingerich; five sisters: Katie Mast, Lizzie Gingerich, Ollie Hochstedler, Eldora Mast, and Iva Gingerich; two grandchildren and one great great grandchild.

The funeral was held at Central Decatur High School Gym, on Jan. 22, with Norman Troyer, Monroe Gingerich, and Marvin Kauffman serving. Burial was in

the Salem Mennonite Cemetery.

Yoder, Katie (Weaver), 79, of Montezuma, GA, died at her home Nov. 2, 2011. She was born Feb. 11, 1932, daughter of the late Mahlon M. and Sarah (Kramer) Weaver.

She was a faithful member of Montezuma Mennonite Church. She loved her friends and her life revolved around them.

On Sept. 30, 1952, she was married to Floyd E. Yoder, who survives. Surviving are eight children: Marvin (Miriam) Yoder, Belvidere, TN; Sarah (Clarence) Yoder, Mayfield, KY; Mary (Lewis) Plank, Elmer (Ruby) Swartzentruber, Louis (Kathy) Yoder, Brenda (Nelson) Yoder, Larry (Emily) Yoder, Barbara Jean (Ernest) Swartzentruber, and Loretta (Steve) Esh, all of Montezuma, GA; 56 grandchildren, and 46 great grandchildren, one sister, Barbara (Elvin) Yoder; three

brothers: Noah Weaver, Eli Weaver, and Mahlon M. Weaver;

Preceding her in death: one daughter, Ruby Swartzentruber, one grandchild, three sisters: Mary Yoder, Emma Yoder, and Bertha Zook and two brothers: Clarence Weaver and Irvin Weaver. Three sisters and one brother died in infancy.

The funeral was held on Nov. 4, with Eli Kauffman, Donny Swartzentruber, Irvin R. Yoder, and Daniel Yoder serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Trevor Angelo, was born on Dec. 15, 2011. Four hours later, on Dec. 16, he died. His parents are Mark and Ellen (Helmuth) Yoder, Whiteville, TN. He was their first child. Grandparents are Timothy and Treva Yoder and Lloyd and Rose Mary Helmuth. No funeral details were given.



observations

A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that children 8 to 18 years old spend more than seven and one-half hours a day engaged with computers, cell phones, TV, video games and music. (Tool Kit, Jan./Feb., 2012)

It is not apparent that this combination is producing good study habits or good social skills.



Mennonite Weekly Review (1-12-12)

has an article from Christian Science Monitor entitled: “Anabaptists Count the Cost of the War in Iraq.” Coalition deaths numbered 4,486. Estimated civilian Iraqi deaths: more than 700,000. The cost of human lives of survivors diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder: at least \$168,854. Iraq reconstruction: \$182.2 billion. The sum total of cost in lives and natural damage exceeds comprehension. The article closes

with this quote: “Weighing [the] possible benefits against the cost of the Iraq intervention, there is simply no way in which Operation Iraqi Freedom can be judged to have been a successful or worthwhile policy.”

It is commonly reported that Iraq is left with serious unresolved conflicts within their country.



Historian Harry A. Brunk wrote a seven-page biography of Peter Hartman, whose Christian life, his zeal and energy, his sharp memory, left an invaluable legacy for succeeding generations. This 40-page book, *Reminiscing of the Civil War*, is available from Eastern Mennonite Publications. (Phone: 717-733-7998)

Peter Hartman (1846-1934) was born near Harrisonburg, VA, a Mennonite community. He witnessed first-hand some of the heartless cruelties of slavery. He also knew a family who treated their slaves kindly, never breaking up families by selling family members away. When the slaves were freed, these chose to stay with their kind family. The book is an important record of how Mennonites responded to the slavery issue.

The main message has to do with Civil War memories. In August of 1864, General Grant gave the command to destroy the agricultural resources of the Shenandoah Valley. After the campaign, General

Sherman reported to General Grant: “I have destroyed over 2,000 barns filled with wheat, hay, and farming implements, over 70 mills filled with flour and wheat...have killed and issued to the troops not less that 3,000 sheep.” The book is a vivid reminder that the Christian life sometimes requires the courage to withstand the expectations of intense pressure from mainstream society.

The things reported in this book by one who was there should remove all doubt that war is not only un-Christian, but uncivilized.



According to “Tell Me Newline,” having both TV and a car increases your likelihood of having a heart attack. Having livestock lowers it. I’m guessing this conclusion is exercise-related.



The Christian’s journey is eventful and challenging. Unity in the body of believers is a cherished blessing and an important testimony to a watching world. This is one reason why the enemy likes to cause dissension and disruption. Normal life span allows a spread of three generations to be members of the same body of believers. Older persons should welcome the energy and idealism of young Christians. Youthful wisdom is enhanced when it gives respectful consideration to others who are a bit farther along in the journey.

The passing of time does not cause sound doctrine and practice to become obsolete. Failure to realize that real Christianity is inter-generational is not friendly to unity and stability. A firm commitment to the Lord of the church who is the same yesterday, today and forever is both stable and vibrant. It is also essential to inter-generational unity.



In an earlier column, I mentioned a local person who was diagnosed with terminal cancer about two years ago. His medical prognosis was hopeless, so he diligently researched alternative treatments. He thinks he is doing well. I do not know what treatment he is using. There are many possibilities available. He has generously been handing out books he has found in an effort to help others.

A kind reader has examined one of these books, one by Bill Henderson and finds apparent endorsement of homeopathic methods and possibly other objectionable methods. I thank this reader for pointing this out. As with other books by human authors, to “Prove all things and hold fast to that which is good,” is needful. Natural methods of treatment are not wrong, and sometimes helpful. Christians should stay away from things that are mystical and questionable. Prayer and anointing with oil is non-medical and spiritually safe.



Part of God’s provision is to allow for civil law to restrain evil and keep order in unruly society. Followers of Christ support this God-ordained role. But Christians should work together to resolve their differences, without resorting to civil courts (1 Cor. 6). Does this mean that church persons are immune to the regulations of the legal system?

For a church member to disregard corrective discipline from the church and engage in activities that are unchristian and illegal has placed himself in the category of the lawless. The legal system is divinely authorized to deal with such offenders.



National media is saturated with news about persons seeking to influence people to vote them into office. Christians are reminded to pray for the government and to be subject to the laws of the land. It is helpful to remember that public opinion is not the final authority. Only God is sovereign.

Mennonite Weekly Review (1-23-12) carries an item by Harvey Yoder, entitled: “Put U.S. Election in Perspective.” It is an effort to help us to see the big picture rather than only our self-interest.

- The United States is only one of 230 nations world-wide, and has a mere 5% of the world’s population.
- It controls most of the world’s

wealth and military might.

- All nations are of minor consequence in comparison to God's world-wide, eternal kingdom.

- Our president is leader of only one of three branches of government. The legislative and judicial branches are equally deserving of attention and concern.

- While English is a popular language, it is only one of nearly 7,000 languages spoken around the world.

So, for perspective's sake, we could have a more humble opinion of our importance while respecting others living elsewhere on the globe.

• • • • •

District Judge Wesley Brown died Jan. 23, 2012, at age 104. He was the oldest sitting federal judge in U. S. history. He could have retired with full benefits in 1979, but this did not interest him. Brown officially took senior status, a type of semi-retirement that allows federal judges to work with full or reduced case load. He continued to carry a full load for decades. He went to work at the courthouse every day until about a month ago.

He is remembered to have been firm, but also fair and very compassionate. His gait was slower, but his mind remained sharp, as he presided over

a tightly run court room after his 104th birthday. When he was 98, a cell phone went off during formal court proceedings. Lawyers nervously checked their phones. Mr. Brown was embarrassed to discover that it was his phone that he had forgotten to turn off. He promptly fined himself \$100, and remarked, "I guess I learned my lesson."

He was repeatedly questioned about his long tenure and his plans for retirement. His answer: "As a federal judge, I was appointed for life or good behavior, whichever I lose first." In 2011, he told the Associated Press that he plans to leave his post "feet first." (*The Hutchinson News*, 1-25-12)

This man was born June 22, 1907, in Hutchinson, where he began his legal practice. There are several things about this story that made me want to share it with our readers.

- The aging process is common but not uniform in terms of rate and duration..

- An active mind seems friendly to aging "usefully."

- Finally, to finish well is the only thing that is important when our time comes.

- Phil. 1:5 reminds us that to finish well begins and ends with Jesus Christ.

—DLM 

As God Sees It

Ludlow Walker, Sr., Homestead, FL

Sin, not the economy—nor ultimately those at the helm of our government—is our great national problem... As a society, we don't even want to speak about sin, let alone deal with it.

- **Pro-choice** is sin against a holy God. The “choice” was made when man and woman “chose” to be intimate.

- **Homosexuality** is not gay. It is grievous sin against the counsels of heaven. The sinner is to be loved and helped. The sin is to be condemned.


- **Pre-marital sex and infidelity in**

marriage is not a liberal lifestyle. It is sin and disobedience to God's Word. It always comes with a high cost.

- **Pornography** is not acceptable adult entertainment. It is sin that sears the soul and rots the body.

- **Excluding the Bible and prayer from school and government** is not evidence of enlightened judicial wisdom....

Indeed, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).

[Excerpted and adapted from Good News Herald, No. 105, Vol. 23] 

Taming a Wild Cat

Mary Anna Petersheim, Humboldt, IL

One morning this summer I opened our front door. To my surprise and delight, a big grey cat, all skin and bones, lay on the glider of the front porch. She looked at me and with one terrified leap, she was gone. Being a dog and cat lover, I was disappointed.

In hopes of bringing her back, I set a dish of milk on the front porch. The next morning it was empty. I did

this for a week. Then one morning as I put food in the dish, I heard a faint “Meow,” but whatever it was stayed hidden in the bushes until I stepped inside.


Almost six weeks later, the big grey cat finally came to eat while I poured milk. Then she let me pet her. After that, she was friendly.

The first time she ran I could have thought, “Run, see if I care; you'll

come back when you're hungry," but because of my love for cats, I kept calling and feeding her until she finally yielded to my touch!

Then my thoughts traveled to those souls dear to us wandering out in sin. Do we love them enough to keep on praying and putting out a platter of God's Word and love until they come out from hiding? Do we keep on till

they allow the Master's touch to heal them and say, "O, taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Psalm 34:8)?

So we must continue to pray, trust, and have faith that our dear ones will come out and allow the Master to touch them. "Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5). 

Which Suit Coat Should I Wear?

Dale Eby, Dundee, NY

This was a very real question at one point in my life. The churches I grew up in had all ministers wear the plain suit, but not always the members. It was no longer the "regulation coat" when I became a church member. This left the decision up to me. I watched the direction of conservatives and liberals and listened to their drumbeats growing farther and farther apart. The 70's was a time when the charismatic movement was drawing masses of once plain people to throw away everything in the "new freedom" The "new spirituality" I saw brought high emotional peaks, but also left bottomless pits. I pondered, *What*

was God really asking of His people?

I saw that with casualness towards the details of Scripture came a change regarding the holiness of God. This led to contemporary worship services, adjustments to and avoidance of certain Bible doctrines, and disregard to many forms of separation. What I saw was that personal appearance and theology were the proverbial "hand and glove."

I made a change. It brought some questioning, even from an older person I respected. Putting on the plain coat at age 20, led me to associate with others who desired a practical, non-conformed Christianity and who viewed Scripture as meaning all that it said.

Its History

History says that the coat we wear was once the European and American style of all men. The Mennonite men refused lace, ruffles, and other ornamentation, but the style was basically the same. Lapels appeared after 1750 and Mennonites refused to change, at least most of the ministers. The new fad was at first associated with the British military.

Between 1914-1950, much effort was put forth [among conservative Mennonites] to bring ministers and laity together in the wearing of the plain coat because both were on the same level within the brotherhood. The plain coat became the “regulation coat,” aiding in unifying the church and strengthening its witness in the world.

Its Future

The plain coat expresses our desire to be non-conformed to the world and our desire to live more simply. It has served as a reminder to the wearer of his commitment to Christ. Numbers 15:39 says Israel wore the ribbon of blue “to look upon and remember the commandments of the Lord” and to keep from seeking after their “own heart and eyes.”

As an encouragement to our ladies’ separation by their modest dress and head covering, we continue the practice. Until another visible distinctive is invented or agreed upon, we believe it is a respectable and honorable way to dress.

[From the Mid-Atlantic Informer, Jan., 2012. Used by permission.] 

We don’t get a second chance to make a good first impression.



Projecting Poverty Where It Doesn't Exist

Steve Saint

I have been in relationship with the Waodani [Indians of Ecuador] since 1956, when they killed my dad, Nate, and four of his friends. My relationship continued through the time my Aunt Rachel lived with them beginning in 1958 through the time of her death in 1994. I most recently lived with them beginning just after Aunt Rachel's death in 1994 until later in 1997, maintaining a house and spending about one quarter of my time with them until 2008.

When people visit the Waodani, they look around and think, "Wow, these people all have nothing!" People from the outside think the Waodani are poor because they don't have three-bedroom ramblers with wall-to-wall carpeting, double garages so full of stuff the cars never fit and, I guess, because they never take vacations to exotic places like Disney World.

So, on speaking tours I began describing these jungle dwellers as "People who all have water-front property, multiple houses and spend most of their time hunting and

fishing." The most common response I have gotten when describing the Waodani this way is, "Wow, would I ever like to live like that!" I agree completely.

Mincaye, on the other hand, sees the way we "Outsiders" live here in "the foreigner's place" and makes comments like: "Why, never sitting, do the foreigners run around and around in their car things speaking to each other on their talking things but never hunting or fishing or telling stories to each other?" After traveling and speaking with me in the U.S., Canada, and Europe, Mincaye is always greatly relieved to get back to his thatched roof hut, with the open fire wafting smoke in his face, eating whatever happens to be in the cooking pot. He sits around in jungle-stained clothes and the look on his face tells it all. He would not live in North America for all the green paper and the little pieces of plastic he could carry. He doesn't understand how money and credit cards work but he knows foreigners can't leave home without them.

Mincaye is a rich man. Or, he was until someone taught him to drive a golf cart and he started thinking how much fun it would be to take his 57 grandchildren for rides up and down the Nemompade airstrip where we used to live together. Now he wants his own golf cart (which means he would need a charging station, and a solar panel farm to power it, and a shop to maintain it, and spare parts to keep it running...)

From my life experiences with the Waodani—and other groups in Africa, Asia, and South America who live simply and materially contentedly—I have learned that it is unreasonable to evaluate their “lack” based on our distorted and exaggerated perception of need. When we try to meet phantom needs of people who live at a lower material standard than we have learned to consider “minimal,” we not only fall into a trap that keeps us from seeing their real needs but we also tempt them into a snare that can raise their perception of need beyond what their economy can support.

When we project poverty on people where it does not exist, we also overlook the actual poverty with which they struggle. Solomon said it well, “Whoever loves money never has enough, whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. As goods

increase so do those who consume them” (Ecc. 5:10,11).

Dangerous Charity

Often charity to help the poor attracts more people into poverty. One example I have noticed takes place when North Americans try to care for the needs of orphans in cultures different from our own. If you build really nice orphanages and provide good food and a great education, lots more children in those places become orphans. I see this happen all over. When we attempt to eradicate poverty through charity, we often attract more people into “needing” charity. It is possible to create need where it did not exist by projecting our standards, values, and perceptions of need onto others.

So what is poverty? We in the “Wealthy West” have little understanding of “Poverty.” As our standard of living has risen in developed countries, our perception of poverty has changed.

Consider how our definition of an orphan is different from most other cultures. In the U.S., you are an orphan if your mother and father have died. In South America (where I grew up), as in other contexts where extended family structures are intact, you are not really considered an orphan as long as you have a living grandparent, uncle, aunt, or older brother or sister who is

capable of helping take care of you. So when North Americans build an orphanage in South America, we “create” orphans by tempting family members to take advantage of our well-intentioned largess. This is seldom in the best interest of those children who are “orphaned” by our desire to meet what we perceive as their need.

Provoking Poverty

In the same way, proximity and exposure to wealth can provoke a sense of poverty. A group of North Americans going on a short-term mission—with our international cell phones, iPads, fancy clothes and fat wallets to buy curios and spend on hotels and restaurants—can create more comparative poverty than most of us can imagine.

But, all of that is not the issue. Do we have a responsibility to care for the poor? Yes, 1 Cor. 8:11-15 hits the nail on the head. Let me summarize--“No Christ follower should have too much while anyone else has too little.” So, should we all become poor so that we are no longer responsible? No, Paul also points out that this teaching is not intended to put the poor at ease and to burden the wealthy (2 Thess. 3:6-12).

Among people living simply amidst abundant resources, poverty is not measured in annual income net worth, but in “What I have in

comparison to what those around me have.” In such contexts poverty is more of an attitude and a mood than an actual state of having or not having something. In such contexts, contentment is the secret. Some people think 1 Tim. 6:6 says “Godliness is a means of gain,” but it really says “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” Where there is godliness with contentment there is no perceived “poverty” until discontentment has been stirred.

Building Up Christ’s Body

Our goal in planting Christ’s church where it doesn’t exist must be to produce churches that are self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting; especially where the members come from a background of hopelessness, powerlessness, and inadequate resources. The most important aspect of church planting is whatever that fledgling congregation needs most. In a growing number of cases, the greatest need new churches have is to become self-supporting.

Giving handouts creates more problems than it solves. It is like casting out demons with long leases. Break the lease or they will come back and bring more roommates (Luke 11:24-26). Where the Church is being established among people that perceive themselves as powerless, there is a great need for deep discipleship, wrestling with the

roots of poverty at the community level rather than concentrating on the individual.

Financial help that does not develop sustainable, local, financial self-sufficiency is much more likely to create poverty than it is to meet real needs. Until we realize that we can't overcome poverty with handouts, we will never be much help in completing Christ's Great Commission.

As followers of Christ we must fight poverty through discipleship rather than covering it with spiritual frosting. Either we do God's will God's way or we aren't doing His will

at all. Discipleship means teaching others what we have learned so that they can teach others to care for their community's physical, economic, emotional and spiritual needs on a sustainable basis! (2 Tim. 2:2; Matt. 28:18-20).

[Used by permission of Steve Saint]

[Editor's note: While I appreciate these comments of caution against imposing our standard of living onto others, I think we can also become callous and skeptical about the needs of others. Let us not forget to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).]



helpers at home

In-Love Relationships

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

The beautiful verse found in Ruth 1:16 is often used in a wedding message depicts the relationship of husband and wife. However, when Ruth spoke the words to her mother-in-law, "Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee, for where thou goest, I will go...they people shall be my people and thy God shall be my God." Ruth had built a beautiful

relationship with Naomi, in spite of the fact that they were grieving the loss of husbands and sons.

In-law relationships can be beautiful or they can be deeply painful. I am grieved when I hear in-law jokes, especially in wedding messages. God honors marriage and I believe He also honors the relationships which are built into that marriage.

At our oldest son's wedding, a woman told me something I had never heard before. She said, "When a daughter gets married, you gain a son, but when a son gets married, you lose your son." Possibly she was speaking out of her own experience. Not only have I kept my my three sons, but we have also gained three beautiful daughters-in-law.

All relationships take time and work. They don't just happen. As I have thought about this subject, I would like to offer a few suggestions for mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships. In-law relationships are a lifetime commitment, so plan to enjoy them.

To the mother-in-law:

You may not have had the privilege of choosing your son's wife. However, I believe the first step will be in accepting her as his wife. New mothers-in-law may feel rather insecure as to what your place is in your daughter-in-law's life, but remember, she probably feels uncertain too. Take your cues here; don't push too hard; you may need to back off and pray for wisdom in your relationship. Sometimes we try too hard. She may not cook and clean like you do, but that's okay. Maybe you can learn from her. She may not cater to your son the way you did, but remember she is his wife—not

his mother. She may have moved to your home community, away from her friends and family; allow her to be homesick. She may have difficult days of adjusting. Be there for her, but don't make her feel guilty. It doesn't mean she does not like you or the community; it simply means she misses her family in the same way your son would miss you if the tables were turned.

Make her feel like a very real and special part of the family.

Include her in family traditions, like birthdays. Always celebrate her birthday with a card, gift or in whatever way you celebrate his holidays and special memories. Cook her special meals and give her notes of appreciation or gifts you know she enjoys. Family pictures will always include her, she is now a vital part of your family. Let her know she is loved and accepted. Do not show partiality or favoritism with your daughters-in-law. They should never need to feel that you love one daughter-in-law more than another. In fact, they should feel as loved as your own daughters. Do include your daughter-in-law at sister's day, whether in your home, shopping or wherever. Don't blame her for changes they may have made in choosing a church, finances, or other major decisions. Remember, they are

in it together. Offer to help her when she is feeling pressured and busy with the children. Don't go into her home and clean or do things differently than she would do it herself. However, as you learn to know her better and your relationship deepens, you will know when she appreciates your help and accepts your way of doing things.

Your daughter-in-law is the mother of your grandchildren; bless her for it. Her mothering skills may not be same as yours--they may even be better. I believe we can encourage young mothers, however, we need to be very careful that we do not make them feel inadequate. Grandmothers have a wonderful opportunity of supporting and being available when needed, however, we must be careful to know our limits and not interfere (unless the family is in danger). Love your grandchildren, but don't spoil them; just give them lots of love. You will be richly repaid. Do respect your daughter-in-law's rules and requirements for their children. Never say anything bad about her to the grandchildren or even to your son. You are not your son's marriage counselor.

Now for the daughter-in-law: I am no longer a daughter-in-law, because my mother-in-law is with the Lord, and so is my mother. However, I look back and see areas where I failed and

wish I could do things differently. I was the first daughter-in-law in the family so we both made mistakes, however, I can forgive and forget. I have learned life is a growing process. We learn and change and go on. I trust you will do the same as you look at your own relationships.

Remember, not only have you married your husband, but in a sense, you have married his family. They will always be a part of your life, so it is up to you whether you are going to accept and love them or hold them at arm's length. Many a young bride fails to realize that her husband loves his family just as much as she loves hers. He may not talk about it as much as you do, because men often don't express their feelings as much as women do. He also wants to please you, so he tries to please your family. Probably one of the best ways to honor him is to show that you honor his family. Apparently, a mother-in-law is often seen as a threat or a competitor to the new bride. That is so sad! She is his mother, not his wife. You are his wife and not his mother. Allow her the privilege of being his mother, of cooking special foods he's enjoyed from childhood. Don't try to do things like she does; be yourself! Enjoy his family activities and be fair with holidays and special occasions.

Do not belittle or complain about

your in-laws to your husband, your family or to others. Treat them with the same respect you wish for your family.

Find ways to learn to know your mother-in-law. Spend time with her. Invite her over for tea; ask her to go shopping with you. She probably loves to babysit your children, but she would feel honored to be asked to spend time with you. I think of many ways my own daughters-in-law have blessed me. Just this past week the one who lives next door, came down just before lunch and said, “Mom, we haven’t had a chance to just talk for a long time. Can I take you out to lunch today?” We had a wonderful time of sharing. Each of my daughters-in-law

calls me Mom. My first daughter-in-law asked me to come some time after each of her children was born, even though her own mother was usually there first. I treasured those times.

There are so many opportunities to build relationships with your mother-in-law. You will be blessed in return, I assure you. Respect her convictions and preferences, even though you may not see things exactly the same. Remember, she is the person who helped your husband develop into the man he is today. Now you have the responsibility of continuing to help him grow into the person God wants him to be.

Become a daughter-in-love. 

junior messages

The Horse That Worked for God

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

Glory, glory, bless the Lord!” shouted Billy Bray as he stood on the foundation stone of the chapel he was building for the Lord.

He preached the first sermon there on that stone. In Billy’s neighborhood there were many wicked, ungodly people. There were few churches. Billy felt that the Lord wanted him

to build a chapel at Cross Lanes, near his house.

“If this new chapel stands for one hundred years, and one soul is converted every year, that will be a hundred souls; and one soul is worth more than all Cornwall,” Billy declared. He was so excited about the prospect of future victories that he praised and blessed God even

though he did not have enough funds to build a chapel! God provided the funds for that chapel just in time for each need.

Billy was overjoyed when he was given enough money for lumber, but he had no way of hauling the boards to the site of the Lord's house.

A kind neighbor said, "I have a horse and a cart, but my horse is so stubborn I cannot get her to haul a thing."

"I desperately need to get my lumber home," said Billy.

"But you won't get her to pull a load. I warn you," said the man.

Billy took the neighbor's horse and cart and bravely set out to get the lumber. Everything went smoothly. How Billy rejoiced and thanked the Lord when the lumber was unloaded at the chapel site.


"I never saw a better mare," Billy told the owner when he returned the horse. "Why, I did not use the whip once, not even on the steepest hill."

The neighbor was astonished.

"How can that be?" he exclaimed. "You must be an authority on horses. Why, I never heard of such a thing! She certainly will not pull anything for me!"

"Well," said Billy in his own humble way, "that horse was not working for Billy Bray, or she would have been as mean as with anyone else. No, she was pulling this time for a very strong company: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, whom horses, as well as angels, men and devils, must obey. Yes, indeed, my Lord is an expert with horses!"

(Resource: Anna Talbot McPherson, *Spiritual Secrets of Famous Christians*, Zondervan, 1964.)

[This story is taken 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.] 

***It costs more to avenge injuries
than to bear them.***

Dear Youth,

This Month's
QUESTION

Electronic technology can be either a trap or a tool, depending on how it is used. What pitfalls have you noticed regarding the use of information and communication technology? What habits must youth be committed to if they would harness technology rather than having technology harness them?

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

Communication technology has come a long way and it can be harnessed and used for good (encouragement, prayer requests, etc., or just staying in touch with friends). Yet, we can so easily get wrapped up in communicating with a host of different people, and we fail to properly stay in touch in the home. Some spend hours on so-called social networks, “socializing with friends” while they are being very unsociable to people/family around them. I believe if youth have their relationship in check with our Creator, it will be a simple habit of communicating with Him when we are faced with earthly communication temptations.

Javin Mullet, Sugarcreek, OH

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No technology can satisfy humans’ deepest longings for God. Sometimes young people are confused about what they desire. One may feel a need for an “internet fix” but actually he or she needs something that only comes out of dialogue with God. Trying to fill the God-shaped void with social media will never work.

Verda Nisly, Oswego, KS

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What are our **goals** relating to technology? I believe that we must be goal-oriented in our use

of technology. Am I able to justify investing in a cell phone with more power than a ten-year-old computer? Will I be able to utilize it to its full potential?

What are our **attitudes** toward technology? What are the reasons I want the “latest thing” in technology? We need to treat information and communication technology as a tool, a means to an end. If we use technology for business or spiritual purposes, we usually treat it differently than if we are using it for our own pleasure or to maintain our social image.

We relate to technology out of the same heart that we use in relating to the rest of life. We must be committed to the same **principles** in the area of technology as in all the other areas of life. Impersonal communication may make it easier to say things we wouldn't say to a person's face, but we still need to be respectful. Electronic piracy is easier than physical theft, but it only shows the state of our hearts.

The saying goes that knowledge is power. Our involvement with information technology still needs to be subject to Phil. 4:8, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things

are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” We need to have clear goals regarding the knowledge we pursue. How will this piece of information benefit my life? Would I be comfortable with this article in a periodical on my coffee table? Time and “mental bandwidth” are important factors to consider in the information we invest in.

Kenneth Anderson, Rochelle, VA



Technology is like a pillow. You can use it for evil—beating up on annoying friends; or for good, “recharging your batteries.” does that mean that recharging your batteries is inherently good? Suppose your batteries are already over-charged and you're just being lazy (oversleeping). “Well,” you may think, “at least I'm not beating anyone up.” While that is true, you're hurting yourself by cultivating a spirit of laziness, and you're indirectly hurting others by sleeping all day and not making yourself available to join their activities.

So, should you simply throw out your pillow, since it's causing you to be lazy? Well no, you still need

that pillow to sleep well. If you rid yourself of the pillow, you're going to become very sore and grouchy. You might end up spending more time around other people, but your grouchiness will actually make their lives more miserable than if you had just stayed in bed all day.

Some of these same principles apply to the use of technology. You may reason, for instance, that it's all right to spend as much time on the computer as you like, as long as you're not using it for inherently evil purposes, such as engineering destructive viruses, or remotely operating an airborne death machine in another country. But do you actually have specific purposes for being on the computer, or do you simply gravitate toward it when nothing else is going on at the moment? I would suggest the same principle applies here as to oversleeping, that just because you are not using technology to intentionally work evil, does not necessarily mean the full extent of your technological

activities is healthy for you and those around you.

So how do you monitor your technological activities to keep them healthy and beneficial for yourself and others? Some choose to set limits for themselves, but I'm not convinced that's the complete answer. I was staying at a friend's house recently and saw a sign on the family computer that said, "Self-control is remembering what you really want." It was a light-bulb moment for me. Self-control is not about beating yourself over the head, gritting your teeth, and restricting yourself to 33 ½ minutes of social networking per day. Self-control is discerning what you really want, what your heart really desires, then determining how this or that technological activity can best be utilized to help you realize that heart desire. This may seem kind of abstract, but it's a very powerful concept if you are able to grasp it.

David Shenk, Partridge, KS

Next Month's
QUESTION

Read Psalm 147: What is being taught in verses 10-11? What are some ways youth can practically put this teaching into "shoe leather"?

—EE 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

A liar gets caught in his own mouth trap.

• • • • •

Hatred is self-punishment.

• • • • •

The hypochondriac can't seem to leave well enough alone.

• • • • •

He who gossips *to* you will gossip *about* you.

• • • • •

Gratitude is the heart's memory.

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Habits are first cobwebs, then threads, then cables.

• • • • •

A selfish heart deserves the pain it feels.

• • • • •

Truly great men make others feel great.

• • • • •

Laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes it.

• • • • •

Elbow grease produces the best polish.

• • • • •

Bad temper is a sign of inferiority.