



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

Galatians 6:14

MAY 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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Editor: Paul L. Miller
 7809 S. Herren Rd., Partridge, KS 67566
 Ph/Fax 620-567-2286
 paulmiller@bttskynet.net

Assistant Editor: Elmer D. Glick
 P.O. Box 400, Slanesville, WV 25444
 elmerg@frontiernet.net

Associate Editor: David L. Miller
 P O Box 73, Partridge, KS 67566

Contributing Editors:
 Simon Schrock
 Enos D. Stutzman
 Aaron Lapp

Missions Editor: Floyd Stoltzfus
 186 Skyline Dr., New Holland, PA 17557

Youth Messages Editor: Ernest Eby
 1158 Hwy. 198, Guys Mills, PA 16327
 ec.eby.ar@gmail.com | 814-789-3209

Junior Messages Editor:
 Mrs. Mary Ellen Beachy
 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW
 Dundee, OH 44624

Helpers at Home Editor:
 Mrs. Mary June Glick
 1080 Return Church Rd., Seneca, SC 29678

Circulation Manager/Treasurer:
 Mark I. Beachy
 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW
 Dundee, OH 44624
 markbeachy@afo.net | 330-852-2982

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The Lights of Home

Fanny J. Crosby (1820-1915)

*O the friends that now are waiting,
In the cloudless realms of day,
Who are calling me to follow
Where their steps have led the way;*

*They have laid aside their armor,
And their earthly course is run;
They have kept the faith with patience
And their crown of life is won.*

*They have laid aside their armor
For the robe of spotless white;
And with Jesus they are walking
Where the river sparkles bright.*

*We have labored here together,
We have labored side by side,
Just a little while before me
They have crossed the rolling tide.*

*On those dear, familiar faces
There will be no trace of care;
Every sigh was hushed forever
At the palace gate so fair.*

*I shall see them; I shall know them;
I shall hear their song of love,
And we'll all sing Hallelujah!
In our father's house above.*

*They are calling, gently calling,
Sweetly calling me to come,
And I'm looking through the shadows
For the blessed lights of home.*



Jesus Stands At the Door

No one is neutral about Jesus. This is borne out in four instructive statements in the Gospels expressing different attitudes toward Him, which range from closed-minded doubt to vital faith in the Son of God.

1. Some say, **“He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?”** (John 10:20). There is nothing to commend following a deluded man who is possessed of a demon, is mentally unbalanced, and who claims to be what he is not. But the folks making this assertion were tragically wrong! They were defending unbelief. Another common charge Jesus’ critics brought against Him was blasphemy, which called for the death penalty. No doubt, at His crucifixion, some patted themselves on the back and said, “Good riddance! We were right.”

Some people still pass Jesus by thinking they are better off going through life without Him. They may think that at the end of life they will simply pass into oblivion. Thinking that life is better without Jesus seems to rest on the premise that life revolves around man. That is false! Life revolves around God as Creator and His Son, the Redeemer! The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and life makes very little sense from a perch

of self-importance.

Those who push Jesus aside will miss a life of deep meaning. Jesus has not given us just barely enough satisfaction to get us by. He gives abundant life (John 10:10b). Those who saw Him as unhinged or dishonest missed that, because they pitted human reasoning against God. Jesus came to earth to bring God’s message of salvation to all of us. Though heaven and earth pass away, His Word stands. To say disgraceful things about Jesus slams the door in His face, yet He stands at every heart’s door and knocks.

2. Some say, **“He is a good man.”** Indeed, He was that. He was so good that He could challenge His listeners with this, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (John 8:46a). Mortal men had a hard time solving that puzzle. Jesus was obviously human and such a claim might have seemed absurd. He was not a typical human being, however, He was God in human form. To help us process this mystery, we say, “Jesus was 100% human and 100% divine.”

Those who said Jesus was a good man were moving toward Him. They noted His compassion for those who suffer. They heard His approval from God. And they could not outwit Him.

We must, however, go beyond mere assent of His superior qualities that leave us all in the dust by comparison. We must acknowledge that there is more to Jesus than His superiority to other men. To say He is good, starts to open the door to Him, but we must go farther.

3. Peter moved closer when he said, **“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”** (Matthew 16:16). Obviously, if we don’t acknowledge who Jesus is, we will not invite Him in.

He is without an equal in this world. There is “no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). When we enter the family of God, He actually calls us brothers (Hebrews 2:11). But our older Brother (Romans 8:29) is still in a class by Himself.

Jesus does not provide one way among many ways to heaven. Jesus is the only way to heaven. God sent His only Son into the world to bring us salvation. Anyone who follows Him also proclaims Him as the Son of God, who is able “to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him” (Hebrews 7:25). When we say He’s the Son of God, we could say we open the door while still holding onto the doorknob.

4. Probably the best testimony comes from Thomas, who said: **“My Lord, and my God”** (John 20:28).

Thomas’ confession came from his heart that had been guarding itself with self-defending reason. His fellow

disciples told him that Jesus had risen. They told Thomas, with excitement: “We have seen the Lord!” But Thomas didn’t believe it. He wasn’t going to be foolishly gullible. Jesus’ earlier predictions that He would die and rise again after three days baffled them all, and Thomas held out longer against the evidence of its fulfillment than did any of the other disciples, except the traitor.

Thomas explained his resistance with, “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25). A week later, when Jesus gave him that opportunity, Thomas stopped digging in his heels. With his whole heart, he stepped forward and said, “My Lord and my God!” Thomas swung back the door to the inner sanctum of his life—his heart!

What does all this say? It is false and dangerous to say Jesus hosts a demon or is deranged. It is true to say that Jesus is good. It is correct to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God, but unless we acknowledge something more—unless we say it, and mean it from the depths of our hearts, “My Lord and my God!”—we are not opening the heart’s door wide enough. Indeed, if Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.

“Come in! Take full possession of my life, Lord Jesus!”

—PLM 

Israel Report

Donnavon Graber, Jerusalem

April 1 – April is entering in a glorious way as the weather completes its annual shift from winter to spring. Last week we were blessed with a few more showers of the “latter rains.” Biblically, it was this rain that ensured that the late spring and summer crops: wheat, grapes, figs, olives, and dates would reach their yield potential.

April is also the month of Passover, the inspiration and reason we celebrate Easter and the resurrection of our Lord. One hundred twenty-five thousand tourists are expected in Jerusalem this week in commemoration of Jesus’ last week before the crucifixion and resurrection. Today thousands of people paraded down the Mount of Olives waving palm branches and singing in memory of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

When Jesus wept over the city on that fateful day, He was the most misunderstood person in Jerusalem, although probably also the most popular. The palm branches were a nationalist symbol from the time of the Macabees. “Hosanna” was

a messianic cry, literally meaning, “Save us, please!” in Hebrew. So, as the people shouted and waved palm branches, the people were clearly hopeful that the long-awaited Messiah had come. But, as Jesus wept, He must have groaned deeply at the thought that His people wanted deliverance from the Romans, but did not realize and treasure the deeper and more precious deliverance from the tyranny of sin that He came to bring.

Indeed, today things may not be so different. Do we indeed treasure the deliverance from sin as the priceless treasure it is or do we count it as nearly nothing and forget that we are bought with the highest price ever paid in the history of mankind—the death of God’s own Son? Do our expectations of God cause us to miss the much more precious gift that He offers us?

The message of the first passover was the deliverance from bondage and sin. This pointed forward to the perfect sacrificial Lamb and the true solution for the leaven of sin. As in the passover festival, the leaven is

removed and destroyed, may we also treat sin like the plague and walk in newness of life. It is the resurrection life that trumps sin and death.

Death in the Christian life doesn't stop with death, but is a doorway into triumphant life! It is this life that is one of the deepest manifestations of the glory of God. This is the same

glory that the prophets envisioned covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. *“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea”* (Habakkuk 2:14). For it is only when we walk in that resurrection power that we have intimate knowledge of God's glory. 

ANNOUNCEMENT

The annual Christian Youth meetings for 2012 are scheduled for the weekend of July 27-29. The districts and their meeting places are as follows:

Northeast	Pilgrim Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA
Northwest	Sharon Bethel, Kalona, IA
Southeast	Light of Hope, Wytheville, VA
Southwest	Shady Lawn, Mountain View, AR
North Central	Antrim Mennonite, Antrim, OH

May we continue to work together to make these meetings the success they have been.

Verlynn Yoder

Chairman, Youth Planning Committee - Paynesville, MN



You'll never go anywhere if you think you've arrived.

Evaluating the Use of Technology

The Intoxication of Speed and Immediacy

Luke Bennetch, Fredericksburg, PA

From Creation until the 1900's, the fastest thing man could use for travel was a horse. For thousands of years, cargo, mail, and man traveled the countryside on horseback or horse drawn vehicles. Until the mid-1800's, communication was verbal or written. Letters could travel no faster than a horse could run. But since the 1900's, speed has sped away and changed our lifestyle dramatically! Computer technology has fueled the speed of calculations, communications, record keeping, etc. We are rapidly adjusting to the new "speed of life." In fact, if we are not careful, we can become drunk with the desire for speed and immediacy and lose touch with valuable realities.

To illustrate this change, consider the life of Laura Ingalls Wilder, who was born in 1867, in Wisconsin. Her Little House books give us a window into 19th century pioneer living. In a few of her books, she describes what it was like to make long journeys, hundreds of miles across wilderness and unsettled lands. Laura died at the age of ninety in 1957, the year the Boeing 707 was launched and Russia sent the Sputnik 1 satellite into space. The jet age had just begun. A journey that once took Laura's family months

to complete could now be completed in just one hour. In just 90 years, she had seen the horse and carriage replaced by much faster travel. While that is amazing, the person born in 1957 will see greater changes in 90 years than Laura saw in her lifetime!

Phone calls have undergone many changes from the early phones until today. Phones used to be more in the category of a tool to carry out important business. True, gossip and cheap talk have always been a challenge with any phone. But the cost of calls coupled with time constraints helped us keep our calls focused more on important things and less on useless chatter. Today having cell phones with us all the time and with "unlimited minutes" phone plans, we can spend more time visiting with friends than ever before. Mothers can spend too much time on the phone and neglect household duties. We can spend our driving time visiting with others. There is a very good side to this if it is used wisely. We can encourage each other. We can make plans, inform others of our needs, and give direction to those for whom we are responsible. Our young girls are safer while driving, [If they don't phone or text while

driving -Ed.] with Dad just a phone call away. But we must be careful that our phones are our servants and we are not their slaves.

With this speed and immediacy comes a dark side that we must be aware of. One business man complained that his employees no longer think for themselves; they just call him. Another father was wisely concerned about his son calling his girlfriend every day while driving to work. A church leader lamented that while there is more communication ability than ever today, his congregation lacks close-knit unity some congregations have known in bygone days without these connections. With this portability comes the challenge of secrecy with phone calls. Youth can call each other from the privacy of their car or bedroom. Camera phones can capture pictures and send them to others.

Today the U.S. Postal Service struggles to survive since electronic mail (e-mail) has brought immediate mail service to our homes. A letter can be sent to friends on a foreign mission field with just a click on the “send” button. A reply can be back within minutes. The cost is minimal; the speed is great. But for every good invention with profitable uses come some hidden costs and some unseen influences.

The speedy technology has a tendency to shape correspondence

today into an informal, cheap tone. Compare a written letter from the 1900’s to some e-mail letters you may have read today. E-letters of today tend to lack eloquence and expressiveness. They can be very shallow and trite. They can be hour-by-hour diary type letters. Some friends feel compelled to send them out with such frequency that we experience overload trying to read them all.

Text messaging has this snare. Youth are already conscious of how much they are “in the loop” of social life. Texting fuels this self-consciousness. They never really know if their friends are texting others and leaving them out. For some youth, when their phone is quiet they fear they are rejected by their peers. So they send out messages to see what is happening, at odd hours of the day or night. Subject matter becomes very shallow. Language can become less than ideal. A whole new set of lingo is established. Rules of spelling and grammar are broken mercilessly. Intoxication sets in and they can no longer think straight or drive safely.

Movie clips, amusing sayings, and funny pictures wake up the electrons of many a machine as perpetrators of silly entertainment spend countless hours fueling these trite enticements. For some, when they receive one of those from a friend they can count on a flood as each of their friends forward it on to their list of

friends. Some good sayings end by challenging us that if we are spiritual, we will send this on to our whole list of friends. In reality, we need less electronic chatter, more quiet time with God, more assembling with the saints, and more practical Bible obedience. If we are not careful, we can be caught up in Athenianism, spending our time “in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.”

With this speed and immediacy, we can encircle ourselves with a group of friends from all across the land. While we live under the same type of authorities as our forefathers did, we tend to be more influenced by our “e-friends” than by our brethren, parents, and ministers. Our choice of friends has so much more impact on us today simply because they can be with us every day, every hour. They can comment on nearly every aspect of our life and what we are experiencing. Our authorities, who “watch for our souls as they that must give account,” find that their influence in our lives is being minimized by these electronic friends.

Gossip has gotten a speedy lift around the world with this technology, too. The latest news in a community, whether true or not can spread faster than a wildfire on a wind-whipped plain. Telephones can ring wildly spreading the latest news. With a click of the “forward” button, exact copies of a recent letter can fly out to our

friends and they can send it to theirs, and they to theirs. Church stresses are complicated when minutes after a discussion or a meeting, calls and letters can fly around at the speed of this technology. Bible directives for addressing concerns and hurts can be disregarded. Proper respect for each other can be violated. It becomes nearly impossible to track down who said what and to help people be accountable for their speech.

The ability to know the latest news from around the world down to minute-by-minute details can be a snare. Even tracking the weather by the minute consumes some people’s time. With this immediacy we now can “live through” events like 9/11, from many miles away from the crisis. I remember the very spot I was standing in Honduras when the mission’s radio crackled to life and we were told about that disaster as it was happening. Electronic media has brought the news from all over the world to our eyes and ears, not just in plain text but moving clips of actual footage.

For some, “to know” becomes a god that is being fueled by technology. Knowing is their pursuit. They are driven to know the latest of every event. They spend hours following news stories from around the world. They can tell the minute details of events from places they have never been. Caught in this intoxicating pursuit, some fail to study their

Sunday School lesson, read their Bible, spend time with God in prayer, or lead their family in worship each day. They can become so obsessed with this god that they miss some details of their own family and children while they pursue what seem like greater events around the world!

The feeling of “living through” events of history has a tendency to pull us into the event. We can become “politically” involved in our mind. We can tend to own the problem as ours also. We make conclusions and have opinions. The coming presidential election will be a case in point. How much we follow the day to day events shapes our feelings of involvement even though we do not participate in the actual vote. Separation of church and state is first challenged in our minds then lost in our practice!

The internet brings billions of pages of information within our reach. A simple search pulls out possible pages for us on the subject. We can find information NOW! We no longer need to send to a company for information to be mailed to us. Research is accelerated considerably. Documents, books, and companies that were once out of our reach are now only a few clicks away. The god of “instant answers” can capture our hearts. We cannot wait; we must have it now. We will explore additional influences of the internet in another article. For now, suffice it to say that the speed and immediacy of the net

can make waiting on God in prayer seem out-of-date. Patience with our fellow brethren can be a scarce virtue. The black and white pages of our beloved Book can seem outdated.

Because of rapidly changing technology, a person who loves this too much must spend money to replace his equipment before it is worn out just to stay current with the fastest and latest. Stewardship principles are violated. Money is spent for things we do not really need. We are influenced to think that if our friends have one of the newest gadgets, we must have it too. After we buy the gadget, then we want all the apps that go with it.

This speed and immediacy has brought news, information, and people within easy reach of us. It has sped up many of the tasks we do. It has improved efficiency. But for every job that technology saves us time in doing, it offers much greater amounts of other things to consume our extra time. We must honestly look at what we are doing with our time each day. We may need to drink less of this intoxicating influence to have a clearer mind to evaluate whether we are fulfilling the duties God has called us to do with our time.

This new speed of life has brought many blessings to us, but let's not be blind to the effects it is having on us and our people. Parents and ministers must be alert to these challenges and actively combat the snares they bring.

We must stay current with giving direction to this ever changing realm of communication. We must teach the proper use of acceptable technology and draw lines against those that bring us to potential harm. God help us to be ready for the return of Christ and not be drunk with the wine of technology.

[This is the second article in a series that examines the subtle effects that the use of technology brings into our lives. “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Cor. 10:31). From *The Pilgrim Witness*, March, 2012. Used by permission.] 

Life is Not Fair

Myron Martin

[Note: This article was first published in The Pilgrim Witness in May, 1992, five months before Bro. Myron died of cancer at age 34.]

When was the last time this pout-stimulating thought stirred your feelings? There are many circumstances in life that the right reply seems to be, “LIFE IS NOT FAIR.” What should be our response to this phrase that seems to fit our experience?

As we compare our lives with others we must all agree that the statement has some validity. There are no two people alike nor are the circumstances they face identical. All of us have different personalities, traits and gifts. Do we ever stop to think what it would be like if all of us were the same? Our lives cannot be exactly the same and yet allow us to enjoy the brilliance of variety. Besides, this variety can be an enhancement to our own lopsided

personality.

Life will not be fair because some of the things we experience in life are the result of the unfair treatment of other individuals. Joseph was not treated fairly for two reasons. In the first place, his brothers were envious and selfish. There is no limit to the mistreatment that can be inflicted on others if a person is governed by his carnal nature. Pharoah, Herod, Nero, Hitler, Saddam, and even abusive parents are outstanding examples of unfairness. We, like them, will treat others unfairly if we give too much attention to our own affairs and fail to be thoughtful of others.

Joseph was also mistreated because of misunderstandings. It is easy to pass judgment and punishments on

individuals when we do not know all the truth. Often, it is those closest to us (other church members, our family or our children) of whom we jump to conclusions and judge unfairly. Misunderstandings not only cause a person to be unfair with others, but it can also cause him to believe that everything in life is against him.

Satan will also see to it that life is not fair. His involvements in the life of Job show how much power he has to make life miserable. The Gadarenenean demoniac, who was under Satan's control, had his life so altered by the demons that it was not fair for him to be in such bondage while others could live a normal life. Satan knows that we are not all the same and he custom designs each temptation to our personal weakness.

Life will not be fair because many circumstances are the outcome of natural laws. Sickness is sometimes brought on by negligence, but usually it is beyond our control. The Shunammite woman's son became sick in the field and died. Some people are more prone to sickness and allergies because of the genetics in their body. Others have deformities from birth like the man born blind in John 9. Life is not fair because we live in a body that has strengths and weaknesses that we have no choice in and these are difficult to change in some instances.

We are also affected by natural laws in relation to our surroundings.

Drought, floods, winds, and earthquakes are a few of the natural occurrences that can cause one to feel that life is not fair. Even the tower of Siloam which fell down on the 18 men (in Luke 13:4) was a natural occurrence rather than a judgment on evil. Natural laws operate by cause and effect, but who they affect, is relative and could make life seem unfair.

Life will never be the same for everybody because God never intended that it should be so. God is too creative to make each person over the same pattern and plan. He has uniquely designed each individual for the specially planned place He has for them to fill. How then can we, the clay, say to the Potter, "Why have you made me thus?" We will only find fulfillment in life as we accept God's plan for our lives rather than trying to be like someone else.

Even though life is unfair, GOD NEVER IS! Some things we face might be unpleasant, but if we continue to let God work in our lives, we will be able to say with Paul, "*The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather for the furtherance of the Gospel*" (Phil. 1:12). Yea, "*all things work together for good to them who are the called according to his purpose*" (Rom. 8:28). It is very encouraging to know that God is sovereign and no matter what difficult experiences we are facing, He will manipulate the circumstances for the best benefit of the Kingdom. Isn't that our highest

goal in life?

As we live in this life, no matter who we are, there will always be those who surpass us in one area or another. That does not have to make us feel that life is not fair because God enjoys taking our weaknesses and using them to express His strengths. In the account of the man born blind in John 9, Jesus explained the sole purpose of his infirmity was *“that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”* God also told Paul that He would not remove his thorn in the flesh so that God’s strength could be magnified. Would you like to have no weaknesses and never feel God’s enabling grace in your life, or would you rather have some weakness and be encouraged by God’s sustaining grace helping you? It is good we have weaknesses and reverses so we are humble and dependent upon the power of God. This is the only way that God’s power will be able to flow through us to those who are seeking for a power greater than themselves.

God is always fair in that He often allows us to endure injustices in life so He can change them from a curse to a blessing. An example of this is in the life of Joseph. God allowed individuals to bring hardships into his life, yet in the end, God turned them into a blessing for Joseph and his people. Jesus also suffered a humiliating, cruel death by the work of Satan, yet that was the very act that bruised Satan’s head and gave Jesus the

exaltation *“above all principality, and power, [God] hath put all things under his feet,...hath raised us up together with Christ,...and hath raised us up in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Eph. 1:21,22; 2:5,6). God is more fair to His people because He not only works with the present, but also plans for the future. *“The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.”* We may have to suffer like Lazarus, yet in the end, God will not forget His people, but will open *“the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that shall not be room enough to receive it”* (Mal. 3:10). For everything we endure, God will reward us in a greater degree than we had to suffer.

God is more fair with His children because He takes the reverses in life and uses them to perfect us. We do not enjoy the chastening of the Lord more than children like cod liver oil, yet God brings it into our experience because it is what we need. The Lord *“doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men”* (Lam. 3:33). *“For all things (distresses, persecutions) are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day”* from (2 Cor. 4: 15,16). As we respond properly to God’s chastening in our lives, we will become a vessel that will be recognizable as God’s handiwork.

For God to do His work in our lives there are number of things we must do.

First, we must be one of His children. This includes asking for forgiveness of all our past sins, giving our lives over to Him, and determining to work out His Word in every situation of our lives. This takes an unwavering faith in God and His Word. There will be many times we do not understand the things He allows us to experience, yet we must always conclude that God has everything under control. To strengthen our faith, it is good to look back at experiences where it was evident that God was at work in our lives. There are times of indecision that God gives specific direction through everyday happenings, while at other times His mercy withholds calamities from us that could easily have occurred. We should be alert to these times and use them to praise God for His faithfulness. In turn, it will add to our faith, give us a sense of security and lift us above discouragement.

It is very important that we are totally open before God. There cannot be one area which we are reserving that we do not want Him to touch. There are many things we rightfully enjoy and want to continue to have in life. Even in these areas of life, we must be willing to let God alter our course. May we be as faithful as Abraham was if the test comes to give up what we hold dear. We must be looking for the right things. As we view others, what do we see? Do we see all the things they have that are

better than ours? It is natural for us to see the greener pastures on the other side of the fence, but it is needful for us to train ourselves to see the difficulties others may be experiencing and ways that we can be of assistance to them. This will help us to realize that we do not have all the troubles and that maybe we have it pretty good, after all! Too often when we feel the world is caving in on us, we have had too much attention on ourselves. Raising our horizons to see others is the spiritual discipline that can heal our self-pity. It is also pertinent to raise our eyes above this life and bathe ourselves in the glories of the eternal. Our experiences in life take on a new perspective as we view them from the broader scope. Seeing God's greatness and love extended to us gives us the encouragement and stamina to endure these fleeting sorrows, and to obtain the joys that are waiting for those that endure to the end.

Let us not be concerned about how fair life is to us. If we are careful to be fair with God, we can be assured that God will be more than fair with us and bless us far more than we deserve, in this life and in the life to come.

[From *The Pilgrim Witness*, March, 2012. Used by permission. The note of triumphant faith that shines through this article must have come from humbly seeking God in trials. Triumphant faith is also needed when life goes well. -Ed.]



marriages

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

Beiler-Bitica

Bro. Timothy Lavon, son of Marlin and Gloria Beiler, Paradise, PA, and Sis. Ioana Vasi, daughter of Nelu and the late Nicoleta Bitica, originally from Romania, now from Christiana, PA, at Weavertown Church for Mine Road A.M. Church on March 10, 2012, by Alvin Stoltzfus.

Eichorn-Beachy

Bro. Howard, of Woodburn, IN, son of Enoch and Leanna Eichorn, Plain City, OH, and Sis. Sharon, daughter of Rufus, Jr. and Saloma Beachy, Staunton, VA, at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA, on Feb. 25, 2012, by Simon Schrock.

Helmuth-Overholt

Bro. Lyndon, son of Raymond and Esther Helmuth, Whiteville, TN, and Sis. Kelly, daughter of Jonathan and Susie Overholt on Feb. 17, 2012, at First Baptist Church, Oakland, TN, for Whiteville Mennonite Church by Kevin Yoder.

Kauffman-Shirk

Bro. Bryon, son of David and Anna Mary Kauffman, Lott, TX, and Sis. Emily, daughter of Paul and Vada Shirk, Macon, MS, at Magnolia Mennonite Church on March 3, 2012, by Paul Shirk.

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Philip and Rosanna (Troyer), Fredonia, KY, first child and dau., Benita Joy, Feb. 8, 2012.

Bowser, Ben and Sharla (Miller), Harrison, AR, first child and dau., Jillian Rose, Feb. 28, 2012.

Byler, Robert and Heidi (Overholt), Maypearl, TX, seventh child, third son, Jeffrey Carl, March 7, 2012.

Helmuth, Micah and Natalie (Overholt), Abbeville, SC, fourth child, (one deceased), second son, Lincoln Matthew, April 6, 2012.

Hershberger, Conrad and Esther (Koop), Greenville, VA, fifth child, second dau., Anna Joy Delight, Feb. 22, 2012.

King, Lee and Barb (King), Honey Grove, PA, fifth child, third dau., Sierra LeAnne, March 1, 2012.

Mast, Merlin and Catherine (Miller), Bolivar, TN, third child, second son, Franklin Clarke, Oct. 24, 2011.

Miller, Darrell and Hannah (Gingerich), Uniontown, OH, second child and son, Tyler Isaac, March 19, 2012.

Miller, Javan and Suetta (Hershberger), Dundee, OH, second child, first dau., Tori Rebecca, Feb. 27, 2012.

Miller, Joseph and Lisa Jolene (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, second child, first dau., Jennifer Renae, Feb. 10, 2012.

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

Miller, Nelson and Laura (Coblentz), Cumberland Furnace, TN, third child and dau., Tonya Shianne, Jan. 16, 2012.

Nisly, Nathan and Marjean (Wickey), Hutchinson, KS, third child, second dau., Danielle Elise, March 14, 2012.

Ropp, David and Arlene (Yoder), Blyth, ON, first child and son, Kendyn David, March 9, 2012.

Schrock, Ellis and Daniela (Ciocan), Antrim, OH, first child and dau., Olivia Anne, Feb. 29, 2012.

Sensenig, Wesley and Karen (Schrock), Waterford, Ireland, second child, first son, Aric Daniel, Feb. 15, 2012.

Smucker, Kevin and Krystal (Barkman), McConnelsville, OH, first child and son, Ramonn Donte`, Jan. 21, 2012.

Stoltzfus, Elmer and Ruth (Peight), Middleburg, PA, fourth child and son, Riley Miguel, Dec. 18, 2011.

Stoltzfus, Merlin and Marie (Beiler), Leola, PA, first child and dau., Olivia Grace, March 21, 2012.

Stutzman, John and Bertha (Troyer), London, OH, third child and dau., Jerrica Elizabeth, Feb. 23, 2012.

Swartzentruber, Brian and Dorothy (Petersheim), Abbeville, SC, second child first dau., Nicole Erin, March 30, 2012.

Swartzentruber, Lester and Miriam (Brenneman), Chesapeake, VA, seventh child, second son, Joseph Andrew, Feb. 26, 2012.

Troyer, Titus and Kathryn (Mast), Fredonia, KY, second child, first dau., Monica Dawn, Jan. 18, 2012.

Yoder, Doug and Rita (Weaver), Plain City, OH, second child and dau., Sophie Elise, March 6, 2012.

Yoder, Gary and Jeanetta (Stoll), Abbeville, SC, fourth child, third dau., Riley Kate, March 5, 2012.

Yoder, James and Lucrecia (Wagler), Hartville, OH, fifth child, fourth dau., Eden Mercy, March 22, 2012.

Yoder, Joash and Loretta (Wengerd), Lexington, IN, second child, first son, Colton Riley, Feb. 20, 2012.

Yoder, Terry and Rachel (Wagler), Lexington, IN, second child, first dau., Kianna Brooke, Feb. 7, 2012.

ordinations

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

Bro. David W. Miller, 39, was chosen by voice of the church and ordained as minister at Still Waters Mennonite Church, Georgetown, OH, on March 11, 2012. Preordination messages were brought by Leroy Kauffman, Burkesville, KY. The charge was given by Leon Troyer, assisted by Leroy Kauffman, Delbert Schlabach and Ivan Miller.

Bro. Lowell Miller, 53, of Nickerson, KS, was ordained as minister of international church development, in behalf of Center A.M. Church, on March 25, 2012. This charge confirms his earlier ministry in that effort, as directed by the church and authorizes him to continue. After five years of service in Central America, Lowell has been accepting periodic teaching assignments in other lands. The charge was given by David Yoder.

Bro. Philip Stoltzfus, 46, was ordained as deacon at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Amanda, OH, March 4, 2012. Preordination messages were brought by Wayne Lapp of Burgettstown, PA. The charge was given by Lonnie Beachy. Wendell Beachy was also in the lot.

Bro. Paul Yoder, 63, of Hutchinson, KS, was ordained as minister for

community evangelism and discipleship through Hands of Christ, an outreach of Center A.M. Church, on March 25, 2012. Having earlier served for a number of years in Europe, Paul is now serving in needy situations close to home, as appointed by the church. The charge was given by David Yoder.

obituaries

Coblentz, Anna (Weaver), 87, of Millersburg, OH, died Jan. 18, 2012, after an extended illness. She was born July 29, 1924, daughter of the late Sam B. and Susie (Miller) Weaver.

Anna was a faithful member at Messiah A. M. Church. She enjoyed serving, especially volunteering at Save and Serve in Millersburg.

On Dec. 20, 1945, she was married to Benjamin J. Coblentz, who preceded her in death in April, 2010. Children are Elvin married to Laura McCombs, Fredericksburg; Elsie married to Omar Miller, Harrison, AR; David married to Cora Byler, Millersburg; Mark married to Stacy Mann, Walnut Creek; Sue Ann married to Philip Beachy, Millersburg; Jason married to Mary Hostetler, Dundee; and Ina Ruth married to Mervin Lapp, Gordonville, PA; also 37 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren. Other survivors include sister, Ella (Jonas, Deceased) Schrock and brother, Raymond (Lizzie Ann) Weaver.

She was preceded in death by a son, Charran, a grandson, Joshua Miller, sisters: Sarah (Andy) Yoder and Verna; brothers: John, Perry, Eli, and Daniel.

The funeral was on Jan. 22, with bishop Philip Miller in charge. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Herschberger, Susie, 88, of Tuscola, IL, of Arthur, IL, passed away on Feb. 18, 2012, at the Arthur Nursing Home. She was born Feb. 26, 1923 in Arthur, IL, daughter of the late Joseph and Tillie (Beachy) Schrock.

She was a member of Pleasant View Church, Arcola.

On Nov. 30, 1943, she was married to Edward J. Herschberger. He died in March, 1994.

Susie is survived by a son, Vernon Herschberger, Lindale, TX; a sister, Cora Yutzy of McMinnville, OR; and a brother, Dan T. Schrock, Phoenix, AZ. She was preceded in death by three sons: Merle, Phillip, and Edward, Jr., and one daughter, Velma Herschberger, and 13 brothers and sisters.

The funeral was held on Feb. 22, at Pleasant View with Wesley Yoder serving. Burial was in the Pleasant View Cemetery.

Hostetler, Ada Z., 86, of Reedsville, PA, died Feb. 24, 2012, at Mt. Nittany Medical Center, State College, PA. She was born Dec. 25, 1925, at Belleville, PA, daughter of the late Jonathan and Saloma (Zook) Byler.

She was a member of Valley View

A.M. Church.

On Nov. 29, 1945, she was married to Ben S. Hostetler, who preceded her in death in 2008. Survivors are children: Elsie and husband Leon Peachey, Belleville; Ivan, Reedsville; Norman and wife Anna Mary Hostetler, Belleville; Mervin and wife Wanda Hostetler, Reedsville; Sam and wife Carol Hostetler, Reedsville; Arlene and husband David Zook, Belleville; 23 grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren; two sisters Katie King, Kinzers, PA; Elsie Miller, IN; one brother, Joe M. Byler, Belleville.

She was preceded in death by three infant children.

The funeral was held on Feb. 24, with Eli B. King, Jr., Earl Peachey, and David S. King serving. Burial was in the Locust Grove Cemetery, with David J. Peachey serving.

King, Sara Mae, 78, of Lexington, IN, died Jan. 17, 2012, at her residence. She was born in Hartville, OH, daughter of the late Roman and Malinda (Hershberger) Hostetler.

She was a member of Living Waters Mennonite Church, Lexington, IN.

On May 24, 1953, she was married to Glenn King, who survives. Their nine children: Susan and Noah Yoder, Montezuma, GA; Steve (deceased) and Edna King, Hartville, OH; Eugene and Marie King, Montezuma, GA; Rosemary and Ivan Yoder, Lexington, IN; Kenneth and Edith King, Paris, TN; Dave and Faith King, Dickson, TN; Elaine and Thomas Weaver, Summersville, KY;

Paul and Christina King, Lexington, IN; Margaret and Mark Mast, Dickson, TN; Leon and Loretta King, Lexington, IN; 53 grandchildren, and 27 great grandchildren. Other survivors include 12 brothers and sisters: Clarence Hostetler, Ada Mast, Saloma Sommers, Betty Morris, Dorothy Schrock, Roman Hostetler, Jr., Melvin Hostetler, Eli Hostetler, Joseph Hostetler, Miriam Mullet, Paul Hostetler, and Margaret Slabaugh.

Preceding her in death was an infant brother, William; a son, Steve King; and twin granddaughters, Rhonda and Londa King.

The funeral was on Jan. 20, with David Troyer, Lon Eash, Floyd Lengacher, and Eli Weaver serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Mast, Lareeta Kay, 39, died at OU Medical Center, Oklahoma City, OK, from complications with Gardner's Syndrome on March 12, 2012. She was born Feb. 4, 1973, daughter of Perry Jay and the late Margie (Billington) Mast, in Weatherford, OK. Margie died of Gardner's Syndrome at 35 years of age.

Lareeta was a faithful member of Zion Mennonite Church. She was a cheerful servant of Christ to others. She faithfully cared for her grandparents, John and Fannie (Yoder) Mast for 16 years. She was a massage therapist.

Survivors include her parents Perry and Mary (Borkholder) Mast; two brothers: Keith (and Linda) Mast, Honey Brook, PA; Nathan Mast of the home;

two sisters: Rhonda, Gordonville, PA; and Elaine (and husband Taylor) Lee, Mishawaka, IN; her grandmother, Fannie Mast, Weatherford, OK; five nieces and one nephew.

She was preceded in death by one brother, Timothy Peter Mast; grandparents, John B. Mast. Otis and Marie Billington, and two aunts Mary Ann Miller and Margaret Stutzman and two uncles, Alvin and Melvin Mast.

The funeral was held on March 15 at Pleasant View Mennonite Church for Zion Mennonite Church, with Leroy Peachy, David Yoder, and Kevin Graber, serving. Burial was in the Zion Cemetery with Uncle Amos Borkholder serving in the committal.

Our Rose

Melody Mast

(A niece of Lareeta)

A lovely rose once grew

On yonder meadows lush green hill.

The cruel winds harshly blew,

Yet the white Rose grew stout there still.

One day the Gardener

Bent to see the Rose He'd planted.

He noticed its thick stem

And saw the scars left by the wind.

So, tenderly He plucked

From that terrible windblown drumlin

The faithful suff'ring Rose

And transplanted her in Heaven.

Mast, Mahlon, 66, died suddenly Feb. 20, 2012. He was born in Parkman, OH, August 21, 1945, son of the late Mahlon and Gertrude (Troyer) Mast.

He was a member of Messiah A. M. Church. He enjoyed his family, worked at Walnut Creek Planing, and his loving character was an inspiration.

On May 26, 1966, he was married to Sarah Miller. She survives. Children surviving are Lavina Weaver, Meadville, PA; Jonathan married to Sarah Troyer, Oskaloosa, KS; Philip married to Priscilla Yoder, Oskaloosa, KS; Merlin married to Laura Fisher, Walhonding, OH; Raymond married to Jacquie Nzisa, Warsaw, OH; Norman married to Ruth Fisher, Sarasota, FL; Sue Ann married to Caleb Eddy, Martinsburg, OH; 17 grandchildren; sisters: Mary (Steve) Miller; Gertrude (Eli) Mast; Laura (Allen) Mast, Anna (John) Mast; Anna (John) Troyer; and Lydiann (Clarence) Schmucker, and a brother: John (Esther) Mast.

He was preceded in death by granddaughters: Rosalie Mast, and Jasmine Mast; sisters: Amanda (Dan) Miller and Emma (Chris) Kuhns; and brothers: Alton (Katie) Mast and Clarence (Barbara) Mast.

The funeral was held on Feb. 24, with bishop Philip Miller in charge. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Nafziger, Christina, 91, of Stratford, ON, died Feb. 28, 2012, at Stratford General Hospital as a result of a heart attack. She was born Dec. 30, 1920, in Wellesley Township, daughter of the late Michael and Barbara (Gerber) Jantzi.

She was a faithful member of Fair Haven Amish Mennonite Church. She

took an active interest in young and old.

On Feb. 26, 1942, she was married to Dan W. Erb. He preceded her in death in 1989. In June, 2002, she was married to Ira Nafziger, who died in 2008. Surviving are five daughters: Nancy (Harold) Wagler; Margaret (Peter) Kuepfer; Shelley (John) Erb; Sheila (James) Jantzi; and Denise Bannerman; three sons: Delmer (Mary) Erb; Harold (Marie) Erb; and Donald Erb. Another survivor is a son-in-law, Melvin (Marietta) Roes. Stepchildren surviving: Calvin (Naomi) Nafziger; Twila (Ken) Ryan; Joyce (Ron) McCarty; Leslie (Bonnie) Nafziger; Lucille (Greg) Osiko; Carol (Darrel) Good; Bonita Nafziger; Robert (Evelyn) Nafziger; Sarah Jane (Lamar) Shelley; Shirley Nafziger; Cynthia (Dennis) Detweiler; Yvonne (Marvin) Miller, and June (Gary) Eberly. Also surviving are 34 grandchildren and 84 great grandchildren and sisters-in-law: Jessie Jantzi, Thelma Jantzi, Annie Ropp, Annie Martin, Mary Zehr, and Amy (Norman) Zehr.

She was predeceased by her seven brothers: Peter, Daniel, Michael, Christian, Rudolph, Benjamin, and Valentine; three sisters: Magdalena, Annie, and Veronica; her three adopted brothers: Noah, Ezra, and Emmanuel, her four adopted sisters: Barbara, Nancy, Katie, and Mary. Also preceding her in death were one grandson, one grandson-in-law and two great grandchildren.

The funeral was held at Faith Mennonite Church on March 3, with Steve Adams and Melvin Roes serving.

Burial was in the Mornington Amish Mennonite Cemetery.

Overholt, Vera, 63, of Minerva, OH, died on Feb. 22, 2012, in her home among family and friends. She was born Nov. 8, 1948, daughter of the late Emma (Raber) and Victor Overholt. At age three, she contracted polio, affecting her respiratory system and mobility.

She was a member of Christian Fellowship, bringing much zest for life into the community. In 1971, she stepped into the classroom, becoming a teacher, mentor, organizer, counselor, and an inspiration to many students, as well as others, until she retired in 2002, after 31 years of teaching. She was involved in the Polio Support Group, Canton; Joni and Friends, OH; and International Covenantal God is Love Ministries, Carrollton; blessing others with her love and life.

Survivors include her father, and his wife, Judy Sommers; siblings: Ruth (Johnny) Miller, Minerva; Fred (Bernadine) Overholt, East Rochester; Leon (Ida Mae) Overholt, McVeytown, PA; Lena (Olen) Yoder, Minerva, with whom she resided; JoAnn (Chris) Inhulsen, Montezuma, GA; Delilah (Lonnie) Beachy, Plain City; Judy (David) Miller, Minerva; David (Wilma) Overholt, Minerva, and Dwayne (Kathy) Overholt, Salisbury, PA.

She was preceded in death by a brother,

Michael Overholt.

The funeral was held at First Christian Church in Minerva with Joel Gingerich, Johnny Miller, and Lonnie Beachy serving. Interment was at the Christian Fellowship Church cemetery.

Sommers, John J., 90, of Minerva, OH, died July 21, 2011. He was born in Uniontown, OH, on Jan. 7, 1921, son of the late Henry and Clara (Schlabach) Sommers.

He was a member of Christian Fellowship, Minerva.

On Jan. 1, 1946, he was married to Katie Beachy, who survives. The nine children surviving are: Joseph (Sharon) Sommers, Minerva; Mervin, North Canton, OH; Eli (Barbara) Sommers, Hiddenite, NC; Paul (Mary) Sommers, Baltic; Willis (Marlene) Sommers, Salisbury, PA; Martha Sommers, Minerva; Mary (Freeman) Byler, Windsor; Reuben (Miriam) Sommers, Salisbury, PA; Marlene Sommers, Minerva; also surviving are 41 grandchildren and 24 great grandchildren. Also surviving are two brothers: Willis (Mabel) Sommers, Plain City; and Paul (Keturah) Sommers, Minerva; and two sisters, Mary (Dan) Coblentz, Cincinnati, OH; and Catherine (Abe) Troyer, Apple Creek, OH.

Son Paul Sommers and Johnny Miller served in the funeral. Joel Gingerich conducted the committal at the burial in the church cemetery. 

Can overemphasizing a well-known and needed truth have negative effects? “By grace are ye saved, through faith, not of works...” One could emphasize “not of works” and fail to notice that Christians are created “unto good works”(Eph. 2:9,10).

By the same token, we well realize that we can become seriously unbalanced if we try to choose clothing, however modest and non-conformed and “Christian” to compensate for our lack of repentance and faith and grace.

A respected non-local leader has expressed the concern that it seems that the teaching that externals are inadequate has been emphasized to the point that to some people, what someone wears does not matter. This assumes that only heart issues are important. Unless there is an intentional effort to follow Christian principles of dress, we will logically follow whatever common practice dictates. I have lived long enough to have observed that popular trends are very changeable and do not reflect an awareness of Christian influence.

Let us acknowledge that we are not immune to errors of imbalance in this area. By God’s grace, let us give primary emphasis to salvation

by grace, but also grace that chooses faithfulness away from the well-traveled, broad road.

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Mark Demasn was concerned about the increasingly harsh tone of public dialogue in our country. In January, the Republican businessman enlisted the help of Lanny Draves, a lobbyist and former Clinton aide to help him. Together, they wrote to all 50 state governors, asking each to sign a pledge that says: “I will be civil in my public discourse and behavior. I will be respectful of others whether I agree with them or not. I will stand against incivility when I see it.”

Altogether there were 585 recipients of the proposed pledge. Only three returned them signed. The effort called Civility Project has now been abandoned for lack of support. (*Christianity Today*, Jan., 2012). The need for major change in the area of political dialogue seems obvious. An unwillingness to change is a very real part of the problem.

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In January, 2012, conservative Presbyterians became a new denomination. This was the result of the parent church body deciding to ordain non-celibate gays and lesbians. The new group chose the

name Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians. (ECO)

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Christian faith continues to grow in China. Researchers estimate China’s Christian population between 60 and 115 million. But the government continues to be firm in its opposition. Communist party members must be atheists.

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A Christmas Eve shootout prompted a government crackdown and eviction of a Chattanooga, TN, ministry and its controversial gang-outreach program. Police have responded to at least 19 assault calls there since 2006.

Tim Reid was hosting a secular concert for teens that turned rowdy. The gunfight on Christmas Eve wounded nine. City officials asked for an injunction to close down the club and church. Reid defends his efforts to reach out to gang members on their own turf.

One observer says, “I suspect Reid is in a period of trial and error. Anyone experimenting will make mistakes, but tactic cannot compromise integrity. Gang ministries walk a fine line being accommodating and being prophetic. Jesus did not become a prostitute to reach prostitutes or a drug addict to reach drug addicts. We don’t want to make it so worldly that there is no difference between light and darkness. Jesus says, ‘You have to

leave this and follow Me.”

• • • • •

This is being written on March 10. National news has much to say about several contenders wanting to become the Republican presidential nominee. The way they try to discredit one another seems to me to increase the likelihood of the current president’s re-election. All of this is a helpful reminder that our kingdom is not of this world.

The two-kingdom concept is a long-held Anabaptist position. But to assume that Anabaptists are the only ones with this view is a mistaken view. A regular reader has sent an article by Charles C. Haynes, senior scholar at the First Amendment Center, bringing out the importance of separation of church and state.

David Neff, writing in *Christianity Today* (March, 2012) believes that Christian influence is important in society. But for Christians to become “Kingmakers and Powerbrokers” is dangerous. He is disappointed that 150 evangelical leaders met behind closed doors on Jan. 14 to “anoint” a Republican candidate for president. He says, “Christian leaders who exercise the will to power partake of the same thing they decry in society.”

A secular columnist expresses a similar concern. He notes that Jesus said His kingdom is not of this world, and that His servants don’t fight.

State-funded institutions are not

free to address character-building and moral issues. Church-related institutions do not have those legal restrictions.

Prior to the Civil War, church affiliated colleges educated 90% of undergraduates. Today public universities educate over 73% of American undergraduates.

State-funded institutions do not have those legal restrictions. But here is a constant challenge to overrate the importance of intellectual development to the neglect of of the whole person, which includes a Christian view of morals and ethical behavior. (Gleaned from *Christianity Today*, March, 2012.)

• • • • •

Some readers will remember having read about an imaginary scenario concerning Satan and the Anabaptists. Satan, in company with other other fallen angels was voicing his frustration that persecution was ineffective in stopping the movement. In their search for something more effective, the suggestion came to make them rich.

While we do not know that this actually happened, we have good reason to want to learn how material wealth seems to affect spiritual health. And it is much easier to be objective from a distance than situations of which we are now a part.

Menno Simons lived in Holland. Having been a Catholic priest

who became an Anabaptist made him a wanted man. That he died a natural death suggests that he was supernaturally protected.

When Dutch Mennonites became wealthy and prominent in political and economic circles, they were no longer persecuted. It seems that their earlier desire to follow the Lord and His Word was lost to other priorities. During the 1700's, their numbers fell from 125,000, to about 25,000. Presently, they are fully integrated into the culture. Their theology is seen as shallow and liberal.

Some of their number became Russian Mennonites. It seems to me that these were very careful not to be absorbed into cultural mainstream. But their freedom, which lasted nearly 100 years, allowed for material prosperity.

Suffice it to say, a serious study of these events can be helpful to Christians who are concerned about keeping a proper order of priorities.

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You will notice that the above discussion concerns situations a safe distance from home. Since space does not permit extensive treatment of this important subject, let me share something that is fairly current and close to home.

Recently a non-local brother visited in our home. He said that his response to selling all that he has and giving it to the poor is planning to

will whatever remains of his estate to charitable causes. He would be open to giving consideration to special family needs, especially needs that come because of Christian service.

I assume that we could agree that such a plan is a major departure from what is generally considered normal. Thought-provoking, to say the least.

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I have for some time had an urge to say some things about a Christian perspective about singing and music. Am I right to consider music both an art and a science? I can only look up to persons who understand the rudiments and are also good singers.

I believe to be musically gifted is God-given. I know a man who is seriously handicapped. His social and verbal skills are very limited. But when he hears a new tune, he can play it on his little chord organ. This can vary from a rather contemporary tempo to slow tunes that are typically sung in Amish services. None of his siblings in a good-sized family is similarly gifted. It seems safe to say that this person enjoys the art of music without knowledge of the rudiments.

One reason this is on my mind is that The Mountain Anthems favored us with a program recently. I was impressed that their presentation

was characterized by selections of tunes and lyrics that were easy to understand. They have memorized all the songs and the leader chooses what songs to sing in each program. There is a relaxed, unstructured mood that makes listening enjoyable. There were no very difficult arrangements and meaningless repetitions. The director also took selections from the floor, which were sung with gusto.

An acquaintance of mine who has an adult family shared something he had written in their family letter. He is a good singer who is able to teach rudiments. The following thoughts are excerpted from that letter with permission: He says that music doesn't have to border on the impossible for him to enjoy it. He likes just plain lilting melodies and simple arrangements. He does recognize the youthful urge to show Mama and Papa "What I can do," and "How high I can swing!"

I believe the underlying concern of this person is that singing does not degenerate into a performance that lacks substance.

Congregational singing does not incur that risk. Special singing should make a conscious effort to guard against that tendency. And good congregational singing is "special" in its own right.

—DLM 

What Is the Church?

Virgil Schrock, Boyd, WI

Leaders are not the church, but the church is incomplete and dysfunctional without leaders. Leaders are part of the brotherhood, and are guided by the admonitions of the brotherhood. They have entered into the same covenant relationship with Christ, require daily fellowship with God, and need to learn to rejoice and suffer with the church like all the rest of the members.

Nevertheless, God has given a role for leaders that must be understood, respected, and administered if the church is to be. Leaders are responsible to teach doctrine, to identify righteousness, and to discipline carnality. They must give account for the souls under their care. Every leader ought to think about getting a letter from Christ listing the condition of the church, as did the leaders of seven churches of Asia.

The challenge to minimize the role and authority of leaders, and the desire to intensify and expand the power of leaders outside the definitions of humble but weighty service taught in the Pastoral Epistles, are both carnal. The confusion caused by unlawful realignment of the role of leaders has caused many to lose their souls—both leaders and members.

Church leaders have not invented

their office, nor have they appointed themselves to their position. It is theirs to receive with humility. They do have authority to evangelize, nurture the young, and bring the church to maturity in faith. They labor as servants. They serve both God and man and are themselves served only as they adequately serve their work. In whatever degree leaders serve themselves, they harm the work and their own usefulness in that work. Leaders serve themselves when they protect their authority, their families, and their reputations.

The potential for misusing authority is the same as the potential for misuse of any other gift God gives. But one man's misuse of his authority does not alter the potential for another to do great good with humble, faithful exercise of his authority.

Leaders obtain their authority from God through the church and are to exercise it as a charge from God and the church. Members who know Christ exercise their own gift where God has set them and are to respect the role God has given to others, functioning as a body, in the power of the Spirit, accountable to God. This is a church.

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



The Path

Twila (Mrs. Clayton) Beachy, Bastrop, TX

I walked by my Savior's side today;
The sun shone brightly, casting golden rays
Upon us as we walked, talked and laughed.
Life is sweet; God is so good!

I felt so carefree, happy and free;
I looked at Jesus' tender loving face
And whispered "I love You so much,
My will I give to You, whatever comes my way."

He looked at me with utmost tenderness,
"Child, my way is not an easy one to tread.
There are mountains to climb and the way is so rough and steep
Sometimes sharp thorns will pierce and bruise your feet.

"The sun does not always so brightly shine,
But if you just willingly
Trust Me and place your hand in Mine.
And follow Me as together we climb,

"Places you wonder why here we must go
I'll untold blessings and love on you bestow."
I looked at Him and once more I knew
That I owe Him everything; what matters the way?

“Dear Lord,” I said, with head bowed low,
“You’ve given me Yourself,
You’ve given everything
I owe you my all; I cannot say, ‘No!’

“I will gladly go with You all the way!”
Once more He looked at me and said,
“Be faithful to Me
Until the very end.

“Great is your reward
As you follow Me now
Greater will it be when in heaven
You cast before Me your crown.”

The road is not always easy,
But with Jesus our Friend and Guide,
Who always walks by our side.
He gives grace for the hills we climb.

When the sun of our life begins to set,
And we Him in heavenly splendor see,
We’ll know it was worth it
To walk the path He chose.

We’ll be with Him
In endless love and praise
Forever and forever
Throughout all eternity.



Why I Left Baseball

Billy Sunday (1862-1935)

Ten reasons why Pittsburgh Pirates outfielder Billy Sunday says he left baseball in 1893. (USA Today Baseball Weekly, June 8-14, 1994).

1. Because it has a life which has an undesirable future.
2. Because it develops a spirit of jealousy and selfishness; one's whole desires are personal success regardless of what befalls others.
3. Because it tends to indolence as shown by the fact that few use the five months of unemployment time for study and self-improvement and preparation for future pursuit.
4. Because it is better to benefit mankind than simply to amuse them.
5. Because after one attains a certain standard of efficiency, there is no more room for development.
6. Because it does not develop one for future usefulness as illustrated by the fact that many ex-ballplayers are engaged in the saloon business.
7. Because it is a life in which morality is not an essential to success; one may be a consummate rogue and a first-class ballplayer.
8. Because reflections on past "grand stand catches," "great slides to the plate," "stolen bases," and the echo of applauding multitudes are very poor food for consolation.
9. Because I felt called of God to do His service.
10. Because of the anticipated contentment (now realized) which comes to any man who finds himself in the right place.

[Selected by the editor from a longer essay written by an unknown writer, submitted by Elizabeth Hershberger, Hutchinson, KS. Note: Billy was considered "the fastest man in baseball" when he quit baseball and went into mass evangelism in 1890. He was a valiant opponent of the liquor industry. In his lifetime, according to *World Book Encyclopedia*, he preached to an estimated 100 million people with over one million responding to the invitation to receive Christ as Savior.

—PLM]



The Beachy Amish Mennonite Website: Connecting Seekers and Churches —Part One

Cory Anderson, Newcomerstown, OH

[The Scriptures do not indicate that home missions are any less important than foreign missions. It only makes good, scriptural sense to preach Christ where there is no Gospel witness, as Paul wrote, “Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation. But, as it is written, to whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand” (Romans 15:20, 21).

Many of the seekers written about in the following article come from communities with very little sound biblical teaching about following Christ in obedience and outward practicalities according to God’s holy Word.

This article describes an amazing technological vehicle to give direction to those in our society who are searching for a church fellowship that takes Christ seriously. We are blessed at Pequea Amish Mennonite Church to have a family (approximately 25-30) miles away) from a Catholic background that is enjoying our fellowship because of Cory’s website. But, I wonder, Why did we not find them first? -FS]

More people today could very well be seeking out conservative Anabaptist churches than in our 500-year history. They may have first discovered our existence through a variety of means—television, novels, movies, tourist literature, and so on. But discovering us is not finding us. Most of our churches have a sign out front, announcing to all who pass by: “Visitors Welcome,” but this memo does little for the Chicago

suburbanite, Tampa retiree, or central Texas rancher. The random American has little means by which to locate a conservative Anabaptist church.

With the vision of disseminating church location information seekers, I operate my website, www.beachyam.org. We’re not talking about potatoes grown on the ocean shore (Beach Yam), but a website about Beachy Amish Mennonites (Beachy A.M.). A large majority of Americans have Internet access today, and if they’re

searching for information about Amish or Mennonites, it does not take long to find this website. It is a helpful way to get information to those who turn to this as one of the only resources they have to contact plain people. On this site, I provide information about our beliefs, history, denominational structure, organizations, mission, and cultural trivia.

Those interested can fill out a form, which asks for their location and a little bit about their interests in the plain people. In return, I provide them with directions to a conservative Anabaptist church. To qualify, the denomination must use the women's head covering and not serve in the military (on one end) and allow automobile ownership (on the other). This database includes churches from at least 15 sources, including published directories and knowledgeable people. Over 1,400 churches are included. I receive around two requests a day from people looking for a church location.

I suspect the most important content on the website is not the text, but the photographs. I often get comments from seekers that they read our religious devotion by our dress. It speaks to them of how devoted we are to what we believe and how much we admire our churches, that these plain people are even willing to dress like Christians. A recent comment from a seeker well captures this oft-repeated thought: "My

husband and I have recently come to the realization through study that the head covering is of importance. We would like very much to visit a church that is very conservative in dress and that also covers. We are looking for fellowship and others whose focus is on the Lord, those who are in the world but not of the world."

The head covering and plain, modest dress are two frequently mentioned reasons people are turning to us. But it's more than that; it's the entire lifestyle that appears focused on Christ and not the fleeting shifts of this society. "I have grown somewhat discouraged by seeing how much the many modern Christian churches have become so worldly to the point that the lifestyle of most Christians differs little from the mainstream..." Another: "I really admire your core values and lifestyle and commitment to OUR LORD and honestly wish I could become a friend of your church. I am drawn to you because of your LOVE OF GOD'S WAY OF LIFE and really would like to get to know you better." Another: "I am completely interested in the beliefs and lifestyle associated with your community. I have been through a lot in my years, and frankly, am quite sick of the normal worldly fashion."

May we be humbled by the way people read our lifestyle as a God-focused one. After visiting a church, another person said, "These people

are not only the nicest people we have ever met, but you can see that the church is so devoted to God and they are actually trying to do what the Lord tells us to do and it is so delightful to our eyes to see that that devotion to God has not died in today's society." They are reading this into our many peculiar practices. If our ways speak of such Christian devotion, we should harness it for the kingdom of God and His Glory!

However, their reading into our

ways as God-focused is conditional. They see things clearly manifest before their senses, and it is this which speaks of religious devotion. This appeal is not guaranteed, and our churches can do things to dim the light for those seeking the living waters. If outsiders read into us Christian devotion, we should give glory to God and seek to live this devotion more and more.

Next month, we will consider some ways church members can help a seeker when he is referred to your church. 

ANNOUNCEMENT

Over the past several years, I've been working to photograph all Amish-Mennonite meetinghouses in anticipation of publishing a book of the photos with other information. This project is now under contract and moving towards publications.

I would like to invite all Amish-Mennonite congregations in the US and Canada to submit a photograph of your church people for a forthcoming hardcover, coffee table style book about Beachy congregations. This book includes photographs of all Amish-Mennonite meetinghouses I have taken over the past several years. Ridgeway Publishers of Medina, NY, is publishing it.

Each church will have a page with building photos and a very brief stats/origin note. The book will contain other features and minor content (though it is not a directory as such). Church leaders, if you would like a group photo to go on your page with the building photo I have already taken, please take the time and effort to send me a group shot and have the photographer e-mail me a photograph.

The deadline is June 1, 2012, though I strongly encourage earlier submissions or commitments for the sake of layout planning. Ridgeway anticipates sending pre-order forms to your congregations in late June or July.

We hope this book will be of interest to each, and a valuable piece of history for future generations.

Cory Anderson - 28539 SR 751 - Newcomerstown, OH 43832



Five Gifts to Give our Children

Mary June, Glick, Seneca, SC

Mother's Day is a special time for mothers—a time to feel honored and loved. According to Proverbs 31: 28, children should grow up to call their mothers blessed. Small children enjoy making cards or gifts for their mothers at Mother's Day. Even we older mothers look forward to the phone calls, cards or flowers that we receive from our adult children on Mother's Day. If your mother is still living, be sure to honor her in some way on Mother's Day.

I believe mothers have a responsibility to their children in order for the children to grow up with deep appreciation and respect for their mothers. We must try to look at our role through God's eyes, and see how He would have us relate to our family. God wants us to be joyful as we live with our children.

I know women are not all alike. Some women seem to automatically love being a mother. I was one of those. It was my childhood dream to have a large family, however God saw fit to give us only two children

by birth and two more by adoption. I loved the challenges of motherhood and I confess I forgot most of the unpleasant times. Other women find that even though they love their children, they must work harder at enjoying motherhood. God made each of us and understands our longings and desires, our likes and dislikes. However, He plans joy for a mother at the moment and love for each child He has placed in her care. (See Psalm 113:9)

This month I want to write about some gifts every mother should give to her children:

1. Acceptance

As we give acceptance it gives a glimpse to the child of a loving Heavenly Father, who also accepts us as His child. Acceptance is a key factor in a home. A child who feels accepted at home, will feel more confident to face the larger world outside the home. Give your child lots of hugs and kisses; express feelings of love and acceptance to your child. Even if you did not grow up with outward affection, you can learn to show it to

your children. Every child deserves to know that they belong.

2. Discipline

Teach your child to obey. Find a method of discipline that works for each child. Never abuse or scar a child by unreasonable or unkind discipline. Pray with the child and explain why he needs discipline. Do not do it in anger. Don't threaten but be true to what you say you will do. Apologize if you have been unfair. A disciplined child brings joy to the parents and his peers.

3. Teach Nonresistance

Recently it was brought to my attention how important it is that parents teach nonresistance to their young children. If a child hears the parent responding negatively to someone who wronged them, what is this teaching a child? Children must learn even at a young age that a Christian does not fight back but returns good for evil. Children must learn to look out for children who are being mistreated by other children. A child who is pushed back or ridiculed by others may grow up with a low self worth. Help your child accept other people regardless of color, social status or any other distinction. Children can be unkind. Be sure you are aware of what happens after church or at school. Your child is your responsibility. Teach him to love with a Christlike love.

4. Involvement

Be involved in your child's life.

Know what he likes or dislikes. Help him excel in his strong points and be patient in his weak areas. Be involved in his school activities, if there are special activities for parents, be sure to be there. Take an interest in his friends; make them feel welcome in your home. Take time for your child—his needs, his interests, and even his words are important. Listen to him. Let him know that he is important to you.

5. Respect

Teach your child respect and give him respect. Children learn much more from our actions than they do from our words. Never call your child unkind names even in fun. You never know how that name may impact the child's life in the future. Expect respect from the child. Teach him to respect those in authority: the police officer, the rulers of our country, the ministers, the schoolteachers, the elderly, and also the poor and unkept. Remember a child will learn from what he hears you say. Stop disrespectful behavior immediately, whether it is toward you, his siblings, or anyone else. Teach the child that there are consequences for disrespect.

I have touched only five areas. I know there are many more you can think of that are important. I pray that you will find courage to enjoy your role as a mother and to raise obedient, respectful children. God bless you on Mother's Day!



Empty Bowls

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

The big, black rice pot was cold and empty. There was no more nice white rice to cook and eat. What would Amy Carmichael and her orphan girls do? Not only was the rice gone, there was no money to buy more.

Amy, a missionary in India for many years, had learned to depend totally on God for everything. Daily she studied God's Word to know God better and to know His will for her family of orphans.

While they were still in prayer, a messenger arrived. He handed Amy an envelope. Inside she found one hundred rupees. The prayer meeting turned into a praise meeting. What a blessing it was that God heard and answered their prayers for rice!

A little playmate from the village was watching them. She saw the hungry girls and she heard them pray. She saw how God sent them the money. She was deeply impressed by the Christian's powerful God!

Some time later, Amy and her

family were able to purchase a farm. Now they could raise their own rice and other foods. Their first rice seedlings grew nicely. Amy and the girls rejoiced to see the field spread out, a refreshing sheet of green. But then the weather turned hot and dry for a few days. Hosts of wiggly caterpillars hatched out in the hot sun. There were so many caterpillars that the man in charge of the rice fields knew their crop could be ruined. He told Amy, the workers, and the children about the serious caterpillar problem. He begged them to pray that God would protect their rice. Even the small children understood and they all prayed fervently for God to save the rice.

Two days later, when the farmer again checked the rice fields, a most wonderful sight met his worried eyes. White cattle egrets (small herons) were marching up and down the green rows of rice. They were greedily feasting on the juicy caterpillars. The rice field was saved.

In much of the surrounding countryside the horrible caterpillars completely destroyed the rice fields. But Amy Carmichael and her children again had a praise meeting. Their faith was strengthened. Truly God did care! He loved them! He heard and answered their prayers!

[Taken from *The Horse That Worked for God*, by Mary Ellen Beachy. 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.] 

youth messages

Dear Youth,

This Month's
QUESTION

Read Psalm 147. What is being taught in verses 10-11 that God does not delight in the strength of a horse or take pleasure in the legs of a man? What are some ways youth can practically put this teaching into “shoe leather”?

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

Psalm 147:10 and 11 tells us that the Lord does not delight in the strength of horses or the legs of a man, but in those that fear Him and hope in His mercy. What does that mean for us? We learn from this passage that the Lord does not delight in the temporal things we value. He does not delight in our high rank on the social ladder, our vast resources of knowledge, our extraordinary ability to play volleyball, our name-brand

clothes, our popular personality, our good looks, our ample bank account, our Canon camera, our large circle of friends, our BMW, our beautiful voice, or any other faulty sense of worth and security we may desperately try to create for ourselves. As Ruth, the prodigal son, the woman who likened herself to a dog who licks the crumbs off the floor, and the sinner who smote his breast, the Lord delights in those who come to Him

with nothing to offer, and simply recognize Him as God.

Grace Shank, Rochelle, VA



I think what these two verses are saying is that God’s greatest pleasure is not in our physical appearance and the power and strength of His creation, but rather in our character and spiritual qualities. However, our physical strength can be used in a way that brings honor and glory to God. He cares most for the emotions that center around Him; a fear that recognizes His awesome greatness and sovereignty, and a hope that recognizes His mercy and goodness. God doesn’t look at outward beauty or strength, but rather delights in a heart that loves and reveres Him. And a heart that is in tune with God will respond in constant obedience to what God calls us to do and a trust and dependence on His mercies.

Rachelle Stoltzfus, Gap, PA



Response to previous questions:

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 want to harness technology

rather than technology harnessing them?

We can get so wrapped up in today’s world that we forget about God and what His place should be in our life. We think, “Oh well, I’ll talk to Him later...I’ll read my Bible later...” We need to get our focus on God rather than everything else that seems to control our time these days. If we spend so much of our time on the computer, Facebook, texting, or whatever it may be, that’s where we’re letting today’s world control us. If we’re committed to God and spend time with Him every day, I don’t think we should have a problem with our electronic technology. But if we spend our time on electronics rather than with God, we’re just opening a new door for Satan.

Joy Mullett, Burr Oak, MI



We obviously live in a world that is filled with all forms and fashions of electronic technology. And it has an effect on us. We can’t change that. What we can change is our awareness—our awareness of how technology affects even our thinking patterns. A great book that shed some light on this subject for me is Shane Hipps’ book, *Flickering Pixels*. (A book about how technology shapes

our faith.)

Technology can obviously be very beneficial, but it can also serve as a major distraction. Our awareness of these distractions is huge. Simply realizing that something is a distraction is the first step in overcoming it. So what are some of these traps of electronic technology?

One that I think of right away is loss of genuine community. Nearly all our electronic gadgets come with the promise of bringing us, our friends, and our families together. And to some extent they do, but to me it seems at best like the generic brand of the real thing. Genuine community is something we all need and want. So let's not settle for a fake.

Another huge, monstrous, gigantic trap of electronic technology is the whole time wasting thing. I'm guilty of this one—big time. It's just such fun and easy to waste time. I need to keep asking myself the question: Are the things that I do making me and

the people around me better? God wants us to be using the energies that He gave us in pursuing Him and helping those around us.

So how do we insure that we are using technology wisely and not letting it control our lives? I think it's helpful if we can think of our electronics simply as extensions of ourselves. My phone is an extension of my voice and my ears. My computer is an extension of my mind, etc. This makes me realize that just as I need to control what I say, hear, and think, I also need to learn to control these extensions of my voice, my ears, and my mind.

Technology, if we let it, really has the power to destroy us. But I believe for every bad use of technology there is also a good use. Let's be seeking hard after God and be thinking of creative ways to use technology to bless those around us.

Randall Miller, Quaker City, OH



***It is our duty to obey God's commands,
not to direct his counsels.***

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

To succeed, keep your head up and your overhead down.

• • • • •

When you laugh, be sure to laugh at what people do and not at what people are.

• • • • •

The most dangerous wheel of chance is the steering wheel.

• • • • •

Calling attention to the faults of others does not remove ours.

• • • • •

One of the most difficult secrets to keep is one's opinion of himself.

• • • • •

It's worth knowing the difference between keeping your chin up and sticking your neck out.

• • • • •

One civil right we can all practice is courtesy.

• • • • •

A cynic often gets stuck in the belief that other people are like he is.

• • • • •

Death is not a period but a comma in the story of life.

• • • • •

Beware the persuasive salesman. He may talk you to debt.

• • • • •

Some people think a balanced diet is a double cheeseburger in each hand.