



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

Galatians 6:14

DECEMBER 2013

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 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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There's a Song in the Air

Josiah G. Holland

There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!

There's a tumult of joy o'er the wonderful birth,
For the Virgin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.
Ay! the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!

In the light of that star lie the ages impearled;
And that song from afar has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame and the beautiful sing,
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King!

We rejoice in the light and we echo the song
That comes down through the night from the heavenly throng.
Ay! we shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
And we greet in His cradle our Savior and King!



Tychicus—“It’s Not About Me!”

When Tychicus joined Paul’s traveling group in Acts 20:4, I think he saw he was not embarking on a course that would bring him popularity. The recent riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41) that had hurt the silver shrine business made it very clear that the message of the cross creates conflict with those who worship idols and who seek wealth and honor among men rather than approval from God. Some time later, Paul made plans to return to Macedonia. Luke gives the names of six men who wanted to go with Paul to Troas, among whom was Tychicus.

Tychicus, a Gentile, endeared himself to Paul. He is named in five New Testament references, with the most extensive reference being Colossians 4:7-9: *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.*”

Notice what Paul says about

Tychicus:

- Tychicus would report on Paul’s situation.

- Paul expects Tychicus to do a good job, because he “is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.”

- Paul believes Tychicus will take note of how the Colossians, his countrymen, are progressing in their walk with the Lord and that he would encourage them.

- Paul considers Tychicus and Onesimus a faithful reporting and ministering team.

One very important task Tychicus would undertake was to help Paul, imprisoned in Rome, and runaway slave, Onesimus, to make satisfaction with Philemon, his former master. Apparently here’s what happened: After Onesimus met Paul in prison, his unprofitable life was turned around as he surrendered to Christ as his Savior and Lord. Some time later, he decided to go back to Philemon to make things right with him. It was a delicate situation. Onesimus had wronged Philemon (? taken stolen goods?) when he ran away from him. But then things changed: Now both Onesimus and Philemon were

Christians.

Would Philemon seek to punish Onesimus? Would he take legal action against him?

In Philemon 10-20, Paul entreats Philemon to be gentle in the demands he places on Onesimus:

- He acknowledges that Onesimus had been unprofitable (11).

- He tells Philemon that Onesimus has been a great encouragement to him in prison (13).

- He leaves to Philemon the final decision of what he will require of Onesimus (14).

- He wants acceptance for Onesimus as a brother in the Lord (16).

- He desires a welcome for Onesimus like Philemon might give to Paul (16 and 17).

- He says he will stand behind any debts made by Onesimus. (18 and 19).

- He reminds Philemon that he owes his own faith in Christ to Paul (19).

Paul was submitting a tall order to Philemon. This is where Tychicus again “shows his colors.” He was willing to go with Onesimus back to Philemon, who was carrying Paul’s letter to Philemon asking for mercy on Onesimus. Might it go better if a slave “absent without leave” does not reappear by himself? Maybe Tychicus, a good friend standing by, could improve the chances of welcome and good treatment for Onesimus.

What made Tychicus so valuable to the cause of Christ?

- He joined an unpopular cause while it was under the pressure of persecution.

- He diligently served those with a profile higher than his own.

- He was loyal to Paul, unlike some whom Paul referred to in his letter to the Philippians (1:14-18) who distanced themselves from him, “supposing to add affliction to my bonds.”

- He accompanied a runaway slave who was returning to his master whom he had wronged.

- Paul also sent Tychicus to Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:12), as one would send a trusted brother.

- Many Bibles include a note after the text that says Tychicus was letter carrier for two epistles: Ephesians and Colossians.

In summary, it appears that Tychicus humbly gave his heart to Christ. He joined the persecuted church because when he embraced salvation he believed that the Captain of our Salvation is worthy of our highest devotion. He continued to serve those with a higher profile than his own wherever he was needed and not on the basis of whether or not it brought him prominence.

Tychicus might have said, “It’s not about me! It’s about Jesus and what I can do for Him through His people!” Can we serve so nobly and so unselfishly? By God’s grace, we will!

—PLM 

Re: “Who Wants to be a Guy?”

August, 2013.

I appreciate this reprint from Ervin Hershberger, who “being dead yet speaketh.” The further comments by Bro. Paul were very appropriate. I say “Amen!”

If someone unwittingly uses the term “guy,” I do not take personal offense or sense a need to rebuke them. However, I have chosen to refrain from using that term, unless I’m speaking to or about, Guy Miller, for instance. I don’t know very many men with that name.

Instead of asking “What’s wrong with it?” we could ask the Lord to

sanctify our speech to best honor all men. Should we not seek to use respectful titles and to approve that which is excellent?

The Bible uses terms like “man, men, brother (brethren)” over 4,000 times. The modern term “guy” seems to me a poor substitute to address men made in God’s image, who have the potential of becoming men (and women) of God.

Brothers and sisters, men and women, ladies and gentlemen—let us be examples of the believers in word, in conversation, and in the titles we give each other.

Ralph Miller, Stanardsville, VA 

The Festival of Earl

A Christmas Parable

Ronald Miller, Oswego, KS

Cardwell was a little hamlet tucked deep in the mountain range called Nether. Cardwell had been birthed long ago and was being sustained by the mining industry. Day after day the men in that place went into the bowels of the earth to extract her bounty. The inherent dangers

of the trade and the isolation of her town, together with the austerity of its climate, developed a people who were resilient, resourceful, and independent, who learned to live life one day at a time because they had no guarantee of tomorrow.

One day a man named Earl walked into town. When people asked where

he had come from or how he found this place, he vaguely commented that he had been sent to do what he could to make Cardwell a better place. He lived among them for several years. On some days, he would accompany the roughnecks into the mines. Other days he spent doing odd jobs around town, like fixing a widow's screen door, weeding somebody's garden, planting flowers in the park, and doing whatever he could to benefit the lives of those who lived in that town.

While some regarded Earl with suspicion, others were enthused by his friendship and contribution to the general good. They all agreed that Earl was never discovered to be pursuing selfish interests, and was always refusing pay for his efforts. When his neighbors and friends tried to pay him for his kindness, he told them that his most cherished recompense was to observe them showing benevolence to their neighbors. He singularly invested his days for the benefit of others. When Earl died unexpectedly, those most loyal to him laid him to rest in the local cemetery right beside the town's people—the miners, the shop keepers, and even the stillborn babies.

Those who regarded Earl's example as favorable pondered what they observed and learned while he lived among them. As they relived

those memories, what was most outstanding to them was the way his eyes would sparkle when he said, "My most cherished recompense is to observe you showing benevolence to your neighbors."

There grew up in that town a group of people who determined to live a life like Earl had. They fancied that Earl's spirit still lived among them and they sensed his approval when they extended benevolence to their fellows. That selfless manner of life became such a recognizable pattern that they became known as the Earlites.

Nobody could really remember exactly how it started but some in that place felt that, for a variety of reasons, a town festival should be observed. Some were happy for a break in the monotony of daily toil and routine. Others were keenly aware that not all who ventured into the mines, came back. Still others, were glad for the opportunity that this festival provided to indulge some of their baser interests and vices.

As many traditions evolve and mature, so did this festival. Many curious and quaint details made this celebration unique. It was a time when nobody felt obligated to go into the mines. Families and individuals alike could take a break. However, they agreed that it was characterized more and more by unbridled revelry. Eventually, it was determined that

this festival should be observed during the first full week of March and so was called the Festival of March. All in the hamlet of Cardwell looked forward to that festival at the end of a long, bleak winter, when they could celebrate and also honor some deity for his blessing on them—whatever that meant.

After many years, the influence of the Earlites in that place that had begun subtly and gradually, grew to having a profound effect. Some people came to understand that there is more to life than simply surviving the mines and rigors of mountain life and its elements. There was a deep and abiding satisfaction and peace that came from living life as they understood that Earl would have lived. Nobody was alive any more who remembered when Earl lived among them, but the evidence was unmistakable that Earl's mission of making Cardwell a better place had been accomplished through his efforts and those of his apologists.

As the March festivals came and went, some of the Earlites found the observance of the festival to be at odds with the patterns of life they had learned from Earl. After much discussion, it was decided that the Festival of March should be renamed the Festival of Earl. This conclusion was not a trivial matter and came after much deliberation and considerable opposition. The

Earlites who celebrated the festival “sanitized” many of the traditions of the festival of March, thus to make them less objectionable. They even added a few of their own.

The years rolled on and on. The Earlites enjoyed celebrating the Festival of Earl with much pomp and circumstance. A generation of Earlites grew up who knew little about the Festival of March, but wondered about the origins of this cherished Festival of Earl. So, they consulted the archives and were surprised at what they found. They had supposed that Earl was actually the reason the festival began, but it was not so. They were sobered to learn that many of the cherished traditions of the festival with Earlien designations had more dubious roots in the festival of March.

And so, among the Earlites, a great discussion ensued. Some said, “How can we who honor Earl and his example, participate in the festival rooted in all that Earl was not?”

Others said, “We are honoring the memory of Earl. Who cares how it all began? The most important thing is that we honor Earl today.”

Still others said, “Every time we think about the detestable Festival of March and how the Festival of Earl constituted a mere re-branding of its reprehensible customs and practices, we simply cannot in good conscience participate.”

To which some replied, “Earl taught us to live for and serve others all the time. What better time to declare to the whole world that we are indeed Earlites, than during this festival that bears his name? To shun the festival named for Earl doesn’t

honor him.”

And so, I’m told, that discussion continues today far away in that little hamlet of Cardwell, deep in the mountains of Nether, “What should we do with the festival?”

What would you do?



ISRAEL REPORT

Donnavon Graber, Jerusalem

Sept. 15 – In the early morning hours of the day before Yom Kippur, the Kaparot, or Atonement, ceremony is performed by many Jews. A live chicken is waved in a circle three times above the person’s head as he declares: “*This is my replacement; this is my exchange, this is my atonement, this fowl shall go to its death, and I shall go to a long, good, and peaceful life.*” The poor chicken is then slaughtered while the person considers that this is the fate that he deserves. In some traditions the fowl is eaten for the festive meal preceding Yom Kippur and its value is given to the poor or the meat itself is given to the poor. In other traditions the ceremony is done using money instead of a chicken and the money is then given to the charity.

These persons have not found their atonement through the sacrifice of Jesus, the perfect Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. The Lamb

simply cannot be compared in any way to this poor chicken.


As the sun set on Friday, the Jewish side of Jerusalem settled into an eerie quiet. At sundown, the holiest day in Judaism began—the day of Atonement. The only international airport in the country, Ben Gurion, also shut down. The streets became the arena of pedestrians dressed in white, bicycle riders, and children riding various toys. For 25 hours there is a total fast from food, drink, and marital relations. Polls say that 73% of Israelis keep the fast. White is generally worn in anticipation of God’s mercy for their sins. People wish one another “an easy fast” and “a good stamping.” It is thought that God judges them and stamps them as either good or bad for the next year.

These activities are inspired by Leviticus 16, where it says, “and this shall be a statute for ever unto you, that in the seventh month, on the

tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all...” as I write, the deathly silence of Yom Kippur has been replaced with the buzzing activity of another Sunday morning.

We are actively trying to find shelter for a vulnerable young lady. The story is that her husband beat her, causing her to miscarry. Her parents want to kill her—an honor killing to preserve their honor. She is hiding from her husband and family and is trying to get back on her feet. She is actively considering conversion to Islam. When she first

came to Jerusalem she was living on the street. She found shelter with a lady who lives by herself, and we took her the gift of a food parcel when we found out about her distress. But she needs a better environment to live in and much encouragement to choose the right road, so we are trying to arrange for her to stay at a women’s shelter operated by believers. The situation needs much prayer.

Visitor traffic has continued throughout the summer. Ludlow Walker from southern Florida was visiting the country and shared with us in our Sunday service recently. 

When Is Hunting a Sport?

LaRay Weaver, Martinsburg, PA

Hunting wild game has been a part of livelihood throughout history. But hunting has increasingly become more a sport than a sustenance activity. Can we continue this aspect of our colonial heritage without allowing it to be a passionate sport?

Hunting is a sport if it crowds out devotion to God. “I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12). Our worship is misplaced if we plan to skip personal Bible reading and prayer or family worship to hunt. “I

will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word” (Psalm 119:16). Is hunting in our thoughts during the church worship service and does it pervade our after-service conversation? Did it keep us from preparing for the Sunday school discussion? “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind” (Luke 10:27).

Hunting is a sport if it takes priority over our families. This could be expressed by requiring the family at home to take on a heavy load of

chores so we can claim our favorite hunting spot in plenty of time or by leaving the family to live with friends at a hunting cabin for a few days. We might even be home but not really with our families because of our mental preoccupation with hunting. Do we show interest in their accomplishments, their projects, or their play? Do we listen to their burdens or fears? In our hunting, do we provide for our own, or does the family not really care for the meat we bring home? If our family dreads hunting seasons and all that entails but we persist for our own pleasure, are we serving ourselves first?

Hunting is a sport if we violate the principles of good stewardship. Do we own more guns than we need, own a hunting cabin, or travel long distances just to hunt game not available in our area? To go with friends to buy supplies as a pleasurable social outing will endanger our better judgment. With peer pressure added to the pressure of our own desires, we may be tempted to waste time and money with things like hunting games or target practice in a simulated setting.

Are we tempted to extravagance in outfitting ourselves? Do we need high-dollar guns and scopes? Do we need a complete set of outdoor wear just for hunting, when an orange vest over a work coat would be enough?

Do we spend for such things but have little to give in the offering or fail to pay our share for our Christian day school? Do needs of the family, such as getting a toothache checked or replacing a faulty appliance take second place?

Another example of poor stewardship is hunting for game animals that we have no intention of eating. “The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting but the substance of a diligent man is precious” (Proverbs 12:27). Is it proper to shoot game just for fun? Even animal life is precious to God, and He created animals for our use—not to be killed just for sport.

In our day of affluence, we struggle to recognize the wrong of spending just for pleasure. “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and the pleasures of this life, and bring forth no fruit to perfection” (Luke 8:14). Notice what King Solomon found when he sought pleasure as an end in itself: “I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 2:1). Lasting fulfillment will come from serving God and others with our finances.


Hunting is a sport if we lay aside the principles of separation and the

unequal yoke. Joining a hunting club, even if it is just for the privilege of using the shooting range, will associate us with activities of the club that we cannot support. To join a hunting gang made up of people with differing convictions for an enjoyable event will bring delusion. As we come together with a common interest, wearing common hunting clothes, the pressure to compromise will be intense. The devil will be pleased for us to subtly assume that we are all one in the faith. “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).

Hunting is a sport when motivated by pride. The culture of hunting magazines and sports megastores

cultivates idolatry. Hunting competition, lingo, and boasting should be repulsive to our spiritual sense. Do we retell and glamorize stories of our skillful marksmanship and clever strategy? Do we let worthwhile game pass just to boast a bigger trophy? “The pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). We may be able to determine if hunting has become a sport among us by listening in on the little boys’ discussions. Are they humble?

Do we live to serve God and others or long for the next season for a break from serving? Jesus said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34). What is your meat?

(From *The Eastern Mennonite Testimony*, Sept, 2013. Used by permission.) 

marriages

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

Beachy-Yoder

Bro. Benjamin, son of Philip and Sue Ann Beachy, Millersburg, OH, and Sis. Dorcas, daughter of Nathan and Doris Yoder, Free Union, VA, at Bible Holiness Church, Elkton, VA, for Faith Mission Fellowship, Free Union, VA, on Sept. 26, 2013, by Ivan Beachy.

Beachy-Yoder

Bro. John, son of Omer and Dorothy Beachy, Auburn, KY, and Sis. Clara, daughter of Raymond and Mattie Yoder, Danville, AL, at Sun Rise Baptist Church, Hartselle, AL, for Emmanuel Mennonite Church on Oct. 11, 2013, by Perry Troyer.

Kauffman-Swarey

Bro. Arlin, son of Louis and Susan Kauffman, Cottage Grove, TN, and Sis. Orpha, daughter of Reuben and Freida Swarey, Henry, IL, at Bethel Fellowship Mennonite Church on August 30, 2013, by Lewis Bender, Jr.

Miller-Nisly

Bro. Chad, son of Norman and Sara Miller, Martinsburg, OH, and Sis. Rochelle, daughter of Wayne and Leona Nisly, Due West, SC, at Cold Spring Mennonite Church on Sept. 21, 2013, by Alan Byler.

Schlabach-Beiler

Bro. Javan Lamar, son of Lamar and Rosa Schlabach, Middleburg, PA, and Sis. Colleen Rose, daughter of David and Rose Beiler, Lewisburg, PA, at Bunkertown Church of the Brethren for Shekinah Christian Fellowship, July 13, 2013, by David Beiler.

Schrock-Weaver

Bro. Tim, son of Ben and Mary Jane Schrock, Paris, TN, and Sis. Karen, daughter of Jonathan and Judy Weaver, Orrville, AL, at Crosspoint Baptist Church for Orrville Amish Mennonite Church on Sept. 20, 2013, by Noah Yoder.

Stoltzfus-Lapp

Bro. Jonathan S. Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA, son of the late John B. and Lydia (Smoker) Stoltzfus, and Sis. Rachel Lapp, Narvon, PA, daughter of Henry and

Anna Mary (Esh) Lapp, at Pequea A.M. Church, on August 16, 2013, by Ben A. Stoltzfus.

Swartzentruber-Stoll

Bro. Shawn, son of Steve and Karen Swartzentruber, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Hannah, daughter of Robert and Rose Stoll, Due West, SC, at Cold Spring Mennonite Church on Oct. 26, 2013, by the groom's father, Steve Swartzentruber.

Troyer-Stoltzfus

Bro. Samuel Benjamin, son of Hosea and Bernice Troyer, Plain City, OH, and Sis. Charissa Danae, daughter of Elmer and Bonita Stoltzfus, Plain City, OH, at United Bethel for Bethesda Church on Sept. 28, 2013, by Elmer Stoltzfus.

Yoder-Martin

Bro. Daniel, son of Nathan and Doris Yoder, Free Union, VA, and Sis. Lucinda (Lucy), daughter of Don and Mildred Martin, Mifflin, PA, at Richfield Mennonite Church for Shade Mountain Christian Fellowship, Mifflin, PA, on Oct. 12, 2013, by Daniel Fisher.

Yoder-Nissley

Bro. Dean, son of Michael and Virginia Yoder, Cottage Grove, TN, and Sis. April, daughter of Henry and Fannie Nissley, Paris, TN, at Maplewood Baptist Church for Calvary Christian Fellowship on Oct. 4, 2013, by Truman Yoder.



cradle roll

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

Beachy, Ervin and Elizabeth (Zook), Mifflinburg, PA, fourth child, first son, Benjamin Levi, July 1, 2013.

Byler, Andrew and Andrea (Nisley), Conneautville, PA, first child and son, Isaiah Jordan, Aug. 21, 2013.

Graber, John and Gina (Knepp), Loogootee, IN, second child, first dau., Jakira Brielle, Oct. 3, 2013.

Hochstetler, Landis and Andrea (Miller), Millersburg, IN, second child and dau., Myla Adelle, Sept. 23, 2013.

Hostetler, Michael and Melody (Yoder), Aroda, VA, second child and dau., Kaylee Brooke, Oct. 19, 2013.

Kauffman, Brian and Verna (Stoltzfus), London, OH, second child, first dau., Vania Elizabeth, Oct. 26, 2013.

Kemp, Jonathan and Rebecca (Knepp), Lyons, IN, seventh child, fourth son, Austin Wade, August 6, 2013.

King, Mark and Marian (Stoltzfus), Morgantown, PA, third child, second son, Kyle Wendyn, Sept. 10, 2013.

Knepp, Daniel and Carol (Kemp), Loogootee, IN, first child and dau., Jenica Rose, Nov. 26, 2012.

Lapp, Javon and Rosina (Fisher), Gordonville, PA, first child and dau., Arie Madeleine, Oct. 10, 2013.

Lehman, Spencer and Trudy (Dick), Mifflinburg, PA, third child, first son, Preston Marcellus, August 30, 2013.

Martin, David and Beth (Sommers), Sugarcreek, OH, second child, first dau., Abigail Anne, Sept. 17, 2013.

Miller, Nelson and Ellen (Nissley), Burr Oak, MI, fourth child, first dau., Janae RoseEsther, Oct. 22, 2013.

Nisly, Leland and Yvonne (Gingerich), Hutchinson, KS, fifth child, third son, Lincoln Trey, Oct. 18, 2013.

Nissley, Maynard and Suzanne (Lehman), New Berlin, PA, first child and son, Reagan Elliot, Sept. 16, 2013.

Petersheim, John and Anna (Yoder), Narvon, PA, seventh child, third dau., Allison Hope, Oct. 11, 2013.

Plank, Paul and Marsha (Herschberger), Arcola, IL, fourth child, third son, Isaiah Samuel, Sept. 13, 2013.

Stoltzfus, Mahlon and Charity (Miller), Morgantown, PA, second child, first son, Benson Daniel, Sept. 26, 2013.

Stoltzfus, Michael and Lia, Thailand, third child, second son, Andreas Rafa, Oct. 14, 2013.

Yoder, Nicholas and Lynette (Troyer), Leesburg, OH, first child and son, Kaden Grant, August 30, 2013.

ordinations

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

Bro. Merlin Beachy, 46, was called by voice of the church and ordained as bishop at Mountain View Mennonite Church, Salisbury, PA, on Sept. 29, 2013. Preordination messages were given by Danny Tice, Ivan Beachy, and Jerry Yoder. The charge was given by Jerry Yoder.

Bro. Kinley Coulter, 51, Honey Grove, PA, was ordained as deacon at Shade Mountain Christian Fellowship, Mifflin, PA, on Sept. 29, 2013. Preordination messages were given by George Stoltzfus, Millmont, PA. The charge was given by Daniel Fisher, assisted by Raymond King and Jonas King. Others in the lot were Elvin Fisher, Chester King, and Steve Yoder.

Bro. Darrell Hershberger, 30, was ordained as minister at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA, on Sept. 22, 2013. Preordination messages were brought by Nathan Yoder, Free Union, VA. The charge was given by Simon Schrock, assisted by Ivan Beachy and Lamar Hochstetler. The lot was shared by Kenneth Troyer.



obituaries

Sommers, Esther Marie (Zook), 94, died Oct. 1, 2013, surrounded by her family at her home in Cochranon, PA. She was born May 27, 1919, at Hartville, Ohio, daughter of the late Wallace and Amanda (King) Zook.

She was a member of Plainview Gospel Fellowship, Guys Mills, PA.

On March 27, 1945, she was married to Menno Sommers. He died in November, 2010. Surviving are sons: Mervin (Lois) Sommers, Jonesville, MI; Ervin Sommers, Polk, PA; Loren

(Esther) Sommers, Hartville, OH; Willis (Deanne) Sommers, Cochranon, PA, a daughter, Beulah (Maurice) Reynolds, Cochranon, PA, 17 grandchildren and 36 great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were daughter Ida Mae Sommers and son, Raymond Sommers.

The funeral was held on Oct. 4, with Homer Zook, Ervin Miller, and John Yoder serving. Burial was at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Hartville, OH, with Elmer Yoder conducting the committal.


Yoder, Marian, 59, of Partridge, KS, died at her home Oct. 17, 2013, some four years after she was diagnosed with cancer. She was born in Hutchinson, KS, July 7, 1954, daughter of Lydia (Nisly) and the late Melvin M. Yoder.

She was a devoted member of Center A. M. Church, Hutchinson. Her brave struggle against cancer, and yet submission to God's will, gives glory to God.

She is survived by her sister, Rosa, and her mother, Lydia, of the home, nieces Abigail Zimmerman and Bethany Sult and her husband Brady and their family, Partridge. Also surviving are other siblings: Calvin Yoder and wife Ada of Kalona, IA; Menno and wife Tobie, Kansas City, KS; Abe Yoder and wife Laura, Paynesville, MN; Anna Weaver

and husband Clayton, Wilma Beachy and husband Paul both of Bastrop, TX; Judy King and husband Calvin, Harrison, AR; David Yoder and wife Susanna, Joseph Yoder and wife Twila both of Partridge, KS; 37 other nieces and nephews and 68 great nieces and nephews.

Marian and her sister Rosa did foster care for 20 years, blessing and loving approximately 70 children throughout those years. More recently, when duty called, they cared for their parents, first for Melvin and now still care for Lydia.

A funeral at Center Church, with more than 550 in attendance, was held on Oct. 20, with Oren Yoder, Gary Miller and David Yoder serving. Julian Nisly conducted the committal at the West Center Cemetery. 

observations

Sound Choice Pharmaceutical Institute, P.O. Box 2247, Seattle, WA, 98111, reports that some vaccines contain aborted fetal cells. They want people to be informed so that they do not inadvertently support the practice of abortion. They are supported by donations. Their website is: www.soundchoice.org.

This information comes from Raymond and Laura Graber, Amboy, IN.



Some months ago I mentioned an article in *Mennonite World Review* co-authored by Dwight E. Roth and Sharon Hill Cranford. Roth's heritage includes Amish, Amish Mennonite and Mennonite background. Cranford is African-American. Going back to 1750 and following, these two have a common ancestor. The story begins when a family of six orphans named Mast came to this country. A kind uncle, Jonathan Mast, paid their passage. The two

boys, named Jacob and John, had four sisters. Jacob and possibly his sisters lived their lives in the Amish Church and have a very large number of descendants scattered throughout present-day Amish communities. Jacob became the first Amish bishop to be ordained in this country.

John chose to leave his Amish upbringing and moved to North Carolina. His grandson, Reuben, fathered a son from a slave girl. The baby, named Charley Mast, became a man of Christian faith and character. He also became the progenitor of a significant number of African-Americans with the Mast surname.

When local Harvey Nisly recently asked me where to find the book, *Kinship Concealed*, I suggested the public library. The main facts in the book are considered accurate, but many details are fictional to make the story readable. The following points are clear:

- The Amish were firmly opposed to slavery.
- Many church groups defended the practice of owning slaves.
- An example of heartless cruelty is that Charley’s teen-age birth mother was sold as a slave which separated her from her infant son.
- The Civil War officially freed the slaves, but serious, unethical discrimination persisted for at least a hundred years after that.

This book is published by Legacy

Book Publishing, Winter Park, FL, 32789.

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A Polk County, Florida, sheriff is quoted: “Parents, discipline your children so we don’t have to.” Two girls, 12 and 14, had been arrested for stalking and bullying a classmate until she killed herself. (From a telephone newswire.)

• • • • •

On October 9, 2012, a school bus in Pakistan was stopped by a man who then boarded the bus. He wanted to know which girl was Mahala. No one spoke, but the silent looks answered his question. He shot the 15-year-old girl in the head at close range. Her attacker was a Taliban member. Her offense was that she believed every girl should be allowed to attend school. She was outspoken about it to the point that the Taliban, who opposes this concept, had her marked.

Mahala was brought to a British hospital in a medically-induced coma, six days after the attack. She was in the hospital nearly three months, during which she underwent multiple surgeries. The bullet narrowly missed her brain. It was found that she has not suffered permanent, major neurological damage. It did, however, solidify her will. She says, “It feels that this is not my life; it is a second life. People have prayed to God to spare my life and I

was spared for a reason to use my life for helping other people.” (*Parade*, 10-6-13)

• • • • •

Joe and Lovina Eicher were originally from Adams County, IN, but now live in a relatively new and small settlement in Michigan. She is succeeding her late mother, Elizabeth Coblentz, in writing a weekly newspaper column, entitled, “The Amish Cook.” Their family includes two children with the disability muscular dystrophy, which condition is fairly prevalent among the Amish in Adams County and seems to be caused by close intermarriage.

Her writing gives the impression of a very busy and happy family. The children attend a public school and are involved in a variety of wholesome family activities. The father apparently works in a factory. A prominent feature of her column is the abundance of food preparation and consumption.

I feel that her column in today’s paper (10-16) is especially interesting. They attended her late grandparent Graber’s reunion at Berne, Indiana. There are nearly 1,400 descendants. About 1,000 were present. The event was held in a large shed at her cousin’s place. The host, Dave Graber, furnished grilled chicken for the large gathering. Other food was brought in, again reflecting variety and abundance.

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Gathering items of human interest for this column is not a weighty assignment. It is assumed that such items are more informational than inspirational.

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A group of “Answers in Genesis” bought a billboard in Times Square in New York City that reads: “To all of our atheistic friends, Thank God, you’re wrong.” This message was a response to the message posted by atheists: “Praise Darwin—Evolve Beyond Belief.” The Christian group says that their campaign includes 10 billboards for four weeks and costs around \$200,000. (*World*, 11-13).

• • • • •

Pastor E. W. Jackson, 61, is a Republican candidate for Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia. This African-American has an unusual history. Because of exceptional academic strengths, he was admitted to Harvard University, in spite of his color, where he studied law. On the outside his life looked good. But he had serious sin problems on the inside. In 1976, he responded to an evangelistic invitation. He says, “My life was changed forever.”

At Harvard he was concerned how he could distance himself from fellow students who might be a wrong influence. He found, however, that fellow students wanted to keep their distance from him because they did

not want to hear him talk about his encounter with Jesus. (*World*, 11-13)

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The same issue of *World* has an extensive article about sexual abuse that too often occurs within families. Not only is this a serious sin, it is also illegal and carries penalties that reflect the seriousness of the offense. Most states have laws that ask persons who are aware of such a case to report them to legal authorities.

• • • • •

Regular readers of this column are aware that I have a concern that we do not follow the pattern that many Amish Mennonites have followed. I am grateful that many others share this concern.

It seems that more than a prayerful concern is needed. Concerns and prayers are abstract. I was recently encouraged when a young bishop did something tangible for his congregation. He did what could be done in any congregation: he distributed to every church mailbox a statement that was prepared in 1997 by an older bishop in response to a request from a non-Anabaptist church group in Hutchinson who wanted to know what we believe. Perhaps many of us need a fresh reminder of scriptural reasons why we don't fit in with religious and cultural mainstream.

The statement is 16 years old, but to me, seems entirely up-to-date and

scriptural. Solid Bible principles and practices do not become obsolete with passing generations. I realize that suggestion made in this column are just suggestions, not binding. When Lee Nisly visited us at Center recently, I first became aware of this creedal statement that has also been used at Cedar Crest to set the stage for communion. When taken seriously, it could be very helpful in allowing the New Testament to guide us.

This statement is fairly brief and certainly not exhaustive. Leaders who use it should feel free to add to the statement anything that would strengthen its usefulness.

So I'm doing something that I don't remember doing before in this column. I not only *suggest*, I *recommend* that leaders take this ready-made opportunity to reinforce stability and obedience. When generations are united in their zeal to follow the Lord and His Word, there will be stability and vibrancy. Both youthful energy and years of experience are needed.

Following is the statement I'm referring to, written by Editor Paul Miller. I have used names because it seems to add a touch of credibility over anonymity. Feel free to make copies for distribution.

A Creedal Statement

March, 1997

We believe in 2 Timothy 3:16 and

John 3:16.

We consider ourselves to be part of the church of Jesus Christ, His Bride. We have by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ had our sins forgiven and removed by the blood of His death on Mt. Calvary. We have found new life in Christ, and seek to walk in His commandments, which are not grievous, as we seek His approval above all else.

We Believe:

•In worshipful remembrance of His sacrifice in the communion service.

•In washing the saints' feet, in deed and in truth.

•In baptizing upon adult confession of faith, and that after a period of instruction and preparation.

•In Christian marriage as God leads. Courtship shall provide good preparation by noble behavior and personal purity.

•In giving alms to the poor and help to the disadvantaged, and in not using force to resolve conflicts.

•In maintaining the purity of the local church by wholesome doctrine, by correction, and even by shunning, if the circumstances call for it.

•In responding to sickness by consulting with doctors, but also by prayer and anointing with oil, avoiding all occultism and magical practices.

•In observing Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection, as a day of rest, worship and service to Christ.

•In the special salutation for fellow pilgrims, the holy kiss, to be practiced regularly, and with cleanliness and discretion.

•In long hair for the Christian woman, which shall not be on vain display, but appropriately covered by an agreed-upon, substantial covering.

•In church-prescribed standards of dress and conduct, emphasizing simplicity, modesty, and courage to be different from unregenerate society, with its disdain for personal restraints and group directives.

•In winsome verbal testimony and in taking the Gospel to the regions beyond.

•In the everlasting punishment of evil doers and unbelievers, who do not repent of their evil deeds and their unbelief.

•In the personal return and final triumph of the cause of Jesus Christ, and of the eternal bliss and well-being of those whose hearts are turned wholly toward God in Jesus Christ.

We reach these positions as we read the New Testament as the final will and testament of our Savior, and as we interpret the Old Testament as being fulfilled in the New Testament.

—DLM 

Reaching the Unreached

Kimberly L. Beachy, Scotland Halfmoon, Belize

One story that our team of Anabaptists who were reaching out to the unreached here in a spiritually dark country heard, really stuck with me. We were told of a man who stood on a cliff. He saw a beautiful flower and leaned over to pluck it. While trying to reach it, he fell over the edge and managed to grab a branch just in time. He called out to God, “Help me!”

God replied, “Let go.”

The man said, “But if I let go, I will fall; please help me!”

Once again God said, “Let go.”

Then the man yelled, “Is there anyone else out there?”

One of my favorite verses is Joel 3:14, “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.” Have you ever stopped to think that the person you just passed in the mall might be screaming from his/her heart, “God, help me!” Or that the unbeliever you did business with may be in the valley of decision?

Hey youth, you see many of your peers who are obviously in darkness or leaving the path of light. Are you telling the precious story of Jesus

with every opportunity that God gives you to share? This is a great start for “reaching the unreached.” Do you appreciate the hard work your ministers are doing? Are you trying your best to be a pillar and builder in the church? This is another wonderful step in building the kingdom of heaven.

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). *“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”* (John 9:5). *“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them”* (2 Corinthians 4:4).


“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid” (Matthew 5:14). We have the true light in our hearts. Is God calling you to go shed the light in a dark land? Have you ever felt the nudge to go out into the field to gather the harvest for the kingdom of heaven? If not, this might be your first nudge. Surely, it’s not by chance that you read this article. God

is still calling “Abrahams and Sarahs” to move to foreign lands.

We have had many contacts with people who were open to hear and read about the Good News of the Gospel. Sometimes they have asked, as we handed them a gift package that included a New Testament, “What is this?” It is overwhelming to think of the many souls who have never heard the story of Jesus, and it is exciting to encounter the appointments God has made for souls seeking the truth. *“And the light shines on in darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it—put it out, or has not absorbed it...”* (John 1:5 AMP).

Our team has been praying for you—whoever you are—that is hearing the still, small voice of the Lord, **“Go ye into all the world,**

and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). We have been praying in the direction of business opportunities to have valid reasons for the presence of future workers in difficult countries to do heavenly kingdom work. On behalf of the team, we say a big “Thank you!” to our local congregations for sending us, and all those who supported us in prayers, financial aid, or any other way. As we gathered for our final fellowship service as a team, our hearts were joined in praising God, as we sang, “How great Thou art!”

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). 

helpers at home

Celebrate and Commemorate Christmas

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Christmas is a time of rejoicing. We rejoice with praise and thanksgiving because the Messiah is come. Jesus, our Lord and Master, is born! God sent His Son to earth. He lived among us in human flesh. He died as our Savior and will come again as our King.

Christmas is a reason to commemorate and to celebrate. We commemorate by honoring or remembering His Advent. I understand this more as worship and reflection—a deep inner experience of the heart. Celebration is observed by ceremony, such as a social get-

together for a specific purpose.

I think of an example taken from the biblical account of Christ's birth, using these two words: Celebration and commemoration. The angels celebrated the birth of Messiah by a joyful chorus of praise as they brought good tidings of great joy to the shepherds. Whereas, Mary commemorated the Son's birth by keeping all these things and pondering them in her heart. I believe as women who are honoring the birth of our Savior, we can both commemorate and celebrate Christ's birth with our families at Christmastime.

To Commemorate

Most of us have heard the Christmas story since childhood. The actual setting seems so far removed from our lifestyle today that we can nearly forget that these are actual people who lived and walked this same earth. Mary was a woman like you and me. She had dreams and hopes for the future much like we have. Then her life was changed drastically with those words from the angel, "Mary, you have been favored by God and you will have a child." Wow! I cannot begin to fathom what must have gone through her mind. Yet, she submitted to God's plan for her life and answered with great faith, "Be it unto me according to your

word." What a beautiful picture of a submissive woman!

Because of Mary's part in the Christmas story, women can identify with Christmas in a unique way. I remember the joy and connection I felt with Mary when I was an expectant mother during the Christmas season, and later caring for a newborn child. I can also imagine the pain and deep grief Mary felt 33 years later when she observed her Son hanging on the cross.

Commemoration includes meditation, preparing our own hearts for Christmas. Each year, I enjoy using a devotional book, called: *Remember the Reason*, published by Honor Books, a reprint of David Cook. I don't know if the book is available anymore. It goes through the advent season and always blesses my heart. Meditating on the Advent is an excellent way of preparing your family for Christmas.

There are many different ways of commemorating the season with your family. Plan ahead by focusing on Christ's birth. Younger children especially enjoy setting up and playing with a nativity scene. Read the Christmas story, sing Christmas carols together. Listen to Christmas music. Attend Christmas programs available in your area. Plan a special couple night and attend a concert of

Handel's "Messiah." Commemorate Christ's birth this Christmastime.


To Celebrate

Celebrating Christmas brings to our minds family times, gifts, good food, etc. I believe there is nothing wrong with these activities. However, we need to be aware of the reason for celebrating. We need to find a way and a method that is good for our family, a way that can be used to bring joy and peace into our homes. It is easy for women to plan so much that they become stressed and even depressed because they try to do too much. I know because I have been there.

One of the best ways of bringing joy to your family is to do things for others. Look around you at the needs in your area: How can you lift someone's load or brighten the day

for them? Many people would be delighted with a plate of homemade cookies, a loaf of bread, a homemade pie or other goodies that are a part of your Christmas baking. Include your children in your baking and giving. Children love to give.

Teach your children to be thankful for the small things in life. Gifts do not need to be large and expensive to bring joy to you or your child. Buy gifts that teach and are creative. Don't spoil your child with all the latest gadgets and technology. Let them be a part of giving to others. Help them see the value to both giver and receiver.

Establish traditions in your family celebrations. Your children and grandchildren will never forget them. Christmas should be a happy celebration of Christ's birth. 

junior messages

Powdered Milk for Christmas,

Prison Ministry in Belize, Mary Ellen Beachy

Brother Alvin, would you teach me the Bible?" A muscular, black inmate asked Alvin one day. A number of men wanted to study the Bible. Alvin enjoyed an

opportunity to speak for the Lord. Sometimes he used the Lamp and Light Bible Studies. On other days, the men would have questions about certain Scripture passages, so they

would sit together and study the Word of God.

The inmates were pleased to receive a Bible from Lamp and Light when they had finished a study book. Alvin would also give them a pen. The men liked this friendly, tall man who came in with his Bible.

It took a lot of prayer and wisdom from God to relate and be a friend to the prisoners. Some sincerely sought the Lord. Others seemed to be interested only in THINGS...like food, medicines and money.

One morning, Alvin encountered the bucket brigade. Their cells had no bathrooms in those days, only a bucket instead of a commode. The prisoners were carrying the buckets out to dump them in the canal. After seeing that, Alvin arranged to visit at a later time of the day.

One day at noon, Alvin heard the lunch wagon coming. A tractor with a small trailer it was pulling behind. The tractor sputtered, rumbled and shook as it came in through the gates. Everyone could hear when the lunch buckets arrived. On the trailer were five-gallon buckets filled with rice and beans. Alvin figured it was sufficient, hopefully even good, but he was glad he could go home and eat the lunch prepared by his wife!

Dean Vasquez was a Christian man on death row. Alvin had Bible

studies with him. One morning the headlines of the morning paper said that Dean Vasquez would be hanged on Wednesday morning. Alvin went to visit Dean that day. He didn't know what to expect. He found Dean with a glow on his face like he had never seen before.

"I am ready," Dean shared, "they can take my life, but they can't take my salvation." Later that day the execution was stopped. Dean served more time and eventually was released. Alvin often wondered what became of Dean.

On another day Alvin saw a few prisoners assigned to build a casket in the courtyard right where the other prisoners could see what was going on. Sometimes men on death row had to help build caskets.

What could I give the men for Christmas?" Alvin wondered. He wanted to give something to the 20 men he did Bible studies with—something special. He filled 20 small, plastic bags with powdered milk. They were never getting milk in prison. This was a real treat for the men—never mind that the water they mixed with it was stagnant and at room temperature. In Belize, room-temperature is warm. It didn't matter to them—it was milk and they liked their Christmas gift!


Hummingbird Mission in southern

Belize gave Alvin four big bags of nice pineapples. They mentioned that he could share them with the prisoners. Alvin was happy about taking them something so good—something they never got. The guards gave him permission to take the pineapples in, but first they wanted some, too. Alvin went into a dorm where there were 30 or 40 men. He was going to hand the men these nice, golden pineapples. He forgot that the prisoners did not know how to act orderly. In no time he was surrounded by hungry men—more men than he could handle. He almost got trampled. They didn't seem to hear him say, "Wait a minute, men." This was more than he could handle alone. He dumped the fruit on the floor and said, "There you are. Help yourselves!"

While they struggled to grab the

pineapples, Alvin quickly moved away. He learned a lesson that day. *If I take something in again, I will have to take a helper and they will have to form a line or I will leave.*

The next week Alvin learned another lesson. He was surprised to see glass jars with pineapple rinds on the window sills. Tubes were coming out of the jars. He asked the men, "What is that for" They gleefully told him they were making pineapple wine. This gave opportunity for further discussion in the Bible class.

As he walked out the gate Alvin determined he would not take pineapples to prison again. But he would continue to take the wonderful life-giving words of Jesus! He would do what he could to bring the light of Jesus into dark prison cells. 

youth messages

Why Haven't You Come Before?

Hannah Miller, Nickerson, KS

If what you tell me is true, that in your country nearly everyone has heard this message, then why is it that we have never heard these stories? I do not know anyone in my city, or even in my country, that can

teach me about these things! Why have you not come to us before?" These are the words of a man we met deep in the interior of ancient Anatolia that gives a voice to the cry of the unreached.

Living among the people of this dark land gave me eyes to see the unreached people of the Muslim world. These men and women are not raging savages we often picture when we think of the unreached. Neither are they the desperate poor, huddled in shacks near a garbage dump. There are some of these, no doubt, but many of them are educated business men and housewives who quite simply have never been told. As we spoke with them, we gained a glimpse into their hearts and saw some of the same struggles, fears, and longings we find in our own.

One merchant leaned over his counter and told us the ancient story of Abraham and his sacrifice, how Abraham took his son to the top of a high mountain and prepared to sacrifice him on an altar to God. He smiled as he told us how God intervened and sent a lamb to take the place of Ishmael (as Muslims believe) on the altar so that his life was spared. When he had finished, we were able to tell him a new story, one he had never heard before. All other customers were forgotten as he heard for the first time the story of the Lamb of God

who took our place on the cross and made it possible for us to be clean on the inside—far deeper than the reach of his ritual ablutions. We could see his expression change as he began to understand the significance of such a sacrifice.

The concept of a God who would give himself to redeem his people is as foreign as we are to the people of these foreign lands. They are steeped in the ancient teachings of Islam and know no other way. As they served us tea and listened to the stories of Jesus, nearly every one of them would look into our eyes and tell us that they had never heard this message before. These faces that we knew and loved were the faces of the unreached.

Arzu (name changed), a man we met on a crowded bus, said it well, “This is the best gift I have ever been given!” He repeated it over and over as he clasped a copy of the New Testament tightly in his hands.

The knowledge of Jesus is truly the best gift we can give them, and our friend’s question echoes on and on: “Why have you not come before?” Our excuses ring hollow before that cry.



***If you pore over God’s Word,
His cleansing power will pour over you.***

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*Abbreviations used: ed = editorial; HH = helpers at home;
JM= junior messages; M = meditation; MA = mission awareness;
MM = ministers' meeting message; obs = Observations; P = poem;
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Jesus Thou Mighty Lord

Fannie J. Crosby (1820-1915)

Jesus, thou mighty Lord, great is thy name;
Still through eternal years thou art the same.
Changeless thy holy Word, true evermore;
Thy name we glorify, Thy name adore.

Jesus, Thou mighty Lord, Jesus our King,
Praise for thy wondrous love gladly we sing.
Love in thy diadem shines evermore.
Thy name we glorify, thy name adore.

Sought by thy mercy Lord, saved by thy power,
Led by thy gracious hand, kept every hour.
Thine shall the honor be, thine evermore.
Thy name we glorify, thy name adore.

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The strongest faith is often found in a child's heart.

• • • • •

A Christian heart is a good thing, but so is a Christian liver.

• • • • •

A caring pastor will build his church; a caring church will also build its pastor.

• • • • •

People who complain that they don't get what they deserve should congratulate themselves.

• • • • •

We must be in tune with Christ if we are to be in harmony with each other.

• • • • •

Those who are too severe with others tend to be too lenient with themselves.

• • • • •

To deny one's guilt and reject Christ is the worst kind of insanity.

• • • • •

God gives His best to those who leave the choice to Him.

• • • • •

Men seldom coast into their desired haven; they usually get there despite contrary winds.

• • • • •

Boasting doesn't help in losing unwanted pounds—it's better just to keep our mouths shut.