



Calvary

MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

MARCH 2024

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Calvary Messenger

March 2024

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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Morning Practices to Cultivate Creativity

*“Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust.
Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.”*

PSALM 143:8 ESV

The morning has always held unique importance among people of faith. It offers a daily altar, an undisturbed space for belonging, guidance, and peace before the coming commotion. It replenishes the fuel that allows us to overcome trials throughout the day—and it supplies nourishment for stronger, deeper, sustained creativity.

Any flourishing form of creative living begins in abundance. And morning practices are most helpful when they locate us in our own bodies, souls, and creative voice—close to the ultimate Creative.

In Genesis 2, God forms humans from dust and breathes life into them. This sacred molding of soil and breathing of life is the inception of all humankind. Each day, we undergo the same process—God breathes life into us and forms us. When morning practices place our attention near this intimate, shared Breath of Life, in a place of formation, we can begin cultivating fruitful, creative lives. 

<https://www.alabasterco.com/blogs/articles/morning-practices-to-cultivate-creativity>

Leniency or Mercy?

On the evening of June 7, 2021, Alex Murdaugh called 911 to report that his wife, Maggie, and son, Paul, had been shot at the family's hunting property in Islandton, a rural hamlet about 65 miles west of Charleston, SC.¹

The criminal case against Alex Murdaugh, the former lawyer accused of killing his wife and son, is part of a web of accusations, investigations, and lawsuits that have accompanied the downfall of a member of one of South Carolina's most prominent legal dynasties.¹

Mr. Murdaugh was for years a well-known lawyer specializing in civil litigation. His family law firm, based in the tiny town of Hampton, was considered a powerhouse on the state plaintiffs' bar, and his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had all served as the top prosecutors across a wide region of the state.¹

On September 3, 2021, Mr. Murdaugh was forced to resign from his family law firm after his partners said that he had misused millions of dollars of client and firm money.¹

The next day, Mr. Murdaugh called 911 from the side of a road not far from his home and said that he had been shot in the head. He claimed that the shooter had pulled up beside him as he was inspecting a flat tire. Mr. Murdaugh survived with a head wound.¹

What followed was a series of investigations, indictments, arrests, and convictions, not only for Alex Murdaugh, but for several of his fellow attorneys who also were involved in misusing millions of dollars of client and firm money. Mr. Murdaugh was found guilty of murdering his wife and son and punished with the maximum two consecutive life sentences.² On November 28, 2023, Alex Murdaugh received a 27-year state prison term in exchange for pleading guilty to the 101 counts against him. The charges ranged from money laundering to tax evasion. All told, Murdaugh pilfered about \$9 million from his former legal clients, law partners, and others who trusted him.³

Judge Clifton Newman, who

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/25/us/murdaugh-murder-trial-timeline.html>

2. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/crime-courts/alex-murdaugh-indicted-murder-charges-summary-timeline-rcna38026>

presided over the murder trials of Murdaugh and the financial trials of Murdaugh and his co-defendants, was a thoughtful and soft-spoken man. Judge Newman, who once attended segregated schools in rural South Carolina, admonished the two prominent White lawyers flanked by more White lawyers to address the court as they blamed each other for various legal failures. Both lawyers snapped their attention back to the 70-year-old Black man up front. “Yes, your honor.”³

After hearing lengthy statements and pleas for leniency from friends of Murdaugh’s co-conspirator, Cory Fleming, on how he was such a great man and how he helped his friends, Judge Newman compared their statements to a funeral and of all the great things the deceased person did. “**I believe in justice and mercy,**” Newman said as he sentenced Murdaugh’s co-conspirator Cory Fleming to state prison on September. 14, 2023. “**Leniency is not my responsibility.**”⁴

So, what is the difference between leniency and mercy? We all appreciate it when people are lenient with us and

our failures. How is that different from mercy?

While leniency and mercy are synonyms of sorts, leniency in judgment often calls for a lesser punishment based on the good actions of the person guilty of crimes. It also implies that failures should be overlooked and disregards justice and payment to the person who suffered as a result of the failures or crimes.

So, is God lenient or merciful? Will He just overlook our sins at the day of judgment and say, “Oh well, if you insist, I’ll let you into heaven. You don’t really deserve it, but you did a lot of good things in your life.”

Maybe we ask for leniency when we compare ourselves with other people instead of comparing ourselves with the righteousness of God. Romans 3:9-12 says, “*What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, **no, not one:** there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, **no, not one.***”

The Bible often refers to our sins, iniquities, and disregard for the ways and laws of God.

Psalm 14:2-3 says, “*The LORD*

3. https://www.postandcourier.com/murdaugh-updates/alex-murdaugh-financial-crimes-sentencing/article_978f2b8e-8d60-11ee-95de-57992d762536.html

4. <https://app.podscribe.ai/episode/87763584>

looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, **no, not one.**"

In Psalm 130:3, we read, "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"

When we are in bitterness and anguish as Jeremiah wrote in his laments, his words will give us solace and hope. "Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:19-23).

Judge Newton recognized his responsibility to justice and the laws of the land. He said, "Tempering justice with mercy—it's my responsibility to impose a sentence."⁵

Justice calls for payment for the guilty and lawbreaker. But God was so gracious to have a plan in place for Someone to pay for our sin, Jesus Christ our Saviour, and even now pleads our case before the just and righteous God! The

5. Judge Clifton Newman

more we understand of the ultimate righteousness and holiness of God, we recognize our inability to pay our own debt and the foolishness to beg for leniency. However, it should give us a greater appreciation and gratefulness for the mercy of God and forgiveness of our sin.

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Ephesians 2:4 "But God, who is **rich in mercy**, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins,

hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Titus 3:3 “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man

appeared,

*5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but **according to his mercy** he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

*7 That being **justified by his grace**, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

How wonderful to know that when we come before the Judge at the end of our lives, we will not need to make a plea bargain, but we can fall down at His feet and know that our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus! On that basis, we can expect to hear the gracious and merciful words, “*Enter thou into the joy of thy lord!*”

–AY 

reader response



Re: Distress of Nations, Feb. 2024, p. 7

Brother Aaron Lapp,

Your “Distress of Nations” article is very much appreciated by this reader. It is very timely for this distressful and troubled season we are in. I hope it will get a wide reading audience. Looks like we both read news of the day. I can’t get daily newspapers delivered way back here in the woods. I do read it on my computer, but have a self-imposed

rule; don’t even look at emails and news before my morning time in The Book and prayer (Matt. 6:33). Your article closed with Luke 21:28. It may be of interest to you that I have that verse written and taped on my computer to remind me, when you read about these things coming to pass, “*Look up...your redemption draweth nigh.*” Thank you!

–Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA 

Announcement

Marriage Enrichment Seminar

April 12-14, 2024

Theme: Side by Side – *Growing Together in Marriage*

TOPICS:

- **Unraveling the Threads** - Ben Waldner
- **Unspoken Obstacles** - David Martin
- **Building Bridges** - David Martin
- **Finding True North** (for the husbands) - Tom Johnson
- **The Power of Partnership** (for the wives) - Christine Martin
- **Life Story** - Josh Woodcock
- **Securely Intimate** - Ben Waldner
- **The Ultimate Love Triangle** - Dave Snyder



Seminar will be held at Deeper Life Ministries in Plain City, OH. Preregistration is required. To register, or for more information regarding the seminar, please call 614-873-1199 or email info@dlmohio.org. Registration deadline is March 29, 2024.

the bottom line

Be Kind to Strangers

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Last summer, we had the distinct privilege to host a Ukrainian family for several weeks. They were believers, Dad

and Mom, and four children, ages seven, five, three, and one. He was Ukrainian, she was Russian-born. Their home was in Ukraine, over

toward Russia. When war broke with Russia invading Ukraine, he knew they must leave their home, which they owned, and flee to Russia. He knew he had better chances in Russia to flee further to some other country and perhaps beyond to a future unknown.

They left Russia, fled to Poland, then to Germany, and finally on to the United States. The Pilgrim Fellowship Church in Nottawa, MI, had agreed to sponsor them in the U.S., assisting in housing and a job. He had been a semi-truck driver for CAM in Ukraine for three and one-half years, but needed schooling in the U.S. to secure certification as a semi-truck driver here. Hence, he was enrolled in Philadelphia for several weeks with the family at our house.

Which brings me to my subject—be kind to strangers. We asked how they were treated as refugees. They must have left Ukraine with some money, but they said all along the way Christians gave them money and things relative to their need. Right there is our first point about being kind to strangers. They were in Poland for a time and in Germany as well. They said the German people were rude to them, talked disparagingly at them, and, at times, treated them like garbage. But then they quickly

added, “But not the Christians; they were kind to us.”

This is easily a second point to this topic. Being kind to strangers has the immeasurable value of encouragement by kind words, kindness expressed by a smile, and the virtue above all of giving them a welcome. With these low-cost sacrifices, God is well pleased, even as the Bible says in Hebrews 13:1-2. Verse one says, (transliterated from Luther’s German), “*Remain steadfast in brotherly love,*” which is followed by verse two, “*Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*” (As did Abraham when three men strangers appeared at his tent’s door in Genesis 18.) Later in Hebrews 13, the Bible says in verse 16, “*But to do good and to communicate (sharing goods with others) forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*”

Is God a kind God? Yes. To what extent? Always and forever, for it is an attribute of God. Kindness is not what God has; kindness is what He is. As an attribute, God is kind always, without variation, never less kind on certain days or to selected people in regard to circumstances. Even so, likewise, are all the attributes of God. People do not have attributes; all people have characteristics, which are quite less than attributes. An

attribute is a fixed concept or quality that is unchanging from the time of its origin.

Back to the declared kindness of God. Psalm 117:2 says, “*For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth forever;*” and, “*In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer*” (Isaiah 54:8). Then in verse 10 is this phrase where God says, “*but my kindness shall not depart from thee.*” Yes, we **are** shocked by this family (people whom we now know personally) saying they were treated unkindly in Germany by some non-Christian people, but then also to hear of the many thousands of refugees who must continually face unkind governments, border officials, business people, and private citizens. The big struggle of our friends was not knowing the German language. Some Germans said, “Go back to where you came from, learn our language, then try to come here.” Impossible proposition, of course.

As a boy, I remember the remarks of disgust made by U.S. citizens against German individuals. After World War II, some P.O.W.s were brought here to work at menial jobs, should anyone bother with them. The same was cast at the Japanese,

both Japan and Germany being vanquished by the U.S. and its allies in World War II.

The events affecting the U.S. national interest had been embarrassing after the national pride suffered backsets of politics and economy during the war. There were also the slants of opinion against the Muslims after some of the fanatics destroyed the World Trade Center in NYC on 9-11-01. The Black Americans have been unduly caricatured, even though our countries allowed their being deported from Africa to be sold as slaves back in the 1800s. Some Mexicans suffered unkind words and treatment by our own country, which has involved unkind and substandard treatment by ever-changing laws, and in particular, irregular ways of their interpretation by law enforcement officers and judges. Has there been any race or ethnic group more maligned, or cruelly treated, and even outright killed only because of who they were than the Jews were treated under Hitler’s regime in Germany? Six million Jews, plus gypsies, and other “undesirables” were killed and disposed of in the most despicable ways. It remains as a most horrendous blot upon humanity in the western world; it was one of the most horrible, terrible, and barbarous slaughters of humans ever.


It hurts our hearts even now, that huge volcano of misery, grief, and sadness in the extreme. It seemingly occurs to us as the greatest avalanche of unkindness ever in the history of mankind.

Our forebears came to America, beginning with Columbus in 1492. In the 1600s, colonists came to our fair land, some were kind and some became barbarous. Various wars broke out as the white man claimed territory upon which the native Americans had no legal documents to prove their ownership of land they had lived on and cultivated for years or generations unknown. *The Trail of Tears* is a book that has drawn my own tears as an engaging read. Native Americans were forcibly moved from Georgia, the Carolinas, and Tennessee, to the barren and fruitless lands in parts of Oklahoma. Many of these were Native American evangelical Christians, practicing non-resistance in most noble ways.

The Bible says, “Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses [plural]; for they have been ever of old” (Psalm 25:6). Jesus gave a further word on the subject, saying “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again;

and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Luke 6:35).

Just last week, my wife and two daughters, and two of Elsie Beachy’s sisters went to VA to visit Elsie (her husband, Ivan, died last year) for two days. On the way home, a great cloud of steam rolled out from under the hood of their car. The hose to the radiator broke. In their daytime calamity, a total of eight “Samaritans,” one at a time, stopped to offer help. One went to get a local mechanic, and another went to get the needed parts and a gallon of antifreeze, and left it there. Another man had the right tools for doing the replacement. None of them would accept any payment. The man who brought the needed parts, said, “That is not the way God does things” (to be paid for every kindness).

The Bottom Line is that in the story that Jesus gave about the traveler who fell among thieves, he was helped by a stranger. That man was delayed in his travels to aid this victim’s transport to an inn, besides paying his bill. Jesus’ bottom line is the one here for us today, “Go, and do thou likewise.” 

Hope

is putting **faith** to work when **doubting** would be easier.



Discipleship and Discipline

Frank Reed, Manheim, PA

Discipline—The foundation of life

Discipline, very simply, is the foundation of life. It is the one rule you cannot break. At least you cannot break it and get away with it. What is discipline?

Discipline is discipleship. We, as humans, must be disciplined. We must become disciples. If we do not become disciples we become egotists or worse. Disciples are followers. Disciples become leaders because only those who know how to follow can really lead.

An unfortunate but recurring problem in modern (and postmodern) society is the lack of discipline. In strong-willed people this becomes a serious situation. If one is not a disciple, one's will remains unbroken. If the will is not broken, the spirit is injured. The spirit can only be healthy if the will is broken.

We are to become disciples of our parents first of all. They are to break our wills. In particular, the father is to break our will. Breaking the will frees the spirit. It is the spirit that responds to God. Without that combination (broken will and unbroken spirit),

we become uncontrollable.

Too many times in the past, a father would break the will of the child and would also break his spirit. The Bible warns us against this practice. This is a wrong and destructive practice, and it has produced a reaction. Today, on the other hand, many times fathers are passively allowing any kind of behavior in young children. This is also wrong and is not discipline, and it does not teach the child discipleship. These children are growing up as uncontrollable. They believe that they have a right to do and say whatever, whenever, and however they want.

This destructive behavior seems to be uncorrectable and uncontrollable. The person has been formed into a will that cannot be challenged without incurring wrath. Any attempt to correct that child is met with defiance. The defiance is deeper than just the will. It reaches to the spirit. The spirit is offended because it has learned that its way is right. It is the final arbiter of truth.

Children who have been neglected can easily develop this behavior. They know that there is no one who cares enough to intervene in their lives.

They have been abandoned. They are lost to the world. This world is a dangerous place—a place where one looks out for one's self or dies. Survival becomes the goal—survival by any means necessary.

Sometimes the energies are turned inward—sometimes outward. Inward causes depression. Outward causes destruction. As the child becomes a young adult the situation becomes impossible. They become physically strong and psychologically devious.

Discipline and appropriate punishment for wrong behavior bring resolution to life. The child knows that he/she should be disciplined for wrong behavior. If discipline does not happen, he builds up a reservoir of guilt. Discipline displaces the guilt. Lack of discipline produces that reservoir of guilt. That guilt can be expressed as accidents, anger, financial failures, emotional stresses, marriage struggles, moral failings, etc.

Discipline is loving direction. It includes, but is not limited to, punishment. Punishment is only a small part of discipline. Discipline values the person and attempts to develop the best characteristics of the person. Discipline sees the latent talent and works to encourage the abilities. It attempts to hone the skills into useful behaviors. It gently (and

sometimes not so gently) shapes the will. The spirit then responds with the satisfaction of a job well done. The undisciplined person never has that rewarding experience. The experience of accomplishment is reward enough for the disciplined person. Life becomes example—example of life well-lived and loved. Appreciation for excellence is high.

When a person is disciplined, he/she develops appreciation for those who do their work well. Undisciplined persons have appreciation for no one. They are self-consumed. Their existence is so fragile that they can never be wrong. They can never allow themselves to be corrected. That would be to admit wrong and they cannot do that. They have to be right at all costs. When their will is challenged, their spirit is attacked. When their spirit is attacked, they fight like cornered and wounded animals. That behavior is becoming prevalent even among “Christian” people. It is the result of a lack of parenting that produces discipline. The lack of discipline has produced a life out of control.

Only submission to God and His Word can change those people. When they are confronted, they are very repentant. They hate their behavior. They can pray and promise to do better only to have the behaviors

surface the next day. Any challenge brings renewed fear. Fear strikes the heart and, in spite of the best intentions, the battle is on again.

How are undisciplined people different from egotists? Egotists only repent as far as they need to in order to survive. They never truly repent. Egotists love themselves. Undisciplined people typically hate themselves but have no power to change. Egotists are controlled by insecurity. Undisciplined people are controlled by fear. They know they are destructive but are not able to control their actions. Another power is controlling them. Their self-hatred is the result of a lack of discipline.

Undisciplined people remain selfish. Children are self-centered. That is the way they are born. That is how they survive the first year of life. They cry when they have a need. Their cry is their message that they need something. Discipline is needed as the child gets to be one year old and older. If discipline is there, the child learns to respect order and authority.

If that discipline is not there, the child remains self-centered and selfish—demanding his or her own way—and taking that selfishness into life, marriage, church, work, etc. That selfishness is the source of lust and anger. The anger occurs when the

selfishness of the person is threatened or when they have to share their life and ideas with another person. Loving discipline will remove that selfishness.

Discipline is motivated by real love—a love that undisciplined people have never experienced. Jesus said, “*Love your neighbor as yourself.*” Real self-love is also the result of discipline. It is not so much self-love as it is self-respect. Respect of self begins with accepting self as a creation of a loving God. That respect then reaches out to and honors other persons.

The Apostle Paul kept his body in subjection. He did not allow his physical body to control his mind and heart. He was, in a word, disciplined. He had been a student of Gamaliel. Gamaliel was a demanding teacher. Paul learned that accomplishment was the result of diligent application. He was a student of the Covenant. He was a Ph.D.—a doctor of the law. As a Christian, he applied those same disciplines to the New Covenant. The world is still reaping the rewards of that discipline. God used him to spread the Gospel to the entire Mediterranean world.

The Bible predicts lawlessness in the last days. We are there. We can still, in these last days, be lawful. We can and must display the law of God in our hearts and in our

actions. God has laws. Gravity is one example. He also has spiritual laws. They cannot be broken without dire consequences. World society is experiencing those consequences today. True believers are called on to display the love and discipline of a loving, heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

Train up a child... Training is learning to respond properly to authority. When children are allowed to grow up without discipline, they then do not have a basis for which to respond to God and His Holy Spirit. They respond to the love and call of God but do not go on to be obedient followers of Jesus Christ. They obey when they feel like it and not when they do not. Training a child prepares the child to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Discipline also trains people to think. They then do not follow every false authority. They are discerning and strong disciples.

Are you a disciplined person? If you are not, God will provide that discipline. If you fall on that Stone (Jesus), you will be broken. You will be disciplined. If you do not fall on that Stone, that Stone will someday fall on you. Today is the day of

salvation. Now is the accepted time. If you have not experienced loving discipline, it is waiting for you. In the words of the Word, and in the words of God's children, you can find love and discipline that will break your will and bless your spirit, and you will be healed. That is God's promise to you today.

Broken hearts can be mended. God is the Great Healer. He uses us to bring healing to each other. That is the call to us today. To mend the broken hearts.

I was disciplined as a musician and as an athlete. I spent hours practicing measures of music so that I could play them perfectly in the program. I spent hours practicing steps to throw the javelin. I have attempted to apply those disciplines to Bible study and teaching.

If, as diligent Anabaptists, we would apply the agricultural and occupational proficiency to our faith, we would be spiritual giants. That is the call of God on our lives. Let us be about our Father's business and lend our most diligent efforts to His Kingdom.

<https://biblicalbrethrenfellowship.wordpress.com/2023/11/05/discipleship-and-discipline/>



Among the **attributes** of God, although they are all equal,

mercy shines with even more *brilliance* than justice.



marriages

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

Hochstetler-Miller

Bro. Carson, son of Nelson and Debbie Hochstetler, Olar, SC, and Sis. Jemima, daughter of Richard and Mary Miller, Woodstown, NJ, on November 18, 2023, at Faith Orthodox Presbyterian Church for Woodstown Anabaptist Church by Mark Hochstetler.

Mullet-Schlabach

Bro. Jared, son of Roman and Hosanna Mullet, Newcomerstown, OH, and Sis. Melanie, daughter of Marvin and Yvonne Schlabach, Fresno, OH, on January 20, 2024, at Maranatha Fellowship Church for Salem Amish Mennonite Church by Roman Mullet.

Nisly-Shenk

Bro. Braden, son of Arlyn and Brenda Nisly, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Anna, daughter of Harry and Edith Shenk, Partridge, KS, on January 20, 2024, at First Christian Church (in Hutchinson) for Center Amish Mennonite Church by Brian Shenk.

Shores-Yoder

Bro. Benjamin, son of Curt and Marilyn Shores, Kalona, IA, and Sis. Amy, daughter of Mervin and Ada Yoder, Washington, IA, on October 27, 2023, at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church for New Hope Mennonite Church by Gabriel Beachy.

Stoltzfus-Reyes

Bro. Jeremy, son of Matthew and Martha Stoltzfus, McVeytown, PA, and Sis. Karen, daughter of Lupe and Eunice Reyes, Fairview, MO, on January 12, 2024, at Fairview Fellowship Church by David Byler.



cradle roll

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

AlMassou, Ramzi and Natalie, Sarasota, FL, a son, David Ramzi Elias, July 26, 2023.

Bennet, Ian and Ruth, Sarasota, FL, received for adoption, a son, Jeremiah, born September 14, 2023.

Byler, Kenneth and Kate (Knepp), Whiteville, TN, sixth child, first son, Dakota Jace, December 16, 2023.

Byler, Stephen and Krista (Wengerd), Saegertown, PA, second child and son, Peter Atticus, January 30, 2024.

Byler, Trenton and Kara, Newark, OH, first child and son, Cohen Briggs, June 1, 2023.

Chupp, Kendall and Hannah (Yoder), Sarasota, FL, a son, Noah William, October 24, 2023.

Eicher, Caleb and Katrina (Musser), Kalona, IA, first child and son, Corey Daniel, January 11, 2024.

Gerber, Jonathan and Rhoda (Gerber), Millbank, ON, first child and son, Bryson Kyle, January 28, 2024.

Herschberger, Daniel and Ruth (Beiler), Honeybrook, PA, seventh child, fourth daughter, Kimberly Nicole, January 4, 2024.

Herschberger, Wilbur and Krissa (Graber), Amboy, IN, fourth child, second son, Landon Gene, December 27, 2023.

Kauffman, John and Emily (Wagler), Fredonia, KY, third child, second son, Zachary Tyrell, October 14, 2023.

Kauffman, Justin and Renita (Zook), Guys Mills, PA, second child and son, Robin Luke, December 1, 2023.

Kimberlin, Keith and Charissa (Byler), Itasca, TX, second child and son, Cameron Lariat, November 13, 2023.

Kleiner, George and Malinda (Yoder), Aroda, VA, sixth child, second daughter, Karina Estelle, January 5, 2024.

Kuepfer, Ronald and Janelle (Erb), Baden, ON, sixth child, third son, Adrick Rylan, December 1, 2023.

Lengacher, Brent and Juliana (Wittmer), Loogootee, IN, sixth child, fourth daughter, Meredith Claire, September 7, 2023.

Martin, David and Beth (Sommers), Fresno, OH, eighth child, second son, Wesley James, January 14, 2024.

Mast, James and Rosetta (Wengerd), Sugar creek, OH, third child and son, Victor Jude, January 14, 2024.

McGrath, Eric and Nicole (Vasquez), N. Tazewell, VA, third child, second son, Forest Christopher, August 3, 2023.

Miller, Ben and Laura (Wadel), Alliance, OH, third child and daughter, Natalia Jo, December 7, 2023.

Miller, Christopher and Jewell (Raber), Beach City, OH, second child and daughter, Vienna Sage, January 29, 2024.

Miller, Travis and Christina, Utica, OH, third child and daughter, Haven Caroline, November 23, 2023.

Peachey, Andrew and Ina (Herschberger), Mannsville, NY, third child, second son, Israel John, October 7, 2023.

Peachey, Jeremy and Marita (Miller), Paint Lick, KY, first child and son, Carson Levi, December 16, 2023.

Petre, Irvin and Zoraly (Arroliga), Warfield, VA, third child, second son, Aleiky Tobias, December 6, 2023.

Shenk, Cris and Maria, Mt. Vernon, OH, first child and daughter, Aria Ruth, July 20, 2023.

Troyer, Floyd and Rosemary (Nisley), Kokomo, IN, sixth child, fifth son, Asher Mikel, November 7, 2023.

Troyer, Jeremy and Veronica (Yoder), Itasca, TX, first child and son, Jaxon Carter, December 24, 2023.

Wagler, Andrew and Jelinda (Quevedo), Hartville, OH, first child and son, Noah Drew, December 1, 2023.

Wagler, Benji and Andrea (Lapp), Holtwood, PA, third child, second daughter, Brynlee Rose, December 30, 2023.

Wagler, Brandon and Irene (Knepp), Loogootee, IN, third child and daughter, Harper Lynn, October 13, 2023.

Wagler, Douglas and Anita (Miller), Fredonia, KY, first child and son, Maverick Cole, December 2, 2023.

Zehr, Dylan and Rosina (Jantzi), Millbank, ON, first child and daughter, Avery Danica, January 3, 2024.

Zimmerman, Rodney and Kaylene (Martin), Paint Lick, KY, second child, first daughter, Lindsay Rayne, October 17, 2023.



ordinations

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

Bro. Darryl Keim, 36, (wife, Lanora Nisley), Kokomo, IN, was chosen by the church and ordained minister at Bethany Fellowship on December 5, 2023. Preordination messages were given by the local ministers. The charge was given by Darlton Bontrager.

Bro. Ellis Miller, 46, (wife, Lynita Miller), Hutchinson, KS, was ordained deacon for Center Amish Mennonite Church on January 28, 2024. Preordination messages were given by David Yoder, LaVerne Miller, and Maurice Graber. The charge was given by Dwight Miller, assisted by Keith Miller and LaVerne Miller. John David Miller shared the lot.

Bro. Andrew Wagler, 33, (wife, Jelinda Quevedo), Hartville, OH, was called by the church and ordained minister for Pleasant View Church on November 11, 2023. The final message was preached by Joel Gingerich. The charge was given by Thomas Wagler, assisted by Joel Gingerich.

Bro. Thomas Wagler, Jr., 45, (wife, Marjorie Overholt), Hartville, OH, was called by the church and ordained minister for Pleasant View Church on November 11, 2023. The final message was preached by Joel Gingerich. The charge was given by Thomas Wagler, assisted by Joel Gingerich.



Gingerich, Verda Kaye, 60, passed away on August 10, 2023. She was born March 14, 1963, in Goshen, IN, to the late Wayne and Elizabeth (Hochstetler) Schrock.

In 1988 she married Joseph Gingerich, and came to Sarasota from Nappanee, IN. Verda was a member of Sunnyside Mennonite Church. She highly valued relationships and loved camping and spending time with her children and grandchildren.

Left to cherish her memory are Joseph, her husband of 35 years, children: Timothy (Renie), Kevin (Hannah), Kenneth (Meghan), Veronica (Travis) Yoder, Jason (Kim), and Ryan; grandchildren: Destiny, Colton, Austin, Blake, Cody, Benjamin, Stella, Hazel, and Elena; sisters: Lorraine (Jonas) Gingerich, and Ruth (Reinhart) Burkholder.

In addition to her parents, Verda was preceded in death by her brother, Lyle.

The funeral service was held on August 13, 2023, at Sunnyside Mennonite Church followed by interment in the church cemetery.

Lengacher, James, 83, entered heaven on July 14, 2023, at Parkview Regional Medical Center in Ft.

Wayne, IN. He was born in New Haven, IN, on November 15, 1939, to the late Victor D. and Dena (Delagrange) Lengacher. He married Anna Mae Hilty on March 5, 1959, in Berne, IN.

Surviving are his wife, Anna Mae, children: Steven (Darlene), Woodburn; Judy (Tim) Eicher, Grabill; Grace (Brad) Hochstetler, Woodburn; 16 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren; son-in-law, Paul Kauffman, Hicksville, OH; siblings: Anna Marie (Emmanuel) Brandenberger, Grabill; Victor (Melinda), Grabill; Emma (Junior) Graber, MI; Marian Schmucker, New Haven; Martha (LaVerne) Steury, Grabill; and David (Leah), Grabill.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Carolyn Kauffman, great-granddaughter, Diana Rose Eicher, and a brother, Joe.

James worked as a cabinet installer and service man for Harlan Cabinets for 59 years. He was a member of Fellowship Haven Church, and in earlier years he worked with the jail ministries. At the age of 50 years old, he started deer hunting. He loved spending time with his family and especially taking family vacations every year. Family was very

important to him.

The funeral service was held on July 17, 2023, at Allen County Christian Fellowship. Burial followed in the Fellowship Haven Church cemetery.

Mast, Eli Lloyd, 82, Whiteville, TN, passed away at his home on November 26, 2023. Lloyd was born on May 15, 1941, in Thomas, OK, to Noah and Elizabeth (Nisly) Mast.

At seven years old he moved with his family to Stuarts Draft, VA, where he spent the rest of his childhood. He accepted Christ as his Saviour in his youth and was baptized. He was a charter member of the Whiteville Mennonite Church until his death.

As a young man he served as a conscientious objector at Hillcrest Nursing Home in Harrison, AR. Later, he earned his Bachelor's degree in elementary education from Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, VA. He taught eight years in IN and OH and then moved his family to Whiteville, TN, in 1976. In TN, he taught at Eastside Elementary and Jefferson Elementary before becoming a poultry farmer. He also owned and managed Backermann's Bakery and Cheese Shoppe. After retiring in 2002, he volunteered and enjoyed new hobbies.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Sharon (Graber), and his four

children: Gloria Mast, Whiteville; Julia (Joe) Lapp, New Holland, PA; Merlin (Catherine), Bolivar; and Delores Mast, Whiteville. He was also blessed with 10 grandchildren: Sean Lapp, Adrianna Lapp, Ashley Lapp, Allison Lapp, Jackson Mast, Alayna Lapp, Caroline Mast, Franklin Mast, Amarissa Lapp, and Emmalise Mast. He is survived by one sister-in-law, Norma Mast.

He was the youngest of eight children. He was preceded in death by all of his siblings: Fannie (Dave) Hershberger, Mary (Dan) Yoder, Sadie (Stanley) Kajkowski, Sylvia (Victor) Parker, Verna Mast, Wilma (Frank) Goran, and Elmer (Mary Jane Yoder).

The funeral service was held on November 30, 2023, at the Whiteville Mennonite Church with Kevin Yoder, Paul Overholt, Lavern Eash, and Ray Kauffman serving. Interment followed in the church cemetery.

Schrock, Enos M., 86, of Rochelle, VA, passed away at his home on January 12, 2024, following a long illness of Parkinson's disease. He was born on August 17, 1937, in Dover, DE, to Moses M. and Elizabeth (Amstutz) Schrock. On December 9, 1956, he married Nora Yoder, who survives.

In 1957, Enos and Nora moved

from Stuarts Draft, VA, to help with the founding of Oak Grove Mennonite Church. He was ordained deacon of this church in 1967. He was a member there until his death. His number one love in life was Jesus and the church.

Telling the neighbors about Jesus was a high priority. He helped with Calvary Mission, a church for African Americans, when segregation was still a way of life in Madison County in the 1960s.

Enos taught a winter term at Calvary Bible School in Arkansas for 14 years. Enos and Nora went to Belize as missionaries in 1985 and were there for three years. During the next 13 years they went back to Belize seven times to help with the work.

He is survived by seven daughters and one son: Vera (the late Henry) Brenneman, Rochelle; Karen (Paul) Heatwole, Rapidan; Marietta (Ray) Shank, Rochelle; Violet (Steve) Anderson, Rochelle; Stephen (Marilyn), McKenney; Christine (David) Martin, Rochelle; Loraine Schrock, Rochelle; and Connie (the late Nathan) Wagler of Cross Hill, SC.

He is also survived by four sisters and one brother: Mary (the late Leo) Yoder, LA; Lydia (Sam) Kanagy, SC; Anna Mae (Elbert) Detweiler, MD; Moses Leroy (Ruby), FL; and Ruth Schrock, NM.

Enos was blessed with 52 grandchildren and 95 great-grandchildren.

The funeral service was held at Oak Grove Mennonite Church on January 14, 2024. Burial followed at the church cemetery.

Stutzman, Perry Lee, 80, of South Hutchinson, KS, died December 27, 2023, at Mennonite Friendship Communities. He was born March 28, 1943, in Hutchinson, KS, to Tobias and Emma (Nisly) Stutzman.

On March 13, 1971, he married Judith Nisly in Hutchinson. They shared 52 years of marriage together.

Perry was a long-time employee of Pleasantview Home Improvement and then was a truck driver for ProVia Doors. He was a member of Center Amish Mennonite Church and gladly served in any way he was asked. In the mid-60s, Perry served a two-year term at Hillcrest Home in Harrison, AR. From 1998 to 2000, Perry and his wife, Judith, served with Choice Books of Kansas.

Perry loved music and singing and belonged to the Kansas Mennonite Men's Chorus. He loved history and loved people. Perry always remembered dates, recalling all birthdays, anniversaries, and significant events from memory.

Perry is survived by his wife,

Judith, sons: Owen (Wanda), South Hutchinson; Lyle (Maria), Washington, IN; nine grandchildren; siblings: Glenn, Ervin, and Erma Yoder.

He was preceded in death by his parents, daughters: Julia Ann Stutzman, Twila Joyce Stutzman; and sisters: Edith Stutzman and Mary Edna Yoder.

The funeral service was held on December 31, 2023, at Center Amish Mennonite Church. Burial followed in West Center Amish Cemetery.

Yoder, Amos C., 88, of Huntsville, AR, passed away July 29, 2023, due to a farm accident in Huntsville. He was born October 18, 1934, at Thomas, OK, to Clarence J. and Fannie (Wingard) Yoder.

Amos was raised in the Thomas, OK, area and attended Jefferson School southeast of Thomas. He was baptized at a young age, a member of Lighthouse of Faith Mennonite Church, and was faithful to Christ until his death.

On October 20, 1955, he married Susan Yoder. Amos and Susan lived southeast of Thomas for a year and a half, then moved to Garnett, KS. They lived there for 13 years and returned to Thomas in January of 1970. Amos loved life and hard work; farming was his work and hobby. He

was a father who taught his children that God and His Word are the principle to live by. Church life was very important to him. After Susan passed away in June of 2003, he was a widower until December of 2006 when he married Mattie Mast. They lived in Thomas until their move to Huntsville in July of 2013.

He is survived by his wife, Mattie, eight sons: Edward (Lois), Wesley; Joni (the late Dana), Thomas, OK; Perry (the late Martha), Millersburg, OH; Floyd (Regina) Fairland, OK; Alva (Jane), Middlefield, OH; Earl (Sharon), Petersburg, PA; Paul (Rebecca), Sturgis, MI; Eugene (Rose), Perry, KS; two daughters: Marilyn (Clyde) Yoder, Montezuma, GA; Susan (Stephen) Beachy, Belvidere, TN; 50 grandchildren; 48 great-grandchildren; four brothers: Herbert (Lillian), Goshen, IN; Leon (Dorothy), Middlebury, IN; John (Betty), Millersburg, IN; Harley (Ruth Ann), Garnett, KS; sister-in-law, Irene Yoder, Ligonier, IN; uncle, John Yoder, Hutchinson, KS; and aunt, Viola Wingard, Montezuma, GA.

Amos was preceded in death by his parents, his first wife, Susan, three brothers: Samuel, Perry, and Elmer; one grandchild, Sean Yoder; and two daughters-in-law: Dana (Maddon) Yoder and Martha (Wengerd) Yoder.

The funeral service was held August 3, 2023, at Lighthouse of Faith Mennonite Church, Huntsville, AR, with Clyde Yoder and Stephen Beachy serving. Interment was in Zion Cemetery, Thomas, OK.

Yoder, David W., 84, of McVeytown, PA, passed away on July 8, 2023, at Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, PA. He was born on August 4, 1938, in Belleville, PA, to the late Sam C. and Arie (Byler) Yoder. He is survived by his wife, Sara (Peachey) Yoder, whom he married on October 26, 1961.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his children: Marlin J. (Julia A.), McVeytown; Marlene J. Yoder, at home; Darwin W. (Shana), Belleville; Loren K. (Mary Ellen), Belleville; Mary Ellen (Myron) King, Greencastle; 20 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; siblings: Beulah Kauffman, Reedsville; Frances Kanagy, Chambersburg; Marlin (Mo) (Karen), Buhler, KS; Raymond (Nancy), Reedsville; John (Joyce), Buhler, KS.

He was preceded in death by siblings: Anna Hostetler, Mary Kurtz, Esther Peachey, Elsie Yoder, Samuel (Sonny), Arlene Spicher; grandsons: Derek, Jensen, Joshua King; and great-granddaughter, Sierra Yoder.

David was a lifelong dairy farmer

and a member of Valley View Amish Mennonite Church. In earlier years, Dave enjoyed hunting and fishing. More recently, he could be seen at a few of the local restaurants having coffee and socializing with friends. He was a friend to everyone and enjoyed handing out candy to the children at church. He especially enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held on July 11, 2023, at the Valley View Church with Arlan Kurtz, Matthew Peachey, and Eli King officiating. Burial followed at the Locust Grove Cemetery.

Yoder, Kore E., 78, of Belleville, PA, passed away on May 10, 2023, at his home. Born May 21, 1944, in Belleville, he was the son of the late John S. and Lena (Bawel) Yoder.


He was preceded in death by sisters: Lomie E. Yoder, Savilla B. Hostetler, Elsie A. Beachy; brothers: Aaron R., and infant brother, Benjamin R.

Kore is survived by his wife, Susanna (Miller), whom he married on March 24, 1966; his children: Marvin J., Sharon E. Yoder, Mary Ellen (Loren) Yoder, all of Belleville; Katherine E. (Glen) Chupp, Eden Valley, MN; Brenda A. (Bill) Coutain, Lewistown, PA; 18 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren; sisters: Naomi L. Yoder, Belleville; Mary E.

Yoder, Belleville; Nancy J. Beachy, New Berlin, PA; brother, Raymond J. (Ann), Guys Mills; and sister-in-law, Dorothy Yoder, Hadley, PA.

Kore was a lifelong dairy farmer and a taxi driver for the Amish following his retirement. He was a member of the Valley View Amish Mennonite Church. He and his wife enjoyed traveling and vacationing

in Florida. He also enjoyed fishing, going to Alan Seager, and having picnics with the family.

The funeral was held on May 14, 2023, at the Valley View Amish Mennonite Church with Earl Peachey and Matthew Peachey serving. Burial followed at the Locust Grove Cemetery. 

observations

I was given a book by a guest who stayed in our home this past summer. He indicated that he found the book helpful and thought I might enjoy it as well. He is a good guesser. The title was *Leadership and Self-Deception* by the Harbinger Institute. As indicated, the author is not a person but rather the result of a collaborative effort by this organization. The book is written in story form. Though many of the situations and even persons in the book are inspired by real events, this is not a true story. I found the book helpful in expanding my understanding of the helpful and unhelpful ways we treat those we live and work with.

I went looking and found another book by the Harbinger Institute

titled *The Anatomy of Peace*. This book has plenty of overlap of themes with the aforementioned title, but zeros in more on how this plays out with the way that parents relate to their children. It's interesting that both books actually present some overlap of characters. The events in *The Anatomy of Peace* took place before the events in *Leadership and Self-Deception*.

One of the key thoughts that both books deal with is the issue of treating other people like objects. If you're like me, you tend to recoil a bit at that suggestion. But it's possible I may have done that without giving it much thought. When we cultivate the attitude that our goals, priorities, needs, desires, etc., are primary and everyone else's are less important,

we live very selfishly. Selfishness overlooks, or outright refuses to acknowledge the legitimate and obvious needs of others. When we, in our own mind, see ourselves as being primary and others as inferior, we self-justify treating them as “less than.” It is a small step then for a sales person to see his potential clients as objects that facilitate his superior goal of achieving a sale. If my reputation is the most important, then the misbehavior of my children is an affront to my need to be well-thought-of. This creates enormous pressure on our children to perform, not for their own good, but for my reputation. Can you see how this type of focus tempts one to treat others as objects that I can use to achieve my goals?

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One of the characters in the book was having difficulty relating to his problem child who was a great source of embarrassment to his father. As Lou pondered some of these things, a scene from his childhood flashed through his mind.

His hardworking father tended a small but productive apple orchard in the state of New York on the banks of the Hudson River. The property the orchard was on was small, so they weren't rich. But his father was patient and diligent.

When Lou was a teenager, his father had saved enough money to buy a new car. Now the family had a car in addition to the old truck that had served as the family's sole source of transportation heretofore. The lad had an errand to tend to in town on Saturday afternoon shortly after the family had acquired the new car. Lou inquired whether he might be permitted to take the new car, hoping to show it to some of his friends. His father, who was seated in the living room reading the paper, graciously gave him permission. As he prepared to leave, it suddenly occurred to him that he had forgotten his wallet and returned to the house to retrieve it. When he raced back outside, he was stunned that the car was missing. He had started the engine but left it in neutral without engaging the emergency brake. The place where the car was parked sloped gently down toward the river. He ran to the bank just in time to see the car settling below the waves on the Hudson River. Horror washed over him. He ran back to the house. He couldn't bear the thought of telling his dad what had happened, but he knew he needed to. As Lou blurted out the story, his father didn't so much as turn around from his position of reading the paper. When Lou finished by telling his father

that the car was in the bottom of the Hudson River, his dad didn't say anything right away. Presently, he turned the page and told his son in calm, even tones, "Well, I guess you'll have to take the truck then."

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While this story is fictitious, the lesson is one that we do well to heed. This father knew his son was hurting terribly because of what he'd done. They both knew where the blame rested for this tragedy. This father also knew that there was very little that he could say that would help his son to better avoid making this mistake again than what this opportunity had already provided. This wise father also somehow understood that heaping a generous measure of parental wrath on this already hurting son would actually compound the problem.

Because the father saw young Lou as a hurting son with real needs, he treated him with dignity rather than an obstacle to his own success. He didn't treat him as an object but as a person.

The Scripture gives us full and well-developed instruction on how we should treat each other. The indwelling presence of Christ and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit give us the wherewithal to live above our fleshly, selfish leanings.

These two books are not Christian books, but they underscore some important Christian principles. If any of you readers feel inclined to read them, I predict you'll find plenty of meat among the inevitable bones that you might need to spit out. Thanks to Luke Yoder from northern Indiana for giving me a copy of *Leadership and Self-Deception*.

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One of my co-pastors recently preached a helpful sermon on "Happiness." Happiness, joy, and cheerfulness are all words with meanings that overlap. It has been said that happiness tends to be more conditional and joy operates in spite of circumstances.

I recently read a snippet in which the writer pointed out that people who are consistently happy have often had years of experience practicing both patience and gratitude. Those who experience the most happiness do so because they've chosen to be happy. This is quite different from the idea that happiness is something that happens to us. Those who are happy tend to choose gratitude for things that the broader culture has trained most folks to regard as a problem.

Some time ago, Brenda and I were visiting a dear widow and were impressed by her cheerful outlook. We commented on that and

commended her for her courage and example. She cited Ephesians 5:20 as something of a mantra she tries to live by. She indicated that she knows the Scripture exhorts us to give thanks in all situations, but that this verse in Ephesians goes a bit further by exhorting us to give thanks for everything. It reads this way, “*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

What I’m gathering from this is that those folks we meet who seem to be always smiling and always happy are likely not that way because they can’t help it, but rather because they have conditioned themselves to practice a grateful spirit and be thankful for disagreeable things. They are that way because they choose to focus on joy rather than an ample supply of woes.

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Sales data for new electric vehicles has experienced some significant headwinds the last year or so. Many folks believe that these vehicles are one piece of the required puzzle to reduce man-made damage to this planet. Several major manufacturers of electric vehicles have scaled back production and some have postponed expansion. Several issues are often

cited as instrumental in dampening enthusiasm for EVs.

One difficulty is referred to as range anxiety. This is less for those who have the capability of recharging the vehicle at night and use them close to home. But for long-range driving, many are frustrated at the inability to find suitable charging options. When they are available, the time needed to restore maximum driving range is often twice or three times longer than it takes to refuel a gasoline car. And this is under optimal conditions. Complicating this issue is that if one miscalculates and the battery runs out, it isn’t as easy as pouring a gallon of gas from a can into the tank to get you to the nearest gas station.

Purchase prices that exceed the price of vehicles with internal combustion engines also have served to blunt the demand for new electric vehicles. However, the prices are coming down and the battery technology is getting better and access to charging options are growing. While it seems like a long shot, time will tell if President Biden’s goal, of having 50% of all new vehicle sales in the USA be electric vehicles by the year 2030, is viable or not.

–RJM 

The *OPEN HAND* holds more **friends** than the closed fist.



Diedrick

Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS


He is slight for his 13 years, with a delightful sprinkling of freckles across his nose. Speech is arduous for him, and those who do not know him well find it difficult to extract meaning from his efforts. But how he loves to be understood! His powers of observation are keen; he also remembers things well and laughs at his own jokes.

We spend several hours a day together as substitute teacher and student while on campus at CBS where his father teaches. This unusual child exerts significant energy to master what for most of us is a breeze. When we began the three-week term, he came to school willingly though we had little momentum and he didn't feel tops. But as the hours together at the table in Pine Haven accumulate, I am rewarded with more and more words understood. His persistence in expressing his thoughts increases; and how I whooped on the day I understood an original thought, an entire sentence of his! But often, I

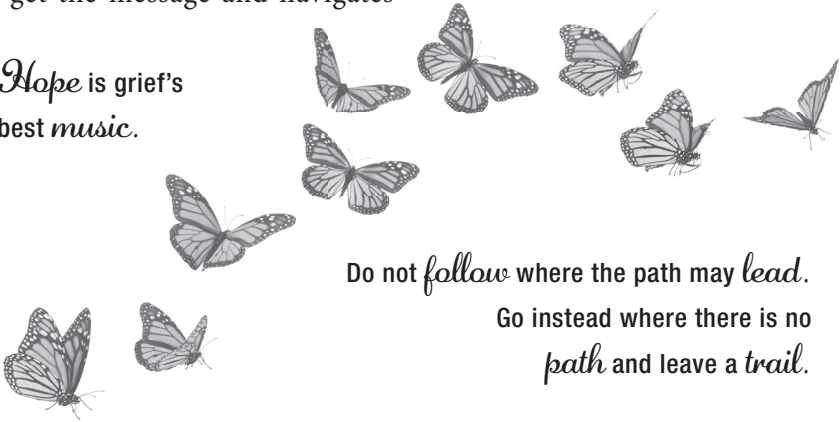
must say, "I'm sorry. I wasn't able to understand what you said." His eyes drop, and we return to the school work on the table. I feel sad.

If I open the cafe curtains, there follows a running commentary on the view: the vehicles in the parking lot, birds knocking snow off branches. He can identify teachers laboring in the study! He loves to rewind the story told to him of Daniel and Ken (cooks) rescuing a neighbor stuck in his driveway, hands flailing in imitation of the spinning tires as he practices diction. "*Spuh-inn-ing*," I coach, asking him to stretch out the vowel sounds. We watch a teacher dash from the study to join in snow play, arming himself with a shovel to toss clouds of the fluffy stuff upon students. Diedrick exclaims to me again and again, "Cliff! Cold!" complete with gestures of shaking stinging fingers. We read and discuss familiar scenes of home and school from a homemade book: Merv's combine is a favorite page. Each word I understand helps me know what he is thinking, a treasure.

These hours spent with Diedrick will be among my prized memories of CBS 2024. The second Sunday morning, I am already seated in the chapel when his family trickles in to be seated on the bench next to Stan and me. I watch his eyes, hoping he understands the invitation my heart extends, "Sit with me?" He seems to get the message and navigates

past family members and sits next to me. In the after-Sunday-School scramble, a small sister places herself between us; Diedrick furrows his brows and says aloud, "No. Me." My shoes nearly slip from my feet in this sacred moment, and I savor the lovely gift he offers me: friendship with one differently gifted. 

*Hope is grief's
best music.*



Do not follow where the path may lead.

*Go instead where there is no
path and leave a trail.*

mission awareness

What Can You Say At Viewings or Funerals?

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

Awareness "implies having knowledge of something through alertness in observing what one sees, hears, or feels" (Webster's New World Dictionary). Attending a funeral anywhere in the world is the most

acute of all mission activities because what's lying in the coffin speaks louder than words can express. Through the years, our mission staff in Belize often attended funerals of children, youth, and the gray haired. We left some graveyards

with heavy hearts. But then there were those occasions of great joy when Christians died whose sins were washed away by the blood of the Lamb.

On a dreary Sunday morning on the day before Christmas of 2023 there was a tragic accident about one mile east of our church, Pequea Amish Mennonite, just before the service started. An east-bound vehicle drifted into the westbound lane and collided with a car that was headed to church. John and Dorothy Esh's two teenage boys and 11-year-old daughter were rushed to the hospital. Though they were wearing seatbelts, the terrific impact left the victims with broken backs and internal injuries. The parents talked to their daughter, Lylah, before she was taken into the surgical room, thinking she would pull through. But approximately 30 minutes later they found out that Lylah had died. It was such a shock! Later, another couple from church, who accompanied the parents, said she had such a peaceful expression on her face lying on the surgical stretcher. Several hours later when Marilyn and I received the news, while visiting Marilyn's mother in Ohio, we wept. Lylah had such a pleasant demeanor and a sweet character.

So what is there to say when

someone is grieving? How can I express myself? Are there some do's and don'ts?

Never say, "God wanted another flower in His garden." Perhaps you could say, "Seldom are you distant from grief, sorrow, or pain in the Bible. These experiences are God's trust in us."

I remember so well nearly 30 years ago, during the viewing of my first wife, Lill, a pastor from a Mennonite church comforted me with a few simple words of heartfelt expression and feeling: "We wish you our deepest sympathy." Another minister, whose wife had also died, gave me some words of wisdom, "Floyd, take time to grieve." And yes, grieve I did for some months. It is healing and comforting! But there is a time to go on with life.

A book I can recommend is, *What You Can Say When You Don't Know What To Say*, by Lauren Briggs. Here are a few helpful quotes from her book.

- "In the event of a death, do say, 'I will always remember_____.' Don't say, 'He is so much better off in heaven.'

- "When a baby dies: do say, 'I know how much being a mother means to you.' Don't say, 'You can always have another one. Be thankful you have Jerry. At least you never got

to know the child.’

- “After the death of a spouse and the wife took care of her husband for a long time, do say, ‘Even though he needed you a lot, I know you will really miss him.’ Don’t say, ‘You were so blessed to have him for 30 years.’”

Here are a few helpful quotes from a book, *Helping People Through Grief*.

- “Allow the person to talk about the deceased loved one. Ask open-ended questions like, ‘What happened?’ or ‘Can you share with us what led up to his or her death?’ Offer practical assistance on jobs at their home. Remember them on holidays, especially the firsts.


- “Avoid statements such as ‘He’s at rest. Time heals.’ Don’t change the subject when the grieving person talks about their loved one. Do not say, ‘This loss is God’s will.’ Most grieving persons are troubled by that statement but are too polite to say so” (author unknown).

The viewing and funeral were five and six days after Lylah died. Marilyn and I don’t remember ever being at such a quiet, reverent viewing. Many close relatives and friends attended. We walked in line to view the body and then met the parents, John and Dorothy Esh, a couple near 40 years of age with five living children. We gave each of them a hearty handshake, but we just wept with

them. We could not say anything. Perhaps that conveys more comfort than many words.

We do not read that Jesus ever attended a funeral. However, in the story of the death of Lazarus, amidst all the family and community sorrow and grief, Jesus spoke some of the most assuring and comforting words: “*I am the resurrection and the life: he that liveth and believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*” (John 11:25, 26).

Jesus “groaned in spirit” and “again groaning in himself” (11:33, 38). Jesus was deeply moved in spirit and troubled at the painful and deplorable condition that sin brought into human existence. “*Jesus wept*” (11:35). The Greek word “wept” has “the connotation of silently bursting into tears in contrast to the loud lament of the group” (The MacArthur N.T. Commentary).

Jesus “cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth...*” (11:43, 44a). Someday all the righteous dead will burst forth: “*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*” (I Corinthians 15:52). **Glory hallelujah!** 

Compassion for the Depressed

Lois Troyer, Georgetown, OH



As you step out the door, the warm sunshine touches your face. Ah, spring is here! You head out for a walk, and you glory in the sounds of the warblers, woodcocks, and peepers. The blue sky makes you heady with delight. There's life everywhere—bursting, colorful, and so welcome!

But slowly you realize the sun is growing dimmer. You shiver as the light lessens and the chill brings terror to your heart. What's happening? Then you realize that the world has gone grayscale. The warmth and color are replaced by fear and dread that your heart and brain have never previously known. Doom laughs in your face and assures you that life as you know it is ending. How did I get here? How can I get away from this darkness that's swallowed me?

This is what a *new onset of depression/anxiety* can feel like. Some of us can't imagine it. Some of us were previously lost in the terror of it and have emerged. We can see light again, but we walk with a limp, holding the light for those coming behind us.

Would you like to help hold that light? First, let's talk about how *not* to help.

1. Don't presume that it's only a spiritual problem or demonic possession. Depression often results from a combination of factors. There can be physical, spiritual, and emotional facets to depression. Trauma, loss, physical sickness, burn-out and extended stress, imbalances in the body such as hormone or vitamin deficiencies can all be contributors. Depressed people don't need grenades like *more accountability* and *repentance* thrown at them either. These people are vulnerable and are usually desperate for healing, and it can lead to a spiritual crisis when they feel like they have repented from all there is to repent of a million times, yet the darkness is **still not gone**.

2. Don't presume that it's something they've brought on themselves. This is a cruel view. It is true that unhealthy thinking patterns can contribute to depression. But you can't be compassionate while secretly

thinking they need to just pull themselves up with their bootstraps. They don't want to be where they are. Actually, they wouldn't wish it on their enemy. Their hands are blistered from those bootstraps. And they can smell your fake compassion from a mile away. Even people you think you know well can have untold stories of brokenness, unknown to you, that can affect them years later.

3. Don't presume that it's only a physical problem and suggest they take a product that has turned the masses perpetually cheerful. Unless you have personal experience with supplements that improve depression, leave that subject for a professional.

4. Don't deny that they are depressed or try numerous odd ways to cheer them up or offer solutions. Solomon had something to say on this subject centuries ago, "*Like one who takes away a garment in cold weather, and like vinegar on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart*" (Proverbs 25:20 NKJV). And don't compare their symptoms with those of other depressed people. Just because your great-aunt Hilda slept all day when she was depressed doesn't mean this person who can't sleep isn't depressed.

5. Don't gossip and discuss with uninvolved people that this dear person should just think happy

thoughts. Don't they know that there are others facing worse situations?

6. Don't expound on the dangers of antidepressants and Christ-centered therapy. While they may not be cures, they can be tools.

Are you still with me? That's a lot to absorb, I know. Would you still like to help? Here's how to **actually** help.

1. Pray. And pray a lot. Ask them for specific requests and then offer to pray with them on the spot. When a person is mentally exhausted, even praying can look overwhelming. You may find yourself praying the same thing every time you ask them for requests. That's ok. Tell them so. Heaven can't be stormed enough for their healing. Pray for wisdom and patience for yourself. You'll need endurance beyond what you can produce if you are supporting a depressed person.

2. Come to them in the posture of *what can I do for you?* And not, *this is what you need to do.*

3. Welcome them into your home and life. Provide a truly safe, nonjudgmental haven for them where they can process and be honest about the state of their physical, spiritual, and mental health. Allow them to talk as much or as little about it as they choose.

4. Be comfortable with their tears. Hug them or hold their hand while

they let the tears flow again. Assure them that you aren't tired of their tears, and they can cry whenever they need to. Allow them to lament the darkness that has befallen them. As healing progresses, the tears will become less frequent.

5. Portray a calm acceptance of the whole messy situation and don't dither about how we got here and how we must get back out. That attitude doesn't produce peace and only digs the hole deeper. Hold their healing with an open hand and entreat them to do the same. Don't set timelines or expectations for when everything will be hunky-dory again. This is a recipe for disappointment.

6. Allow them to tell you of the same fear or sliver of darkness over and over. If you sense they're carrying ongoing pain from a family member or someone who should be a safe place for them, assure them that they are free to tell you and that doing so is not betrayal. Allow them to name their pain and verbalize it in its entirety. Every time they talk about it, a measure of healing and clarity happens.

7. Offer them hope often. Hope is a powerful force. Tell them they won't be depressed forever. Verbalize often that God hasn't forgotten them and is healing them. Point out progress that you see. Assure them that the world is

still turning, and the feeling that life is ending for them is not reality but is instead an untrue message from a struggling brain.

8. Offer physical assistance. Make a meal for them. Check with them when you go to the store and ask if they need something. Ask them what looks overwhelming to them and address them as you can. Work is overwhelming when you're depressed.

9. Don't be offended by their words and actions. Hurting people can be blunt and even borderline ridiculous. Let it roll off. Don't be surprised at the other emotions that surface or the fervor of them.


10. Encourage them to find a good balance of busyness and rest that helps them get out of bed in the morning. All busyness or all rest can both be detrimental. Allow them to help you if they offer. They desperately need to feel valued and needed.

11. Advocate for them if they are faced with unhealthy pressure from family members or superiors, whether in church or at work. Offer to go with them to have hard conversations. This is very helpful for single people who have no spouse and are especially vulnerable in these situations.

12. Educate yourself on depression, *especially* if your husband is in

a position of authority. Church leaders, service unit leaders, school administrators, etc. and their wives should all have a grasp on how to respond to a depressed person. Damaging and hurtful decisions are sometimes made by those unfamiliar with or who hold wrong views of people with depression. (See points 1 and 2 of the previous section.)

Are you still with me? Don't feel like caring for people is a minefield where one misstep will blow you into next week. Unless you are closely involved, showing up with a hug and an "I'm sorry and I care" is all that it takes. Don't let fear of doing the wrong thing keep you from doing

anything at all. The battle cry of the Gospel is redemption at every level. All of us who are made in the image of God and have been redeemed are called to spread the good news of Who Jesus really is. He didn't come to help us to be self-sufficient and over-achieving. Our Jesus came to preach the Gospel to the poor, heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and to free the oppressed. Let's not look over the heads of our sisters, out into our communities and mission fields, but fail to bring Jesus to the hurting in our pews. May this Gospel become not only what we do, but who we are. 

junior messages

The Boy Who Loved to Run (Part 2)

Margretta Yoder, Hutchinson, KS

[Continued from last month.]

A World of Changes

Six months after Lopez had received the wonderful news that he was going to America, he was heading to America on a big airplane. He grew increasingly hungry as the trip went on as he always declined the airplane food. Life had taught him that if you didn't

have money, you can't eat. Lopez was sure this food wouldn't be free. Thankfully, a helpful flight attendant was finally able to explain that the food was truly free. Lopez landed in Syracuse, NY. His new parents awaited him with hugs. Finally, 10 years after he'd been ripped from his mother's arms, Lopez had found a home!

Lopez asked his new parents if he could run the first morning that he was in the States. His parents seemed quite puzzled when Lopez wanted to run 30 kilometers and were even more shocked when they did the math and discovered 30 kilometers equaled 18 miles!

Running was the only thing that felt familiar to Lopez in this new country. Lopez had to learn how to use modern conveniences that Americans are used to. Turning lights on and off, using hot water in the shower (not just cold water), and even using a toilet were learning curves!

His new mother gave him a new name, Joseph. She was determined Joseph would go to school and catch up with his class as well as go to college. This goal felt impossible for he spoke almost no English when he arrived at age 16. He worked so hard that his brain ached. Even with a hired tutor, he could hardly keep up. His mom always told him, “You are smart, Joseph, you can do this.”

One of Joseph’s history teachers inspired him and helped him see that education could help him reach his goal of running in the Olympics.

Joseph studied the life of Jesse Owens, a Black Olympic runner, and his goal grew. It was now not just to run but also to make a difference in

the lives of others. So Joseph set to work at getting a great education.

In school and college, Joseph was noticed for his skill at running. He decided to use his African name. Nike made an offer to sponsor him to train for the Olympic trials. The decision was hard because Lopez was still in school, but he accepted. He knew this was his chance to reach his big goal of the Olympics. His first step was to begin his training at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. He experienced various setbacks in running when he injured his hamstring two weeks before the Olympic trials.

And then, only 10 minutes before the 1500 meter race, he twisted his ankle. He prayed, “God, I believe You gave me this dream. You’ve provided in so many ways to get me here.” And the pain disappeared. Now in the last 100 meters of the race, his hamstring tightened. Lopez started falling behind. He prayed desperately once again. And God once again healed Lopez. He finished third—the last chance to qualify for the Olympics that year.

Lopez headed to Beijing for the Olympics. Afterwards, he discovered his parents, whom he had thought were dead, were still alive. Before long, he headed to Africa to see his birth parents. Their reunion was

heart touching. Lopez remembered his friend's words, "You will see your mother again."

Whatever happens, may each of us run strong for Jesus in the race of life. We are given one life to live for Him.

For more details of Lopez's adventures read: *Running for My life*¹ by Lopez Lomong

1. *Running for My Life, Joseph L. Lomong, aka Lopez Lomong, Nelson Books, 2012*



youth messages

A Self-Disciplined Life

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

The older I get, it seems that a year flies by much more quickly than it used to. Recently, someone explained to me that it was due to the percentage of time that a year is of our lives. The older we get, each year represents a smaller percentage of our lives. As I look around and see how time has affected me, I realize that many areas of my life have slowly slipped due to lack of discipline in my own life. Time has taken its toll on my body, and I'm not in the physical shape that I was in my late teens and early twenties. A friend, who was in a similar situation, and I decided to do something about it. We chose to spend the month of January practicing self-discipline in hopes of

improving our overall quality of life. In the last several weeks, I've learned a few things about self-discipline.

In order to use self-discipline, you need to be able to exercise self-control. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23). Temperance or self-control here is translated from the Greek word *enkrateia*. Its root meaning is "power over oneself or self-mastery." *Vincent's Word Studies of the Bible* added that it means "holding in hand the passions and desires." To simplify, it is mastery over one's desires and impulses.¹ The ability to say no is vital for the

1. *Bibletools.org*

practice of self-discipline. Just say no, it's that easy, yet that simple act of saying no and denying our personal desires is so difficult because of our fleshly desires.

In the world today many people, Christian and non-believer alike, recognize the value of self-discipline. College football Hall of Fame coach Lou Holtz said, "Without self-discipline, success is impossible, period."² If we want to excel in certain areas of our lives, or improve in others, we need to build good habits and it takes self-discipline to do that. Self-discipline does not mean living an extremely restrictive lifestyle, however, it does mean restricting certain areas in our lives in order to better ourselves and our lives as a whole.

As Christian young people, it's important that we are cultivating and practicing self-control in our lives. If you want to excel in your Christian life, this isn't negotiable. Look at the life of the Apostle Paul. In I Corinthians 9:24-27 he says, "*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do*

2. *The Power of True Success*, pp. 160-164

it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Even a Christian as mature as Paul recognized how important it is to practice self-control. He uses the example of a runner, training and running to win. He mentions that in striving to be the best, they are temperate (self-controlled) in all things. In the over two millennia since these words were penned, we see that not much has changed. Professional athletes, musicians, and actors today do the same thing—denying themselves, starving themselves, and spending hours practicing and practicing and all for fleshly reasons. They want to be the best, they want the fame, recognition, status, and money. They are allowing their lusts to motivate them to be self-disciplined in many areas of life in order to get what they want.

As Christians, we need to practice this self-control in order to combat our carnal desires, not fulfill them. How did Paul develop self-control? First, he became a believer which opened his life to the working of the Holy Spirit. As Paul began to


live in obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading in his life, the fruit of the Spirit, mentioned earlier in Galatians 5, began to grow in his life. Paul listened to the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:12-14 says *"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* He indicates here that it is through the Spirit of God that true self-control can be practiced. Allowing ourselves to be led by the Spirit is also an indication to those around us that we are followers of Christ.

Another area of self-control that Paul practiced was fasting. He mentions it in II Corinthians 6:5. As followers of Christ, it is implied that we are to fast. In Matthew 6:16 when Jesus was talking to His disciples, it's interesting to note that He doesn't say "If ye fast..." He says, *"When ye fast."* Fasting helps in the development of self-control. When we bring our food appetites under control it would logically follow that other physical desires would be diminished as well. Our body's metabolism changes after 2-3 days of fasting and begins deriving energy from the fat cells rather than from the

food we would normally have eaten. The body then focuses that energy on vital organs and allows other drives to go dormant.

In II Peter 1:4-8b, The Apostle Paul gives us somewhat of a road map that, if followed, helps to produce self-control. *"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance."* When we are diligent in our faith, in practicing virtue, and increasing in the knowledge of God's Word, then temperance (self-control) will follow.

God-honoring self-control is a product of a Spirit-filled life. Galatians 5:16 sums it up nicely. *"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."* Only the power of the Holy Spirit gives us the strength to practice self-control. Without it we are slaves to self.

"True self-control means willingness to resign the small for the sake of the great, the present for the sake of the future, the material for the sake of the spiritual, and that is what faith makes possible" -Hugh Black 

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THOUGHT GEMS

It takes an honest person to admit if he's tired or just lazy.

• • • • •

An idea is a funny little thing that won't work unless you do.

• • • • •

The only reason some people are lost in thought is that they're total strangers there.

• • • • •

It's better to keep a friend from falling than to help him up after he falls.

• • • • •

The most important thing a father can do for his children is love their mother.

• • • • •

When most people put in their two cents' worth, they aren't overcharging.

• • • • •

Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make them all yourself.

• • • • •

Learning is like rowing upstream; not to advance is to drop back.

• • • • •

The man who watches the clock will always be one of the hands.

• • • • •

Laziness travels slowly and is soon overtaken by poverty.

• • • • •

Anyone can steer the ship when the sea is calm.