



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JUNE 2024

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Calvary Messenger

June 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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Walking with My Father

Mila Eichorn, Luz y Esperanza, Paraguay

*“I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”
(Matthew 28:20b).*

The stars shone brightly overhead, but the tears that poured from the girl’s eyes didn’t allow her to see the clear, beautiful night. The struggle to see the road ahead was too great, making her want to give up. She didn’t notice a bright light coming towards her until a voice said, “My daughter, why do you weep?”

Startled, the girl looked up into the loving eyes of her Father. “Come,” He said, “I will help you along.”

With sudden hope the girl arose and took her Father’s hand. The road didn’t look so dark if her Father was with her. What she thought had been impossible was now possible. It was then that she realized that the darkest times in life show you that God is strong and that He will always be there to help you. The road may be rough, the valley deep, and the mountain steep, but no matter what, you can make it through anything if you have your Heavenly Father by your side.



Secret Place of the Most High

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91:1).

Psalm 91 is one of several Scripture passages that I memorized many years ago. Someone recommended reciting memorized Scriptures to yourself when you find it difficult to fall asleep. This Psalm is one I often turn to in such a time, and while I cannot recite the verses in perfect order or remember the latter part of the passage, it often helps me fall asleep. In a recent nighttime recitation, I was struck with the phrase *“the secret place”* in the first verse. Where is this secret place?

A secret place intimates a place not known to the general public. To be allowed to dwell or remain in this place suggests a place of privilege or close connection with, in this case, *“the most High.”* Strong’s describes it as a place of protection or a hiding place. Was the writer suggesting a physical place where he knew that God dwelled?

There are several people in the Bible who had a very close relationship with God. In Genesis 5 we read that

“Enoch walked with God” or lived a life of communion with God. When you take a walk with another person, you are in step with him and walking side-by-side. I have always imagined Enoch taking literal walks while talking with God, and finally he never returned home because *“God took him.”* What a wonderful way to go!

Moses spent many weeks of time alone with God, especially on Mount Sinai. It was here that God respected Moses’s request to see God’s glory. *“And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen”* (Exodus 33:21-23).

Because of his faithfulness to God, the Lord said of him, *“with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold”* (Numbers 12:8).

God spent the first two years of the children of Israel’s time in the

wilderness showing His people that He wants to live among them. Within the tent of worship was a very special and secret place where God's glory dwelled. This place was significantly called the mercy seat. Was this the "secret place" that Psalm 91:1 talks about?

David was anointed king because of his relationship with God. Because of Saul's disobedience, God chose David to be king as noted in Acts 13:22. *"And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."* The communion of David with his God as recorded in the Psalms continues to give strength to us today. One of the few places in the Old Testament where God refers to Himself as a father is to David. God's word to David through Nathan the prophet included this verse: *"I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men"* (II Samuel 7:14).

When Jesus came to earth, He showed us the closeness He had with His Father. He spent time alone in prayer with Him at night and completely followed His will. In perhaps the darkest moment of His

life, He addressed His father as Abba, a term showing personal intimacy. Is this the *"secret place of the most High?"*

God, our Father, wants us to realize and enjoy the privilege of adoption into His family. *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"* (Romans 8:15). We realize that we are His sons and daughters and can rest in His love. (See "Sitting in the Father's Lap" in the April 2024 issue of *Calvary Messenger*.)

As earthly fathers, we have the privilege of showing our children a safe place when we hold them in our laps. This should include times after we discipline them, but that should not be the primary time. We do well when we talk to them about their day and allow them to tell us all about their lives. I believe this should continue above the age of four, so they can have this memory of talking with their earthly father and so learn to find the lap of their Abba, Father. A recent devotional illustrates well the special place a father's lap can be to a young child.

The sound of the drill terrified five-year-old Sarah. She leaped out of the dentist's chair and refused to get back in. Nodding understandingly, the dentist told her father, "Daddy, get in the chair." Jason thought he was meant

to show his daughter how easy it was. But then the dentist turned to the little girl and said, “Now, climb up and sit in Daddy’s lap.” With her father now cradling her in his reassuring arms, Sarah relaxed completely, and the dentist was able to continue.

That day, Jason learned a great lesson about the comfort of the presence of his Heavenly Father. “Sometimes, God [chooses not to] take

over what we have to go through,” he said. “But God was showing me, I will be there with you.”¹

Where have you found the “secret place of the most High?” Try imagining yourself sitting in your Heavenly Daddy’s lap and telling Him all about your day. It’s a safe and comforting place.

–AY

1. “In God’s Arms,” April 4, 2024, *Our Daily Bread*



It’s 11 O’clock, but Midnight’s Coming

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

It’s 11 o’clock.

Sinners are at the bar, and movies, and dancing.
Christians are partying, to the mountains, or to Florida.
No one knows that midnight is coming.

It’s 11 o’clock.

Sinners are confused. Christians are amused, and some are short-fused. They don’t know midnight is coming.

It’s 11:10.

Everyone is busy, business is booming, traffic is heavy,
they’re all in a hurry, coming and going.
They’re all over the world. They forgot, midnight is coming.

It’s 11:20.

People go shopping, to restaurants to eat, to socializing feasts.
Everyone is in the race together. No one knows that it is late
already, that midnight is coming.

It’s 11:25.

Sinners are careless, saints are prayerless. They forgot the
time, that midnight is coming.

It's 11:30.

Sinners live life without Jesus, saints become taken up with the present.
They don't pay any mind, midnight is coming.

It's 11:35.

Sinners are mocking. Some are scorning. Some are cursing.
The saints are playing. Some are overtime in working. Some are sleeping.
They don't regard the late hour, that midnight is coming.

It's 11:40.

Sinners are unbelieving. Some doubt all of the Bible. Saints are undecided.
Some doubt some parts of the Bible. Many seem unaware. Some don't care.
All of them agree that God loves everyone. Did someone mention the time?

It's 11:45.

O-o-o-oh! It's so late already. Few people agree how late it is. Even
Christians do not respect what the Lord has said. They don't know the
prophecies are true. But let me tell you something, midnight is coming.


It's 11:50.

The world becomes worse. The Christians lose zeal.
The world tries more laws. The Christians try less.
The world has more violence. The Christians give up.
They all forgot to look at the clock: midnight is coming.

The Bottom Line is,

*"And at midnight there was a cry made. Behold, the bridegroom cometh!"
"Behold he cometh with clouds,
and every eye shall see him,
and they also which pierced him,
and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."*

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Amen.

[This article was inspired by the old poem, "It's Friday, but Sunday is coming," (Good Friday and Easter Sunday) and a sermon preached by Pastor Rufus.] 

.....
Your SHADOW is confirmation that light has traveled 93 MILLION MILES
unobstructed, only to be deprived of reaching the ground—thanks to you.

Announcement

2024 Youth Fellowship Meetings

Northeast – Maranatha Fellowship, Sugarcreek, OH - July 26-28, 2024

West – Leon Salem Mennonite Church, Leon, IA - July 26-28, 2024

Southeast – Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Aroda, VA - July 26-28, 2024

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Announcement

Staffing Needs at Christian Light

Our Vision: Strong families and growing churches



Christian Light exists to support Christian education around the world and to provide character-building literature for families and churches.

- We need people in the education support office to serve as consultants to homeschoolers all over the US.
- We need people with computer skills to serve in the IT department.
- We need someone in the permissions office to manage copyright issues.
- We need staff members in the order department to help oversee customer satisfaction and order management.

If you are interested in helping to fulfill our mission, please call Ken Miller: (540) 337-2534 or e-mail us at info@christianlight.org

*It's not so much how busy you are, but why you are busy.
The **bee** is praised, but the **mosquito** is swatted.*



Evaluating Our Political Concerns

Marvin Kauffman, Weldon, IA

When we tag political systems as evil, focus on and fear the evil in those systems, and do everything in our power to push back on those systems (even voting against them), it is easy to see all the evil as “out there.” Do we perhaps overlook the potential evil within our own hearts?

As we think about political systems and elections, let’s be willing to consider some of the evils that may be lurking in our own Conservative Anabaptist hearts. One of those could be lack of trust. We like to think we have an unwavering trust in God, yet we fear the possible consequences when an apparently evil system is in power. We fear the loss of our religious freedoms and the possibility of persecution. We fear the loss of our traditional comforts, our economic freedom, and prosperity. Where is our trust? In whom do we trust?

There may also be the evil of pure selfishness—it’s all about me. One of the candidates has been labelled as “the epitome of narcissism.” Narcissism is a psychological label describing one who is extremely and hopelessly self-centered. Hopefully, none of us are narcissists, but do our

political concerns reveal narcissistic traits lurking in our own hearts? Throughout history and in the present, Christians have suffered much more persecution than freedom. In fact, the kind of freedom that Christians in this country have enjoyed for centuries has been almost unheard of throughout church history. Who are we that we should be exempt from loss of freedom? Christians who have enjoyed material prosperity have always been a minority. Many have suffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods (Hebrews.10:34). Why do we insist on being the exception? Is it all about me? Sadly, the push for plain people to vote in the last election likely had little to do with moral issues like abortion and much more to do with religious freedom and economic prosperity, especially the latter. Anti-abortion rhetoric may simply have served as an effective “carrot” to move vulnerable people in a desired direction.

Another lurking evil may be an ingrained disrespect for the “*powers that be.*” How well are we doing with the mandate to “*honor the king,*” who at the time it was written was likely Nero. He persecuted Christians

relentlessly and was considered to be the most evil of all the Roman emperors. If God was calling on those early believers to honor, because of his position of authority, a decadent character like Nero, would He ask any less of us? While we have certainly observed some deplorable political and moral shenanigans and questionable character in our time, we would likely all agree that we

haven't had any Neros!

Though we certainly do have legitimate reason to be concerned about the political and moral climate of this country, are we willing to trust God regarding which party is at the helm? And are we willing to be honest and repentant about potential evil lurking in our own hearts, which could actually be the real reason behind some of those concerns?



Abba, Father

Denver Yoder, Somerset, OH

“**W**hereby we cry *Abba, Father*” (Romans 8:15). Abba is the Aramaic word for Father used by Jesus describing His own intimate relationship with God.

God's intimate relationship with humanity is a distinct feature of Jesus' teaching by word and example.

God also intends earthly fathers to establish and maintain a loving relationship with their own children. Psalm 103:13 clearly depicts the heart of a godly earthly father and our Heavenly Father.

As Christ was in subjection to His Heavenly Father, so our sons and daughters are called to submit themselves to their earthly fathers. As

we fathers fully submit ourselves to our Heavenly Father, we can remove many of the rocks in the pathway that our children must travel.

Fathers are called to feed their own souls daily with the Word of God. As spiritual leaders, we are also responsible to feed our families with daily portions of heavenly manna suitable for the child's needs.

As a small child, Bible stories may suffice. Later in adolescence and beyond, children need and welcome strong spiritual guidance provided by a father whose heart is set on serving God and who has a burning vision for eternity.

Out of the darkness and mist comes the faint and heart-rending

cry from the broken child, “Abba, Father,” only to be answered by his own echo. Where are the dads who will rend their hearts, who will fast and pray, and will not rest till their flock is properly provided for spiritually?

Fathers are vested with a high calling to lead and develop the hearts of their children in Christ’s image. It is sad to see so many hearts of children being turned to anger towards their fathers.

The failure of uncommitted fathers often has long-lasting and far-reaching consequences on the minds and development of innocent children.

According to Ephesians 6 and related Scriptures, children are called to obey parents. When parents are in a proper relationship with God, it becomes easier for children to obey. As children grow into the teen years and beyond, the calling shifts from obedience to honor. Honor must be earned through a proper relationship between father and child. Honor will not be acquired by demand or slothfulness.


The father is the parent responsible in setting the pattern for the child’s obedience in the family home. Fathers are called to take leadership in the structure, character building, and development of the child.

Fathers are called to “not provoke”

their children. A home without spiritual guidance and proper structure will provoke a child to anger.

The father is God’s constituted authority who must oversee discipline in the home when the child does not obey as God intended. The father who does not discipline his child is undisciplined himself and disobedient to God’s will. Failure to discipline for disobedience in tender years is a predetermined recipe for heartaches for both parents and child in later years.

Undisciplined parents can cause almost irreparable emotional and spiritual damage to the child’s heart. Children are not given to us as an outlet for our anger or frustrations but rather as gifts from God. Parents are given the stewardship in providing a safe haven for their total development in the home setting. Training children is not an overnight occurrence. It takes careful forethought and conscience obedience to God on the part of both parents.

It is very important for fathers to listen to the hearts of their children. If we only listen to the mouth, we bypass real heart and soul issues. May God grant faithful fathers grace to rise to the challenge and fulfill their Biblical calling with diligence and a long-range vision for future generations and for eternity. 

The Transfiguration: Peter's Perspective

Hannah Troyer, Millersburg, OH

Sometimes in life we come across people who change us the way a church steeple changes the sky. They stand out on life's ground and we can point from miles around and say "See that? He is why I became who I am today."

For me, that man was Jesus. I don't have the time to go back and describe the way He changed my life. But let me give one example I believe will give ample proof that He was divine.

To me, Jesus was human. I knew He was deity, but somehow the reality of His immortality felt fuzzy and gray; after all, I did life with this Man every day. So one day we're talking, and Jesus decides that some walking would be good for us all. He took us to a mountain and like most times a fountain of wisdom flowed out of His mouth. As we reached the top, I sensed this was not any ordinary day. But I didn't think much of it; after all, life with Jesus wasn't drab in any way.

Suddenly, the space we were in was no longer the place it had been. There was light everywhere filling

the air and no darkness at all could get in. I looked at Jesus, and looked away because He was the source of this splendor. Then what did I see? Moses? Elijah? When did they enter? My heart skipped a beat. This was great! This was awesome! I could think of nothing more wholesome than staying up here and gaining all wisdom. In fact, what would be better than building a temple for each of these prophets and staying forever?

Before all the words to what I was feeling got out of my mouth, what seemed like a ceiling of clouds came down and covered the three. But these were no rainclouds; no, these were light clouds full of radiancy. A Voice thundered from heaven, "This is my Son with whom I am smitten; please listen to Him." The sound of the Voice gave me no choice but to fall on my knees in fright. By the thuds on the ground, the others had found the event as startling as I.

Then I felt Jesus' touch and His voice in my ear, "Get up, there's no

need to fear!” I opened my eyes and started to rise with awe in my mind. The light was now gone and we were alone with Jesus, Whose smile was divine. I vowed in my head to never

forget this moment we’d shared with our Lord. The fact He was Christ was solidified in my heart forevermore.

*[Written at Calvary Bible School, 2024.
Submitted by Galen Stutzman.]* 

Giving up the Sword and the Bow

Phil Beachy, Millersburg, OH

The story of Jonathan and David is well-known but take note of this unique aspect. It is one not often detected. Verse one of I Samuel 18 says, “the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David.” Then in verse four, Jonathan stripped himself of and gave to David, along with other things, his sword and his bow.

Just before the sacrifice of these weapons, David had the marvelous victory over Goliath because of his trust in God. Jonathan was much older than David. He was also the one next in line to the throne. But in chapter 18, we are told that Jonathan loved David, so he relinquished those rights to David. In this remarkable gesture of giving up his sword and bow, he gave up his protection as well.

The sword and bow, mighty weapons, kill and maim, and most

importantly, protect. The sword and bow are personal, made to fit the owner. By Jonathan giving up his sword and bow, he signified great surrender and great love.

In this story, what Jonathan did was significant. He became vulnerable to enemies, for now he was open to attack. He gave up his protection from danger of wild animals and opposing armies.

He preferred David over himself in the kingdom. In this move, Jonathan bowed to God’s decision in the judgment of his father.

He didn’t wait for David to instigate action but instead took the first step. He regarded David’s welfare; seeking another over himself. David did not ask for this expression of love and submission, but Jonathan gave it voluntarily.

The very heart of the Gospel is lived out in Jonathan’s example.

Jesus Christ is our perfect model. Isaiah 53 records Him enduring and sacrificing everything. Jesus gave up His will to the Father at Calvary. He became as a lamb, defenseless and unwilling to fight. When criticized or condemned, Jesus did not defend Himself. I Peter 2:21-23 tells us that we are called to follow in Jesus' steps, to "*revile not again.*" He totally gave up His rights. He is pleading for us to also give up our sword and bow.

Giving up our sword and bow today is giving up our rights, especially in self-defense. We have been taught well the aspect of non-resistance in our actions—we wouldn't be tempted to wield that physical sword—but sometimes our tongues fight. Words hold much power.

The ability to hold the tongue is a mark of maturity. In times of stress and censure, ugliness often releases verbal arrows. When we shoot criticism, gossip, and defensiveness, relationships deteriorate. Defending ourselves comes as a first response. It takes self-control and Spirit-control to be silent when confronted. We don't relish giving up our rights.

Instead of self-defense, let us be slow to speak. Conflicts can resolve when we surrender our right to

protect ourselves. If our words are gentle when we speak, it enhances our relationships. Truly soft words turn away anger and muffle the blows of our attackers.

When we rest in God's sovereignty, He will protect. Many times He keeps our physical lives safe, but even if we die as Jonathan did, our spirits are in God's hands.

Voluntarily giving up our personal opinions is giving up our sword and bow. It is being honest about how we think, but then being willing to lay down our ideas. It is becoming vulnerable to attacks. It is giving up our protection; our self-defense against hurt.

Giving up our sword and bow is preferring others, trying to understand their ideas and thoughts and accepting them as better than ours. It is taking the first step to reconciliation. It is going all the distance instead of waiting and hoping to meet halfway. It is looking out for the best of the other person. It is Jesus' way.

Isn't it time we act as Jonthan and take the knives out of our words? Can we give up our sword and bow?

[This was condensed from a message given at Bastrop, TX, in 2022.]



Light has more space to enter a *heart* if it is broken.

I Saw a Beautiful Thing

Old Love

Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS



It was in my Bible. Finished with my devotional reading, my eyes dropped to the raggedy edges of notebook paper protruding from the back of my Bible. Idly turning to straighten the pages, I paused to leaf through the growing collection of oddments. An outdated family photo. The memorial card for a beloved father. The list of Wednesday evening prayer groups. Nestled among these bits, two older pieces caught my attention: our wedding photo and invitation, circa 1996.

The couple in the picture glows, their enthusiasm untarnished by the work of living in peace as becomes the faithful. The scalloped edges of the invitation are intact but the paper is now creased and dotted with age spots. I start in small surprise: my heart with its own age spots stirs

as I remember—today is our 27th anniversary! I reread the lines chosen for the front of our invitation in those electric days of dreaming and waiting:

To love...

with tenderness and devotion

To honor...

with understanding and respect

To cherish...

with wonder and thankfulness

This was how we had set out to live out our vows before God and to each other. Up-to-date photos verify gains and losses (think pounds and hair), and where is the glow? As brass is to gold—the glow of then to now. Old love, well-worn and faithful...

*this is a thing
of wondrous beauty.*



marriage

May the home established by this marriage be a little substation of heaven, where God reigns and His blessings flow.

Byers-Beachy

Bro. Marlin, son of Myron and Sara Mae Byers, Goodsprings, TN, and Sis. Elaine, daughter of Clara and the late Henry Beachy, Belvidere, TN, on January 20, 2024, at First United Methodist Church for Belvidere Mennonite Church by Perry Miller.



cradle roll

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

Albrecht, Leslie and Judith (Byler), Brunner, ON, third child, second daughter, Kailey Grace, March 29, 2024.

Byler, Reuben and Dora (Hostetler), Carlton, PA, third child and son, Jacoby Vaughn, March 31, 2024.

Eicher, Henry and Verena (Swartzentruber), Keystone, IN, fifth child and son, Zechariah Timothy, March 28, 2024.

Gerber, Michael and Charlotte (Schmidt), Gadshill, ON, third child, second daughter, Jasmyne Skye, April 10, 2024.

Gibson, Nick and Tiffany (Huntington), Custar, OH, sixth child, fourth son, Hayes Jadon, April 1, 2024.

Graber, Philip and Janet (Brubaker), Torrington, WY, third child, third son, Jethro David, March 29, 2024.

Hostetler, Mike and Melody (Yoder), Kenya, Africa, fifth child and daughter, Kyra Avonlea, April 24, 2024.

Kauffman, Matthias and Vienna (Schmucker), Belleville, PA, first child and daughter, Valerie Jean, February 14, 2024.

Kline, Bryson and Annie (Miller), Zanesville, OH, second child and daughter, Lottie Grace, March 27, 2024.

Miller, Clayton and Angie (Helmuth), Plain City, OH, third child, first daughter, Kylie Ann, April 9, 2024.

Miller, James and Robin (Mast), Pulaski, TN, seventh child, fourth daughter, Desi Belle, April 9, 2024.

Miller, Matthew and Gina (Troyer), Meadville, PA, fourth child, third daughter, Callie Hope, April 14, 2024.

Miller, Randy and Sharon (Zook), Lyndhurst, VA, fourth child, third son, Jackson Lee, April 6, 2024.



Miller, Seth and Beth (Keim), Milan, IN, first child and daughter, Concetta Shiante, January 28, 2024.

Snyder, Dustin and Abigail (Stoltzfus), North Lewisburg, OH, second child and daughter, Addilyn Kay, April 11, 2024.


Sommers, Tim and Phyllis (Quackenboos), Chesapeake, VA, seventh child (one deceased), Kitri Hope, March 14, 2024.

Stoltzfus, John Ervin and Emma (Smucker), New Holland, PA, seventh child, sixth daughter, Joanna Grace, April 13, 2024.

Weaver, Jonas and Bernice (Yoder), Oskaloosa, KS, fifth child, second son, Adrian Bryce, March 16, 2024.

Yoder, Samuel and Jessica (Steiner), Free Union, VA, first child and son, Karson Lee, April 6, 2024.

Yoder, Tristan and Lois (Hershberger), Ozawkie, KS, fourth child, second daughter, Merideth Ann, March 17, 2024.

Zook, Jesse and Marilyn (Peachey), Belleville, PA, third child and son, Patrick Ray, March 7, 2024. 

o b i t u a r i e s

Hostetler, Derek B., 17, McVeytown, PA, passed away on April 4, 2024, at Lancaster General Hospital. He was born on June 15, 2006, to Marvin B. and Karen S. (Miller) Hostetler.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by his brothers, Carson and Austin, at home; paternal grandparents, Norman and Anna Mary Hostetler, Belleville; maternal grandparents, Raymond and Ada Miller, Uniontown, OH; and many special aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Derek was a special needs child. He enjoyed traveling with his family and attending Valley View Amish Mennonite Church. He will be greatly missed by his friends and family, who are rejoicing that he is with Jesus.

The funeral was held April 7, 2024, at Valley View Amish Mennonite Church, with Matt Peachey and Jalon Zook serving. The burial was at the Locust Grove Cemetery.

Kanagy, Joshua Layne, 13, of Wytheville, VA, passed away on March 20, 2024, as a result of a UTV accident. Born on March 21, 2010, in Wythe County, VA, he was the son of Titus and Beulah (Peachey) Kanagy.

He was loved by his parents and siblings: Christopher, Deidrich, Abigail, and Elizabeth. Also surviving are his maternal grandmother, Mary Peachey, Mifflin, PA; paternal grandmother, Ann Kanagy, McVeytown, PA; and numerous

aunts, uncles, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by grandfathers, Henry Peachey and Aquilla Kanagy.

Joshua had a bright and cheerful outlook and was a friend to many, especially his classmates of the Light of Hope Christian School where he attended for all eight years of his school life. He loved the outdoors, hunting, fishing, and hiking. He was industrious and was always ready to put his heart into the task at hand. His presence will be sorely missed in the home, church, school, and community.

The funeral service was held at Light of Hope Christian Fellowship on March 24, 2024, with Wayne Yoder, Jesse Zook, Urie Kanagy, and Millard Yoder officiating. Interment followed at Light of Hope Cemetery with John Beiler officiating.

Schmidt, David Lorne, 63, of Hamburg, ON, died peacefully at his home on March 28, 2024. He was born in Stratford, ON, on February 8, 1961, to the late Lorne and Mary (Spenler) Schmidt.

He was baptized upon the confession of his faith in Jesus Christ as a youth and was a member of the Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite Church.

On July 10, 1982, he was united in the holy bonds of matrimony to Norma Jantzi. They shared the joys and sorrows of married life for over 41 years.

He leaves to mourn his departure four sons: Walter (Miriam), Wilfred (Dorcas), Roger, Richard; five daughters: Delores

(Nathan) Graybill, Dorothy Schmidt, Verna Schmidt, Kathryn (Trevor) Gerber, and Charlotte (Michael) Gerber. Also surviving are five grandsons and eight granddaughters. He will be sadly missed by his father-in-law, Ohmer Jantzi, and brothers: Ronald (Elizabeth), Lloyd (Sharon); and sisters: Anna Mae (Ivan) Kuepfer, and Sharon (Joe) Gerber. Also sisters-in-law: Kathryn Schmidt, Barbara (Elam) Martin, and Rosanna Jantzi; and brothers-in-law: Merlin (Darlene) Jantzi, Earl (Darcee) Jantzi, Harold (Michelle) Jantzi, Ronald Jantzi, David (Josie) Jantzi, and Edgar (Gigi) Jantzi.

He was predeceased by his brother, Ralph, and sister, Reta (Kenneth) Steckly. David was also predeceased by his mother-in-law, Esther Jantzi, and sister-in-law, Marlene Jantzi.

The funeral was held at Cedar Grove Amish Mennonite Church on April 2, 2024, with John Gerber and Larry Ropp serving. Interment was at the Cedar Grove Cemetery.


Troyer, Fanny Mae, 94, of Plain City, OH, passed away peacefully on March 4, 2024, at her home. She was born December 30, 1929, in Plain City and was married to Abe Troyer for 68 years.

She was a faithful member of the Canaan Fellowship Church. She was a loving mother and appreciated her family very much. She enjoyed sewing and pieced quilts for her children and quilt tops for her grandchildren. In her later years, she provided many quilt tops for the sewing circle.

She is survived by children: Erma (Ron) Hoover, Ray, Steve, Carol (Rick) Yutzy, Linda (Dale) Beachy, daughter-in-law, Linda Troyer; 13 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren; three sisters and brothers-in-law: Mary Gingerich, Arie (Daniel) Hochstetler, Katie (Alvin) Yoder; one brother and sister-in-law, John (Mary Ellen) Miller and Cathy Miller, and 51 nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents: Lee Roy and Elizabeth (Troyer) Miller; husband, Abe, in 2020; two sons,

Nelson and John; sisters and brother-in-law: Emma and Raymond Kauffman, Susie Miller, brothers and sisters-in-law, Clarence and Anna Miller, Eli and Wilma Miller, Wyman Miller, Ralph Miller, Alvin and Fannie Miller, brother-in-law, Joe Gingerich, and five nieces and nephews.

The funeral was held March 7, 2024, at Haven Fellowship Church with Robert Beachy officiating. Burial followed in the Canaan Fellowship Cemetery. 

observations

The book of Judges records the account of the defeated Canaanite captain, Sisera, who took refuge in Jael's tent. He was exhausted and implored that she not disclose his presence in case anybody came looking for him. He also asked for a drink of water. But she gave him milk to drink instead of water after which he went to sleep. When he was fast asleep, she drove a nail through his temples, killing him.

Babies often drink milk just before bedtime. As children grow older, milk continues to be a bedtime ritual for many children. Many adults also feel that a bedtime drink of milk contributes to a good night of sleep.

The research that I saw was not conclusive one way or another.

But since this account in Scripture specifically mentions milk, I tend to lean toward the idea that the drink of milk contributed in some way to his deep sleep. It also seems as if Jael might have been just a bit crafty in offering him milk instead of water since she took advantage of his sleep to kill him.

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Mark DeJoy reports in a piece he wrote about the prices of various goods and services that were common during the decade of the 60s. Among them was the report that a three-minute long-distance

domestic phone call cost about \$2.00 back in the 60s. Differing rates applied to different regions, but this was reported as an average. When inflation since then is applied to this figure, we would be spending close to \$20 today for the same three-minute conversation! While it seems as if most things have become much more expensive in our memories, phone conversations per minute isn't one of those things.

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My wife, Brenda, lived in Ohio, and I, in Kansas, before we got married. We didn't see each other very often between the time we were engaged and when we married in 1990. Back then we still paid for phone calls by the minute. I don't remember what the phone rates were, but it was much less than users paid in 1960. As newlyweds, we weren't sure how to accurately anticipate the costs we would have as we started up our own home. But one pleasant surprise was that our monthly rent, when we were first married, ended up costing less than our monthly phone bills during our engagement. This is both a reflection of the fact that we were planning a wedding and courting via phone calls as well as the fact that we rented a house from a benevolent brother in the church who probably didn't charge us enough for rent.

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It does seem that rent and phone costs have gone two completely different directions the last 20 years or so. I comment without knowing how rent compares to the general inflation index.

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Another notable difference from the decade of the 60s is that as of October 2022, the percentage of US adults who were married stood at 45%. This figure is reported by Deseret News, a publishing company associated with Brigham Young University in their annual American Family Survey. In 1960, 72% of US adults were married. But societal changes, related to how people viewed divorce, promiscuity, parenthood, etc., took hold during the decade of the 1960s. The ideas that took root during that time have grown and borne fruit in a variety of ways that contribute to the decline of Christian ideals of marital fidelity and orderly family structure.

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Among the ideas that seem to descend from the rejection of godly restraint in these areas are more contemporary ideas that leave the idea of marriage as something we can put on and put off according to our general disposition. Now some people even advocate that marriage

can be comprised of any two, three, or more individuals who decide they would like to get married, regardless of the gender of the participants. After all, there are folks who feel that gender is something that the person is free to determine according to his or her preference without regard for biological realities. To be sure, there are other things that could be mentioned, but it seems as if this society has moved a long way from saying that sin doesn't matter to saying that sin is good and normal and right.

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I'm guessing that most of the *Calvary Messenger* readership will agree with what I just wrote. However, there is a very vocal segment of the American social landscape that agrees too. But some of them go much further. Our allegiance to our holy God and the authority of Scripture will put us at odds with much of mainstream social thought today. However, that should never be mistaken as license to be rancorous and unkind toward those with whom we disagree. Allegiance to a loving God isn't played out in a militant attitude toward those who advocate for something else. God calls us to love all men, brothers and enemies.

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My wife and I recently listened to an audio book while traveling. The title was *Under the Overpass* by Mike Yankoski. This book chronicled the experiences of Mike and his friend, Sam, who spent five to six months living on the streets in the cities of Denver, Washington DC, Portland, San Francisco, Phoenix, and San Diego. They left with a sleeping bag, a change of clothes, and guitars that they played for donations. They lived without the resources that they left behind and traveled from place to place as they could with the money they were given on the streets. The goal was to see what two young Christian men with considerable privilege could learn about and from those who live on the streets.

The following comments are not a comprehensive book report. If they pique your interest, I suggest you might read the book for yourself. We found this book to be striking and convicting and inspiring by turns. Here are some of my impressions.

1. It is difficult to overestimate the fact that my upbringing is one of tremendous advantage. This is something that should be stewarded well.

2. Our teaching on diligence, the reward of hard work, and the blessings of faithfulness sometimes leaves little room in our minds for

the fact that not all who live on the streets are there because they prefer that more than living responsibly.

3. Too many times, I've chalked up the plight of the "down and outers" to a just and predictable result of bad choices, rather than be moved to compassion by the love of Christ.

4. I tend to think of charity in terms of efficiency and making sure that my benevolence isn't misappropriated. I'm reminded that God doesn't give energy and health only to those who choose to glorify Him with those good gifts. If God gives good things to people when He knows they will misuse it for wrong, it makes me wonder if maybe I have a few things to learn about my open or closed hand.

5. Our rural setting has insulated me from much of the homeless slice of the population.

6. The responses of churches and those who profess Christ to the "least of these" is sometimes very encouraging and sometimes profoundly disappointing.

These comments are in no way meant to be the final word on the complicated issue of homelessness. But it has prompted us to ask how

faithfulness, compassion, love, and Christianity should play out in our lives.

One idea that came out of some reading that my wife has done the last couple of months is this. We went shopping and put together little packages placed in gallon zip-locked bags, comprised of a bar of soap, a toothbrush, toothpaste, washcloth, a copy of the Scriptures, and a gift card for a restaurant that is situated close to an area where street people are often located. The first time we gave out one of these packets was to a gentleman in a wheelchair. His response was something like this, "May the Lord bring this blessing back to you just like a boomerang."

People who are generous with this world's goods toward disadvantaged people might be taken advantage of. But I've found some peace in understanding that since all I have is the Lord's anyhow, He is able to take better care of His things than I can. If I help someone who shouldn't be helped, the Lord is well able to glorify Himself through my sincere intentions, even if they are not well targeted.

-RJM 



Every FATHER should remember that
one day his SON will grow up to
FOLLOW his example and not his advice.

Anabaptist Vision for Today

Val Yoder, Bemidji, MN

Historically, Anabaptists have been given two labels. During the Reformation our spiritual ancestors were called “the radicals.” They were a pro-active group on the cutting edge of a determined effort to bring the church back to her biblical foundation in Acts. They initiated discussion, evangelism, and took Christ’s command to “*go therefore and teach all nations*” literally. The ambition and intensity of this time not only earned them the title “radical,” but also ignited the fires of persecution and wrathful animosity against their simple faith.

Years later, some of the heat of religious hatred toward them dissipated. As the next generation reflected on the cruelty and brutality upon their forefathers and found places of political refuge, they developed a maintenance mode of church life. There was a concerted effort to preserve that which forefathers had died for. “Hold fast to the faith” became the theme. In their places of refuge from the intolerant magistrates of Europe they became known as the “quiet in the land.”

The “radicals” and the “quiet in the land” are both essential titles and represent two callings of church life. The church is called to be pro-active while maintaining the faith. We are to go teach all nations while holding fast to the faith. As a contemporary Anabaptist, I am grateful for a heritage that has done well in maintaining biblical application while most other denominations have compromised to the point of invisibility. I recall going to Sunday School as a child in a mission church where Lutheran ladies would not come to church unless they were veiled, usually with a stylish hat. Walter Beachy reports that in his grandmother’s day the Amish and Methodist ladies looked nearly the same from across the street. It was only with a closer look that you would see the frills and extra lace not worn by the Amish. “Holding fast” in our churches has visibly preserved a biblical obedience that has been lost in most other denominations.

As important as maintenance is, it must actively cooperate with passionate action. If our “holding fast” is not coupled with “go ye

therefore,” Anabaptism will become extinct except as a spectacle for tourism. We will be little more than a quaint reminder of western culture’s past.

Honest questioning forces us to ask, “Where are we in these “holding” and “going” endeavors? Several years ago, a teacher at Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute (SMBI) Minister’s Week asked a group of 40 to 50 pastors, “How many of your churches have five or more members from non-Mennonite backgrounds?” Only one pastor raised his hand. Would this indicate which side of the continuum we are on? When churches grow only due to church hopping and childbirth, we are in a maintenance mode. When churches divide due to dissension instead of evangelism, we are in a maintenance mode. If marriage and material things primarily characterize the future vision of our people, we are in a maintenance mode.

These factors do not suggest pro-activity! Marriage and material things are tools to something far bigger! We are in warfare. No truce has been called between the kingdoms of man and the Kingdom of God. Some question, “Is it safe to send young people to Iraq?” No, it may not be safe! But we are not here to be safe. We are here to be

dangerous! Even the gates of hell are not able to withstand us! If we are concerned primarily about safety, we are stuck in maintenance mode. Was it safe for Felix Mantz to face the city council? Is it safe for the underground Chinese church to take the gospel back to Jerusalem? Was it safe for the ten Booms to hide Jews? Was it safe for Stephen to preach to the high priest? Was it safe to visit the orphanage in Haiti?

As important as the maintenance mode is, it will never be compelling by itself! Where there is no “go ye therefore,” there will be no significant or biblical “holding fast.” Oh, that we would once again be worthy of the title “radical!” God calls us to maintenance, but He also calls us to trailblazing, to adventure, to battle, to escapades, to risk for the sake of building the Kingdom of God! The greatest challenge facing the contemporary conservative Anabaptist church is providing the “go ye therefore” examples for young Anabaptists today to model their lives after and to guide them in the conquests of the Kingdom.

The conservative Anabaptist church must continue to raise up men and women like Irwin and Susan Schantz who left home and family to travel to the frigid northern regions to plant churches where no Anabaptist

had ever traveled. Their bread was spread with lard in their primitive home while they labored to plant churches in northern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario.

We need homes like that of Count Zinzendorf whose house became a training facility for missionaries. The prayer closet of their home was filled 24 hours a day with prayer warriors for 200 years! That community of people sent out more missionaries in 20 years than all the rest of European Christianity did in 200 years.

The conservative Anabaptist church has the resources and willingness in its young people. In the early 80s, young people left SMBI on weekends and term breaks for the cellars of New York City to encourage and assist the church planters that labored there. They slept on tables and the floor while rats walked on the pipes above them. Today young men are cautiously taking food and clothing through jungles in Myanmar to people marked for genocide by the government. Others are demining areas land mined during wars. Still others are utilizing micro-financing programs to minister to the impoverished. There is a whole army of Kingdom soldiers in our churches which is willing to go into battle with weapons not made with hands. They need to be called forth by the church

and sent into action.

What is the challenge facing Anabaptism in 2024?

1. We must get our eyesight off retirement! If middle-aged Anabaptists primarily dream of retiring in some vacationland city of the south, they will live out a lifestyle that will not reflect a compelling vision to the next generation! We will lose that generation to the worldly value system that has already captured us.

2. We must embrace the commitment of the persecuted church. *Martyrs Mirror* should be a regular part of our educational history requirements. The underground church in China should become our mentor. Our love for Jesus must mean that what we live for is also worth dying for. The Chinese church is committed to sending their best workers, the most experienced, and the best equipped. A pastor is hardly deemed worthy in some Chinese circles if he has not spent time in prison. While we question if it is safe to go into closed-access countries, they expect persecution. Of the first 39 missionaries sent out in the “Back to Jerusalem” mission effort, 36 were arrested and sent back home. The Chinese church rejoiced that three made it through, the others tried again as soon as they were released

from jail. They train their workers to cross cultural barriers, to target specific groups, and to witness in all situations (trains, buses, police cars—even on their way to execution). These workers are spiritual suicide bombers. They know they need to go, but they don't know if they will come back. They are trained how to get out of their handcuffs in 30 seconds and how to jump from second-floor windows without getting hurt.

3. We must rekindle the fire of conquest in young men. The God-given drive for conquest in young men has been sedated by sports endeavors, shooting the biggest buck, or hitting the most home runs. When our teaching of non-resistance is not coupled with conquest for the

Kingdom, we will raise a generation of wimps—yellow soldiers who prefer coffee time to war time. Assuredly, our weapons are not carnal, but neither are they non-existent. They are MIGHTY, to the pulling down of strong holds!

Middle-aged American Anabaptists must capture a vision of Kingdom building that calls forth the wisdom of the aged and the daring of the young. This vision must include both the maintenance of faith and the pro-active aggression of works. Our challenge involves “holding fast” while we “go therefore.”

[Reprinted with permission from I Witness News, Spring, 2024. Submitted by Chester Weaver.]



Stupid Questions?

Wendall Danner, Owenton, KY

“**W**hy did you break that pipe?” my son blurted out as he peered into the hole I had dug. The drain pipe that I had caught while digging for the water line lay splintered at the side of the hole. Feeling rather disgusted at myself for not being more careful, and a bit irritated at his question, I responded,

“Don't ask stupid questions” and went on digging.

But as I dug, I thought about my response. I remembered the words of my mechanic years ago: “There are no stupid questions. If it's a question in your mind, ask it.” I thought about another quote from a story: “A person that *don't* ask stays dumb,” and I began to feel ashamed of my

response. Was it a stupid question? True, it may have been rather blunt. Its timing, no doubt, could have been a bit more tactful. But was it stupid? In my heart I knew the answer, and I realized I had an apology to make. Of course, it didn't make any sense why I would tear apart a perfectly good pipe, and I would have had questions myself.

This incident made me do some thinking, and I had to ask myself some questions. What kind of attitude do I display toward my children's honest questions? Do I invite them to ask what's on their mind, or do I stifle their questions? Do I belittle them because I think they should know the answer themselves, or shrug off their questions because I am too busy with more important things? If I do not take time to answer their less important questions now, will they voice their questions about the more important things of life?

These are questions that we fathers need to honestly consider. What did God tell His people in Old Testament times? *"And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up"* (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). *"Ask thy father and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee"* (Deuteronomy 32:7).

While a child's endless questions may at times become wearisome, and sometimes our children may need some direction as to what questions are appropriate, we need to be careful lest we discourage them in their quest for answers to the questions of life.

[From the March 2023 issue of The Connector. Used with permission. Submitted by Paul L. Miller, Partridge, KS]



A HOME BLUEPRINT

Home—a world of strife shut out, a world of love shut in.

Home—a place where the small are great and the great are small.

Home—the father's kingdom, the mother's world, and the child's paradise.

Home—the place where we grumble the most and are treated the best.

Home—the center of our affection, around which our heart's best wishes twine.

Home—the place where our stomachs get three square meals a day and our hearts a thousand.

-CHARLES M. CROW



Sunday School and Summer Bible School Teaching

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

On Sunday mornings I love to watch the children march to the front part of the church into their Sunday school classes. There is an air of expectation! To observe the dismissal from classes and see these excited children returning and often holding papers up high in their hands to show their parents brings joy to attendees. Someone was teaching and igniting fire and enthusiasm in the hearts of these little ones with eternal Bible stories and truth.

Summer (or winter) Bible school is also a mission arm of the church for teachers to sow the seed of God's Word and implant truth that has everlasting value in the hearts and lives of eternal souls.

A Sunday school pupil may be a "seven-day-a-week" teacher, because a teacher is one who helps someone else to learn. Even a child may teach a parent an impressionable lesson of simple prayer. You are either

constantly influencing somebody or being influenced by some person or both.

There is no teaching unless there is learning. Clarence Benson says, "The object of our teaching is to make something happen in the life of our pupil." The task of our teaching is to assist our students in making godly decisions and choices for Jesus Christ and the church. The task of Sunday School teaching (or Summer Bible School) is often taken too lightly. We must develop and ask our Heavenly Father for a pleasant personality, to make thorough preparation on our knees in the school of prayer, and be filled with the Holy Spirit to effectively reach our pupils. We cannot expect the Holy Spirit to bring things to our remembrance if Bible knowledge has not been assimilated in our minds. The disciples did not ask, "Lord, teach us how to teach, or teach us how to preach, but 'teach us to pray'" (Luke 11:1). Here the King

James emphasis is not “how to pray,” but “to pray.” Jesus teaches us how to pray in other passages. We learn to pray by praying. Yes, amen!

Someone has said, “A teacher will teach a little by what he says, more by what he does, but mostly by who he is.” And again, “What you are speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say.” How can we get our point across to others if we don’t believe and live what we say? Don’t be discouraged if your lesson seems dull and uninteresting. Keep teaching with enthusiasm and relying totally on the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ, to impart truth into the hearts of the students. Paul admonishes, “*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*” (Romans 12:3). God can best work through the teacher who is empty of himself and rests totally on the Lord.

If a person works hard all week and stays up late Saturday night, then attempts a “quick” study on Sunday morning, this teacher misses out so much on what God wants to teach him. Meditation all week long has promises of blessings and good success. “*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth:*


but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8). If you are teaching a section of Scripture, dig deep for gold. Who is the writer addressing? What were the conditions of the people? In Judges 20:16, we read about the seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed: “*...everyone could sling stones at a hair breadth, and not miss.*” The marvel of their skill was not so much the masterly throw as their perfect aim. A teacher without an aim is like a ship floundering in the ocean without a compass or direction. Aimlessness in teaching produces restlessness in pupils. Make thorough preparation by determining upon a starting point, outlining the successive steps along the way, deciding on the goal, and aiming for an easy landing.

In Nehemiah 8:8 the triad of the teaching program is illustrated: “*So they [the teachers] read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense [taught with clarity] and caused them [the students] to understand the reading [they learned].*” News reporters follow a “golden text” in writing the news and stories in their daily newspapers. They are Rudyard

Kipling's "Just So Stories." It runs like this: What? Where? and When? How? Why? and Who?

Speak clearly. Use eye contact with your students. Avoid using the word, "ah." Practical illustrations and class discussions are like windows in a building. They allow light to penetrate. Too many illustrations and discussions are not necessary. They weaken the structure. They can lead to getting sidetracked from the "lesson aim" and cause unnecessary bunny trails. Awaken curiosity by varying the approach. Do not talk with the same dry tone of voice. Learn from our Master Teacher, Jesus Christ, who taught with questions. Discuss the pupils' questions rather than following your own outline to sustain attention. Allow or assign students to prepare for a short speech in class that amplifies the lesson.

If available, using a chalkboard to sketch your outline and writing out a few details can enhance your teaching. Bible maps may also be helpful.

Here are a few quotes from the book, *The Sunday School in Action* by Clarence Benson (1932): "The most prolific cause of failure among teachers, next to the inability to discipline, is the lack of thorough knowledge of the subject taught. When Jesus taught, the needs of the pupils were put above the demands of the subject matter, and He adapted His teaching of the truth to the questions of the moment." However, Jesus also taught the multitudes by lecturing with lengthy oration and eloquent rhetoric. Both teaching and preaching hold a proper balance in assimilating eternal truth in the Church of Jesus Christ. 

A Woman After God's Heart

Why Did God Make You?

Susan Raber, New Concord, OH



Why did God make people anyhow? Unfortunately, there is no specific Bible verse that says, "And God created

people for this reason..." However, we do have verses that imply why we were created.

Isaiah 43:21, "Thus saith the

LORD...*This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.*"

I Peter 2:9, "*But ye are a chosen generation, ...that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*" (This is an action-packed verse!)

I Corinthians 6:20, "*For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*"

I Corinthians 10:31, "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*"

Obviously, we were created to glorify God.

In fact, the first question addressed in the Westminster Catechism (1648) is, "*What is the chief end of man?*" The answer is stated as, "*Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.*" Many of us have known this principle of glorifying God since we were young children. I've heard prayers that include the phrase "Help us to glorify You in all that we say and do." How do we do that? Recently, I found a specific and practical answer to this question from author Ed Welch, *When People are Big and God is Small, Running Scared*, and others.

How do we glorify God? Let's explore three practical ways to glorify God.

Firstly, the most common way to glorify God is to praise Him in worship as in song. Other synonyms for praise are: bless, extol, thank, and magnify. Have you read Ann Voskamp's, *One Thousand Gifts*? This book's emphasis is on gratefulness. Every time we sincerely thank God, we are acknowledging His greatness and are praising Him.

Psalms 50:23a says, "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.*" We have been taught that when we do well, we are not to take the credit to ourselves, but God may take the credit (i.e. glory) because He created all things to begin with. He deserves *all* the credit! There is no one above Him whom God needs to give the credit to. He is above all.

A good test to see if you have developed a life of praise is to ask yourself how you react to bad news. Do you focus on the negative or does your mind automatically search for the positive in the situation? The Bible says, "*I will bless the LORD at all times*" and "*His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*"

How true is that for you personally? Are most of your private thoughts of praising God or of pitying yourself? Oswald Chambers says, "No sin is worse than the sin of self-pity, because it obliterates God and puts self-interest upon the throne." A

life of praise may need to begin with a renewing of the mind. A mind that focuses less on praying, “God, help me!” to a mind that focuses on “Thank You, God, that my situation isn’t worse and is under Your control!”

As we glorify God, our thankful list becomes limitless because His resources are limitless. As we praise God, we should focus on thanking God for Who He is and not just for what He does for us. This becomes easier as we grow in the knowledge of Who God is. To do that, we need to intentionally study God’s attributes.

How big is your God? How many resources does He have? How many resources does David ascribe to God? We know that David was a man after God’s own heart, but we aren’t told the specifics of how he gained that title. I like to think that David’s praise and passion for singing is what earned him that coveted title. Do you think we could earn this coveted title by doing the same—by praising God all day, every day? Especially, if that is why we were created in the first place.

Secondly, we can honor and glorify God by asking God for help. Asking someone to help us takes a measure of humility. When we ask for help, we are acknowledging that we need bigger and better resources than our own. When we don’t ask the great *I AM* for

help, choosing to live independently, we treat God as second-best, implying that we have more resources than He does. Do you know how it feels to have someone ask specific questions of you about something you are knowledgeable about? Don’t we feel validated? So, God the Father is honored when we depend on Him and ask Him for help because in so doing, we acknowledge His greatness and His limitless resources. Malachi 3:10 says, *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”* He has what we need, and He waits for us to ask.

Thirdly, let’s explore this idea from Ed Welch. “One of the best ways to glorify God is to mimic Him in love and justice.” The love part isn’t so hard for us since we’ve been taught about selfless love from childhood, but what about justice? What is justice and justification? I’ve heard “justification” simply explained as “just as if we had not sinned.” Do you agree that this is how God sees you? If you have repented of your sin, then God sees you as *perfect* and clean—just as if you had not sinned.

Is this how we view others? Even

the people we have trouble getting along with? When Jesus hung on the cross in agony, how could He forgive those men around the cross who were mocking and taunting Him? Was it not because He could see right into their hearts, and Jesus knew that they didn't understand Who He was or that He was the Messiah, the pure, innocent, powerful, God of angel armies and the Savior of their sins. Jesus' response was, "Father, forgive them...because they don't *get it*." Are you willing to mimic God in that way? The next time that you receive silence, or worse, criticism, will you be willing to say, "God, I'm not going to let this bother me because they simply don't *get it*, and I'm going to view this person as if they haven't just offended me, because that's what Jesus does for me?" To me, this sounds a lot more difficult than a simple command like, "Love your enemies." To mimic God in love and justice, we need a heart full of love and a memory free of accusations! Are you (am I?) willing to mimic God in justice? To see others, just as if they had not sinned against us? Are we willing to choose to not see any past mistakes and only see people as "*perfect in Christ Jesus*" (see Colossians 1:28)?

Praise, ask, and mimic God. Three profound yet simple actions that any

of us can do, and when we do them, we are glorifying our Creator as we were created to do.

"O praise the LORD...For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 117).

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).

"To declare, I say, at this time his [Jesus'] righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

It has been said that we were created for relationships. The Bible is full of examples of relationships and about how relational Jesus was while He was here. We were not created with a deficiency in this or any other area! When we only embrace the attitude that we are created for relationships, we tend to focus on ourselves rather than on our duty to glorify God.

When I put God in the picture, the scene changes for me. It becomes more about a great God to Whom we owe everything, rather than about myself with all my human faults and tendencies. We are created to praise God and reflect His image to others. As we mimic God in love and justice, we are reflecting His glory to others

and that goes so much deeper and is much more satisfying than trying to keep our relationships in order.

May I suggest that if we mimic Him in love and justice, we will have the

finest (though varied) relationships on earth. No matter who we are relating to, or how obstinate the other person is, glorifying God will be reflected in our relationships.



junior messages

The Mill That Would Not Burn, Part I

Hannah Eicher, McArthur, OH

It was in the wee hours of the morning of the Fourth of July. A little town lay sound asleep in the summer night. Stars twinkled overhead. All was well.

But all was not well at the sawmill. A pickup turned into the driveway and parked behind the stacks of lumber in front of the mill. The driver jumped out carrying a bucket of motor oil and a torch. He passed quickly into the mill that was housed under a roof with open sides.*

He made his way to the long electrical panel on a wall, took off its cover, and poured motor oil quickly over it in big black splashes. He did the same thing with a garbage can at the end of a conveyor belt.

All in all, he was there for 50 minutes, trying to get fires started. At last he succeeded at the electrical panel and a ball of flame rose into the

air, lighting up the surrounding area with an eerie glow. The man walked out of the mill, satisfied that the mill would go up in smoke. He got into his pickup and drove away.

Several hours later, the mill workers arrived. When they stepped out of their vehicles, an awful, acrid, electrical smell greeted them. The electricity was off. One of the workers made a quick call to the owner.

“I’ll be right over,” Ron promised. When he walked through the dark mill, it was obvious that something was up. Pulling out his cell phone, he called Nathan, the office manager. “I want you to come in.”

Nathan got there as quickly as he could and the two men examined the evidence of an attempt at arson. “I think I know who this was,” Ron said.

The man he was talking about, Mr. Frost, was a Vietnam veteran

who lived about an hour away. He owned forested land. A local man, Mr. Arthur, who sold logs to the mill, was logging there. As it happened, this man was “down on his luck” as the saying goes, and kindhearted Ron had allowed him to use his bulldozer for the job.

A series of events had followed, and the logger, Mr. Arthur, and the landowner, Mr. Frost, were at loggerheads (if you can stand the pun). There had been mistakes in paperwork, the mill had refused to buy some junk logs, and finally Mr. Arthur had simply abandoned the project. This had infuriated Mr. Frost who had allegedly said he wanted to “burn the mill down!” Now as they looked at an obvious arson attempt, Nathan and Ron were highly suspicious of Mr. Frost.

The police began an investigation. The security cameras were covered with years’ worth of dust, and the footage wasn’t clear. They could capture enough of the events of the night before the power went out to piece the story together.

The police said there was really no reason the mill didn’t burn down. The amazing thing was that it had burned enough to make the arsonist think he had done his job and leave. But once he left, the fire went out. Ron and Nathan believe it was the

hand of God.

That’s not the end of the story. The dozer was still sitting on Mr. Frost’s property. Mr. Arthur, Ron, and another man from the community, a loyal friend of Ron’s, went to his place to see if they could reclaim it. Mr. Frost promptly got out a shotgun and waved it around threateningly. “Let him wing one!” suggested the local man, knowing he could then legally fight back in “self-defense.”

“Are you kidding?” Ron was horrified. “I’ve got a wife and five children at home!” They were out of there as fast as they could go!

Mr. Frost’s next move was to plant a “No Trespassing” sign right in front of the dozer. The only way Ron could legally reclaim his own property was to get a court order. He didn’t want to do that. It was far more important to leave a clear testimony with Mr. Frost.

Mr. Frost demanded a high sum of money in exchange for the dozer’s return. He claimed there was damage done to his property, and he wanted it cleaned up in addition to the money.

Nathan and Ron decided to go talk to him. They were suspicious he had tried to burn the sawmill down, but he had a soul. They hoped they could come to an agreement.

That was a long and fearful evening for Nathan’s and Ron’s families.

Knowing the temperament and capabilities of Mr. Frost, the wives and children of the two men were very worried. Their concern heightened when neither man answered their phones.

Nathan's wife finally reached him, and the story was not as dramatic as they had feared. Mr. Frost had talked and was civil. He told them his problem was with the logger. He said he was sorry to put them in this situation. He made all kinds of strange statements. "I have a pure soul, all that I have, I came by through prayer," he informed them. He said he was a decorated Marine and knew a lot about the police and the legal system and on and on.

Nathan and Ron had brought a sum of money along in cash and were hoping to settle for less than what he demanded. But no, he still had to have his exact amount.

In the end, they paid him his

money. It stung, but it wouldn't be nonresistant to go to court. They hoped they could leave a clear testimony with Mr. Frost and appeal to his conscience.

A crew of men from their church cleaned up the land to finish the deal and the dozer rode home to the mill in triumph.

Was it Mr. Frost who tried to burn the mill down? It may always be a mystery. But our hope is that he saw Jesus in Nathan's and Ron's actions and will someday trust Him as his Savior.

Mr. Arthur has visited Nathan's and Ron's church several times. They don't know how serious his interest is, but this is one good thing that has resulted from the whole ordeal.

The adventures at the mill weren't over yet, though. Watch for Part II next month.

**A true story but names have been changed.*



youth messages

The Power of Forgiveness

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

As Christians, we don't need much time in a secular setting to know that people

are greedy, selfish, dishonest, and quick to betray a confidence, loyalty, or action if it suits their situation.

Lust of personal pride, lust for security, and desire for dominance can cause humans to hurt and offend others with our words or actions.

Unfortunately, what shouldn't be an issue in the church is sometimes worse than in the world. Some of us may have heard the statement, "... and they call themselves Christians!" I recently heard the term "Church Hurt." Church Hurt occurs when people are emotionally, mentally, spiritually, or even physically damaged by those whom they thought they could trust.¹ When Christians live by the lusts of the flesh, and lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, they live no differently than a nonbeliever.

As I pondered the reason for this Church Hurt, a few things stood out. Firstly, people are human. St. Augustine once said, "The Church is not a museum for saints, it is a hospital for sinners." As sinners, we make mistakes, intentionally or not, in the things we say and do, and those can hurt feelings and damage relationships. Recognizing who we are in the sight of God (imperfect and flawed creatures with a propensity to raise ourselves up by pushing others down) helps us to recognize our own shortcomings. It also makes us aware

1. <https://www.evantell.org/church-hurt/>

of others' shortcomings. Expecting perfection in human relationships is unrealistic.

Secondly, we allow ourselves to be more vulnerable in the church because we are a brotherhood. We should be able to trust the person in the pew next to us or the church leader behind the pulpit. All of us are at different spiritual maturity levels, have different experiences, and therefore have different ways of looking at things. We may be a brotherhood, but unfortunately, those differences sometimes clash.

Thirdly, it's easier to get hurt in the church because we put on the whole armor of God to protect us from the fiery darts of the devil in our daily lives, but we let our guard down and don't always set proper boundaries with fellow Christians. So, when a brother or sister makes a cutting remark, stinging barb, or betrays a trust we are surprised and caught off guard.

We have feelings and emotions, and we get hurt. Bitterness because of unresolved hurts and petty infighting has taken its toll on the church of Christ. It is discouraging to the younger generation when they see those "mature in the faith" acting like children. I've seen it with my own eyes. Our brothers and sisters will make mistakes, and it hurts. I make

mistakes. Leadership is not excluded from making mistakes either. The Apostle Paul rebuked Peter because he was out of line and offended Gentiles. Those in leadership who abuse the authority given to them or hurt those in their flock with their actions bear a greater accountability for those actions.

Even speaking the truth in love can bring offense. Jesus was perfect and people took offense at Him. No one enjoys being rebuked or spoken to about a shortcoming. Don't be one of those people who is easily offended. Take the time to examine if the concern has merit and be glad someone cared enough about you to come talk to you. Colossians 3:13 says, *"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*

I heard a minister once say something along the lines of "The church is where we can be hurt the most, but it is also where we can more readily be ministered to and receive healing." People in the church may have caused hurt, but people from the church will also be your ministers of comfort. *"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able*

to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

Church Hurt comes in different forms. Some hurts are real and others are perceived. Both need to be forgiven, but one seems a bit easier to forgive than the other. When someone hurts your feelings or "offends" you without knowing it, it is your responsibility (as a Christian) to forgive them. When someone wrongs you, knows that they wronged you, and apologizes, it is your responsibility as a Christian to forgive them. Both of these instances call for forgiveness, but the difference is that the act of forgiving an unintentional hurt frees you. Forgiving an intentional wrong frees them.


The story is told of an Amish minister who, while his buggy was parked at the place where they had their church service, discovered that some boys who didn't like him very well put a bunch of heavy rocks in his buggy, then hid to see what would happen. The man came to hitch up and go home and realized something was wrong. When he found the rocks, he quietly unloaded them, hitched up, and went home without any reaction. Years later, one of the boys was still feeling guilty about what

he had done and went and talked with the man. After admitting to his part in the trick, he apologized and asked forgiveness to which the minister replied, "I forgave you when I unloaded those rocks from my buggy all those years ago, and here you've been carrying them around with you all this time."

Take a moment to ponder the many people you know who have been hurt and chose not to forgive. They are carrying around those rocks with them. It affects their whole life and will continue to affect their eternal future if they hold on to those hurts.

Matthew 6:14 says, "*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*" Jesus is the perfect example. At His crucifixion, He was trespassed against and forgave them while they were doing it. Imagine if He rose from the dead and wanted vengeance on those who had killed Him? Whether those people repented later is unknown, but Scripture doesn't indicate that someone will be judged for crucifying Jesus physically. When Jesus died on the cross, He ransomed all who believe, and God is forgiving many people many times

over. He expects us to forgive the wrongs done to us by Christian and non-Christian alike.

Whether you are someone who has experienced Church Hurt or, God forbid, done something to someone else that may have caused offense, it's time to break the cycle. Don't take your problem and go to a church down the road. Deal with your conflict and continue to grow spiritually where you are if at all possible. "*And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints*" (I Thessalonians 3:12-13). Love is the key. Love allows us to forgive. Love allows us to see past faults and conflicting personalities to see the person who God values. "*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful*" (Colossians 3:13-15). 

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What is a “free gift?” Aren’t all gifts free?

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Anybody who doesn’t make mistakes can’t be very busy.

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Keep busy. It’s the cheapest medicine there is. -Dale Carnegie

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How many boxes of those Thin Mints do I need to eat before I see results?

• • • • •

If ants are such busy workers, how come they find time to go to all the picnics?

• • • • •

Take time to think where you are going or you may not like where you end up.

• • • • •

Don’t argue with a fool. People watching may not know the difference.

• • • • •

How is it that one careless match can start a forest fire,
but it takes a whole box to start a campfire?

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God’s part we cannot do. Our part God will not do.

• • • • •

Generosity is inverted prosperity.