



# Calvary MESSENGER

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

*Galatians 6:14*

## DECEMBER 2024

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Calvary Messenger

December 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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## If That Isn't Love

*Erma Yoder, Pratts, VA*

FATHER, I am thinking how You and Jesus must have felt on that first Christmas Day. The angels sang praises, but how did You feel? When Jesus left the courts of glory, did You weep as You let Your only Son go to earth, knowing that He would be rejected and finally suffer and die? I cannot imagine the pain Father and Son felt. Yet there was rejoicing. I just kneel at Your feet and say, "Thank you." I want to serve You and love You.

He left the splendor of Heaven,  
 Knowing His destiny  
 Was the lonely hill of Golgotha,  
 There to lay down His life for me.

If that isn't love,  
 The ocean is dry,  
 There're no stars in the sky,  
 And the sparrows can't fly.

If that isn't love,  
 Then Heaven's a myth,  
 There's no feeling like this,  
 If that isn't love.

-Dottie Rambo 

## For God So Loved the World

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).*

**A**t the end of this month we will celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. He was born as a human and lived on this earth as a man, and because of the love of God the Father and Jesus the Son, He died for the sins of the whole world. God has always had a great love for mankind, His creation formed in His own image. How did He show His love to mankind since the Creation of man until the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem?

### **Our Choice**

God created man with the option to serve Him or to reject Him. We believe that God is honored by mankind choosing to serve Him instead of being like the birds and animals who live by instinct. It didn't take our first parents long to doubt the goodness and love of their Creator and follow the serpent's

suggestion to doubt and disobey God. Adam and Eve fell—into sin and away from God. *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:6).*

### **God's Pursuit**

*“And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Genesis 3:9-10).* From the beginning of time, man has fled from God in fear and shame because of his sin. However, in stark contrast to false gods, our God of love pursues His creation despite our sinfulness. *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:4-5).*

### **God's Choosing**

*“Now the LORD had said unto*



*Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall **all families of the earth** be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3).*

And so began the making of a people of God—a people from whom the Son of God could be born—a people who would understand sacrifice, atonement, and redemption.

Deuteronomy 7:6 *“For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*

*7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:*

*8 But **because the LORD loved you**, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”*

Despite God's steadfast love for His people, they barely retained their name as a people of God. Indeed, it was only *because* of God's steadfast

love that He kept His side of the covenant He had made with them at Sinai. However, in the lineage of God's “often unholy people” was a sprinkling of foreigners and outcasts. The Gospel of Matthew mentions these women, some of whom were foreigners, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the “*one that had been the wife of Urias.*”

His chosen people mostly missed the Son of man. Many of them still reject Him. Because of this we have been grafted into this “family tree” of God's people. We have been adopted into the family of God! *“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God”* (Ephesians 2:13,19).

In the hubbub of activity, during the celebration of Christ's birth, let's not forget our spiritual heritage and be unprepared for His second coming as many were for His first appearance. It was because of God's love that Jesus died on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. Only through the blood of Jesus does God call us His sons and daughters. As we celebrate Jesus' birth, let's also celebrate His death and resurrection!

–AY

O the deep, deep love of Jesus!  
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free;  
Rolling as a mighty ocean  
In its fullness over me.  
Underneath me, all around me,  
Is the current of Thy love;  
Leading onward, leading homeward,  
To Thy glorious rest above.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus!  
Spread His praise from shore to shore;  
How He loveth, ever loveth,  
Changeth never, nevermore;

How He watches o'er His loved ones,  
Died to call them all His own;  
How for them He intercedeth,  
Watcheth o'er them from the throne.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus!  
Love of ev'ry love the best:  
'Tis an ocean vast of blessing,  
'Tis a haven sweet of rest.  
O the deep, deep love of Jesus!  
'Tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me;  
And it lifts me up to glory,  
For it lifts me up to Thee.

- S. Trevor Francis (Public Domain)



## the bottom line

# For I Am a Sinful Man

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

**T**oday I stopped at my favorite gas station because their gas was 36 cents per gallon less than the three closer stations. Gas cap open, I reached for my credit card—my wallet, where is it? I feel immediate desperation! I am 13 miles from home, and my car's computer shows I have only eight miles left in my tank. Inner panic. "Lord, help me. What should I do?"

At the pump next to me, a man

walked from his car to the store for a quick purchase. I went in as he was returning. "Sir, I am in trouble." Several apologetic lines from yours truly, making a case for himself, venting his best perfectionist tendencies.

"Don't worry, I will give you some gas."

"I could give you one of my commentaries for \$10 worth of gas."

"It will be okay; I'll just give you

some.”

“Let me show you what’s in my trunk.” (Twenty titles of my books are visible).

“I’ll just give the gas; I am not a reader.”

Here is my “take-away” from this unexpected dilemma and its result. I plead guilty to these six charges.

- Why did I connive to give him something when he clearly said he will give me some gas?

- Why offer a \$10 book for the same dollars’ worth of gas? If I were a Christian giver, I should at least have favored him with two books for \$10 worth of gas, or one book for \$5 worth of gas.

- Being a godly man, why should I “redeem” myself with any transaction at all on my part? In my perfectionist tendency on civil justice, I suggested he give me his name and address so I could send him a check. “No thanks, I’ll just give it to you.”

- Why did I have the compulsion to tell him I was in Christian service for many years, being now 86 years old? Can I compensate by his pity for me?

- Why am I so slow to recognize that gift-giving is fuller by the giver when the receiver has no advertised goodness or worthiness to consider? Including an eventual repayment.

- I am a well-to-do Mennonite, a retired pastor, a Christian writer, an

active speaker, a known giver. How can I (must I) improve somehow in my receiving before I die?

There are two essentials in modern life: the wallet with credit cards, and the cell phone.

My wife could not help me—she was at a distant place as a taxi driver. And I am scheduled to soon taxi for some other Amish people. My perfectionist ways came crashing down with a hollow echo, except for some artificial talk in a regrettable attempt to reduce a stranger’s blessing as a giver.

He could have said, “Please, sir, I am a giver.”

And I could have said, “Yes, I know, but I am also a giver.” (And see him as a competitor in this area. You see, I do not like to be outdone!)

The title for this article came from my earliest feelings wrenched from my wounded spirit. Yes, I felt like Peter at his moment of feeling enveloped in unmanageable unworthiness.

Jesus was at the beginning of His earthly ministry. That morning, Jesus has two teaching sessions, one as He stood on the land, the other as He sat in Peter’s fishing boat. After this second session, He asks Peter to “launch out into the deep.” A little morning boat ride, maybe? Hardly, as Jesus then says, “*and let down your nets for a draught.*” Draught = for a

“haul” of fish! (Strong’s).

A futile release of just one net? In the full daylight of the morning? With all the people on the shore watching? This will be a full-blown failure, Peter may have thought, and Peter will become the laughing stock from Dan to Beersheba! Just one net, Jesus? (singular).

Peter, breathing hard, never at a loss for words, says, “*Master, we have toiled all night (huff) and have taken nothing; (huff) nevertheless at thy word (huff) I will let down the net*”(singular).

Forthwith, “*they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net (singular) brake.*” Peter calls for his partners in the other ship to come to HELP! They fill both ships, so that they are in danger of sinking (he could lose everything)!

Peter was greatly “*astonished,*” besides being exhausted and exasperated. He falls down at Jesus’ knees and says, “*Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*”

When my gas tank now had plenty enough to go 500 miles, was I nicely relieved? No! My own insufficiency bothered me greatly—and my inner fret and worry—rather than claiming a saintly faith!

As I left that station, these very words were spoken to Jesus in my spirit. “*Depart from me, O Lord, for I*

*am a sinful man.*” I needed God’s grace to overcome the big upset in my heart which I had just experienced, not only a minor experience in my soul!

Was Jesus an example in giving? Yes! Yes, very much so! And what about in receiving? Well, the disciples once went into a Samaritan town to buy food for Jesus and the 12 men. (Not easy, it was against convention). Later, they did a lot of work for Him to pass out all that food, once to 5000 men plus women and children, and later to 4000 men. (How many cooks and servers were needed at your daughter’s reception of 400?) These men were sent to preach the arrival of the Kingdom of God. He accepted invitations to various feasts at people’s houses, and also to a wedding. Some people were needed to wash His clothes and repair His sandals. Jesus could graciously receive without exceptions needing to be made, and also give without expecting remuneration of equal value. How can I be more like Him in these matters?

Jesus was the Grand Giver of all time—the creation of the world, epiphany-type services in the Old Testament, the unseen hand to guide and provide for the people of Israel. And born of a virgin, He came as a helpless receiver from His mother and Joseph. He received the searching



questions of the doctors of the law in the temple as a 12-year-old. He gave assistance to Joseph in the carpenter shop as a teenager. He received the boy's lunch to feed the multitude. He received ignorant and wayward people's inquiries. He received people's questions for religious information. He received many requests for healing. He received accusations with patience. He received appreciation and thanks with humility so it could benefit the giver.

And by the divine will of the Heavenly Father, Jesus received the unjust mockery of an illegal trial at the religious court conducted by teachers and administrators of God's law and order. They then gave it over to Roman civil magistrates, known for their mix of humane procedures in court and their unpredictable inhumane excesses in the name of keeping the peace. Jesus received their taunts, their mockery, the pastime sport of the soldiers. He endured all this verbal and physical abuse, the lashings of the steel-thonged whip, the intense humiliation to His holy sense of righteousness. He received pain, injury, deprivation, disgrace as the worst of evildoers, in a seeming exchange for His friendship to all people in all walks of life, the healing and help to countless hundreds of people in physical healings. Jesus

blessed and encouraged thousands by His teaching, giving His invitation and hope for all to enter into His kingdom.


The extent of His giving and receiving is well-documented, in a grand preview of His continued giving to us poor, earth-bound, selfish-oriented earth-dwellers. *"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). And then the promise of receiving us, *"And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37).

And then Jesus died for us, giving His life for us so that we might receive from Him the privilege of sonship, becoming a child of God by His death, resurrection and ascension. He is now the High Priest for us before God the Father in heaven in an uncomplicated ministry of giving, giving, and more giving.

**The Bottom Line** is that Jesus is even yet, day by day, night after night, still giving and giving and giving. God continually gives many good gifts to His children.

*"Go and do thou likewise,"* Jesus said. Be a willing giver.

*"Freely ye have received, freely give,"* Jesus said. Be a gracious receiver.

May you be blessed in the holiday season of this month in Christian giving and sanctified receiving. 

# Helping People in Need Seminar

January 21-23, 2025

*The Modern Christian in a Crumbling Society*

## Tuesday

**Being a Digital Disciple** (Protecting Your Faith in the Digital Era)

**Securing Your Heart** (Overcoming the Negative Influences of Social Media)

**The Illusion of Emotional Needs** (Rediscovering God's Sufficiency)

**Debt-Free Living** (Breaking the Chains of Financial Burden)

## Wednesday

**Understanding LGBTQ Activism**

**Navigating Cultural Shift**

**Nourishing Body and Soul** (Breaking Free From Eating Disorders)

**Confronting the Silent Epidemic** (Verbal Abuse in Relationships)

**Finding Hope in Uncertain Times** (A Christian Perspective on Government Mandates)

## Thursday

**Engaging with Secularism** (A Christian Response to a Changing World)

**Understanding Accountability Groups** (Strengthening Faith and Personal Growth)

**Principles of Effective Accountability** (Principles For Christian Accountability)

**More Than Conquerors** (Overcoming the World Through Jesus)

*Location: Washington State, hosted by the area German Baptist Churches. Speakers are all from Deeper Life Ministries and Fresh Start Training Center*

For more information please contact Deeper Life Ministries:  
(614) 873-1199 or [info@dmlmohio.org](mailto:info@dmlmohio.org)

## Same, Only More So

*Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS*

Nearly home after a brisk walk, my steps turn into our driveway. As always, my eyes seek out the American elm, the largest tree on our Kansas homestead. I admire again its lines sketched in black, stark against the warm hues of a December sunset. With its graceful, distinctive vase shape, I've dubbed it "The Monarch"—head and shoulders above the nearby trees.

It stood leafless. Each limb and twig sharply outlined by the flaming colors. I note the peculiarly-arched limb reaching east, the result of a length-wise split. In the western boughs, a deserted oriole nest dangles, empty. I admire again the wide crotch with seven massive limbs springing from the trunk. My steps slow as I ponder; what will the winter of my life declare me to be? How can I age as beautifully as this tree with its graceful lines?

The deciduous tree in winter cannot hide its shape. No lush green foliage clothes the gnarled limbs, concealing crooked lines and wind-twisted branches. The angles are there

for all to see: dead limbs, the ravages of disease, the lack of symmetry due to crowding. So also, the aged human being is sketched against the horizon of waning years. Weaknesses and strengths grown fibrous through decades of living—all these will be manifest, without the concealing charm or physical beauty of youth.


Sometimes I visit with seniors who speak of life primarily in the past tense...the glory days of their youth, strength, and beauty. I remember a visit with Claude. At 93, his large frame was gaunt, his elegantly-shaped hands soft and pink with nails clean and trimmed. But when conversation turned to the good ol' days, his eyes shone and his voice gained vigor as he recounted how many tons he hauled that day, and the route he took...my mind wanders and I wonder: is that what he lived for?

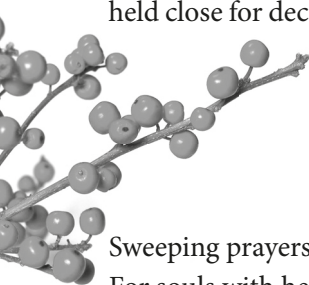
Some diseases change the way the mind works; these factors are beyond human control, and I do not address them. Rather, I mean the aging where we become even more of who we were—personality and peculiarities thickened and grown stout, like a

soup left to simmer for years. Think of that and tremble.

How does one age graciously unless grace is our daily manna? How will it be when muscle tone and brain cells are diminished, if efficiency and productivity are the measure of the day now? What becomes of the woman who took pride in her appearance. How will she age beautifully? The memories of cherished accomplishments (often held close for decades)—when these

tumble out, all unadorned, what will you learn that I have lived for?

The winter beauty of a tree is austere, the growth of years is on display. Likewise, there is a spare, stark **beauty** in old age. Where grace and truth were loved and lived, there is a sweetness present—like slowly-simmered onions caramelized. Where ungrace and selfishness were the daily habit, the flavor is sharp and pungent. What will you be like in old age? More of who you are now. 



## Greatness

*Judy King, Harrison, AR*

Sweeping prayers to heaven's door,  
For souls with hearts of pain,  
Her "closet" was her sick bed,  
Her yearnings, not in vain.

Her prayers of faith the Master heard,  
Changed many hearts with stain.  
The wonder of the Master,  
Had touched those lives again.

Her mission was her prayer life,  
Though few folks knew her call.  
Yet God above smiled on her;  
Her prayers were worth it all.


• • • • •

Jesus sat beside the treasury,  
And saw what people gave.  
Scribes gave much, then swaggered on.  
Attention they did crave.

Also, hoping people heard  
Coins clinking in the coffer,  
To satisfy their swelling chests,  
For all they had to offer.

Then quietly, a woman came,  
Clothed as a widowed Jew.  
Ears strained to hear the clinking,  
But heard just mites of two.

Jesus said the wealthy scribes  
Gave little of their many  
Extra coins from each fat purse,  
While she gave her last penny.

Sometimes greatness comes in throngs  
Or in groups so small.  
Yet most important of it all  
Is heeding Jesus' call. 

## marriages

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

### Helmuth-Peachey

Bro. Aaron, son of Harlan and Joanna Helmuth, Amesville, OH, and Sis. Martha, daughter of Louie Jr. and Olive Peachey, Woodville, NY, on October 11, 2024, at Northern Light Christian Fellowship by Wilmer Peachey.

### Hooley-Beachy

Bro. Jaden, son of Dan and Sue Hooley, Holmesville, OH, and Sis. Diane, daughter of Philip and Sue Ann Beachy, Millersburg, OH, on August 10, 2024, at Dayspring Mennonite Church by Phil Miller.

### Hostetler-Deppen

Bro. Duane, son of Norman and Anna Mary Hostetler, Belleville, PA, and Sis. Sara, daughter of Eric and Julia Deppen, Elizabethtown, PA, on September 21, 2024, at the Deppen Farm by Andrew Burkholder.

### Zook-Stoltzfus

Bro. Caleb, son of Chester and Julia Zook, Belleville, PA, and Sis. Charity, daughter of Elmer and Elizabeth Stoltzfus, NJ, on October 5, 2024, at Salem Co. Mennonite Church, by Mel Beiler.



## cradle roll

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

**Beachy**, Benjamin and Dorcas (Yoder), Brinkhaven, OH, fifth child, fourth daughter, Milena Verity, September 19, 2024.

**Garza**, Ray and Debbie (Miller), Kalona, IA, second child, first son, Dawson Ray, September 23, 2024.

**Gerber**, Karl and Janice (Wagler), Wellesley, ON, first child and daughter, Briana Ruth, October 3, 2024.

**Gregory**, Justin and Brenda (Zook), Belleville, PA, second child and daughter, Kimberly Ann, August 30, 2024.

**Herschberger**, Lamar and Rebecca (Beachy), Kokomo, IN, first child and son, Austin Wayne, September 1, 2024.

**Hochstedler**, Dylan and Theresa (Wray), Amboy, IN, fifth child, second daughter, Anael Dawn, March 20, 2024.

**Miller**, Glen and Rhoda (Farmwald), Alpha, KY, third child, second son, Kingston Elliot, August 7, 2024.

**Miller**, Joey and Elfrieda (Shank), Stuarts Draft, VA, third child and son, Findlay Clay, October 22, 2024.





**Miller**, Justin and Shelly (Gingerich), Kalona, IA, second child and son, Ethan James, October 14, 2024.

**Miller**, Paul and Doris (Miller), Tazewell, VA, second child, first son, Tristan Jase, July 7, 2024.

**Nisley**, Matt and Miriam (Rocke), Tuscola, IL, fifth child, fourth son, Masyn Cole, September 24, 2024.

**Otto**, Mark and Wanita (Yoder), Sullivan, IL, fourth child, second daughter, Jolisa Faith, September 20, 2024.

**Petersheim**, Andrew and Marjorie (Stoltzfus), Gap, PA, fifth child, third daughter, Charlotte Jo, October 27, 2024.

**Stoltzfus**, Douglas and Kelsey (Martin), Narvon, PA, fifth child, first son, Connor Douglas, October 21, 2024.

**Weaver**, Anson and Jessica (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, first child and son, Sheridan Chase, October 22, 2024.

**Wingard**, Roderick and Annie (Shenk), Montezuma, GA, first child and daughter, Soraya Rose, October 23, 2024.

**Yoder**, Jonathan and Hailey (Jones), Partridge, KS, second child and daughter, Audrey Elise, August 31, 2024.

**Zook**, Anthony and Ruth (Fisher), Georgetown, OH, fourth child, third daughter, Julie Alyssa, October 17, 2024.

**Zook**, David and Ellen (Schrock), Belleville, PA, second child, first son, Ethan Chester, September 13, 2024.

**Zook**, Josiah and Amanda (Schlabach), Dunmore East, Ireland, fourth child, third daughter, Maria Jo, October 21, 2024.



## ordinations

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

**Bro. Wayne Bontrager**, 48, (wife, Linda Miller), Oswego, KS, was ordained deacon by the voice of the church for Cornerstone Mennonite Church, on October 20, 2024. Preordination messages were given by Phil Yoder, Costa Rica. The charge was given by Stan Nisley, assisted by Phil Yoder and David Yoder.

**Bro. Bradley Gerber**, 40, (wife, Margaret Gerber), Perth, ON, was ordained bishop for River of Life Amish Mennonite Church on October 27, 2024. Preordination messages were given by Melvin Beiler and Wilmer Peachey. The charge was given by Arnold Jantzi, assisted by Melvin Beiler and Wilmer Peachey. Daniel Byler shared the lot.

**Bro. Anthony Shetler**, 37, (wife, Norma Miller), Hutchinson, KS, was ordained deacon for Cedar Crest Amish Mennonite Church on September 8, 2024. Preordination messages were given by Michael Mast. The charge was given by Lee Nisly, assisted by Michael Mast and James Shetler. Conrad Nisly and Randall Miller shared the lot.

**Bro. Dustin Snyder**, 27, (wife, Abigail Stoltzfus), North Lewisburg, OH, was ordained deacon by the voice of the church for Bethesda Fellowship Church on September 29, 2024. Preordination messages were given by Matthew Raber, Roger Hostetler, and George Stoltzfus. The charge was given by Elmer Stoltzfus, assisted by Alan Byler and Robert Beachy.



## obituaries

**Miller**, Carolyn, 62, of Arthur, IL, passed away August 29, 2024, at her home surrounded by her family. She was born on July 19, 1962, in Goshen, IN, to Joseph J. and Mary (Glick) Hochstetler. She married Allen Duane Miller on May 29, 1982, in Middlebury, IN.

She is survived by her husband, Allen, seven children: Vanessa Miller, Atwood, (boyfriend, John Helmuth); daughter-in-law, Carmel Miller, Arthur; Javan (Elizabeth), Ontario, Canada; Valerie (Cameron) Miller, Arthur; Kyle (Raquel), Sarasota, FL; Austin (Rosa), Ephrata, PA; Clinton, (girlfriend, Jayden), Wasilla, AK; Preston, New Holland, PA; 15 grandchildren, seven siblings: Barbara (Laban) Mast, Goshen, IN; Marvin (Arlene) Hochstetler, Topeka, IN; Maynard (Laura) Hochstetler, Middlebury, IN; Linda (Marvin) Yoder, Dade City, FL; Treva (Aaron) Bauman, Muddy Pond, TN; Irene (Daniel) Marner,

White Pigeon, MI; and Fern (Gordon) Bauman, Goshen, IN.

She was preceded in death by her parents, a son, Reggie Allen Miller, and an infant sister, Joanna.

She was a member of Pleasant View Church, Arcola, IL. Carolyn and Allen spent 17 years as missionaries in Ontario, Canada.

Carolyn was valedictorian of her 1981 graduating class at Clinton Christian School, Goshen, IN. Music was her passion; she enjoyed playing guitar, hammer dulcimer, lap harp, and piano. She also enjoyed oil painting, arranging flowers, and photography.

Her love for the Lord was passed along to her children and grandchildren.

The funeral service was held on September 2, 2024, at Arthur Christian School, with Matthew Bontrager, Paul Plank, and Ray Stutzman serving. Burial was at Arthur Cemetery, Arthur, IL.

**Schlabach**, Jonas N., 79, Lexington, IN, passed away peacefully on August 12, 2024. He was born in Plain City, OH, on March 21, 1945, to Noah and Lydiann (Miller) Schlabach. On June 15, 1967, he married Irene Miller, who preceded him in death on February 29, 2024.

Left to cherish his memory are children: Lavern (Evelyn), Richmond, MO; Rebecca (Joseph) Hostetler, Belleville, PA; Glen, of the home; Steven (Debra), Melvern, KS; Loretta (Leon) King, Lexington; Robert (late Dorcas), Holliday, MO; Mark (Kimberly), Paris, MO. He will also be missed by his 19 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Also surviving are four brothers and two sisters: Roy Schlabach, Shreve, OH; Henry (Sara Etta); Freeman (Catherine); and Noah Jr. (Darla), all of Plain City, OH; Mary, Millersburg, OH; Esther (Louie) Swartz, Auburn, KY; and sister-in-law, Martha Schlabach, Apple Creek, OH.

Along with his wife, he was preceded in death by a son, Edward, daughter-in-law, Dorcas, sister, Ada, brother, John, and sister, Verna (Eli) Chupp.

The funeral service was held on August 16, 2024, at Living Waters Mennonite Church. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

**Schmucker**, Clarence M., 76, of Oskaloosa, KS, passed away on October 13, 2024, after a lengthy illness. He was born on January 2, 1948, in Nappanee, IN, to the late Martin E. and Barbara (Hochstetler) Schmucker. He married

Lydia Ann Mast of Holladay, TN, on November 27, 1969.

He was baptized as a youth and was a member of the Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Aroda, VA.

He was preceded in death by his wife, six brothers, and two sisters.

After living in Franklin, KY, for 33 years, they moved to Aroda, VA, to be close to their daughters. Later, Clarence went to visit his sons in KS at which time his health declined more.

Clarence loved his family, was a hard worker in his earlier years, enjoyed reading, and visiting with people.

He is survived by two daughters: Nora (Robert) Troyer, Aroda, VA; Leanna (Mervin) Glick, Stanardsville, VA; two sons: Robert (Elva Jean); Nelson (Janice), both of Oskaloosa; 17 grandchildren: Bethany Troyer Kipps, Meredith Troyer Martin, Julie Troyer Yoder, Kendell Troyer, Benson Troyer, Norabeth Schmucker Miller, Rhonda Schmucker Yoder, Mari Schmucker, Amy Glick Mast, Sarah Glick Eby, Lydia Glick, Curtis Glick, Andrew Glick, Landon Schmucker, Tristan Schmucker, Cassandra Schmucker, Miranda Schmucker; and 15 great-grandchildren.

He is also survived by three sisters: Katie Mast, MI; Sylvia Mast, Ida Wagler, both of Etna Green, IN; three brothers: Daniel (Esther), Franklin, KY; Joseph (Carol), Hutchinson, KS; John Henry (Tillie), Franklin, KY; and numerous nieces and nephews.

The funeral was held at Oak Grove

Mennonite Church, Aroda, VA, on Thursday, October 18, 2024, with the burial at the church cemetery.

**Stoltzfus**, Samuel S., 83, of Ronks, PA, passed away at his home on August 4, 2024. He was born in Ronks, PA, to the late Jacob and Barbara (Stoltzfus) Stoltzfus. He married Susanna L. Petersheim on November 1, 1962.


He was a member of Summitview Christian Fellowship of New Holland.

He was a farmer and later provided transportation to the Amish community. Sam loved when his family came to visit and frequently encouraged them to remain faithful to the Lord.

Surviving besides his wife are

seven children: Marvin (Ruth), Leola; Mahlon, Ronks; Rose (David) Beiler, Winfield; Joy Stoltzfus, Gordonville; Mark (Rachel), St. Thomas; Matthew (Jewel), Gordonville; Sharon Stoltzfus, Gordonville; 17 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, two brothers: Jonathan, Amos (Katie); sister, Lizzie Lantz; and sister-in-law, Annie (Vernon) Nissley, Lewistown.

He was preceded in death by six siblings: Mary, Elmer, John, Dan, Jacob, and Gideon (late husband of Edna Stoltzfus).

The funeral service was held at Summitview Christian Fellowship on August 7, 2024. Interment followed in the adjoining church cemetery. 

## observations

This past summer a grandmother I know had some of her grandchildren along while shopping at Walmart. In the parking lot an elderly lady sized up a stack of bagged mulch, seeming to wonder how she would load the mulch she had paid for. Grandma and the grandchildren noticed her dilemma and offered to assist. After the task was completed the elderly shopper expressed her relief and gratitude. The seven-year-old grandson who had helped replied enthusiastically, “...Here to serve.”

I know the characters in this story pretty well, except for the elderly shopper. I am aware that this attitude of willing service is one that the little boy’s parents are eager to see developed in more and more areas of this little chap’s world. In spite of this gap between the little fellow’s awareness and his sometimes immature conduct, the parents should be encouraged. After all, his response gives tangible evidence that this point of emphasis in the teaching and training program at home is being practically applied.

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Our heavenly Father showed us how this service attitude and approach should look by giving us the example of His Son Who came to serve, not to be served. There are times when we likely do pretty well at remembering this, as was the case with the seven-year-old lad. But might there also be times when our heavenly Father notices that we forgot again and how far we have to go for our conduct to line up with our stated awareness, that we're "...here to serve?"

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My wife and I sat across the table from her as we leisurely ate our lunch. We'd never met before, but certainly enjoyed learning about her colorful life. She is now more than 80 years old. But her vitality and wit seem much younger than her years. It was only after our visit that I decided to share this, so I didn't get permission from her to mention these things. In order to conceal her identity, I'll just call her Ella. Ella and Brenda and I have mutual acquaintances that vouch for Ella's credibility.

- Ella was born to Amish parents and is still Amish.
- She has never married.
- She spent 33 years teaching school. Most years she was the only teacher in the one-room and two-room schools of that region and era. The first year she was informed that

she would likely have a few more than 50 students. When the dust settled after the beginning of school, there were 61 pupils from grades 1 to 8. She indicated that grades 1 and 2 and 7 and 8 were her favorite grades, as well as kindergarten that ran during the spring. She really enjoyed getting the students started academically and teaching history in the older grades. One year some of the dads came in to "help" out. But she found that distraction to be more drag than benefit. For instance, the checkers game that was begun during recess between one of the dads and a student wasn't finished by the end of recess, so the dad suggested that they just carry on until they were done.

- When Ella was a little girl from age 9-11 she became quite proficient in shooting marbles. With the permission from their bishop that her parents sought and secured, Ella entered various marble-shooting competitions. Her proficiency led to ascending levels of competition that culminated in a national competition, which she won at age 11! She didn't remember what all she was awarded for the accomplishment other than a big trophy and some gifts from area merchants, including a bicycle. But she quit marble competitions after her age-11 national championship. When we asked if she still shoots marbles,



she wryly commented, “Not anymore. I have ‘arthur’ in my thumb.”

- She helped provide in-home care for an adult, non-Amish, handicapped relative until very recently when the demands surpassed her remarkable energy. She seemed a bit pensive, and possibly a bit regretful when she simply stated that she was no longer able to continue.

There are quite a few details in her life that illustrate that she seems quite familiar with the concept that indeed we’re “...here to serve.”

Brenda and I got the distinct impression that if we would have spent more time with Ella, she would have been able to provide us with interesting stories for a long time.

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In a recent Mennonite periodical, I noticed the obituary of a lady whose name sounded familiar. Reading her obituary brought back memories of an interaction that I had with her since-departed husband between 35 and 40 years ago.

I was serving in El Salvador at a time that was embroiled in a guerrilla war. The USA was supportive of the right-wing government in a struggle with left-wing insurgents. My work involved legal paperwork for the mission. Processing residential permits and securing permission for those wishing to visit El Salvador were

time-consuming and involved several steps at different offices across the city.

One day at the Migrations building I met a couple who seemed to be foreigners like me. I overheard a bit of their attempts at Spanish and concluded they weren’t native Spanish speakers. As expats sometimes do, I decided to strike up a conversation. Come to find out they were indeed from the USA, were there as visitors with another Mennonite organization, and were casual and long-ago acquaintances of my parents. What a coincidence! We exchanged contact information which led to them paying a visit to the residence where I lived with another missionary family.

I expected this visit to be one of exploring mutual acquaintances with these distant cousins in the Mennonite family. This was several decades ago, so I don’t remember all the details of that interaction. But some things do stand out.

Our conversation quickly morphed from pleasantries to a theme that seemed much more urgent to our guests. The theme had to do with a New Testament Christian and specifically a Mennonite’s involvement and non-involvement in politics. These folks were very sympathetic to the plight of those in El Salvador who were disadvantaged

because of the oppressive right-wing regime in El Salvador. Political demonstrations against the ruling party were a common occurrence in El Salvador during that time. These activities attempted to apply pressure in such a way that would influence positive change.

About that time, I interjected that I wouldn't be comfortable with participating in a demonstration or in a march because of my understanding that Christ teaches us to avoid using force. But I said that I would have some openness to engaging elected officials through conversation or letter writing if necessary. It seemed appropriate to me that a governing official would know how the constituents felt in the jurisdiction that he or she represented.

My comment sparked an energetic response. The gentleman guest said something like this, "You draw the line between letter-writing and marching. A lot of people do that. But look at the example of Jesus. He did a \_\_\_\_\_ (he used a word that wouldn't be suitable to print here) of a lot more marching than letter writing. Everywhere He went a multitude marched with Him."

I guess the similarity between the throngs who followed Jesus while He walked among us and that what I observed in the demonstrations

on the streets of San Salvador was something I hadn't thought of. The similarity remains stubbornly elusive.

• • • • •

In October an unsolicited book arrived in our mailbox written by Gary Miller entitled, *What Jesus Refused to Do*. Jesus' public ministry occurred at a time when there was a lot of public sentiment in the Jewish community against the Roman occupation. But in the middle of all this, Jesus ushered in His Kingdom, rather than reform the injustices of the current political structure. His plan was to transform the hearts of men. To be clear, when men's hearts are right and following God's plans, this affects civic affairs in wholesome and beneficial ways. But Jesus' means of affecting change was through the hearts of men rather than the civic political process.

Jesus was steadfast in His refusal to acquiesce to those who tried to get Him to address the societal needs around Him through the political process. His Kingdom works in the hearts of men and works out from there.

It is true, as my friend said, throngs of people followed Jesus wherever He went. May the number of those who follow Jesus to seek His truth multiply. I'd like to be part of that throng, wouldn't you?

-RJM 

## ABCs of Missionary Preparation (Part 3)

*Craig Steiner, Santa Elena, Cayo District, Belize*

*Jesus gave His twelve disciples three and one-half years of teaching and training. Twice He even gave them short-term, hands-on assignments by empowering them to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Sadly, Judas entertained false ideas and selfish thoughts too long and Satan entered into him. Judas “kissed the Door to Heaven and turned around and descended to hell.”*

*Later, the 11 disciples and the newly-ordained Brother Matthias, were all filled with the Holy Spirit including all the 120 believers in the upper room. This was the beginning of an additional training from Jesus Christ by the ever-present Teacher, the Holy Spirit, within us. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26) -FS*

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Each year, hundreds of missionaries move to new areas, hoping to make a difference there for the Kingdom of

God. Some prepare with degrees and graduate programs, while others do little more than pack their bags. While many roles don't require a degree, we do well to prepare more than our luggage. Here are the last nine of the 26 ABCs to help missionaries prepare for effective service.

**Read** – Former President George W. Bush was a voracious reader. In 2006, he lost a reading contest with his advisor, Karl Rove, who won—110 books to 95. The President insisted that he had lost because he had been “busy as Leader of the Free World.” He still averaged almost two books per week! While the former President may not be our role model in every area of life, we do well to follow his desire to learn and his teachability.

There are multitudes of good books available to readers. Find three, or 30, or 300 and read them! First, the Bible needs to be a priority in our reading program. Then, a teachable person also seeks to learn from others. As you prepare for service, read widely, thoughtfully, and carefully. Keep a journal of notes from books you read.

Discuss your gleanings with others. Once you are preparing to serve with an organization, ask if they have a list of required reading before you go. In this series, you will also find excellent books from which to choose.

Use *How to Read Better and Faster* by Normal Lewis to teach you to read better, and not surprisingly, faster. Mortimer J. Adler's *How to Read A Book* helps you develop the deeper disciplines of critical reading.

**Singing** – Cultivate a love for singing and learn the rudiments of music. All churches, especially mission churches, welcome enthusiastic singers and capable song leaders. Develop the abilities now so that you have the opportunity to practice and grow. Experienced song leaders find it easier to lead songs by memory or on short notice. Both happen frequently in mission settings.

Music is best learned under the teaching of an experienced musician. Bible schools and music camps offer practical teaching, while those who cannot attend could use *Rudiments of Music* by Michael Overholt to learn some basics. Aspiring song leaders can find an excellent instructional Youtube video series called *Song-leading Basics* taught by Wendell Nisly and made available by Shenandoah Christian Music Camp

**Training** – Never stop learning!

Beyond formal education, there are lots of opportunities to continue learning, especially in specialty skills. Those planning to serve abroad should intentionally train before they go, and continue that training as they serve.

Most Bible schools provide spiritual and practical training useful to mission work. Mission Training Center in New York City and the Institute for Global Opportunities in Thailand provide more focused training toward preparing workers. REACH, hosted by Faith Builders, provides mission exposure plus learning opportunities through workshops and sessions. Numerous organizations and missions provide week-long or weekend training for those preparing to work with specific people groups or regions.

Missionaries should have at minimum a basic understanding of first aid. Most communities have first aid and CPR courses available to the public. To acquire a deeper knowledge, consider studying as an Emergency Medical Technician or taking the two-week Missionary Medicine Intensive from Equip International. Use *Village Medical Manual* by Mary Vanderkooi, or *Where There Is No Doctor* by David Werner for self-study and reference.

Teachers and mission workers can find continuing education

opportunities in locally-hosted events and through [thedockforlearning](http://thedockforlearning.com). Faith Builders and Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute also offer excellent short and long-term study options.

**Understand the country** – Develop a thorough understanding of the country where you plan to serve before you go! Research its history, geography, and government. Learn about its people, religions, and current issues. Begin to familiarize yourself with the languages of this country. This research allows you to understand the people you will work with and how they think and live.

This research also starts your journey of learning that you will need to continue as you move to a new area or country. Missionaries, who know it all, accomplish little and don't stay long. One veteran missionary noted that it takes about seven years before a worker truly understands the new culture around him.

If you have not yet chosen a country for service, surveying the world with a resource such as *Operation World* can be helpful. Read about a country each day and pray over its needs. This exercise is profitable for all and helps us to see the world through God's eyes.

**Victory** – You must be walking in victory before you go. If there are strongholds and sins that still have control, take care of them. If there

are issues or hurts in your past that are not dealt with, take care of them. Working closely with others in a mission setting tends to bring these things to the surface. The past need not hinder the present.

Learn how to face temptation victoriously. Personal purity is imperative for all workers, male and female alike. Ask for help from a parent, mentor, or minister.

**Witnessing** – Telling others about Jesus is a joint effort between our life and our lips. They must work together, and they must both work. To get you started, use practical teaching combined with hands-on practice. One of the best resources is the workbook *Becoming Fishers of Men* by Allen Roth.

**Xenophobia** – This phobia affects missionaries and would-be missionaries. It is the fear or dislike of foreign people and their customs and culture. It keeps some Christians from considering a move to another country or area. It sends some missionaries home within a short time and keeps others from being effective. In other countries, their different normal is as normal to them as your normal is to you.

Overcoming xenophobia starts with understanding God's heart for all races and peoples. We must confess our pride and prejudices



and begin to appreciate the good in other cultures. Even in your home community, immigrants and minorities can sense those who treat them with respect and truly care about them. Begin to see your daily interactions as opportunities to learn about other cultures. Give a smile and say hello. Initiate conversations. We sometimes need our worldview adjusted by God as He did for Peter in the story of Cornelius. Woe to the missionary who clings to xenophobia.

*Foreign to Familiar* by Sarah Lanier is an excellent primer for understanding people and cultures that are different from ours. For a more thorough read, check out *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* by Paul Heibert.

**Yes** – This simple word, learned

easily by toddlers, often needs relearning as adults. It takes continual effort to turn our focus from ourselves to serving others. Be a person who is willing and dependable. Sure, there are appropriate times to say no, but we all appreciate people with a servant heart and a sacrificial spirit. Start now by practicing your “yes” in your home, church, and community.

**Zeal** - The words consistent, faithful, and disciplined are more closely related to zeal than the words radical, excitement, and fanaticism. The development of zeal is more like a student investing 12 years of daily study in school than a man being struck by lightning. Enthusiasm is contagious. Is yours worth catching?

*Concluded*

*[Used by permission]*



## A Woman After God's Heart

### We Are on His List

*Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH*



**W**e bump over four-syllable names in the first 17 verses of Matthew. We'd like to hurry on to the more interesting parts about Jesus'

birth, and the Herodian drama with the escape to Egypt, but these names challenge our resolve to read *all* of Scripture.

For some of us, pursuing the links

in our genealogy is our latest hobby. But genealogies aren't a hobby thing for the Jews. When they read the first part of Matthew, they know exactly what Matthew was doing. For them, your genealogy establishes your inheritance, your lot, your destiny, and your identity. It's who you are. Jesus was the fulfillment that the Messiah would come from the lineage of Abraham and David. Matthew proved that flawlessly by this list of names, hinging Jesus' adoptive father Joseph to Abraham and David.

As we look closer, we begin to be drawn in by the realization that the real story actually begins within these interesting names. While the majority are men's names, we note a sprinkling of four women's names, actually five, counting Mary.

In a culture where traditional Jewish men's morning prayers ran something like this: "Blessed are you, Lord, our God, ruler of the universe who has not created me a woman," (*nor a gentile nor slave*), it especially grabs our attention that women appear alongside men in Matthew's Messianic genealogy. In a patriarchal society, it was the fathers who mattered. But, they also knew that the promised Messiah would come from a woman.

We continue digging into this list

of names, and we begin to realize the nature of these ladies. We are not looking at the names of Eve, Sarah, or Rachel. It becomes clear that the inclusion of these ladies' names is by design, and deserves far deeper concentration than a single rushed reading.

**Tamar.** Jacob's son Judah fathered Perez by his daughter-in-law Tamar. Yes, daughter-in-law. Stories don't get much more unruly than this one. We remember Tamar's disillusionment, her dashed hopes of bearing a child—husband after husband—and a father-in-law's empty promise. Tamar used her wit and deception to be able to bear a child as a widow, and as the seed of her own father-in-law. At the story's end, after he dismissed plans to stone Tamar, Judah stated, "*She has been more righteous than I.*"

**Rahab.** Tamar pretended to be a prostitute, but Rahab actually *was* a Canaanite prostitute. When the Hebrew spies came to check out Jericho, she readily sheltered them for the night. In so doing she separated herself from her people and chose to identify with God's people. She confessed to them, "*I know that the LORD hath given you the land... for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.*" She voluntarily acknowledged her faith in the God of

the Israelites, leaving the idols of her people and background. She hung the crimson rope from her window, setting her dwelling apart from the others. When the city fell, her house and family alone were saved. Rahab married Salmon. Baby boy Boaz was born to them. (Genealogies really *are* amazing: Salmon was a great nephew-in-law to High Priest Aaron!)

**Ruth**, the Moabitess, emerges next. Despite Ruth's shining character, her Moabite ancestry overshadowed her identity. The Moabites descended from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters. A Moabite was not allowed in the Lord's assembly. No doubt, Boaz knew his mother Rahab's unlikely story of Canaanite-prostitute-turned-God-worshiper, and found the possibility of loving Ruth, the Moabitess, well within his religious reason. Boaz, a kinsman redeemer, understood about disorderly backgrounds and Messianic redemption long before Jesus came to upset the religious standards of the day.

Next, the **wife of Uriah**. Perhaps Bathsheba's story is so scandalous that in the Greek Bible she is not given a name. Especially, when we consider that the villain of her story is the man after God's heart. King David seduced her. If she *was* given

a choice, she was a poor model of submission. Willing, or forced, she suffered indescribably. Her soldier husband was murdered, leaving her a widow. David's unchecked authority snatched her to himself to mask his sin. As a result of their adultery, her infant son died. Bathsheba must have wondered if there was a God in Israel.

**Mary**. The unwed teen-aged girl, engaged to Joseph, shows up pregnant. The gossip vultures circled over this young couple from the beginning. Mary didn't have the advantage of reading Matthew one while she absorbed the scorn of the religious and feared a stoning. But quite possibly she and Elizabeth *did* rehearse the stories of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. They may have marveled together over other unusual births and scandals of vulnerable women before them. Of others who had carried the image of God at a high cost, and of other women who had wondered if wrong would always prevail. Despite the vicious rumors, Mary chose to trust the angel, her beloved Joseph, and her God.

The laborious list of names in Matthew 1:1-17 shows us:

1. Jesus defines His genealogy, not the other way around.
2. We don't choose our heritage, but our choices determine our legacy.

3. God uses very broken people to accomplish His perfect purpose. We all have ghosts in our closets. No one is beyond the reach of His redemption.

4. Ancient texts deal with modern issues.

5. Matthew's genealogy highlights

Jesus' *inclusive* family. These women may have been Gentile, outcast, or with rough sexual pasts, yet they were all deeply loyal to Yahweh.

6. In His genealogy Jesus becomes real, relatable, and tangible. The Almighty God has come to earth and identifies with *all* of us.



## junior messages

# Thirty Malnourished Babies

*Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH*

So many needs. So many people and babies desperate for compassion and care. Haiti was full of needy people.

Rosemary was full of love to give. She worked tirelessly at The Berea Clinic five days a week. She reveled in her work of helping people in need.

The clinic workers were two Americans and 12 Haitian women; nurses, pharmacists, or helpers. The doors opened at 8:30 in the morning and stayed open until 3 or 4:00 in the afternoon. Every day was bustling and busy with over 200 people who needed consultations, children with malnutrition issues, and vaccinations to give. There were always emergencies, people who

needed bandages and stitching for wounds.

Three or four of these days were open for mothers to bring their babies. It was not unusual to see 30 sick and malnourished babies daily. The mothers brought their babies every two weeks. The worst cases came once a week.

Why did so many moms bring their babies?

- The babies' mothers did not have enough milk.
- Some were babies whose mothers had died, or someone saved a baby who was thrown out. Haiti had many unwanted pregnancies and unwanted babies.
- There were malnourished babies,

from six months to two years old, who were underweight and sick. If nothing improved, they would die.

- There were some babies who were dying, critical, and starving. They needed hospitalization.

### **The Milk Program**

Babies who were not gaining weight could be on the program. Rosemary loved giving the moms two bags of powdered milk every two weeks. Her heart went out to the cute little babies with their curly hair.

There were so many ill and hungry babies. When a baby was starving, his hair would turn orange, and in the worst cases, the hair would fall out. Many twins were brought to the clinic. Mothers seldom had enough milk for two babies. The nurses taught the mothers how to breastfeed. Some listened and learned; others followed their culture's superstitions.

The babies were not named at birth. One mother came in with twin boys. She told the nurse at the front desk, "Name these babies." The nurse thought awhile and then she named them Samuel and Samuelson. Rosemary had to smile.

The Milk Program in this clinic was a big boost for moms and their hungry little ones. One baby boy came with his aunt, who posed as his mom. But this baby was not gaining. Rosemary was suspicious

that the woman was selling the milk. Rosemary knew she must confront the woman.

She sat down with her in the consultation room. "You don't love this baby," Rosemary stated. "He is not getting the milk. You are done. We will not give you more milk."

Rosemary was also suspicious that this woman was a witch doctor. The woman responded, "I don't want this baby, you take him."

"No," Rosemary said, "I will not take him. You are responsible." The woman walked out of Rosemary's life with the baby.

Rosemary called six patients at a time into her examination room. Many days later, a nurse brought in a shabbily-dressed man carrying a baby. "You must see him now," she said.

She told the man. "Sit there till I am done with all these." She had heard the baby cry faint little squeaks. Haitians berate people who let their babies starve. When the others were out, Rosemary said to the man. "I'm ready for you, hand me the baby." She pulled the towel back, and as she had feared, the baby was skin and bones. His faint cries were pathetic. Rosemary looked keenly at the boy.

"I know this baby," she said. "A woman, posing as his mother, had



him on the Milk Program.” The shabby man admitted he was the father and that the child’s mother had died. Rosemary tried to teach him how to care for his little son. But finally they saw the child would not survive with his dad. One of the other nurses asked Rosemary if they could keep the baby.

Rosemary loved that baby boy and became his primary caretaker. She slept when he slept. He would wake up every 45 minutes. When she worked at the clinic, he slept on her desk and if she was too busy with patients she’d ask for a lady to hold him right where she was working. They named him Kenderson. She cared for him for three months. In time he grew fat and healthy.

Haiti was becoming more violent and lawless. Rosemary knew the day would come when the Americans

would have to leave. She arranged with a childless woman from church to keep Kenderson. She felt good about that. When Kenderson had been with her for three months, the mission evacuated.

Rosemary’s heart was torn, tears dripped from her cheeks as she hugged the people and told them good-bye. She handed over Kenderson. She did not know if she would ever work in Haiti again? She knew she had loved and done what she could.

In Haiti today Kenderson is fat and thriving. Rosemary longs for and misses him. She knows God is in control and all she can do is trust the Lord.

Thirty malnourished babies. One, and hopefully more, is doing well! How is God calling you to help someone in need?



## youth messages

### Lion or Sheep

*Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH*

Recently, my dad sent me a picture of a shirt he saw at a store. It said, “Raise Lions not Sheep.” Ironically, as Christians, we should be raising sheep, not lions.

We need more youth who rely on the Good Shepherd and less on their own strength.

Historically, lions have been a majestic symbol of pride, strength,

and leadership. They are typically characterized as smart, ferocious, and awe-inspiring. Sheep, on the other hand, are characterized as soft, dumb, and helpless. Have you ever seen a sheep run? It's nothing like the majestic muscle-rippling bounds of a tawny lion. They stump along on their spindly little legs—far from awe-inspiring. Sheep don't hunt down and pounce on their prey. They don't like drinking from running water because it might splash on them. A lion's roar can be heard up to five miles away. Sheep have a geeky little baa! A lion can run for short bursts at speeds of up to 50 mph and leap as far as 36 feet. Sheep can run at speeds of up to 20 mph and if chased, can possibly clear a four-foot fence. If, however, they tip over and land on their backs, the weight of their wool can keep them stuck on their backs, and without help they can suffer a slow and painful death.

I did a little research into the "Lions not Sheep" slogan and found that it is a mantra and lifestyle that conveys the idea of being a leader and not a follower. Lions not Sheep is also a clothing brand, the founder of which says the idea came to him when he realized he had lived most of his life as a sheep. The slogan is a reference to the saying "A lion doesn't lose sleep over the opinion of sheep."

Why then, if lions are seen as leaders and examples of strength, do we not want to be lions?

As we enter the holiday season, we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus Who came as the "*Lamb of God*" (John 1:29). He was a perfect, innocent, and willing sacrifice—a little lamb. Jesus was and still is part of the Trinity—part of the most powerful, awe-inspiring entity ever imagined. He was not weak. He was not helpless. He made a choice to set aside His power in order to save us. Philippians 2:7-8 says "*But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" The term "*form of a servant*" doesn't sound very lion-like, does it? We tend to rebel against the idea of being like sheep or being like servants. Both of those words give the idea of vulnerability, submission, and humility.

Like Philippians 2:8 mentioned earlier, Jesus humbled Himself. Verse 7 says that He "*made himself of no reputation.*" Our reputation is pretty important to us. Our reputation affects our social standing and how other people see and relate to us. A good reputation heavily impacts our witness in the community and

most times benefits our businesses which in turn benefits our wallets. Whether or not we want to admit it, our reputations are important to us. Humility just isn't a natural inclination for us. Interestingly, a group of lions is called a pride, the very antithesis of humility.

When we liken ourselves to sheep, we are acknowledging our need to submit and follow those God has placed over us. We aren't supposed to blindly follow just anyone. Sheep are supposed to follow their shepherd. A flock of sheep generally stays together, and they follow as a group. If we choose instead to identify as lions, we should remember that lions are big cats. The term "herding cats" is an idiom that describes the difficulty of managing or organizing something that is uncontrollable or chaotic. As Christians, why would we want to identify with animals that are so independent and individualistic that trying to get a group of them working together and moving in a singular direction could be characterized as uncontrollable or chaotic? The members of a pride actually hunt well together and the females share care of the cubs. They are very territorial and suspicious of newcomers, especially if they view them as potential threats.

When we choose to join the flock of God as sheep, we are acknowledging

not only God's authority in our lives, but we are placing ourselves under His protection. We count on our Shepherd to fight our battles for us. Any strength that we have is what comes through Him—unlike lions who are bastions of strength and prowess in and of themselves. Lions assert their dominance until there is a clear alpha male and a few beta males. Most other male cubs are run off when they get to the age of 18-24 months. Sometimes several young males will band together and take over another pride. If they do so, they will often kill the existing male cubs of that pride so that they won't compete with them for resources.<sup>1</sup>


*Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:5-8).*

Jesus is literally "*The Lion of the*

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1. *Lions and Their Unbreakable Bond with Their Pride*, Bobbi Brink (lionstigersandbears.org)

*Tribe of Judah.*” However, He didn’t come to earth as that. He came as a lamb. He came as a sacrifice. He is “*The Good Shepherd*” Who gave His life for His sheep. As His followers we should take His example and find our

place in the flock as followers of the Good Shepherd. As youth, we need to find our identity not in ourselves and our accomplishments but in our Shepherd. Only Jesus can claim to be a lion—the Lion of Judah. 

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[Abbreviations used: BL=Bottom Line; BT=I Saw a Beautiful Thing; Ed=Editorial; GE=Guest Editorial; JM=Junior Messages, Med=Meditation; MA=Mission Awareness; Obs=Observations; P=Poem; SM=School Matters; W=A Woman After God’s Heart; Y=Youth Messages]

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The highest and the greatest expression of faith in the whole Bible is—  
“*Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him*” ( Job 13:15). —OSWALD CHAMBERS

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Periodicals

## THOUGHT GEMS

The hardest thing to give is in.

• • • • •

Hats off to the past; sleeves up for the future.

• • • • •

Faith is not a pill you take but a muscle you use.

• • • • •

Don't pray for an easier life; pray to be a stronger person.

• • • • •

One thing the future can guarantee—anything can happen.

• • • • •

Where you go hereafter depends on what you go after here.

• • • • •

Some people profit by their experiences; others never recover from them.

• • • • •

First, give yourself to God. You may be sure He'll look after what is His.

• • • • •

Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.

• • • • •

Experience should be a guidepost and not a hitching post.

• • • • •

Experience makes a person bitter or better.

• • • • •

If doubt overtakes you, stop for a faith lift.